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**TALK YUH TALK:  
MAKING SENSE OF HOW GRADUATE  
SECONDARY TEACHERS IN TRINIDAD  
LEARNED TO TEACH WITHOUT  
PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION**

**A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
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**JOYANNE DE FOUR-BABB**

**University of Waikato**

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## ABSTRACT

In Trinidad and Tobago graduate secondary teachers begin teaching with subject degrees, but without pre-service teacher training. How, then, do these people come to see themselves as teachers? How do they learn how to teach? I draw on life history, constructivism and discourse analysis for my analysis of teachers' stories of beginning to teach. These stories were collected in individual interviews with 29 experienced graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad between March and August 2000. I use discourse analysis to explore the historical and policy context and highlight the dominant ideas about teachers and teaching that have been made available to teachers in Trinidad. I argue that in spite of the historical period in which they began to teach, the 29 interviewees' interpretations and understandings of *being* a graduate secondary teacher and *doing* what they thought secondary teachers should do, were informed by dominant discourses such as the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge, a disciplinarian, a role model and a socially responsible person. These discourses were also evident in the wider official and common-sense ideas on secondary education, teachers, and teaching, as well as the recruitment practices of secondary teachers. I theorise about the ways in which these discourses created possibilities and sometimes put limits upon the interviewees' construction of their practical professional knowledge—that is the knowledge they gained from day-to-day experiences of teaching. I recommend that pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes for secondary teachers in Trinidad must help teachers to explore why they may see themselves in certain ways and not in others. Schools should also play a more prominent role in the preparation and on-going professional development of graduate secondary teachers by seeking to become a place of learning for all teachers.

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## PROLOGUE

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### TALK YUH TALK

*Teachers know their lives in terms of stories. They live stories, tell stories of those lives, retell stories with changed possibilities, and relive the changed stories*  
(Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 12).

In Trinidad and Tobago, the phrase “talk yuh talk” is used when one requires a person to say his/her ‘piece,’<sup>1</sup> and this thesis is an example of me, a graduate secondary teacher from Trinidad, saying my piece, talking my talk. In my talk, I make sense of interview accounts from 29 other graduate secondary teachers about their experiences of beginning to teach without having participated in a pre-service teacher education programme. I explore and analyse their ideas of teachers and teaching and how these ideas influenced what they did as new teachers in the physical, historical, social, political, and cultural context of secondary education in Trinidad between 1965 and 2000.

My identification with talk is culturally relevant. I grew up in a Trinidadian society where *ol’ talk*—social chit-chat—is a national pastime. In Trinidad, an oral tradition is rooted and still thrives in popular literary forms such as calypso, rapso and folk tales. It also exists in other day-to-day uses of language in forms such as *picong*, *heckle* and *fatigue*—talk that makes fun of someone; *shoo shoo*—quiet gossip exchanged behind one’s back; and *mauvais langue*—talk that speaks ill of someone; *fat talk*—boastful talk; *back chat*—insolent, argumentative or cheeky responses (Mendes, 1986). Another West Indian writer—a Guyanese woman named Edith Gilroy—reminisced that through her formative years “talk was paramount and free flowing. The grandparents and their ancestors participated in talk, and called it discourse” (Gilroy, 1995, p. 64). In this common-sense usage, discourse meant “an interchange of views in a social setting” (Gilroy, 1995, p. 64).

As a child I was very familiar with the talk of teaching. I was the daughter of two teachers, the niece and cousin of other teachers. I lived the experience of

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<sup>1</sup> I use single quotation marks around words that I would emphasise if reading this thesis aloud.

the “consistency of teachers talking about their lives” (Goodson, 1991, p. 39). Teachers’ stories, which my siblings and I referred to as “Teacher Talk,” filled social events, dinner table talk and all aspects of daily life. This talk has always helped me to understand the complexity involved in teaching. For example, when I first began to teach, I made sense of teaching through the Teacher Talk from my parents and their friends about their classroom experiences. I used their stories to help me to get a better understanding of what teachers do and to make changes to my own practice as a teacher. A few years into my teaching career—during my one-year Diploma in Education at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad in 1990/1991—I read the work of John Holt (1968; 1982). In these books, Holt used his stories to tell of his personal experiences of teaching, and why children learn or fail. Again, I was able to make connections between his stories and my own stories of teaching, student learning and student failure.

Prior to taking up a Commonwealth Scholarship offered by the New Zealand Government to pursue doctoral studies, I was a Geography teacher with 10 years classroom experience in two secondary schools in Trinidad. I had completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology and Geography in 1985 (University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica), an in-service Diploma in Education in 1991 (University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad), and a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration in 1993 (University of Texas, at Austin, U.S.A.). In 1999, when I took up the Commonwealth Scholarship, I moved more than 8000 miles away from Trinidad, leaving behind all my family and friends, my husband, and my four and a half year-old daughter. I also left a teaching post that I had transferred into in September 1998. Before leaving for New Zealand I had six weeks to prepare—finish classes, grade papers, end a career as a secondary teacher in Trinidad, get visa documents, medical certificates, get through Christmas, say goodbyes, answer the question, Why New Zealand? one million times, before I left for a land that was ‘upside down.’

When I began my doctoral studies in New Zealand on the 11 January 1999, I knew nothing of the educational system in that country. However, reading *Teachers Talk Teaching* (Middleton & May, 1997), based on the narratives of New Zealand educators, helped me to ‘fill that gap’ in my knowledge. The teachers’ talk in that book enabled me to make connections between my experiences of education and those of the New Zealand educators who told their stories. Once again the power of teachers’ stories helped me to understand the

experiences of teachers and reconfirmed that indeed teachers live storied lives and stories were an expression of practical understanding of teachers work (Carter and Doyle, 1996). *Teachers Talk Teaching* helped to confirm my choice of teacher stories as a focus and a source of data for my doctoral study.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000):

People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others, including the young and those such as researchers who are new to their communities (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxvi).

Similarly, Bell and Gilbert (1996) argued:

Telling narratives...can be seen to facilitate both personal and social construction of knowledge (including self-identity). While the study of teachers' narratives may give researchers insights into teachers' culture...the sharing of narratives amongst teachers enable them, themselves, to construct and reconstruct their own culture of what it means to be a teacher...and to reconstruct their sense of self (Bell & Gilbert, 1996, p. 63).

I was convinced that a shared understanding of who we are as graduate secondary teachers, and how we come to be that way, would help other practising teachers to think more deeply about *who* they are and *why* they do what they do. This should help us to better understand our identities as teachers.

This is talk about graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad told by a person who has 'lived the experience' as a graduate secondary teacher in that country. My talk is also an analysis of the stories of 14 male and 15 female graduate secondary teachers who began teaching in Trinidad between 1965 and 1999. This is one version of their stories. This is where the thesis talk begins.

## CHAPTER ONE

\*

### MOUT' OPEN, 'TORY JUMP OUT'<sup>2</sup>:

#### INTRODUCING THE STUDY

*"Mouth open, story jump out. If you open your mouth the whole story will come out. Once you start saying a little, the entire secret will be revealed"*  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 202).

#### Introduction

When I was recruited as a graduate secondary teacher by the Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago<sup>3</sup>, (see Figures 1 and 2) in 1986, the only qualification necessary for me to teach was a subject specialisation, as evidenced by an accredited Bachelor's degree. I was not required to have completed any teacher education course-work, nor was I required to have attended any specialist institution for the preparation of teachers before engagement in full-time teaching. I never crossed the "ritual bridge" (Britzman, 1986, p. 442) of student teaching. In other words, my teaching was neither examined nor supervised before or immediately after I began to teach. There was no formal mentor provision or requirement as mandated for teachers in the United States who begin teaching without pre-service training (Dill, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996; Wiebold, 2000). I was put into the classroom and assumed full responsibilities in the teaching/learning process.

My experience of entering the teaching profession in Trinidad was not unique. Over the years, thousands of prospective graduate secondary teachers, like me, have not been formally exposed to foundational areas in education such as educational psychology, sociology or philosophy in any pre-service teachers education programmes. Many may not have had the opportunity to become officially acquainted with the history of the educational system in which they had

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<sup>2</sup> In the spirit of 'Talk yuh talk', I use Trinidadian sayings as titles for each of the chapters in this thesis. These sayings have helped me to make sense of the material in each chapter in the day to day, common language of the people of Trinidad.

<sup>3</sup> Trinidad and Tobago are two islands, but one nation state. This study was carried out with teachers who work on the island of Trinidad.

Figure 1

## Location of Trinidad and Tobago



Courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.  
 Available online at: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/americas\\_pol96.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/americas_pol96.jpg)

Figure 2

## Map Of Trinidad And Tobago



Courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.  
 Available online at:  
[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/Trinidad\\_and\\_Tobago.GIF](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/Trinidad_and_Tobago.GIF)

to teach. Very few would have possessed pedagogical thinking skills, that is, a professional “understanding of how to recognize, evaluate, and implement activities with pupils’ learning in mind” Carter (1990, p. 295). Many prospective teachers were never taught or shown how to plan and implement lessons. Most have never been exposed to the “pedagogical skills” that teacher educators say new teachers need. These skills include: a repertoire of teaching methods, classroom management and organisational skills, the ability to assess students before, during, and after lessons, the ability to motivate students and an in-depth understanding of curricular materials (Cheung, 1990; Shulman, 1989). Yet, they were employed and began teaching in secondary schools as full-fledged teachers.

The main opportunity<sup>4</sup> available to graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad for professional training is the optional, one-year, in-service post-graduate Diploma in Education (DipEd) the structure and content of which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight. This programme is offered at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine (UWI), Trinidad. The DipEd is only offered to practising graduate secondary teachers with a minimum of two years teaching experience (Durojaiye, 1996) and is therefore regarded as an “in-service” professional development opportunity. The programme only caters to about 80 to 100 teachers per year (see Appendix A) because the number of available places is limited in each curriculum group. Teachers must get approval from the Ministry of Education and their principals to take part in the DipEd programme.

As a result of this delay between beginning to teach and participating in the DipEd, there is a vast backlog of “untrained” teachers in classrooms in secondary Trinidad and Tobago (Durojaiye, 1996; Mark, 1987). By untrained I mean teachers who have not “attended Teacher’s Training College [for primary teachers] or successfully completed the Bachelor of Education [Primary] or the Diploma of Education programmes” [for secondary teachers] (Central Statistical Office, 1999, p. ix). For example, in 1997/98 of the total group of 5122 secondary teachers (2168 male and 2936 female), there were 1931 graduate secondary teachers, who not participated in primary or secondary in-service programmes (Central Statistical Office, 1999). This figure represented 37% of the total number of secondary teachers—an increase of 7% from 1990. There was no expansion of the DipEd programme after 1997 and since then hundreds of new

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<sup>4</sup> Some graduate secondary teachers may have completed the Primary Teachers training before they completed their degrees.

teachers have been recruited to teach in secondary schools. Therefore, one could estimate that in 2000 when this study was carried out, there were more than 1900 graduate teachers teaching in secondary schools who had not had the opportunity to participate in some type of formal teacher preparation or professional development programme either at the primary or secondary levels.

Our stories of becoming secondary teachers in the Trinidadian context would be far different from most of our counterparts who entered secondary teaching in other English speaking countries such as the United States, New Zealand, Australia, Kenya and England. In these countries, for the most part, prospective secondary teachers are usually required to participate in pre-service teacher education programmes to learn new skills for the job *before* they are recruited or certified to teach. In the United States, for example, under such programmes prospective teachers are exposed to a professional component addressing areas such as subject matter, teaching methods, educational principles and classroom practices (Cheung, 1990), as well as a general knowledge component. These prospective teachers would have pursued programmes at Teachers' Colleges or universities for periods varying between one and five years and teacher education courses may have been run as conjoint programmes while pursuing a first degree or as one-year graduate programmes. (Alcorn, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Ducharme & Ducharme, 1993; Gimmetstad & Hall, 1994; Lindsay, 1990).

Phelan (2001), D. K. Phillips (1998) and Taylor (2000) argued that “multiple educational discourses” circulate in teacher education programmes and these multiple educational discourses “shape particular kinds of teaching identities” (Phelan, 2001, p. 585). Taylor quoted Phelan when he explained that educational discourses can be thought of as:

ways of viewing the educational world, ways of communicating with others in that world, ways of valuing and thinking about the world of teaching and learning and the actors within it (Taylor, 2001, p. 1).

But if prospective graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad have not been formally exposed to educational discourses before they begin to teach, upon which ideas do they draw as they become teachers? How do the ideas they draw upon influence the beliefs that they have of teachers and teaching, what they do, how they act, or what they think is important when they first begin to teach? Do the ideas that prospective teachers draw upon change over time? What contradictions or

tensions exist in these ideas? Do teachers resist some of these ideas? What are the implications for the preparation and on-going professional development (Cochran-Smith, 1998) of graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad?

In the rest of this Introductory chapter, I reveal the rationale for this study and explore the theoretical concepts that I have used to make sense of the teachers' stories. I conclude this chapter with a preview of the contents in each of the forthcoming chapters.

### **Rationale For The Study**

In the *Education Policy Paper 1993-2003* of Trinidad and Tobago it is stated that in order to improve teacher competency, teachers “must be professionally prepared for their respective tasks” (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 78). This policy is based on the understanding that “if you want to improve learning, improve teaching” (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 3). As a teacher who also subscribed to this way of thinking, I could not fully understand why, in the light of these recommendations, graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad are not required to participate in compulsory pre-service or in-service teacher education programmes for preparation and ongoing professional development (Cochran-Smith, 1998). This study enabled me to address this concern through an exploration of the historical development of the secondary education Trinidad.

The 1993 policy document made recommendations for: (i) “short intensive courses...to meet the needs of beginning teachers who have no initial teacher training and for teachers who re-enter the profession after a long absence” (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 78); and (ii) “a BA/BSc. Dip Ed—a four year conjoint degree through which persons who wish to teach should attain their initial teacher training” (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 79). However, I was quite sceptical as to whether or not these programmes would ever come on stream in the near future because recommendations for pre-service, secondary teacher education programmes have been made repeatedly in the policy documents and working party reports on education before and after the first official educational policy document in 1968. In 1999, there was little indication of when these programmes would begin or how they would be funded. In 2000 when the research for this study was carried out, graduate secondary teachers were still being recruited to teach with only subject degrees (“*Ministry of*

*Education, Vacancies,*” 2000). In 2003, when this thesis was being completed, these programmes were still not available to beginning teachers.

As a Trinidadian educator the continued lack of preparation for graduate secondary teachers continued to be a source of worry to me. First of all, I was concerned that so many graduate secondary teachers have not participated in some form of formal programme of teacher preparation. As Darling–Hammond (1990) argued, “if one admits untrained teachers to full membership in the occupation, the risk of uninformed practice and student mistreatment is high” (Darling–Hammond, 1990, p. 268-269). Yet, I questioned whether or not a ‘traditional’ pre-service programme would fully prepare prospective teachers for the task of teaching or improve the performance of graduate secondary teachers and students’ achievement in Trinidad in the way that the policy paper suggested.

Pre-service teacher education programmes are based on the educational idea that participation in such programmes would help prospective teachers to learn much of what they need to know for the job before they begin to teach. However, the advantages of pre-service teacher education are constantly being debated in educational circles (Berliner, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000). On the one hand educators such Darling-Hammond (2000) argue for pre-service teacher education to provide teachers with the skills for the job. She explained that:

substantial evidence indicates that teachers who have more preparation for teaching are more confident and successful with students who have had little or none [and] an important contribution of teacher education is its development of teachers’ abilities to examine teaching from the perspectives of learners (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 166).

On the other hand, researchers such as Tripp, (1994) criticised pre-service teacher education in the United States as being “inadequate preparation for teaching” (Tripp, 1994, p. 1) because it teaches the “wrong things” are taught by “wrong people,” and in the “wrong settings.” This was Tripp’s way of criticising some university-based teacher education programmes that emphasised academic knowledge content over pedagogical and practical teacher knowledge. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) argued that the experiences during initial preparation may be wiped out by experiences new teachers have when they are placed in schools.

Pre-service programmes also tend to be criticised for not being in touch with the real world needs and experiences of the teachers in the context of their teaching as they provide limited professional training apart from teaching practice (Sikes, 1985, McWilliam, 1994). Hargreaves (2002) argued that pre-service

teacher education programmes may “miss a lot of what matters most in developing good teaching” (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 3) because they rarely acknowledge the emotional dimension of teaching. Consequently, many mainstream teacher education programmes need to be completely reconceptualised to help teachers cope in a changing world of teachers’ work, now marked by increased expectations for teachers and increased knowledge (Sarason, 1993; Tripp, 1994).

Furthermore, as Hamilton and Pinnegar (2000, p. 237) argued some teacher education programmes do not pay “careful attention to who our students [beginning teachers] are, what they know and believe, and what experiences and talents they bring with them.” For example, several international studies based on the experiences of student teachers enrolled in pre-service teacher education programmes, indicated that prior beliefs about teaching have the greatest effect on teacher practice (Britzman, 1986; Ethell & McMeniman, 2002; Keltchtermans, 1993a; b; Pajares, 1992; Sugrue, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998). Past experiences of schooling are an important influence on what prospective teachers learn during teacher education programmes. Formal teacher preparation may expose teachers to educational theory and subject content, but what they believe, if left unchallenged, may persist (Beijaard, & De Vries, 1997). As Sugrue (1997) argued:

The personal experiences of student teachers, their apprenticeship of observation and embedded cultural archetypes of teaching collectively yield the *forms* (socio-historical situatedness) and the *content* (beliefs, attitudes, dispositions) and behaviours of their teaching identities. By deconstructing student teachers’ lay theories, therefore, insights are gained into the most formative personal and social influences on their personal identities. Coming to terms with lay theories, their content, the principal forces that interact in their formation, and the tacit nature is critical to professional development and renewal (Sugrue, 1997, p. 214-215).

Britzman (1986, 1991), whose work was based on student teachers’ experiences of beginning to teach, suggested that a person’s ideas about teaching are rooted in his/her biography or “cumulative social experience” (Britzman, 1986, p. 443) and that the experience of learning to teach is a conflict between demands resulting from the interaction of biography, student teaching practice and school structure. Britzman (1986, p. 448) identified three “cultural myths” held by the teachers she studied. These were: (i) everything—“student learning, the presentation of the curriculum, and social control” (p. 449)—depends on the

teacher; (ii) teachers are experts—they are supposed to know the answers; and (iii) teachers are self-made. Britzman (1986) argued that together these myths “contribute to the teacher’s taken for granted views of power, authority and knowledge” (p. 448). She added that:

Cultural myths, then provide a set of ideal images, definitions and justifications and measures for thought and activity, and sustain a naturalized view of the reality it seeks to encode (Britzman, 1986, p. 448).

Such research on the persistence of pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching suggests that teachers’ beliefs are well established long before teachers begin to teach and that their lived experiences and personal experiences of schooling influence their beliefs about teaching. This research made me wonder: Where do teachers’ ideas, beliefs or myths come from? How are they constructed? If as Sugrue’s research suggests teachers’ beliefs do not change unless they are challenged or deconstructed in formal or informal programmes of teacher education, do teachers who have never participated in formal programmes of education have the opportunity to address their ideas of teaching? If they do not, do they simply reproduce the ideas constructed in society about teachers and teaching? How do these ideas influence what teachers do? What tensions exist as these ideas are acted upon? What spaces exist for the resistance of dominant ideas?

Another of my concerns revolved around whether or not the policy paper’s proposed pre-service programmes would be imposed on teachers, and designed by teacher educators from countries outside of Trinidad who may not take into consideration the vast body of knowledge and experience that secondary teachers in Trinidad have. As Carter and Doyle (1996) argued traditional pre-service programmes tend to reduce teacher control over the knowledge base in teaching and they suggested that:

by locating knowledge for teaching within teachers themselves and by demonstrating clearly the complexity of the enterprise of teaching, it is possible to deny outsiders—university based researchers or government policy makers—access to a simplistic “knowledge base” for controlling teaching (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 123).

Furthermore, as Johnson, Monk and Hodges (2000) argued:

Teachers working in economically developing countries are constrained by a somewhat different set of circumstances, have different perspectives on what they do, and need different in-service provision too those in developed countries (Johnson et al., 2000, p. 179).

Based on my experiences as a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad who has lived the experience of learning to teach without pre-service teacher education; as a person who has been involved in the designing and facilitating of in-service programmes for secondary teachers; and as an educational researcher, I ‘knew’ that as graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad my colleagues and I had constructed our own bodies of knowledge and educational ideas about teachers and teaching. I wanted to explore some of these ideas, especially those about teachers and teaching that graduate secondary teachers have when they begin to teach, and the sources of these ideas. I also wanted to make sense of how and why teachers come to prefer certain points of view, and how these points of view are “enabled or constrained” (Middleton, 1993) in the social, historical and biographical context of their lives. In so doing, I could begin to make sense of the complexity of *who* the graduate secondary teacher is/was in the Trinidadian context. This understanding could better inform prospective in-service and pre-service programmes that any other teacher educator, or I may design because it would be rooted in the teachers’ own practical understandings of what they do. As a researcher, who is also a graduate secondary teacher and part-time teacher educator, I felt that I could achieve these goals.

In addition, I was motivated to tell and analyse stories of a group of Trinidadian teachers like me and whose talk is particularly absent from the international literature on teacher education. Talk from these teachers would be informed by their own day-to-day experiences of schooling and work in classrooms, rather than by a programme of professional training (Grossman, 1989; Taylor, 2000). Indeed, as Doecke, Brown and Loughran (2000) argued:

Teachers engage in various kinds of talk. Such talk is one of a range of reflective activities that constitute their ‘knowledge’ as teachers. This may be subjugated knowledge that traditional, academic researchers have not always known how to handle, but is knowledge nonetheless (Doecke et al., 2000, p. 343).

A study based on teachers’ stories would enable a few teachers to have their say—articulate what they know about some aspects of teaching and how they came to know it.

Judith Shulman (1989, p. 6) reasoned “the future holds the prospect for many alternative ways for someone to learn to become a teacher.” I was aware that, because of teacher shortages world-wide, millions of teachers were being recruited to teach in primary and secondary classrooms without initial teacher

preparation (Henning, 2000). Even in countries such as the United States of America where pre-service teacher education is the norm, an increasing number of teachers are being recruited to teach in rural or inner-city areas in states such as California, without having participated in pre-service teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Dill, 1996; Taylor, 2000; Wiebold, 2000). Since most of the research in these countries focuses on the pre-service teacher or teachers who begin with pre-service teacher education, stories of becoming a teacher without pre-service teacher education would become increasingly relevant to teacher educators outside of Trinidad and Tobago.

Casey (1995/6, p. 239) argued that “there are many different teachers’ stories waiting to be heard.” My analysis of stories from Trinidadian teachers would represent “an interpretation of experiences or events that reflects, perhaps, a general understanding of similar experience and events” (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 121). These teachers’ stories would give other teachers, teacher educators and researchers access to teacher knowledge that may not have been previously accessed in educational research in Trinidad and Tobago.

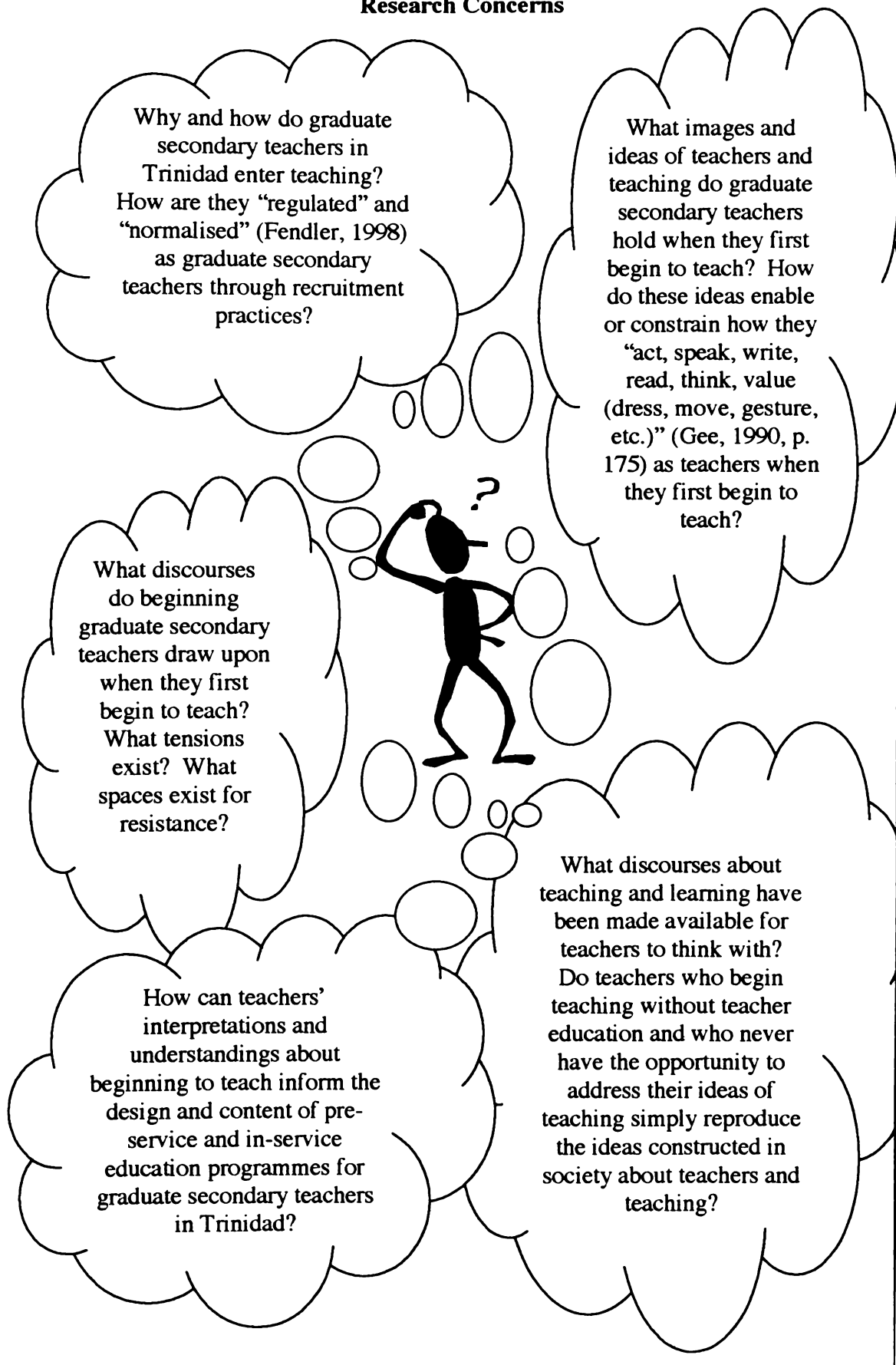
It is out of these personal, professional and political concerns that I first imagined doing a study based upon stories from graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad who began teaching without participating in pre-service teacher education programmes. I was motivated to focus on the graduate secondary teacher’s experiences as a beginning teacher because, as Britzman (1991) argued, beginning to teach is the time when “one confronts the multiple meanings, constraints and possibilities of the teacher’s identity in the process of constructing one’s own” (Britzman, 1991, p. 2). The initial and broad concerns that drove this study are summarised in Figure 3. However, as the US Social Scientist Thorstein Veblen said, “The outcome of any serious research can only be to make two questions grow where only one grew before” (Noble, 1995, p. 241). Thus, as explained later in this chapter, these concerns were reworked, modified, and expanded into research questions listed later in this Chapter.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) described the theoretical perspective or orientation underpinning a study as the way in which a researcher looks at the world and makes assumptions about what is important. Similarly, Wellington (2000, p. 27)

**Figure 3**

**Research Concerns**



explained that theory is a “framework for understanding or making sense of things which happen.” In this section, I disclose how I made sense of this study through theoretical concepts such as “narratives and stories,” “professional knowledge landscape,” “constructivism,” and “Foucauldian discourse analysis.” These concepts helped me to ‘dig deeper’ into the teachers’ stories that I collected. I also explain how these theoretical tools helped me to formulate my initial research concerns identified in Figure 3 into research questions, which I list in the next section.

### **Narratives And Stories**

Individuals speaking for themselves (Munro, 1998) appealed to me as a form of research data that I would be comfortable using in my educational research. As I explained in the Prologue, I understood the value of stories and narratives as a source of what teachers know. Carter (1995) explored the concept of story and argued that “stories consist...of events, characters, and settings arranged in a temporal sequence implying both causality and significance” (Carter, 1995, p. 6). She added that stories “represent a way of knowing and thinking, that is particularly suited to explicating the issues with which we deal” (p. 6) and they capture the “richness and the nuances of meaning in human affairs” (p. 6). Carter and Doyle (1996) defined narrative as follows:

A narrative or life story is an interpretation of experiences or events that reflects, perhaps, a more general understanding of similar experiences and events. Presumably individuals draw their interpretations from a variety of remembered experiences, bits of information, beliefs, knowledge, dispositions, commitments, and cultural forms, as well as the tasks at hand (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 121).

In this study, the teachers’ stories are interpretations of events related to beginning teaching as told to me in interviews. These stories represented an opportunity for me to base my research on the “lived experience” or “personal life stories” of people who have become graduate secondary teachers.

One strand of my literature search included studies that focused on teachers’ own stories about their professional knowledge—a field that has grown significantly since the 1990s (Carter & Doyle, 1996). According to these same authors this type of research is:

centred on the practical understandings that teachers develop as they enter and begin to teach and on the ways in which beginning and/or experienced

teachers come to frame their understandings within their life stories or life experience (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 129).

Connelly and Clandinin are noted researchers in the field of narrative research (Clandinin, 1989, 1992; 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; 1995; 1996; 1998; 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; 1999; Connelly, Clandinin & He, 1997).

They explained:

For us, narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience. Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a way of writing and thinking about it (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 18).

Narrative inquiry places value on people's stories and taps into *their* knowledge from *their* perspective. Clandinin and Connelly, and those who are influenced by their "narrative inquiry" approach to research, use teachers' stories in three ways: as a "phenomena under study" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 4); as a method of study; and as a way of thinking and writing their research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this study, teacher narratives are used as expressions of the practical understanding that the interviewees have of their experience of teaching. Narratives have also influenced the research methods (as discussed in Chapter Two) and the style of presentation used in this thesis.

Despite its growing popularity or probably more as a consequence of its growing popularity, research based on teachers' stories and associated issues of this tradition goes "against the grain" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 1997, p. 75) of "traditional" research because teachers' stories provide an alternative insight into what is perceived as "credible" educational research. Stories are located in the experience of teachers, rather than from observations of teachers. D. Thomas (1995) described teacher's narratives as "reasonable texts" because:

they offer the possibility of an alternative set of stories about teaching and the education system. They are redressive with disclosures from the classroom and staffroom as counterweights to those deriving from positions of power and policymaking (Thomas, 1995, p. 15-16).

Milburn (1992) commenting on work by Clandinin and Connelly, summarised the major critique of narrative-based research by asking:

What exactly *is* a teacher's 'story'? How does it differ from the traditional autobiography or biography, or from such recent inventions as 'life-cycle', 'life structure', 'life history' or 'career history'? And what are the bounds of the teacher's story? Are there any characteristics essential to such a story? Are there personal givens? Are there curricular givens? Are there approved (desired, suggested, recommended, required) topics? Are some

subjects taboo? Are there approved discourses for a teacher's story? Are they largely anecdotal, or are there other approved (desired, hoped for) forms? Or does 'anything go'? For whom are teacher's stories intended? For private, personal use? For certain associates? For supervisors? For public display? (Milburn, 1992, p. 62-63).

Milburn's questions reflected many of the concerns that I initially had when I read the relevant literature on teachers' narratives. I wondered whether or not teachers would tell me the same stories of learning to teach that they would tell their spouses, friends, colleagues or children. I also wondered whether or not other teachers would see their experiences of beginning to teach reflected in these stories. After my analysis would these stories still 'belong' to the group of teachers who gave them?

### **Professional Knowledge Landscape**

While teachers' stories seemed a useful way for me to collect data on teachers' understanding of their experiences of beginning to teach, I recognised that teachers work and develop their knowledge of teaching in particular political, educational, social, historical and cultural contexts. Kelchtermans (1993a) referred to these contexts as "the physical, institutional environment of the school as well as the social, cultural and interpersonal 'Lebenswelt' [every day world/life-world]" (Kelchtermans, 1993a, p. 444). Clandinin and Connelly (1995) regarded these contexts in which teacher knowledge is produced as the "teachers' professional knowledge landscape." They explained:

A landscape metaphor...allows us to talk about space, place and time. Furthermore it has a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, events and relationships. Understanding professional knowledge as a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of components and influenced by a wide variety of people, places and things. Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places and things, we see it as both an intellectual and moral landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, pp. 4-5).

This landscape metaphor, linking space, place, time, people, places, things and relationships appealed to me because of my background as a Geographer. I was prompted to move from beyond simply collecting stories based on teachers' descriptions of beginning to teach, to also collecting and analysing historical data on secondary education in Trinidad. This data could provide details on the specific social, political, historical and cultural context or landscape of graduate

secondary teaching in Trinidad over time. This understanding of the landscape could help me to better explore how the stories the teachers had to tell may have changed over time and how multiple and competing stories might have been available at the same time.

The landscape metaphor also helped me to recognise the importance of social relationships in the context of the teacher's work. As McLaughlin (1993, p. 81) argued "a teacher's-eye view sees teaching as an integrating activity, intertwined and interdependent with students, subject matter, and features of the immediate workplace environment." When teachers tell their stories, they incorporate aspects of the contexts in which they work. Teachers' stories are influenced by their individual biographies (Britzman, 1986), their daily relationships with students, administrators, parents, policies and the social, political, historical, and cultural milieu in which they operate. In other words, when teachers tell their stories, these stories, and the circumstances in which they came to be constructed, occur "within power structures and social milieux" (Goodson, 1995, p. 98). So, how then, was I to interpret these stories?

### **Interpretation of Stories**

My interpretation and understanding of the interviewees' stories in this study evolved from the way in which I came to make sense of the world during the time that I engaged in this piece of research. Before I began this doctoral programme, I thought of people as "unitary, rational actors" who had the "power to choose and to make decisions in relation to [their lives]" (Davies, 1992, p. 63). Because of this, I believed that the teachers' stories would be accounts of their "real world" and it would be very straightforward for me to interpret their stories as instances of "fact." I could analyse the teachers' stories that I collected as a disinterested researcher and seek to explain "causes and effects" of particular "factors" that made teachers act in certain ways when they first begin to teach. I could also "make predictions" about what graduate secondary teachers would do when they first begin to teach. In other words, I could think about these stories as direct perceptions of teachers' realities and treat them as "versions of reality" based on teachers' life experiences. However, reading Guba and Lincoln (1994) made me question my perspective. I came to recognise that there were many other ways in which I could make sense of the teacher's stories.

For example, I could regard the stories as an activist and interpret them as “structural/historical insights” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 112) and try to critique them. I could approach the stories as a participant, an insider and seek to understand and reconstruct the stories and look for common themes. Or, I could deal with each as a ‘telling’ that is “constrained, partial, and determined by the discourses and histories that pre-figure, even as they might promise representation” (Britzman, 1995, p. 232). Thus, the ways for interpretation were more varied than I had first imagined.

### **“Constructivism”: A Way Of Thinking About Teacher Learning**

When I first conceived the research questions for this study during the first weeks of doctoral study, my views on ontology—“the form and nature of reality” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) and epistemology—“the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what could be known” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) were being strongly influenced by the constructivist view of knowledge. Fosnot (1996a, p. ix) argued that “constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning; it describes both what ‘knowing’ is and how one ‘comes to know.’” Constructivism draws on perspectives from psychology, philosophy, epistemology, sociology and history (Kinnucan-Welsh & Jenlink, 1998) and provides “a way of thinking about the formation of knowledge and understanding” (Mackinnon & Scarff-Seatter, 1997, p. 51).

From a constructivist point of view knowledge is seen as “temporary, developmental, non-objective, internally constructed, and socially and culturally mediated” (Fosnot, 1996a, p. ix). It “is inherently partial and positional because it is grounded in an individual’s interpretation of the world” (O’Loughlin, 1992, p. 336). “As human beings we have no access to an objective reality since we are constructing our own version of it, while at the same time transforming it ourselves” (Fosnot, 1996b, p. 23).

Learning is regarded as “an interpretive, recursive building process by active learners interacting with their physical and social world” (Fosnot, 1996b, p. 30). It is “an act of interpretation” (O’Loughlin, 1992a, p. 336). Fosnot (1996) elaborated on the concept of learning as:

a self regulatory process of struggling with the conflict between existing personal models of the world and discrepant new insights, constructing new representations and models of reality as a human meaning-making venture with culturally developed tools and symbols, and further

negotiating such meaning through cooperative social activity, discourse and debate (Fosnot, 1996a, p. ix).

But constructivism, is by no means a homogenous ideology (O'Loughlin, 1992a); nor is it a "monolithic, agreed-upon concept" (Richardson, 1997a, p. 3). Indeed, "constructivism has many sects—each of which harbors some distrust of its rivals" (Phillips, 1995, p. 5). In addition, similar forms of constructivism are given different names, which of course adds to the confusion in the literature (Geelan, 1997; Good, Wandersee, & St. Julien, 1993). One of the many existing tensions within constructivism revolves around the debate of whether knowledge is produced solely in the mind of the individual (personal, radical constructivists) or within societies and cultures (social, critical, contextual constructivists) (Cobb, 1994b, 1995, 1996; Driver & Scott, 1995; O'Loughlin, 1992b; Smith, 1995). Another area of contention is whether knowledge resides in the environment or is a product of discourses within societies.

Fox (2001, p. 23) argued that constructivism has "relatively little to say which is distinctive." He identified and critiqued six claims of constructivism: (1) learning is an active process; (2) knowledge is constructed, rather than innate or passively absorbed; (3) knowledge is invented, not discovered; (4a) all knowledge is idiosyncratic and personal; (4b) all knowledge is socially constructed; (5) learning is essentially a process of making sense; and (6) effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended checking of problems for the learner to solve. He described these ideas as "vague," "simple," "incomplete," "mis-leading," "contrary" and "self-contradictory" and based on "weak philosophical assumptions" (Fox, 2001). He concluded that constructivist ideas seem to make sense in contrast to behavioursitic models of learning, but they "move us beyond naïveté, but perhaps not very far" (Fox, 2001, p. 34).

Nevertheless, the common thread through constructivism's diverse meanings is that what one knows is in the mind of the learner and the learner takes an active role in creating knowledge (Bickhard, 1997; Cobern, 1993; Geelan, 1997; Good et al, 1993; Matthews, 1994; Phillips, 1995; Rosen, 1993). In other words:

individuals create their own understandings, based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact (Richardson, 1997a, p. 3).

Constructivism has provided a view on how a learner comes to know and has helped educators to focus on learning and on practices in which teachers engage students in learning (Begg, 1996; Taylor & Carr, 1994). Bettencourt (1993) explained:

[Constructivism] involves a conception of the knower, a conception of the known, and a conception of knower-known. If we agree that learning has to do with the growth of knowledge...then constructivism has relations with teaching and learning (Bettencourt 1993, p. 39).

Richardson (1997a) argued constructivism describes the way people learn, not the way they should learn. As a theory of knowledge and learning, constructivism has made some inroads on behalf of alternative approaches to learning and teaching. It has been described as an “intellectual tool”, but “not a universal truth to replace objectivism” (Tobin & Tippins, 1993). Constructivism alerts us to the issue that “knowledge is not transmitted directly from the knower to another, but is actively built up by the knower” (Driver, Asoko, Leach, Mortimer & Scott, 1994, p.5). In addition “constructivism’s particular contribution...is its recognition of multiple realities, multiply constructed by individuals and groups, who ground their constructions in the particulars of their own personal experiences” (Lincoln, 1995, p. 92).

Reading studies that acknowledge the central role of what teachers know from their classroom experiences and how they put this knowledge at the forefront of the teaching/learning process (e.g. Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Brooks, & Brooks, 1993; Fosnot, 1996b, 1996c; O’Loughlin, 1992b; 1995; Richardson, 1997a; 1997b) helped me to recognise that the concept of constructivism would be useful to help me explore the construction of graduate secondary teacher knowledge. I was particularly drawn to Bell and Gilbert’s (1996, p. 50) “social constructivist view of learning” with respect to teacher learning. From their perspective,

- Knowledge is constructed by people.
- The construction and reconstruction of knowledge is both personal and social.
- Personal construction of knowledge is socially mediated. Social construction of knowledge is personally mediated.
- Socially constructed knowledge is both the context for and the outcome of human social interaction. The social context an important part of the learning activity.
- Social interaction with others is a part of personal and social construction and reconstruction of knowledge (Bell & Gilbert, 1996, pp. 50-51).

In the Trinidadian context, graduate secondary teachers' knowledge has been "created, not received" (Holt-Reynolds, 2000) because teachers have not been exposed to "authoritative knowledge" in pre-service teacher education programmes. The interviewees constructed new knowledge about teaching and student learning from their interpretation of the classroom world, first from their lives as students and later through their own classroom teaching. They constructed new knowledge to give them new understandings of the learning situations they were in.

Constructivism, and more particularly the social constructivist view of learning, was used as a referent and a framework for my thinking about *teachers as learners* who are constructing an understanding of what they should do as teachers. Constructivism, as a theoretical perspective, helped me to shift my thinking and questions from 'How do teachers learn to teach?' to 'How do teachers construct their ideas about teachers and teaching'? This framework is best seen in opposition to learning to teach in response to stimuli, or by following a model of learning, or mastery of a specific set of skills. Teachers learn to teach not merely copying what they see, but actively constructing it. Thus, I sought to make sense of how the interviewees "reformulate[d] their schemas to make sense of dissonant information and experience" (Walker & Lambert, 1995, p. 2). Finally, constructivism provided a way for me to thinking more deeply about the teacher learning that is taking place and to construct my own understanding about teacher learning as I present in Chapter Eight.

My engagement with constructivism was my bridge into poststructural theory, which helped to provide me with more theoretical tools to make sense of my stories. I had to stop thinking about the interviewees as unitary, rational actors who had the "power to choose and to make decisions in relation to [their lives]" (Davies, 1992, p. 63). I could no longer think that these teachers' stories would be accounts of their real world. I began to understand that from a poststructural perspective, what teachers know is constructed between them, rather than instances of fact. This knowledge is culturally and historically specific (Burr, 1995). I came to understand that I needed to focus on the "subject's accounts primarily as a resource to find out about the social world and how it is constructed" (Davies & Banks, 1992, p. 3).

In order to deepen my analysis, I examined what the teachers said, not simply as an analysis of words or *what they said*, but in terms of *how they came to*

*say what they said*. In other words, I took a critical stance towards teachers' taken-for-granted knowledge and asked more demanding questions (Burr, 1995). I paid attention to the historical and cultural underpinnings of their particular understandings, and looked at the ways in which their knowledge came to be. I examined critically the socio-historical context in which teachers constructed their teaching knowledge and traced sources of their ideas in wider settings on the professional knowledge landscape. In this way I was better able to understand how some teachers' stories were "constrained or enabled" (Middleton, 1993) by the dominant political, economic and historical educational ideas on secondary education and teaching available to them as beginning teachers. I was then able to "understand their meaning; see them as the social constructions which allow us to locate and interrogate the social world in which they are embedded" (Goodson, 1995, p. 98). The use of Foucauldian discourse analysis helped me with this kind of deeper historical analysis.

### **Foucauldian Discourse Analysis**

Michel Foucault's work has been used in diverse areas such as sociology, psychology, cultural studies, political theory, literary criticism, and education (Ball, 1990a; 1990b; Marshall, 1989; Mayo, 2000; Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998a; 1998b). Roth (1992) explained that Foucault's work was useful because it has helped researchers to "intensely scrutinise [their] claims of knowledge" (Roth 1992, p. 693), especially those related to the exercise of power.

Foucault's work on how the modern human subject has come to be constituted (Foucault, 1977) provided a useful tool to help me to think about becoming a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad. As Foucault (1980) suggested:

we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc (Foucault, 1980, p. 97).

In other words, I explored the particular ways in which being a graduate secondary teacher was "constructed, understood, defined, enacted, sustained, legitimated and reproduced" (van Dijk, 1994, p. 163) by the educational ideas available in Trinidad in the ever-changing political, economic, and historical moments between 1965, when the first interviewee began to teach, and 2000 when the study was carried out.

Foucault argued that the subject is produced in a context of discursive and power relations. In other words, subjects come into being through a complex interplay between “power” and “discourses” (Mansfield, 2000). For Foucault, discourses or “well-bounded areas of social knowledge” (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 31) were particular ways of speaking or writing about things and were social practices producing the objects to which they referred. Foucault explained:

I would like to show that ‘discourses,’ in the form that they can be heard or read, are not, as one might expect, a mere intersection of things and words: an obscure web of things, and a manifest, visible, coloured chain of words; I would like to show that discourse is not a slender surface of contact, or confrontation, between a reality and a language (*langue*), the intrication between a lexicon and an experience;.....[we can no longer treat] discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the identities of objects of which they speak (Foucault, 1972, p. 48-49).

Many educational writers have drawn on this Foucauldian notion of discourse. For example, Ball (1990a, p. 2) argued that “discourses are about what can be said or thought” about something at any given moment. Burr (1995, p. 184) explained that discourses are “a systematic, coherent set of images, metaphors and so on that construct an object in a particular way.” Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000) took discourses to refer to “systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects” (p. 3-4). Fairclough (1992) argued:

Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they ‘constitute’ them; different discourses constitute key entities (be they ‘mental illness,’ ‘citizenship’ or ‘illiteracy’ in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects (e.g. as doctors or patients) (Fairclough, 1992, p. 3-4).

In other words, from a Foucauldian perspective, discourses put limits on what it means to be a certain thing and in so doing ‘produces’ a person or thing in a particular way. Discourses, then, refer to what is said, what can be said, and what is not said about ‘subjects’ such as graduate secondary teachers, and ‘objects’ such as secondary schools, secondary education and teaching at any given time. For example, a secondary school may be thought of, spoken or written about by different people in the following ways: by educators as a place of learning; by policy makers as a place for bright students or a place for the children of the privileged class in the society; by social workers as a refuge for teenagers; by financiers as a building or an expensive venture; by teenagers as a jail.

Discourses inform policy documents and educational systems and therefore create possibilities and constraints for thought and practice.

Van Dijk (1994) argued that the purpose of discourse analysis is to “explore the relations” between what people say and the “social, political, or cultural structures and processes” (van Dijk, 1994, p. 163). Thus, the underlying purpose of this study was to make sense of the teachers’ stories by loosening the embrace of the “things and words” (Foucault, 1977, p. 48) said about the graduate secondary teacher and unravelling the complex interplay of discourses and knowledge that constituted the graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad over time. There are many discourses circulating but if I can identify a few, then I will be better able to understand who we are as graduate secondary teachers, how we came to be this way and make suggestions for changes to who we become, what we do and what we value as graduate secondary teachers.

Foucault (1977) also linked discourse to power because, as he argued, discourses are always in competition for supremacy of how a thing should be. At any given time, discourses compete for supremacy in the constructed world and the adoption of one discourse leads to the exclusion or marginalisation of other possibilities. This competition creates a space what can be said or thought or not said or thought about any object or subject at any given time. As Ball (1990a) argued:

[discourses are] also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations....Meanings thus arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations (Ball, 1990a, p. 2).

In *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977), Foucault distinguished between sovereign power, which he viewed as something external and enforced on the body, and disciplinary power. He argued that disciplinary power is the dominant mode of social regulation of people in the modern world. It is invisible and does not rely on physical force, but relies on infinitesimal practices. Foucault argued that disciplinary power is internalised in people through disciplinary technologies and results in self-control (Covaleskie, 1993; Foucault, 1977; Marshall, 1989). These disciplinary technologies are practices that result in subtle forms of social and self-regulation. They help to classify particular behaviours, actions and attitudes as “normal” or “abnormal.”

In her analysis of Foucault’s (1977) work, Gore (1998) identified eight disciplinary technologies characteristic of modern societal institutions such as

schools. These included: *surveillance*, which she explained as “supervising, closely observing, watching, threatening to watch, or expecting to be watched” (p. 235); *normalisation of judgement* through comparison by “invoking, requiring, setting or conforming to a standard defined as normal” (p. 237); *exclusion*, setting apart from the normal— “the defining of the pathological” (p. 238); *classification* which is the differentiation and ranking of groups and individuals; the distribution of bodies in space, through separation or isolation; *individualisation*—giving individual character to oneself; *totalisation* defined as “giving collective character” (p. 242) to individuals, by naming oneself as part of a group and; *regulation*, defined as “controlling by rule, subject to restrictions, invoking a rule, including sanction, reward and punishment” (p. 243).

Foucault (1977) explained how these disciplinary technologies could be combined through the examination. He argued that:

the examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those normalising judgement. It is a normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanism of discipline, the examination is highly ritualised (Foucault, 1977, p. 184).

Foucault (1980) also described disciplinary power as “capillary” as it flows through society and is inscribed on the actions of all (McHoul and Grace, 1993).

He argued that:

In thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourse, learning processes and everyday lives (Foucault, 1980, p. 39).

Thus, part of the analysis in this study was to show how disciplinary technologies operated in the social regulation of the graduate secondary teacher. For example, in Chapter Seven I explore how the recruitment process seeks to “normalise” and “categorise” graduate secondary teachers as school-subject specialists.

Marshall (1996) recognised that Foucault’s work cannot be generally used and suggested that his “insights should be used...to problematise certain givens.” He suggested that Foucault’s major research questions revolved around “how power was exercised at the level of the individual” and “how do we come to be subjects in the sense of being people with a certain view of ourselves and subjects who are subjected” (Marshall, 1996, p. 92). In other words, Foucault did not

study the lived experiences or everyday theories of individual human subjects. His concern was about how persons were constituted in discourses. In this study Foucault's ideas were not suitable for examining individual lives and the construction of teacher knowledge. However, they were very useful in helping me to "loosen the embrace...of words and things" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49) about educational practices and to make sense of the ideas available to the interviewees as specific times and places as explored in Chapters Three to Six.

### **Subjectivity**

My engagement with constructivism, Foucauldian discourse analysis and poststructural theory (e.g. Davies, 1990; 1991; 1992; Jones, 1993; Middleton, 1993; Weedon, 1997) helped me to re-examine my perspective on subjectivity of the graduate secondary teacher. According to O'Loughlin (1992, p. 336-337) "knowledge construction depends on the subjectivity of the learners and the implicit and explicit power relations of the pedagogical situation." In other words who the graduate secondary teacher is and how he/she came to be that way and what they came to know depended upon the various ways of being a graduate secondary teacher available to them within dominant discourses.

Davies (1992, p. 62) argued that "within poststructuralist thought, the person (and the idea of what it means to be a person) is collectively and discursively constituted." She went on to add:

Who we are, our subjectivity, is spoken into existence in every utterance, not just in the sense that others speak us into existence and impose unwanted structures on us...but in each moment of speaking and being we each reinvent ourselves (Davies, 1992, pp. 73-74).

Kamberlis and Scott (1992) argued that from a poststructuralist point-of-view, subjectivity is "viewed as produced or constituted in and by historical, social and material practices" (Kamberlis & Scott, 1992, p. 360).

Discourses "position people in different ways as social subjects" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 4). However, as discourses are always in competition for supremacy, who the subject is, is constantly in process. As Davies and Harré (1990) argued:

Accordingly, who one is is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and others' lives (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 46).

There is no way that one can identify all the discourses acting upon and through a person at any given point in time. As Davies (1991) argued:

Just as there are multiple readings of any text, so there are multiple readings of ourselves. We are constituted through multiple discourses at any one point in time, and while we may regard a move we make as correct within one game or discourse, it may be equally dangerous within another (Davies, 1991, p. 47).

I began to understand that I would have to see the teacher as being constituted “through multiple and contradictory discourses” (Davies, 1992, p. 57). I needed to think of subjectivity as a “discursive category” rather than in an “essentialist sense” (Davies, 1992, p. 54) where the self is “unified, coherent, autonomous and noncontradictory” (Kamberlis & Scott, 1992, p. 360) and the subject ‘knows’ what he/she is doing.

Davies (1992) explained that “the concept of positioning is central to understanding the way in which people are constituted through and in terms of existing discourses” (Davies, 1992, p. 54). Davies and Harré, (1990) use the concept of positioning rather than role as “the central organising concept for analysing how it is that people *do* being a person” (italics added; Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 62). They argued that “position is what is created in and through talk as the speakers and hearers take themselves up as persons” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 62). They added:

Positioning, as we will use it, is the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines. There can be interactive positioning in which what one person says positions another. And there can be reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself. However, it would be a mistake to assume that, in either case, positioning is necessarily intentional. One lives one’s life in terms of one’s ongoing produced self, whoever might be responsible for its production (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48).

Davies (1991) also argued that the “subject positions” that individuals may take up are made available through a variety of discourses. Davies, working with Harré in 1990, argued that:

A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one’s own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned (Davies & Harré (1990, p. 46).

In other words, from a particular subject position, one comes to think, act, value (Gee, 1990) oneself in a certain way. Gee (1990) also argued that:

Each of us is a *subject-actor* in many Discourses, as well as the *subject-citizen* of many Discourses, and the *subject-matter* (topic/theme) of Discourses. We *act out* our Discourses, we are *constructed* by them, and we *theorize* about ourselves through them; and we do all three of these at once, and each of these three allows us to exist (italics in original; Gee, 1990, p. 175).

But at any given time, the way in which one does this is always in competition with other ways of acting, thinking, valuing. We do not simply choose to become or be. We may *think* that we choose to be, do, act, and value, but those ‘choices’ are enabled or constrained by the possibilities available. Those possibilities depend on time, place, and people in a particular social and historical context. As Phillips argued:

Antagonistic discourses clashing among themselves clash upon the individual, creating a violent landscape. As discourses, like waves crash and wash around us, we find multiple identities, either consciously taken upon us or unconsciously placed upon us (D. K. Phillips, 1998, p. 28)

Two examples of studies in teacher education that examined discourses at work on the process of learning to teach are D. K. Phillips (1998) and Taylor (2000). Phillips (1998) explored discourses at work on students engaged in pre-service teacher education programme. She identified the discourses present in the language used in her participant’s discussions and illustrated, through the use of stories subjectivity as a battle site for competing discourses, the disciplinary power of a dominant discourses, the insidious nature of discourses which “exercise control even when the individual does not choose such control” (Phillips, 1998, p. 93) and the use of discourses to “probe and re-invent” (Phillips, 1998, p. 125) the self.

Taylor (2000) drew on concepts of post-structuralism and discourse analysis to investigate his experiences and that of four other students of being taught to teach. As a participant/observer in a pre-service teacher education programme, he identified and explored how three discourses—“student teacher as technician,” “student teacher as child,” and “student teacher as agent of change”—operated in the teacher education programme. He traced how the identities of the prospective teachers were constituted through and in terms of these existing discourses. He concluded that discourses helped to delineate a

range of teaching identities that could exist and although it was difficult to trace all discourses, one should continue to identify discourses to better understand how discourses influence identity.

Although these two studies were based on the talk of teachers engaged in pre-service teacher education programmes, they were very useful in terms of demonstrating how discourses appear in teachers' talk. They were also helpful as the authors traced various discourses that teachers draw on.

### **New Understandings**

The Foucauldian concepts of disciplinary power, knowledge, subject and discourse, a poststructural view of subjectivity, and constructivism were useful to me in this study, but in different ways. Through Foucauldian discourse analysis I came to see that *who* the interviewees were as graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad, and how they came to be, act and value is constructed within a complex interplay between what was said and the power relations that at times constrained their actions, their ways of thinking, and the way they thought of themselves as teachers. According to Taylor (2000):

Discourse and identity are not things that happen to us: they are the things that we participate in. We are constantly negotiating our identities through the numerous discourses around us. We accept some, we reject some, and we manipulate some to suit our needs. Of course our acceptance or rejection does not make them thrive or vanish. We are not that powerful. We can't simply pick and choose and build ourselves into the teacher we want to be. But we can take action...that may alter our identity and the concept of teacher in little ways (Taylor, 2000, p. 138).

Through constructivism, I was able to my focus on the graduate secondary teacher as a learner and explore the construction of teachers' knowledge. I also used constructivism to theorise about the interviewees' construction of teacher knowledge. These theoretical tools enabled me to engage in a study that challenged the notion of who we are as graduate secondary teachers and how we come to be that way. They also enabled me to organise and prioritise my initial concerns raised in this Chapter and summarised in Figure 3 into more critical and political research questions as listed in the next section.

I thought of using these three diverse theoretical perspectives in terms of a bookshelf: the top shelves could not stand without the bottom shelves or supporting pillars. The analysis of the educational policies and historical practices (top shelves) would be supported and explored within the teachers'

stories (bottom shelves) and the knowledge construction that took place (supporting pillars). The spaces between the shelves would be the places for analysis, resistance and negotiation of new ideas and knowledge.

One tension in presenting a piece of research that used such disparate techniques for analysis was, should the stories be presented in a chronological fashion, one life at a time, in the social context or be presented as more of an integrated analysis of 29 stories? I resolved that the presentation would incorporate both a linear (vertical) and a horizontal approach. In the historical section—Chapters Three through Six—I read the stories ‘vertically,’ within the context of their time. For each historical era, I present one interviewee’s story so as to exemplify the influences of the discourses on the subjectivity of that interviewee. In Chapter Eight, I read the stories ‘horizontally’ and explore the influences of discourses on the construction of the interviewees’ “practical professional knowledge.”

### **Research Questions**

In Figure 3, I summarised the main concerns and issues that drove this piece of research. The specific research questions addressed in this study are:

- 1) How do graduate secondary teachers who begin to teach without teacher pre-service teacher education come to see themselves as teachers?
  - a) What images of teachers and teaching did the interviewees hold when they first began to teach?
    - i) What discourses did they draw upon as new teachers?
    - ii) What ideas were available for them to draw upon/think with?
    - iii) What tensions existed?
    - iv) What spaces for resistance exist?
  - b) How and why do teachers enter teaching?
    - i) Why did the interviewees choose to enter teaching?
    - ii) What was their process of entry into teaching?
    - iii) What was their induction process into teaching like?
    - iv) How are they regulated and normalised as graduate secondary teachers through the recruitment process?

- 2) How do graduate secondary teachers learn how to teach?
  - a) What did the interviewees say they did as beginning teachers?
  - b) From the dominant subject positions, how did the interviewees construct an understanding of what they had to do as teachers?
  - c) How did the ideas/images that they held constrain how they said they acted, dressed, spoke, moved as new teachers' when they first began to teach?
  - d) How was their “practical professional knowledge” (re)constructed by in-service programmes?
  
- 3) What are some of the implications of my research for in-service programmes?

### **What's Ahead**

Chapters One and Two make up the introductory section of this document. Chapter One dealt with the rationale for the study and theoretical framework used to make sense of the stories in this study. In Chapter Two, I explore some relevant studies done on secondary teachers in Trinidad. I also examine the methods used to collect and analyse data, as well as provide some biographical background data for the 29 interviewees who took part in this study.

The organisation within Chapters Three, Four, Five, and Six—the historical section—is very similar. In these chapters, I broadly survey part of the “professional knowledge landscape” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) in which the interviewees were educated and returned to teach and introduce the interviewees in the context of their time. In Chapter Three, I explain that the reason behind the historical framework adopted in Chapters Three Four Five and Six is to provide “insights into the social dimensions or constraints of discourse” (van Dijk, 1994, p. 163) on secondary education, teachers and teaching in Trinidad and Tobago up to 1999.

In Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine I put the theoretical tools to work and make sense of the stories of becoming teachers. In Chapter Seven, I use Foucauldian discourse analysis to examine the processes of selection and recruitment of graduate secondary teachers and argue that these processes “normalise” graduate secondary teachers as subject specialists. In Chapter Eight I use concepts of constructivism and teacher knowledge to theorise about how the

interviewees constructed various aspects of their knowledge about teaching and learning. In Chapter Nine, I discuss my interpretations and understandings of this study. I put forward recommendations for future research and the design of programmes for the preparation and ongoing professional development (Cochran-Smith, 1998) of graduate secondary teachers.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### DE 'TORY COMIN' TO COME: PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND LIFE HISTORY METHOD

*"Comin' to come. Coming along nicely. Making progress."  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 214).*

#### Introduction

In the first part of the chapter, I examine educational research done on secondary teachers in Trinidad to show how this study fits into the local educational research effort. In the second part of this chapter, I reflect on the methods used to collect and analyse data. Finally, I introduce the 29 interviewees who participated in this study.

#### Understandings From Local Research

Local educational research has had a relatively short history in Trinidad and Tobago. The two major organisations at which research is carried out—the Ministry of Education and The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine—were both established in the early 1960s. The initial thrust of the then Institute of Education at UWI was aimed at:

the improvement of the quality of teacher education in all of the contributing territories. The activities of the Institute included the conduct of in-service courses, workshops, curriculum development, syllabus development and approval, the monitoring of teachers colleges' examinations, material development and the conduct of development conferences for educators (Faculty of Humanities and Education, School of Education, 1999, p. 1).

In 1980, a Teacher Education Committee in its review of teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago, commented on the lack of research in education. This dearth, the committee suggested, was due:

partly to the lean resources available for Education Research, the difficulty in recruiting and retaining appropriate staff and the limited opportunity for post-graduate work with a research orientation. Students who pursue post-graduate studies in education abroad are more often influenced by their

personal interest and/or those of their professors rather than the needs of individual territories or the region (Teacher Education Committee, 1980, p. 11).

The UWI, St. Augustine did not offer a Master of Education programme specially designed for qualified graduate teachers until 1988 when 80 teachers entered into the programme (Durojaiye, 1996). Before that, most people pursuing masters or doctoral programmes studied in the United States, Canada or Britain. In addition to the short research history, research findings are not readily accessible to teachers and parents. These research findings tend to be read more by researchers, decision-makers, and administrators rather than teachers and this has been cited as an area of concern in teacher education (E. Thomas, 1996).

Because much of the doctoral level research on the Trinidadian education system has been done by Trinidadian educators based in universities outside of Trinidad and Tobago, I searched the *Dissertation Abstracts Online* for educational studies done at Canadian and American universities. I also searched the *Index to theses accepted for higher degrees by the universities of Great Britain and Ireland* for dissertations/theses done at British universities. In many instances, I relied on the abstracts of these studies, as the theses were not readily available in New Zealand. Many of the abstracts had limited information and did not always give details of the methodology. When I was in Trinidad (March 2000—August 2000) doing the field-work for this study, I had access to masters and doctoral studies housed at the School of Education Library at the UWI, St. Augustine. I also had access to the hundreds of Curriculum Studies carried out as part of the Diploma in Education coursework.

The research interests and methods used in studies on education in Trinidad and Tobago have been diverse, and I focused on masters and doctoral studies that researched the development of secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago and the professional development of the secondary teacher.

The studies of the development of the secondary teachers' professional knowledge tended to view teaching as the acquisition of existing knowledge, skills and attitudes and devised programmes for this transference. For example, based on a review of the literature, Bobb (1976) identified six categories of knowledge and skills related to the roles that secondary teachers ought to develop in order to be competent (desirable practice). She used a questionnaire to gather data from secondary teachers on their performance in these roles and found

several factors that limited their performance of these roles (actual practice). Then she determined the discrepancy between desirable and actual practice by doing a statistical analysis of the data and developed a programme of training activities to bring “actual practice in line with desired practice” (Bobb, 1976, p. 3). Mark (1980) focused on the specific skills and behaviours required by secondary science teachers to perform their job. She identified these based on the literature and an initial survey of science teachers. She then solicited the opinions of these behaviours from science practitioners—science teachers, teacher educators, Curriculum Officers and university lecturers in science. Mark did a statistical analysis of the responses and based on the results, designed the content for a programme to prepare secondary science teachers.

These studies were typical of the kind of educational research done internationally during the late 1970s and early 1980s (de Landsheere, 1994). The teacher was seen as a novice and the teacher educator as an expert. Knowledge about teaching was something to be learned either as a craft, from observation of an expert, or in a process-product approach where experts pass on skills and attitudes they think teachers need. These researchers’ recommendations sought to fix undesirable practice. Both studies viewed a deficiency in teacher knowledge as a disease to be treated, rather than as an illness—“the patient’s [teacher’s] experience of the disease” (Goleman, 1995, p. 4). In other words, they viewed teacher knowledge as something external to the teacher and did not focus on the meaning that teachers made of their own experiences. These studies were usually based on large-scale survey data, statistical analysis and not rooted in the teachers’ own understandings and interpretations of what they do and why they do it. Conversely, in this present study, what teachers know and how they come to know it is the focus of inquiry, not what they do not know or what they should know in terms of skills and attitudes as decided by experts. The studies by Bobb and Mark also focused on the needs of the secondary teacher in general (Bobb, 1976) or the needs of the secondary Science teacher in particular (Mark, 1980). This study focuses particularly on the “beginning to teach” experiences of the graduate secondary teachers across several curriculum subjects.

Several studies were concerned with analyses of the social, economic, and political influences on the historical development and reforms of secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago. For example, researchers analysed: the effect of democratisation of secondary education on social-class structure (C. Sandy,

1986); the ways in which the school system had changed between 1840 and 1975 (McVorrán, 1989); the role of nationalism and denominationalism in secondary education (Stewart, 1979; 1981); the historical development of education in Trinidad and Tobago (Alleyne, 1996; Campbell, 1996; 1997; E. Williams, 1962). These studies provided me with very useful overviews and critiques of the historical development of secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago and I was able to draw extensively from them for the details in Chapters Three, Four, Five, and Six. However, none of these studies focused on how these social and political changes affected teachers personally or affected their theories about schooling, learning and teaching. None linked the changing educational ideas to the personal experiences of teachers or mapped how these changes affected what was said about graduate secondary teachers. This study fills that gap as it seeks to identify how the historical changes in educational ideas ‘enabled or constrained’ teachers’ understandings of what it means to be a graduate secondary teacher.

De Lisle (1993) and M. Sandy (1988) sought to establish “causal relations” (Husén, 1994, p. 5051) between the role of the work environment and teacher performance. De Lisle (1993) argued that differences in work environments of the four types of secondary schools<sup>5</sup> were responsible for the differences in the job attitudes and performance of teachers. Sandy (1988) argued that the influence of the school environment on teacher efficacy and performance was greater than that of issues related to demographic variables, social environment and teacher development. While these studies highlighted the importance of school environment on teacher performance, these researchers used a quantitative design and analysed their data with statistical measures. In this study I use a qualitative design which according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 4) “stress[es] the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.” I use the words of teachers and words in policy documents as data to be analysed.

Harvey (1981) also studied the school environment and used an approach that “allowed for the grounding of the research in the reality of the practitioners” (Harvey, 1981, p. v). Harvey focused on the then new Senior Comprehensive schools. She conducted an in-depth study involving interviews and observations

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<sup>5</sup> An elaboration on the different types of secondary schools is presented in Chapters Four and Five.

that sought the perception of teachers, principals and Ministry of Education personnel on the new senior secondary system. Harvey's study served to identify issues considered important by practitioners in a Senior Comprehensive school. These included concerns related to students, personnel, curriculum and examinations. The study also highlighted the success of collaborative research which Harvey concluded "allowed for a close interplay of educational research, knowledge generation and practice, as well as for the exploration of issues of value" (Harvey, 1981, p.vi). Harvey's study was a step in the direction of including the perceptions of practitioners in Trinidadian educational research. However, she did not pay attention to how and why these teachers had come to their particular understandings or how those understandings were related to historically available ideas. Her study was also based on the experiences of teachers in one type of secondary school—the Senior Comprehensive. In my study, teachers in several types of secondary school have been included.

I located two studies that used teachers' stories as data. Loney (1982) recommended the use of a three-step process to help teachers obtain and attend to data on the self and write autobiographies, in an attempt to help teachers understand themselves better and in so doing, be more effective. The programme was applied in a teacher education programme in Trinidad to demonstrate its usefulness and application to teacher education. Morris (1999) used in-depth interviewing to produce data for a study of how the personal and professional lives of 12 women principals "are intertwined and how their race and gendered positions impact on their career choice, promotional opportunities and management practice" (Morris, 1999, p. 343). Both these studies emphasise the teacher as the knower and the influence of the teacher's biographical experiences on coming to know. However, neither analyses the historical, political and social contexts that enable or constrain what the teacher knows, or how and why he/she comes to know.

Very few of the local studies that I found on secondary teachers and their teaching were based on teachers' stories. I could not find any study that focused exclusively on the experiences of beginning graduate secondary teachers. No local study focused specifically on the experiences of "beginning to teach" by graduate secondary teachers. No local study focused on the interpretations and understandings of the initial experiences of teaching from the perspective of experienced teachers. No local study examined how these experiences change

over time. This study seeks to make a contribution to the ‘talk’ in all of these areas.

In the next section, I describe, justify and evaluate (Wellington, 2000) the three strands of the life history method used to collect and analyse data in this study.

### **Life History Method**

As I explained in the Prologue and Chapter One, the technique of individuals speaking for themselves (Munro, 1998) and telling their stories appealed to me as a research method that I would be comfortable using in my educational research. Like Carter (1995), I saw stories as a way of knowing and thinking as they were:

a way of grasping the richness and indeterminacy of our experiences as teachers and the complexity of our understandings of what teaching is and how others can be prepared to engage in the profession (Carter, 1995, p. 326).

Like Jalongo Isenberg, and Gerbacht (1995) I understood that:

The teacher’s life is not an orderly professional pathway; rather, it is a personal journey shaped by context and choice, perspective and values. ...It is primarily through story, one student at a time, that teachers organize their thinking and tap into the collective, accumulated wisdom of their profession (Jalongo et al., 1995, p. xvii).

In other words, teachers make sense of their lived experiences of teaching through their stories and these stories embody the teachers’ experiences of teaching. I understood what it meant to be a teacher from the teacher talk with which I had grown up.

Therefore, I needed to use an investigative method that would enable me to collect stories from teachers about their experiences of beginning to teach and situate their stories and theorise about them within the socio-historical context of the experiences of those teachers. But what methods of data gathering would help me to obtain and make sense of these teachers’ stories in terms of the individual biographies, the socio-cultural context of Trinidad and Tobago and broader historical change? What methods would ensure that I complete the study within my two-year, scholarship determined deadline for data collection, analysis and write up of a doctoral study? My investigation during the *Educational Inquires* coursework of this Doctor of Education (EdD) programme (see De Four-Babb,

2000b) led me to the life history method (Faraday & Plummer, 1979; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995a; 1995b).

The term *life history* is sometimes used interchangeably with terms such as “story,” “narrative,” “biography,” and “autobiography” (Bertaux, 1981, Nias, 1992). Hatch and Wisniewski (1995a) debate whether or not narrative research and life history research are the same. On the one hand they quote Ayers who suggested that there could be no useful distinction between narrative and life history research because:

Each relies on story, on subjective accounts, on meaning constructed by people in situations. Each focuses on a life as lived—an experience not easily fitted into disciplines, categories or compartments. Each assumes a dynamic, living past, a past open to interpretation and reinterpretation, to meaning-making in and for the present (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995a, 114).

On the other hand, they argued that many authors describe life history as a type of narrative. For example, Zeller, whom they quote, stated “while all life histories are narratives, not all narratives are life histories” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995a, p. 114). Hatch and Wisniewski (1995a) argued that the life history is person-centred and goes “beyond ‘scientific’ or ‘empiricist’ standards that...continue to dominate other qualitative methodologies” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995a, p. 118).

Faraday and Plummer (1979, p. 777) suggested that the life history method “strives toward locating the individual first of all in his or her overall life experiences, and secondly, within the broader socio-historical framework that he or she lives.” By building on the invaluable contributions of Faraday and Plummer (1979) and others, Goodson (1981, p. 71) concluded that:

the life history, if fully documented, records how the manifold social, economic and psychological influences of particular historical periods intrude on the individual’s action and consciousness. In short, the life history challenges us to situate each life within its wider historical background (Goodson, 1981, p. 71).

Life histories focus on making meaning of an individual’s life or part of it, in context—that is as it was “lived in a time, place and under particular social circumstances” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995a, p. 115).

Carter & Doyle (1996), p. 121 argued that in educational research that utilised life history methods “personal meaning is situated in a historical context, in part to establish a critical perspective on one’s understanding of the forms of teaching practice” (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 121). Similarly, Woods (1987) explained that life history is:

an eminently suitable method in the compilation of teacher knowledge. It is based within the subjective reality of the individual in a way that both respects the uniqueness of individuals and promotes identification of commonalities among them (Woods, 1987, p. 124).

Hatch and Wisniewski (1995a) argued that the life history method can be distinguished from other types of qualitative research because of the focus on the individual and the aim to understand individual lives or individual stories. The data comes from the individual in his/her own words and can be produced in an interview setting (Middleton, 1993). The researcher then “tries to make the story jibe with matters of official record and with the material furnished by others familiar with the person, event or place being described” (Becker, 1970, p. 64). The researcher also uses his or her theoretical perspectives to ‘read’ the data.

This “dialogical, discursive nature” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995a, p. 117) makes the life history stand out from other forms of qualitative research. The life history ‘fills the gaps’ as the individual is seen in relation to his/her religious, social, psychological currents present in his/her world (Goodson, 1988). This intersection of biography, social structure and history helps us to better understand the available options and choices people make, the ‘why and how’ issues that are left unexplained in questionnaires.

I wondered, how could a story about beginning teaching, which is only part of a life, be used in a life history? But as Denzin (1970) suggested life histories may be *complete* if they cover the entire span of one’s life; *topical* if they cover one phase; or *edited* if interspersed with comments and explanations by someone other than the focal subject. He added that whether complete, topical or edited, all life histories contain three central features “the person’s own story of his life, the social and cultural situation in which he and others see him responding, and the sequence of past experiences and situations of his life” (Denzin, 1970, p. 222).

However, the life history method is not without its drawbacks. First of all, generalisations cannot be made from the life history. As Goodson (1981, p. 64) suggested “the methodological inadequacies of the life history method came to be set against the need to develop abstract theory” and the move to a model of single study research that focused on testing hypotheses and the degree to which findings could be generalised. Faraday and Plummer (1979) elaborated on these “methodological inadequacies” and argued that:

the life history technique is viewed with scepticism because it is held to provide no wider link to theoretical understanding, have little power of generalizability, and to be an extremely time-consuming method where results are often vague and no more than that which could be gained by statistical methods (Faraday & Plummer, 1979, p. 774).

Goodson (1988) also suggested that the life history was lengthy and laborious and that some surveys can capture much of the same information in less time. I discuss the limitations that I experienced with the life history method in Chapter Nine.

I found the life history method quite enticing because of its potential to allow me to pay attention to the teacher's story *and* the context of that life story. It enabled me to focus on the individual life of a teacher and make sense of the collective experience of a group of teachers in a particular place and time and the social context in which the stories were created. Middleton's (1993; 1998) work exemplifies this approach. Based on my readings about the life history method, I recognised that three crucial strands needed to be interwoven in the life history method for this study. (a) The *life story* or personal narrative, which gives the teachers' perceptions of their experience of teaching, which can be collected through one-on-one interviews. (b) Analyses of *public and private archival records*, or other written and symbolic ((Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993) that capture the changes in educational policy over time. (c) *Interpretation by me as researcher* in the light of the theoretical perspectives described in Chapter One. Each of these three stands has its own technique for generating, collecting and/or analysing data and this adds to the complication of the life history method.

In the next sections, I discuss the methods used to choose the people who participated in this study. I also discuss the methods used to collect and analyse their stories. Finally, I present relevant biographical details for each interviewee. The information is presented in tables so that the reader could return to them as needed.

## Collection Of Stories

A major component of the life history method is the collection of the stories of a person's life or part thereof, given in the participant's own words, oral or written.

In this section I analyse how the “sample” of teachers was chosen and how their stories were collected.

### **The Sample**

The teachers’ stories in this research project were gathered from 29 graduate secondary teachers who work on the island of Trinidad. These teachers have worked in secondary schools in Trinidad for between three and thirty–five years, and have experienced historical changes in the educational system as students and/or teachers.

I chose to focus on people who in 2000, were graduate secondary teachers and who started teaching without teacher training. In choosing this group, I have excluded those teachers who currently work in secondary schools: (a) with only Advanced Level (pre-university, high school) qualification; (b) without degrees, but with in-service primary teacher training; and (c) with technical vocational experience and training. I chose those with degrees because they are labelled as having some of the highest educational attainment in the educational system in Trinidad and Tobago. If the assumption is that “one is educated, therefore one can teach,” then I want to know: How did these persons construct their knowledge as graduate secondary teachers?

One of the issues that I faced in carrying out research more than 8000 miles from where I was studying, was getting the “word” out about my project. Therefore, in 2000, before I left New Zealand to return to Trinidad for six months of ‘field-work,’ I requested publicity for the study from the president of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association (T&TUTA) (see Appendix B). He placed a column in the TUTOR newspaper (*Calling Secondary Teachers*, 2000) that explained the purpose and rationale of the research. This step was quite successful in advertising the project as many teachers in Trinidad received a copy of the paper and read the column. On several occasions, interviewees and other teachers whom I met, commented that they had seen the column in the TUTOR and expressed an interest in my work. In two instances, people volunteered to take part in the project based on the article.

In keeping with the guideline in the *Handbook for Research* (University of Waikato, 1999, p. 19) that states “ethical approval must be sought both in New Zealand and overseas to ensure that any potential differences in cultural values are fully considered,” and the practice of seeking approval from the Ministry of

Education in Trinidad and Tobago, I applied and was granted permission to carry out research in Trinidad (see Appendix C). I was also granted permission to use the library facilities at the Faculty of Humanities and Education, University of the West Indies for reading purposes only between March 15, 2000 and August 30, 2000.

I used a “snowball sampling” technique (Erlandson et al., 1993; Weiss, 1994) to locate potential interviewees who at the time of the study: (i) were secondary teachers; (ii) entered the teaching service in Trinidad and Tobago after 1962; (iii) were holders of subject degrees (graduate teachers) when they first began to teach; and (iv) started teaching with no formal programme of teacher education or pre-service teaching practice. I asked people whom I knew to be experienced teachers and rich sources of data if they would like to take part in the study. In turn, I asked each of them if he/she knew and could refer me to other teachers who matched the criteria stated above and whom they knew would be willing to take part in the study. I then made telephone contact with these persons. However, many of recommended teachers did not match all of the criteria listed above.

I quickly recognised that even within the cohort of secondary teachers that I had targeted, there were many different stories to be heard and that I needed to be more flexible, especially with respect to criteria (iii) and (iv). In the end, I collected stories from ten persons who did not strictly meet *all* the criteria. For example, not all of the 29 interviewees in the sample began teaching with degrees and at the secondary level. Many had taught at a primary school at some point in their educational career. One person had participated in pre-service, primary teacher training, another two had been primary trained and two persons had participated in on-going programmes of training during their first year. Their stories provided some insight into what it was like to begin teaching with some teacher training, although these programmes were not particularly targeted at the graduate secondary teacher.

My intention when I devised the information letters for this study (Appendix D) was to interview a maximum of 30 teachers. Deciding on this sample size was based on several issues. I wanted to have a ratio of males to females that reflected the almost 1:1 ratio of secondary school teachers. I also needed at least three persons who had worked in each of the seven school districts in Trinidad. The teachers chosen should also represent the major school-subject

areas. As a group, they should have taught in all the different types of public secondary schools on the island. Finally, I wanted at least ten representatives who were at secondary school in each of the decades—1960s, 1970s, 1980s.

In order to meet these requirements, I would have needed a minimum of 21 teachers and a maximum of 30. Financial costs and time, which are constraints of any research project, also dictated that maximum of 30 teachers. Additionally, there was the financial difficulty of returning to Trinidad for additional data to be collected. The interviews were scheduled for a period between February and August. However, during this period there are many interruptions in the school year for Carnival, mock examinations, and school vacations. The final total of 29 teachers in the sample, was the maximum that could have been achieved given these constraints. However, by that point the data encompassed the various teachers' experiences over time and between different types of educational institutions.

Weiss (1994, p. 29) argued that one weakness of the snowball sample was that it would “always underrepresent those who have few social contacts and will therefore underrepresent every belief and experience that is associated with having few social contacts.” However, within my sample of 29 teachers there was diversity in terms of age, race, gender, geographical location and educational institution to reflect the socio-cultural context within which teachers lived and worked. There were 14 men and 15 women, born between 1945 and 1972 and who, taken as a group, had taught at 35 of the country's 110 public secondary schools (in 2000) located in all of Trinidad's seven educational regions. The interviewees also taught a wide variety of subject areas which included Mathematics, English Language and Literature, Modern Languages (French/Spanish), Science (General/Physics), Business studies (Accounting, Principles of Business, Economics), Modern Studies (Geography/History/Social Studies) and Physical Education.

There was also an interesting overlap of experiences. In some instances two or three interviewees had attended the same secondary school as each other, some during the same years and others in different historical eras. Some interviewees taught other interviewees. Some were co-workers. Some had taught at the same school, but at different times. Some were friends at secondary school and remained colleagues as teachers. These inter-relationships are not unusual in a small country and they added to the depth and richness of the data.

The use of a snowball sample technique also meant that some people knew exactly who was interviewed, especially if they had discussions with their friends after the interview. People saw me turn up at schools for interviews. I also witnessed interviewees who openly talked to other people about being interviewed by me. What is confidential is what has been said by whom since I am the only person who can match all of the pseudonyms to the real names. The names of schools and places are omitted from excerpts so as to reduce the likelihood of identifying school settings and people referred to by the interviewees.

I hand-delivered an *Interviewee Information Package* to each potential participant (see Appendix D). This package included details on the scope of the project and consent forms. If a person agreed to take part in the study, we set a date, time and place for the interview. This was usually arranged face-to-face or by telephone. Initial informed consent for the interview process and use of excerpts in the written document, was obtained in writing prior to the start of each interview (see Appendix D, *Informed Consent*).

### **Interviews**

One-to-one interviews, carried out between March and August 2000, were the main strategy used to collect stories related to the interviewees' experiences as beginning teachers. These interviews enabled me to gather descriptive data of events long past, in the teachers' own words. Erlandson et al. (1994) quoted Dexter and described interviews as "conversation[s] with a purpose" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 85).

Semi-structured interviews were used because the interviewees' entry into teaching had taken place years before the interviews and no one had any audio-visual or written records of their experiences. Each interviewee was interviewed once and all interviews were audio-taped. The interviews varied in length from 20 to 150 minutes. Although the 20-minute interview seemed short, the interviewee and I discussed all the areas planned for the interviews.

I devised an interview schedule (Appendix E) to help interviewees elicit their memories, perspectives and understandings of issues that were relevant to the research project. The interview schedule provided me with a group of questions in a sequence that allowed me to collect more or less the same data from the interviewees and helped the conversation to flow. This list of open-ended

questions was not given to the interviewees. I found that a set of questions planned in advance helped me to focus on and remember the topics for the stories I wanted to collect. However, there were times that I asked these written questions in different ways or I moved a question up because that topic was the direction in which the interviewee was heading. In several instances the questions and conversation digressed to aspects of teaching that I had not thought of.

I relied on recommendations in texts on research methods such as Bogdan and Biklen (1992) to devise questions for the interview schedule. First I brainstormed the topics relevant to my research concerns and identified topics on which to base my questions. I wanted questions that were introductory, some that served as a warm up for the interview, and others that summarised parts of the interview or the interview as a whole. I decided to collect demographic data on the *Biographical Data Sheet* (Appendix D) and used our off-tape discussion before the interview to clarify any misunderstandings that I had about this data.

The interview schedule followed the structure of introduction, warm-up, body, closure and thanks. The interviewees were asked to give their pseudonym and date and whether or not they consented to having the interview taped. These warm-up questions provided an opportunity for me to check the audio-recording equipment, as well as provide one more opportunity for the interviewee to consent to the interview. I then asked each interviewee *"Tell me why and how you entered teaching? Why teaching and why secondary school?"* This question addressed the research questions related to entry into teaching (research question 1b, p. 32) and served as a good point to begin our discussions. The next set of questions related to the induction process into teaching and gave the interviewees an opportunity to reflect on that time when they first started to teach. Next we shifted to image of teachers, experiences of teaching, perceptions of student learning and in-service experiences. The questions here were based on research questions 1 and 2a, b, and c (p. 33). Summary questions included: "can you complete this phrase for me, my first years of teaching were like; for me teaching is now like." I also sought to give the interviewees an opportunity to add any relevant information when I asked: *"Is there any other information that you would like to include about your experiences of learning teach?"* This question also sought to close the interview, but an opportunity to remain in contact was sought when I asked: *"Can I contact you to clarify any questions about what we have said?"*

Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to trial the questions specified in the interview schedule as no sample of Trinidadian graduate secondary teachers was available in New Zealand and I was unable to visit Trinidad to carry out a pilot study. However, a pilot study that I had done for the *Educational Inquires* [research methods] component of my EdD coursework did present me with an opportunity to carry out and transcribe interviews and to write up a piece of qualitative research (De Four-Babb, 2000a).<sup>6</sup>

The interviews presented an opportunity for the interviewees to reconstruct past events in their own words and interpret these events for themselves (Erlandson et al., 1993). Several interviewees said that they had never really thought of some of the things we discussed and that they appreciated the opportunity to talk about and think through experiences that had long gone. Consequently, the interviews allowed the interviewees and me “to move back and forth in time; to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 85) and in so doing better capture the personal perceptions than responses in a questionnaire. However, with interviews there is always the drawback that interviewees may not remember events clearly or that they select some stories and not others (Larson, 1997). In some instances interviewees gave wrong dates, or figures which they clarified later in the interview or when they edited the transcript.

The interviews were done in places that were most convenient to the interviewee. For many of them this was at their school library, staff-room, or an empty classroom in the schools at which they taught. These brief visits to various types of secondary schools provided me with examples of “here and now” of the context of the interviewees workplace (Erlandson et al., 1993) and enabled me to see first-hand some aspects of the physical, social and cultural landscape within which graduate secondary teachers work in Trinidad. Other interviews were done at people’s homes, my home or in public spaces, such as at classrooms at the University of the West Indies.

Before the interview, each person was advised that he/she could stop the audio-taping at any point of the interview; however, most of the interviewees

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<sup>6</sup> The pilot study for the research methods course was based on personal narratives from two women who were principals at Anglican high schools for girls in former British colonies. I sought to use their narratives to help me to make sense of how personal life experiences and some practices of the Anglican Church helped to establish educational cultures for women. I used feminism, post-colonialism and Foucauldian disciplinary technologies to read and theorise about the women’s stories.

appeared to be quite comfortable with the taping. No one became visibly distressed during any interview. Some interviewees seemed to forget that they were being taped until the tape clicked to be changed. In a few instances, others asked for the tape to be turned off at certain points in the conversation for them to organise their thoughts about a question or to say something “off-tape.” Still one or two others became conscious of saying things “on tape,” and they modified their words.

A typed script or “transcript” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 128) of each interview was made from the original audio-tape. Transcribing is quite time consuming as it takes a skilled typist three to five hours to transcribe a one hour interview (Kvale, 1996). I transcribed some of the tapes and I hired a skilled stenographer/typist to help me transcribe others because I am not a skilled typist. The person I hired transcribed tapes for a living and was therefore fast and efficient, two qualities that were important given my short time-frame for fieldwork. As a Trinidadian, that person was able to understand the local accent and dialect far better than a transcriber in New Zealand could. Each interviewee was told which one of us would be transcribing his/her interview and he/she had the opportunity to consent to having that person do the transcribing. Each transcript was stored on a separate, well-labelled computer diskette and hard copies were made from these diskettes.

The audio-taping and transcribing process led to voluminous data; more than 30 cassettes, 30 diskettes and over 600 pages of typed interview data were generated from this study. Because of this, I ensured that each audio-tape, computer diskette, and transcript was coded with the number of the interview, the pseudonym of the person interviewed, and date of the interview. If more than one interview was done on one day, the interviews were labelled alphabetically. For example, 28DotComA160800 and 29AntoiniaB160800 were two persons interviewed on August 16, 2000, with Dot Com’s interview being the 28<sup>th</sup> interview and Antoinia’s being the 29<sup>th</sup>. The same coded were used on the transcript, along with a summary of each person’s educational and work history gathered from the biographical data sheet.

Pseudonyms were used as an ethical consideration for confidentiality. Each interviewee was given the opportunity to choose his/her own pseudonym. I only assigned pseudonyms on two occasions, when the interviewees asked me to do so. The pseudonyms were used during the interview, so that the transcriber

would not have the identity of the person speaking. The transcriber also signed a confidentiality statement because there was some likelihood that she may have known one or more of the interviewees or the persons or places to which the interviewees referred.

All interviewees had the opportunity to re-read their spoken words as written text in the transcript as a copy of the typed, transcribed interview was sent to each interviewee. Many took the opportunity to make changes, add or delete information in pencil or ink on the transcripts before returning the corrected transcripts to me. I then made their noted corrections and returned a copy of the re-typed and corrected transcript to the interviewees. This correction/return process continued until they were satisfied with the contents of their transcript. Only one interviewee retyped his transcript because he was not comfortable with the way in which his spoken words came across in a written form. When the transcripts were returned to each of the interviewees, they were also individually reminded of their role in research and that they could withdraw from the study at any time up until the final corrected copy of the transcript was returned to them. They were also reminded of their ownership of their narrated statements and their right to grant permission for the use of excerpts of these statements in the thesis. Final authorisation slips which granted permission for me to use excerpts from the transcripts in this thesis, were signed and returned to me when the interviewee was finally satisfied with the contents of the transcript (see Appendix F). All interviewees returned these slips.

Excerpts of dialogue used in this thesis are referenced by pseudonyms and the year the person began teaching at a secondary school. For example, James Brown\77 is the interviewee who chose the pseudonym *James Brown* and who began teaching at a public secondary school in 1977. For the most part, the names of places, people, and subject areas mentioned during the interview have been omitted and replaced by *[name of place/person/subject]* in an effort to maintain confidentiality. Where these are mentioned, I have received the interviewee's consent. In places, I have modified some the spoken dialect to conventional English spellings and grammar, but the 'rhythm' and meaning of the language has been preserved as far as possible.

In terms of population (1.3 million) and geographical size (4828 km<sup>2</sup>), Trinidad is a small country and despite my best efforts at keeping each interviewee's identity confidential, some interviewees may be recognised when

their words in this study are read by some Trinidadian educators. This possibility was discussed with interviewees prior to the interview and when possible during the write up of this study. No one objected to the use of his/her words even with this knowledge.

All interview transcript data was stored in a locked case when not in use. Audio-tapes, computer disks and transcripts were also secured in a locked case when not in use. The transcriber and I were the only persons who had access to the raw data (taped interviews) generated in the study. The transcriber returned all interview tapes and diskettes to me after the transcription process was completed. This raw data will be kept until after the completion of the study in accordance with university regulations (see University of Waikato, 1999, p. 20).

I found the quality of the interview data to be quite good, although an opportunity to return to the field for a follow-up interview would have given me the opportunity to probe areas raised in the interview more deeply. The interviewees and I managed to establish a good rapport and in many instances much of the discussions went on for hours after taping, even in cases where I had never met the interviewees before. I believe that the shared collegiality of me being one of them lent itself to such openness. What the interviews did not capture was the facial expressions and body language of each interview and since I did not video-tape the interviews. I also did not make personal notes during the interview because I thought this may have distracted the interviewees.

### **Public And Private Documents**

Well-collected and presented teacher stories do not make a life history. These stories need to be located in time and so capture the context of the life and changes over time. According to Tierney (1998, p. 54):

we do not undertake life histories with the intent of simply understanding how a person came to be X...rather the search is to understand the powers of culture to define ways that enable [him/her] to act or not act in specific ways (Tierney, 1998, p. 54).

Denzin (1970, p. 223) suggested that “any document that bears a relationship to a person’s ongoing definition and experiences” can be used to support the life story. These written, symbolic records (Erlandson et al., 1993) were treated as “social products” (Wellington, 2000, p. 110) and analysed to provide more information

and to recreate the social and economic environment within which the teachers' experiences occurred and included public archival records generated for public consumption (Plummer, 1983).

The published documents used in this study included the official educational policy papers put forward by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in 1968, 1985, and 1993. Educational planners and practitioners from all sectors of the education system formulated these policy papers. Other official, published documents consulted and analysed included education reports produced by various working parties on education and the Trinidad and Tobago laws and regulations on education and teaching, and application forms used to enter the teaching profession. Published historical accounts of secondary education in Trinidad based on documentary analysis official education documents (Alleyne, 1996; Campbell, 1996, 1997; E. Williams, 1962) were used to help me gain a better understanding of the educational system in Trinidad over time. I also used private materials such as appointment letters and registration certificates to make sense of some of the stories.

Together, these public and private materials helped me to locate the life stories in a sociocultural and historical context and in so doing complete the 'mosaic' (Becker, 1970) of the life history. I could place the interviewees stories "within the broader social contexts in which the teachers' educational experiences and perspectives came to form" (Middleton & May, 1997, p. 15) and "reveal the particular ways" (Hepburn, 1997, p. 27) in which the subject position of 'graduate secondary teacher' has been "constructed, understood, defined, enacted, sustained, legitimated and reproduced" (van Dijk, 1994, p. 163) in Trinidad over time.

### **Interpretation Of Data**

Armstrong (1987, p. 23) suggested that "analysis from the life history method is in large part qualitative data analysis" which is done simultaneously with data collection. Qualitative analysis does not usually involve formulating a hypothesis, testing it and rejecting or accepting the hypothesis. The data is divided into units—paragraphs or sentences—which reflect categories, emergent trends and/or theory in the data.

There is no shortage of recommendations on the processes needed to interpret qualitative data (see for example, Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Cohen &

Manion, 1994; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Riley, 1996; Weiss, 1994; Wellington, 2000). For example, Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that analysing qualitative data should be done in three stages: *data reduction*—selecting, sorting, collating, summarising and coding data by themes or categories; *data display*—organisation and representation or depiction of data in a visual form to enable conclusion drawing; and *conclusion drawing/verification*—giving meaning to the data. Wellington (2000) suggested the following stages: *immersion*—getting a sense or feel of the data; *reflecting*—standing back and ‘sleeping’ on the data; *taking apart/analysing data*—carving data up into manageable bits, selecting units for use, coding units, allocating units to categories; *recombining/synthesizing data*—“searching for patterns, themes, and regularities in the data; it also involves looking for contrasts” (Wellington, 2000, p. 136); *relating and locating data* in existing research; and *presenting the data*. Riley (1996) suggested that when trying to analyse data, one should “organise the data,” “hear what the data is saying,” “recognise and pattern your own ideas about your data,” “organise evidence for your interpretation,” and “present your findings” (Riley, 1996, p. 11). However, I agree with Walford’s (1991a) argument that “the careful, objective, step-by-step model of the research process is actually a fraud” (p. 1) and as the authors in his edited volume *Doing Educational Research* (Walford, 1991b) show there are “challenges and embarrassments...pains and triumphs...ambiguities and satisfactions” (Walford, 1991a) in carrying out the analysis of data.

I was able to immerse myself in the interview data when I listened to the tapes repeatedly to check the transcribed and printed interview against the actual taped interview. I was able to hear what the teachers saying and relate conversations from the different interviewees as I checked each subsequent interview. At times I thought of my collection of interviews like a large discussion group, with each person giving his/her answer to a particular question. In this way, I was able to identify common themes, images and ideas as well as note those that stood out from the others.

When I returned to New Zealand in September 2000, I moved on to the next phase of organisation of the data. I began this phase of data analysis process by using the qualitative analysis software NUD\*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data, Indexing, Searching and Theorising) version 4.0 (N4). Like Gahan & Hannibal (1998), I found that this package supported the processes

engaged in qualitative data analysis. According to designers L. Richards and T. Richards (1991):

NUD\*IST invites (though it does not require) extremely fine-grained indexing. (We avoid that ambiguous term ‘coding’). It will store information in tree-structured indexes, which become the repository for references to documents and thinking about them (L. Richards & T. Richards, 1991, p. 45)

The NUD\*IST software helped me to reduce the volume of interview data. I was able to use the software to examine and sort each transcript in terms of content. This was helpful as I did not have to do the “cut, paste and colour” routine as described by qualitative researchers working in the 1980s (Middleton, 1993). I was able to create an index tree (Appendix G) and read the transcript data across each interview in terms of categories that included: (a) entry process (b) teacher image (c) description of teaching (d) support (e) formal experiences of teacher education (f) student learning (g) learning to teach (h) base data. The index-tree enabled me to manipulate, merge, delete, or add new nodes (categories) as necessary (see Appendix G).

NUD\*IST also enabled me to position relevant sections of the text from each transcript within each of these categories and sub categories. For example, under the node, *Teacher Image*, I was able to locate whatever each interviewee had to say about how he/she viewed teachers, good teachers, bad teachers, the source of the image, their personal interpretation of teacher image and conflicting images. I was able to distinguish each unit of text because each interview was coded with the number of the interview, the interviewee’s pseudonym, the date of the interview, sex, age, type of schools they taught at, year of entry, and Diploma of Education experience. I printed the information from each node and did a fine-grained analysis of the data in each. I wrote in the margins of the printed copies. I then used the memo feature of NUD\*IST to cut and paste relevant quotations into the written report (see Appendix H for examples of NUD\*IST data).

One drawback of using computer software for analysis is the lack of expertise to maximise the use of the programme. NUD\*IST was quite new to me and this was the first time that I used this software programme. To learn more about the technique, I attended a two-day workshop, had several tutorials from my supervisor, and used the text by Gahan and Hannibal (1998) as a guide as I coded the data. I do not think that I was able to fully utilise NUD\*IST as a tool for

qualitative analysis. However, I was able to see the potential for the use of NUD\*IST in a project that generated a lot of interview data.

Another drawback of using computer software is the possibility of losing data through technological failure. When my computer “crashed” in June 2001 after I had spent an entire day doing a second round of analysis, I lost all of the day’s analysis and previous analysis. Fortunately, I had printed off the sorted data before the crash.

For further analysis in terms Riley’s (1996) recommendations of “hearing the data” and “recognising the patterns in the data,” I had resorted to tabulation and summarising of the data. I wrote summaries of each interview, as well as each of the categories. I generated lists, looked for commonalties in the data, focused on a few interviewees’ stories, drew pictures and visualised the interviews as large group conversations.

Faraday and Plummer (1979) refer to the researcher’s interpretation of data as “contamination” of data. They represent the involvement of the researcher’s views on a continuum. At one end is the subject’s pure account, in the original form, with no analysis. However, this form of presentation is not suitable for a doctoral degree where some analysis is expected. At the other end is the researchers’ purely analytical account, which includes no input from the participants. And in between is systematic thematic analysis—verification of the researcher’s analysis by anecdotes from participants. Faraday and Plummer (1979) argued that:

researchers who use life histories can legitimately move through any stage on this continuum as long as they publicly acknowledge how far they are ‘contaminating’ the data...[and they] should therefore acknowledge the *degree* of interpretation that has taken place (italics in original; Faraday & Plummer, 1979, p. 788).

My intention in this thesis is to let the voices of graduate secondary teachers be heard and so I have selected at least one quote from each of the interviewees. In some instances I have focused on one interviewee’s story in detail. In others I have chosen one or two quotes to express points being made. In other instances, I have included quotes that show unique interpretations of the interviewee’s teaching experience. In terms of the presentation of the thesis, I have recognised that the style should be accessible to both to an academic audience and other graduate secondary teachers. Thus the presentation is like a

story unfolding, with a strong historical bias, so that other teachers can place themselves in the context of time.

The other set of data was that from the public and private documents especially the educational policies. According to Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, and Henry (1997, p. 15) “to analyse policies simply in terms of the words in formal documents is to overlook the subtle nuances and subtleties of the context which give the text the meaning and significance.” As Wellington (2000) argued:

Documents have multiple meanings. Documentary research starts from the premise that no document should be accepted at face value, but equally that no amount of analysis will discover or decode a hidden, essentialist meaning. The key activity is one of interpretation rather than a search for, or discovery of, some kind of Holy Grail (Wellington, 2000, p. 116).

Based on Wellington’s (2000) suggestions, I analysed the content of the documents in terms of the words and rhetoric used. I looked at who wrote the document, their position or bias and the audience at which the document was targeted. I also questioned the intent of the publication, the style it was written in, and the time and context in which the document was written.

I focused mainly on the sections of these policies related to goals of education, secondary schools, and teacher education. I reviewed the words and phrases related to these issues and looked for patterns in the data or the discourses they seemed to draw upon. Since the policy documents are constructions by policymakers, I tried to see how their interests came through in the document and how they differed from mine, or those of the other interviewees, “from the ground up.” I questioned the emergence of some policies and examined their construction in historical context. I also noted any silences or contradictions in the policy text, with respect to teacher education.

My personal notes also formed a useful way for me to reflect constantly on the vast amounts of data I collected. For this reflection, I devised four sets of journals. In the *Reading Logs Volumes I to VIII*, I documented summaries of research readings and my reflections and thinking on the readings. The summaries and reflections were noted in different coloured inks. In a second journal, *Thesis—Personal Reflections*, I recorded my “feelings, attitudes, learning, and insights and which chronicles [my] growth” as a researcher (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 108) over the four years of doctoral study. In the third, I entered issues related to data collection in the pilot study and the doctoral research. In the fourth, I sketched diagrams of the particular issues of the project. These journals

provided a good place to chronicle changes in my thinking and interpretations over time. They also helped me to carry out the process of ongoing analysis, as well as provide me with “an audit trail” (Erlandson et al., 1993) of the research process.

Data analysis for this project was indeed messy. It was ongoing and at times I pursued false leads that eventually took me nowhere. It was at times complicated and frustrating and at others clear, straightforward and delightful. However, the analysis presented here may have differed considerably if done at another time or place or within another theoretical framework. Indeed there is a “personal reality of Doing Educational Research” (Walford, 1991, p. 16).

### **Introducing The Interviewees**

At this point I introduce the 29 teachers who took part in this study. The biographical base data for these interviewees are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3. These tables have been included at this point so that the reader can return to them, if needed, whenever the interviewee’s name is mentioned in the text.

Tables 1 and 2 show the (i) chosen pseudonym and initial; (ii) sex (M/F); (iii) date of birth (DOB); (iv) dates during which interviewee attended secondary school (Second. Years); (v) type of secondary school interviewee attended (Secondary School); (vi) the year interviewee first began teaching (Entry); (vii) the types of secondary school interviewees taught at during his/her first five years of secondary teaching (First Five Years) and (viii) completion/non-completion of postgraduate Diploma in Education or Diploma of Special Education (DipEd/SpEd). The dates used in the titles of Table 1 and 2 coincide with the historical periods used in the study, before and after 1984.

Table 3 shows a summary of the educational history of the 29 interviewees. The horizontal axis lists the interviewees by initials (see Tables 1 and 2 for explanation). The vertical axis shows the period between 1958 when Billy Joe first began attending secondary school and 1999 when Harold began to teach at a secondary school. In every year between 1976 and 1999—except 1983, 1987, 1988, and 1996—at least one person had entered teaching (see Table 3). Between 1958 and 1999 at least one interviewee was either in secondary education or in teaching. Collectively, these interviewees were able to give a picture of graduate teaching in Trinidad over time.

Table 1

## Base Data For Interviewees Who Entered Teaching Between 1965 and 1983.

Pseudonyms And Initials*		M	F	DOB	Second. Years	Second. School	Entry	First Five Years	DipEd/SpEd NI Y   Year	
BJ	Billy Joe	√		1945	58-64	GS <sup>M</sup>	1965 1978	GS <sup>MX</sup> GA <sup>M</sup>	√	
SA	Salohcin	√		1950	64-69	GA <sup>MX</sup>	1972* 1973	PR GA <sup>MX</sup>		√ 94
TG	Tiger	√		1955	67-73	GA <sup>MX</sup>	1973* 1985	PR JS; CP		√ 94
SC	Sid Chase		√	1956	67-73	GA <sup>F</sup>	1973* 1979	PR GA <sup>MX</sup>		√ <u>92</u>
JB	James Brown	√		1952	64-70	GA <sup>M</sup>	1977	SC		√ 01
CY	Cynthia		√	1956	67-74	GA <sup>F</sup>	1978	GA <sup>MX</sup>		√ 84
PU	Poui	√		1957	68-74	GA <sup>M</sup>	1979	SC		√ 86
BA	Barbara		√	1956	67-74	GA <sup>F</sup>	1980	GA <sup>F</sup> ; SC		√ 86
BU	Bumper		√	1960	72-79	GA <sup>MX</sup>	1980	GA <sup>M</sup> ; JS GS <sup>MX</sup> GA <sup>MX</sup>		√ 92 <u>97</u>
SL	Salman	√		1955	67-75	GA <sup>M</sup>	1982	GA <sup>M</sup>		√ 90

\*Began teaching at a primary school

Types of secondary schools (see Chapter Five for further discussion)

PR Primary

GA Government Assisted

GS Government Secondary

JS Junior Secondary

SC Senior Comprehensive

CP Composite

PVS Private Secondary

<sup>M</sup> All male<sup>F</sup> All Female<sup>MX</sup> Co-educational

Table 2

## Base Data For Interviewees Who Entered Teaching Between 1984 And 1999.

Pseudonyms And Initials*		M	F	DOB	Second. Years	Second. School	Entry	First Five Years	DipEd/Sp.Ed NI Y   Year		
SN	Sandra		√	1965	76-83	GS <sup>MX</sup>	1984 1991	PVS JS; GS <sup>MX</sup>		√	97
AD	Adrian	√		1965	76-84	GA <sup>M</sup> SC	1984 1989	JS;SC; CP		√	99
JS	Jesse		√	1961	73-81	GA <sup>F</sup>	1985	GS <sup>MX</sup>		√	92
AN	Andi		√	1959	72-79	GA <sup>F</sup>	1986	GA <sup>MX</sup>		√	95
PO	Portfolio	√		1967	78-85	GA <sup>M</sup>	1986* 1989	PR GS <sup>MX</sup> GA <sup>M</sup>		√	94
DJ	D. Jew	√		1967	79-87	GA <sup>M</sup>	1987* 1998	PR GA <sup>M</sup>		√	01
OC	Ocssu	√		1965	77-85	GS <sup>MX</sup> ; SC	1989	GA <sup>MX</sup> SC	√		
MY	Maya		√	1966	77-86	JS,SC	1989 1990	PR JS		√	94
KO	Kowen	√		1967	79-86	GA <sup>MX</sup>	1990	GA <sup>MX</sup>		√	00
TT	Miss T&T		√	1966	78-86	GA <sup>F</sup> GS <sup>F</sup>	1990	JS		√	94
JA	Jane		√	1967	78-86	JS;SC; GS <sup>MX</sup>	1990	SC		√	97
MN	Mr. Man	√		1962	73-81	JS; GA <sup>MX</sup>	1992	GA <sup>F</sup>		√	00
DC	Dot.Com		√	1967	79-86	GA <sup>F</sup> GS <sup>F</sup>	1990* 1993	PR CP; SC		√	96
VG	Mr. Vogue	√		1966	78-86	GA <sup>M</sup>	1991	GA <sup>F</sup> SC		√	94
HA	Harold	√		1971	83-90	GA <sup>M</sup>	1993* 1999	PR GA <sup>MX</sup>		√	01
FS	Fluffy Starr		√	1972	83-90	GA <sup>F</sup> GS <sup>F</sup>	1994	GA <sup>M</sup>	√		
AT	Antoinia		√	1971	83-90	GS <sup>MX</sup> GA <sup>F</sup>	1994	SC; JS; GS <sup>MX</sup>		√	96
RH	Rhonda		√	1972	83-90	GA <sup>F</sup>	1995	SC; GA <sup>MX</sup>	√		
SM	Smith		√	1953	65-72	GA <sup>F</sup>	1997	GA <sup>F</sup>	√		

**TABLE 3**  
**Interviewees' Educational History**

	BJ	SA	TG	SC	JB	CY	PU	BA	BU	SL	SN	AD	JS	AN	PO	DJ	OC	MY	KW	TT	JN	MN	DC	VG	HA	FS	AT	RH	SM	
1958																														
1959																														
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1971	■				■																									
1972	■				■																									
1973	■	■			■																									
1974	■	■			■																									
1975	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1976	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1977	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1978	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1979	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1980	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1981	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1982	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1983	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1984	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1985	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1986	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1987	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1988	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1989	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1990	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1991	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1992	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1993	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1994	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1995	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1996	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1997	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1998	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				
1999	■	■			■		■	■	■	■																				

There was variation in the number of schools in which the interviewees worked as beginning secondary teachers. Jesse, Bumper and Adrian taught in more than three different schools in their first five years of teaching. Smith, Sid Chase, Miss T&T, Kowen, Cynthia, Fluffy Starr, Salman, James Brown and Andi only taught in one secondary school have spent their entire teaching careers in the secondary schools at which they began to teach. The other 19 interviewees taught in two to three schools. Ten interviewees—Salman, Portfolio, D. Jew, Barbara, Smith, Salohcin, Kowen Maya, Jane and Fluffy Starr—began teaching in the same type of secondary school that they attended as students. All the interviewees, except Smith, Mr. Man, Adrian, James Brown, Rhonda, started teaching in the same year that they completed an educational experience at a school or university. Those interviewees who worked in other jobs before entering teaching did so in the civil service and banking sectors. Therefore, for many interviewees much of their experience of life was framed within an educational institution.

At the time of the interviews, 21 interviewees had participated in and completed the optional, in-service Diploma in Education (DipEd) at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine (see Tables 1 and 2). Three interviewees were participating in the DipEd programme when they did their interviews. Five of the interviewees had not done or completed the DipEd programme.

### **Summary And Comment**

Through this study, I wanted to find out how in the absence of pre-service teacher education, graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad were “constituted through and in terms of existing discourses” (Davies, 1992, p. 54) and how they constructed their knowledge about teaching from various subject positions. I collected and sought to make sense of stories from 29 graduate secondary teachers in my attempt to understand why and how these teachers came to think in certain ways in a particular social, historical, cultural and political context. I did not seek to *falsify* any previously held hypotheses. I used this research opportunity to learn more about learning to teach *from* teachers. My research sought to make visible some of the dominant discourses that have influenced a group of graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad especially between 1965 and 2000. I believed an

understanding of these discourses would help us to make more sense who we are and who we become as teachers. As Taylor (2000) argued:

Discourse is socially constructed and we are part of that construction, albeit a small part. The more aware we are of the discourses around us, and in us, the more we are able to resist and negotiate those discourses allowing us a role in becoming the teacher we feel we want to be (Taylor, 2000, p. 11).

In this way, my research should help other teachers to have a greater understanding of how they draw upon certain discourses, and how these discourses can interact to influence how new teachers think, act and value (Gee, 1990) as graduate secondary teachers. In addition, it can help teachers identify the discourses that have informed the education system in which they have participated as students, taught and formulated their ideas and have helped shape the policy, institutional, systemic and curricular possibilities for their professional lives. In this way the research could provide a resource of teacher knowledge for designers of in-service or pre-service teacher education.

In this study, my main argument is that the interviewees became graduate secondary teachers by participating “within those available sets of social meanings and practices—discourses—which define them” as graduate secondary teachers (Jones, 1993, p. 139). In other words, the ways in which the interviewees thought and spoke about teachers and teaching when they first began to teach and what they said they did as new teachers and what they said they ‘knew’ about teachers and teaching, would have been both constrained and enabled by the discourses available about graduate secondary teachers within any given period. Put another way, the interviewees’ ideas about ‘normal’ behaviours and attitudes of graduate secondary teachers and their ways of *being* a teacher and *doing* teaching, would have been influenced by what was said, what could be said, or what could not be said in Trinidad and Tobago about graduate secondary teachers. Furthermore, these discourses could be related to young teachers, old teachers, male teachers, female teachers, teachers of particular subjects, teachers in particular schools; teaching; aims of secondary education; teacher recruitment and teacher education at any given time. But what was said, or could be said about any of these issues changed over time. Also what was said at any given time has emerged from a constant struggle between what has been said in the past and what *else* could have been said about any of these issues. As Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1998) argued:

Within an historical period, varied discourses compete for control of subjectivity, but these discourses are always a function of the power of those who control the discourse to determine knowledge and truth. Thus while a person may be the subject of various discourses, subjectivity will be produced by the discourse that dominates at the time (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 224-225).

In other words, there are always political struggles over what is to count as “knowledge” and “truth.” Only some versions of knowledge come to dominate in any given period.

Taking up these ways of interpretation discussed in this chapter has not been easy for me because I was using theoretical perspectives and methodological tools that were completely new to me. At times in the process of analysis, I still thought of myself as a rational human being who made choices, not as a person who negotiated existing discourses, or whose possibilities for thinking, acting or choosing were enabled and constrained by my historical, geographical, and institutional positioning. It took me a long time to ‘get my head around’ this way of thinking. The process of interpreting data while using these tools reminded me of my first experience on a skateboard as a teenager in 1980. I got on the skateboard and after two seconds the skateboard went one way and I the other. In the same way I have been on a slippery slope in learning to use these theoretical tools. Unlike that experience—I never got back on a skateboard and so I never learned to skate—I worked with these theoretical tools until they—my skateboard—and I were moving in the same direction.

In Chapters Three, Four, Five, and Six I use the historical framework outlined earlier to explore the political, economic, social and discursive context in which the 29 interviewees had their experiences of secondary schooling as students and then entered into the teaching profession. The purpose of this historical approach is to provide a sense of space and place for the unravelling of the interviewees’ stories. It is also useful to show continuity or change in discourses and ideas available for them to think with over time. Finally, this historical exploration foregrounds the teacher so that when other teachers read it, they could place their own stories in the context of their time. The questions that frame the discussions in the historical section include: What was the economic and political situation in Trinidad and Tobago between 1956 and 2000? What dominant discourses informed the policy documents and educational systems? Why did the interviewees enter teaching? What ideas of about teachers and

teaching did these interviewees hold when they first began to teach? How were individual interviewees constituted through and in terms of discourses that positioned him/her as a graduate secondary teacher?

## CHAPTER THREE



### FROM DAY ONE: COLONIAL STRUCTURES—BEFORE 1956

*“From day one: From the very beginning. At inception”  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 214).*

#### Introduction

In the first part of this chapter, I outline some of the issues that influenced the historical framework used to explore the political, economic and social context in which the 29 interviewees had their experiences of secondary schooling as students and then entered into the teaching profession. In the second part I briefly explore the social structure and the system of secondary education before 1956 and identify some of the dominant discourses that influenced social and educational policies. This analysis is done in an effort to provide a foundation for understanding the shift in thinking that took place during the period after self-government and independence.

The chronological focus in these chapters helped me to read the interviewees’ transcripts within and across historical time and make sense of whom the graduate secondary teacher was assumed to be in different social, economic, political and historical contexts. I was also able to make sense of the changes and continuities in the stories over time. One’s school experience is important because of the discursive constructions of one’s school experience in terms of policy, pedagogy and practice. So, I draw on the stories of those who were at secondary school during a particular period to “fill out” some of the social practices that existed.

#### Historical Framework

Rhonda, one of the interviewees in this study, used the metaphor of “putting new wine into old bottles” to help *her* make sense of teaching in the political,

historical, social and cultural context in which she worked as a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad. She explained:

I think—because of the history of Trinidad or the Caribbean—we are new countries and because of our particular history, teaching has a whole set of problems that have cropped up because of that. Because what is happening really is that we have administrators, principals, etc, who grew up at a time when to be a teacher was a big thing. There was all this status attached to being a teacher and most times they did not even have degrees. It was just to be a teacher. They have come from a whole different system of class and status etc where the teacher in the village had a certain role and a certain responsibility and he was looked upon in a certain way. And all of that has changed.

But we are teaching in a system where the top people are still from that old school and they still feel that they are something and that their word is good enough and that they do not need to justify their actions. And they do not need to read all these new books and find out the philosophy and so because they are principals. And that is enough. So teaching is really...it is strange that there is that conflict there. It falls within the realm of something that was created a long time ago but you have new teachers. So we can't fit really into that old...it's like putting—how you say? Putting new wine in old bottles. That is really what is happening (Rhonda\95).

Rhonda's metaphor served to remind me that the present education system in Trinidad and Tobago has been built upon the old structures, practices, and prejudices of the past. It also helped me to realise that some discourses from previous historical periods may still exist in recent historical times. To get a better picture of the present, I needed to go back to how and why secondary education was established in Trinidad and Tobago. In other words, it was important for me to understand the “old bottles” before I looked at the “new wine.” In the historical section, I focus primarily on developments of the Trinidadian system as it is mainly events in this socio-cultural context that would have shaped these interviewees' experiences.

### **Historical Periods**

The period of focus for these chapters spans a 54-year period between 1956 when the oldest interviewee began secondary school and 2000 when the interviews were carried out. I identified three major historical periods within this time and one before and used these periods as frames for the discussions in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six. The four historical periods are summarised as follows:

1. *Colonial: Before 1956.* During this period Trinidad was under colonial rule, first by Spain from 1498 to 1797, then by Britain from 1797 to 1956. These

groups of Europeans were in political and economic control of the islands. Economic depression, World Wars I and II, high unemployment and poverty marked the early to mid twentieth century. From the 1930s there was also rising anti-colonial sentiment, led by Black intellectuals and organised unions of the working class, in their attempt to have a greater say in the political future of the country (Alleyne, 1996). By 1956, discourses of self-government and self-rule were dominant as the former colony sought to imagine and create a future separate from Britain.

2. *Independence, Decolonisation and Development: 1956 to 1967.* Political control shifted from the British expatriates to local, educated, middle class politicians in 1956 when a system of self-government was established. Trinidad and Tobago and other British West Indian colonies formed the Federation of the West Indies in 1958 in an attempt to acquire their independence from Britain (McIntyre, 1998; Winks, 1970). However, in 1962 this political Federation collapsed when many of the islands sought individual independent status. Trinidad achieved this status on 31 August 1962. The Queen of England remained the Head of State until republican status was achieved in 1976. During this post-independence period the government sought to create a new, independent nation. The secondary education system was one site that the government used to achieve its social objectives.
3. *Boom Days—Expansion, Revolution and Petro’ dollars: 1968 to 1983.* This was a period of considerable political stability. The Peoples’ National Movement, which was elected in 1956, formed the government. The same leader, Dr. Eric Williams, ruled until his death in office in 1981. There was also significant economic and social revolution during this period. Trinidad had been an oil-producing country since the early 1900s and world-wide increases in the price for crude oil from 1973 produced a significant economic windfall for the country. This put the country in a favourable position with international lending agencies and loans for development schemes were used to finance significant industrial and social infrastructure. The watchwords of the day were: “money is no problem.” At the same time, there was social revolution locally and world-wide in terms of social justice issues, civil rights, Black Power and feminist movements that affected the world in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Increased access to secondary education drove developments

in the education system. In 1976, the country became a Republic, severing all political ties with Britain.

4. *Adjustment, Political Change, Stabilisation and Growth: 1984 to 2000.* The drop in oil prices resulting from the glut of oil on the international market in 1982 meant that the government could no longer finance the massive development projects of the 1970s as debt repayment became the major focus of the government. “Structural adjustment,” “efficiency,” and “monitoring” were some of the discourses of the day. There was also political change as changes in the ruling government took place in 1986, 1991, and 1995. By 1996, however, oil prices were again on the rise and this set the stage for a secondary modernisation programme begun in 2000.

Within each historical period there was a congruence of economic and political discourses that both shaped and developed within the social structures in Trinidadian society. McGarthy & Alexander (1997) defined social structures as the “role relationships, social networks, groups and institutions” (McGarthy & Alexander, 1997, p. 317). Discourses such as “nation building,” “self-reliance,” “social integration,” “development,” and “structural adjustment” dominated official government policies at particular times. These discursive shifts resulted from, and at the same time constituted changes in educational policy and innovations within each period. In addition, within each historical period, there were discourses from earlier times competing with new ones. Or, as Middleton and May (1997) argued, within each period there was:

a counterpoint of interweaving themes; of debates that rage and subside; of policies that are promoted and transformed; of people and texts whose ideas are prominent and powerful for a while; and of events that shape constraints and possibilities for dramatic change in teachers’ lives and ideas (Middleton and May, 1997, p. 16).

These discursive shifts were also important because they signalled the kinds of dominant ideas about teachers and teaching that were available during the time that the interviewees’ own ideas about teachers and teaching were coming to form. They represent the discourses that the graduate secondary teacher was “constituted through and in terms” of (Davies, 1992, p. 54).

### **Postcolonial Consciousness**

Undertaking my doctoral study while living in New Zealand and later on living and writing up the study in England, reminded me of the postcolonial status of the

social world in which I grew up and the positioning of graduate secondary teachers as postcolonial subjects. As an Afro-Trinidadian woman, born in 1963 the year after Independence, I experienced childhood during the immediate post-independence period, a time of decolonisation or throwing off of the colonial yoke. I never sang “God Save the Queen” at national functions. At school we were taught the national anthem “Forged from the Love of Liberty” and the motto “Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve” and watchwords “Discipline, Tolerance and Production” the vision statements of our independent nation. I had not lived in the colonial period.

For me, colonialism was a political practice that I encountered in my West Indian History textbooks. It belonged in the past, and was only discussed by my parents in their stories about childhood, and growing up and beginning to teach as young people during the nationalistic movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The most outstanding political event in my early memory was the Black Power movement of 1970, when young people were agitating to change the still existing colonial mentality and practices of “colonial privilege” (Memmi, 1957/1965) that remained in the society (see Pantin, 1990). As a seven year-old girl, I was intrigued by the march of large masses of unemployed, local youth from Arima to Port-of-Spain and the fact that my father, who was at that time an evening student at the university, had to be in before the curfew during the national State of Emergency.

When I went to live in New Zealand in 1999 the issue of colonialism resurfaced. I was now living in a former white settler colony, where the social institutions were derived from British models and therefore similar to those in Trinidad. The comparatively low levels of poverty, the lack of overcrowding, the strong presence of indigenous people, and the existence of seven universities serving a population of 3.9 million, as opposed to one university to serve the English speaking Caribbean’s 5.5 million population, were some of the immediate differences that kindled my awareness of the differences between our colonial experiences, especially with respect to teacher education. Therefore, the analysis of the personal narratives of teachers in relation to the social history and individual began to take on a new meaning. I realised that I needed to get a deeper understanding of the influence of colonisation on educational experiences during the colonial era. In so doing I would be better able to understand the

legacy of colonialism in present practices in education in Trinidad. As McWilliams (1991) suggested:

Theories of post-colonial discourse take up the challenge of revealing the complex interactions of colonizer and colonized that inform the current status of the post-colonial subject....The affirmative move within this theoretical arena is to discuss how subjects are constituted now that the colonial powers no longer have overt political control (McWilliams, 1991, p. 103-104).

In New Zealand, I was fortunate to meet two women who had been principals in former British colonies. One worked in an African colony during the 1950s through its independence to 1973 and the other in Trinidad between 1936 and 1951. They were able to give me some insight into colonial practices into places mainly populated by Africans and people of African descent. Again their teacher talk provided me with an opportunity to make sense of the operation of a colonial educational system from the perspective of those who had been constituted in and by it. Their stories formed part of my pilot study for this research project (De Four-Babb 2000a) and a few stories from one of these women is included in Chapter Three. This pilot study was carried out as part of the course-work for the Research Methods paper that was part of the Doctor of Education (Ed.D) programme. As part of the analysis in that study, I attempted to “unweave the complex structures [and practices] put in place by colonialist rule” (McWilliams, 1991, p. 103).

I recognised that a deeper understanding of how the education system evolved in Trinidad was critical to my understanding of who the graduate secondary teacher is and how he/she came to be that way. It was also important for me as a teacher in the system to get a better understanding of the issues related to the graduate secondary teacher, issues such as: How are teachers recruited? Why is there no requirement for training? How are the practices of recruitment and training constituted in and by prevailing discourses? A brief re-telling of this history would provide a broad and general review of the secondary education system and would enable me and other readers to place teachers' stories in the context in which they evolved. Although none of the interviewees began to teach during the Colonial period, it is an important time as it laid the foundation for the educational system in Trinidad as we know it today.

## **Colonial Social Structure And Secondary Education**

Trinidad was claimed as a colony of Spain in 1498 but E. Williams (1962, p. 21) concluded the “conquest was in name only.” Historians have argued that under the principles of Spanish colonialism Trinidad existed solely for the economic benefit of Spain (E. Williams, 1962). The small, indigenous Amerindian population of Carib and Arawak tribes were to be enslaved and used as workers for their Spanish masters in agriculture or mining. The colony was supposed to trade solely with Spain. Governance was from Spain and the Roman Catholic Church played a significant role in the conversion of the Amerindians. However, because Trinidad did not have gold or silver, and Spain did not have the manpower to settle, trade with, or protect Trinidad, the island was virtually neglected and undeveloped between 1498 and 1595.

The island of Tobago, was not colonised by the Spanish, but was a Dutch colony from 1632. On several occasions, the island changed hands between the Dutch, the French and English. E. Williams (1962, p. 52) suggested that this rivalry between these “metropolitan governments made it impossible for anything to be done” in Tobago. Under the French in the late 1700s there was some economic development based on agriculture. At that time 94% of the population were African slaves. In 1802 Tobago was acquired by Britain and in 1889 was annexed to Trinidad. In 1899 the twin-island British Crown Colony Trinidad and Tobago was born.

Such colonisation was practised world-wide from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century as part of Europe’s search for new lands to expand various European empires. McClintock (1993) argued that this form of colonisation involved:

direct territorial appropriation of another geopolitical entity, combined with forthright exploitation of its resources, labour, and systematic interference with the capacity of the appropriate culture (itself not a necessarily homogenous entity) to organise its dispensations of power (McClintock, 1993, p. 295).

New social systems were created for the sole purpose of economic benefit to “mother countries.” In other words, the ways of being a people and nation were “constructed, understood, defined, enacted, sustained, legitimated and reproduced” (van Dijk, 1994, p. 163) as belonging to another nation. An underlying discourse of dependency framed social, economic and political relationships between the colony and the colonising power.

This early European colonisation was also marked by a “contact of peoples” (Maunier, 1949, p. 5), usually white Europeans and darker-skinned indigenous peoples. The relationship between the groups was usually one of domination rather than co-operation, as these early Europeans sought to exploit the indigenous populations for their own economic benefit. Cashmore (1996) argued that such contact in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century helped to produce a discourse of “whiteness” related to control and superiority of the European races.

Bonnet (2000) explained that the term *white* was used to describe Europeans in colonial settings and this was “symptomatic of the term’s emergence as a key site in the forging of a new mass political identity based on distinctions between coloniser and colonised, dominant and subject peoples” (Bonnet, 2000, p. 17). Theorists of the discourse of whiteness such as Bonnet (2000) and Wander, Martin and Nakayama, (1999) suggested that in the Christian era the colour white was associated with purity and perfection, while the colour black was associated with sin and darkness, the curse of Ham and inferiority.

The naturalist traditions of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries classified racial groups and ranked them according to physical characteristics. For example, Mc Clintock (1995) explained how the merging of Mantegazza’s Morphological Tree of the Human Races and the family of Man provided “scientific racism...for popularizing and disseminating the idea of *racial* progress” (italics in original, Mc Clintock, 1995, p. 39). By 1800 a three-race hierarchy emerged—Caucasian, Mongoloid, and Negroid. According to Wander et al. (1999, p. 15) “by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these and other race typologies provided a solid foundation for explaining behavioural variation and social inequity.” Such racial theories spawned the discourses that dark-skinned people were not rational men and that they were subhuman. Hence, a theory of inferior intellect of non-white populations emerged. Whiteness came to symbolise superiority and privilege. This discourse devalued non-white skin colours and was critical in shaping the relationships between people, social networks and social institutions in the colonies.

From around 1783, Spain allowed Roman Catholic French planters and their African Slaves, and free coloureds<sup>7</sup> from other Caribbean islands to settle in

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<sup>7</sup> The free coloureds were a group of people who descended from the offspring of white male planters and their black, female slaves. Most of these coloureds were not owned by the European planters in the way the African slaves were. They were able to own property and operate businesses.

Trinidad and help develop the promising sugar economy. By 1797 the population in Trinidad was stratified by race, class, and colour (Table 4) and created the social structure of the Trinidadian slave/plantation society. The French planters supplied the white management under Spanish laws and formed the ruling class. The free coloureds formed a middle class. The African slaves provided labour and substituted for the indigenous labour found in other colonies.

**Table 4**

**Population Structure In Trinidad In 1797**

Total Population	17, 648
Whites	2086
Free coloureds	4466
Amerindians	1082
African Slaves	10, 009

Source of Data: E. Williams (1962, p. 48)

In 1797, Trinidad was seized by the British as part of Britain's colonial expansion and established as a Crown Colony of Britain in 1802. Under this "colonial relationship" (Memmi, 1965, p. 7) the economies of Trinidad and many other West Indian islands were restructured to fuel British "capitalism and industry" (Loomba, 1998, p. 4). Trinidad produced agricultural crops, such as cocoa and later sugar-cane as raw materials for British industry. In return, Britain had a ready market of colonists for its manufactured goods. This economic arrangement brought significant profits to Britain.

A system of Crown Colony government, rather than representative government, was established in Trinidad in 1802. Under the system of Crown Colony government, Britain retained complete control and governance over Trinidad, with all authority invested in a Governor. In so doing, Britain could increase its cultural, religious and linguistic influence over the diverse group of people in the islands. At that time the majority of the white population was either French or Spanish, and the number of free coloureds outnumbered the total number of whites in the island. This meant that the British could easily be outvoted in a representative system. It was unthinkable at that time that non-Englishmen or free coloureds should have that kind of dominance in a British colony.

Sugar was the most important agricultural crop of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was extremely labour intensive and relied on a regular supply of African slaves. However, after the importation of slaves was stopped after emancipation between 1834 and 1838, new sources of labour were needed to support this labour intensive industry. Britain turned to Asia—first to China, then India between 1845 and 1916—to supply large numbers of indentured workers needed for the sugar plantations. These new sources of labour introduced other racial groups into an already established socially and racially stratified society.

By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century social stratification was well established in Trinidad because the main population groups were in a “hierarchical order of subordination and domination” (Ogbu, 1994/97, p. 766) with whites on top and blacks at the bottom. Ogbu (1994/1997, p. 766) argued a society is stratified “*when and only when* its individual members from different social groups are ranked on the basis of their membership in specific social groups that are also ranked.” In Trinidad that rank was based on wealth, colour and class. For example, the Europeans (whites/light skinned people) were the owners of and had access to the means of production. The Africans and Indians (blacks/dark skinned people) provided the labour. The middle groups of skilled workers and junior professionals were occupied by the free coloureds (brown skinned people). Each stratum represented similar access or lack of access to income, wealth, power and prestige and represented common life chances and lifestyles. Each was maintained, not by law, but by social practice and social relationships (Braithwaite, 1953; Bolland, 1992). However, the obvious dimensions of race and class were not the only dimensions of social stratification. Colour of skin, occupation—professional, skilled, unskilled—and status—claim to prestige and power, were also significant dividers (Braithwaite, 1953).

There was also very little homogeneity within each stratum. For example, as Braithwaite (1953) explained among the white Europeans, there were the French and French Creoles (born in the West Indies), the English expatriates and local born English. The labouring classes comprised East Indians, Chinese, Africans and African descendants, and migrants from other islands (Braithwaite, 1953). Therefore, within each stratum there would be social groups that would have different forms of social interaction with people of the same group.

Such a system of social stratification established an order of relationships between the groups and between members of the same group as elaborated upon

by Braithwaite (1953) and Bolland (1992). There were specific rules governing social relationships between members of the same group and members of different groups (Braithwaite, 1953). Social institutions were established to serve different groups in different ways, although some sociological theorists argued that the same institution served different groups in different ways (Bolland, 1992). For example, education as a social institution served each sector differently. After emancipation in 1834, both Christian and non-Christian religious bodies established primary schools for the sons and daughters of the newly emancipated African slaves and later East Indian workers in an attempt to provide them with basic education.

Education was viewed as the affair of the family and the church, not the government (Campbell, 1996). Braithwaite (1953) argued that there was an acute religious concern for the “morals and welfare” of the people. Blacks, therefore, had access to primary schooling and very little beyond. Good students were recruited through the pupil-teacher system to teach at primary schools. The only opportunity for a higher form of education for them was the Teacher’s Diploma completed at Teachers Training College, which for the most part, this was done after a few years of apprentice style teaching. The secondary education system was quite separate from the primary system. It catered to the needs of the children of the upper classes (whites/French creoles) to provide an education to take them into the professions or higher education. Thus, the system of secondary education served different groups of the population in different ways.

Religion was another dimension for the stratification of Trinidadian society. French planters and their slaves were Roman Catholic and most of the English population and their slaves were mainly Church of England (Anglican Church). Hinduism and Islam were introduced with the immigration of Asian populations into Trinidad. There was also competition between the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Church as each Church sought to maintain its influence over its members. At the same time, Canadian Presbyterian missionaries were involved in the conversion of the East Indian labourers, who were Moslem and Hindu. Consequently, the various religious groups were keen to provide intellectual, moral and spiritual training for their members. They established secondary schools to carry out this function.

The first secondary schools in Trinidad were private (fee-paying) schools set up by the Roman Catholic Church. These denominational schools catered

mainly for the religious and economic white elite, some of whom may have been unable to send their children to school in Europe. St. Joseph's Convent, the first secondary school on the island, was started for the daughters of the French Creole community in 1836. It was run by a Teaching Order of Catholic nuns (Campbell, 1996) and sought to produce girls who would be "good wives and mothers" (Anna, pilot interview). Queen's Royal College (QRC), the first government secondary school, was established for boys in 1859. This non-religious, secondary school provided a "classical education" (E. Williams, 1962, p. 204) for the sons of the local elite—merchants, planters, professionals, and public servants—so that they in turn could fill the leadership roles in an Anglicised colony. A Catholic secondary school for French Creole boys, later named the College of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), was set up in 1863 to provide a religious secondary education and proved to be a significant rival of QRC. The Canadian Presbyterian missionaries focused mainly on the education of the East Indians. In 1900 they instituted a secondary school later known as Naparima Boys College "for the male children of the missionaries and the local assistants" (Alleyne, 1996, p. 25). This policy would have enabled a few Indian boys to attain a secondary education.

The populations of the first denominational secondary schools reflected the existing social order. The early system of secondary education *included* sons and daughters of the white ruling class, who were being educated to maintain their role as leaders in the local social structure. It also *included* the sons and daughters of the coloured middle class who were able to pay tuition fees. These children could aspire to a profession or to fill the lower ranks of the civil service. The system *excluded* those boys and girls whose parents were part of the African and Indian working class and unable to pay tuition fees. For example, in 1869, less than 20% of the QRC's population was non-white. There were no blacks or Indians in attendance (E. Williams, 1962). The sons and daughters of the African and Indian workers were excluded from secondary education on two accounts: their inability to pay fees, and the belief that they needed only a basic primary education for their role as workers.

Those parents who were unable to pay tuition fees for their sons and daughters found tuition-free secondary education difficult to attain (Stewart, 1981). Although the government, some secondary schools, societies, and councils offered tuition scholarships, they were mainly for the academically able or

“bright” students. From 1872, the College Exhibition was the only avenue for three or four boys in the entire country to enter into a secondary school. This examination used by the government to select academically outstanding students for free places (Campbell, 1997). In this way, eventually many bright middle class and poor, Black and Indian students were able to complete a secondary education. In other words, we see the emergence of reward for the intellectually able, those best suited to succeed. For many of them this was a means of social mobility from the ranks of poverty. Those who were poor and not bright had no such hope.

In their study on social mobility and secondary schooling in Trinidad and Tobago, Cross & Schwartzbaum (1969, p. 189) defined social mobility as a “change and exchange of social status.” Blacks who were intellectually gifted could aspire to a higher social rank by improving their educational status. This would take them out of the working class into the middle class. Thus, while secondary education for the most part reproduced the societal divisions along class and race lines, it brought untold opportunities for a few successful students. This promise of social mobility served to fuel the dreams of many students and their parents (M. Williams, 1995).

The curriculum at most of the early secondary schools was based on the traditional English Grammar school curriculum. This curriculum was very academic and did not include technical subjects. The curriculum was “based very largely on foreign materials that bore no relation to the daily lives of the pupils or to their environment” (E. Williams, 1970, p. 460). There was little focus on local culture. As Williams (1970) argued, the foreign curriculum:

violated the fundamental principle that education should proceed from the known to the unknown, from the village to the great wide world, from the indigenous plants and animals and insects to the flora and fauna of strange countries, from the economy of the village and the household to the economies of the world (E. Williams, 1970, p. 460).

A ‘good’ secondary student was one who mastered this foreign curriculum as evidenced by outstanding performance in the British examinations—Junior Certificate (later called Ordinary Level) and Higher Certificate (later called Advanced Level) examinations set and marked by the Universities of London and Cambridge in England. The good student was also expected to reflect English cultural traditions, norms and language, rather than the African, East Indian or other local forms of knowledge and culture. As Memmi (1965) argued:

it is in this way the coloniser erased the historical memory of the colonised and in so doing created a memory that was only of the coloniser's peoples.

Foucault (1977) argued the examination as a technique that encompassed hierarchical observation, surveillance and normalisation. In Trinidad, the examination was crucial in defining who was educated and who was not in the society. In time, academic success in external examinations became synonymous with educational success. It was a measurable, observable and attainable record of what one could do. A good school could be measured by the number of students who passed their examinations and the grades they achieved. Consequently, the main business of the secondary school became the preparation of students for external examinations.

Student success was highly rewarded and the Certificate became the "badge" of success (Harvey, 1981). The promise of an Island Scholarship also made the "badge" of certification more desirable. The colonial government offered Island Scholarships based on performance in Mathematics, Languages, Modern Studies and Science examinations. These scholarships supported one or two successful students per year in their university study, which was usually Oxford or Cambridge (Alleyne, 1996; Campbell, 1996). Initially, only white, male students gained these scholarships, but over time academically outstanding coloured and black students gained them. Although the number of scholarships was limited, public demand led to increases in the number of scholarships awarded. These awards helped to emphasise the value of pursuing an academic curriculum. Consequently, "the whole society had got locked into the Cambridge examination syndrome with its emphasis on academic subjects and foreign cultural orientation" (Campbell, 1997, p. 31).

The general public also focused on examination success at secondary school because a successful secondary education represented an opportunity for social mobility in a colony where access to better life opportunities was linked to race and colour. As Braithwaite (1953) argued

It was the ladder thus established by the educational system that became one of the most important methods by which members of the middle and lower classes could improve their occupational scale and come to play an important role in public affairs (Braithwaite, 1953, p. 55).

For many non-white, academically gifted students this was the only way out of their social stratum—they could get a 'professional' job or be employed in the lower ranks of the civil service.

During the early 1900s, the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Canadian Presbyterian churches established several more fee-paying schools to accommodate the increased demand for secondary tuition for sons and daughters of the middle class. As some members of the working class began to aspire to and achieve middle class status, and were better able to pay tuition fees, their children were enrolled in increasing numbers in secondary schools (Campbell, 1996). The British government however, did not increase its role in secondary education, possibly because it believed that the cost should be borne by the colonies. The provision of secondary education was left to the religious organisations. This is noteworthy because Britain had established compulsory secondary education for its people in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One could argue that this lack of investment was so that the colonies remained dependent on Britain for higher education and in so doing, Britain could keep its prestige and power. One could also argue that as Britain expanded its empire into Africa and Asia, it no longer felt obligated to support these small islands in the West Indies.

Another marker of educational achievement was proficiency in English language. Although the official language in the education and legal systems was established as British Standard English in 1823, both St. Joseph's Convent and CIC were based on the French Metropolitan model (Campbell, 1996) and initially all instruction was in French. However, instruction at QRC and the external examinations were in English. These Catholic schools eventually switched to instruction in English as the colony became more Anglicised.

Until the early 1900s, English was a second language for many people (Singh, 2000). The majority of Trinidadians spoke "Trinidadian English-lexifier Creole," (Singh, 2000) a complex blend of English, with words from the French-based patois, Bhojpuri of the East Indian community, and several words from various African languages (Singh, 2000). Trinidadian Creole was considered by most citizens to be an inferior language. According to Singh (2000):

TEC [Trinidadian English Creole] has been, and still is, variously referred to as 'bad/broken English', 'slang', or 'dialect'; the latter term indicating that it does not, for many native speakers, have the status of a full language (Singh, 2000, p. 98).

The use of the Trinidadian Creole and the speakers of it were often ridiculed and condemned in the local newspapers. The use of dialect was invariably linked to class and race. For example Singh (2000, p. 98) argued that "native speakers...were invariably Black, poor and uneducated (thus reinforcing

the links between ‘bad English’, marked ethnicity, low social class and powerlessness).” As Fanon (1965) argued:

Every colonized people—in other words every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country (Fanon, 1965, p. 18).

Attempts were made by teachers and administrators to stamp out the use of the Trinidadian Creole in secondary institutions. For example, Singh (2000) recounted a preparation course for lecturers of English held in 1937 as discussed in a local newspaper. This course was given by an Englishman “who ha[d] been conducting experiments with the boys of the college to get rid of the use of ‘creolisms’” (Singh, 2000, p. 101). Therefore, if a secondary student exhibited any local language, this was interpreted as a lack of education. As Fanon (1952) argued:

To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white, will be the whiter as he gains greater of the mastery of the cultural tool that language is (Fanon, 1965, p. 38).

In the same way the discourses of superiority and language came together to shape the characteristic of the educated person in the Trinidadian society. Secondary students were encouraged to “speak properly” (M. Williams, 1995).

In 1951 a report based on a review of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago stated that secondary education was divorced from the primary system and technical system of education (Colony of Trinidad and Tobago, Education Department, 1951). The report went on to add that the secondary system was designed for the intellectual elite of the colony to fill the ranks of the civil service not occupied by expatriates. It was also an avenue for a chosen few to gain qualifications to pursue a programme of studies at university and enter the professions of law or medicine. It was not designed to complete what was started at primary school. The system did not cater for 80% of the country’s secondary aged children (Colony of Trinidad and Tobago, Education Department, 1951). There was inequality of access by race and social class. Although a secondary education contributed to social mobility for those who were bright, at the same time it reproduced inequalities of opportunity in a socially stratified society.

By 1956, there was a well-established dual system in the provision and control of secondary education. Religious boards, mainly the Roman Catholic

Church, the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church, owned and operated twelve denominational secondary schools. The colonial government, on the other hand, had not invested much in public secondary education (E. Williams, 1970). Consequently, it played a minor role in the secondary education system. It owned and operated three secondary institutions: one secondary school for boys, one co-educational secondary school and one technical institute (Campbell, 1997). However, there was an increasing demand by working class groups to provide more places at the secondary level for their children.

This complex colonial history in Trinidad gave rise to a society in which race, religion, language, class, and culture were inextricably linked. People occupied places in a social hierarchy based on their race, colour, class, and religion. Their subject positions were enabled and constrained by colonial discourses revolving around the superiority of the Europeans or whites in the colony and the subservience of non-whites and dependency on Britain. The sole purpose of existence of any colony was for the benefit of the mother country. All knowledge and authority were vested in the mother country and the colony was dependent upon the mother country to supply leadership. At the same time there was also religious agitation for moral control over the people.

Simpson (1999, p. 6) argued “institutions of formal education in postcolonial settings tell no simple story about how ‘culture’ is transmitted and yet they are the key sites of the reproduction and refashioning of subjectivity, society and culture.” He added that “schools and colleges in the postcolony are...extremely ‘dense’ sites in which historical and social processes converge, where local, regional and national cultural politics play out” (Simpson, 1999, p. 6). In Trinidad this was no exception. The secondary school was an important site where colonial discourses revolving around social stratification by race, colour, and religion shaped relationships and individuals. The children of the working class “masses” (Black and Indian) were for the most part excluded from the secondary education system unless they were academically and economically able, while those of the middle and ruling classes (White) had opportunities to participate based on their wealth, colour and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986/1997) which included their facility with English language rather than Creole. Being educated was based on a mastery of specified knowledge.

But how were graduate secondary teachers constituted in and by these colonial practices? These issues are addressed in the next section.

## **Graduate Secondary Teachers In The Colonial Era**

Before 1956, graduate secondary teachers were appointed, promoted, transferred, terminated, suspended, by the Boards of Management of each secondary school and with the approval of the Director of Education (Stewart, 1981). Principals and managers of the denominational schools recruited secondary teachers from England on contract or locally to fill the few local teaching posts. For example, in the pilot study interview, when I asked Anna, a former principal, about the source of her school's graduate teachers in the 1940s, she replied:

From England, because at that stage there wasn't teacher training in the West Indies and I wanted trained teachers. So I used to bring teachers out from England who had their degrees and their teaching training. I wanted the teaching training. And they were very good teachers (Anna, pilot study interview).

When asked how she recruited the teachers she recounted:

Well in England there was a teachers' employment body and I used to write to that teachers' employment body and say, "Could you get me a teacher to teach such and such subjects?" whatever it was. And I would need them with degrees in such and such subjects and if possible teaching training as well. And they used to find the teachers and send them out (Anna, pilot study interview).

Consequently, in the late 1950s, many of the teachers with degrees who worked in government and denominational secondary schools on the island were not locals. For example, Billy Joe, who began secondary school in 1958, commented:

A lot of the teachers came from abroad. A lot of the teachers were white, Englishmen or in the case of the Catholic schools, they were from Ireland or Irish priests as the case may be (Billy Joe\65).

This practice of recruiting foreign teachers may have helped to maintain Britain's colonial relationship with the colony of Trinidad by providing jobs and positions of authority to English citizens. Many of these expatriate teachers were guaranteed jobs and advancement in their careers because of their advanced qualifications and the "colonial privilege" (Memmi, 1965) historically afforded to foreigners, especially those of European descent. As Memmi (1965) argued:

You go to a colony because jobs are guaranteed, wages high, careers more rapid and business more profitable. The young graduate is offered a position, the public servant a higher rank, the business man substantially

lower taxes, the industrialist raw materials and labour at attractive prices (Memmi, 1965, p. 78).

For example, in the pilot interview with Anna, I found out that some expatriates received housing in exchange for services at the boarding schools. She said:

They would live at the school. They didn't have to live at the school, but they started and mostly they stayed at the school. And then we took boarders. And they [the teachers] got free residence at the school, in return for assistance with the boarders. In the day of course, the boarders were at school, but when they came out they had a rest and then they played games and then they had dinner. And after dinner, they did their homework, and the teachers supervised the homework, the resident teachers. They got their residence for that (Anna, pilot study interview).

In a society stratified by colour and race, these white, expatriate teachers enjoyed a privileged status within the society. As Braithwaite (1953) argued:

The individual Britisher moving into the society obtains superior status as of right and his psychological need [for belonging in a group] seems to encourage him to accept this status and the whole mythology that goes with it (Braithwaite, 1953, p. 76).

Billy Joe explained what this privilege looked like based on his personal experience in a school with many foreign teachers:

These people in the society generally were regarded with awe. So they had a certain authority and in-built respect because they were foreign, they were probably white and got total support from parents. So that, I guess the feeling was because they were able to command that respect and command order in the classroom and they had support of the parents. They had all these positive things I guess the idea that they therefore could teach in a colonial outpost was accepted (Billy Joe\65).

Similarly, Trevor Rhone, a West Indian author, captured this social practice of colonial privilege in his play *School's Out*. The play was set in a staff-room and based on the experiences of teachers in a secondary school in a British West Indian colony.

ROSCO: I know you wouldn't complain or sign a deputation about salaries.

PAT: I can't. I am an expatriate. I'm on contract.

ROSCO: And contracted to get more than me, eh Mr Hendry?

MICA: Naturally, Mr Callender. Pat is a superior teacher, a superior man.

ROSCO: Ah, white is beautiful. Same thing ah tell you Mr Hendry. White is beautiful (Rhone, 1986, p. 83).

As Rhone's play suggested, the foreign teachers were better paid than most of the local graduates, enjoyed greater privileges, and as representatives of the British, and may have done little to improve political and work conditions for their local

colleagues. In other words the expatriate teacher more often than not accepted his role in the social hierarchy.

The few, local graduate secondary teachers attained their degrees in one of two ways. Before 1948 there was no institution for tertiary education in the British West Indies, so most graduate secondary teachers attained degrees from universities in England, Canada or the United States. For example, in the 1940s, many of the secondary graduates from the Presbyterian schools attended Canadian universities, because the Missionaries who established schools for the East Indians were mainly Canadian Presbyterians (Campbell, 1996, 1997). This practice of pursuing tertiary education 'outside' of the islands helped to establish an intellectual elite of West Indians in metropolitan areas such as London (Hennessy, 1992; Walmsley, 1986).

Some local graduate secondary teachers also completed degrees extramurally while resident in Trinidad, by pursuing university courses 'externally' with the University of London (Alleyne, 1996; Campbell, 1996; 1997). Holders of external degrees were not viewed with the same prestige as those attained by residing in England, because they had not lived the life of a student in England and faced the English masters at Cambridge or Oxford (Campbell, 1996). For example, in 1950, teachers who studied abroad were paid 8% to 20% more than those with external degrees (Colony of Trinidad and Tobago, Education Department, 1951). The higher salary was intended to attract the expatriate teachers and encourage locals who had studied abroad to return home.

Graduates from British and Canadian universities were preferred as teachers because they were trained in specific content areas in the British system of education, as opposed to the generalist/liberal degree of the American universities. Many graduates returned to their former schools to teach. For example, Anna, who was a principal in Trinidad during the 1930s and 1940s recounted:

The girls that went abroad...when they came back of course one of the things that they did was to become teachers at the school and it meant that I was able to have properly trained teachers and teachers who had had a bit of experience in England and Canada. I didn't particularly want to take the ones who had been schooled in the States because our school took the English exams and if they had been in a school in the States, those exams that they had been trained to put children through, were not necessarily the ones that they were going to have to do when they came to school, at my

school because we did all the English exams. We didn't really do American exams (Anna, pilot study interview).

Having a Bachelor's degree during the colonial era was a "major triumph" (Campbell, 1997, p. 48) because it was a level of education few people in the society had attained. For example, in 1949 only 88 persons in the country had degrees (Campbell, 1996). A degree was a means of social mobility in that it allowed holders to "escape political and social condition" (Memmi, 1965, p. 82). However, many local white males who graduated from English universities usually entered professions such as law, or medicine and surveying and seldom chose to enter secondary teaching because of the perception that these careers provided a certain amount of financial status and individual independence. Far more middle and working class males and females entered teaching after they attained their degrees (Campbell, 1996). For them this meant a significant change in their social status. Thus, although secondary teaching was considered to be a good job, it still existed below the status of law and medicine.

Yet, both foreign and local graduate secondary teachers during the colonial era were regarded with great respect. As Billy Joe explained:

These masters who taught me, none of them did a Diploma in Education. They had degrees and they came back. It was the colonial period and there was the aura of being a master at [*name of school*] and they lived on that. They survived on that very well (Billy Joe\65).

These 'masters' were not only distinguished by their qualifications, but on occasion, by their distinctive dress and residence. As Billy Joe explained:

I remember when it was speech day, graduation day at [*name of school*] it was a sight to behold with all the masters being in their robes from their universities. They had to wear it with the mortar-board. And you have to remember this is coming to the end of the colonial period so the teachers—a lot of them were foreign.... The principal was always foreign and they lived in quarters next to the school. So all that added to the aura of this teacher being something glorified, somebody being special. So that was my first impression of teaching. That they were something glorified (Billy Joe\65).

Inherent in Billy Joe's comment is the awe and respect associated with the privilege of a university education, especially one completed at an English university. Billy Joe's account also draws attention to the foreignness of the graduate secondary teacher, a foreignness which held both mystique and respect for achievements.

There was a dichotomy between professional training for primary and secondary teachers. Primary teachers were trained at Teachers' Training College because historically many of them did not attend secondary school. The Teachers' Training College was therefore more of a secondary school level institution and considered to be below the level of education and training required by someone who had gone to secondary school or university. Graduate secondary teachers, on the other hand, were not required to be trained, that is involved in attendance at an institute that prepared a person for a specific job. One wonders what sort of thinking perpetuated these ideas. Was it that graduate secondary teachers were probably seen as being ready for the task of teaching others "in the sense that most of them had learned how to learn and could easily learn what they had to teach" Obanya (1995, p. 6). Did one's ability to 'pass' external examinations become an indication of one's ability to teach? Was it thought that those who had a university education were so well educated that they should know how to teach?

### **Summary And Comment**

The purpose of the colonial secondary school in Trinidad was not, as contemporary policies would emphasise, to teach students "how to learn"; rather, it was about students acquiring knowledge as evidenced by certification. In addition, education involved adoption of British values and way of life. In colonial Trinidad, a person was considered educated if he/she had successfully attained a qualification from a secondary or tertiary institution. For the graduate secondary teacher a degree was evidence of this success.

An exploration of how the colonial graduate secondary teacher was constituted in and by these discourses such as "education as certification" is outside the scope of this study. However, one could argue that this focus on the outcome of examinations could have set up an expectation that the graduate secondary teacher would produce the 'educated secondary school student.' A good student would be one who was academically certified, possessed good language skills, and had a chance to enter university or a profession. Indeed, many graduate secondary teachers would have been themselves 'good students.' To be considered good teachers they too had to be knowledgeable and have a track record of academic success with their students. In other words, good

graduate secondary teachers were knowledgeable about their subject content and their students did well in external examinations. In what ways was there an opportunity to resist these ideas and seek alternative meanings? Those stories from those who taught during that time are waiting to be explored.

But how did independence from Britain provide new ways to think and talk about the education system and graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad? How did the secondary education system change after independence? Did any of the old, colonial ideas about secondary education and teaching remain relevant in the age of independence? What contradictions and inconsistencies might there have been between the new and established ideas about teachers and teaching? What ideas influenced graduate secondary teachers during this time? What spaces existed for the resistance or alternative meanings of these ideas? These are some of the questions addressed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR



### AFTER ONE TIME IS ANOTHER: INDEPENDENCE, DECOLONISATION AND DEVELOPMENT—1956 TO 1967

*“After one time is another: The tables have turned.  
Conditions are the reverse of what they used to be”  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 190)*

#### Introduction

The period between 1956 and 1967 marked the emergence of Trinidad and Tobago as an independent country that was no longer a colony of Britain. It gained its independence from Britain in 1962. A look at Tables 1, 2 and 3 in Chapter One shows that in 1956, 20 of the 29 interviewees were not yet born. Three interviewees were born in that year. Four were under five and had not yet entered primary school. Two were attending primary school. No one was a secondary school student. Although eight interviewees were enrolled in secondary school between 1956 and 1967, only Billy Joe completed this level of education and began to teach at secondary school. In this chapter, I briefly outline the major historical and political trends between 1956 and 1967 and contextualise these in a discussion of the nature and power dynamics of the society. I also contextualise the social construction of the subject position graduate secondary teacher in discursive shifts of this time and place.

#### Social Structure and Secondary Education

Between 1956 and 1967 there was both a political and social revolution in Trinidad and Tobago (Campbell, 1997). Historians such as McIntyre (1974; 1998) and Darwin (1988) have documented how in the post-World War II era groups of educated locals in British colonies agitated and organised themselves to become independent of British rule and colonial power. This political and social agitation had its genesis in the rise of Black consciousness or “negritude” (Henry,

1996) and working class political fervour in the 1930s and 1940s in which local citizens demanded more representation and involvement in their futures (Williams, 1962). This marked a rise in anti-colonial ideas, which were fuelled by discourses of “self-reliance” and “independence.” In 1958, in their attempt to throw off colonial rule, British West Indian colonies formed the Federation of the West Indies. However, this political union of former British colonies collapsed in 1962 when the governments in the larger colonies within it, such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, sought their independence from Britain as individual states.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the People’s National Party (PNM) was elected as the nationalist government in 1956, with its leaders being mainly members of the Afro-Trinidadian middle class. Dr. Eric Williams, a noted scholar and historian who had been educated at Oxford, England, was the political leader of the party and the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. According to Dr. Williams, the main aims of the new government included the “political education of the people,” “Nationhood,” “morality in public affairs,” “emancipation of women,” and “the reduction of racial tension” (Williams, 1962, p. 244).

By 1962 the new government had achieved its objective of forming a new political entity: a new nation, free from direct political control by the former colonial power Britain. However, the new PNM government soon realised that in order to solve the problems of the former colony, this new nationalism needed to go beyond a new flag, a new national anthem, a pledge and a motto. The government was faced with the challenge of bringing changes to a society that bore the legacies of a colonial past. These legacies included: high unemployment especially among the African and East Indian population; a high illiteracy rate; poverty; social stratification by class and colour; social separation of the races; and racial exclusion in occupations in certain sectors of the society (Williams, 1962). Consequently, the improvement of social welfare was one of the major objectives of the new nationalist government. It was seen as essential for the government to increase its control over the nation’s affairs. In part, this could be achieved by providing more jobs through economic expansion and reorganisation through industrialisation; by raising the standard of living by improving access to housing, education, and other social amenities; and by promoting racial equality and integration in public employment and education (Harewood & Henry, 1985). It was also seen as important that the first government by locals forge a *new people* from a diverse, multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic group, as at

that time there were few characteristics that were shared by all the people. The only common characteristic of the people in this diverse multi-racial island was the cultural and linguistic stamp resulting from British colonisation. As McIntyre (1974) argued, the society was extremely British and loyal to Britain.

Timár (1983, p. 397) argued that after independence “newly independent countries gradually [became] aware that they would have to produce their own intelligentsia and provide the masses with the basic general education essential to modern economic development.” These new countries bought into the economic idea that they needed to “catch up” with countries such as Canada, the United States and European countries that had been nations for longer periods and had well-developed economies. In other words these new countries needed to develop so that they could raise the standard of living of the population. The government saw its role as central in this development.

Development planning was in vogue in the 1960s and was based on the discourse of stage development—that societies advanced in a linear fashion, an idea shaped strongly by previous notions of Social Darwinism and evolutionary societal progress (Cashmore, 1996). Developmental planning was supported by the international lending agencies such as the World Bank to which new countries, such as Trinidad and Tobago, had to turn to get funding for their development. Development plans conceptualised within this framework were designed to take these new countries—formerly the colonial world, now the Third World (Darwin, 1988)—out of their economic misery and into economic prosperity as experienced in the First World nations. For example, Trinidad adopted the Puerto Rican model proposed by a prominent West Indian economist, Sir Arthur Lewis. He suggested that West Indian societies could move from traditional, agricultural economies to industrial development through a series of stages. The *Five-Year Development Programme 1958-1962*, the *Second Five-Year Plan 1964-1968*, and the *Third Five-Year Plan 1969-1972* were designed to take Trinidad and Tobago through the stages of industrial development (Harewood & Henry, 1985).

The thinking at the time was that a country’s ability to develop depended on having a group of citizens who were educated enough to participate as workers at various levels in the new economic structure. Therefore, citizens needed to be prepared for development and education was an important component of that preparation.

According to Woodhall (1987/1997) economists such as Becker and Schultz made the link between education and economic growth in the 1960s and developed a theory of human capital. This theory, Woodhall explained, is based on the argument that “human beings invest in themselves, by means of education and training, or other activities, which raises their future income by increasing lifetime earnings” (Woodhall, 1987/1997, p. 219). Education was therefore seen as an investment since expansion in education systems could foster economic growth (Torres, 1995). One could understand how this idea would take hold among groups of people excluded by wealth, race and history from the upper echelons of society.

Developmental planning was translated into governmental policy on education. For example, governments in new countries developed educational plans that were macro-statements or educational policies that contained lofty statements on what education was supposed to achieve (London, 1997; Psacharopoulos, 1986;). In Trinidad and Tobago, the United Nations encouraged educational planning through UNESCO since aid agencies such as the World Bank favoured countries that had elaborate plans. In 1964 the Prime Minister invited a UNESCO Educational planning mission to present an outline for the development of Education in Trinidad and Tobago. It recommended the establishment of an Education Planning Unit. Planners were trained and set to work on a national plan (Campbell, 1997; London, 1997). A one-man mission worked with the trainers to work out the model for secondary education. They were guided by and drew conclusions from past reports on education including the Marriot/Mayhew Report of 1931, the Moyne Commission of 1939, the Missen Report of 1945 and the Maurice Report of 1959. The planners developed the first Draft Plan for education in 1967 which after consultations with educators and the public was adopted in 1968.

By the mid-1950s access to secondary education began to change from being based on one’s race, ability to pay fees and one’s religion, to one’s ability to perform at secondary school and benefit from a secondary education (Campbell, 1997). Increased government and state control over education became a priority for the Trinidadian government because “educational institutions [could] socialise individuals in particular ways, creating specific political orientations toward democratic and non-democratic structures” (Torres, 1995, p. 263). However, as explained in Chapter Three, in the late 1950s denominational bodies, and not the

state dominated in the provision and control of education. In 1960, the government redressed this imbalance in the provision and control of secondary education in its favour. The government signed an agreement with the religious boards of management called the Concordat. This agreement changed the financing and administration of secondary education in Trinidad (Alleyne, 1996; Campbell, 1997) and set the stage for a new system of education after independence.

Under the Concordat religious boards 'gave' 80% of the First Form places available at the denominational secondary schools to the government, while the Boards retained the right to choose the remaining 20% of entrants. The religious boards kept the ownership and management of their properties and retained some discretion over curriculum, including Religious Instruction. In return the government provided aid to the boards in terms of two-thirds of the building costs and paid teachers' salaries. The denominational schools were now called "government-assisted" or "assisted schools" because the government was being *assisted by* and *assisting* the religious bodies in the provision of secondary education. This helped to foster a dual system in the provision and ownership of secondary schools between the government and religious bodies. The old system of denominational schools was not dismantled; rather a system of government control and ownership was established alongside a denominational one.

Between 1960 and 1963 the government further expanded its role in providing public secondary education. Ten new Modern Secondary schools—also called Central schools because of their location in areas outside of the major towns and suburbs—were constructed and opened by government. This increased the number of free places available from 1000 in 1960 to 3547 in 1963 (Campbell, 1997). However, even with that increase, only 35% of the secondary-aged population in Trinidad and Tobago had access to free secondary education (London, 1993a; 1993b). There continued to be a demand for free places for more students.

The Modern Secondary system was based on a model of modern secondary used in England in the 1940s. These new Modern Secondary Schools were supposed to offer a curriculum that included more practical and technical subjects. However, both Alleyne (1996) and Campbell (1996) argued that because these schools were headed by principals who were former graduate secondary teachers taken from the leading government and government-assisted

secondary schools, and because they did not wish the schools to seem inferior to the longer established schools, they tended to adopt an academic tradition, rather than a more practical or technical one. In time these schools became very much like the existing government-assisted schools that were based on a grammar school type system.

The Education Act of 1966 gave the government the power legally to “control and consolidate the entire education system” (Campbell, 1997, p. 84). Under the Act, the Teaching Service Commission became the sole body for establishing “criteria by which teachers were employed, promoted or dismissed.” This significantly reduced the power of managers and principals of government-assisted schools in the hiring and firing of teaching staff. This move in theory reduced the control of local religious Boards of Education in deciding who could or could not enter teaching in favour of the government. However, in practice, principals at the government-assisted schools continued to have some say in whom they hired.

The government achieved the provision of free secondary education for a wider population by removing tuition fees in government and government-assisted schools and by increasing the number of school places available through the establishment of these new schools. These measures were also “designed to lead to a secondary school body that would become more and more representative of the country’s population than in early colonial times” (Alleyne, 1996, p. 52-53). More students from the two largest, but mainly excluded ethnic groups, were now participating in secondary education in centralised urban and semi-urban locations. According to Alleyne (1996, p. 52) this increase in places “widened the opportunities for children with ability from poor families to get a secondary education.” Effectively, the increase in the number of places would also help to bring various racial populations together at the secondary school. However, in practice because the major populations were also geographically separate, school populations especially in rural areas continued to be racially similar.

In 1961 the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) replaced the College Exhibition as the selection mechanism to place students in the “free” places. The examination made places available “on the basis of ‘objective,’ standardized achievement and intelligence tests” (Baksh, 1986/2001, p. 713). In other words, this examination classified some students as “academically able students” worthy of a free secondary education. Up to 1975, the top 500 students in this

examination were also awarded monetary scholarships. This goal of attaining a free place at secondary school dominated the lives of thousands of Trinidadian children and their parents because many people were unable to pay for a secondary education at a private school. However, the number of places were limited and so free secondary places were reserved mainly for those who were “academically able.” Thus entry into secondary school at that time was highly competitive. As one interviewee recounted:

In the early 1960s I was one of the victims of the entrance examination, that is the early Common Entrance Examination where it was a two-tiered examination where you first had to do the intelligence test before going on to write the Common Entrance with the Arithmetic, Comprehension, Composition. I passed the Intelligence Test but because of the paucity of places then, I never got placed in one of the few secondary schools. There were just three or four to which I could have gained acceptance at that time (Salohcin72).

The Common Entrance Examination became a sorting device to place the best performing students—who were referred to by one of the interviewees as the “cream-of-the-crop” (Barbara\80)—into the older and more established secondary schools, especially the government-assisted schools. Placement was based on one’s performance in the examination and one’s choice of school. School choice was inextricably linked to location, religion and one’s perception of what was a ‘good’ school. The top 15% of students who attained the best scores were supposedly placed in their first choice school.

The ‘first choice schools’ were usually the older government and government-assisted schools which had a longer track record of producing students with high achievement in the O’Level and A’Level examinations or Island scholarship winners. Consequently, there was the perception that these schools were good. Ironically, these schools remained good, because they got the best students. So while access to secondary education increased, placement practices resulted in inequality between schools. The older schools got a significantly higher proportion of the students who had done well in the Common Entrance Examination. These students were more likely to do well at the Ordinary Level and Advanced Level. Thus evolved a system of “prestige schools,” which were in the main the longer established government schools and government-assisted schools run by various religious bodies and “non-prestige schools,” which were the newer government secondary schools.

The Common Entrance Examination employed disciplinary technologies (Foucault, 1977). It involved a system of ranking and separation of students, based on their academic performance. It normalised some students as “bright” and others as “not bright.” It classified who was deserving of a secondary education and who was not. It punished those who were not deemed to be successful by denying them an opportunity to get a secondary education. The Common Entrance examination made visible the good and made the weak student invisible in the secondary system.

“Passing” the new Common Entrance examination meant securing a place at secondary school based on one’s outstanding academic ability. “Failing” meant not securing a place, not necessarily because one was not bright—academically able—but because of the lack of places. However, for the man in the street, failure at Common Entrance signalled academic failure: not good enough to secure a place.

To summarise: after 1956 there were significant shifts in the dominant political discourses from “colonialism” to “nationalism,” “independence,” “self-reliance,” “development” and “self-rule.” As an independent country, Trinidad and Tobago could no longer depend on Britain to be responsible for its legal, political, social and economic affairs. The government of the new country also needed to redress the racial and economic imbalances that thrived under colonial rule. The education system was a pivotal point at which such changes could be made.

The new government implemented legal changes to bring a secondary education that was for the most part owned and operated by religious bodies, to one that was under government control. In this way the government could achieve its goals of social justice by providing equality of opportunity for all citizens to access secondary education. This government expanded the secondary system, albeit too slowly for the demands of the population which viewed a secondary education as a means of social mobility. By 1968, access to secondary education was no longer officially a privilege based on colour, race, class or religion. Who had access to secondary education had changed from one of whom could pay for secondary education, to include all citizens who were deemed to be “educationally able” and who, when educated were seen as most likely to be successful in helping in the development thrust. Secondary education was closely linked to social mobility in this socially stratified society. However, it was not

mobility for all as only the best—the “intellectually elite”—of each stratum could access this benefit.

During the period 1956-1967, the government of Trinidad and Tobago increased its control over the administration of the education system. It also expanded the number of government owned and operated secondary schools. Consequently, secondary education in the independence era was no longer limited to only those who could afford it; the system now included those who could do well and benefit from a secondary education. In other words, access was free to those who were academically able to do well in the system. It was also free for all students who could gain a place. In this way, far more children of working class parents benefited from a secondary education. However, access was limited to the top groups of ability and to some extent class: those who were poor and not bright still had no access to secondary education. Furthermore, more than 75% of the secondary school population still had no access to a free secondary education. There were simply not enough places. So the system included the most academically able and excluded the less academically able. Education remained synonymous with certification and a means of getting employment. Although the aims of education were framed within discourses of “social justice” and “equity,” in practice a person’s intellectual ability, and to a lesser extent class framed those who benefited from a free education.

### **Graduate Secondary Teachers and Training**

Between 1956 and 1967, the discourses of “nationalism” and “self-reliance” influenced the recruitment of graduate secondary teachers. There was a greater emphasis on an education being provided by a local graduate who knew local things (Campbell, 1997). For example, a Cabinet Proposal, adopted in 1960 by the government stated: “In the appointment of teachers, both graduate and non-graduate, preference would be given to West Indians over expatriates” (Trinidad and Tobago Government, 1960, p. 26). This proposal was later adopted in the Education Teaching Service Regulations (Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, 1966, p. 55, Section 7).

This nationalistic recruitment policy enabled the government to employ local graduates from the University of the West Indies, established at St. Augustine, Trinidad in the 1960s. As part of its development plan, the

government had invested heavily in providing scholarships for tertiary education. This helped to increase the pool of local degree holders (Harewood & Henry, 1985). This policy ensured that they would not have to compete with expatriate teachers for jobs. It also meant that the government could achieve its goal of increasing employment for locals.

In the same Cabinet Proposal there was a recommendation that the teachers and principals for the new Modern Secondary schools be based on recruitment firstly from existing teaching personnel at primary and secondary schools, then from new entrants. Consequently, rather than appoint expatriate administrators for new schools, local graduate secondary teachers from existing government and government-assisted secondary schools were placed in the new Modern Secondary schools as principals and administrators (Trinidad and Tobago Government, 1960). This opened up more career avenues for local graduate secondary teachers who now had a chance to become administrators in schools or move into the ranks of School Supervisor in the newly formed Ministry of Education. In addition, an expanding civil service, new industries and expansions in other sectors of the economy meant that local university graduates had more options for employment than ever before. Thus shortages of graduate staff continued to be a problem for schools, especially in areas of Mathematics, Science and Geography.

In 1959, members of the Maurice Committee, the first education review committee comprised of locals signalled that “there is need for the government itself to raise the standard of teacher training and improve conditions of the teaching service.” (Maurice Committee, quoted in Smith, 1978, p. 56). However, these words were not heeded as they were uttered at a time when the government was engaged in expanding the secondary education system and needed to staff these schools as quickly as possible. In 1964, the recruitment of graduate secondary teachers based on academic qualifications alone, was again severely criticised by another education committee made up of prominent, local educators. It stated:

The system of appointing teachers without any experience whatever to teach on a trial-and-error basis should be discontinued as early as practicable. The disadvantages which flow from this practice are obvious and need not be enumerated (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1964, p. 24).

The committee recommended that a teacher education policy should be at the forefront of educational plans even at the time of expansion. It stated:

Since the education and the professional training of a teacher ordinarily take longer than the mere building of a school, it is important that before each new step in the expansion of educational facilities is taken there should be a reasonable prospect of an adequate supply of teachers, of a quality and with an education and training appropriate to the purpose (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1964 p. 22).

The committee also warned of the need to have teaching staff who had not only university qualifications, but who had also participated in some programme of professional training. It explained:

However limited the supply of teachers may be—indeed, particularly when the supply is limited—it is essential that those entrusted with the education of the youth should themselves be both educated and trained (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1964 p. 22).

Despite the clear position put forward by educators for the training of secondary teachers, by 1967 there was still no concrete plan in place for the training of graduate secondary teachers. Although a pre-service Diploma in Education (DipEd) was established at Mona campus of the University of the West Indies in the late 1960s, it was unlikely that many Trinidadian graduates would have gone to Jamaica and incurred added expenditure when they could be employed as teachers without the additional DipEd qualification.

In 1964, a committee reviewing education commented on the dominant idea about the role of the secondary teacher as follows:

It has been suggested to us that at the secondary level the capacity for the pupil for learning ought to have been so well developed as to enable the teacher to devote himself *rather to the presentation of new knowledge to the pupil, than to the development of his ability to learn* (italics added; Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1964, p. 11).

This statement could only be possible at a time when only the ‘best’ students, based on the CEE examination, attended secondary school.

There continued to be an unstated but pervasive discourse that ability to learn and pass examinations was the same as ability to teach. This discourse continued to underlie the recruitment of new graduate secondary teachers as they were recruited without professional training to teach in the expanding system of the secondary system. This expansion made it difficult to require further training from new graduates as they could just have easily entered new professions that were being opened up in the burgeoning economic structure. Teaching was no

longer a first choice option for graduates and therefore not the only avenue for social mobility. One wonders whether or not these discourses of decolonisation, nationalism, development and social mobility shaped the ways in which the other interviewees came to see themselves as teachers. By 1967, the graduate secondary teacher was still involved in producing educated students who were academically certified, had good language skills, and had chance to enter university or a profession. Consequently, the purpose of a secondary education remained the same as in the colonial era—getting a certificate, which in an expanding economy was a sure way to access a job.

So far I have taken a look at the secondary system from the ‘top’ in terms of government policy and practice as constituted in and by prevailing discourses of nationalism, development, independence and social justice. I have noted how these discourses have informed policies on provision and access, to secondary education. But how did these ideas and events influence those who at secondary school at this time and later became teachers?

At this point, I peek into Billy Joe’s story. Billy Joe was the only interviewee to begin teaching at a secondary school between 1956 and 1967. How did he create his own understanding of what he should do as a teacher?

### **One Interviewee Enters Teaching**

Billy Joe was nineteen when he first began to teach at a co-educational, Modern Secondary school in a semi-urban area in 1965. He began teaching after graduating from one of the oldest government secondary schools in Trinidad. When he began teaching, he possessed Advanced Level (A’Level) qualifications and was classified as a “non-graduate master” because he did not yet have a degree. He applied and was accepted to teach at secondary school because of the existence of the classification “Assistant Teacher III” based on this level of qualifications.<sup>8</sup> One could argue that at the time of employment Billy Joe’s main experiences of life would have been at educational institutions.

In our interview I asked Billy Joe why he wanted to be a teacher. He explained:

I guess I always wanted to be a teacher. My mother was a teacher, although I didn’t know her that well. She died when I was very young.

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<sup>8</sup> The classification of secondary teachers is discussed in Chapter Seven.

But I guess [*name of school*] at the time when I was there, was coming to the end of a period of very great teachers. And because of the expansion of education, the democratisation of education in the country they took all of them and made them principals in the new school development; in the schools that were then being developed. So [*name of school*] lost all of them. But I had that experience of some of those great teachers and they had a tremendous impact on me and I guess that is the experience that was in the main that told me that I wanted to teach (Billy Joe\65).

Billy Joe was a student at a time when there were many foreign teachers at his school. However, as a consequence of recruitment initiatives discussed earlier in this chapter, it was mainly local graduate secondary teachers who became principals at the Modern Secondary schools. Billy Joe saw locals in administrative roles as a great achievement on the part of his teachers and described being “in awe” of them. One can only imagine that as a young, black, male national how proud he must have felt to see his teachers assume leadership positions in other schools, after his own experience of foreign teachers and administrators. Billy Joe also said that he experienced the “aura of [the] teacher being something glorified, somebody being special.” He viewed teachers as “glorified” because of the authority, prestige and power accorded to teachers in the late 1950s.

Billy Joe explained that he wanted to teach because he had a very positive image of his teachers, whom he described as “unforgettable characters” and that he wanted to be like them. He explained:

I think that the real ability to teach had to do with personality. That was my impression. Indelible on my consciousness was that. These guys who I revere and all the kids who went to [*name of school*] at that time when we meet, half of the conversation is about these teachers. They were all identifiable by their clothes or they rode a bicycle to school or they said crazy things. One was a music freak or whatever. They all had some set of characteristics to identify them. I wanted to be like that very much (Billy Joe\65).

I interpreted Billy Joe’s childhood dream of wanting to teach through the continuous process of positioning explored in Chapter One (see p. 29). Davies and Harré (1990) argued that “our development of our own sense of how the world is to be interpreted from the perspective of who we take ourselves to be” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 47) and that involves several processes. They argued that first a person learns “the categories which included some people and excluded others” (p. 47). Then one learns to participate “in the various discursive practices through which meanings are allocated those categories” (p. 47). The

next part of the process involves “positioning of self in terms of the categories and story lines. This involves imaginatively positioning oneself as if one belongs in one category and not the other” (p. 47). Finally, Davies and Harré argued that “the development of a sense of oneself as belonging to the world in certain ways and thus seeing the world from the perspective of one so positioned” (p. 47).

As a student Billy Joe learned the category of great teachers as persons with unique personalities. In other words, for Billy Joe a teacher was ‘great’ because he or she acted or behaved in certain ways. Billy Joe also saw his teachers as great because they had the potential to be good, local leaders. Billy Joe positioned himself within the story lines of the great teacher. In other words he saw himself as belonging to the category of great teachers. In this way, as a new teacher Billy Joe came to see himself as a teacher and did what he thought teachers should do—display his unique characteristics as a performance in the classroom.

As a new teacher, Billy Joe drew on the discourse of “teacher as performer.” He explained:

I saw teaching at that time not as a profession, I saw it as an art and I wanted to be that....So I thought a classroom was a place for performance by the teacher. And I certainly tried to live up to that in those early days (Billy Joe\65).

In Bill Joe’s opinion teachers acted in ways so as to make them stand out and show up their unique characters. He wanted to be like that.

Billy Joe also explained that what he thought he should do as a new teacher was picked up from observing his own teachers at secondary school. For example, he believed that as a new teacher he should not proceed with the lesson until the class was quiet; target the most difficult student and give him/her some responsibility; have a sense of humour; get to know each child as an individual; and establish a one-to-one relationship with each child. But according to Britzman (1986):

What students tend to observe is a pattern that results from the hidden influences of teacher preparation, school policy, curricular mandates and state law. Beyond students’ recognition that teachers have more police-like power in the classroom, students perceive their teachers’ work as similar to their own work, and as such, reduce it to mere classroom performance (Britzman, 1986, p. 445).

Billy Joe’s understanding of what he should do was limited to specific, observable performances which he sort to emulate in his teaching. However, he may have

seen these as part of the teacher's performance without understanding the pedagogical reasons behind these teacher behaviours.

When he first began to teach, Billy Joe's idea of teacher as performer was constrained by his professional knowledge landscape. Billy Joe explained that the school that he first taught at was "a completely different school" to the one he had attended. In the first place there were girls and there were no girls in his experience of secondary school. He said that he did not have the experience of how a male teacher should deal with girls, so he had to rely on other female teachers to discuss "feminine matters." In the second place, he began teaching at a school that was not in an urban area. His students came from a different social stratum and experienced a different way of life from his own experience of schooling in an urban area. He explained:

This was a relatively country school as compared to a town school....semi-urban, semi-rural; you are meeting children who had to tie out the cow before they came to school and reached late as a result. So those were challenges because it is one thing being able to do a performance in a class where everybody is bright and everybody is urban, modern...Your performance has to be very coloured by the type of child and the type of environment (Billy Joe\65).

Billy Joe recognised that he could not 'perform' in the same way that his teachers at his urban secondary school, steeped in colonial tradition, did. He needed to do things differently because he was performing in a different social environment, to a different social audience. His idea of what he should do as a teacher was limited by his own experience as a student. His experience of teaching was based on concepts of the "male," "urban," "bright," and "modern" student. He had to come to terms with doing teaching for both male and female, semi-rural, not-as-bright, and more traditional student.

Billy Joe based his actions on the patterns of behaviour of his former teachers. His story also highlights the importance of teachers in the lives of their students in terms of how our teachers influence what we do and how in time we can act in the same ways that they do. However, does acting in the same ways mean that we draw upon the same ideas as other teachers? Did Billy Joe do the things he did in the classroom for the same reasons that his teachers did?

Billy Joe's said that he enjoyed overcoming the challenges that faced him as a new teacher. When asked to describe his first years of teaching, Billy Joe responded that they were like an adventure. He explained:

My first years of teaching were like an adventure. It was adventure in the sense of adventure having newness about it, discovery and challenge about it but it also had excitement and enjoyment. And I would say adventure because all of those things characterised my first experience in teaching. I really loved it and it was really exciting. I guess in a sense at that tender age of 19, it was exploratory also. So adventure I think is a reasonable word (Billy Joe\65).

He explained one challenge as being instrumental in shaping what he did as a new teacher:

When I got to that school, I was young— 19 years old. I got to this school and the [*name of subject*] teacher whom I was taking over from calls me into the staff room and tells me “Don’t worry you know. They are not going to pass exams. They don’t have the aptitude to do [*name of subject*].” In other words, he had signed off on them early. When I went to that class it was such a beautiful class, it was such an attractive class. I started just trying to prove him wrong and I thought that was a test of my ability. So really and truly I knew what I had to do, because I designed my own thing, because these were children in whom hope was given up on (Billy Joe\65).

Billy Joe’s colleague drew upon the discourses of “ability,” “teaching as the transmission of knowledge,” and “education as certification.” This teacher did not think that Billy Joe should waste his time with less able students because they would not do well in examinations. I interpreted his story as follows. Billy Joe resisted those assumptions about his students not being able to do well in exams because they were not bright enough or because they were not capable of the success of urban and bright students. In addition, Billy Joe knew that if his students did not do well on external examinations, he would look like an incompetent teacher. In other words, he recognised that his performance as a teacher would be measured by his students’ success. He too drew upon the discourse of teaching as the transmission of knowledge. But he also drew upon the idea that it was his responsibility to ensure that his students learned.

Billy Joe said that he set out to prove that he could be a good teacher by making his students learn and do well on examinations. He explained:

I had to come up with unique designs then as to how [to learn] and with [*name of subject*] the easy way out is to have them work plenty problems and work hard with them. And they used to come home by my home for free lessons, extra lessons on Saturday mornings and they all passed [*name of subject*]. But the method: it had to be inspirational for one, and it also has to be repetitive in a sense. So I didn’t mind doing a topic over and over and then I had to find other ways to do it because I was enthused. I was very motivated especially because they had written off these kids and I was full of energy because I was 19 years old. So I guess the methods I

used were designed by myself and what I learned from my own experience. But I said there were differences with that experience and the environment I was in. I designed my own things and it worked very well (Billy Joe\65).

Billy Joe's unique designs to help his students learn were based on "extra lessons," and "repetition." He was convinced that his own actions would help students to be better learners. However, again Billy Joe was drawing upon the transmission model of teaching and he saw learning as memorisation and rote. For Billy Joe the challenge and satisfaction of his reliance on self and his personal discovery of techniques that worked provided him with a sense of adventure, pleasure and enjoyment.

Based on Billy Joe's experience with his own teachers, the normal way to be a teacher was to be a performer/actor. As a new teacher he tried to perform in ways that made his teaching memorable and unique. But when faced by the perceived inability of his students and the expectation for their failure, he came to see himself as a performer in a different way—one who could ensure their success in examinations. If he could pull off that act, then he would prove his colleague wrong and be a good teacher.

But Billy Joe was also drawing on a discourse of the idea of teaching as a "performative act" which hooks (1994) argued:

is that aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst for drawing out the unique elements in each classroom. To embrace the performative aspect of teaching we are compelled to engage "audiences," to consider issues of reciprocity. Teachers are not performers in the traditional sense of the word in that our work is not meant to be a spectacle. Yet it is meant to serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning (hooks, 1994, p. 11).

Billy Joe's story gives some indication into how the context of teaching could create tensions for the new teacher. Billy Joe began teaching in a new type of secondary school, where the traditional ideas of who was bright and able did not hold. But he thought of himself as a teacher who could "prove them wrong" and this enabled him to think of what he should do to help his students. Although his initial understanding of was of the teacher in the traditional sense of a performer who did things to stand out, he came to understand how what he did as a new teacher could help his students to be successful or not successful.

Billy Joe sought to engage his students in the learning process, although other teachers had labelled them as not being capable of success. He wanted his

teaching to be a performance, but at the same time he took up a subject position as performer/activist to ensure that his students did well in examinations. This enabled him to become more active in getting his students to learn. Billy Joe became a performer/activist for the welfare of his students who were different from the ones who were being successful in Trinidad at that time—those brighter students in older secondary schools like the one he had attended—because he possibly recognised that they too would have to do their part in the development of the country and they could should not be left out of the teaching/learning process.

Billy Joe's story also highlights the influence of gender and age on how persons may see themselves as teachers. He said that as a young man did not think that he could deal with "feminine issues" and problems in a co-educational environment. His youth enabled him to see himself as an energetic and vibrant teacher who should get involved in the lives of his children.

These brief stories have been used to illustrate how Billy Joe's understanding of what he should do as a teacher was based upon a construction of what he 'knew' or believed, his past experiences and the ideas he came into contact with (Richardson, 1997a). However, the ideas that were available for him to choose were constituted through and in terms of the dominant discourses of his time. These stories by no means illustrates all the discourses that Billy Joe drew upon as a new teacher, but they are some of the ones identified in his talk. Other stories from Billy Joe may reveal examples of other discourses.

Billy Joe began to teach in 1965, a few years after independence and at a time when an educational policy for the new nation was being formulated. What were the social, political and economic situations like in Trinidad at this time? What discourses were available to inform educational policies and the educational system? Were there any changes in the provision of and access to a secondary education? Why did the interviewees who began to teach at this time want to teach? What ideas did they come in with? How did these ideas and available discourses enable or constrain how they came to see themselves as teachers and what they did as beginning teachers? These questions are used to frame the discussion in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE



### DIS TIME NOT LIKE BEFORE TIME: BOOM DAYS, BLACK POWER, AND PETRO'DOLLARS—1968 TO 1983

*“Dis time not like before time: Times now are not like they were before.  
Things have changed drastically”  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 194).*

#### Introduction

This chapter is presented in three parts. In the first part, I explore the changes in the social and political environment between 1968 and 1983, examine the changes in secondary education in Trinidad, identify some dominant discourses and describe their influence on the new educational policies on the education system and on graduate secondary teachers. In the second part, I turn to the reasons given by the nine interviewees who began to teach and their initial ideas about teachers and teaching. In the third part, I examine one interviewee’s story to explore the discourses he drew upon as a new teacher.

#### Social Change And Secondary Education

The period 1968 to 1983 was one of significant social and economic change in Trinidad and Tobago. The year 1968 was an important one in education, as it marked the beginning of the implementation of the first locally devised education plan for Trinidad and Tobago. The new education plan ushered in a new structure of secondary education that was quite different from what existed in the past.

In 1968, one interviewee was at university. Nine were in secondary school. Four were in primary school. Eleven were five years old or under and four were not yet born. Of the nine interviewees enrolled in secondary schools, eight were at government-assisted schools and one attended a government secondary school. All of these interviewees could have been described as ‘academically able’ students. All of them except one, secured a place in the secondary system through the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) at a time

when only 18% of the population passed the CEE (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1984). The only interviewee who did not 'pass' the Common Entrance Examination was still able to participate in secondary education after passing an entry examination offered by his secondary school.

For me, the period between 1968 and 1983 marked the time in which I started and completed much of my formal education in Trinidad. In 1968, I had already completed my first year at primary school and had moved from South Trinidad to live "in the East." In 1974, I passed the Common Entrance examination and began as a student at a government-assisted secondary school at which I would return to teach in 1998. In 1979, I successfully completed my Ordinary Level (O'Level) examinations. In 1981, after successfully completing my Advanced Level examinations, I began to teach at a private secondary school before beginning a university programme in 1982.

### **Political And Social Conditions**

Between 1968 and 1983, there was considerable political stability in Trinidad and Tobago. The Peoples' National Movement (PNM) government was in its third term of office, and still under the political leadership of Dr. Eric Williams. This government was re-elected in 1971, 1976, and again in 1981 after the death of its political leader. This political stability may have accounted for consistency in policies during that period.

Despite the government's efforts after independence to provide jobs, social amenities, and redistribute income, by 1968 there was little change in the social conditions (Harewood & Henry, 1985). There was still high unemployment, especially among urban Black youth. There were not enough economic opportunities for young Blacks and Indians to "move up" the social ladder. As a result there was a widening gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" (Harewood & Henry, 1985). Positions of power in private enterprise and the civil service were still held by local whites. As one interviewee recounted:

You still had some vestiges of the colonial past even at that stage that they had not been eliminated yet. It was difficult for dark skinned people to work in banks and that kind of thing (Salohcin\72).

In other words, discourses that promoted social and racial stratification were marginalising those of "social justice," "equality" and "equity." Change had not come fast enough for young, educated Blacks, who saw themselves as being

governed by the same white structure, even though there was Black political leadership. As Campbell (1997), an educational historian, argued:

Concurrently, it was felt by some blacks that the social structures of colonialism, especially the predominance of white creoles in business with the long-standing consequential discrimination against blacks and Indians in employment in private enterprise, had not been destroyed despite the coming to political power of black men, and increased access to education by Indians and blacks (Campbell, 1997, p. 74).

Consequently, there was perceived inequality on the part of the working classes and unemployed (Harewood & Henry, 1985), as they saw themselves being deprived of a fair slice of the “economic pie.” Some young people thought that the government was not sympathetic to their needs and that it was not interested in radical reformation of social and economic structures to address the imbalances in society.

These feelings and perceptions of inequality among Black youth were fuelled by events in the United States. In that country, Blacks were engaged in their own political, legal and social struggles to achieve full American citizenship and attain racial equality especially in economic and social enterprises (Ashmore, 1994). This struggle was known as the Civil Rights Movement (Levy, 1992). Although legal racial segregation did not exist in Trinidad, social and economic inequity paralleled the experiences of young Blacks on the island. Many Trinidadian students at universities in the United States and at home, were actively involved or sympathetic towards the Civil Rights Movement. For example, several West Indian students had been involved in anti-racist protests at St. George’s University in Canada. However, it was Black Power, a more militant offshoot of the Civil Rights Movement (Barbour, 1968, Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967; Levy, 1992) that became popular among the Trinidadians.

This Black Power movement also had a Trinidadian connection. The leader of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee in 1967 was a Trinidadian, Stokley Carmichael. He was very militant and active in getting Blacks in the United States to register to vote. He had moved to New York as a high-school student and in 1967 he was a student at Howard University, a campus very popular among Trinidadian students in the USA (Levy, 1992). Therefore, whether viewed as a radical or a saint he was well known to the Trinidadian public and a possible hero among some intellectuals.

Stokley Carmichael and Charles Hamilton argued that Black Power was:

A call for black people in this country [United States] to unite, to reorganize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society.

The concept of Black Power rests on the fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks.* By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society (italics in the original; Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967, p. 44).

Both the Civil Rights and the Black Power Movements were framed within discourses of social justice, racial equality, racial equity and self-reliance. These ideas helped to fuel an “anti-white establishment feelings to great intensity in the local black community” (Campbell, 1997, p. 75), especially among the students at the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies. The discourses were also taken up by the young, unemployed, urban, African youth who were disturbed by the inequities that still existed some 14 years after self-government. The response was a social revolution in Trinidad.

In 1970 there were “outbursts of civil disobedience and a clamour by youth for government to become more accountable to the people” Lynch-Richards (1976, p. 8). This 1970 Black Power Movement was marked by public demonstrations, marches by the unemployed, an attempt by a section of the army in February 1970 to oust the government, and a national State of Emergency, a period of time I remember well, despite being only seven at the time. These social outbursts were considered to be “civil disobedience” because young people were revolting against their more moderate leaders. Nonetheless, this movement was significant in highlighting social issues related to race and the need to make the government more accountable for providing what it had promised (Alleyne, 1996; Shah, 2000).

This social revolution “encouraged a more articulate and positive assertion of blackness, of black dignity, of the right of black people everywhere to equality before the law and to equal opportunities of employment” (Parry, Sherlock and Maingot, 1987, p. 276). A new political party, the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) comprised mainly of young, educated, Black men and women emerged from this awareness. The followers advocated a return to African culture and a rejection of white domination. They wore African dress, hairstyles, and legally changed their names to names which reflected their African heritage (Pantin, 1990).

Five of the ten interviewees who were at secondary school or in post-secondary education in 1970 mentioned the Black Power Movement as a significant event that defined the way they came to see themselves as individuals and teachers. As James Brown explained:

In the late sixties and early seventies, I was a sixth former and then went on to University. This was a period of turbulence and change in world history. There was the "American Civil Rights Movement", "Black Power" and Marxism: these had all been a part of my direct experience over the period. Entering a new school system at that time with all these ideas and the enthusiasm and idealism of youth, made my early years defining moments, not only in my professional status of teacher, but also defining moments for me as a person in the development of my world view (James Brown\77).

Poui and Sid Chase, who were both at secondary school at the time, said that they became more politically active and socially conscious, especially as students at university. Billy Joe, who was at university in 1968, explained that the Black Power revolution helped him to gain a better understanding of the education system. He said "I got a clarification on what the education was, on what education purpose is supposed to be" (Billy Joe\65). Salman explained that his school had a "long history of dealing with the elite." He recalled several incidents in which he perceived that the policies and practices at this school were unfair, especially to black students. For example, he described some rules, such as a rule against the carrying of afro combs as 'anti-black student,' and an incident of sit-down protest over a student who was militant and seen as communist. Salman also explained that his level of political and social consciousness of issues of "racism," "social justice," "social equity" and "Afrocentrism" ignited as a result of his school experience. These ideas flourished at university in the mid-1970s, before he began to teach. He stated:

At university I became a lot more socially conscious. I know for many people at the time that was the popular thing. That was the in thing. You dressed a certain way. You did certain courses. You expressed certain views (Salman\82).

When he began to teach at the same secondary school he attended, he was very conscious of these issues.

Notwithstanding the social revolution of the early 1970s and the government's policies for social integration, little progress had been made in terms of racial integration at some schools especially those in rural areas. For

example, Salohcin described his experience of beginning to teach in a rural primary school in 1972 in the following way:

In the 1970s you are talking about a young black, man going into a predominantly East Indian community with an afro. Some of those students...had never really seen someone of African descent at that so close up with such a hairstyle. So my hairstyle was something that aroused their curiosity. It was always out of curiosity that some of these young East Indian children would come to my table and put their hands on my hair and press it down and because of the hair it would come back up and that was so strange and it was excitement for them. Some of them referred to me by my ethnicity because they could not remember my name. It never offended me because I saw them as children who came from a community and they were about learning. It was an opportunity for me to educate them and take them out of that kind of—I want to say that kind of mind set (Salohcin\73).

Salohcin saw himself as an activist in terms of changing ideas related to race based on his presence as an Afro-Trinidadian in a school with mainly East Indian students.

### **Economic Conditions**

The period 1968 to 1983 was also one of economic revolution in Trinidad and Tobago. Between 1970 and 1972 the government sought to increase the role of the state and redress the social inequities. It did so by adopting new policies aimed at reducing poverty and redistributing the limited economic pie (Harewood and Henry, 1985). The government adopted measures such as more funding for higher education, the establishment of a local bank, small business initiatives, and increased social assistance to poor persons. These government initiatives received a significant economic boost in 1973 when oil-producing countries quadrupled the price of oil products (D'Aeth, 1975). For many industrialised countries these increases significantly raised costs of production and living. For them, this was a period of economic crisis marked by increased prices, inflation, and high unemployment as industries closed their doors and moved to cheaper labour markets in developing countries. In contrast, in oil-producing, newly industrialising countries like Trinidad, Nigeria, Venezuela and Mexico, these high oil prices brought untold revenues and fortunes to the economies.

These "Petro'dollars" (a Trinidadian reference to money from petroleum exports) brought unprecedented wealth to a nation which only a few years before was plagued by staggering unemployment and poverty. The government was able to increase its expenditure, as well as secure international loans from the World

Bank for development projects (London, 1993c). For example, the civil service grew by 33% between 1973 and 1978 (Harewood & Henry, 1985). The country's balance of payments went from a deficit of TT\$32 million to a surplus of TT\$694 million in a few months (Campbell, 1997). The Pt. Lisas Industrial Project was initiated to site new industries producing petrochemicals, iron and steel, ammonia, and urea. These industries were formed by the development of partnerships between the government and multi-national corporations relocating their business from more industrialised countries. This expansion in the industrial sector opened up new job opportunities in the field of science and technology. Consequently, university graduates had a wider choice of professions.

The government used the revenue gained from the petroleum industry to increase the salaries of public servants, including teachers. With more money in hand, there was an increase in the demand for goods and services, such as new homes, cars, appliances, travel, banking and insurance. The government also used the financial gains from the petroleum industry to subsidise the cost of education by providing parents with book and uniform grants, a free school bus service, school meals and a school medical service (Campbell, 1997). Consequently, in the 1970s the population experienced an improved standard of living and prosperity. It is for these reasons that the 1970s are fondly remembered and referred to by Trinidadians as the "Boom Days."

### **Planning And Expansion In Secondary Education**

The *Draft Education Plan, 1968-1983* was the first major education plan developed by the government after independence. Up until 1968, educational planning was included in the Five-Year Development plans that the government had developed since 1958 (e.g. Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1969). According to Alleyne (1996) the 1968-1983 education plan "laid the foundation for a relevant national education system for the country and shaped its growth well into the future" to (Alleyne, 1996, p. 113). The *Draft Plan* maintained strong links between education and nationalism, economic development, and decolonisation. For example, education was proposed to be "a fundamental contributor to human resource development, to discipline and to economic progress in individuals, families and nations" (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 6). The underlying philosophy of education was explained in the plan as follows:

What are we educating for? We are supposed to produce citizens who are intellectually, morally and emotionally fitted to respond adequately and productively to the varied challenges of life in a multi-racial developing country and to the changes which are being brought about rapidly in the economic foundations of civilisation, particularly the challenges of Science and Technology (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 5).

In other words, the goal of education as stated in the educational policy was to produce citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who would be able to make a contribution to the development of a society that was moving toward an industrial economy and a more urban lifestyle. Each citizen could pursue his/her personal goals by becoming productive members of the developing society. This development was based on the discourse of science and technology as the engine of progress and the theory of human capital.

The planners explained that the 1968 Education Plan was prepared to increase the local input into the planning of the education system. They explained:

Full national independence and identity will be achieved and secured only on the basis of an education system which does not rely on foreign assumptions and references for its existence and growth (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 5).

In other words, the planners sought to decolonise the education system. Yet, despite the need to create an education system that did not “rely on foreign assumptions,” a UNESCO planning mission was used to train the local planners who prepared the 1968 Plan. The planners accepted the aims of education of the Report of the UNESCO-ECLA conference that stated:

General education...should endeavour to develop a responsible attitude towards work, stability in relations with others, adaptability and change, the ability to think objectively and a sensitive approach to culture beyond the limits of specialisation (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 5).

The favourable economic conditions after 1973 enabled the government to secure loans from international lending agencies such as the World Bank (London, 1993c). However, as D’Aeth, (1975) and P. Williams (1976) argued these World Bank loans to newly developing countries came (and continue to come) with ideas, advice and programmes on how education could be linked to economic growth (for example, The World Bank, 1995b). Usually, these ideas, advice and programmes were based on capitalist principles and suited to the needs

of already developed countries and the recommended education systems were expensive, text-book driven, and followed western and/or urban educational systems rather than systems based on the ideas of the people in the new countries. Similarly, Rich (1994) argued the aim of the World Bank was to integrate the newly developing countries into a capitalist world economy, rather than the eradication of the poverty and inequality that existed in countries such as Trinidad and Tobago.

Consequently, such ideas, advice and programmes could be regarded as a form of neo-colonisation or new colonisation of education as the decisions of what was good or not good were *not* being made by the people who were affected by the policies. Instead, international planners, usually from developed countries made these decisions. This reliance on foreign ideas, advice and programmes helped to maintain the dependency on a foreign system, foreign consultants, foreign money, and therefore, negated the attempt to remove foreign assumptions and references.' By adopting the UNESCO policies, the local planners passed up an opportunity to create a totally new system. One wonders whether or not these policies were the best for those upon whom they would be inflicted or could another system have more adequately met the needs of a Trinidadian society, which at that time was plagued by unemployment, high illiteracy rates and poverty?

One major aim of the 1968 plan was the expansion of the secondary sector to provide education up to the age of 14 for all students. This would be accomplished by the establishment of three-year Junior Secondary Schools which were to accommodate 77.2% of the 12+ age group by 1977 (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 18). However, in 1975, the Prime Minister presented a new set of proposals on secondary education to Cabinet (Ministry of Education, 1975a, 1975b). Some educational historians argued that these new proposals were put forward because of the changed economic fortunes in the country after 1973 (Alleyne, 1996). Newspaper reports of the time indicated that there was an outcry among parents when they realised that not all of the Junior Secondary graduates would be placed in senior secondary schools. Whatever the reason, the government's improved financial position enabled an extension of secondary education to all the graduates of Junior Secondary school. They were then able to complete a five-year secondary programme in two cycles, the Junior Secondary and the Senior Comprehensive (Ministry of Education, 1975a, 1975b).

The planners explained that “the term [comprehensive] as used here is not borrowed from the U.K. It is a name tied to this particular type of school which encompasses two traditionally separate courses” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 33). Such an establishment, the planners argued would reduce capital and recurrent costs, promote the interaction between different parts of the curriculum and raise the profile of secondary education (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968).

The new structure for secondary education was guided and influenced by the perceived ‘manpower needs’ of a capitalist, industrial society (Gould, 1993). The educational system was planned with a view to producing workers that economists foresaw the society needed (Coombs, 1968). For example, in 1975, when the Prime Minister modified the 1968 education plans, he argued that:

It must be realised and accepted that any Education Plan for Trinidad and Tobago must have as its prime goals the preparation of our citizens leaving the secondary system to seek either immediate employment or further education at some higher level. The majority belong to the former group. Various studies have shown that for any country involved in heavy industrial developments, the requirement for personnel can be broken down, generally into the following categories:

10-15 percent	Professionals
15-20 percent	Sub professional and technicians
60-70 percent	Persons with general training but with definite exposure to the sciences and industrial processes
10-15 percent	Skilled craftsmen

(Ministry of Education, 1975a, p. 5).

In other words, the educated person would be a person willing to become a worker or be ready for higher education. In these historical conditions, there was no waste of the human resource in providing skilled manpower and use of resources in education. Everyone was needed to do his/her part to move the country forward.

Inherent in this two-tier structure was that different types of secondary schools could be used to produce different types of secondary graduates. The older, more established “prestige” schools would continue to produce the professionals and the new schools the other categories of workers. The new Comprehensive system was intended to provide the country with a workforce suited to the type of industrial development that the country was embarking upon.

The two types of secondary schools offered two distinct curricula at the secondary level. According to the 1993 National Task Force these were:

1. An essentially academic programme designed to prepare graduates for further education or employment at the clerical level in traditional workplaces. Market driven, ad hoc introduction of technical/vocational courses has been taking place at the traditional 5 and 7 year school.
2. A programme that is oriented towards the technical/vocational skills areas. This programme is provided at the Senior Comprehensive schools, which also provide, on a smaller scale, the more traditional academic programmes for those who are so inclined (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 50).

Popkewitz and Brennan (1998a) argued that:

Curriculum becomes...part of a discursive field through which the subjects of schooling are constructed as individuals to self-regulate, discipline and reflect upon themselves as members of a community/society (Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998a, p. 13).

In other words, the curriculum offered to secondary students differed by type of school and the type of educated worker to be produced by the school.

The curriculum of the new comprehensive schools included “both academic and technical courses in the same establishment” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 33). All students at the co-educational Junior Secondary schools pursued a broad-based curriculum proposed in the education plan. The curriculum of the new system could be seen as an extension of government control. For example, the general objectives of the common Junior Secondary curriculum were:

- (a) to equip the pupil for embarking on specialised education and training courses by developing in him the academic attitudes of curiosity and, initiative and investigation, along with the basic competence in a wide range of disciplines;
- (b) to promote a close identity of pupil with his environment and with the national effort of development (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 19).

The school-subjects offered for study at the Junior Secondary Schools included English, Music, Arts & Crafts, Physical Education, Mathematics, General Science, Agriculture, Social Studies, and French or Spanish (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968). However, the prevocational courses were based on gender. For example, Woodwork and Metalwork were recommended “*for Boys...to develop awareness of the scientific and mathematical foundations of technology*” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 20). Food preparation, Textiles and Clothing and Home Economics were recommended “*for*

*Girls...* to acquaint girls with basic orientation required for vocations which from time to time interest girls (e.g. nursing, office education); to promote awareness of the scientific foundation of household management and the various aspects of the course” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 20). After the three-year period, the students at the Junior Secondary Schools wrote the locally set 14+ Examinations and were placed at Senior Comprehensive Schools. The students who did well in these exams were placed in traditional Government Secondary schools or Government-assisted schools.

At the Senior Comprehensive schools students pursued “academic, specialised craft, or pre-technician courses” (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 51). The curriculum subjects offered were based on “the prescriptions regarding environmental and national relevance to the necessities of economic development and social change” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 34). Student choice was restricted because “there is no scope in this expensive sector of the education system for subjects which do not have an excellent and sound justification related to both the national interest and the welfare of the individual student” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 34). The O’Level subjects were limited to “English” (Language), “Mathematics”, “a science subject” (Chemistry, Physics, Biology), “a social science subject” (Geography, West Indian History, Commerce) and “a subject within the broad field of the Humanities” (French, Spanish, Art, Music and English Literature). The A’Level subjects were also ‘streamlined and grouped into four areas:

- (a) Mathematics (Mathematics (Pure and Applied), Physics
- (b) Science Chemistry, Biology, Physics
- (c) Modern Studies History, Geography English
- (d) Languages French, Spanish

(Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 36).

These curricular recommendations shaped the list of school-subjects offered by many secondary schools. They also indicated a distinction between academic subjects and non-academic subjects pursued at the school level. There was a clear absence of the fine arts such as dance or drama and there was a strong academic emphasis on what was deemed useful for a developing nation. The proposed curriculum could also be viewed as an extension of governmental control as the school-subjects deemed valuable enough for students to pursue were linked to issues of industrial development.

There was a rapid growth in the number of secondary schools between 1968 and 1983. In 1969 there were 50 secondary schools—21 government schools and 29 Government-assisted schools and 6 Intermediate schools. Between 1972 and 1983, 21 new Junior Secondary schools were introduced into the system (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1984). Between 1975 and 1983, 24 Senior Secondary schools were “constructed, furnished and made operational” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 21). By 1983 there was a total of 93 secondary schools: 65 government and 28 government-assisted schools (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1984). This expansion enabled the government to achieve a fully-operational, national secondary education system, which existed alongside a modified denominational one. However, as Mark (1987, p. 65) argued “in addition to the new Junior and Senior Secondary Schools, the traditional secondary schools were retained and were allowed to function in their established academic ways.” She added “the retention of the old system and the introduction of the new system has resulted in the present system of secondary education consisting of two parallel and relatively independent sub-systems.” (Mark, 1987, p. 65-66).

The new schools represented a totally new organisational system for secondary education unlike that of the five or seven year Government and Government-assisted secondary schools. As one interviewee explained:

The new system divided the five-year programme leading to the General Certificate of Education O’Level examinations into two: a three-year programme at the Junior Secondary Level, followed by another two years at the Senior Secondary Level (James Brown\77).

These new schools also differed from the existing ones in terms of infrastructure. They were modern and large unlike any other seen in Trinidad and Tobago before 1972. They were well equipped with modern equipment. As one interviewee who began teaching in one of these new schools recalled:

The schools were large...just the sheer size of them was a cause for marvel, because all the schools that I had attended or had known first-hand were about either half or in some cases quarter of that size. The size seemed to be more akin to a campus with all the different departments. That was the impact it had on me (James Brown\77).

Several of the new Junior Secondary and Senior Comprehensive schools were constructed in rural areas in an attempt to redress the imbalance between the

provision of secondary education in rural and urban areas (Harvey, 1981). The new schools were also wholly owned and operated by the government.

All of the new Junior Secondary and Senior Comprehensive schools were co-educational, unlike the single-sex status of most of the older secondary schools. This was done to achieve integration among the sexes in the new schools. Most of the Junior Secondary Schools operated on a daily double-shift system—morning and evening shift. Under this system two separate groups of students and teachers used the same facilities. Each shift had its own vice-principal, but there was only one principal for the school (London, 1993b).

The Senior Comprehensive schools operated on a whole-day basis. At the end of two years, students wrote external examinations Cambridge Ordinary Level, which were replaced by the Caribbean Examinations Council [established in 1979] (CXC, O'Level) or the National Education Certificate (NEC) for technical/vocational and craft subjects. Eventually a few Senior Comprehensive schools started additional two year courses to prepare students for the General Cambridge General Certificate in Examination Advanced Level (GCE A'Level). Composite Schools had the same curriculum as the Junior and Senior Comprehensive Schools; however, students spent their five secondary years in one location.

The Common Entrance Examination (CEE) continued to be used to place the increasing numbers of students at secondary schools. For example, in 1972, 32% of the students taking the Common Entrance secured places at secondary school. By 1975, this figure increased to 45%. By 1983, the year that the youngest interviewees began secondary school 67% of the population attained places in the secondary system (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1984). This placement was based on a complex mechanism of a student's academic ability, parental choice, geographic location and availability of places as described in Chapter Three.

But the CEE could also be viewed as a complex system in which “pupils [were] distributed according to aptitudes...and the use that could be made of them when they left school” (Foucault, 1977, p. 182). The government decided that it was important to produce a group of leaders and a group of workers and used the CEE examination to assign them to specific spaces to receive an education that would best fit their ability and the positions they were to take up as workers. One could argue that such specialisation may be good, but when a placement practice

placed the more educationally able at the older, more prestigious schools, then the benefits of specialisation become blurred.

The event of being placed at or passing for a Junior Secondary school was stigmatised as students were regarded as not being academically good enough to pass for one of the older, more established schools, despite the fact that more than 60% of all students were assigned to Junior Secondary schools! For example, Maya one of the three interviewees who passed for a Junior Sec, recounted how she felt when she heard her Common Entrance results in 1974:

First of all when I passed for [*name of school*] it was traumatic to say the least. But you know you are expecting...having done pretty OK in primary school you know. I was expecting to go to “a better school” and I did not. And passing Common Entrance for there was really like a failure, because that is how—not my parents—but society...and you hear the talk that Junior Sec whatever, whatever. So initially it was not nice at all having to know I had to go there (Maya\89).

This placement practice was competitive and hierarchical. It siphoned the ‘best’ students to the older, more established schools and at the same time it helped to establish a perception of the Junior Secondary and Senior Comprehensive schools as inferior secondary institutions because of the perceived lower levels of academic achievement of its students. As James Brown, who began teaching at one of the first Senior Comprehensive schools explained:

The Junior/Senior Comprehensive system widened the net. But a view developed that these new secondary qualifiers were of inferior quality to the students who went to the more traditional five-year schools, the most academically successful of which were termed “prestige schools” (James Brown\77).

The CEE was not really about equality of opportunity as the kind of education one had access to depended upon one’s academic ability. It normalised good students as academically able.

The placement of students in different schools based on measured academic ability also reproduced the existing social class differences (Bourdieu, 1986/1997; Campbell, 1996). In 1996 the World Bank commented on this reproduction of social class between schools in Trinidad:

Children from lower income families are concentrated in the Junior Secondary, Senior Comprehensive, and Composite schools. By contrast [children] from upper and middle classes have the highest concentration in 7-year traditional schools, 5-year traditional school, and Sixth Form Colleges, far above their share in the total population in secondary schools (The World Bank, 1996, p. ix).

Similarly, one interviewee who began teaching at one of the new Senior Comprehensive Schools summed up:

In most cases the students who were qualified for the “new” schools came from a working-class, socio-economic, whereas the children of the middle and upper classes all went to the “prestige schools” (James Brown\77).

Therefore, social class stratification was reproduced rather than reduced within the new structure of secondary schools.

The new Senior Comprehensive schools had large populations of well over 1000 students. As one interviewee who started teaching at one of the new comprehensive schools recounted:

The Senior Comprehensive student profile took some getting used to. They were all at that critical transitional age—15, 16 17—all of them at that age. So that was another aspect. This is a traumatic period in a young person’s development so that you have all the adolescent issues to manage and resolve (James Brown\77).

These students were also different from those who attended the Government and Government-assisted secondary schools. As James Brown noted:

The Junior Secondary school student was and still is a complicated persona with a lack of self-esteem, anger and raw potential all mixed into one (James Brown\77).

They were different because for the first time in Trinidadian society large numbers of children from *all* social classes in society were taking part in the education system. The “children of the masses,” (Poui\79) many of whom were from less affluent families and the working class, were receiving a secondary education in large numbers. Many of these children were the first person ever in their families to receive a secondary education. These new students brought greater variations in ability, interest and attitudes to the secondary system, which previously had only catered to the top 20% of the population. For the first time there was mixing of these socio-economic groups and this sometimes resulted in conflict between students and between students and teachers. As James Brown explained:

The new type of student also faced several social problems such as poverty and different family arrangements. The consequences of these problems invariably entered the secondary school system. These concerns were intensified by the large numbers of students within one age group in the school (James Brown\77).

Braithwaite (1953) in his sociological investigation into social stratification in Trinidadian society identified many differences between the

middle and lower classes. For example, he argued that people in the lower classes displayed more aggressive behaviour, used swear words, had differences in dress, taste, language, modes of expression, religion and attitude toward education. These differences in behaviour would become noticeable if several students expressed them at the school level. Sometimes these attitudes were quite different from those of their teachers who had been educated in the traditional system, where the range of abilities was narrower. For example, Poui who began teaching at one of the early Senior Comprehensive schools in 1979 described this difference in his attitude toward education and the attitude of his students in a Senior Comprehensive school. He said:

I think also the attitude of students [differed from] our attitude toward the education. I thought that this was something desirable. You were going towards this thing and you had a certain approach and so on. You saw this as desirable and therefore you had a certain approach that you...in terms of doing work, in terms of even your discipline. You were not about to challenge anybody in terms of authority.... Essentially too [these schools had] students with similar learning styles...although I mean even there you had people with who were different, but at least everybody was a little more analytical that sort of approach (Poui\79).

The level of academic performance in the external examinations by the students in the new Senior Secondary schools was lower than that of students in the Government-assisted and Government Secondary schools (Campbell, 1996; Gocking & Edghill, 1981; The Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994; The World Bank, 1995a, 1996). One reason for this discrepancy in performance could have been the condition that the less able students as identified by the CEE were assigned to these Senior Secondary schools and they experienced more interruptions and less teaching time. Another as put forward by Poui could have been that there was a wider range of ability than at the older schools. As Poui explained:

But when you got to the Senior Comp you recognised that you have this wide range of ability, wide range of learning styles and to recognise then that the academic wasn't everything. It was not that these students were dumb. They were very good in other areas and therefore saw education as just not the academic. The curriculum should not just be focused on that area (Poui\79).

A further explanation could be that the external examinations were unsuitable to the ability of the students. Gocking and Edghill (1981) stated that while the General Cambridge Examination (GCE) originated in UK in 1951, and was introduced to Trinidad in 1964, the examination was designed to cater for top 20% of the secondary population in Britain. In 1958 it was found unsuitable in

England and Wales because of an increasing ability range. The CSE was introduced in Britain in 1965 to cater for 40% of the population and in 1978 a new GCSE was introduced. Gocking & Edghill (1981) concluded that GCE raised the secondary school certification standard at the same time that there was an expansion in secondary school provision and an increase the ability range of secondary school students. Therefore, the failure rate was great.

During the 1970s secondary teachers also found that the British exams were no longer useful devices for assessment of West Indian students. They were seen to be culturally irrelevant. The governments from fourteen Caribbean countries, including Trinidad and Tobago, established the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to design and administer a new exam. In 1979 the first local examinations were administered.

### **Summary And Comment**

During this historical period 1968 to 1983, there was political stability but social and economic revolution pushed the government to make changes in secondary education. Economic windfalls helped the government to expand secondary education to more students and for a period of five years. While there had been expansion in terms of the provision of the number of places available for secondary education, there was still stratification by ability and class at the secondary level. Children of the middle-classes were found more frequently in the older schools. There were also inequalities in terms of time spent in secondary schools and expectations of the students. Inequalities also existed in terms of access and participation rates in the different types of secondary schools (Campbell, 1996). The best students were targeted to be professionals and therefore went to the more prestigious schools. In this era there were also major curriculum changes that culminated in a Caribbean body to administer O'Level examinations, but A'Level examinations continued to be administered by English universities.

The complex interaction of placement, manpower planning and curriculum established a two-tier system in secondary education by 1983. The new Junior Secondary and Comprehensive schools were supposed to be a new vision for education. However, they were ushered in alongside an older system rather than as a replacement for a system built on colonial discourses of elitism and academic

focus. In addition, the old colonial system was not dismantled and efforts to integrate the two were resisted.

The new system presented a new professional landscape for those graduate secondary teachers who began teaching at these schools. They were working in environments with more students from a smaller age range; students with lower academic ability as determined by the Common Entrance examination; and students who may have had different social expectations for what they were expected to achieve at school. What subject positions were available to the graduate secondary teacher in this new system? How did the interviewees who began to teach then see themselves as teachers and learn how to teach in this scenario? These questions are addressed in the rest of this chapter.

### **Graduate Secondary Teachers In The New Order**

The expansion in secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago between 1972 and 1983 resulted in an increased demand for the numbers and types of teachers required at the secondary level (Harvey, 1981; Mark, 1987). Teachers were needed for all the subjects of the new, integrated Comprehensive programme. These included persons with “the traditional academic, pre-technician, commercial, general industrial, and limited specialised craft training” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 3). Teachers at secondary schools were no longer solely academic specialists; new groups of people teaching technical and vocational subjects such as Woodwork and Agriculture were also employed at the secondary level. Teachers who were certified to teach at the primary level and who possessed specialist subject qualifications such as a foreign language, Art & Craft, or Physical Education were recruited for the new Junior Secondary Schools. Graduates of the two technical institutes were recruited for technical and vocational subject areas. Young university graduates from the local University of the West Indies (UWI) were recruited mainly to fill the vacancies for academic subjects.

This variation in types of educational history of secondary teachers created a hierarchy in teachers’ qualifications especially within the Senior Comprehensive secondary school. The graduate secondary teacher was placed at the top of the system, as the person with the longest period of formal education. The post of graduate secondary teacher retained the rank as the highest-paid entry-level

position at the secondary school. Training was not a criterion for rank since there was no category above the graduate secondary teacher on the Ministry of Education recruitment scales. The salary scale was also higher than that received by a trained primary school teacher. Even teachers, who had degrees and taught in primary schools, were below the category of the graduate secondary teacher located at the secondary school. Therefore, the position of prestige and privilege of the graduate secondary teacher established in the colonial era was not immediately diminished.

This recruitment pattern also helped to establish differences in the distribution of graduate staff between older established government and government-assisted schools, and newer Junior Secondary and Senior Comprehensive Schools. This differentiated distribution still existed in 1999 as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

**Secondary Teachers By Qualification And Type Of School**

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NO. OF TEACHERS	%UNTRAINED		%TRAINED	
		WITH DEGREE	W/OUT DEGREE	WITH DEGREE	W/OUT DEGREE
Junior Secondary	1201	27	17	21	35
Senior Comprehensive	1545	35	32	25	08
Composite	406	38	32	19	11
Government Secondary	952	40	15	33	12
Government-assisted	1018	52	05	37	06
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5122</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>

(Source Of Data: Central Statistical Office, 1999).

Trained primary school teachers were found in greater numbers at the Junior secondary schools. By 1999, government-assisted schools had 89% graduate staff while only 48% of the staff at Junior Secondary schools were university graduates.

In 1978, Lawrence Carrington, a Senior Research Fellow at UWI, St. Augustine, commented on the effect of this differentiated distribution of graduate staff. He argued:

Differences in the type of staffing of the comprehensive-style secondary schools by comparison with the traditional institutions reduces the appearance of equality of standards. The secondary sector was traditionally staffed by graduate teachers. The proportion of graduate

teachers who had professional training was never a source of contention. The Comprehensive-style schools do not have a proportion of graduate teachers equal to that of the older schools. Whether or not this is a measurable disadvantage it is a severe shortcoming in the eyes of the public. This inequality in the distribution of graduate staff added to and helped to shape the discourse of the comprehensive system as inferior (Carrington, 1978, p. 527).

This perception was difficult to overcome, given the general public's obsession with qualifications. Although Junior secondary schools have the highest level of trained staff—mainly teachers who were trained at primary schools—it was the lack of graduates that was an issue.

The 1966 Education Act required that all new teaching vacancies were to be filled by citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, residing in or outside of the country. Non-residents could only fill vacancies if the government was unable to find a citizen qualified to fill the vacancy. This recruitment policy enabled the vast numbers of graduates of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to secure jobs in the Teaching Service. However, by 1979, there were many other occupational choices in Trinidad especially for Natural Science graduates. Secondary teaching was no longer regarded as the prestigious profession since more prestigious professions were now open to educated locals. Yet, Poui one of the interviewees who began teaching at this time explained that he was willing to postpone further studies at university and forsake other job opportunities in sectors outside of teaching. He explained:

Of course, you were also aware that even at that time people were talking about teachers. “Teaching,? You going into teaching boy? Why you doing that?” As if you have condemned yourself to a life of [laughs] hell.

J: Did that influence you in any way?

P: Well I think it would have. Clearly it would be in the back of your mind. Because as if you are now the lowest rung of the ladder kind of thing. Clearly you are beginning to wonder “Why am I in this thing?” But certainly there was that sense of excitement in the sense of challenge and as I say especially in the situation (Poui\79).

### **Training For Secondary Teachers**

In terms of training for graduate secondary teachers, the *1968-1983 Draft Plan* stated that “efforts should be made to achieve a fully trained teaching service by the year 1975 or as early as possible within available resources.” However, in this plan, the government also stated that one difficulty facing developing countries was “how to provide quality education in sufficient quantity as to meet the demand and the need and at sufficiently low cost as to be financed by the poor

society.” In other words, the cost of secondary teacher training was a more important consideration than the quality of the graduate secondary teacher recruit. Therefore, the designers of the plan focused on the use of student ratios to limit recurrent cost and suggested that:

In order to keep recurrent costs of a fully trained service down to reasonable limits, we have retained the ratio of 1:40 for trained teachers in Primary schools. In the case of Junior Secondary Schools, a ratio of 1:34 is used, at Senior Secondary level 1:25 is proposed instead of 1:20 as at present; 1:20 being wholly unrealistic and unnecessary by reference to the curriculum and by reference to our resources (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 57).

Rather than implement a system of pre-service training for secondary teachers, the Ministry of Education continued to recruit graduates with no teacher training at the secondary level because it said: “we cannot afford educationally or financially the withdrawal of 50-70 persons per year for training purposes” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 61).

It is evident from this policy statement that the cost of training teachers outweighed the benefits of having a fully trained teaching service who were prepared for their jobs of teaching. The government said that it could not “afford educationally” or “financially” to withdraw graduate teachers from classrooms for full-time training. However, the question that should have been asked was “Could we afford *not* to train the teachers?” One could argue that “afford educationally” as used in the document is not related to student learning or outcomes of education. It was made with reference to the provision of places and increase in quantity, rather than the quality of the education service. The rapid expansion envisioned required far more teachers than available and there were shortages in schools as indicated by the Prime Minister in his 1975 proposals and in the *Draft Plan*. To further withdraw teachers from the classroom for training or to require that they be trained would upset the plan of having the new schools come on stream. In addition, there was no ready pool of graduates to draw from as substitutes for those being trained; graduates were being sought for full time positions.

Similarly, one could argue that “afford financially” referred to the cost of paying teacher educators, the cost of paying teachers while they were being trained (as was the practice with primary teachers), and the cost of having a replacement teacher for the period of training. The cost of training a secondary teacher would have been much greater than training a primary school teacher as

secondary teachers earned higher salaries. This was a significant juncture in the development of the education system. It was a point at which an opportunity was lost to put teacher education at the forefront of educational policy and implement a system of pre-service training that would have no doubt exposed potential graduate secondary teachers to a wider range of educational discourses. The planners could have established a compulsory in-service programme, as with primary teachers. New teachers could then be recruited to fill the places of those who went to be trained. Instead, the planners recommended:

The professional training envisaged would be purely on a part-time basis, evening studies, vacation courses, etc, and close liaison would be needed on this between the curriculum research activities and school organisation studies continuously being undertaken in the Ministry of Education and the University authorities. There is no proposal to press for full-time courses in Education because this would never answer the need of the 400-500 teachers now in the system who have no professional training...It would be financially more feasible to finance unilaterally or otherwise the establishment of a good education section at St. Augustine or a special Training Unit within the Ministry of Education and Culture the former being preferable at this stage (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 61).

Therefore, from 1968 training for graduate secondary teachers was established part-time because of economic constraints.

In 1973 the government introduced the In-service Diploma of Education for graduate secondary teachers at the UWI, St. Augustine. The programme was made available after funding from the Organisation of American States (OAS) was secured. However, because the in-service DipEd only accommodated between 80 and 90 graduates per year (see Appendix A)—the size of the entire staff of one Senior Comprehensive school—it could not effectively eliminate the pool of untrained teachers. Hence, the backlog of untrained teachers was never removed as new, untrained teachers were added to the system faster than they could be trained. The government was able to have the services of teachers while they pursued their teacher training because the programme was part-time. In the absence of a government initiative for full-time training, many principals resorted to in-school training. These training sessions have been organised at the school level and are usually initiated by needs as seen by principals, senior teachers or teachers with additional qualifications (Melville-Myers, 1995).

To summarise: Between 1968 and 1983 there were significant social and economic changes in Trinidad and Tobago. The system of secondary education

was restructured and expanded and the new Comprehensive system introduced. Large numbers of graduates and non-graduates were employed in the expanded Comprehensive system. More nationals now had access to secondary education. This wider net also meant that students of a wider range of abilities were now participating in the education system.

The discourses of “development,” “nationalism,” “social equality” and social equity” “manpower planning” and human capital theory were all evident in the 1968 plan and contributed to the idea of an expansion of the secondary education system. However, the role of the graduate secondary teacher did not seem to be well thought out. There was the underlying belief that any educated person was able to educate other nationals.

In spite of the pivotal role that teachers would have to play in this development, little thought beyond their own educational qualifications was given to their professional preparation. A compulsory teacher education policy was compromised for cost efficiency in the system. Thus an opportunity to change the perception for the preparation of teachers was lost. In addition, there was not much preparation to mark the transition of a graduate secondary teacher from being a university student to being a teacher.

So why did the interviewees begin teaching in this historical era? What ideas about teachers and teaching did they hold? To what extent did these ideas draw upon dominant discourses? These questions are addressed in the next section.

### **Nine Interviewees Enter Teaching**

Salohcin, Tiger, Sid Chase, James Brown, Barbara, Poui, Cynthia, Salman, and Bumper (see Tables 1, 2, and 3) began teaching at secondary schools for the first time between 1968 and 1983. Each person’s decision to become a graduate secondary teacher was made at two levels: one, to enter teaching and the other to teach at the secondary level. These two decisions were not necessarily made at the same time. From their stories I realised that the interviewees’ transition from student to teacher was a brief one. Only Barbara, James Brown and Bumper had any work-experience outside of the educational institutions. Barbara had worked for one year in a bank before beginning her university programme and James Brown and Bumper had worked briefly as civil servants in other governmental

ministries. Therefore, one could argue that when they first began to teach, much of the interviewees' understanding of teachers, teaching and schools would have been constructed from their perspectives as students.

Five of these interviewees began teaching in the position of graduate secondary teacher, that is, after completing a Bachelor's degree. Cynthia began teaching at a co-educational, government-assisted school in 1978. Poui began teaching in a Senior Comprehensive school in 1979. Barbara taught at an all-female, government-assisted school for one year in 1980 before transferring to a Senior Comprehensive school in 1981. Salman had one university paper to complete for his degree when he started teaching at an all-male government-assisted school in 1982. James Brown tried another job in the civil service before entering teaching in 1977, two years after he completed his degree. He began teaching at a senior Comprehensive school.

The other four interviewees took varied routes to becoming graduate secondary teachers. Sid Chase entered the teaching profession in 1973 with only O'Levels. She taught at a government-assisted primary school for one year before going abroad to complete her high school education and first degree. She then returned to teach at a co-educational, government secondary school in 1979. Salohcin began teaching in 1972 at a primary school after completing a one-year, pre-service programme of pre-service primary training. After one year of primary teaching, he transferred to a co-educational, government-assisted secondary school because he wanted a "different kind of interaction" with the students. In 1984 he completed his Bachelor's degree part-time while teaching. Tiger began teaching in 1973 after completing his A'Levels and taught in a government-assisted primary school for 12 years before transferring to a Junior Secondary school in 1985. During this 12-year period he completed primary teacher training and began a first degree part-time. On completion of the degree he transferred to a Composite school. Bumper began teaching at an all-male, government-assisted school in 1980 in the same year that she completed her Advanced Level (A'Levels). She quickly left that post, but returned to teaching in 1981. She completed her degree part-time while teaching.

From these interviewees stories, I realised that there were many ways to become a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad and Tobago. A person may begin to teach with the minimum O'Level qualification for primary teaching (Assistant Teacher II), attend Teacher's College, complete a degree as part-time

or full-time student and apply for a secondary position. He/she is reclassified when he/she assumes the post in the secondary school. Another person may move from being an Assistant Teacher III with A'Level qualifications to a graduate secondary teacher by pursuing a part-time degree while teaching at secondary school. A third person may enter teaching with an incomplete degree qualification and complete the degree. Thus a hierarchy of teachers based on academic entry qualification, and remuneration can create an informal professional "career ladder" within the group of secondary teachers at any one school. Social mobility can take place within this informal career ladder as one improves qualification and earns a higher salary.

### **Reasons For Entering Teaching**

Choosing to enter the teaching profession has been identified by educational researchers as a "critical incident" (Tripp, 1994), "critical phase" (Measor, 1985) and an important "career phase" (Huberman, 1989; Sikes, 1985) in the life of a teacher. This is an important event because a person is faced with the choice and decision to move from being a prospective candidate into the group of teachers and in so doing comes to see him/herself as a teacher. It is for this reason that I wanted to find out why the interviewees in this study entered teaching.

At the beginning of each interview, I asked each interviewee "All right [pseudonym of interviewee], I want you to tell me how and why you entered the teaching profession? Why teaching and why secondary school?" In the "complex conversational context" (Moir, 1993, p. 22) of our discussions each interviewee gave diverse, but inextricably linked reasons for his/her entry into teaching (see Table 6). From their responses, I could tell that the interviewees thought of themselves as rational people who made informed choices about their decision to teach. As Burr (1995) argued, they assumed that they exercised choices and made their own decisions and were authors of their existence. However, based on the theoretical framework I have adopted for this study, I needed to make sense of the reasons with the theoretical tools I discussed in Chapter One. Reading Davies (1992) reminded me that within my theoretical framework "the person (and the idea of what it means to be a person) is collectively and discursively constituted" (Davies, 1992, p. 62). I needed to understand and interpret their reasons as "discursive events" constituted in and by available discourses. Such theoretical

understanding required me to go beyond a simple classification of the interviewees' reasons as presented above and regard these reasons as:

manifestations of discourses, outcrops of representations of events upon the terrain of social life [which] have their origin, not in the person's private experience, but in the discursive culture that those people inhabit. The things that people say and write, then, can be thought of as instances of discourses, as occasions where particular discourses are given the opportunity to construct an event in this way rather than that (Burr, 1995, p. 50).

This sort of analysis was not easy for me to grasp, because I had great difficulty thinking outside of the concept of individuals choosing. However, I used my concept of talk to make sense of the reasons as discursive constructions.

**Table 6**

**Reasons For Entering Teaching Before 1984**

	BJ	SA	TG	SC	JB	CY	PU	BA	SL	BU	
Childhood dream	√			√			√				3
Good teachers	√	√						√		√	4
Family	√			√		√	√				4
Service to others		√			√		√	√			4
Recruited by principal/teacher			√			√			√	√	4
Job change					√						1
Financial need											0
Use academic											0
Holidays and benefits											0
No plans to enter						√			√		2

I reviewed the reasons and imagined what could have been said to these interviewees that could have made them think of and see themselves as teachers and want to teach. I then reviewed these reasons in terms of the culturally and socially available discourses at the specific time at which the decisions were

made. Two of these discursive constructions are presented in the following sections<sup>9</sup>.

***“Yuh<sup>10</sup> have Plenty Teachers In Yuh Family So Yuh Could Teach.”***

Marso & Pigge (1994) argued that the presence of teachers in the family was an important factor in influencing the decision of prospective teachers to enter teaching. Lankard (1995) argued that “family influence” is an important force in preparing young people for their role of workers and that they form their attitudes from interacting with those around them. Of the nine interviewees who began to teach between 1968 and 1983, Sid Chase, Poui and Cynthia identified being related to teachers as being influential in how they saw themselves as teachers. Sid Chase, who had grown up in a family of primary school teachers in the 1960s and 1970s, said that she had “lived the part” of a teacher since childhood. She explained:

I grew up in a family of teachers...My great grandmother, and my great, great aunts, they were all teachers. They were French teachers in the early days and they taught in the French schools. My grandmother was a teacher, my grandfather was a teacher and they were both principals. Very, very young principals at that. My aunts, my uncles on both my mother's and father's sides were teachers. My mother was a teacher so that I lived the part even before becoming a teacher. But apart from that, while I was at secondary school I always wanted to be a teacher and in particular I knew that I wanted to be a [name of subject] teacher. So, that I just never thought of doing anything else other than being a teacher (Sid Chase\79).

For Poui, teaching was an acceptable choice because he also had family members who were teachers. He explained:

I also have some members of my family who were in teaching as well. One of my aunts. My grandfather was a principal of primary school and my uncle ran for many years a private secondary school. So that there was that sort of “teaching blood” I suppose to put it that way as well, around in the family (Poui\79).

In other words, as children, both Sid Chase and Poui learned how to participate in various discourses about teachers and teaching. They could identify with the possibility of being a teacher.

While it is not unusual for children of teachers to want to teach, being related to a teacher did not necessarily encourage some interviewees to want to

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<sup>9</sup> In this Chapter and Chapter Six, I express these reasons in Trinidadian English Creole to retain cultural relevance.

<sup>10</sup> Yuh = You/you

teach. For example, Cynthia, who was the daughter of two teachers, said that she ended up in teaching and eventually found teaching to be an acceptable profession to go into because her parents were teachers. She saw teaching as an option. She explained:

I don't think entering teaching was really a conscious decision. It was not let us say something that I had determined that I wanted to do but it was one of the options....The principal wanted someone to teach [*name of subject*]. I had just graduated from university and had done courses in [*name of subject*]...and the principal came and he asked me to come across and do some teaching. At the time I was not working. As I said I had come home...I was probably home for about a month or so and I said well, fine. I was in the process of writing applications to various companies and firms, so I said well, fine because I was not doing anything at the time. So in a short space of time I was at the school and teaching (Cynthia\78).

Cynthia rationalised that the principal asked her to teach because he probably held the view that “if your parents are in education, obviously you are going to fit the mould of being ready for education” (Cynthia\78).

On the one hand, being related to a teacher or having “teaching blood” could be regarded as a form of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986/1997). Social capital is linked to one's membership of a group, in this case a group of teachers. Bourdieu (1986/1997) argued:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words membership to a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu 1986/1997, p. 51)

In other words, as children or relatives of teachers, these interviewees had membership in a group of teachers and could credit their social capital. Their family members provided them with a “network of connections” (Bourdieu, 1986/1997) and their volume of social capital was based on this network of connections. In addition, these interviewees had their own “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1986/1997) in the form of academic degrees and a successful educational history. This made them desirable prospective teachers to be recruited by others.

This desire to teach could also be understood in terms of positioning. As O'Loughlin (1995) argued:

From birth...children are part of ongoing cultural narratives and discourse practices that provide the norms by which they learn to conduct themselves in various social contexts (O'Loughlin, 1995, p. 110).

In other words, these interviewees wanted to teach or accepted teaching as a profession they could get into because they had positioned themselves in terms of story line of the story line (Davies and Harré, 1990) of who the teacher is and saw themselves as belonging to the world of the teacher, very much in the same way that Billy Joe, discussed in Chapter Four did.

***“Ah<sup>11</sup> Educated / Yuh Educated. Help Others.”***

Lortie (1975) identified this interpersonal theme of the need to work with people as one of the themes that attracted people to the teaching profession. Salohcin, Poui, and Barbara cited service to others as a reason for entering teaching. They saw teaching as a part of their civic responsibility to pay back society. As Poui put it “one needed to go back and do something for the society” (Poui\79). As citizens of a newly independent country, they wanted to do their part to help in developing the society.

For example, Salohcin explained that he entered teaching because of the positive experiences that he had with his primary and secondary teachers. He said that his teachers encouraged him to learn, gave him a chance to participate in secondary education when he had failed the Common Entrance. He also described them as “surrogate parents.” While entering teaching because of interactions with teachers is not uncommon in educational research on reasons for entry (Brown, 1992, Marso and Pigge, 1986), Salohcin also explained that it was “always [his] desire to put something back into the system. And having those teachers as my role models I felt as though it was one of the best ways to want to repay them and, of course the society” (Salohcin\72). He said that he began teaching at a time when he was aware of his social responsibility.

I went in at a time when Trinidad was in virtual turmoil because that was the period when you had the Black Power Revolution. So for me it was a revolution in the sense I was having an opportunity to play a role in educating people (Salohcin\73)

Therefore, he entered teaching to pay back the debt to those who helped as well as to fulfil his role as an educated citizen.

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<sup>11</sup> Ah = I

Barbara, Salman and James Brown saw entering teaching as an opportunity to help others. They framed their reason of service to others in terms of a commitment to working with young people in society. For example, Barbara explained that for her the reasoning behind entering teaching was:

a love of sharing. It was a choice between that and becoming a missionary strangely enough (laughter) anything to serve and I realise that I'm not very, very religious, I am more spiritual than religious so I felt that was a way to interact with people and to in some way impact on them (Barbara\80).

The responses from these interviewees indicated that there was also an social expectation that educated citizens would be willing and able to help others learn. Bumper, Tiger, Cynthia and Salman explained that initially they did not intend to teach. However, they were recruited as teachers because various principals recognised that they were qualified to teach and they needed someone to fill the vacant teaching posts at their schools. Bumper, Salohcin, Cynthia, Salman, Poui and Barbara were subject actors (Gee, 1990) in the discourses of civic and social responsibility. As educated citizens they saw themselves as being responsible for helping young people to develop and wanted to do something about it.

### **Ideas About Teachers And Teaching**

The ideas about teachers and teaching held by these interviewees when they first began to teach can also be viewed as the “manifestations of discourses” (Burr, 1995, p. 50). Seven of the nine interviewees who began to teach between 1968 and 1983 drew upon the discourse of the teacher as a knowledgeable expert and teaching as the transmission of knowledge. They said that when they first entered the classroom their ideas of how they should do teaching included teaching as the “direct transmission of facts and knowledge” (Bumper\80); “imparting of knowledge” (Salman\82); “preparation of students for exams” by “get[ting] them to learn what ever was on the prescribed curriculum at the time” (Cynthia\78); and “getting the content of the subject area across [to students]....see how good you could get students to be in the subject—how much they could speak and write” (Bumper\80). James Brown summed up his personal theory of teaching in the following way:

From my experience as a student I thought it would involve imparting or passing on your knowledge and also preparing people for exams and generally preparing for life.

Sid Chase explained that her idea of a teacher went beyond imparting knowledge and included aspects of the teacher having some control over student behaviour. She explained that a teacher should be:

A knowledgeable person and a skilful...a person who could skilfully impart knowledge. Now having said that however, I think the dominant picture was in all of that was really the authoritarian teacher. Order! You know, order, being firm, yes fair and friendly, but being firm. To me that was the dominant thing (Sid Chase\73).

These interviewees saw the teacher as being in charge of the learning process and their responsibilities as teachers was to prepare students for examinations based on a specific syllabus that outlined the knowledge components. It was these specific components for his/her specific subject area that each teacher should know well and be able to impart. If any teacher did not know them him/herself, how could they be expected to “pass them on” to their students?

The dominance of the idea of the teacher as transmitter of knowledge at this time was not surprising, given that all of these interviewees had attended schools steeped in a grammar school (academic) tradition, which as described earlier focused on academic competence. Only James Brown had any experiences outside of an educational institution when he first began to teach. What was surprising, though, was that even after three years of university education, they still saw the teacher mainly as a transmitter of knowledge.

Some of the interviewees also saw the teacher as a role model or exemplar and a person to be respected. For example, Cynthia explained that she expected the teacher to be given but at the same time earn the students’ respect:

A teacher is someone to be respected. A teacher is someone that children look up to not only for learning what is on the curriculum but a teacher is someone a little more than that. That it is a person in the society or community who is well respected, whose life should inform those of the people whom they teach (Cynthia\78).

Salman extended the idea of teachers being responsible for students and said that said teachers needed to “play a part in the lives of the students” and help with “shaping the values” students hold. He explained how his male teachers in the late 1970s at an all-male, government-assisted secondary school, provided him with role models. He explained that they were masculine and ethically strong, yet respectful to authority. This impressed him because these teachers were not afraid to express their views. Therefore, as a teacher he was influenced by the

discourses of “male teacher as a male role model” and teacher as not publicly critical of authority. He recounted:

Most people were very much impressed by teachers. They were very male. At the time, too, there were very few female teachers, but I mean you looked up to them as men who had strong convictions and were prepared to stand by them, whatever. The school rules that they felt were anti-student and to some extent anti-black student, they were not afraid to express their views on it. Very often though, they never—as far as I recall—they never openly criticised school administration. That was one thing that was very significant and I think to a large extent I have remained that way as well (Salman\82).

Similarly, James Brown explained that a teacher should be:

Somebody who was approachable, that the students could relate to in a form or fashion, but at the same time was able to control the classroom situation. Somebody who was committed to the students (James Brown\77).

Several discourses, including the discourses of teacher as transmitter and teacher as role model, were available ‘in the air’ for Salohcin, Tiger, Sid Chase, Cynthia, Bumper, Barbara, Poui, Salman and James Brown to take up. However, an exploration of how these discourses worked on and through each of them at any given time is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I explore Poui’s story about beginning to teach to give some sense of an individual acting out these discourses, being constructed by them and theorising about himself through them (Gee, 1990). I have chosen Poui’s story because it best exemplifies the negotiation of coming to see oneself as a teacher by a graduate secondary teacher who was educated in the “traditional” system and who began teaching in a Senior Comprehensive school.

### **Poui’s Story: “Balancing This Old And This New”**

Poui was born in 1957 and attended an all-male, government-assisted secondary school between 1968 and 1974. He began his teaching career at a Senior Comprehensive in 1979 at age 22 after he completed his Bachelor’s degree in Natural Sciences at the local campus of the University of the West Indies. Poui explained that he began teaching at a secondary school because of the availability of jobs there and because he was “more comfortable” dealing with older students, he was able to “use his degree” and got better pay. In addition, as I explained

earlier in this chapter, he saw teaching was an acceptable career choice for him because he several family members whom he respected, were teachers. He also considered himself to have “teaching blood” and was therefore willing to do the job.

It was quite easy for Poui to enter secondary teaching in the late 1970s because new Senior Comprehensive schools were being established. At that time graduate secondary teachers were being employed at a rate of 220 per year (Ministry of Education, 1984) and there were significant shortages of teachers especially in Mathematics, Science and Geography. Poui said that his ease of entry into secondary teaching was also facilitated because he did not have to attend Teachers’ Training College. It is interesting that while Poui wanted to teach, like the policy makers, he did not see the need to be trained. He saw this as an advantage because he could get a job immediately, without any extra preparation.

Poui was one of the interviewees who noted that the Black Power movement influenced him to get involved in student politics at university. This involvement helped him to become committed to social change. As one of the academic elite of the country, Poui came to recognise that he had a responsibility to give back or contribute to the education of other members of society. In other words, he accepted that as an educated citizen of Trinidad and Tobago he should make a contribution to the development of an emerging society. Teaching provided him with an opportunity to make such a contribution. It also allowed him to feel that he was “doing his part in terms of bringing education to a wider mass of people” (Poui\79). As he said, he was aware of the “wider implications of education” for the development of citizens.

By 1979, there were many occupational choices for Natural Science graduates in Trinidad and Tobago. Yet, Poui was willing to postpone further studies at university and forsake other job opportunities in sectors outside of education. He was willing to work on what he saw as the “lowest rung of the ladder” in the professional world, as at that time, teachers received much less pay than other professions. As a Natural Science graduate, Poui had the opportunity to move up in society through post-graduate education or a better paying job in the industrial sector that was flourishing in Trinidad at the end of the 1970s. Yet, he positioned himself as a responsible educated national and chose to enter

teaching. Poui said that this career choice opened him up to ridicule from his friends as they regarded teaching as “a life of hell” (Poui\79).

Poui explained that in spite of the difficulties he encountered, he felt excitement and challenge because he was involved in something new. He was working in a new school system and a new school. These new institutions disrupted the existing social order. By becoming a teacher, Poui believed that he would be able to achieve his goal as a responsible national and at the same time make a contribution to the new educational order.

Poui described how his experiences at secondary school had been very academic. He explained that the curriculum was:

The sort of more academic curriculum, English, Maths, Physics, Chemistry or Spanish, French what ever it was, Geography and so on. And to me the thing was the content and passing the exams. That was the measure of success. So whether you did anything else was not really too important. The cricket and football was by the way or the music—we had a little smattering of that in Form One or Form Two. But the main thing was you going down this academic road and go in towards the science areas and so on (Poui\79).

For Poui, success in secondary education was measured by mastery of the academic curriculum as evidenced by passes at Ordinary and Advanced level examinations. His concept of educational success would have enabled him to think of himself as a graduate secondary teacher as being responsible to “get across content and “help students to learn the syllabus” (Poui\79).

However, as a new graduate secondary teacher in a Senior Comprehensive school, Poui said that he had to create his own understandings of how the secondary educational system should operate. Like all the other new teachers, he was being called upon to establish a new system of education with social practices that would require new ways of thinking about teachers and teaching. But he had been educated in a different system and therefore, as a young teacher in this new system, he recognised that he would have to do teaching differently. Poui said that at the time he began teaching he was aware of high rates of failure in the Senior Comprehensive schools and the concern by the government for such failure (e.g. Gocking & Edghill, 1981). He explained that many other new teachers had the same ideals as he, and they also wanted to make the new system work for those it was supposed to serve at that time. He explained:

I think too at the time of starting there were a number of us in the same position because there was this mass of young teachers. It is not that there were many older teachers around who would be setting a different tone or

maybe a different example or may be directing in certain ways. Essentially it was most of us were in the same position and therefore that we were talking to each other, of course, and trying I suppose to find this new way as you would put it....because this was certainly not the system that we went through at all. And therefore trying to balance this old and this new. You have this image in your head and at the same time trying to—with this missionary zeal—trying to [laughs] establish this new order so to speak (Poui\79).

In other words, as a graduate secondary teacher in a new type of school, Poui wanted to find a new norm of behaviour for secondary teachers. He was aware that the old ideas of teachers as “starchy,” unapproachable and inflexible would not work in the Comprehensive system. As a new teacher he was facing students who brought new and different challenges that required him to act and interact in alternative ways that would help him to be successful with his students. He explained:

You had this traditional view in your mind that teachers should be this very distant person, authoritative figure and so on, that would be passing on, helping students to learn the syllabus and that sort of thing. But...coming from this background of the broadening of education...you also had this idea of the teacher as someone who would be almost like a missionary. You are going in there and you are working with people and you telling yourself as a young person—because I was about 22 at the time I think, just turned 22 as I went into the system—that you do not want to be a starchy old teacher. You want to be vibrant and reach the students and be able to relate to them and...given of course the background that you had the people talking about the failure and students and so on...not be a traditional kind of teacher. So I supposed you had both of those competing in your mind and try to find that medium (Poui\79).

It was not easy for Poui to find a compromise between these two contradictory ways of thinking about the teacher. He did not want to be what he considered to be the “traditional” teacher. He needed to be the kind of teacher responsible for the success of all kinds of students. He wanted to be a different kind of teacher and he explained how he worked it out:

It was trial and error and practice. I mean at times you would start off very sort of stiffly and so on. And then I suppose sometimes you would go from one extreme to the next. Then you would try to be maybe...well when I say get too close get too...maybe I try to relate to the students more as friend than anything else, which of course has dangers in that in terms of getting too close. And then you had to sort of try to find the compromise between the two (Poui\79).

Students and teachers have occupied different social positions on the educational landscape in Trinidad and Tobago. As a new teacher Poui was expected to

maintain the social distance or “draw the line” between student and teacher relationships. In other words, new, young teachers were not expected to be too friendly or involved in the lives of their students, especially those of the opposite sex. Thus, for Poui drawing the line involved trial and error as he sought to establish the right social relationship between himself and his students.

Poui indicated that as a new teacher his middle class view on the value of education was challenged. He explained:

This theory you had in your head about education and its value that you thought that everybody had this view of it and that the thinking was different in terms of education in term of...your idea was education for the ‘good of man’ and the ‘educated man’ and ‘cognitive development’ and all this kind of thing. Whereas everybody would think of education “Well it is really a means to get a job” or they say you had to get this and that and that kind of thing (Poui\79).

This was a challenge for Poui because he was simultaneously being positioned by contradictory discourses on the purpose of secondary education, education for life or education for work. As a graduate secondary teacher was he supposed to only convey a body of knowledge to his students? Or was he supposed to help students develop practical capabilities that they would need for a job? Or was he supposed to prepare them for life?

Poui’s experience as a student in the secondary education system made him think of himself as a graduate secondary teacher in the first way. However, his new experiences as a teacher in a Senior Comprehensive school made him realise that he had to think of the purpose of education in a different way. For the first time he began to question what he thought about the purpose of education. He explained:

All your traditional notions of teaching and of students and of even people’s attitude to learning and education, you suddenly realised that that doesn’t hold. So it is a period of learning and even of course the values...the culture-shock and so on that what you would regard as standard; suddenly—coming from the sort of middle class background—suddenly you recognise that wasn’t standard at all! So that there was a period of shock in a sense, a period of learning and of challenge I would say. I suppose the overall thing would be challenge. Frustration too, because it wasn’t easy at times to deal with that coming to terms with that sort of thing and to make the adjustment and a lot of people didn’t. A lot of people just left or moved on to some other area after (Poui\79).

Being positioned as an educated subject and a graduate secondary teacher in a Senior Comprehensive school created feelings of shock and frustration because

for the first time Poui realised that he had to think about teachers and teaching in a different way. For example, he had to find new ways to make sense of the good teacher and the good student in his educational landscape that were different from his own experience as a student and the prevailing ideas about the good teacher as a producer of student successes in external examinations. If he were ‘judged’ by this requirement then he would not be considered as a good teacher, because his students were not doing well in the exams. He explained:

We began to realise that the students that we had would not get 80 and 90 in exams. They wouldn’t necessarily pass the exams in the end. So that traditionally you thought of getting the students to pass the exams was the thing and then you began to realise if that was the way you are going to measure success and learning and so on, then you would be a total failure (Poui\79).

Poui sought to find new ideas about the good teacher in the context of his work. He began to question the validity of his ideas of teaching as transmission of knowledge. He began to question his own experience of schooling and concluded, “Maybe, you were not taught at all in the sense that you...learnt on your own” (Poui\79). Poui also questioned the approaches taken by his teachers and concluded that “the whole question of conceptual development” was not “a priority” of his teachers. He also realised that he had to develop a “conceptual base” and not everybody had “an analytical approach of looking at things and, therefore it wasn’t just a question of developing the thing logically” (Poui\79).

Poui also realised that he had to change the way in which he thought of the good student. If good students were ones who passed exams, then he would have few good students in his classes. He explained how he changed his way of measuring student success:

You started to realise that when you actually made the attempt to get to where the students are and to try and decide where to go with them, that really if you got a turn around even in attitude and you got them at least—not maybe to pass the exams—but at least to begin to understand some concepts and able to develop [name of subject], some basics skills, then you began to feel that you had achieved something. Then in terms of the learning you could see when students would begin to develop those basic skills as you go along. And as I say their attitude of at least making the attempt to grapple with the work, to fight with the work and to at least see the importance of it in terms of their whole lives. It was more from a sort of subjective—in a way—assessment of whether the students were beginning to appreciate almost the value of this [name of subject] or this education at all and even in some small way you seeing some change in attitude, some change in values even or at least some attempt at being organised (Poui\79).

Poui realised that he needed to measure student success in ways other than simply the results in external examinations. He was also able to see more dimensions of assessment. For example, he came to see student success as “a turn around in attitude,” “understanding basic concepts,” “development of basic skills,” an “appreciation of the nature of the subject.”

Poui encountered and negotiated two contradictory discourses about the graduate secondary teacher. One positioned him as the “traditional” teacher as transmitter of knowledge. The other positioned him as the teacher who could enable students in a specific location to be successful. He realised that his traditional beliefs about teachers and teaching would not work in this new type of school. Therefore, he sought to find new ways of being a teacher to fit in with his new ideas on teaching and learning.

Poui was certainly caught up in the prevailing social discourses of nationalism and development. He understood his position as an educated national and he wanted to act in the way that an educated national should act. He understood the role of education in development. But there was great tension between his activism in terms of what he wanted to do as a teacher and the context in which he wanted to carry out his actions. Poui’s story highlights the confusion that a new teacher may face when he/she is called upon to be an agent of change in a time when new educational systems and policies, that draw upon different discourse, as introduced. It was difficult for Poui because he had to wrestle with his old ideas of how a teacher should be, in the context of a totally new system of education. The old ideas simply did not work. For Poui, coming to see himself as a graduate secondary teacher involved him reconstructing his ideas and establishing new ways for thinking and talking about teaching in the context of the Senior Comprehensive schools.

Poui’s story highlights the tensions that new teachers face in a time of change in the education system and the responsibility that some teachers may feel to make the system work. Poui’s story also highlights how taking up positions as “young, energetic and committed” persons can work to help one cope with the requirements of change. What also emerged in this chapter was that graduate secondary teachers in this era may have wrestled with subject positions within the discourse of the teacher as a transmitter and discourses of nationalism, social justice, and development. To what extent did these discourses shape the

educational policies and systems, and ideas of the people who began teaching after 1983? This question is addressed in Chapter Six.

## CHAPTER SIX



### WHEN PUSH COME TO SHOVE: POLITICAL CHANGE AND ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT, STABILISATION, AND GROWTH: 1984 TO 2000

*“When push come to shove: When the going really gets rough”  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 207)*

#### Introduction

The period 1984 to 2000 could best be described as one of political and economic change in Trinidad and Tobago. In 1984 when I began my final year at university in Jamaica, fifteen of the interviewees were at secondary school. Five were at university—three as full-time students and two as part-time students while teaching. One interviewee was employed outside of the teaching sector and eight were engaged in full-time teaching (see Table 3).

By the mid-1980s, money *was* a problem in Trinidad and Tobago. Falling prices of petroleum and petrochemical products on the global market resulted in drastic declines in the Gross National Product. This loss of earnings resulted in significant cutbacks in the level of expenditure in several sectors, including education. The period was also one of significant policy formulation for education. In 1984 there was an official assessment of the 1968 Education plan. Two educational policy papers—*Education Plan 1985-1990* and the *Education Policy Paper 1993-2003*, also known as the *White Paper*—were prepared and adopted during this period.

What discourses did these new policies draw upon? Were they any different from those of the previous era? If they were, did these new ways of thinking bring changes to secondary education and teaching? Did the interviewees who began teaching in this historical period do so for the same reasons as their colleagues before? If not what were the differences? What ideas about teachers and teaching did they draw upon? Were they the same? These are some of the questions addressed in this chapter.

## **A New Political And Economic Order**

By 1986, the year I first began teaching as a graduate secondary teacher at a government-assisted school, “We want a change” was the rallying cry of nation’s voters. The People’s National Movement (PNM) government was defeated for the first time in 30 years. A new government was formed by the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). This coalition was created between the opposition United Labour Front (ULF), a mainly East Indian Labour Party headed by Basdeo Panday, and other “organised parties of black creoles opposed to the PNM” (Campbell, 1997, p. 79). This alliance resulted in a landslide victory as the NAR won 33 of the 36 electoral seats. Mr. A.N.R. Robinson became the new Prime Minister in 1986. However, by 1988 the Alliance had disintegrated and Mr. Panday and his followers left the party and formed CLUB 88. This party later became the United National Congress (UNC). In 1991, the PNM was again re-elected, only to be defeated again by another coalition between the National Alliance for Reconstruction and United National Congress (UNC) in 1995. The UNC won elections again in 2000.

These political changes were quite significant for the implementation of education policies. For example, education policies formulated by the PNM government, were left to be implemented by the NAR and UNC governments. Only the UNC government stayed in power long enough to begin discussion on a new educational policy.

In tandem with the new political order, there were significant economic changes in Trinidad and Tobago. During the early 1980s, the fall in world oil prices, and protectionism in markets of developed countries, reduced the export revenue. Trinidad and Tobago like many other developing nations, was unable to service the debt incurred by extensive borrowing during the 1970s. Therefore, the government of Trinidad and Tobago approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to get help to finance its debt burden.

To get “structural adjustment” loans from the IMF, borrower countries had to comply with and meet strict economic policies and conditions. These structural adjustment policies included: currency devaluation, reduction in public expenditure, removal of state subsidies, restraints on wages and public sector employment, liberalisation of price mechanisms, reform of financial sectors, streamlining of the public service, opening the country to foreign investors, selling of state owned enterprises and allowing foreign companies to purchase

state assets (Graham-Brown, 1991). These policies sought to reduce the role of the government in providing social services, while at the same time provide a favourable condition for the establishment of a “privatised market society” (Peters, 1997, p. 228) and were based on neo-liberal economic principles.

By the mid-1980s neo-liberal discourses, principles and policies world-wide sought to restructure the public sector and establish market economies (Marginson, 1993). Larner (1998) identified three sociologies of neo-liberalism. These were neo-liberalism as: (i) a policy framework, (ii) a political discourse and (iii) a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance.

As a *policy framework*, governments drawing on neo-liberal principles, place emphasis on markets rather than on the welfare state. According to Larner (1998):

markets are understood to be a better way of organising economic activity because they are associated with competition, economic efficiency and choice [so that] rather than formulating policies to ensure full employment and an inclusive social welfare system, governments are now focused on enhancing economic efficiency and international competitiveness (Larner, 1998, p. 5–6).

The proponents of this neo-liberal view argued that if education were to be viewed as a market commodity and schools were to “design their programs and to market these programs to families...education would improve” (Murnane and Levy, 1996, p. 108). As a *political discourse*, neo-liberalism was fuelled by the continuing discourse on the role of the individual and the free market. One contribution to the idea is the New Right doctrine which states that the “absence of competition leads to inefficiency within the educational system, which results in a mismatch between the skills produced by schools and those required by the labour market” (Lauder 1987, p. 10). These political views influenced restructuring efforts in that privatisation, reduction of expenditure on education by government and decentralisation of decision-making form part of the rhetoric of those seeking neo-liberal reforms. As a *set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance*, neo-liberalism encourages individuals to see themselves as active subjects with individual choice, while conforming to the norms of the market (Larner, 1998). In education and other welfare agencies governance is conducted through “technologies, such as budget disciplines, accountancy and audit” (Larner, 1998, p. 12).

The NAR government adopted many of the structural adjustment policies mentioned above and cut spending in social service areas such as education and health. For example, between 1988 and 1992 there was a reduction in government spending, personal taxes were increased, and state owned companies privatised (The World Bank, 1995a; The World Bank, 1996). The Trinidad and Tobago dollar was devalued and salaries and wages of public servants cut. Between 1985 and 1993, there was a decrease in expenditure on education by 25% (The World Bank, 1995b). There was no expansion in the provision of places in the secondary education system during the 1980s. All the subsidies for transportation, books and uniforms established in the late 1970s were removed. The new economic policies reduced the government's expenditure on education and shift the burden to the public. These policies were treated with mistrust by the general public, especially as the government had spent the last 20 years pumping money into the education system and promoting the role of education in the development of the people and the nation.

Teachers in many schools, including the one I worked in, were faced with having to raise funds for recurrent expenditure and to cover shortfalls not met by government. Teachers endured a 10% salary cut and a freeze of the Cost Of Living Allowance from 1987. There were late payments of salaries on several occasions (Lavia & Garcia, 1998). Many teachers were unable to meet their financial commitments such as mortgage payments on houses, car loan payments, transport costs. Many resorted to 'moonlighting' jobs such as giving private tuition, taxi driving, small businesses, working part-time abroad or leaving the job. I knew of many teachers who had to sell their homes, cars, or had to take their children out of higher education. Consequently, the privileged, middle class position of the teacher achieved in the 1970s was quickly eroded in the 1980s and teacher morale was at an all-time low.

According to Graham-Brown (1991, p. 19) structural adjustment policies were not aimed at "develop[ing] the economies of the countries concerned but to ensure that they continue[d] paying their debts." According to some critics, the IMF's policies sought to restrict demand, consumption, and expenditure in developing countries and redirect the saved resources to repay debt (Danaher, 1994). This resulted in a direct transfer of funds from poor countries to rich countries. Consequently, the rich got richer and the poor got even poorer (Rich, 1994). As Graham-Brown (1991) argued:

One result is that concepts such as cost recovery, efficiency and adjustment have shifted the emphasis away from discussion of broader issues of development, particularly the concern to promote equity and social well-being rather than simply economic growth (Graham-Brown, 1991, p. 19-20).

In other words, the discourses of “efficiency” and “effectiveness” emerged as more dominant and in so doing pushed concerns of social justice such as equity and equality to the margins.

The erosion of the living standard of people of Trinidad and Tobago exacerbated the levels of poverty (Henry & Melville, 1989/2001) levels in the country. There was untold damage to the staffing of social services in Trinidad and Tobago as several personnel resigned and these services suffered from the long-term effects of under-funding. The structural adjustment measures had removed money from poorly funded areas, such as health and education and this resulted in a decline in quantity and quality of service. As noted by The World Bank:

The trend between 1985 and 1994 shows that the decline in public investment in education during the economic recession have severely constrained the ability of the system to cope with the challenges (The World Bank, 1996, p. 29).

It was not until 1994 that there was growth in the economy for the first time in more than a decade. Ironically, the World Bank attributed this growth to:

prudent fiscal and monetary policies, including reform programmes in trade, tax, price controls, and foreign exchange transactions have resulted in the resumption of economic growth (The World Bank, 1995a, p. 1).

### **Educational Planning and Policies**

During the 1960s and 1970s, education projects in the developing world had focused on the provision of human and physical resources—text-books; determining teacher-student ratios; access; expansion of the education system; teacher training; curriculum diversification; new curricula and texts; programmed instruction; educational television; team teaching; alternative schools that break down western traditions; new technologies; and lifelong learning programmes. However, the success of these projects was limited (Beeby 1966, 1980; Habte & Heyneman 1983; Kremer, 1995; London 1997). Their lack of success resulted from high recurring costs, pre-occupation with single projects, high cost of

maintenance of capital equipment, and the high cost of repayment of loans to lending agencies such as the World Bank (Habte & Heyneman, 1983; Hurst, 1983; Klees, 1986).

Some educational plans also embraced ambitious projects—eradication of illiteracy in 25 years (Timár, 1983) and universal primary education. Unfortunately, these two elusive goals have never been achieved in many developing countries. Expansion of educational systems meant more salary payments and higher infrastructural costs (Habte & Heyneman, 1983). These increased costs raised the overall cost of provision of education and as economic hardships increase declining enrolments become more visible (Timár, 1983). Some authors (Klees, 1996; London, 1994; Psacharopoulos, 1986; Timár, 1983) suggest that elementary economics had been neglected in these plans as many developing countries were unable to finance educational reform.

By the late 1970s, there was a new global concern about the quality of education with educationists such as Beeby (1969) from New Zealand raising this concern with respect to educational policies. Beeby argued that because economists, rather than educators, designed educational plans, they tended to focus on the provision of educational places and aspects of quality such as levels of student achievement had been omitted from the plans. Hanushek (1995) argued that in many countries the stakeholders in education were beginning to doubt the effectiveness of schools to educate young people. These stakeholders cited a litany of social ills—poverty, crime, ill-health, violence, illiteracy, dropouts, inequity in education, unemployment—as evidence of the failure of schools. The opinions of these parents, educators, political analysts and business round tables were located within discourses in which the state is viewed as continuing to fail to provide the systems needed to produce educated citizens. The critics believed that the resulting inefficiency and waste on educational systems needed to be curtailed so as to reduce the financial crisis of many economies.

By 1984, the concern about the quality of education in Trinidad and Tobago emerged in educational policy. Despite the massive expansion of the secondary system in the 1970s, the numbers of students from low-income families were progressively reduced as the levels of schooling increased. These students were concentrated in the Comprehensive systems and performance in these schools lagged behind those of the government-assisted schools (The World

Bank, 1995a, 1996). In addition, there was a track record of failure of implementing educational policy in Trinidad and Tobago (London, 1991, 1993a, 1993b), such as those policies regarding increasing contact time (de-shifting) of Junior secondary schools and achieving universal secondary education. London (1991, 1993a, 1993b) attributed this failure to reduced capital expenditure, vague policy statements, political instability, poor record of achievement, and an unclear source of finances and conditions of World Bank policies. This concern with quality was evident in the Ministry of Education's Assessment of the Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1968 to 1983 published in October 1984 " (Ministry of Education, 1984). This assessment was done "to highlight the quantitative and qualitative achievements [and weaknesses] of the Education Plan, 1968—1983 (Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 62) with the aim of planning the way forward for education in the nation. The 1984 assessment discussed the achievements of each of the proposals of the 1968 plan and the 1975 proposals made by the Prime Minister. However, the assessment was rather silent on the lack of achievement of secondary teacher training.

The assessment ended with the Ministry of Education's definition of quality education. It stated:

Quality education is concerned with bridging the gap between what goes on in the classroom and the world in which we live. In summary it deals with the curriculum in relation to the environment. It seeks to redress imbalances and maladjustments between schooling and the labour market, between schooling and family life, between schooling and citizenship and finally between schooling and living (Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 63).

The assessment also noted that for education to fulfil its role in "enhancing the growth of individuals and society" it must continually attempt to "restructure itself so as to be able to respond flexibly to societal demands for quality education" (p. 64). This task it identified as the main challenge for the new educational plans to follow.

In 1985, the PNM government published the *1985—1990 Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 1985). The plan which was designed for a shorter five-year period, because at the time, long term strategic planning was being criticised for being too difficult to monitor. The 1985 plan acknowledged some of the accomplishments of the 1968 Plan. For example, by 1985 there was increased provision in primary and secondary places and a virtually 100% trained primary school teaching staff. The plan also noted that the secondary teaching staff was

54% graduate secondary teachers, with 42% being “professionally qualified.” It also noted the “unacceptably low” levels of achievement at both the primary and secondary school. At the primary level “approximately 20% of the children entering the secondary system read considerably below the required standard” (Ministry of Education, 1985, p. 6) and at the secondary level “examination results have been unsatisfactory” (Ministry of Education, 1985, p. 7).

The *1985 to 1990 Education Plan* signalled its commitment to improving quality with respect to several sectors of education. It also reaffirmed its commitment to the philosophy of education in the 1968 Plan by stating:

Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that its greatest resource is its people and its greatest hope for the future lies in the development of the potential of its children. The provision of education provided must therefore cater for the spiritual, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, physical and vocational development of the student (Ministry of Education, 1985, p. 14).

There was the underlying belief that in Trinidadian society “an effective and efficient school system can and will provide for a nation’s wealth” (Novlan, 1998, p.10). The rationale for education was expanded beyond the “intellectual, moral and emotional development” of the earlier 1968 plan to include spiritual, aesthetic, physical and vocational development with specific goals listed for each of these areas in the 1985 Plan.

In 1986, after its landslide victory over the PNM, the NAR government had little choice but to adopt some of the major policies put forward for educational development in the *1985-1990 Education Plan*. Despite financial constraints, the government managed to secure a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank and it was used to construct a Learning Resource Centre for teachers. The funds were also used for a retraining programme for primary teachers. Unfortunately many of the policies of the 1985 Plan did not “see the light of day” (Alleyne, 1996, p. 129) as World Bank loans were later withdrawn.

In the last days of July 1990, the country’s political and social stability was ruptured by a coup launched by the Jamat, a Muslim -based group in Trinidad. However, the NAR government and the armed forces were able to quell the rebellion. Despite these social and political disruptions, the NAR promised a new education plan for the period 1992—1995; however, the new government did not stay in power long enough to make one.

By the early 1990s, neo-liberalist principles and policies dictated a new economic global economic perspective. These principles had a profound effect on

the educational policies, especially in Britain, New Zealand and the United States (Lauder, 1987; Novlan, 1998; Wagner, 1996). As Ball (1998, p.120) suggested, the new market model of “contracting, deregulation and privatisation [has] reduced....the capacity for direct state intervention. [States] have moved from welfare corporations to a market model.” Education was no longer viewed as a social good, driven by social equity concerns and resulting in social mobility of the individual. Rather it was seen as more of an individual good. One’s prosperity would depend on one’s ability to trade individual skills. Education could be seen a private good, to be paid for by those who benefit from it (Demaine, 1993; Wagner, 1996). In other words, education was viewed as a service to be bought by the individual who exercised choice and pays for the commodity. Thus, the neo-liberals contended that the state should regulate, *not provide* education. They recommend reductions in state intervention and financial support and an increase in privatisation. At the same time, neo-liberal policies called for increased monitoring and surveillance of social systems. Thus, state control could be maintained by stricter accounting practices, more testing to measure efficiency, and performance appraisal of staff. These new ideas did not simply replace the pre-existing concerns of social justice and equity, but they became more the dominant ideas drawn upon by policy makers.

In 1991, when the People’s National Movement returned to political power under the leadership of Mr. Patrick Manning, the new PNM government was keen to continue its work in education. After holding consultations with stakeholders in education and other interested publics, a new education plan was produced by a 23-person Task Force, composed of representatives from all sectors of the education system and headed by Carroll Keller, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine (National Task Force on Education, 1993).

The *Education Policy Paper 1993-2003* stated that “we must broaden access and improve quality simultaneously in accordance with social demand if we are not to experience further deterioration in our levels of learning environment” (National Task Force, 1993, p. ix). Increased access was no longer the main concern of the new plan. Issues of quality of education were also raised in light of the high failure rates in the external examinations written by students enrolled at secondary schools.

The philosophy of education in the 1993—2003 plan was stated as follows:

What do we want from our education system? We all hope that our education system will establish and maintain the ethical and moral values necessary for civilised interpersonal and intergroup relationships in our multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Our educational arrangements themselves must be marked by a technical and professional proficiency and a participatory style of operations and ought to promote the social efficiency necessary for successful nation building (National Task Force On Education, 1993, p. vii).

This statement indicated a continuation of the ethical and moral purpose of education as stated in the 1968 and 1985 plans. The aim of education continued to be nation building, and racial integration. The statement of the philosophy continued:

Further it is expected that the curricular offerings in the education system will address adequately, the goal of all-round development, but with the economy and effectiveness we are now seeking to establish in the national economy as a whole (National Task Force On Education, 1993, p. vii).

Here, we see the emergence of the neo-liberal discourse in the education policy. There is concern with efficiency of resources, especially in the light of the depressed economic situation in the 1980s and the early 1990s. The discourses of accountability and monitoring become more evident as the philosophy continues:

Finally all these tasks must be accomplished through procedures which emphasise the need for accountability and constant improvement at all levels and at every stage of the educational enterprise. These are therefore recommendations for a vigilant and purposeful monitoring and evaluation capability and effort, buttressed by an Educational Management Information System that would keep the national community informed, promote its much needed involvement and secure its indispensable support for what after all, is a national effort. With our house in this type of order we can meaningfully and confidently engage in dialogue with lending and donor agencies, finance houses etc on the international scene (National Task Force On Education, 1993, p. vii).

So what accounted for the emergence of these discourses in Trinidad and Tobago where a New Right government was not in power? Levin (1998) suggested that “policy borrowing” accounted for similarities in policies. Trends in educational restructuring may be reinforced by globalisation (Jones, 1998) and as information on new policies spread throughout the developed world via the media, world-wide web, international funding agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, political parties with similar views, and the interchange of intelligentsia. Because no one wants to be left behind, new policies are adopted

with little evaluation of results (Levin, 1998). In other words, the policy makers tended to draw upon the same discourses as these ideas became the normal way to think. Levin (1998, p. 138) also suggested that “new ideas move around quite quickly but their adoption may depend on the need any given government sees itself having.” Indeed the statement “with our house in this type of order, we can meaningfully and confidently dialogue with lending and donor agencies, finance houses etc on the international scene” (National Task Force On Education, 1993, p. vii) suggests that the funding agencies would more readily accept plans that are steeped in the neo-liberal language that they were speaking at the time. Therefore to get the funding, the government needed to adopt some of the ideas espoused by the funding agencies.

The 1985 Plan noted that the favourable climate for provision of educational places of the 1970s had come to an end, and the task was now to “re-evaluate its priorities before it proceeds towards the goal of providing secondary school places for the entire 12-17 age cohort” (Ministry of Education, 1985, p. 7). Table 7 shows the enrolment of students in the five types of public schools existing in 1997/1998. Between 1985 and 1998, there was no significant growth in the numbers or types of public secondary schools. Yet, the demand for secondary education continued to outstrip the number of available places. The government resorted to purchasing places in private secondary schools to meet the demand for places.

**Table 7**

**Student Enrolment In Public Secondary Schools In Trinidad And Tobago By Type Of School – 1997/1998**

Type And Number* Of Schools		Secondary Population †	
		Numbers	Percentage
Junior Secondary Schools	24	33328	31.4
Comprehensive Schools	19	26207	24.7
Composite Schools	9	8388	7.9
Government Assisted	30	20530	19.3
Government Secondary	19	17735	16.7
TOTAL	101	106188	100.0

(Sources Of Data: \*National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 50;

†Central Statistical Office, 1999, Table 16, p. 32).

When the UNC government came into power in 1995, it had no choice but to implement some policies of the *1993–2003 Education Plan* that funding agencies had already approved (Alleyne, 1996). For example, in 1995 the UNC government embarked upon the construction and repair of primary schools, a project already on stream as the PNM had secured an International American Development Bank (IADB) loan to do this. One goal of the UNC government was the achievement of Universal Secondary Education. Like their predecessors the UNC government commissioned committees and task forces to investigate and make recommendations in areas of the education system. These included policies stated in the 1993 plan such as the establishment of local school boards, the post-primary system, universal secondary education and technology studies (Ministry of Education, n.d, p. 1).

### **Developments In 2000**

In the year 2000, three significant developments were taking place in the secondary education system, that will be sure to impact upon the preparation and ongoing professional development of the graduate secondary teacher in the future. These developments were: (i) a further expansion of the secondary system to cater for 100% of the graduates of the primary level; (ii) the introduction of a Professional Management and Appraisal Process (PMAP) for all teachers; and (iii) decentralisation of the education system.

The 2000 expansion in the secondary education system introduced another type of public secondary school as part of the Secondary Education Modernisation Project (SEMP). This expansion was funded by a US\$105 million loan from the IADB. The first phase of the project involved the construction of ten new “Government High Schools.” The curriculum of these new schools is mainly academic and does not include technical and vocational subjects. These schools are supposed to have an enrolment capacity of 5250 students when fully operational. Most of these schools were opened by November 2000.

The SEMP project “was developed in general, in keeping with the mission of the Ministry of Education: ***TO MANAGE THE MODERNIZATION AND RENEWAL OF THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING*** and in particular in response to the many criticisms of the education of Trinidad and Tobago” (italics and bold in the original; Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 1). These

criticisms were related to the “low levels of literacy and numeracy” a “lack of creative, analytical and problem solving skills,” “low examination passes and serious cases of student misbehaviour” (Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 1). These woes in the system are quite similar to those related to the quality of education identified in the 1993 plan.

The SEMP programme is composed of “four interrelated components” (Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 2)

- (i) Qualitative Improvement—improvements in educational quality through curriculum development; teaching and learning strategies and supporting resources; professional development; and testing, assessment and evaluation.
- (ii) Equity in provision—universal secondary education through the construction of “20 new schools to provide 10,000+ new secondary places” and upgrading of existing secondary schools.
- (iii) Institutional strengthening—operational efficiency by “strengthening the leadership capacity of the Ministry of Education” (Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 2) and incentives for teachers and students aimed at enhancing performance.
- (iv) Studies and Measures—“a number of pertinent studies necessary for building a platform necessary for further development” to be carried out by “a judicious mix of international and national consultants” (Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 2)

The goal of “equity in provision” was realised with the construction of 10 new Government High Schools opened in 2000 and subsequent placement of 100% of the primary students who took the Common Entrance Examination in 2000 at secondary schools. The government achieved 100% placement by purchasing free places for students in private secondary schools, a practice started in the early 1990s. This suggests a blurring of lines between public and private education a development, which may be significant for future developments in education in Trinidad.

Another development to note is that for the first time since the signing of the Concordat in 1960, there was an expansion of the denominational system with the construction of three Hindu secondary schools and two Anglican secondary schools. These new denominational institutions are private schools, but the government purchased up to 90% of the places. These developments signal a new era for national control in the provision of secondary education. One wonders whether this governmental involvement in private secondary education is a move to make private education public or to privatise public education.

In 2000, the Common Entrance was held for the last time. It was replaced by the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA). However, there was no change in the practice of student placement based on academic merit. In other words, placement practices were still being informed by a discourse of academic ability. As a result, high percentages of students from the lowest quartile in the Common Entrance examination were placed in these new schools. Students who were unable to read or write were placed in special classes within these new schools and existing Junior Secondary schools. Therefore, could 100% placement at secondary schools really be viewed as an achievement?

These issues were widely debated in the national media between July and September, 2000. Some people applauded the 100% placement as a final achievement of free secondary education for all. They saw it as the realisation of a dream established in 1956. Others saw it as a significant achievement for the political party that dared to make it a reality. Few in these camps mentioned the existing failure and drop-out rates in the existing system. For example, the then Prime Minister stated “For the first time, no child has been deemed a failure. For the first time no child has been left behind. For the first time, no child has been left without hope.” (Express, July 17, 2000). His view of failure was based on a discourse of access. Failure was not having a place in a secondary school and therefore not having any access to secondary education. However, if a child is unable to cope with the literacy demand of a secondary education system, and the system is not set up to provide the students with the professional help that they need, then what hope could there be (Shah, 2000)?

Others wondered whether or not this goal should have been realised before the infrastructural, financial and professional inadequacies in the secondary education system were attended to. They argued that the existing secondary system was already overcrowded and few could understand the rush to place students in a system that could not accommodate them. Existing schools lacked furniture, basic supplies and were under-funded (Ahmad, 2000; Gordon, 2000). There was a shortage of teachers in some subject areas such as Mathematics and Geography. There was little provision of training for teachers to deal with the special needs of the students who have not only failed to place, but had failed the exam and were in need of serious remedial help (Jacob, 2000). Some people argued that the 100% placement as a political move to gain votes in the 2000

election (Shah, 2000). Finally, it was felt that the government should be thinking of increasing jobs and ways to reduce the unemployment rate (Shah, 2000).

Salohcin also discussed how this placement issue would further affect teachers and students. He explained:

Full placement, but the question is are they really ready for secondary education? By no stretch of the imagination you are going to tell me you are going to be teaching a secondary curriculum using Goldilocks and Chicken Licken, Jack and Jill. I know people will argue we did that when we went to school. Of course we did, but not at secondary school. We did it in Standard One and that kind of thing. I have a difficulty with that, no two ways about that.

Some parents, they are ecstatic, their claim is, well I never had a chance to go to secondary school so my child getting a chance. The question is are they really getting a chance....a chance at what? As they say people are seeing it as a political move but there is always the saying that the sting is in the tail because when these people cannot cope and they become very frustrated, we are going to be sitting in a powder keg. The tragedy is when the powder keg is ignited, some of the planners and those people who hatched this "hare brain" idea would be long gone (Salohcin72).

Salohcin, talking as a practitioner in a junior secondary school, recognised a potential outcome of placement of students without making preparations for specialist teachers to help them. Again, like in the 1970s, teachers were being placed into classrooms with very little preparation to deal with the real task at hand of educating students who had significant problems that could affect their learning. One wonders how the graduate secondary teachers assigned to these schools would construct their understanding of how they should be as teachers.

In 1987, Mark, a teacher educator, commented on the addition of the Comprehensive system. She argued "in addition to the new Junior and Senior Secondary Schools, the traditional secondary schools were retained and were allowed to function in their established academic ways" (Mark, 1987, p. 65). She added "the retention of the old system and the introduction of the new system has resulted in the present system of secondary education consisting of two parallel and relatively independent sub-systems." (Mark, 1987, p. 65-66). In 2000 when the new Government High Schools were introduced, a third parallel sub-system was added to the secondary system in Trinidad. One cannot help but wonder how untrained graduate secondary teachers will cope.

In 2000, preparation was also being undertaken for the introduction the PMAP. The PMAP was designed to:

- (i) identify, evaluate and measure work performed in relation to defined objectives, responsibilities and standards previously determined between members and their supervisors;
- (ii) ensure the achievement of educational goals and objectives as well as enhance the overall performance of the School and Education system; and
- (iii) identify and determine current and future developmental and training needs of members of the Teaching Service (T&TUTA, n.d.).

There is evidence of a managerial discourse in these goals which suggests the emergence of a standards based programme for professional development. However, the teachers union took the position that they will not agree to the implementation of the PMAP until “the necessary support systems and pre-requisites are in place.” The union also advised the concept of PMAP could lead to enhanced performance of teachers if it is regarded as a “developmental” system rather than a “punitive” against teachers (T&TUTA, n.d.)

The third development is that of reorganisation and restructuring of the educational system (London, 1996) to achieve a system of school-based management. One of the goals of school-based management is to “provide a context for the professionalisation of teachers” (National Task Force on Education, 1993). I addressed this development as part of my doctoral coursework (De Four-Babb, 1999b). I concluded that improvements in teaching and learning were not guaranteed because school-based management could lead to increased time-demands for teachers, new expectations for participation in decision-making, increased financial burdens for schools. I recommended that practitioners thoroughly analyse the school-based policy in terms of the economic, social and cultural context of the school community and teaching and learning. In addition, teachers must demand financial and human resource commitment from their employer to ensure that there are improvements in the work-life of teachers as promised.

Between 1984 and 2000, there were significant political and economic changes in Trinidad which affected the development of educational policies. However, each successive government, as Alleyne (1996) argued, “had no alternative but to build on the foundation and continue on the road of educational development that the PNM had marked out with its 15-Year Educational Plan [in 1968]” (Alleyne, 1996, p. 135). This period was also marked by stagnation in the economy and under-funding of the education system. It was not until 2000 that was there some economic growth and the stage was set for continued expansion in

the secondary system. These developments identified above shaped and will continue to shape the professional landscape of the graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad. For example, one could only wonder how managerial discourses would create possibilities and constraints for thought and practice of beginning graduate secondary teachers in the future.

Now, I turn my attention back to the graduate secondary teacher between 1984 and 2000. First, I discuss the professional development opportunities available to graduate second teachers between 1984 and 2000. Then, I examine the Ministry of Education's definition of the "good" teacher. Finally, I introduce the interviewees who began to teach after 1984.

### **Educational Opportunities For Graduate Secondary Teachers**

Between 1984 and 2000, opportunities for professional education for graduate secondary teachers were still limited to the in-service Diploma in Education (DipEd). However, there was little expansion in the number of graduate secondary teachers awarded the DipEd (see Appendix A). Therefore, the programme was unable to reduce the backlog of untrained teachers or provide training for the thousands of new graduates in the Comprehensive system.

In the 1985 plan, a recommendation for "training in the aesthetic areas of the curriculum" (Ministry of Education, 1985, p. 106) was made for changes in the content of the programme DipEd because it was viewed as being too academic. There were also proposals for: the re-examination of technical/vocational teacher training; provision for the training for administrators of secondary schools; and the implementation of a four-year with education degree programme (Ministry of Education, 1985). However, the economic constraints described earlier in this chapter, limited the availability of the financial investment needed for the expansion of the DipEd. Additionally, there was no attempt to begin a four-year degree programme in education at the university that included a subject specialisation and educational theory.

Few other opportunities professional development opportunities existed for graduate secondary teachers who wished to further their studies in Education. At the University of the West Indies (UWI) "higher degree programmes" at the School of Education were:

intended to develop a cadre of professionals capable of addressing the research, developmental, administrative, supervisory and instructional needs of the education sector of the region served by the university.

These programmes included a Master of Arts, Master of Philosophy, and a Doctor of Philosophy. They were not targeted at beginning graduate teachers. In 1988, a Master of Education programme was established at UWI for experienced graduate secondary teachers. However, the focus of this programme was to produce teacher educators for the Teacher Training College and to make significant improvements in teacher education at the primary level (Durojaiye, 1996).

Professional development opportunities were also available through union-run programmes. These programmes sought to assist with the development of teaching skills and provide pedagogical information to teachers. A Certificate and a Diploma in Special Education was also offered through collaboration between the University of Sheffield, England and the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association (T&TUTA). In 1993 a Master of Education was established by the same collaboration (Clarke, 1998). In 1998, the first cohort of teachers entered the doctoral programme.

In the *1993-2003 Education Policy Paper* the government recommended that teachers be “professionally trained for their prospective tasks” and that the “system of teacher training and education to be of the highest quality.” The policy also called for a “fully co-ordinated system of teacher education” and an “increased capability to administer in-service training programmes” and “short, intensive teacher courses to meet the needs of beginning teachers” (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 78-79). The policy stated:

In the short run or Plan period, and no later than 1995/96, a well-articulated and fully co-ordinated system of teacher education must be developed. It must encompass programmes for the preparation of teacher educators in all in-service and pre-service programmes and courses for the professional development of administrators, teachers’ aides and caregivers (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. xv).

Unfortunately, by 2000 when the field-work for this study was carried out, this recommendation had never been fully achieved. But, there had been a few attempts by the Ministry of Education to implement some form of pre-service or in-service training for new secondary teachers. For example, the On the Job Training Programme (OJT) was started for university graduates in 1994. These programmes will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

## **The “Good” Teacher**

In the assessment of the 1968 policy paper (Ministry of Education, 1984), the Ministry of Education stated that “quality teaching is critical to student performance” (Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 64). In other words, it recognised that good teachers were needed if the to goals established for the education system were to be accomplished. But what discourses informed the Ministry of Education’s definition of a good teacher?

A clear statement was made on the qualities of the good teacher in the 1984 assessment. It stated:

The good teacher must be secure in his command of subject matter and in his ability to impart this knowledge. The good teacher must be possessed with attitudes and moral character, which will have a positive impact on the all-round development of the student. This attitude deals with traits of understanding, sympathy expressed in dealing with one another, enthusiasm and effort in undertakings, the willingness to accept and to meet the new demands made on mind and body. These characteristics of attitude and moral character which educationists call the affective domain are also referred to as the hidden curriculum. It is vital that we recognise the importance of the hidden curriculum that such qualities of punctuality, regularity and proper work attitudes are built. In summary the development of quality teachers in the quest for quality education must embrace all of the above elements (Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 63-64).

This perspective on the good teacher places the teacher at the centre in terms of being an exemplar to students. Teachers are identified in this definition as having some impact on students’ learning. To do this, the ministry said, teachers needed “a command of subject matter” and the “ability to impart knowledge.” This idea draws heavily on the discourse of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge. Knowledge is regarded as something external to the student, something to be passed on from teacher to student. Indeed this perspective was elaborated in a comment in the *1984 Assessment* that “teachers and textbooks [are] the two major conduits by which the “stuff of learning” is “transmitted into the classrooms” (Ministry of Education, 1984, p.64). Paulo Freire (1970) referred to this view as the “banking” concept of teaching and learning.

Good teachers are also expected to display certain behaviours. For example the teacher is expected to be punctual, regular, understanding, sympathetic, enthusiastic, and willing to help students. The Ministry of Education is of the opinion that students will observe and emulate these behaviours. It is for

these reasons that they are thought of as part of the “hidden curriculum.” Kelly (1989) has defined the hidden curriculum as:

those things which pupils learn at school because of the way in which the work of school is planned and organized but which are not in themselves overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangements (Kelly, 1989, p. 11).

What the Ministry also expects is that if students emulate these qualities, they would become good workers. Teacher development, then, is seen as intellectual and attitudinal development. However, since these attitudes are part of the “hidden curriculum,” one wonders if the Ministry expected them to be hidden parts of teacher development programmes. The dominant discourses that inform this policy statement include are the teacher as transmitter of knowledge and the teacher as role model or social and moral exemplar. These are the same that informed the ideas of the interviewees who began teaching before 1984. One wonders whether or not the interviewees who began to teach after 1984 were constituted through and in terms of these dominant discourses.

To summarise: by 1984, there was still the perception by the Ministry of Education that a graduate secondary teacher should be a subject specialist and knowledgeable expert and be of sound, moral character. The definition explored above offered little alternatives to the image of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge and a role model or exemplar. The ministry’s definition could be located within the banking model of education (Freire, 1970). The graduate secondary teacher still held a position of privilege based on his/her level of education. There was still no requirement of teacher training as a pre-requisite for position. The training that was offered was optional and insufficient to cope with the backlog of untrained graduate secondary teachers. Between 1984 and 1999 some forms of in-service and pre-service training for graduate secondary teachers existed. However, economic constraints hampered the establishment of wider-reaching programmes.

In the next section of this chapter, I introduce the nineteen interviewees who began to teach between 1984 and 1999. I explore these interviewees’ reasons for entry into teaching and the ideas they brought with them. I close the section with one interviewee’s story of beginning teaching.

### **Nineteen More Interviewees Enter Teaching**

Like their colleagues who began teaching between 1968 and 1983, the nineteen interviewees who began teaching between 1984 and 1999 also took different routes to enter secondary teaching. Portfolio, D. Jew and Tiger began teaching at the primary level after they completed their Advanced Level (A'Levels). After his first year in the primary system, Portfolio entered university and on completion started teaching as a graduate secondary teacher. D. Jew and Tiger taught at primary schools for more than five years before beginning their secondary teaching careers. They had both successfully completed their in-service primary teacher training programmes, before pursuing a university degree for subject specialisation. Sandra and Adrian also began teaching after they completed their A Level studies, but at the secondary level. They taught for one year after which they went on to university. On completion of their courses they both worked for a short stint in the public service before returning to teach at the public secondary level.

Dot.Com, Maya and Harold started teaching at the primary level after completing their degrees. Dot.Com and Maya were quickly transferred to secondary schools, but Harold did a second subject specialisation at university for three years before he began to teach at a secondary school. Rhonda, Smith and Mr. Man worked in other jobs after obtaining their degrees. Rhonda worked for one year in a bank before starting to teach at a Senior Comprehensive school in 1995. Smith started secondary teaching after 15 years in the working world. Mr. Man also worked in various public sectors before entering teaching in 1992. The other eight interviewees—Jesse, Andi, Kowen, Miss T&T, Jane, Mr. Vogue, Fluffy Starr and Antonia—began secondary teaching in the same year that they completed their first degree.

From the experiences of these interviewees and those who began teaching earlier, I concluded that most of these interviewees began teaching immediately after spending time in educational institutions. For these interviewees, their views of teaching and learning would be influenced by their school experiences and the discourses available to them in school. They saw the life of the teacher very much in terms of the life of the student. I also concluded that there is no common route to becoming a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad. Thus, there is scope for further research on the experiences of groups of teachers who take these various entry routes. What was common, however, was the process of

recruitment and this process as it is an important time during which the interviewees would have had an opportunity to think of themselves as teachers. This process will be analysed further in Chapter Seven.

In this section, I discuss the reasons that these interviewees gave for entering teaching and the ideas about teachers and teaching they say they had when they first began to teach.

### **Reasons For Entering Teaching**

A list of reasons given by the interviewees for entering teaching is shown in Table 8. However, as I explained in Chapter Five I did not simply want to identify the reasons the interviewees gave for entering teaching, but that I tried to make sense of how and why they came to give those reasons. I also explained that I looked at the reasons as manifestations of the discourse (Burr, 1995). The interviewees made the decision to be graduate secondary teachers at two levels: first to teach and then to teach at a secondary school. The main reason given by these interviewees for teaching at the secondary level was the increased salary. As Fluffy Starr stated “secondary school was also more money. It involved a higher degree of education but it is also more money in the end” (Fluffy Starr\94). Those interviewees who entered primary teaching with a degree, such as Dot.Com, Maya and Harold did not have their degrees recognised and were only paid for their Advanced Level (A’Level) qualifications.

In the sections on interviewees reasons for entry discussed in Chapters Four and Five, I explored the reasons of fulfilling a childhood dream to be a teacher; the concept of teaching blood; and the wish to serve others. In this section, I discuss these reasons, as well as others identified by the interviewees who began to teach between 1984 and 1999.

#### ***“Ah Always Wanted To Teach”***

In Chapters Four and Five, I discussed Billy Joe’s and Sid Chase’s childhood dream of wanting to teach in terms of positioning (Davies, 1992). Portfolio, D. Jew, Maya, Kowen, Dot.Com, Mr. Vogue and Fluffy Starr said that they decided that they wanted to be teachers when they were children. For example, Andi, who was the daughter of teachers, indicated how she “played teacher” in her childhood and how those experiences shaped how she saw herself as teacher as instructor. She explained:

Maybe I was supposed to be a teacher because I remember my brothers

**TABLE 8**

**Reasons For Entering Teaching 1984 And Beyond**

	SN	AD	JS	AN	PO	DJ	OC	MY	KO	TT	JN	MN	DC	VG	HA	FS	AT	RH	SM	
Childhood dream	√				√	√		√	√				√	√		√				8
Good teachers					√				√							√				3
Family	√		√	√		√				√					√					6
Enjoyed first year			√							√										2
Service to others	√			√				√			√		√				√		√	7
Recruited by principal/teacher		√																		1
Job change	√	√																√	√	4
No job in chosen field	√	√	√	√			√			√					√					7
Financial need	√	√			√	√	√		√			√	√		√	√		√		11
Use academic	√							√			√		√			√	√	√	√	8
Holidays and benefits	√								√							√				3
No plans to enter teaching			√							√					√		√	√		5

used to have these Lego blocks and I would set them out and you have the red Lego block in front and that would be the teacher...I remember playing that sort of...you know you if you are playing by yourself that's how you play and that's how you are instructing people (Andi\85).

For some of the interviewees, their childhood dreams of wanting to teach were sustained by their experiences with teachers in their lives, such as relatives who were teachers or persons who taught them at primary or secondary schools. For example, Fluffy Starr explained that her dream of being a teacher grew from childhood because of teachers in the government-assisted schools between 1983 and 1990. She made a link between having good teachers and her success in learning at school and she believed that she could see herself in that role. She explained:

I don't think I wanted to do anything else but teach. From the very beginning that had always been my dream. As well as, I think, I was influenced by having very good teachers in school and I felt that that was important for the whole process of learning. I think that I could have seen myself in a role like that, trying to give back to other students (Fluffy Starr\94).

Fluffy Starr drew on the discourse of the teacher as being central to the student's success. She saw herself as being able to help others learn in the way that her teachers had helped her to learn.

The childhood dream to teach was also encouraged by the interviewees' experiences of tutoring other students when they were themselves students. For example, Mr. Vogue, who was a secondary student at a government-assisted school between 1978 and 1986, explained that his initial choice of career was to be a doctor, but that he was never good at Science, so that he could not achieve that dream. While at secondary school he developed a love for his subject area and had good experiences tutoring students. He explained:

[My teacher] asked me to take the class and supervise them make sure they don't make noise, and I started teaching where they were in the book. And I heard some student some guy said "Oh my God! He is even better than [*name of teacher*]" and that had my head swollen. I thought well, "Yes I was good." She didn't get through to some of them and I know she was good. I feel I am just as good or even better (Mr Vogue\91).

Mr. Vogue also drew upon the idea that the teacher was responsible for student success and that if he could help students to be successful, then he could be a good teacher. In the main, his success with helping students while he was himself a student made him think that he could teach. Thus, his childhood dream of

wanting to teach was sustained because he came to believe that he could be a good teacher because he felt that they possessed the attributes he believed good teachers have. In other words, he positioned himself as a good teacher.

***“Ah Have Teaching Blood, Ah Should Teach.”***

Miss T&T, D. Jew, Harold, Andi, Sandra and Jesse had close family members who were teachers. However, only Sandra said that the teachers in her family positively influenced her to want to teach. Miss T&T and Harold, who were also the children of teachers, were not keen to teach. Miss T&T who was the daughter of two teachers explained that she tried teaching only on the advice of her parents. She explained:

As a matter of fact, one of my life’s decisions after I graduated from university was *not* to teach. My parents convinced me to give it a try and after the first day I decided ‘no way Jose’ am I doing this. But [another Ministry] at the time was not able to provide me with any sort of permanent job so my father convinced me to stay on for a while. Since then I have grown to love it and I am finding great difficulty in thinking about leaving it at all (Miss T&T).

Harold’s negative view of teaching was based on his own observations of his father’s experience in teaching. He explained why he did not want to be a teacher:

There is no room for advancement. It is not very satisfying as a job. I mean [my father] did enjoy himself. He did gain some sort of satisfaction from the job. But he always told me if I could do something else, well maybe I should. In terms of advancement, in terms of a career and stuff,...teaching as a profession does not have much scope for that. If you want to improve yourself and advance in a career, teaching is very difficult to do that with. So he always advised me to do something else. So I always had this impression that teaching was a dead end job. Plus my observation of some of the teachers I had—especially at secondary school—looking at them you could see that some of them did not look very happy (Harold\99).

Nonetheless, the profession provided an acceptable choice of career for some interviewees who were family members of teachers, but who were reluctant to teach.

***“Yuh Educated, Yuh Ha’ To Wuk”<sup>12</sup>***

In any developing society, the expectation is that all able-bodied and educated will work (Brown, 1992). Employment is needed to earn a living, for social mobility and seen as “a major part of one’s personal identity and worth” (Brown,

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<sup>12</sup> Ha = Have; Wuk = work

1992, p. 185). In Trinidadian society unemployment has always been a significant socio-economic problem, especially in age group 15-24 (Farrell, 1978; Henry & Melville, 1989/2001). In 1978, Farrell argued that because Trinidad is a “non-traditional, highly urbanised society” (p. 119) and a money economy a person who does not have a wage or salary is unable to participate in the economy. This statement still held true in 2000. There was no “benefit,” “dole” or social security cheque for unemployed persons. An educated person without a job was regarded as a failure. The value system stressed the importance of a job.

The need to be employed was given as a reason for entry by far more interviewees entering teaching after 1983. Eleven of the nineteen interviewees mentioned financial reasons for their choice to enter the teaching profession. For example, Kowen who began teaching in 1990 at a government-assisted school explained that teaching became a “viable option” because:

In the late 70s early 80s when I was in secondary school, teachers enjoyed a relatively high standard of living as compared to now of course but coming from...the lower socio-economic background you find that teaching would represent a considerable enhancement of my fortunes. Plus, to be quite honest the hours are nice. You have a lot of time to pursue other things that may interest you. Basically that's it. That is why I wanted to become a teacher (Kowen\90).

For Kowen, teaching represented a significant increase in his personal financial fortunes especially in the face of unemployment or underemployment in the mid-1980s.

Five of the interviewees said that they began teaching because they wanted to get some work experience and earn some money before embarking on their university education. For example, in 1984 as new A'Level graduate Adrian did not want to be unemployed and be a burden on his household. A job was important to help him reduce his reliance on others as he explained:

Coming from a family that was not too well off, not that we were short of things like food and so on, but as a young person, you always want money in your pocket and you want to be able to make a contribution *back* to your parents in terms of all the sacrifices that they made and so on. So you want a job (Adrian\84).

Similarly, D. Jew explained his reason for beginning to teach after A'Levels in the following way:

I really had aspired to working at the bank after I finished A'Levels because it was the in-thing at the time and the bank environment seemed to be very ideal for somebody who is now leaving school and you are aspiring towards a job. But there was this position that opened up at the

[*name of school*] and my father...sort of encouraged me to apply for the position. I didn't really think about it long and hard. At the moment I saw it as a means to an end because it was really my intention to work to save some money to go on to do studies at university. That was the objective. What encouraged me a little more at the time was that teaching paid more money than the bank did (D. Jew\98).

Rhonda, Mr. Man, Sandra, and Adrian left jobs in the civil service and banking sectors and began to teach because teaching paid more than those jobs. Additionally, their old jobs did not provide them with an opportunity to use their academic qualifications and knowledge.

Jesse, Andi, Ocusu, Miss T&T, and Harold said that they entered teaching because there were no jobs in their chosen field. In the mid-1980s, because of the scarcity of jobs in their chosen field, these interviewees applied to teach at the secondary level because it offered the promise of permanent employment in a time of economic recession. They had to 'settle' for jobs in teaching. As Lortie (1975) argued:

teaching functions, therefore, as a stratification safety net, which allows people to land without severe damage to their status aspirations (Lortie, 1975, p. 50).

These interviewees all positioned themselves as workers and as workers in a developing society. They saw themselves as needing and wanting to work. Teaching provided them an opportunity to fulfil their need to be workers and to provide them with some economic return.

***“Yuh Real Good In That Subject; Yuh Better Teach”***

At university most interviewees tended to specialise in the subject or subjects they were best at during their A'Level years. It is during that time that they began to see themselves as a “Geographer,” “Mathematician,” or “Economist.” The interviewees who completed A'Levels would have spent several years developing an allegiance to a subject discipline (Phelan, 2001). This allegiance would enable them to take up the subject position of graduate secondary teacher as a subject specialist. Their subject area provided a “sense of security” and was an important part of who they were as teachers (Sikes, 1985).

This reason for entering teaching draws on the discourse of secondary teacher as subject specialist. The interviewees came to see themselves as belonging to categories of teacher, for example, French teacher, History teacher. They recognised the characteristics in themselves to be specialists. For example, Rhonda explained:

I knew I did not mind doing it [teaching] for a while because I love my subject area which is why I had done my degree in that. So I did not mind teaching. And really and truly I always tell people...when I am in a classroom, teaching a poem or doing a lesson, I enjoy doing that. But you know I do not enjoy all the extras or lack of extras. But I do enjoy the actual thing....First of all I am just simply enjoying it myself, the way I would enjoy a book if I am reading it at home. So the way I would enjoy it personally, I am enjoying it like that. And then I enjoy the way they learn, the way the look (Rhonda\95).

As a subject specialist, Adrian said that he wanted to teach at the secondary level because his “most recent experience in education was at the secondary level and being very familiar with the material at that level” (Adrian\84).

The reasons for entering teaching given by these nineteen interviewees were similar to those given by interviewees who began teaching between 1968 and 1983. But in a less favourable economic situation more of them chose to enter teaching because as an educated citizen they had to find a job at a time when not many jobs were available. For example, in 1986, as a university graduate I had to wait for six months after graduation to get a job. It was a common experience for all my colleagues who graduated with me. Fortunately I wanted to teach, but I knew several persons who ‘ended up’ teaching because there was little else to do and because the entry requirements were not very stringent.

What struck me as I reviewed the interviewees’ reasons for entering teaching is that very few of the interviewees saw teaching as a career in which they could develop their professional ambitions. Many thought of it as a job, one that was quite easy to get into, as long as they were academically qualified. I concluded that some of these interviewees were positioned in terms of two contradictory discourses, “teacher as worker” versus “teacher as professional.”

### **Ideas About Teachers And Teaching**

When asked what ideas they held about teachers or teaching, 12 (SN, AD, JS, AN, DJ, TT, JN, MN, VG, FS, RH, SM; see Tables 1 & 2) of these 19 interviewees expressed the idea that they saw the teacher first and foremost as a knowledgeable expert and transmitter of knowledge. But Andi, Miss T&T, Jane, Mr. Vogue and Antonia also expressed an understanding that in addition to being a transmitter of knowledge, the teacher was also responsible for preparing the student for life. For

example, Andi explained “It was more than delivering the subject area you are doing. It was supposed to be producing the all round student” (Andi\86).

Miss T&T and Mr. Vogue believed that a teacher should “mould” the minds and behaviour of students. Miss T&T explained that a teacher was:

someone, who apart from imparting knowledge in your subject area, had a responsibility to mould children into being proper citizens. And somehow or the other being here I feel that moulding of students to proper citizen has become a major aspect of my teaching than actually teaching a subject area (Miss T&T\90).

Similarly, Mr. Vogue believed that:

A teacher was someone who would earn the respect of all the students. It was supposed to be a noble profession as I heard so often. A teacher would just go in there, try his best, just deliver the syllabus, formal and informal, and mould the minds of the younger ones (Mr. Vogue\91).

Both of these interviewees drew upon a discourse of social responsibility. However, I do not think that when Miss T&T used the term “citizen” that she was relating it to the concept of citizenship as a status which provides civic, political or socio-economic rights (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 1994). Rather, she saw the moulding in terms of “guiding purposes” (Miss T&T) where the teacher would be responsible for ‘guiding’ students through their social and moral development by helping them to develop responsible attitudes and behaviours that they could use in their social relationships.

Antonia drew on the discourses of “teacher as transmitter” and “teacher as socially responsible person,” but she added other dimensions of the teacher as educating for life and as a disciplinarian when she said that she saw the teacher as:

Somebody to bring across information. Somebody to guide the children. Somebody to discipline the children. But I realised that it was not only that. You do not only educate in terms of the academic; you have to educate about life (Antonia\94).

Seven other interviewees (AD, OC, PO, MY, HA, FS, RH) also saw the teacher as being in control of student behaviour.

Jesse also drew upon the discourse of the teacher as transmitter of knowledge, but she also believed that the teacher was “not an exciting person” who was “far removed” from students, and “not very approachable” (Jesse\85). That was in marked contrast to Jane who saw the teacher as being very much involved in the life of the student. She said:

I think my image of a teacher was based on my own experiences as a student. As a student I had a very close relationship with my teachers. In

addition to school-work I spent a lot of time with them doing extra-curricular stuff. For instance we would go to hikes, to pools and stuff like that. We had that kind of relationship with our teachers. So I tried to adopt that same kind of relationship with my students (Jane\90).

However, not all of the interviewees were able to articulate their specific views of the teacher. For example, when asked about his image of a teacher, Mr. Man answered:

I really did not have any conception as such. I just thought teachers were there and as a teacher you would teach and you had a certain amount of respect (Mr. Man\92).

Rhonda explained that she saw the teacher as a “school ma’am.” She explained:

That was one of the problems or one of the reasons that I never wanted to teach. [My friend’s] mother always says “the school ma’am.” [*Laughs*]. She says “Oh! Two school ma’ams.” So we always thought—frumpy. Whenever you think of teachers...although we had young teachers ourselves, we remember the oldest teacher we had. The oldest, unmarried...somebody’s old aunt. That is what you think of. Somebody very inflexible. Somebody who does not know about the real world. That is what I think I thought....They don’t think you live outside of school....If I had to draw a teacher, that is what I would draw...Even now [after being a teacher]...If somebody said you have one chance to...draw a teacher, that is still what I would do. Draw...an old, inflexible sort of person (Rhonda\95).

Rhonda’s said that her dominant image of a teacher as female, stern, inflexible, unexciting, and harsh, were framed mainly by her experiences with nuns/teachers in her experiences of schooling and reinforced by the images of teachers she had seen on television. However, for her, this way of being a teacher conflicted and contradicted who she saw herself to be. When she began to teach, she was young—23 years old—and vibrant. She could not see herself as an old, inflexible woman. For these reasons, she did not want to belong to the group of teachers. In fact, she chose not to see herself as a “real teacher.” She explained why.

I think because at the back of your mind you don’t think...because I still don’t think of myself as a teacher. So although I think I am not what the—I don’t want to say typical—but what I would think of as a typical teacher. I am not that but still I would still think I am different. I am not like the *real* teacher because the real teacher is still what I have in my mind (Rhonda\95).

Rhonda could not see herself as a real teacher because she did not behave, think nor act like the “school ma’am.” However, Rhonda did not reject this image from her concept of teacher; she simply chose not to see herself as a real teacher.

Rhonda's story illustrates how strong her ideas were, to the extent that she preferred to see herself as not being a real teacher rather than modify her image of a teacher.

Fluffy Starr's description of her image of a teacher summed up how in some ways the interviewee's drew upon multiple and sometimes contradictory ideas about teachers and teaching. She explained:

I thought a teacher was not boring first of all. I thought that was important that the teacher be very vibrant and be willing to go to the lengths to explain a student certain things without getting annoyed like irritated. I saw teachers as being a little dowdy because in my days they were...now teachers dress and they are much more professional in their appearance than long ago. Let me see...compassionate and kind, apart from the whole academic thing like getting a child to pass an exam or so. I thought that a teacher was someone who you can easily relate to and go to with a problem. If there were something bothering you apart from just the work and so that that teacher would be willing to listen. I also saw my teachers as I respected them a great deal and always saw them as figures where we would try to imitate that type of behaviour or model or pattern yourself according to that kind of thing. There were some other teachers who were just on the other scale, on the other side of the spectrum just...teachers that you didn't like. Teachers who you thought did not teach properly [and] who you thought were lazy (Fluffy Starr'94).

Fluffy Starr presents an image of a teacher as vibrant yet dowdy, patient compassionate and kind, and an academic helper. Yet, she acknowledges that not all teachers possessed these attributes and she was keen not to pattern or model the attributes of these "lazy" teachers, who did not "teach properly."

The interviewees' ideas about teachers and teaching are varied and were informed by several discourses. The ideas that these interviewees held about teachers were similar to those held by the interviewees who began to teach before 1984. These ideas revolved around the teacher as a knowledge expert and transmitter of knowledge who could help students pass exams; the teacher who cared about producing the whole child, not just the intellect; and the teacher who was a role model and exemplar for life. These ideas were also very similar to those expressed in the Ministry of Education's statement on the good teacher. However, the interviewees also drew upon discourse that positioned them as disciplinarians, actors and socially responsible individuals. They understood that they were not simply transmitters of knowledge, but that they were also shapers of young minds. In Chapter Eight, I put forward my suggestions as to how the 29 interviewees constructed their practical professional knowledge and acted as teachers from the subject positions of the "teacher as transmitter of knowledge,"

“teacher as disciplinarian,” “teacher as role model,” and “teacher as socially responsible person.”

In the next section, I present Maya’s story and theorise about how she was constituted as a graduate secondary teacher through and in terms of discourses such as the teacher as a role model, a disciplinarian, a socially responsible person, and an actor.

### **Maya’s Story:**

#### **“If I Could Make It, I Figured Anybody Else Could”**

Maya was born in 1966 and attended secondary school between 1977 and 1986, the time in which the secondary system had been expanded to include the comprehensive system. A good education was highly regarded in Maya’s family. Her parents, whom she described as being “poor,” recognised that education could provide her with the opportunity to do better than they had. She explained:

It was always pounded in my head as a child that education is the great equaliser. It does not matter...you could use it to move up, you could use it to improve yourself (Maya\90).

Through her own life Maya fulfilled those expectations. She used her education to “improve herself” and transform her poverty into opportunity. Although she had “passed” for a Junior Secondary school in 1977 (described earlier in this chapter) and said that she felt that she was viewed as a failure by society, she succeeded academically in the comprehensive system and went on to complete a first degree at university. During her A’Level years Maya said that she realised that she lacked the academic ability to obtain an academic scholarship to finance her medical studies. However, she knew that she wanted to go to university. She decided that teaching was an acceptable second choice as she had high regard for the profession. She decided to teach at the secondary level because she could relate better to older students.

Maya was satisfied to enter a teaching career at a time—in the late 1980s—when the prestige of being a teacher had been severely eroded. She was also happy to teach because she was able to have a job during a period of increased unemployment and it was a job that she wanted to do. Many other people who entered teaching at this time were doing so because the fields that they wanted to work in were not employing new personnel. She explained:

This [teaching] is what I wanted to do. All through UWI people would say “So what do you want to do?” And I would say teach and then they would say “Really? Why do you want to do that?” It is not this; it is not that and the other.... I was happy and I was thankful that of course that I had gotten a job. Because at that time, in 1986 [year she began university] things were...rough. It was recession and I was really grateful. And to top it off to do something that I know that I would like, it was even better (Maya\90).

Maya was also contented with her career decision to teach because she believed that she could help other students who were like she once was. She explained:

For me [teaching] is still a noble profession, regardless of what people might say, because I think you have the chance to really impact on people’s lives in a positive way....And I think I could impart that [education as the great equaliser] to students especially those who probably come from disadvantaged homes—that education is it, if you really want it. And I hope to impart that to them (Maya\90).

Maya was keen to return to the Junior Secondary level to teach. She wanted to be a “role model” for her students, some of whom may have viewed themselves as failures. She believed that she could be a role model because she had gone through a similar experience in the educational system and had been successful in the same type of school. Maya explained:

Having gone through the system I appreciate first-hand that our Form One children coming here are frightened. They are disappointed and they figured that they are coming here, and they must not be good enough or something like that. So I try to make them feel not so. And I let them know that I have been through it and if I could make it, well, I figured anybody else could make it. So it was a good experience coming back here because I felt it would make me a better teacher because I appreciate these children’s background, the difficulties they are going to face and stuff like that (Maya\90).

Thus, Maya constructed her own understanding of what she should do as a teacher for students who like her were poor and possibly saw themselves as failures. She could help them to be a success by modelling her own achievements and hoping that her students would emulate her.

Based on her own experiences of schooling and with teachers at the primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Comprehensive schools that she attended, Maya came to the understanding that teachers should be stern. But there was some negotiation on how stern she should be based on the level she taught and her sense of self as a woman. She explained how her interactions with teachers at

different levels of the education system influenced her beliefs about different kinds of teachers:

In primary school you would think [of teachers as] stern and watch what you are wearing. Make sure you follow all the rules or else, kind of thing. Particularly the female teachers in primary school you tended to see them as more caring, less stern as the males. Coming into the Junior Sec it was probably the same image. Although they were less stern I would say. In Senior Comprehensive, more approachable (Maya\90).

Although in her schooling experience Maya observed that teachers were stern, as a student she was not comfortable with teachers who were too stern. She explained:

I viewed a teacher as having to be stern and so on; but when it came to myself in my own experiences as a student, if a teacher was too harsh or too stern, I did not learn very well. And in bringing that to my own experiences as a teacher, I thought that, well, maybe we need to strike a balance. We cannot be overly stern and at the same time we cannot be too friendly because either extreme would bring problems, because you are alienating...especially young people, teenagers, the more you are stern with them the more you alienate them. The more you run them...It was a challenge for me over the years and still is in striking that balance. My image of a teacher now is that a teacher should be firm, not necessarily extremely stern. I always use the word firm and put your foot down yes, but you must be willing to compromise and meet the students halfway too, because you have to make them feel like people too. I don't think teachers should be in the business of putting down. Sometimes you need to—put down—but you don't leave them there. When you put them down, you try to do something to pick them back up (Maya\90).

Maya constructed an understanding of teacher as disciplinarian by striking a balance between been firm or friendly. As a female teacher at a Junior Secondary school, Maya was firm, but she rejected the idea of the teacher as a strict disciplinarian who used corporal punishment. At the same time she sought to be approachable. Maya explained that her “firm, but approachable” philosophy was reinforced by readings in popular psychology. She explained:

I read in a book once this notion of tough love. That is my philosophy, especially in my dealings with the children. I will be as tough as nails, but you would know why. And I will explain to you why this is so. And if I really buff you or I really come down hard on you I would always try to go back, not leave them hanging. I then try to explain it to them “Well miss is doing this because of so and so and so.” You know you always try to show them that it is for their benefit in the long run. It may not seem so now, but eventually (Maya\90).

Maya felt that she should be strict, but caring with her students. She also saw herself as a teacher who would be available to her students when they needed her.

If she needed to be harsh, she would explain to her students why she was harsh. Maya felt that she also had to reach out to students who like her may be afraid to approach her teachers. At the same time, as a teacher, she needed to keep students in control and to draw the line. Maya made a link between teacher performance and student performance. She drew on the discourse of teacher as responsible for student learning. However, in her effort to help students, she realised that she should not be too friendly.

When Maya began to teach, the ideas of “firm, but approachable” limited her actions as a teacher. She explained:

When I became a teacher I wanted to be all of those things, in addition to letting the children know that even though Miss is firm, and that is one thing that I am, that I am firm yes, but you could still come to me. You do not understand something never be afraid, because when it comes to saying that, that is your right. And it is then my job regardless of what to abide by that (Maya\90).

Maya, who is a petite woman, felt that her physical size might have been a deterrent to students viewing her as firm. Therefore, she acknowledged that she needed to be a “good actor” to convey that character of being firm. She explained:

I think if you go into the classroom now you have to be a good actor. I think teachers have to be good actors, because you may not be a confident person normally, but if you really want to be an effective teacher I think you really have to do something to develop your confidence and how you approach...like when you walk into a classroom, they have to know, well hello! She is in charge! Not from a dictatorship or authoritarian kind of thing, but you are in charge. And even prior to going in I knew I had to...you had to portray that kind of thing, otherwise it would be more difficult than it probably really is (Maya\90).

Maya also drew on a religious discourse in terms of what how she saw herself as a teacher and what she thought she had to do. She explained:

I think my involvement in church and hopefully my growing relationship with my God really...it sort of keeps you in line. It convicts you. You have to...you cannot say one thing and do one thing. And I try to pray that this affects my teaching too; that I would bring it to bear in my work too. So that keeps you in line. When you want to come and just sit down and say well you know...No! This is what tells you well no this is not right. You are responsible for these kids and you have to come here and do what you have to do. So that has been a help to me then (Maya\90).

As a person drawing upon her faith, she saw herself as doing the right thing by helping her students.

Maya sought to bring harmony in understanding herself as one who was to help her students develop as responsible and successful human beings, despite their tendency to think of themselves as failures. Maya negotiated the ideas of teacher as a role model, authoritarian and friend. She had lived the experience of a student who had been successful at the Junior Secondary level who had used her education for social mobility. She had worked hard and achieved and was living proof of the ideals of the educational system as equaliser and opportunity for social mobility. She came to see herself as a role model for her students at a Junior Secondary school.

### **Summary And Discussion**

By the year 2000 when I carried out the interviews for this study, a secondary system that was originally provided education for only the privileged and the wealthy now provided an education for all of the secondary aged population in Trinidad. A secondary education system that was once controlled by denominational bodies was now centralised and under government control. A secondary curriculum that was once strictly academic, had been expanded to include technical and vocational subjects. Access to secondary education that was once based on ability to pay and academic merit was now available to all students leaving primary institutions. However, in spite of these changes, the secondary system in Trinidad and Tobago remains stratified by ability and socio-economic status. Children of the middle classes continued to be found in disproportionately larger numbers in the older established Government and Government-assisted schools and children of the working classes are found in greater numbers at the comprehensive system. There is also a distinction in academic performance with high failure rates in external examinations being common in the Senior Comprehensive and Composite schools.

Although each successive government has had its own objectives, the overall purpose of education has never varied much from the policies set in the 1968 plan which sought to provide education for economic and social development. A secondary education fulfilled an economic, political and social benefit to the individual (Gould, 1993). It was also important to provide the manpower needs for the new society, to socialise the people into democracy in the new state and to provide an employable population. The type of secondary

education and the school a person went to could determine a person's life chances and life style. A secondary education also afforded a person an opportunity to move up the social ladder.

Official discourses informed the major innovations in educational policy, system, and structure of secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago within each of the four historical periods outlined in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six. For example, in the 1960s discourses of development, nationalism and independence flourished in policy and practice. In the 1970s discourses of social justice and quality emerged in policy documents. In the 1980s, structural adjustment and change crept into the official policy. By 1993, there was some evidence of neo-liberal discourses in policy documents. By 2000, there was the emergence of a managerial discourse in developments in the system. However, some discourses for example, "access by ability," "education for development," and "education as certification" continued to be dominant in educational policy and practice.

These discourses created possibilities and constraints for how the interviewees thought they should be as teachers and how they should act. They thought of teachers as knowledge experts, transmitters of knowledge, disciplinarians, exemplars, role models and guides to students, actors activists, caring persons, good dressers, remote individuals, non-professionals, and passionate people. Each of these ways of being positioned the interviewees in different ways. They throw up useful categories for further and future discussions and research about teacher image in Trinidad.

In the previous four chapters I took a journey back through time and briefly explored the historical, social, economic and political context of secondary education in Trinidad. I introduced the interviewees in their historical time and analysed their reasons for entering teaching. These included: fulfilling a childhood dream, paying back a debt to society; being recruited as an educated citizen; and for economic and social benefit. I also explored the interviewees' ideas about teachers and teaching that they say they had when they first began to teach. Some of these ideas included, the teacher as an knowledgeable expert and transmitter; as a disciplinarian, an actor or performer; a role model or exemplar; a guide; and a school ma'am. The brief case studies from Billy Joe, Poui and Maya interviewees were used to show how these prevailing ideas enabled and constrained how these interviewees came to see themselves as new teachers.

In the next chapter, I shift my attention to the recruitment process for graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad. I wanted to find out: who is “called forth” or “hailed” or “interpellated” (Althusser, 1971) as secondary teachers by the Ministry of Education? Who does the Ministry of Education think the graduate secondary teacher is (Ellsworth, 1997)? What dominant discourses inform the recruitment process for graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad and Tobago? How do the ‘disciplinary technologies’ such as surveillance, normalisation of judgement, exclusion, classification, regulation and examination, explored in Chapter One, result in subtle forms of social and self-regulation of the prospective graduate secondary teachers? These are some of the questions addressed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN



### MORE IN DE MORTAR DAN DE PESTLE: RECRUITMENT INTO TEACHING

*“More to it than meets the eye. More to the story than was said”  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 202).*

#### Introduction

The process of entry into the teaching profession is an important time for the construction of one's identity as a teacher (Britzman, 1991). In Trinidad, once a person decides to apply for teaching, he/she will then participate in the recruitment process. Therefore, the time between deciding to teach and being selected and placed at a school was an important time for the interviewees as it presented an opportunity for them to construct new understandings of how they should be as teachers and what was required of them.

The recruitment process would be informed by various educational discourses. The discourses that inform the recruitment practice could also create possibilities and constraints for how a person may come to think of him/herself as a teacher. In this chapter, I use Foucauldian discourse analysis to loosen the embrace of things and words (Foucault, 1977) said about and done in the process of selection and entry of graduate secondary teachers into secondary teaching. I examine the various stages of the recruitment process and identify some of the discourses that inform these practices. I also explore how the prospective graduate secondary teacher is constituted through and in terms of these discourses.

#### The Recruitment Process

Recruitment is critical for the continued existence of any profession (Hale & Starratt, 1989; Lortie, 1975). In the *International Dictionary of Education* recruitment is defined as “the process and methods of finding and attracting new personnel, members, etc” (Page & Thomas, 1977, p. 286). As Dan Lortie argued:

From the perspective of the occupations, these processes are the means of its endurance: no occupation which fails to attract new members, inculcate its subculture, or sustain commitment through time can survive or maintain its identity (Lortie 1975, p. 24).

In Trinidad and Tobago, the current social and institutional practice for recruitment of teachers was established in 1966. It is a highly centralised process. The Teaching Service Commission (TSC), a civil service bureau established by the Education Act of 1966, is the only body with the authority to “hire, dismiss, promote, and transfer all teachers who work in public schools” (Stewart, 1981, p. 192). Until 2000, the TSC was part of the Public Service Commission and teachers were “civil servants.” Members of the Teaching Service were subject to the laws governing the TSC. These include the *Education Act of 1966* and the *Education (Teaching Service) Regulations, Chapter 39.01* of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (Cabinet Appointed Committee, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 1999).

Prior to the establishment of the TSC in 1966, the Director of Education handled all recruitment of teachers and principals in government schools. The Director delegated these responsibilities to the Boards of Management of each of the government-assisted schools (Campbell, 1997; Stewart, 1981). Consequently, principals had “some discretion” (Billy Joe\65) in who was recruited to teach at their schools as they could make personal recommendations to their respective Boards. However, when the TSC was established it served to “standardize the criteria” (Stewart, 1981, p. 192) by which a teacher or principal could be hired. In so doing the government was able to control those persons who were employed in the education system. Such an arrangement allowed for “stricter methods of surveillance [of teachers], a tighter partitioning of the population [and] more efficient techniques of locating and obtaining information” (Foucault, 1977, p. 77) about who wanted to and who would be allowed to teach.

According to Hale and Starratt (1989):

The movement of an individual or group into or out of a social group or a transition into some different social arrangement within the society is marked by a rite. These celebrations, indicating social movement, have been given the general title of rites of passage (Hale & Starratt, 1989, p. 25).

But “rites of passage” are themselves constituted through and in terms of existing discourses. Therefore, it was important to examine the recruitment process in order to identify the discourses that constitute this social practice.

Jesse described the phases of the recruitment process in the following way:

I filled out the forms with the Ministry. The Ministry asked for my degree certificate and my O'Level and A'Level certificates. There was an interview, I think a few months after I applied. And then I just had to wait to be called to a school (Jesse\85).

The other 28 interviewees' stories about the various stages of the recruitment process were very similar to Jesse's, despite the historical period in which they began to teach. However, there were some slight differences between interviewees who began teaching in primary schools and others who went directly into the secondary system. The process is not as simple as Jesse describe; indeed, there is more to it than meets the eye. The recruitment process includes *registration, application, classification, interview, and placement*.

### **Registration**

The Teachers' Register was established under the Education Act of 1966, Section 47 (1). It signalled the Ministry of Education's attempt to monitor all persons who wished to be appointed to teach in the public school system. The Act stated "Subject to this Act, no person is eligible to be appointed to be, or to continue to be a teacher, unless his name is registered and kept in the Register of teachers herein required to be kept" (Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, Education Act, 1966, p. 26). The Minister of Education was put in charge of keeping this public record which was first published in 1966 in the *Gazette*, the government newspaper. Since then, supplementary lists have been used to update the Register. A person's name is removed from the Register upon death or if found "guilty of gross misbehaviour, or gross inefficiency or other conduct unfitting him for employment as a teacher" (Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, Education Act, 1966, p. 27). This person would be informed in writing and when his/her name is removed, he/she will no longer be permitted to teach in Trinidad and Tobago. He/she could appeal this decision within forty-two days.

In order to be entered into the Teacher's Register, a person must have a minimum academic qualification of at least a pass in five Ordinary Level subjects (O'Levels). As Sid Chase explained:

You registered, meaning that you simply go down—I cannot remember—I think it was the Treasury. You paid five dollars and you showed your certificates, your O'Level certificates and once you had a minimum of five O'Levels you could register as a teacher (Sid Chase\79).

Each person is then given a certificate bearing a teacher's registration number (see Appendix J). This registration number is a requirement for the next phase of the recruitment process.

While this Register is a bureaucratic and legal requirement for all persons wishing to teach, it is also a form of surveillance (Foucault, 1977) of prospective teachers by the government and members of the general public. There is the public naming and listing of those who will be allowed to teach. When the names of those who wish to teach are published, they become targets of the public gaze and their private lives are up for public scrutiny for "gross misbehaviour" or "gross inefficiency." For example, Bumper recalled:

I remember something happened in my private life, though, and my mother said to me that she did not very well like something that I was doing and she said, "You know you can be reported to the Ministry for that." And I said, "What? My personal life is my personal life. I don't want anybody meddling. And in fact after I persisted along that line, she told me that in fact somebody had told her that they would report me to the Ministry. And I was very, very upset. But I sat down to think about it again and I said "Listen, this probably is not very right and if you are to be some kind of role model and set some kind of example, maybe you should listen. That was about the only thing (Bumper\80).

Although Bumper did not disclose the 'something' that happened in her private life, the threat of being reported served to make her modify her behaviour. In her case, she was under surveillance by her own mother and other members of the public. In the same way the registration process could induce self-control in prospective teachers who have made a public declaration to teach and have therefore opened their lives up for public scrutiny. Since there is no definition of "gross inefficiency" and "gross misbehaviour," many practising and prospective teachers will want to appear "well-behaved" and "efficient." From these subject positions they would tend to try to display exemplary or conservative behaviour, as they do not wish to be "struck off the list."

The registration process excludes from teaching those persons who do not possess the minimum academic qualification to teach. Although a person may be extremely talented, if he/she does not possess the minimum qualification, he/she cannot legally teach. At the same time the registration process identifies a group of people who can perform the function of teaching. This normalisation or setting of a norm (Gore, 1998) for those who *can* enter the teaching profession is based on an academic standard rather than the expressed ability to do the job. This leads

to the public perception that anybody who has five O'Levels can teach. As Cynthia explained:

I think it all stems from the whole idea that anybody could go in a classroom and teach. Anybody! And that is a view held by society I mean if anybody could go in a classroom and teach you are obviously not a professional, and the fact that we are not trained in advance emphasises that view. Just get five subjects and make sure you get Maths and a Science and you will teach and if you can't find anything better to do, teach (Cynthia\78).

Therefore, at the initial registration process for teaching, the Ministry of Education calls forth persons with a minimum academic qualification to be listed as part of a body of potential teachers. The underlying discourse is any certifiably knowledgeable person could be considered as a prospective teacher.

### **Application**

Prospective secondary teachers may find out about teaching vacancies from other teachers, principals or advertisements for teachers put out by the Ministry of Education or denominational boards. For example, I found about two teaching vacancies from my father who sent me a letter a few months before I graduated from the University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica. In the letter dated "9/5/85" he commented:

About job opportunities, I have no exciting news. Why? I have not investigated the ministry as yet. However, I must inform you, two vacancies (Geog.) will be created this month, at [name of school]. Are you interested? State your wish with dispatch. If interested send application. Tell me the earliest date you can be available, so I can talk it over with the principal (E. De Four, personal communication, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1985).

My father was a graduate teacher at a government secondary school when he wrote this letter and had insider information on the vacancies at the other school. He knew the principal of the school and was willing to suggest me as a possible person for the job. I did not accept his offer at the time, but was able to secure my first job when another teacher told me about another vacant position several months after I returned home.

The Ministry of Education advertises for graduate secondary teachers when vacancies become available. For example, in 2000, the Ministry of Education in its attempt to find "suitably qualified persons to fill teaching

vacancies” in specified subject areas for named secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, invited applications to be considered from:

1. Persons who hold degrees or diplomas from recognised Universities/Institutions
2. Non-graduates who have fulfilled partial requirements for the award of a degree from the University of the West Indies and are available for immediate employment
3. Persons who hold five (5) O level passes including English and Mathematics together with (2) Advanced Level passes, one of which must be in the relevant subject area.
4. Persons who are over the age of 45 years who possess the above qualifications would also be considered for employment **on contract only**. (bold in original; Ministry of Education, Vacancies, 2000).

For the Ministry of Education, “suitably qualified” refers to an academic standard—a graduate of a “recognised” university, an incomplete degree or A’Level qualifications—rather than a professional or technical indication that one can teach. The prospective teacher is positioned first and foremost as a school-subject specialist. There is no requirement for previous experience of working with groups of young people. There is no requirement that one be familiar with how students learn. There is no requirement for the prospective teacher to have some ability to work with students of varying abilities, with learning disabilities or from various economic and social backgrounds. The absence of these requirements in an advertisement for teachers continues to feed into the idea that anybody with an academic qualification *can* teach.

The advertisement also calls forth persons to fill different categories of secondary teacher—the graduate, non-graduate, and A’Level graduate teacher. Each of these categories represents different levels of experience in the education system and suggests that there can be no level playing field in terms of preparation and ongoing professional development for all secondary teachers.

The policy of employment of persons over the age of 45 “under contract” discriminates against more mature persons who may want to change careers and enter teaching. This person still has 15 years to make a career in teaching before his/her compulsory retirement at age 60. Therefore, one questions the fairness of this policy.

Applications are made in duplicate on prescribed forms (Appendix K). The application forms request verifiable data such as a person’s name, age, educational history, nationality, weight, height, language and nationality. Original academic, birth and marriage certificates must be presented when a

person submits the application forms to the Ministry of Education. In addition to these original documents, two recent photographs are required to confirm these aspects of biographical data. The Teacher Registration Certificate and number must also be submitted with the application forms. Other general information such as available date for employment, father's biographical details and occupation, other jobs held and disabilities and convictions are also required.

The focus on "father's occupation" is a 'slap in the face' for the thousands of children of single or married working mothers as mother's occupation is not requested. This policy hints at a patriarchal discourse that harks back to the 'old boy's network' that flourished in colonial days when the sons of the religious and economic elite filled the spaces of the civil service as described in Chapter Three.

The application process can be viewed as a form of "administrative documentation" (Foucault, 1977, p. 189) and represents a "whole mass of documents that capture and fix" (Foucault, 1977, p. 189) prospective teachers. It puts them under surveillance by the Ministry and its representatives. However, while this biographical information is easy to collect (Reilly & Chao, 1982) and gives some idea of the physical characteristics of the person being recruited to teach, the information gathered is not necessarily a good indicator of how well a person will be able to teach. A more detailed application process is needed for potential teachers to draw out whether or not they are able to engage students in the teaching/learning process.

### **Classification**

Graduate secondary teachers are classified in two ways: (i) as a class of teacher based on the level of academic qualifications and (ii) as a specialist school-subject teacher. In its attempt to administer the large number and types of teachers recruited to teach at secondary schools, the Ministry of Education devised a hierarchical system of classifying secondary teachers based on academic qualifications. Up to 1999 the categories of secondary teachers included: (i) persons with degrees (Teacher II); (ii) persons with incomplete degree qualifications (Special Teacher III); (iii) persons with primary Teacher's Diplomas (Teacher I); (iv) persons with A'Level qualifications (Assistant Teacher III); (v) persons with technical vocational training (Technical Vocational Teacher, I-IV). In 2000, this system was replaced by a newer system of classification (T&TUTA, n.d.). However, the old classification scheme is used in this study

because it was the system that was in place when the interviewees first began teaching.

In the pre-2000 classification scheme, the title of the secondary teacher at each level is constituted by a minimum academic qualification. According to Mackinnon (1960, p. 83) “each teacher is put in a category and appropriately labelled.” Academic performance may be an indication of how well someone has ‘learned’ formal subject knowledge. It is not a direct measure of how well a person can teach.

Every category was tied to remuneration. The post of graduate secondary teacher was the highest ranked and paid. However, academic qualifications beyond a first degree or professional qualifications such as a Primary Teacher’s Diploma or the in-service Diploma in Education did not result in any change in rank or added remuneration.

Foucault (1977) argued that:

The distribution according to ranks and grades has a double role: it marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards (Foucault, 1977, p. 181).

Teachers who do not possess a degree have an incentive or reward of increased pay if they choose to improve their academic qualifications and ‘move up the ranks’ to graduate secondary teacher status. However, those who do not hold degrees are ‘punished’ because of their lack of tertiary qualifications. Those who teach in primary schools with degrees are punished because their degrees are not recognised. This bureaucratic standard subsidises the weak and holds back the able (Mackinnon, 1960). In other words it punishes those who move on to higher education or professional development because those teachers who pursue academic or professional qualifications are not rewarded for their efforts. The result is that those with added academic qualifications tend to move out of the classroom and into administrative posts or other jobs. Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996) argued:

For talented candidates to decide to teach and to remain in teaching, they must perceive opportunities for professional growth, advancement and financial rewards (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996, p. 69).

This practice of no rewards for professional advancement continues to reinforce the discourse that those with degrees do not need professional training. If there were some recognition of the professional qualification above the level of graduate secondary teacher, then this would probably signal that there is need for

a professional requirement for teaching. There is need for a greater range of career options and rewards for those graduate secondary teachers who want to stay in the classroom and improve their academic qualifications.

The classification as a specialist school-subject teacher is based on a complex interaction of one's university specialisation, the secondary school school-subjects and the vacancy available. For example, although I completed a double major in Geography and Geology, I was only classified as a Geography teacher because Geology was not part of the secondary curriculum. Two interviewees, whose names I have withheld because they have identified their subject areas, gave an example of how they were classified as Geography teachers when they began to teach.

*Joyanne: You said that you did Economics [at university], and yet you were sent to teach Geography and History. How did that come about?*

Interviewee A: When you are interviewed they look at the subjects you read for your degree and your A'Level qualifications and they would assess your competence in specific subject areas. The vacancy at [name of school] was for History/Geography teacher and based on my assessment, I was deemed qualified to fill the vacancy.

Interviewee A was assigned to teach Geography and History as determined by his/her A'Level qualification, rather than his/her specialisation at university. He/she was needed to teach Geography because of a vacancy existed for a Geography teacher and since he/she had done it at A'Levels he/she was classified as a Geography teacher. Similarly Interviewee B explained how he/she had to choose between his/her university specialisations based on the vacancy at his/her school:

I thought that when you went to the Teaching Service Commission for an interview, you were being interviewed for the job of a teacher. I was told point blank, "What subject would you like to be tested on?" I said, "I have a double degree...." "But no you have to choose a subject." So I chose Geography. So that is how I am classified as a Geography teacher. So right away you have said to me you can be a Geography teacher, but you cannot be a History teacher, when I did not mind teaching the History. I've never taught History

*J: You've never taught History?*

Interviewee A: No. But I've been teaching Social Studies and I have not a clue.

As new teachers both of these interviewees got jobs as Geography teachers based on vacancies for particular types of teachers in the secondary system. The thinking behind this practice may be that an ability to understand the formal content knowledge of a discipline, can be an indication that one could teach a

certain school subject, especially if one had already passed that level of qualification at O' or A' Levels.

The graduate secondary teacher is classified and normalised first and foremost as a specialist school-subject teacher based on his/her academic qualifications, and not based on one's ability to teach that subject, that is demonstrate practical understanding of what they should do as teachers.

### **Interviews**

The interview was recommended in the 1960 Cabinet proposals as "an essential part of the procedure in making appointment" for teachers (Trinidad and Tobago Government, 1960, p. 5). The interviews were supposed to be conducted by the five members of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC). Membership in the Service Commission [is] held by

persons (male or female) with experience in teaching and educational administration, who could be relied upon to assess the technical requirements of a vacancy and the professional qualification of applicants (Trinidad and Tobago Government, 1960, p. 8).

Sid Chase described her meeting with these officials in the following way:

I was called by the Teaching Service Commission to be interviewed for a post. When I entered the room I came with all my documents...my original documents that is. Of course nobody asked me for any original documents. There was a panel. I can't remember the number but it was certainly more than about four persons on the panel. I do remember a particular lady being on the panel....So this awesome panel...I have to say awesome because everybody looked very bureaucratic I must say...elderly people (Sid Chase\79)

The assumption is that these experienced educators are qualified to judge the prospective teachers. However, one wonders what is their concept of a 'good teacher'? Will they be upholding the Ministry of Education's view of a good teacher as described in Chapter Five? Or will their concepts be based on their own experiences as teachers and with teachers.

An interview provides an opportunity for face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is also useful for the assessment of the interviewee's personal characteristics such as elements of physical character such as height, build, race, voice, dress, well as communication skills of prospective teachers. Interviewers could convey information about the job and provide an opportunity for applicants to clarify questions (Reilly & Chao, 1982). But one could also regard the interview as a disciplinary technology: an examination. As

an examination “it is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility which one differentiates and judges them” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). The interview uses surveillance.

While the main purpose of an interview may be to eliminate unsuitable candidates, in the face of teacher shortages in certain school-subject areas especially Mathematics and Geography or at periods of increased demand for teachers, many people will not be eliminated as classrooms and schools need to be staffed. Additionally, some applicants may try to make a good impression on the interviewers. As Salohcin explained:

You know when it comes to people doing interview, they do fantastic because people could talk their way out of something and get in there [the classroom] and then muck it up (Salohcin\73).

As Salohcin suggested, a ‘successful’ interview is not necessarily an indicator of what one *can* or will be able to do when one begins to teach.

The interviewees described these Teaching Service Commission interviews as usually under half-an-hour. The questions asked in the interviews tended to be general rather than technical questions. For example, Kowen stated: “I guess knowing that I was just a university graduate they couldn’t ask too many technical questions because I had no formal training” (Kowen\90). The questions in the interviewees were related to reasons for entering teaching and how to teach a particular topic/lesson. Poui described the interview as follows:

I remember being asked questions like, some very general questions like how would you approach the teaching of a particular topic? That kind of thing. How would you deal with difficult students? General questions like that. I mean other than the normal questions like why you would like to be there and that sort of thing. To me as I remember it was not a very in-depth kind of interview. They asked you these things and I suppose once you give a reasonable kind of answer, that was it. Once you did not obviously, I suppose, appear to be—I don’t know—a total delinquent or something, that was the thing (Poui\79).

One wonders what kind of judgement about a person’s ability to teach could be made during a 20 to 30 minute interview. Although the interviews were scored, no feedback was given to the interviewees about their performance in the interviews. The results of the TSC interviews are ranked and names of prospective teachers are put on an availability list that principals can consult when they need new teachers.

Taylor and Driscoll (1995) warned about the “halo effects” of the interview, that is the external factors that may influence interviewers to introduce an element of leniency in the interview. These “halo effects” are particularly significant in small communities, such as the education fraternity in Trinidad, where there is possibility of interviewers and interviewees knowing each other, directly or indirectly. Several interviewees mentioned examples of these halo effects. For example Sid Chase recalled:

I remember this particular panellist smiling and then the lady, the elderly lady who was a school supervisor at the time looked at me and she said “Who,” and she called my last name, “Who is your family?” And she said “Is so and so your grandmother? “Are you related to so and so?” So I said yes. She said, “So your are so and so’s granddaughter?” So I said yes. So the other panellist now who had asked me the first question said, “Oh! Your mother would have told you to make a statement like that then. No wonder you responded so eloquently.” And the next thing I heard was “Thank you very much for coming. You have done very well in the interview.” And the next thing I knew I was appointed (Sid Chase\79).

Many of the interviewees believed that the interview process was not rigorous enough. For example, Miss T&T explained:

Now looking at it I felt that maybe it was too simple an interview. And I feel that...and in interacting with other people in the teaching profession sometimes I feel that maybe, people are ending up in teaching who do not want to be here and maybe the interview should interrogate people a little more, because when you are in a job that you don’t really want to be in, you don’t perform to your maximum (Miss T & T\90).

Salohcin made recommendations on how more rigour could be imposed in the interview process. He explained:

I believe you must have some kind of evaluation process other than the university qualifications. In much the same way you have jury selection. So much work has gone into education over the last 25 years, I am sure that some instrument could be designed so that close to 60% staying in the system could be determined. Really! People are coming into the system and the attitude they have towards people’s children is frightening. They do more harm than good sometimes. That’s the minority, but still it happens. So you have an instrument where you have them evaluated, psychologically, emotionally, so you ‘know’ how they are likely to respond in a given set of circumstances. You must have some kind of orientation and some kind of pre-service training. I would say a minimum of six months in the first instance before people are placed in a secondary school. The approach today is a rush job, a quick fix which virtually unleashes some unfit candidates on the school children (Salohcin\73).

The interview was useful to make face-to-face contact between a prospective teacher and people who are well-experienced in the education system. But the process as described by the interviewees was quite brief and not rigorous enough. It did not discriminate between one's ability to learn and one's ability to teach.

### **Placement And Support In The Beginning Years**

The appointment of a new graduate secondary teacher depends upon the existence of a temporary or permanent vacancy in the Teaching Service. Permanent vacancies may be created when a teacher resigns or is promoted to a new post or when a new post is created with the expansion of the delivery system. Temporary vacancies may be created when teachers go on maternity leave for three months or on full-pay or no-pay study leave.

All first appointments of graduate secondary teachers are made on a temporary basis and teachers are "on probation." The letters of appointment from the Ministry of Education state: "This appointment is purely temporary and may be terminated at any time by either party at short notice." However, this bureaucratic requirement is disconcerting to those persons who wish to make a career in teaching. As one interviewee stated:

Even that was kind of strange because after a while when you started teaching, you know you are temporary and they keep sending these letters from the Teaching Service Commission telling you this does not allow you in any way to go and further your studies or do any other thing. [*Name of a person*] told me don't take that letter on, you go and do your DipEd because I was kind of scared to do it.

*J: How often did you receive those temporary letters?*

V: Once a term or twice a term. I think I have some of them home somewhere. I found that it was strange, getting into teaching, you are temporary. They don't want to allow you to go and study to do your Dip Ed, your Masters or whatever it is, but yet they send these letters for you. They tell you are a teacher. I mean that can't be. The system is messed up a bit (Mr. Vogue\91).

Before being confirmed in a permanent post by the Teaching Service Commission, graduate secondary teachers must complete a two-year probationary period and a medical examination to determine whether or not they are fit to teach. However, there is no professional requirement or additional certification required to move from probation to confirmation. These levels of appointment are bureaucratic requirements since there is no professional standard to be achieved during the two years of probation. Teachers are given full responsibility

at the start of the job and new teachers have to cope with the demands of the job like any other experienced teacher.

The Ministry of Education does not issue Teaching Service Regulations to teachers, but advises new teachers that the terms and conditions of their employment are subject to these regulations. The appointment letter states:

I take this opportunity to invite your attention to the Education (Teaching Service) Regulations, Chapter 39:01 of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in which are set out the terms and conditions of your employment as a member of the Teaching Service (Director of Personnel administration, personal communication, April 29, 1988).

None of the interviewees described any orientation to the legal and contractual obligations of the job from the Ministry of Education. As Miss T&T explained:

I was just sent here with a letter. I wasn't even given Teaching Regulations or anything like that. I was just plopped in here and that was it (Miss T&T90).

However, T&TUTA, the teachers' union provides legal advice on terms and conditions of employment for those teachers who seek it.

No interviewees described involvement in an orientation programme that focused on the history of the educational system in Trinidad and Tobago. Salman was the only interviewee who said that he received a handbook specially designed for new teachers at his school. The handbook outlined the school policies and procedures and teacher regulations.

Many of the interviewees explained that they had little choice in where they are placed to teach, unless they were recruited by the principal of a specific school. Jesse, Adrian, and Bumper found that they were moved around to several schools before their appointments were confirmed. Jesse who taught at three schools in her first year found that this movement gave her a varied experience of teaching in different school systems as she was able to interact with different teachers. On the other hand, Adrian found that this movement hindered his ability to settle into the job. However principals recruited Tiger, Cynthia, Smith and Salman to fill vacancies in specific schools.

The interviewees who began their teaching careers at secondary schools were put into classrooms and expected to carry full teaching workloads. However, many of these interviewees mentioned that they did not receive much support or feedback on their teaching. The lack of formal support or feedback from principals or Heads of Department did not mean that as new teachers the

interviewees were not being covertly observed. Cynthia, remembered that when she was a new teacher, a few other teachers “cast an eye and” and chatted with her. In turn as an administrator she said that she and her principal:

follow the process in the sense that we kind of keep an “eye” on the teacher but the “eye” is not a sit in the classroom kind because we know it makes them uncomfortable. We encourage the Heads of Departments to do that, to make appointments and do some clinical supervision of the new teacher. Some of them have been doing it and some of them have not been doing it. But we make it a point of duty to pass by to listen in but you are outside of the classroom. The principal and I we would confer on our observations. Or we might be next door in another class. Your class will be set to work because we still teach, and you listen to the teacher. It is a very informal method. We keep an eye... we make it a point of duty to keep an eye on the new ones, but it's the Head of Department who has primary responsibility (Cynthia\78)

There was, then, some form of surveillance of the work of new teachers by their colleagues and principals.

The Education Act of 1966 states that one responsibility of the Minister of Education is to:

make provision for the professional training of teachers for the entire system of public education, and lay down the standards which are applicable to the recruitment of teachers, their training and conditions of service (Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, Education Act, 1966, p. 10).

Yet, no interviewee felt that the Ministry of Education was in any way concerned about his/her progress as a new teacher. All of the interviewees perceived the support they received from the Ministry of Education to be minimal. Two interviewees concluded:

I don't think there is enough involvement by the Ministry. Of course, I suppose they probably don't see that as their role. I don't think enough is being done. I think the view is still held by the Ministry you qualify, jump in a classroom (Cynthia\78).

In other words, possession of academic qualifications signifies that one can teach. Similarly, Jesse said the Ministry of Education involvement with her as a beginning teacher was:

Zero. In terms of staff development? None. But in terms of problems getting money, and all of that, lots. But nothing in terms of staff development. No nothing at all. Nothing from the ministry (Jesse\85).

In Jesse's experience the Ministry was keen to fulfil its role as employer.

The Education Act of 1966 also recognised that one of the twelve “powers, duties and functions” of a Supervisor of Schools is

the conduct and supervision of courses of induction and training for untrained teachers in service as well as courses for other teachers (Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, Education Act, 1966, p. 18).

Maya, Salman and Dot.Com mentioned that, as new teachers, they had some contact with Ministry of Education Curriculum Officers. Sid Chase recalled:

In fact, I never saw a Curriculum Officer for years. In fact, in my entire career I only saw a Curriculum Officer once and that was well after ten years of teaching” (Sid Chase\79).

Antonia was one of the few interviewees who recounted having had formal meetings with their principals when they first began to teach. She explained:

The principal...briefed me about classroom management, what was expected of me as a teacher, the role, how you have to listen to the children. As a Form Teacher there are certain things that you have to do. You have to be there for the children. Plus he gave me some handouts to read (Antoinia\94).

On the other hand, Harold explained that he received very little orientation to what he had to do when he first began teaching. He explained:

There were not any supports really. There was not any in terms of what to expect and what type of focus to adopt. There was not anything. It was more syllabus, scheme oriented. That was the sum total of it really. If I could remember the first day, I was just given the scheme. The other teacher said, “Well you have a Form One class first thing in the morning. You are doing ‘mountains’ and the classroom is in that direction. Where is the textbook? This is the textbook here. Flip through. This is the first chapter. It is on mountains. And you go (Harold\99).

These two stories indicate the level of variation between schools in terms of the role of the principal in terms of the preparation of new teachers to take on the task of teaching.

The interviewees said that they also received some support from their Heads of Departments. However, again, the quality of support varied from school to school. For example, Smith stated:

I have teachers...I have a good Head of Department on whom I—*[name of subjects]*—two good heads of departments. When I have trouble getting a concept over they can advise me how to go about it. Or they can advise me how to get out of a sticky situation in a classroom. So I tend to rely a lot on my peers or I did initially (Smith\97).

While some schools had well-developed systems of subject departments, others, especially schools with smaller teaching staffs did not. In addition, in some

smaller schools some teachers may teach several subject areas and this may complicate the departmental structure. For example, one interviewee explained:

I was teaching Maths, Accounts, POB and Commerce. So I was in the Science department and I was in the Business department. Your Head would not really monitor you to say...although they would be checking with you (name withheld).

The most frequently mentioned area of support by the interviewees was from their colleagues, especially those who taught the same school-subject. Sid Chase explained:

There was nothing structured but I found a lot of comfort in some of my colleagues whom I went to, who I would sort of observe as well respected teachers and who I thought were good teachers. I would go and I would ask them some questions and they would point out certain things to me. But, to a great extent there was actually no support. I mean, when I say that the support even from my colleagues that was quite sporadic as well, you know. But I did feel comfortable enough to ask them if I got into a jam (Sid Chase\79).

But new teachers cannot always depend on colleagues. In some instances where there were many new teachers on the staff, some interviewees felt that they could not really get help from their colleagues. As Rhonda stated:

You had other teachers who were in no position in terms of training, no position in terms of finances, no position in terms of equipment to offer that support themselves. You basically have people who are in the same position. The only thing is that other people have been there longer than you and they have probably learned to overlook, learned to be less frustrated, or they are more frustrated (Rhonda\95).

Kowen and Portfolio both spoke about working in schools where some members of staff were competitive rather than co-operative. Kowen described this as a “crab in barrel mentality” in which teachers sought to fight their way to be recognised.

The interviewees viewed the support provided to them as beginning teachers as minimal and varied. This lack of support was reflected in the metaphors used by some of the interviewees to describe their first years of teaching. These metaphors were generated by the question: *Could you please complete the following: My first years of teaching were like.*

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued that “*the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*” (italics in original; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). They also argued that metaphors help people to express their lived experiences in a way that simplifies, yet retains the

essence and emotion of the experience. Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1984) argued that metaphors are “data-reducing,” “pattern-making,” and “decentring” devices that “connect findings to theory” by “taking several particulars and making a single generality of them” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 22). Munby (1986) argued:

One fruitful way to begin to understand the substantive content of teachers’ thinking is to attend carefully to the metaphors that appear when teachers express themselves. Accordingly, an attempt to penetrate the metaphorical content of a teacher’s speech appears to be a promising approach to learn something about how a teacher constructs educational reality (Munby, 1986, p. 201).

Similarly, Fairclough (1992) argued that:

Metaphors are not just superficial stylistic adornments of discourse. When we signify things through one metaphor rather than another, we are constructing our reality in one way rather than another. Metaphors structure the way we think and the way we act, and our systems of knowledge and belief, in a pervasive and fundamental way (Fairclough, 1992, p. 194).

Therefore, the metaphors used by the interviewees were their ways of taking complex experiences and understandings of their experiences in their first years of teaching and putting them into a simple form. Although I could not take the figures of speech about the interviewees’ beginning years of teaching literally, they summarised each interviewee’s own understanding of his/her experience. These simplified versions of their experiences in the first years would have captured the essence and emotion of the interviewees’ real life experiences of beginning to teach. In this way, they provide a useful insight into the interviewees’ experiences of beginning to teach.

The most frequently metaphor used by the interviewees was that of “survival.” For example:

I was thrown into that water and I just had to learn to swim. There was no guidance, there was nobody to say well “do this” or “do that” or “try this method” “try that method”. It was try this, fail. Try that, it’s ok. And that’s how I went about (Barbara\80).

What I am seeing coming up bold. I am entering into the sea. I am seeing no boats, no life jackets, no life saving devices but a matter of entering into this unknown kind of world as it were, and being challenged to swim (Cynthia\78).

It was a matter of throwing you into the lion’s den and it was a matter of how you survived or how you don’t survive. And the sad thing about it is if you don’t survive, I don’t think it would have made a difference.

Nobody would have said anything, unless it was something really drastic. It was that kind of situation (Cynthia\78).

[It was like] jumping off into a pool and not knowing how deep it would be, you know. It took me a little while to find the bottom and to be able to stand up, you know and realise that I was not going to go all the way down. I was going to stop at some point and stabilise. It was...I did not know at the time that I was sort of finding my feet until afterwards when I looked back and realised that I had not found my feet (Smith\97).

From this metaphor I came to understand that first of all, in the initial years some interviewees felt as though they were “thrown into” a challenging, life threatening, dangerous, unknown, situation. Second, these persons did not believe that they had the skills, tools or support needed to live and thrive in the teaching situation and this led to frustration. However, there was some reluctance to give up and die and although the process of learning to teach was a lonely venture and it did not seem to matter to anyone else if the person involved survived, these interviewees refused to give up.

From my analysis of the interviewees’ stories, I better understood that the threat of their existence was the threat to their own understanding of who they should be as teachers. Many were uncertain about how they should act, behave, speak and do teaching. In the absence of any structured support, they felt helpless as new teachers and were left to find out what to do by methods of trial and error.

A second metaphor used by the interviewees likened learning to do teaching as being on a “see-saw.” For example:

My first years of teaching were like a see-saw. There were really highs and lows, ups and downs, that I just had to figure out how to navigate (Sid Chase\79).

Nothing that I experienced before, in that as I said, on the one hand you had this excitement, and on the other hand you begin to realise that you don’t have the tools to be able to do the job. You are not really trained and equipped to do the job (Poui\79).

A roller coaster ride...Highs, downs. There are times, and I think the highs were much less than the down parts because a lot of times you doubt, that doubt, that whole idea of should I be doing this or should I not be doing this, what am I doing wrong. And then it would take just one child to understand what you are doing and to say “Miss, you know I really understood that,” but that was very few and far in between. The holidays were a little high too but it started to get down when you realised that it just don’t cut. The three weeks here and the two weeks here just doesn’t cut it at all (Fluffy Starr\94).

The variability of the experience of learning to teach was also captured in the phrases “difficult, but rewarding” (Mr. Vogue), “challenging, scary, enjoyable at times” (Antonia\94).

To me, the image of a see-saw conveyed the experience of learning to teach as one of variation—ups and downs, good experiences followed by bad ones. In learning to teach these interviewees had to overcome some difficulties in their teaching.

A third metaphor used by the interviewees was that of culture shock. For example, Jesse described her first years as:

an eye-opener in that I met people and students and a world that I was not exposed to that was very different from let’s say my sheltered home (Jesse\85).

Similarly, Miss T&T likened the experience to alcohol filled chocolates. She explained:

You know those chocolates, alcohol filled chocolates. You know when you suck them and you reach the middle and your mouth just goes BOOM! That what teaching was like for me. [...] As I said it was a big culture shock, it was like “WOW!...That was how it was (Miss T&T\90).

For both Jesse and Miss T&T, the first years of teaching brought them into life situations that they had never before experienced. They explained that some of their students had different value systems from the ones they held. Therefore, they experienced culture shock as their personal values were challenged by their social relationships with students who held different values from their own.

Not all of the interviewees viewed their experiences in the beginning years as difficult. A fourth metaphor used by the interviewees conveyed a sense of the pleasure that some of the interviewees gained from the experience of beginning to teach. For example Billy Joe described his first years of teaching as “an adventure.” Similarly, Maya regarded her experiences in her first years of teaching like “reading a good book, meaning turning every page and experiencing something new” (Maya\89). For both of them, beginning to teach was filled with newness, excitement and pleasure associated with an adventure.

A fifth metaphor used by the interviewees was that of beginning to teach as personal growth. For example:

I think I was growing all the time. I was searching for ways to improve myself. I was determined to make it work and I began to think somewhere along the line that maybe I did have something to contribute and in fact that I could become a very good teacher. I recognised all my own

shortcomings but I suppose that hope and that desire to make it work, that is what kept me going. I was enjoying it most of the time (Bumper\80).

You learn about yourself especially about your personality and so on. You are very conscious of what the students saw in you. In those years you try to project an image that you are self-confident whereas you were not (Mr. Man\92).

For these interviewees personal growth came from the desire to continuously improve their teaching. They were determined to be successful teachers.

Some interviewees also viewed the first years of teaching as one that laid the foundation of their teaching careers. It was a time when these interviewees said that they learned skills that helped them to survive in the profession. For example:

The [first years of teaching] were like virtually laying the foundation for a long career, because I always threatened to get out and I never left after almost 30 years. So they were like laying the foundation to make myself comfortable in the job. Because I probably felt I was going to be in it for the long haul. (Salohcin\72).

I would say it was interesting, but it was also rather enjoyable and I learnt a lot during the first years and it has helped me a lot during the course of my teaching career (Jane\90).

The metaphors used by the interviewees suggest a variation in the emotional aspects of beginning to teach. For some interviewees the experience was a pleasurable, while for others it was quite difficult. For some it was both. For some it was an act of survival, but for others it was a foundation to their career in teaching.

### **Summary And Comment**

In Trinidad, the Ministry of Education calls forth persons to be specialist school-subject teachers in secondary schools. These persons must possess a minimum academic qualification of Advanced Level. They are classified and ranked as teachers based on their academic qualifications, rather than practical competence of being able to teach or work with young people. The graduate secondary teacher is ranked at the top of the various levels of secondary teachers. Possession of an additional teacher education qualification such as the primary

Teacher's Diploma or the Diploma in Education does not rank a person above the rank of graduate secondary teachers.

The recruitment process is not as simple as described by Jesse. Several discourses inform the practices. For example, two dominant discourses inform recruitment practices based solely on academic qualifications. The first is an ability to learn as evidenced by an academic qualification is equated with ability to teach. In other words any 'certified as knowledgeable' person can teach. The second discourse is that teachers are capable of learning what they need to do as teachers on the job. They can learn on their own and so there is no need for a system of support. There is an understated expectation that the new teacher can do it all on his/her own with little help. For example, find the Ministry of Education expects that the new teacher would seek out the Teaching Service Regulations and interpret his/her contractual obligations. But in reality, beginning teaching is a very confusing time for the new teacher and many of them enter the profession without any idea of their rights and responsibilities.

Like Hale and Starrat did in their study, I found that a lack of ceremony or weak rites of passage (Hale & Starratt, 1989) marked the interviewees' entry into the teaching profession. The interviewees' orientation to the job and school context, was ad hoc and varied depending on the principal's or Head of Department's professional commitment. As new teachers, the interviewees' ability to teach was not observed beyond a few questions in an interview. There was also an absence of formal supervision of the interviewees when they were placed in schools. The metaphors used suggested that the beginning years of teaching were quite difficult for some interviewees and one in which they could have benefited from more support. The recruitment process provided few official opportunities for the interviewees to think about what they were required to do as teachers. The process does little to help the graduate secondary teacher see beyond him/herself as a specialist school-subject teacher. In Chapter Nine, I address my recommendations for the recruitment process.

In the next chapter I turn my attention to the issue of learning to teach. On the basis of my analysis of the interviewees' stories of what they say they did as beginning teachers, I present *my* interpretation of the interviewees' construction of their "practical professional knowledge" or what they had to do as teachers from each of four subject positions. I also examine how their knowledge their practical professional knowledge reconstructed by in-service programmes.

## CHAPTER EIGHT



### IF SNAKE COME OUTA BUSH AND SAY “SNAKE DEY!”—HE DEY: CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE AS GRADUATE SECONDARY TEACHERS

*“From the horse’s mouth. If someone knowledgeable informs you of something, then it has to be accurate.”  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 198).*

#### Introduction

When you have not [taught] in a formal setting, nobody has really given you any instruction on how you do it, you walk into the classroom not being a teacher....you are not a teacher, because...you have no concept of yourself as teacher. You are now putting that together....You do not know the role that you are filling. You are trying to put that together...You are in the process of I suppose constructing this persona the teacher. And in fact you do not really have a full concept....The concept is vague as well, because the concept of teacher is things you remember from ten years back. I can see that I constructed the personality of myself as teacher. Of course some of that overlaps with the personality of who I am in real life. But there is a certain amount of construction based on who you are not as well. On who you are supposed to be. On who children perceive you to be. On who you want them to perceive you to be (Rhonda\95).

Rhonda used concepts of role and personality to theorise about how she constructed knowledge and her sense-of-self as a graduate secondary teacher when she first began to teach. She said that she drew upon ideas that she had gained from her own experiences of schooling, aspects of her own personality, ideas about who she thought she should be as a teacher, and who she should be in terms of what students wanted her to be. As Rhonda’s story exemplifies, graduate secondary teachers, in the construction of their identity as teachers, act out and construct their ideas about who they should be and what they should do according to those ideas that are available to them in specific time and place. They also and think of themselves, and their identities as professionals (Gee, 1992) through these well-known bodies of knowledge.

In Chapters Three to Six, I read the interviewees’ stories about their ideas of teachers and teaching according to historical periods identified in Chapter Two.

I gave examples of how the interviewees' ideas about who they should be as teachers and who they assumed their students wanted them to be were 'flavoured' by the dominant discourses or "patterns of thought and action related to key ideas" (Phelan, 2001, p. 584) about education, teachers and teaching, available to them in their specific time and place. These discourses 'breathed into life' and 'breathed life into' education policies, institutional structures, the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) and socio-cultural conditions in Trinidad within which the interviewees attended school and learned to teach. In these chapters, I also argued that although new discourses such as nationalism, development, and social justice informed educational policy documents and systems after 1956, certain ways of viewing education, teaching and learning have persisted.

For example, between 1968 and 2000, the dominant purpose of education as articulated in policy papers continued to be informed by the understanding that education could provide for the "economic and social needs" (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1969, p. 266) of the people in the country. As explored in Chapters Five and Six (pp. 104-105; 144), the underlying aims of education during this period revolved around providing an opportunity for the all-round development (intellectual, social, moral, ethical, spiritual) of individuals, so that they could take their places as members as economic contributors, workers and well-adjusted citizens in a multi-ethnic-religious-cultural society such as Trinidad. Similarly, the various ways of being a graduate secondary teacher have been constituted through and in terms of discourses similar to those that informed the nature of education and teaching in Trinidad. For example, as described in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the interviewees saw the teacher as an intellectual expert, a transmitter of knowledge, a role model, a social and moral exemplar, a socially responsible person, a worker, an actor, and a performer.

In this chapter, I read the interviewees' transcripts otherwise. One of the aims of this project was to explore how teachers' everyday knowledge, gleaned from their practical experience of beginning to teach, might be a resource for the planning and implementation of preparation and ongoing professional development for graduate secondary teachers. To this end, I analyse the interviewees' stories and construct my understanding of the development of the interviewees' construction of their "practical professional knowledge" from four dominant subject positions taken up by these interviewees. I show how the

interviewees constructed new on-the-job knowledge about teaching through grappling with their personal ways of being and knowing and the new ways of knowing and being that they encountered in practice. As Lambert (1995) explained:

individuals bring past experiences and beliefs, as well as their cultural histories and world views into the process of learning; all of these influence how we interact with and interpret our encounters with new ideas and events (Lambert, 1995, p. xi-xii).

The chapter is organised into three parts. I begin by exploring the concept of practical professional knowledge in terms of the extensive areas of teacher knowledge studied in educational research. Then, I analyse aspects of the interviewees' practical professional knowledge constructed through and in terms of four ways of being a graduate secondary teacher. These ways of being emerged from the historical analysis done in Chapters Three to Six and the analysis of the interviewees' stories. I then turn my attention to the interviewees' knowledge construction that resulted from their participation in formal programmes for the preparation and professional development of teachers—mainly the in-service Diploma of Education (DipEd) and other short courses targeted at beginning teachers. In this section, I explore the following questions: What educational ideas about education, teaching and learning did the interviewees say they engaged with during the Diploma in Education programme? To what extent did these ideas change the way they thought about themselves and their practice? This analysis enabled me to construct a clearer understanding of the ways in which the interviewees' practical professional knowledge *did* and *did not* develop through classroom teaching. I could then make more informed recommendations for the preparation and ongoing professional development of graduate secondary teachers.

### **Practical Professional Knowledge**

What teachers know about teaching and how they come to develop or construct that knowledge has been researched in a number of ways. For example, Carter (1990) focused her review of research on learning to teach on the development of “practical knowledge,” that is:

knowledge teachers have of classroom situations and the practical dilemmas they face in carrying purposeful action in these settings (Carter, 1990, p. 299).

The concept of practical knowledge is applicable to this study because much of what the interviewees knew and came to know about teaching was based upon their own classroom observations and situations as students (Lortie, 1975) and/or from their own observations, encounters and experiences as teachers. Cynthia, Poui and Dot.Com were the only interviewees who indicated that they had read any books on pedagogy as beginning teachers. As Maya explained:

You are starting from really no man's land...and you do not know what you are about. Even when I came to the school, I had never read any books on Education. You do not know how to start to do a lesson, so you just...you are going into the classroom and most times you start off by doing what you saw as a student (Maya 90).

Carter identified three types of practical knowledge from her review of educational research: (i) *personal practical knowledge*—personal understandings of the practical circumstances in which teachers work for which she identified the research by Clandinin and Connelly (1987); (ii) *classroom knowledge*—what teachers learn from classroom situations and tasks about teaching; (iii) *pedagogical content knowledge*—knowledge of how to teach specific subject matter—as I came across in research by Grossman (1989) and Shulman (1986 & 1987a). Grossman (1989) elaborated on the concept of pedagogical content knowledge as:

conceptions about what it means to teach specific subject matter, knowledge of curricular materials available in a content area, knowledge of instructional strategies for teaching particular subject matter, and knowledge of students' understanding and possible misconceptions in a subject area (Grossman, 1989, p. 192).

Hiebert et al. (2002) also build upon a concept of practical knowledge and use the term “practitioner knowledge” (p. 4) to describe “the kinds of knowledge practitioners generate through active participation and reflection on their own practice” (Hiebert et al., 2002, p. 4). They argue that this practitioner knowledge is a valuable source of what teachers know and come to know because it is personal and embedded in the practice of millions of teachers on a daily basis. However, these researchers recognise that this type of knowledge is not shared among practitioners and “lacks the public vetting of researchers' knowledge”

(Hiebert et al., 2000, p. 4) and therefore, some researchers may not wish to consider it as part of the knowledge base of teaching.

The concept of “formal subject-matter knowledge” or “disciplinary knowledge” as researched and reviewed by Stodolsky and Grossman (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1994, 1995; Stodolsky & Grossman, 1995) is also relevant to understanding the kinds of teacher knowledge that the graduate secondary teachers constructed. As explained in Chapter Seven, the teachers in my study were recruited as specialist school-subject teachers. Stodolsky and Grossman (1995) argued that “subject matter is one of the primary organisers of life of secondary school teachers” (Stodolsky & Grossman, 1995, p. 228). They argued that “subject matter influences actual instructional practices, as well as how teachers think about curriculum, learning and teaching” (Stodolsky & Grossman, 1995, p. 228). In another paper, these researchers put forward two arguments. The first was that “the nature of the parent discipline and features of the school subject, as well as teachers’ beliefs regarding the subject, help create a conceptual context within which teachers work” (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995, p. 5). The second was that the “parent disciplines from which many school subjects derive may exert an important, if often invisible, influence on secondary school curriculum and instruction” (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995, p. 6).

Lee Shulman (1987a) also identified formal subject knowledge as one of four sources upon which his minimum “knowledge base” (p. 8) for teaching was built. This knowledge base, discussed below, included seven “categories of knowledge that underlie the teacher understanding needed to promote comprehension among students” (p. 8). Shulman explained that formal subject knowledge is derived from “scholarship in content disciplines” (Shulman, 1987a, p. 8) and based on the “accumulated literature and studies in the content area and the philosophical scholarship on the nature of knowledge in those fields” (Shulman, 1987a, p. 9). In the case of my interviewees, this would refer to disciplines studied as degree subjects at university such as History, Bio-Chemistry, Mathematics, Zoology, Botany, Chemistry, Economics, Geography, Physical Education, French, Spanish, English Literature and Sociology.

A second dimension of teacher knowledge includes familiarity with curricula, tests and testing materials, rules and roles in educational institutions, professional teachers’ organisations, government agencies and mechanisms of governance and finance. In Trinidad, this source for graduate secondary teachers

would include: the syllabi and examination rules and regulations for the various subject areas produced by the external examination bodies such as Caribbean Examinations Council and English universities such as the University of Cambridge and the Ministry of Education circulars, education policy documents and reports. As Shulman (1987a, p. 10) argued “these comprise both the tools of the trade and the contextual conditions that will either facilitate or inhibit teaching efforts.”

The third source of teacher knowledge is from findings and methods of philosophical, critical and empirical research in the areas of schooling, social organisations, human learning, teaching and development. However, in Trinidad access to these forms of local and international research is quite limited as I discussed in Chapter Two. Cynthia, Dot.Com and Poui were the only three interviewees who said that they actively researched and read any educational books or material as new teachers. The major formal opportunity for the interviewees to access local and international educational research would have been when they participated in the Diploma of Education programme.

The fourth source of teacher knowledge, identified by Shulman (1987a) is the “wisdom of practice” which he described as the “least codified of all” (p. 11). He explained that this is an important source as “practitioners simply know a great deal that they have never even tried to articulate” (p. 12). My interviews for this thesis aimed to collect examples of such practitioner research. But, as outlined in Chapters Three to Seven, these sources of knowledge have also been constituted through and in terms of dominant discourses over time. These discourses are breathed into life and breathe life into all the curricular products, and educational policies and practices available.

Shulman’s (1987a) explained that seven categories of knowledge underlie the “instructional functions of teaching” (Shulman, 1987b, p. ). These were:

1. *content knowledge* [understanding of the basic concepts, structure and interrelationships of the formal subject];
2. *general pedagogical knowledge*, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter;
3. *curriculum knowledge*, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as “tools of the trade” for teachers;
4. *pedagogical content knowledge*, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;
5. *knowledge of learners* and their characteristics;

6. *knowledge of educational contexts*, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and
7. *knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values*, and their philosophical and historical grounds (italics added; Shulman, 1987a, p. 8).

But even Shulman's long list does not capture all the kinds of knowledge with which teachers engage. Shulman did say that it was the minimum and that "a knowledge base for teaching is not fixed and final" (Shulman, 1987a, p. 12) because what we know about teaching is constantly evolving. Additionally, teachers should know that the knowledge base is constantly growing and improving (Hiebert et al., 2002).

Sockett (1987) critiqued Shulman's work on the knowledge base and said that "intellectual strategy" was "flawed" (Sockett, 1987, p. 208). One reason he gave for his comment was Shulman's "relative lack of attention to context, as opposed to content" (Sockett, 1987, p. 208). Sockett argued that the actual context in which teaching is taking place is "crucial" as "it dramatically influences the very character of the skills deployed" (Sockett, 1987, p. 209). He argued that one's practice is rooted in one's contextual knowledge, which is a base for decisions teachers make. Sockett urged that researchers and teachers think of the knowledge base, not only in terms of teaching as an activity, but also in terms of an occupation. He argued that:

the knowledge base of teaching as an occupation, involves complex judgments of balance between ideal and possible practice, not merely in matters of pure pedagogical reasoning—for practice is rooted in context. That context is not a set of abstractions, but is the social, perhaps political base for practical day-to-day, hour-to-hour decisions made by teachers (Sockett, 1987, p. 210).

Bell and Gilbert (1996) offer an even more all-encompassing way of looking at teacher learning. They argued that knowledge construction or learning is at the heart of teacher development. They identified three kinds of teacher learning: social, professional and personal development. They argued that:

*Social development*...involves the renegotiation and reconstruction of what it means to be a teacher...[and] the development of ways of working with others that will enable the kinds of social interaction necessary for renegotiating and reconstructing what it means to be a teacher...*Personal development*...involves each individual teacher constructing, evaluating and accepting or rejecting for herself or himself the new socially constructed knowledge about what it means to be a teacher...and managing the feelings associated with changing their activities and

beliefs...particularly when they go ‘against the grain.’ ...*Professional development*...involves not only the use of different teaching activities, but the development of the beliefs and conceptions underlying the activities. It may also involve learning some [content knowledge] (italics added; Bell & Gilbert, 1996, p. 13).

From the categorisations of all the various kinds of knowledge that are identified above, one can conclude that the areas about which teachers construct their knowledge about teachers, teaching and learning are wide and varied and still evolving. Nonetheless, the concepts of “practical knowledge,” a “professional knowledge base,” Clandinin’s and Connelly’s (1995) understanding of teachers’ professional knowledge as situated in an intellectual and moral landscape (explored in Chapter One), and “contextual knowledge” provided useful reference points for me to think about the practical professional knowledge the interviewees constructed. This practical professional knowledge was based on the interviewees’ day to day practice of teaching in various secondary schools across the country.

Some of the aspects of the practical professional knowledge base explored in this chapter include: what did it mean for these interviewees to teach a specific school-subject area? How did they construct their practical professional knowledge with regards to: the subject matter or content that they were supposed to teach? The instructional strategies used to teach students? Their understandings and assessments of student learning? The ways in which they prepared for teaching? Their methods of classroom control? The context of their teaching? Other areas of their practical professional knowledge? In the next section I explore some of these issues based on my interpretation of the interviewees’ stories.

## **Constructing Knowledge:**

### **The Teacher As A Transmitter Of Knowledge**

Of the 29 interviewees, 21 indicated that as beginning teachers they saw their major teaching role as “conveying disciplinary knowledge” (Phelan, 2001, p. 587) to the students in their charge. This view of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge and teaching as transmission of knowledge was consistent regardless of the type of school the interviewees had attended as secondary students, the schools they first taught at, or the historical period in which they began to teach.

The discourse of the teacher as transmitter of knowledge makes several ways of being a graduate secondary teacher available to the teacher including: the teacher as: (a) a knowledgeable and skilful subject expert; (b) a repository of knowledge; (c) a person who is able to impart the specified content across to students; and (d) a person who can help students to pass examinations. In turn, students are positioned as non-knowers, who must learn the specified content to pass examinations. In other words, “the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing” (Freire, 1970, p. 54).

But there are many contradictions inherent in these subject positions. Can the teacher really know it all? Can teachers impart knowledge to *all* students in the same way and at the same time? Is specified knowledge the only valuable knowledge? Is what students know not valuable? Is passing examinations the only way to measure student success? These are some of the issues that the interviewees had to grapple with as they constructed their practical professional knowledge through and in terms of this discourse.

### **Content Knowledge**

School-subject knowledge is derived from various academic and non-academic disciplines. School subjects are important for the organisation of secondary schools (Grossman and Stodolsky, 1995) as they are usually the basis for departments and time-tables. These school subjects are also important for the recruitment and classification of graduate secondary teachers as specialist school-subject teachers as explained in Chapter Seven. So I wondered, to what extent did the formal subject area influence the interviewees’ ideas about teaching?

The graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad begins to teach with a view of him/herself as a certain kind of specialist school-subject teacher, whose professional identity is based on the major discipline he/she pursued at university or in some cases Advanced Level as exemplified in two interviewees’ stories in Chapter Seven (p. 193). For the interviewees who taught the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth forms, where students were being prepared for the Ordinary Level (O’Level) or Advanced Level (A’Level) examinations, what to teach or the specified school-subject knowledge was largely determined by the syllabus for the subject area/areas. The syllabus gives an outline of the specific content areas for a specific school subject, and may also state objectives for each topic, for example: “The student will be able to: define plate tectonics.” The various syllabi are

prepared for the Caribbean region by examination bodies such as Caribbean Examinations Council (C.X.C) and University of Cambridge and are external to the school system. Teachers have no direct input into the choice of content areas. The content and organisation of examinations in each subject area are based on the specifications within each syllabus. Textbooks are usually written to 'cover' the objectives of content areas listed in the syllabus. The structure and content of syllabi may be revised by the production bodies every five years.

To some extent, these curricular materials influenced the topics that the interviewees thought they could/could not and should/should not teach. For example, D. Jew, Jesse, Harold, Portfolio, Fluffy Starr, Dot.Com and Cynthia spoke about the initial task of teaching in terms of "teaching the syllabus," "finishing the syllabus," "following the syllabus," "doing a topic," "covering the C.X.C. syllabus" and "following the text." D. Jew, who had had several years teaching experience at the primary level and was a trained primary school teacher before he began to teach at a government-assisted secondary school, explained that he believed that the order in which he should present certain topics was constrained by the specific objectives and content areas of the syllabus in his subject area. He said:

You realise that you have to teach a syllabus that is in my perception one where there is an overload of material. So your initial response is that you have to do it in a linear fashion. You get this done and that done and you must cover X, Y and Z before the examinations. So however you do it, you do it but you have to get it done (D. Jew\98).

In other words, D. Jew saw the content of his subject area as linear, and that teaching should also follow a linear pattern.

The syllabus also constrained D. Jew's practical professional knowledge in terms of the quantity or number of topics that he should teach. He was concerned about covering as many topics as possible before the final examination so that his students would be able to address the requirements of the examination.

He explained:

You have a curriculum that is given to you as well and you have to implement it. The end result is always in terms of the certification [of students]. Your performance is always equated with the amount of success you are able to effect at the end of the process which boils down to how much you can cover. It is never about your methods. It is always about you didn't teach this topic and you didn't teach that topic and it's January. It is not about readiness and rates of learning. It is not about those things. It is always about the end product which is certification (D. Jew\98).

The curricular materials and examinable nature of a school subject were also important to constructing an idea of how important a subject was, that is its relative status in the school curriculum. Sid Chase was the only interviewee who, as a graduate teacher, did not teach a school subject defined by a syllabus and an examination. She taught Physical Education. Sid Chase recalled her principal's shock when she asked for a syllabus on her first day at the school. She said:

The principal looked at me in total consternation [*Laughs*] because it was the first time that any teacher had ever asked for those things. Apart from which she said, "You came to teach Physical Education." To teach Physical Education as far as she was concerned, one didn't have to use those documents, so what was I talking about (Sid Chase\73).

In Sid Chase's school, PE was regarded as a non-academic and non-examinable subject. This would certainly have deemed it low status in relation to the other school subjects. Even the students had certain expectations about the subject as Sid Chase explained:

[They thought] that I would just come and give them a ball to play and then they would go outside and play and I would just be in a sort of supervisory role and that didn't happen. So we had initial battles of doing theory and practical. And that they would get their practical work but I had to bargain with them because they would get very frustrated and upset with the theory. In addition to which, because it was a non-examinable subject some of the students felt they didn't have to do it (Sid Chase\73)

Sid Chase's own beliefs about the value of P.E. spurred her into political activism in order to get her students and other teachers to change their attitude towards her subject. She decided that creating a syllabus for P.E could do this. She said:

I decided...I never put it on paper but there was a programme somewhere in my head, that I was going to do the biggest P.R. job for Physical Education that I could. So as I said not having the curriculum and so on, I set about writing one. I reflected on of course on my own studies and I looked up, you know...I didn't know what a curriculum meant or what it looked like but I sort of just figured out, that well, you must have a rationale, you must have objectives and then you must say what you are going to do so you must have topics (Sid Chase\73).

Although many of the interviewees said that what they taught was framed in terms of the specified syllabus content, what one taught could also be re-shaped by one's personal understanding of the content. I shall use Salman's story to explain. In Chapter Five (p. 102) I introduced Salman who as a beginning teacher was in a contradictory place on his professional knowledge landscape. He began to teach in a school that had a "long history of dealing with the elite." He felt

uncomfortable as a teacher in this educational setting because he thought that he was betraying his ideals as a socially conscious and politically aware teacher. He discussed this dilemma with other teachers in a similar position:

They told me contrary to how I was feeling, I was in a very unique position. In fact I was in an “enviable” position in that I could make some kind of impact on some of the very students I was concerned about....What they also pointed out to me was that...while initially I did not want to do it [teach], I was still in there with my eyes wide open and I could make an impact in terms of some of the school policies, even if it is just a criticism of something or standing up for something or standing up for a student or whatever (Salman\82).

So, Salman thought that he could be an agent for social change within the traditional setting and use the content to do so. He explained:

I started to teach it a lot more in terms of issues and conflicts and we started to look at [*name of subject*] from a more social, economic, political standpoint, even at Form Three level (Salman\82).

Salman believed that he could help his students to raise questions about what they were learning and link their new knowledge to life around them. Salman went beyond syllabus requirements to show the content knowledge in relation to the wider social and cultural experience of his students.

Content knowledge, then, influenced what the interviewees believed they should or should not teach and was to some extent an indication of the status of a subject. Some interviewees developed a linear view of the content based on the syllabus objectives and sought to address as many of these objectives as possible. However, some interviewees recognised that content knowledge could also be used as a political tool to raise social consciousness among students.

### **Preparing To Transmit**

The interviewees had to construct their practical professional knowledge according to the requirements of preparing to teach a particular school-subject. Shulman (1987a) identified four critical steps within this process, which sought to make knowledge available to students. These steps included: *preparation* which requires “critical interpretation and analysis of texts, structuring and segmenting, development of a curricular repertoire and clarification of purpose” (p. 15); *representation* or “use of a representational repertoire which included analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations, explanations and so forth” (p. 15); *selection* “choice from among an instructional repertoire which includes modes of

teaching, organizing, managing and arranging”; *adaptation and tailoring* to student characteristics “considerations of conceptions, pre-conceptions, misconceptions, and difficulties, language and culture, and motivations, social class, gender, age ability, aptitude, interests, self concepts and attention” (p. 15).

D. Jew described how he had problems structuring and segmenting (Shulman, 1987a) what he knew from his wide range of disciplinary knowledge into school-subject knowledge suited for the particular age group with which he was dealing. He explained:

I had some difficulty in breaking things down simply to third formers and I tended to justify that by saying, “No, no. There is no such thing. I need to bring them up. They need to start thinking at a higher level”...So it is not me breaking it down into bits for them as much as my expectations of them coming up to my level and I feel if I could bring them up then I am doing such a great thing. Because I am getting them to maximise and optimise their real potential. So that if they could go home and say, “Sir taught us about dynamics today” and they start talking about dynamics, then I would think that the perception would be that I am doing a good thing (D. Jew\98).

D. Jew had problems adapting and tailoring (Shulman, 1987a) material to suit the different age groups. He said that he experienced difficulty when he had to switch between teaching different levels of students. He explained:

The next thing was switching between levels. Teaching sixth formers at one level, pitching the [name of subject] at one level and then with the third formers bringing it down at their level. So I had keep switching in my mind so that made me a bit uncomfortable (D. Jew\98).

Similarly, Dot.Com explained that she had to grapple with understanding how much of the content material she was required to pass on to her students:

The only thing that I need to grapple with now was the material. How much material do I need to give? Am I giving too much or am I giving too little? How deep do I go into this?...Yes, there were some objectives in the syllabus but to some extent they were wide...it was like “How deep do I go?” (Dot.Com\93).

D. Jew’s and Dot.Com’s difficulties of re-conceptualising the content to present to their students were consistent with findings in other research. For example, Grossman (1989) argued that the secondary teachers she interviewed equated subject preparation with planning for learning. She argued that:

without help, the teachers found it difficult to reconceptualize the discipline of English for English as a secondary school subject, and to rethink their subject matter to make it more accessible to students (Grossman, 1989, p. 193).

In the same way D. Jew and Dot.Com were unable to re-conceptualise their formal disciplinary knowledge as school-subject knowledge for their students. They displayed little understanding of the idea of breaking down material into sizeable chunks so that students could access the concepts presented.

This inability to re-conceptualise formal disciplinary knowledge made Fluffy Starr feel insecure about her teaching. She explained:

There are some things that I just took for granted. And sometimes they would have major problems with it and I would be like “This is something that you should know.” And that made me uncomfortable because I felt I had to go back now and start from the basic myself. Sometimes I questioned my teaching ability. Sometimes I questioned my knowledge of how things should be (Fluffy Starr<sup>94</sup>).

Fluffy Starr believed that if her students had a basic understanding of concepts in her subject area, then as a teacher she could help them to build upon their basic knowledge. However, she did not see herself as being responsible for teaching them these basic concepts. She believed that they would learn if they did the basic work on their own at home. Fluffy Starr said that when she recognised that her students had not grasped the core concepts of her subject area, she realised that she would have to re-visit and re-teach what she considered to be basic content knowledge. This meant that she had to return to the basic concepts herself. This made Fluffy Starr question her ability to teach as she doubted that she could convey this knowledge to her students.

Fluffy Starr’s story is interesting because she did not say how she thought the students developed their basic knowledge of the school-subject. It is also of interest because it indicates that as a beginning teacher Fluffy Starr did not see herself as being responsible for teaching the core aspects of her subject area, a responsibility that most would say is critical to any teaching. It is possible that when she realised that she did have to teach these concepts, she did not know how to re-conceptualise her formal subject knowledge into school-subject content knowledge and put it across in a way that her students could understand. This made her feel uncertain about her teaching.

Ocssu, Salman and D. Jew said that not knowing the specific school-subject content knowledge also created a sense of uncertainty for them as beginning teachers. Ocssu, who began teaching in a government-assisted secondary school in 1989, explained:

The main thing was that I was not really—how they say—au courant with the material....Because it was a new syllabus...it took me two or three

years to catch myself and as I [went] along I was fishing through. So that was the only uncomfortable thing. Because when students ask you a question on something you're teaching and you cannot give a good response, then you start to look bad. I had one or two of those experiences because I know the children initially trying to test me out to see how good I was (Ocssu\89).

Ocssu grappled with two types of knowledge, the formal subject knowledge of the discipline area that he had pursued at university and constructing an understanding of the requirements of the school-subject knowledge as outlined in the new syllabus for his subject area. Ocssu also recognised that he was under surveillance (Foucault, 1977) from his students and his fear was that he would appear incompetent in the eyes of his students if he did not know the content. For him it became normal for a teacher to know and abnormal for a teacher not to know.

Ocssu, Salman, D. Jew all said that to become knowledgeable and skilful experts they needed to revise and learn the specified content knowledge with respect to the syllabus requirements. In their attempt to learn the specified content, D. Jew and Salman said that as beginning teachers, they spent long hours preparing for their classes. For example, D. Jew, who also believed that a teacher should have a "command of content," explained that his desire to appear as a knowledgeable teacher to his students regulated his sleeping patterns. He said:

I spent many a night well pass midnight getting three and four hours, sometimes two hours sleep to be able to perform the next day because at no time do you want to come across as being incompetent. Nobody is going to see that you are new to the job and you need time to acclimatise. You have to start from the buzz go. So at no time could you relegate yourself into the position of not knowing or not being competent. If it meant not sleeping the night before to come across as being confident and competent...and it took a lot of that because I had the sixth form, the A'Level syllabus. So it was a bit daunting the first year (D. Jew\98).

As knowledgeable experts, teachers come to see themselves as persons who should know the content and be able to show their knowledge by answering any questions asked by the students. However, there are some inherent contradictions in this subject position of teacher as expert. For example, no one can know it all, even though some teachers try hard to give the impression that they do and students do think that teachers know it all. Additionally, as Shulman (1987a) argued, anyone can know the specified content, but that does not make him/her a teacher. It is one's ability to link the content and the pedagogy that is far more important to being a teacher. So how then did the interviewees construct

their knowledge about instructional strategies for teaching particular subject matter?

### **Knowledge About Instructional Strategies**

Many of the interviewees said that they simply did not know what to do when they first begin to teach. As Rhonda said, “I know *what* to teach. But I was not sure that I was going to know *how* to teach” (Rhonda\95). Kowen said that when he first began to teach, he used a “chalk and talk” strategy to “espouse” what he knew. He explained:

How did I know what I had to do? I didn't. I went into the classroom, picked up the chalk and looked at the topic and I began to espouse what I knew about it. To say that I actually knew that I was imparting knowledge, the way to get the best of the things like I know now. I wouldn't say that I know it now, but I know it a lot better now than I knew back then. But the idea of actually pulling that information and imparting it to the students. That is what I was doing, imparting information. Giving information (Kowen\90).

Many of the other interviewees including Poui, Kowen, and Billy Joe said that they did not know how to present and transmit the content to students beyond telling all and note-giving. They said that like Kowen they stuck to methods such as lecturing, demonstrating, giving notes, following the syllabus, and teaching/reading from the text. These methods involved them telling or showing the content knowledge to their students without any investigation into whether or not the students were understanding the content or making meaning for themselves. In other words, the interviewees who taught this way tended to engage in “mimetic teaching” which has an “emphasis on the transmission of information from teacher to students” (O'Loughlin, 1995, p. 108). But according to O'Loughlin (1995) “mimetic teaching” ignores student input and voice. Rote learning and memorisation are widely practised by students and right answers are revered. As O'Loughlin (1995) further argued these ways of telling and showing inhibit real learning by students in terms of critical thinking, linking knowledge to experience, and the production of new knowledge. One could argue that positioned as a transmitter of knowledge, there is no need for teachers to do teaching in any other way. But actual teaching involves so much more—“management, presentations, interactions, group work, discipline, humour, questioning, and other aspects of active teaching, discovery or inquiry instruction, and the observable forms of classroom teaching” (Shulman, 1987a, p. 15). So

how did the interviewees construct knowledge about other instructional methods that they could use?

Like J. Shulman (1989), Wiebold (2000) and Grossman (1989) I found that for many of the interviewees learning new teaching strategies was left largely to chance and trial and error. The interviewees began by trying strategies that they had observed being used by other teachers. Rhonda explained:

I think what...teachers who are in my situation, what they do, on that first day you are really trying to remember what your teachers did. That is what I had done. I think like the weekend before I started I was trying to remember what was it that we did in the classroom. What was it like? What did they do? And they are trying to reproduce that. Bit by bit I guess you also...I remember that first week looking in to classrooms as I passed along the corridor to see what other teachers were doing. Were they standing up? Were they sitting down? Are they walking around? Are they using the board? So you are looking to see what they are doing. You're trying to remember what people did with you. So it is a trial and error process really. Trying things out. Seeing if they work and if they don't (Rhonda\95)

Rhonda's description highlights the significance of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) to the construction of what Rhonda thought that she should do as a beginning teacher.

Barbara, Billy Joe, Bumper, Adrian, Jesse, Ocusu, Portfolio, Mr. Man and Sandra described how over time they managed to discover what they needed to do. They said that they discovered their own techniques or devised methods of teaching "from their head" (Jesse\85) or based on their own practice in the classroom. However, they devised these methods without tapping into the existing body of research on teaching methods on what they should do as teachers. They never realised that these self-discoveries were part of an existing body of practical teacher knowledge because in their day-to-day teaching they did not have the opportunity to engage with formal theory or research related to teaching and learning. They had no way of knowing whether or not the techniques they were trying were the most effective for all students or pedagogically sound. As Barbara explained:

You see I didn't really know that I was doing anything wrong. So you just went along. Today was bad, the week was bad, the following half of the week was bad, the rest of the week was better. So you went and you said ok well it wasn't so bad. So this didn't work, this worked this following week, so I'm feeling better. You somehow felt that in the long term you were achieving something (Barbara\80).

Some interviewees drew upon their personal theories about learning formed from their own experiences as learners to help them develop instructional strategies. For example, Maya described how when she was a student learning “did not easy come easy” to her and that she needed to “work hard” to remember a body of knowledge and achieve her academic goals. She explained:

I certainly was not...somebody who would pick up things very, very easily...I would learn by repetition...Once I understood something I would learn it. If I did not understand it, heaven help me. To say like you know some children, what we would term naturally brilliant...but you know you just pick up things so easily and it is easy for you, that was not me....and I knew that. And because I knew it, then I would push myself, because I know that I had to be attentive in class. I had to go home. I had to set aside time. I had to study. There were no two ways about it. So that in that sense I would not say...school was probably a little bit difficult for me because I had to make an extra effort all the time. ...So somewhere in the back of my mind I *did* understand that you cannot just tell them....[Although] I did not know then how to go about having these different types of lessons—something just tells you that you just cannot tell them. You have to show them, you have to use other methods, you have to use something concrete or use an example or something like that....[I] really did not have the reasons, why you did it this way or different ways of doing the same thing. [I] certainly did not know anything about psychology and how to...I guess intuitively...[I] could probably relate; you have an idea (Maya\90).

Maya’s personal experiences as a learner enabled her to see that as a ‘transmitter of knowledge’ she would have to find ways to make sure that all her students understood any body of knowledge that she presented. Although she recognised that she had to put forward ideas in different ways to reach all of her students and used different techniques to achieve this goal, she had no access to research-based ideas or theoretical discourses on alternative ways of learning. An opportunity to engage with these ideas may have enabled her to think about what she could have done differently in her teaching.

Similarly, Rhonda explained how her construction of herself as a learner framed what she should do in her classes. She explained:

I was always very artistic and very creative and if the teacher was *not* as artistic or creative and if the teacher was for want of a better phrase boring, then I ran into trouble with them. I was always a very good student and a very bright student, but the teacher had to hold my interest. So that if the teacher came and the teacher just monotonously went on and on, you would find that by the end of the class I would have my whole desk covered in drawings. In fact I had a desk with this sort of vinyl on it and my goal every day was to fill the entire desk. And at the end of the day, when the bell rang, I cleaned it off so that the next day I would have a

whole new desk to start off with. ...I know that it is hard for a child to sit in a classroom...I can't sit still for so long. It is boring. So I am saying that it has made me understand the kids. I know it is hard for them to sit there. And I try to do things in such a way as to capture their attention. They will stay interested. Of course that is not always possible and I am not talking about things like equipment and those sort of aids, because we do not have those kinds of facilities in this school. We do not have the finances for that kind of thing. What I try to do really is try to make the class...as real life as possible. ...I try to make it a little relevant and a real life. (Rhonda\95).

Although Rhonda was a “bright” student by her own admission, she understood that she would have to keep her student’s interest in the same way that she required teachers to keep hers when she was in a learning situation. She also realised that she would have to make her school subject as meaningful as possible to the lives of the students and capture their attention. But her story also indicated her understanding of the context in which she was teaching. Without the help of any audio-visual equipment she recognised that she would have to devise strategies to keep her students interested in what she was trying to teach.

What I came to realise was that the interviewees’ common-sense views on how students learned strongly influenced what they did as new teachers. So how then did the interviewees think that their students learned and how did they measure their student learning?

### **Students’ Understanding And Learning**

Antonia, Harold and Mr. Man said that as beginning teachers they had no concept of how their students learned. Billy Joe and Mr. Vogue believed that students learned by repetition as indicated in Billy Joe’s story in Chapter Four (p. 91-97). Dot.Com believed that students learned by emulating teachers. Miss T&T believed that children learned when they were encouraged to do so by their parents. Rhonda (see story above) was the only interviewee who said that she recognised that children learn in different ways because she herself was a visual learner. Jane’s concept of student learning summed up what most of the other interviewees thought about how their students learned when they first began to teach. She explained:

How do I think students learn? I think basically I thought students learned simply by sitting down and studying: reading their books and reading their notes and doing diagrams and stuff like that, they would learn what they needed to learn. That is basically how I thought they learned (Jane\90)

Jane's thought that her students learned by reading, repetition, rote and memorisation of school-subject content and agreed that this is the way in which she learned as a student at secondary school. This process of *read/hear/see, memorise, learn, remember for the test* summarised the way in which most of the interviewees viewed how their students learned when they first began to teach.

Sandra elaborated how she thought "paying attention" and "understanding" influenced student learning:

When I am teaching in a class I want absolute attention and I could watch a student and tell in my mind whether he is paying attention or not. He could be watching me and not paying attention and I know it. When they are paying attention you could see the nods that they understand when you talk. I know that they understand when they give me [*nods head*] yes. They repeat questions after when I ask and they answered correctly. Those who did not answer were not paying attention. They were talking and whatever. So you could see children are learning when they are understanding what you are saying. If they are not understanding, they are not learning. They are not paying attention (Sandra\84).

Sandra built up her concept of her students' learning in the following way. She believed that if her students paid attention then they would understand and they would learn. If they did not pay attention, they would not understand and they would not learn. The evidence for understanding was nodding of heads and correct answers to questions. But what Sandra's theory ignores is the idea of students making meaning of the new knowledge for themselves or linking their new knowledge to past experience. She was being influenced by a view of learning as being able to give back information.

When asked how he thought his students learned, James Brown replied:

To tell you the truth, that question of "how people learn," is a concept that I became conscious of much later. I taught and I asked questions and if I got what I perceived to be enough correct responses, and if at the end of the day they performed satisfactorily in the test, then I was satisfied that learning was taking place (James Brown\77).

James Brown constructed his understanding about student learning in the same way that many other interviewees did. However, he said that even when he became aware of the different ways in which people learn, he did not change the way he had constructed his idea of learning. He explained:

I remember for example, I might have been teaching for about four or five years and I had a good friend who was doing the DipEd programme. She first introduced me to the concept that all children are not the same, all children don't learn the same way therefore you have to devise different methods to teach students who are qualitatively different. Why I said that

that might be an embarrassing question is that I must confess that pragmatic reasons have led me in a direction of not incorporating this proven theory (even to the extent that I understand it) into my teaching practice. By pragmatic reasons I mean the practical situation facing the Senior Comprehensive teacher.

James Brown went on to elaborate upon why he held on to his personal theory of how his students learned. He said:

We started off with classrooms to accommodate 25 and we are now accommodating 45 and [more]. The teacher is now “pushed” against the blackboard because there is no more space. Given the overcrowded classrooms it is very difficult to see the students as separate individuals in need of a variety of teaching strategies. When you have these large class sizes basically how it works out is you have one-third roughly who are capable of dealing with the syllabus and motivated so to do. You have another third who might be capable of doing the syllabus but don’t have the motivation for one reason or the other. And you have the lower third that either is not motivated at all or is incapable. The numbers varies from class but roughly that is how it pans out. A division of the class into thirds is the practical extent of theory or different teaching styles for different students (James Brown\77).

James Brown constructed his own theory of learning within the contextual framework of his teaching. James Brown did not find the theory of individual learning styles applicable to dealing with the large classes he taught. Instead, he drew upon discourses of “ability” and “motivation” to explain how he thought groups of his students learned—able and motivated, able and not motivated, not able and not motivated. As the historical exploration of ideas in Chapters Three to Six show, these discourses were very much present and shaped the way in which secondary education was organised in Trinidad. Therefore, it is not surprising that James Brown attributed learning to intellectual ability and motivation.

Cynthia also explained how initially she drew upon a discourse of intellectual ability to explain how she thought her students learned.

When you first enter teaching—to me you tend to concentrate on those who are doing well. You feel that’s the guideline for your performance. “Oh yeah, this one is getting 70 and 80 per cent so obviously I am doing something right” and the children who are not performing as well the tendency is to believe that they, just can’t make the grade. And later on as you get a little more experienced you come to accept the fact that you need to reach these on the edges. And therefore it means that you tend to concentrate more on making sure that everybody learns rather than those who are more intellectually able (Cynthia\78).

As a beginning teacher, Cynthia, like James Brown positioned some of her students as more able and others as less able to learn. If the more able did well on her tests, then they were learning and she was doing well as a teacher. However, in time she recognised that all students had to learn and that she had to find ways to ensure that they all did.

But in hindsight, Cynthia explained that as a new teacher she was unaware of the variety of ways in which her students learned and presented her content in a way that facilitated memorisation. She explained:

In terms of recognising there are a variety of ways of learning...very often we don't take that into consideration when we are in a class. We tend to *very often* just focus on one mode or method and sometimes children are left out because that may not be their primary method of learning information (Cynthia\78).

As a beginning teacher, Cynthia's view of learning constrained how she taught. She believed that her students learned by rote and she taught in ways that would help them to remember—telling, note-giving. She said that she tried to concentrate on making sure everybody learned, but she did not say that she challenged or changed her view of learning and teaching in the way that, for example, Poui did as described in Chapter Five (pp. 139-146). But Cynthia was teaching in a school where the students were far more able. Her students could get 70 and 80%, Poui's could not. Thus the contextual knowledge was important in influencing the development of their different views. In other words, their students were the “unique, variable and unpredictable elements” (Sockett, 1987, p. 209) that influenced them to think of their teaching in different ways.

When asked how they knew that their students were learning 26 of the 29 interviewees replied that they looked at the student results in tests. In other words they gauged student knowledge through rigorous, competitive grading and assessment practices (Krumboltz & Yeh, 1996). Eight interviewees (PU, SA, TG, MY, DJ, PO, SN, HA) assessed student learning in terms of “changes in attitude and behaviour in class” (Tiger\85) and “settling down to do work” (Salohcin\73). Eight interviewees (JB, AD, DJ, JS, KO, SN, AN, RH) said they checked student learning in terms of oral responses to questions. “Body language” (Maya\90), “looks on faces” (Harold\99), “levels of participation” James Brown\77), “degree of effort shown” (Tiger\85), “demonstration of skills” (Sid Chase\79), “making links with past learning” (Portfolio\89) and a positive answer to the question “Do you understand?” (Antonia\94) were other ways in which interviewees figured out

whether or not their students were learning. Rhonda explained how she used a combination of these techniques:

The first indication would sometimes be the look on their faces. You know when they go blank. You know when they are understanding and of course from questions; from asking them; from their books; from how they are able to use the information at another point; how they are able to apply the information. Sometimes you are teaching another topic and somebody says "Oh! You mean like when we talked about...whatever." And you realise that whatever it is stuck in their minds (Rhonda\95).

But these evaluation strategies were still framed within the discourse of teaching as transmission of knowledge. The interviewees were monitoring the students to see if they 'got' the knowledge that they had transmitted to them. If they could say or show the knowledge, then the interviewees took this as an indication that their students had learned.

Rhonda said that she was unable to use student performance to gauge student learning because some of her students lacked the literacy skills to cope with the subject-matter and writing tasks required for her subject. She explained that she did not know how to get the subject content across to students who could not read or write. She explained:

The major problem was that it was extremely frustrating. Frustrating because at Form Four and Form Five level I had students who could not read First Primer [First reader at primary school] and I am trying to teach a syllabus. And you had parents coming in who want to know how much work you completed with their children. So you are trying to complete the syllabus, but the children cannot read (Rhonda\95).

Rhonda said that she did not possess the skills to teach basic literacy to her students, which would have been important for her to help her students progress.

Antonia, Smith and Dot.Com believed that a lack of student interest in their particular subject area inhibited student learning. For example, Antonia explained:

I teach [*name of subject*] and children do not like [*name of subject*]. They have a stigma towards [*name of subject*], whether is since from the primary school or their secondary experiences. So it is difficult to get them to like the subject. And once they do not like the subject, they are not going to perform well in the subject. So I am still trying ways of how to motivate these children, how to motivate them to get to like the subject. You have to like it first to before you actually do it (Antonia\94).

Antonia constructed her ideas about student learning in terms of student interest. If students were interested then they would learn. If they were not they would not

perform. Therefore as a teacher she had to work on increasing student interest to improve student learning and performance.

Bumper was one of the few interviewees who made a link between what she did as a teacher in the classroom and student learning. And even so, she only made that link when some students did even better than she expected. She began to wonder why some of her students did well and others did badly in tests. She explained:

I started to examine which class was...which lesson they seemed to grasp? What did I do for that lesson? Were the most exciting lessons the ones in which they learned the most, in which they retained the most? And I was picking up things like they are learning a lot of vocabulary when I used games and songs and so on, but they are not getting the grammar. The lessons that specifically targeted grammar were the lessons in which they learned the most grammar. And then I started looking at my testing. You cannot give children oral work and then give them a written test. You cannot do comprehension...do this with them in a comprehension passage and expect them to be able to produce it. Their producing is writing it afterwards. I started to see those things and made certain adjustments (Bumper\80).

This close examination of teaching indicated some level of evaluation “checking for understanding,” and “evaluating performance and adjusting experiences” (Shulman, 1987a, p. 15) on Bumper’s part. However, Bumper was making sense of her teaching in terms of how her students did on tests, not necessarily on the meaning-making they were doing with new knowledge.

What I learned from these various stories was that as beginning teachers these interviewees were involved in many kinds of knowledge construction on a personal, professional and to some extent social level. There was also a significant inter-relationship between the way in which the interviewees thought about how students learned, the methods they used to teach and the context in which they taught. Most of the interviewees believed that learning involved memorisation of specified knowledge and taught in ways that would help their students to remember the content. For some of the interviewees, the discourses of ability and interest framed how well students could learn. It is clear that these interviewees struggled to develop an understanding of their pedagogical content knowledge.

## Constructing Knowledge: The Teacher As A Disciplinarian

Of the 29 interviewees, 11 indicated that they saw the teacher as a disciplinarian who kept order in the classroom and was responsible for maintaining students' behaviour in the classroom. They expected students to sit quietly, listen, pay attention, and comply with the teacher's instructions. According to Freire (1970, p. 54) "the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;...the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined."

In Chapter Six (pp. 167-177) I explored how Maya's construction of her knowledge about disciplining students was framed within her own experiences with teachers at various levels of schooling and her gender. Ocssu also framed his understanding of the teacher as disciplinarian within the context of his school experiences. He explained that when he first began to teach he believed that he should not tolerate a lack of discipline on the part of the student and such an infraction could indicate his inability to control the students in his classes. He said that he had formed this view based on his experiences with "very strict" teachers in secondary school. Ocssu explained his beliefs about discipline:

Discipline was one of the key things for me. When I go into a class, that class should be under control, not children trying to test me out...That was my perception of the whole thing. And that the children should really fall in line, rather than me trying to be best friends with them, to get them to do the work. I say well look I have to establish myself. I am the boss here when I come I have work to do...That was my view of things (Ocossu\87).

Ocssu's view of discipline was very teacher-centred. He saw himself as having authority over the students. However, when faced with the reality of teaching, Ocossu, found himself in conflict with some of his students because he believed "when you're doing nonsense, I have to deal with you" (Ocossu\87). Although he was accused of "aggravating the children," Ocossu said he still maintained his understanding of teaching as being in strict control.

Adrian also regarded the teacher as a strict disciplinarian who administered corporal punishment<sup>13</sup> for misconduct and saw himself in that way. He explained:

The image that I had of the teacher [was] one who was really respected by the community, one who all students were supposed to respect, otherwise you put yourself in a position where you could be disciplined and...there was nothing really that you could do. ...The parents that I grew up with,

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<sup>13</sup> Although in 1999, corporal punishment in schools was banned by the Minister of Education, the issue of "licks" in educational institutions is still widely debated as a means of controlling student behaviour.

especially my father, it was simply a case that if you get licks in school or you were disciplined, the teacher was right and you were wrong (Adrian\84).

In Adrian's experience, the teacher was always right and was to be respected at all times. If he showed disrespect towards a teacher and he was punished for it, his parents would have supported the teacher's actions. Based on his own educational experiences, Adrian believed that as a teacher he could use corporal punishment to foster his authority over students.

Adrian said that before he began to teach he recognised that if he was placed at a Junior Secondary School the school environment would be different from what he was accustomed to. Based on his observations and what he had read in the newspapers and seen on television, he had formed the idea that his experience with students would not be the same with students in his school. He explained:

I knew that my experiences were at a prestige school level and I knew that at the Junior secondary school that you would meet...the whole range of students in terms of behaviour and discipline and so on, I had an idea of what an ill-disciplined child would be. So I knew... that the students were not really up to the level that I was accustomed...the sort of students that I grew up with in school and knowing that in place of that there would be some discipline problems (Adrian\84).

However, when Adrian began to teach he still expected his students to respect him and expected to punish those who did not. He believed that like him they would understand that they had put themselves in a position to be punished. However, when he used this tool selected from his conceptual repertoire to shape his initial practice of teaching as a new teacher, he got into confrontations with students. He had to then change his disciplinary approach from focusing on individual students who misbehaved to focusing on the entire class. Adrian explained:

I grew up with the idea of a classroom being the teacher in total control. That is how I grew up. I had to quickly face a situation at the Junior Secondary level—especially with the Form Threes—that you had to develop skills quickly to deal with these students otherwise you might be faced...you may put yourself in a position where you might have some sort of physical situation, some sort of physical confrontation with the students. And looking back I had some physical confrontations with the students in terms of I am trying to instil some sort of iron discipline in the classroom. This is what I was accustomed to and they were not going along with that.

...I had to adapt my teaching in the classroom and begin to ignore those who were the trouble makers in terms of saying generally to the class. "You are making too much noise. Settle down. Try to do some work" and

focus my lesson on those who I would pick out with my eyes those who were really serious and who you could see were focused on the material being taught. So these were the coping skills I had to develop quite quickly. ...I realised that I had to speak generally to the students. If I focused on anybody and there was the potential for this person to be deviant it could develop into a talk-back with the teacher in the classroom and that is what I did not want to develop because it actually happened and I had to simply develop coping skills now to show to the rest of students that wait, I could not be a teacher and be having an argument with students in the classroom. I had to quickly realise, change focus and change strategies (Adrian\84).

Adrian recognised that his beliefs could result in unwanted confrontations and this could indicate to his students that he was not really in control. Thus, he had to construct a new understanding about a disciplinary strategy.

The degree to which an interviewee constructed an understanding of him/herself as a disciplinarian was sometimes determined by the socio-cultural character of the school. For example, Mr. Vogue explained that as a new teacher in an all-female, long established government school he expected his students to be well-disciplined, seated quietly and listening intently. But this was not the case. He explained:

I found myself shouting at some of the students though, because I said to myself in these [schools] the students were supposed to be so disciplined, just sit down and listen to my instructions and pay attention. But I found myself having to shout at some students, having to put them on the chair as punishment (Mr. Vogue\91).

He resorted to shouting and putting the students who misbehaved to stand on chairs because in this way he could exert his authority over them and gain control over their actions.

Mr. Vogue's story also highlights how as young teachers educated in single-sex schools, some of these interviewees had very little experience to draw on how to discipline students of the opposite sex. For example, Jesse who attended an all-female secondary school explained that she did not know how to discipline her male students. She said:

For me the difficulties were in discipline especially with the boys because coming out of an all-girls' school I did not really know how to discipline boys (Jesse\85).

These stories briefly hint at the differences in discipline expectations for male and female students. There seems to be an underlying idea that female students are better behaved than male students.

Sometimes a lack of discipline at the classroom level was a reflection of wider contextual issues. For example, the interviewees who taught in schools in urban areas mentioned classroom and school-wide lack of discipline far more frequently than those who taught in rural areas. Jesse and Sandra who taught in both rural and urban areas commented that the ‘country children’ were better behaved. Kowen, who taught in a rural area said:

You see this school, this school is not really a trouble school. We always have nice students. Any disciplinary infractions we have been able to handle it (Kowen\90).

On the other hand, Mr. Vogue who in his second year went to teach in a rough, urban environment explained that at times he had to use physical force to get discipline:

I saw how sometimes teachers talked to students and they would blatantly disregard any instruction at all. A teacher would tell you sit down, and the person would say I don’t want to be in your class, pick up their bag and walk outside. No student will try that in my class because I will grab him by his hand and shake him up. So I had to really *be violent*. It’s like speaking their language. That is the language that they understand. So it’s like speaking their language. I had to shout at some of them (Mr. Vogue\91).

Mr. Vogue thought that he needed to be “violent” because in his opinion the students were accustomed to violence and this was the only way he could get them to obey him. Underlying both of Mr. Vogue’s stories based on incidents in two different schools, is his idea of teacher as disciplinarian. What is of interest is how the context influenced his behaviour as disciplinarian.

Not all of the interviewees who saw themselves as disciplinarians accepted the subject position of teacher as “dispenser of punishment.” Sid Chase, Barbara and Sandra vowed that because of the negative emotions they felt when they were punished as students in primary school, they were never going to use corporal punishment to keep order in their own classrooms. Sid Chase explained:

I remember this particular teacher, always giving me licks. Well for two things she would give me licks for. One was I always used to cross my legs and shake it and she would give me the ruler on the calves because she said that that had a sexual overtone, that meant that this is a young lady in need. Of course I just ignored that because I just wanted to cross my legs and shake my feet. It might have been a nervous reaction to her, actually. So I know I developed some resentment there and I vowed as a teacher never to do that. The second thing that she beat me for was my handwriting. I was very clear in my position that when I became a teacher I would support students in their learning and not use corporal punishment (Sid Chase\79).

Sid Chase saw an inherent contradiction between the use of corporal punishment and her desire as a teacher to support her students' efforts to learn.

Rhonda also thought about discipline in a way of not forcing her authority over students in the way that she had seen teachers in her primary school do. Rhonda began to teach at a Comprehensive school and explained that she deliberately decided to "get along" with students. She explained:

I did not have any very unpleasant experiences with children, but I think that was because knowing what some of the other unpleasant experiences were that teachers had had, I tried to behave in such a way that I would get along. Well to explain that. The students were very violent...It is a school where you have guns and knives and whatever...Also there were so many fights and teachers sometimes became involved or they would get hit trying to part fights and whatever. So I supposed I went into the classroom with the sort of attitude which was not to try to call the children's bluff. I did not think that I could be the teacher, like a teacher in [her old school] then, in that school where you boof [rebuff] a child and you know they are going to conform. I knew in this school I could not challenge the child because the child would take me up on the challenge. So I suppose I tailored my behaviour to suit and that way I did not have too many unpleasant experiences in terms of discipline. Basically I got along (Rhonda\95).

But not all of the interviewees drew upon this discourse. Some such as Bumper, Tiger, Billy Joe and Jane actively sought to remove the lines between students and teacher by getting involved in the lives of their students. They sought to build up relationships with their students and in so doing got to know and understand their students much better. For example, Jane explained how her relationship with her own teachers influenced the relationship she had with her students:

As a student I had a very close relationship with my teachers. In addition to school-work I spent a lot of time with them doing extra-curricular stuff. For instance we would go to hikes, to pools and stuff like that. We had that kind of relationship with our teachers. So I tried to adopt that same kind of relationship with my students.

The discourse of teacher as disciplinarian draws upon the idea of domination of teachers over students. Teachers see themselves as having authority over students and may seek to impose disciplinary measures on students. This way of being a teacher does not promote much interchange of ideas between teacher and students. The discourse of teacher as disciplinarian is complementary to the idea of the teacher of transmitter of knowledge, the underlying assumption being that in order to transmit effectively, one must have control of the audience

to which one is transmitting. What students learn is obedience to authority. There is always the need to draw the line between students and teacher. In other words, the teacher must not be too friendly with students. Students and teachers need to keep their distance. This may constrain the development of close links between teachers and students and continues to put the teacher at the centre of the teaching/learning process and in charge of student behaviour. But not all the interviewees draw upon these ideas. Some saw themselves as being more a part of the students' life and they sought to build relationships with students.

### **Constructing Knowledge: The Teacher As A Role Model**

Of the 29 interviewees, 16 indicated that as beginning teachers they saw their role in terms of having some influence on the lives of their students. For example, interviewees described the teacher as a role model in terms of being: an intellectual exemplar (Cynthia\80); a person whose life could be an example to their students (Maya\90); an ethical and moral exemplar (Salman\82; Barbara\80); a role model for work attitudes (Portfolio\89) and values (Miss T&T\90); and a good dresser (Portfolio\89, Sid Chase\79 and Sandra\84). As Kowen explained:

You have to focus on I guess, the holistic development of the student, the total person....because you see I think when students leave school they should not only be some bookish theoretic who knows their subject inside and outside. But at least they should have some kind of street sense, some kind of life skill that they could handle themselves (Kowen\90).

In Chapter Six, (p. 167-171) I explored how Maya constructed knowledge of herself as a role model in terms of being an example to students who had similar circumstances to her own. Sandra, on the other hand, described her ideas of teacher as role model in the following way:

A teacher is somebody as a role model, because children look up to you. Somebody who is smart in whatever field. Somebody who is smart overall in fact, besides their specialised field. And a teacher is, even from primary school, is somebody who you look up to. I think I like that. I like that image. Dress, the status a little bit, even though now teachers have no status now. But in my day teachers had status, a certain amount of status that people respected; people around where I lived respected. That is it, status, dress and education (Sandra\84).

Sandra uses the ideas of "intellect," "status" (in terms of social class) and "dress" to construct the aspects that as a teacher she should model to her students. She

explained that she came upon these ideas because teachers are always under the watchful gaze of students, parents, other teachers and other members of the public. As adults, who were also educated, teachers are expected to provide a child with a model to emulate when they became adults. She explained:

It is amazing that even now students look up to teachers and watch every single thing they are wearing. And you have to dress the part of a teacher, how you think a teacher supposed to dress. I mean they are role models. So dressing, I am comfortable with that look...to some extent casual but to some extent very conservative (Sandra\84).

But there are significant tensions in taking up the subject position of the teacher as role model. There is an almost unreal expectation and when taken to the extreme, teachers are not seen as human beings, but rather as distant, mini-gods who can do no wrong (Barbara\80). Students may tend not to see teachers as real people, with real lives and real day-to-day- problems.

Many of the interviewees were in their early 20s when they first began to teach. The “life” that they had been exposed to was for the most part restricted to life in an educational institution. As young persons with limited exposure to broader experiences of life, many interviewees felt that they lacked the experience to be a role model to students or to help them with their problems. For example, Antonia said that she felt overwhelmed at her expectation to provide guidance:

Sometimes you are faced with certain situations that they bring up and I say “Lord, how am I going to handle this? I have no experience. I am young. Certain experiences I never had and how am I going to deal with this?” So I realised that is more than just the academics. It is life in general. It is very challenging at times (Antonia\94).

Similarly, Jane and Jesse said that they felt that they lacked the experience to deal with sensitive or sexual issues that their students encountered. Jesse explained:

I remembered having to deal with students who were victims of incest, not rape, but incest or all kinds of family problems, and I remembered trying to talk it over with my mother. I came out of a very sheltered, happy family life and I was just kind of thrown into situations and I as form teacher had to deal with....and I had no idea what to do and we did not have a Guidance teacher at first. So for me that was the first thing that hit me...that kind of “Wait, nah” its a different world to what I knew and how do I deal with this. My values are different to their values (Jesse\85).

In contrast, Sandra said that she was more mature when she returned to teaching because she was a wife and mother. She explained that she was far more comfortable with dealing with student problems because of her life experience. She explained:

I think being married...even before being married...even having a degree did not give me as much confidence as being married, would you believe. Because being married to this particular person I was socialised into a whole different...people, peer groups. I knew from the top of the social ladder to the bottom of the social ladder. I was relating to everybody, because my husband seemed to know a lot of people. We used to go to weddings, to go to functions and it gave me a lot of confidence in myself. It gave me that confidence that I could speak to anybody. I felt that I could speak to anybody. I could speak to the President down to the maid. I felt very comfortable with that. And that helped me in a classroom. And having a child boosted your confidence. It does. I felt that...now I am a mother. I have a different function. I have a different role. I am not only wife, I am mother now. I am a nurturer. I am important to this child (Sandra\84).

Not everyone embraced the idea of being a role model for all the students they taught. For example, Dot.Com said that there was no way in which she could be a role model for the number of students she taught. Dot.Com explained:

At the level of the other classes [apart from her form class] I teach because I think I had too much to handle. I always feel that if I cannot handle something adequately I prefer not to handle it at all. I don't like to give my assurance that I am going to handle whatever problems they have and when they come to me and I have nothing to offer. That is just going to be another disappointment for them in their lives. They are already disappointed. Why send them further down that road? (Dot.Com\93).

As role models, the interviewees expected to help students deal with situations in their lives outside of school, but sometimes they themselves had no experience or little understanding of the social problems faced by their students and so were unable to be role models without help.

## **Constructing Knowledge:**

### **The Teacher As A Socially Responsible Person**

In terms of this discourse, the teacher is positioned as a socially responsible individual who: (i) wants to pay back debt to society, (ii) is concerned about the welfare of certain groups of students, and (iii) wants to be an agent of change. In other words, some of the interviewees saw themselves as individuals who could make a difference in the lives of their students. Of the 29 interviewees, 11 interviewees said that they wanted to teach because they wanted to serve others or pay back a debt to society. For example, in Chapter Four (p. 136), I explored Salohcin's wish to pay back his debt to his teachers. Similarly, in Chapter Four

(pp. 139-146) I explored Poui's desire to teach in the new Comprehensive system so that he could pay back his debt to society. Earlier in this chapter, I explained how Salman wanted to be an agent of change in the school in which he worked.

Some interviewees were very specific and political about the kind of school that they wanted to work in. For example, Dot.Com explained that she wanted to make a contribution to society by teaching at a government school. She explained her personal reason for this choice:

I have been to denominational schools all my life but I have had friends who have been to government secondary schools, and in the process of our interacting and exchanging information I think I have been probably more giving than taking from them, probably even motivating them. I have found that in the denominational schools, you have that advantage, the teachers motivate, you have your facilities to some extent are adequate, and that is something absent in the government secondary school. I believe one of the reasons was that I decided that I will stay in the government secondary schools is I believe I can make a difference there (Dot.Com\93).

Dot.Com recognised the difference in the context of teaching between the kinds of schools that she had attended as a student and the other types of schools that her friends had attended. She believed that those students at government schools were at somewhat of a disadvantage to those at denominational (government-assisted) schools. Therefore, as a teacher she wanted to make a difference in the context of the lives of students in the government system.

James Brown was also keen to work in the Comprehensive (government) system because he saw it as a challenge—a social structure that was new and different from the kind of school that he went to. He rationalised:

I was happy in the Senior Comprehensive system and meet the challenges it provided. I never went to a co-ed school so that the question of working in a co-ed school appealed to me. All the challenges that this new Senior Comprehensive system presented seemed so much more appealing and exciting than what the traditional schools had to offer. I attended one of the prestige schools...so I knew what that system was all about. I was quite young and idealistic and ripe for a new challenge (James Brown\77).

The interviewees who drew upon this discourse recognised that as educated nationals they had a responsibility to help others. Some of them sought to carry out that responsibility in school systems that they perceived as disadvantaged in some way. Others chose to work within the system to bring about change. They were being role models, but with an edge in terms of striving to make a difference in the lives of their students

## Discussion

All of the interviewees' stories, give examples of the multiple ways in which they constructed their knowledge about what they should teach, where they should teach, what kind of teacher they should be, and how their students learned. These stories exemplify how individuals' past experiences and beliefs influence their meaning-making about teaching and learning. But these stories also highlight how the context in which teaching and learning takes place is an important influence on how the interviewees use and re-construct the knowledge with which they begin to teach.

The interviewees' practical professional knowledge encompassed various kinds of teacher knowledge development. For example, they sought to construct their own understandings of the types of knowledge listed in Shulman's (1987) knowledge base for teaching, including content knowledge, classroom management, strategies for teaching, and pedagogical content knowledge. Through a process of trial and error, "doing" and "evaluating" (Cynthia\78) over time many of the interviewees worked out how they should behave, act, speak, read and write as teachers. Initially, they did what they thought they should do based on their prior knowledge of teaching. They modelled other teachers' behaviour, devised their own techniques and developed their own experiences as teachers. Some interviewees evaluated their teaching in terms of their student's progress. Others evaluated their practice and themselves as teachers.

The interviewees tapped mainly into their "wisdom of practice (Shulman, 1987b) and curricular materials to make sense of what and how to teach. However, in many instances, their wisdom of practice did not always help them to develop pedagogical knowledge such as the ability to transform content to suit their students. Most interviewees did not draw upon educational research to inform what they did as beginning teachers. As D. Jew explained:

When we discuss problems and issues that face us in education at the staff level we sound very much like lay people in the street who know nothing about pedagogy and theories of education and psychology. Never, ever does a professional teacher on the staff say or refer to some theory or some study of the sort. We sound like a bunch of people with our own egocentric views and ideas and desires and even the tone and the language that is used suggests that we are no better off than the person in the street (D. Jew\98).

There was an inextricable link between the way some interviewees viewed teaching and the ways in which they thought students learned. Teaching was viewed for the most part as the transmission of knowledge; learning a process of memorisation, rote and recall of facts; and students showed their knowledge by evaluations or tests. Many interviewees believed thus taught in ways that would promote this type of learning.

In sum, the interviewees' ideas about teaching and student learning were very teacher-centred. Personal biography and personal histories were important in the interviewees' knowledge construction, but it was the contextual knowledge of their occupational situation (Sockett, 1987), especially for those within the comprehensive system, that at times influenced what the interviewees did. This suggests that the context for teaching is significantly different and this must be addressed in professional development programmes.

The focus of this study so far has been on the interviewees' knowledge construction of practical professional knowledge based on their experiences of beginning to teach. But as beginning teachers, Dot.Com and Kowen had participated in short courses targeted at beginning teachers. Fluffy Starr and Harold had participated in the pre-service On the Job Training and Tiger, Salohcin and D. Jew had completed the primary Teachers' Diploma before they became secondary teachers. Additionally, twenty-one interviewees (see Tables 1 and 2) participated in the in-service Diploma in Education sometime in their careers as teachers. These programmes would have provided opportunities for the interviewees to engage with ways of viewing and valuing and thinking about teaching and learning (Phelan, 2001). I could not ignore the interviewees' construction of knowledge in these programmes, if I am to make recommendations for preparation and on-going professional development programmes for graduate secondary teachers.

I wanted to find out what kinds of knowledge construction did these interviewees engage in during these teacher education opportunities, that they did not develop from their classroom teaching? To what extent did their ideas about teachers, teaching and student learn changed as a result of participating in these programmes? These are the issues addressed in the next section of this chapter.

## **Constructing Knowledge From In -Service Programmes**

During the interviews, the interviewees and I discussed the formal professional development opportunities that they had participated in, in terms of their reasons for participating and the “lessons learned” (see Appendix E). In this section, I examine lessons learned in terms of practical professional knowledge construction. I also theorise about the discourses that these programmes drew upon.

### **Primary Teachers’ Diploma**

In the early 1970s Salohcin was involved in a pre-service, residential, programme for the training of primary teachers. However, this programme was not geared towards preparing teachers to work in secondary school. According to Salohcin:

This [programme] was catering for primary education because it was seen as the foundation because it was argued that if the foundation was not well laid, then the superstructure was not going to be able to stand up. So preparation for primary school teachers seemed to have been the thrust at that time (Salohcin\73).

This pre-service programme had been envisioned in the 1968 educational plan. Its content, structure and purpose was informed by the view that teaching is an art and teachers should be “instructed in this art” and “for the teacher to be effective, he needs to be aware of the whole child” (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1968, p. 59). The programme was informed by a discourse of teaching as a skill to be developed through instructing primary teachers in the most effective ways of teaching.

Salohcin’s said that his knowledge construction as a teacher benefited most from the community life among “young aspiring teachers” (Salohcin\73) living and working together for two years and from the supervision during his 13 weeks of teaching practice. He explained:

The thing about the teaching practice is that you would be involved in a certain amount of theory in terms of writing up your lesson plan, in terms of getting your teaching aids and all your material and how you introduce your lessons. A tremendous amount of planning. Then you had the post-lesson evaluation exercise where your supervisor would compliment you and tell you what areas you needed strengthening. If you took their counsel well then you knew you would be a better person for it, a better teacher for it. ...So that we knew when we left training college, having gone through the 13 weeks of teaching practice you were going there with a solid foundation and you were going there confident that you could do a

good job in the primary schools. That is how we found the teaching practice to be (Salohcin\73).

From his story, one can analyse that Salohcin was able to engage with ideas such as “effective teachers plan for the learning,” “beginning teachers can improve their teaching through supervision and feedback,” and “beginning teachers should be trained by experts before they begin to teach.”

D. Jew, did his primary teacher training in the early 1990s, in a non-residential programme. The aim of the programme as expressed in 1985 plan was that “all teachers must acquire a basic level of competence” (Ministry of Education, 1985, p. 102) in nature and purpose of education, comparative and applied religion, psychology and sociology of education; family life education, guidance and counselling, special education, reading education, principles and practices of education curriculum planning, pedagogy measurement and evaluation, health and safety less focus on academic content, more professional training and practical, in-school component (Ministry of Education, 1985). This programme built on the idea that teacher learning involved getting or acquiring as much knowledge as possible from these areas to be able to teach.

D. Jew said that he found the primary Teachers’ Diploma beneficial in terms of organisation for learning. He explained:

When you learn about...objectives...set induction...managing time...classroom management strategies...it is impossible not to become a more effective practitioner (D. Jew\98).

But while organisational skills were useful, D. Jew questioned whether or not he could transfer his knowledge to secondary students. He said he wondered:

“Do I just apply all of that training and appropriate it to secondary level or is it a whole different pedagogy and methodology and psychology altogether?” And nobody told me. I had to find out as I went on that a lot of the things I did at primary were not relevant because at primary they [the students] listened, they admired, they respected without me earning the respect. They listened. You were right even when you were wrong. They went to their parents and they said “Sir said to do it so and it must be so.” They saw you as their role model and their figure-head. But at secondary they don’t listen. They challenge everything you say and do. It made me very uncomfortable and I still am very uncomfortable with that whole transition (D. Jew\98).

He recognised that his practical professional knowledge needed to be reconstructed in the context of the secondary school.

Tiger did not credit his knowledge construction on how to deal with students from participating in programmes at Training College. He said that he learned to work with students and bring out the best in them on the job through “thinking and gestation” and trying to bring out what no one else had from some students. However, when he moved to teach at a secondary school, Tiger found that he had to reconstruct what he had learned in primary classrooms in terms of dealing with older children.

From these stories, I concluded that primary training enabled these interviewees to engage with educational discourses related to organisation for learning. They had the opportunities to think about their teaching in discussions with supervising teacher educators. However, these teachers did not participate in other training programmes before they moved on to teach in secondary schools. Some of what they had come to know during the Teachers’ Diploma and their practice in primary classrooms may not have been suited to the context of secondary education and their older pupils. Thus, their knowledge construction could have benefited from opportunities to help them reconstruct their knowledge in terms of the secondary context.

### **Secondary Level Short Courses And On-The-Job Training**

Dot.Com and Kowen said that as beginning teachers they participated in in-service, short courses of two days to one-week duration. These programmes were targeted at beginning teachers. Kowen did not regard his two-day programme as helpful to him as a teacher. He explained:

We had two facilitators, two apparently experienced teachers. We sat down and they talked about things. They made us do some lesson plans....Well now I know a lesson plan is a lot more detailed than whatever they would have given us. It was just a little jokey [trivial] thing. ...Apparently, they were trying something. I do not know if it continued because later they came out with that OJT thing....You see basically my concerns were basically how do I impart the knowledge? And what I was doing was just chalk and talk except of course, in Literature classes, which were more discussion-based. But what I was doing was just chalk and talk. And that’s it. There and then they are talking about that and what they do is they are telling you how to operate within the teaching environment without actually telling you how to teach. And that was the problem. At a certain point I suspect even the facilitators didn’t know what they were doing (Kowen\90).

From Kowen’s story I can tell that these introductory courses were very limited and did not adequately address his concern as a new teacher of developing new

teaching strategies. Dot.Com, on the other hand, said that she gained a lot. She said, "I don't think you go into anything and come out with nothing."

The idea behind these programmes was to provide new teachers with an orientation to teaching through "short intensive courses...to meet the needs of beginning teachers who have no initial teacher training." (National Task Force on Education, 1993, p. 79). The programme envisaged was informed by teacher development as "meeting needs," such as lesson planning skills. But as Kowen's story indicated, the programme was too short to meet his need of getting access to more teaching strategies. While such programmes may have good intentions to and provide beginning teachers with some ideas for thought about their practices, they brought no radical change to the way Dot.Com or Kowen thought about their teaching and student's learning.

In the early 1990s, the On the Job Training (OJT) was offered as a pilot programme by the Ministry of Education to recent university graduates who wanted to teach. This programme could also be considered as part of the short intensive courses envisioned in the 1993 plan. The OJT programme was not compulsory for beginning teachers and non-participation in the OJT did not prevent a person from being placed permanently at a secondary school.

The programme ran for one year and was structured in terms of an intense two-week session held in August before the first term of the school year. Then OJT teachers were placed in schools involved in the pilot project and they met with the course co-ordinators on a weekly basis for the rest of the year. Fluffy Starr and Harold indicated that experienced graduate secondary teachers, and not teacher educators from the University of the West Indies conducted the programme. OJT teachers were paid a small stipend.

Fluffy Starr, who participated in the OJT programme in 1994, described her experience of it as follows:

It was a teacher-training programme where you went in as a trainee teacher. You went into a particular school and you were put 'under the wing' of a senior teacher. And it was sort of like a process to probably show you various techniques and how it is done, the classroom situations and so forth. But before they actually put you in the school there was a two-week programme, where they would teach you about lesson planning, about classroom behaviour and how to conduct yourself etc. And then after the two-week programme ...they chose the school for you-and then every Saturday for six months you would go for classes. ...they had a computer course on a Thursday afternoon that you would do for like an hour or two (Fluffy Starr'94).

The trainees were supposed to be involved in the programme for one year after the initial two weeks. Harold said that he attended the programme for the full year because he was not placed at a school until late in the year. Fluffy Starr, on the other hand, said that she dropped out when she was appointed because she “did not see the need to do it anymore” because she was “already placed” (Fluffy Starr\94).

The OJT programme adopted an apprentice-style approach to teacher education. This practice paired the OJT with an experienced teacher, a practice based on the idea that a beginning teacher can learn what he/she needs to know about teaching by observing an experienced teacher. But while Fluffy Starr identified the organisation of lessons as the most helpful part of the training, she said that she did not really benefit from seeing others teach. She explained:

When I came out on the Monday what [teachers in her department] did was they tried to, like they both shared up the responsibility of taking me along in their classes. So I would sit and I would watch them teach and I would enquire about what books they are doing and so get a few pointers etc. ...But it was very boring sitting watching people teach because I felt like I was a student. ...I think that I really did not feel that I learnt a lot from that you know, because everyone has their particular style of doing some things. I just felt it was much more exciting when I had gone on my own to try what I've always thought would be a good teacher, to try those techniques (Fluffy Starr\94).

Fluffy Starr recognised that she could learn most of what she had to from actual teaching experience.

Fluffy Starr said that the on-the-job training helped her most in terms of lesson planning, which she said “made the whole idea of teaching a little bit more structured” (Fluffy Starr\94) in terms of content and objectives. However, in time she stopped using the lesson plans because the subject-content had become familiar.

Harold also believed that the OJT classes provided him with the opportunity to learn how to structure his lessons and an opportunity to discuss his experiences with others. He explained:

Most of the time the Saturday classes would just be, they would do some theory-things like lesson plans, record and forecast, how to deal with these things. But a lot of the time it was more talking about our experiences and what we thought. They would give advice on some of the problems that we would encounter and things like that (Harold\99).

From my own observations of the OJT programme as a teacher in one of the pilot schools, I noted many problems with this arrangement. Many of these

experienced teachers or mentors did not know their specific responsibilities to the trainees. The mentors were not paid for the extra responsibility of monitoring a trainee teacher nor were they given any extra free-time to meet with teachers. There was no official requirement to be a mentor and there was no guarantee that the person being mentored was learning how to teach. Similarly, Salohcin, who observed the OJT practice in the capacity of a senior teacher at the school in which he worked, commented:

What you find happening is where you have a shortage of staff in a school, coupled or compounded by the absenteeism of some teachers, you actually find sometimes when the OJT should be in a classroom observing, you have to use the OJT as a stop gap measure to maintain some measure of discipline. It was more like a substitute teacher and that's not what it was intended to be so they are deprived of genuine learning experiences. There was a situation when I came here where one OJT was assigned to someone who left and the teacher was never replaced until long after. The OJT was there floundering, not having some one who could really serve as a mentor and you are not going to use someone who doesn't have the experience to serve as a mentor to an OJT because you are likely to inculcate the kind of habits you don't want to inculcate in a young aspiring teacher (Salohcin\73).

The short courses and OJT programmes were attempts to help beginning secondary teachers develop some elementary understanding of what they had to do as teachers. But they did not seem to make much of an impression on the interviewees who participated in them. The major learning seemed to be with respect of organising for teaching. However, the short and part-time nature of the courses did not seem to offer these interviewees much opportunity to discuss the concerns that faced them as new teachers.

### **Diploma In Education**

There was very little indication that the interviewees had any significant shifts in their ways of thinking about teaching and learning before they participated in the Diploma in Education (DipEd) programme. But participation in a formal programme of teacher education providing them with a chance to engage with new educational discourse. As Phelan suggested:

Teachers bring discourses with them, and they find them in faculties of education. Perspectives are constructed and reconstructed through discourse and through ongoing interactions one has with others and with oneself. Whether talking or reading or writing or thinking to oneself while acting (Phelan, 2001, p. 584).

At the time of the interviews, 21 interviewees had participated in and completed the in-service DipEd at the University of the West Indies, (UWI) St. Augustine or the Diploma in Special Education offered by T&TUTA/TASSETT (see Table 3), all of them after 1984. Three interviewees were participating in the DipEd programme when they did their interviews. On average, these interviewees completed the DipEd four years after they began to teach. However, the time between them starting to teach and completing DipEd ranged between 2 and 24 years of secondary teaching.

Five of the interviewees had not completed or applied to do the DipEd programme. Ocssu started and dropped out of the programme because of the intense workload. Fluffy Starr and Smith said that they had not applied to do the DipEd because they believed that the course should be full-time, otherwise they would find it too stressful to cope with a full teaching load, part-time study and loss of vacation time. Rhonda said that she was pursuing other professional development opportunities and Billy Joe said that he was too near retirement to pursue the DipEd.

### ***Aims Of The Diploma In Education***

The in-service postgraduate DipEd programme was established at U.W.I. St. Augustine, Trinidad in 1973. It was designed to provide 'professional training' for graduate teachers who were teaching at the secondary level. It is optional and offered as a part-time course over the period of one school-year (late July/August to June). Whole-day classes are scheduled during the school vacation periods (July/August, Christmas and Easter). During term-time, whole-day classes are scheduled on one day per week, usually Fridays. The part-time nature of the course is in keeping with the recommendations of the 1968 education plan.

Some teachers on the DipEd may have their teaching-loads lessened through time-table adjustments at their schools. They may be time-tabled with a 'free' Friday, although this may mean fewer free periods during the rest of the week. Other teachers on the DipEd may not have such time-adjustments made for them because their schools may have less flexible time-tables. They have to 'set work' for classes that they miss as there is no substitute-teacher programme in place. Thus the part-time nature of the programme has a significant impact on the loss of teaching time on the one hand, and the stress of carrying full teaching loads on the other.

In 1990/91, when I participated in the DipEd programme, the main philosophy was stated as follows:

The Diploma in Education is designed to meet the needs of graduate teachers in the secondary schools of Trinidad and Tobago, and to provide them with the relevant knowledge, values, attitudes and skills. It aims to make teachers more efficient in the classrooms and to introduce them both to appropriate ways of teaching and the reasons for them (Department of Educational Foundation and Teacher Education, n.d., p. 2)

The terms “meet the needs,” “provide teachers with,” “make teachers,” and “appropriate” suggest that at this time the programme was informed by a discourse of teacher development as responding to inadequacies in teaching. Teacher knowledge was to be developed by giving teachers “appropriate” information that would help to make them more effective teachers. But by 1999 the DipEd was envisioned as “professional training for teachers.” It was viewed as:

the initial training which sensitizes and orients teachers to the fundamentals of their profession. The primary concern is with developing a professional approach characterised by creativity, imagination and the pursuit of professional and personal development. The programme attempts to ensure that classroom practice is informed by a solid theoretical base in the foundation disciplines, curriculum theory and methodology (p. 101).

So during the 1990s, there was a shift from the needs based view of teacher development to one of teacher education as professional development and pedagogical understanding, a shift that was similar to developments in teacher education research internationally (Sprinthall et al., 1996). However, the DipEd programme continued to be seen as introductory course and one through which participant teachers could make links between their classroom practice and new theoretical understandings.

### ***Structure Of The Programme***

Teachers enrolled in the DipEd programme and teacher educators (Curriculum Tutors) are grouped by subject areas: The Teaching of Mathematics, English, Modern Languages, Science, Social Studies, and Educational Administration. The content knowledge areas of the DipEd course include: (a) The Foundations of Education—the Philosophy of Education, the Psychology of Education, the Sociology of Education, Language in Education and Health and Family Life Education. (b) Curriculum Theory with respect to specific content and objectives of subject areas listed above. (c) The Practice of Education: attitudes/interpersonal

skills; lesson presentation skills; diagnostic competence-awareness of the nature and needs of students' planning competence; motivation skills, questioning skills, communicative skills, grouping skills' closure skills assessment competence (Faculty of Humanities and Education, School of Education, 1999).

The evaluation structure of the programme has varied little since it began in 1973. The programme is evaluated through coursework and practical teaching examinations. A teacher must pass both the coursework and practical teaching with a minimum grade B (50%) to be awarded the diploma. The coursework examination is based on (i) an essay of 3000 words based on "an analytical discussion of concepts and findings" chosen from one of the following areas: Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology of Education, Language in Education, Health and Family Life. (ii) a Curriculum study of 5000 words which is "an investigation into a classroom situation" to apply research skills and relevant theory to a classroom or school setting. (iii) a Dissertation of 5000 words which is described as "an extensive scholarly exploration of some issue of educational significance in Trinidad and Tobago" (Faculty of Humanities and Education, 1999). In the mid-1990s, the Curriculum Portfolio was added and it is worth 25% of the practical grade. The portfolio comprises lesson notes and plans, course outlines, and units of work.

The practical aspect of the course is based on teaching practice under the guidance of Curriculum Tutors. Teachers receive monthly guided teaching practice from Curriculum Tutors between October and May. The participants also have the opportunity to teach their colleagues' classes in front of other members of their curriculum group. Thus, the DipEd presents an opportunity for teachers to interact with colleagues in other schools, teach students other than their own, and see educational environments that are different from the ones in which they teach.

The written assignments may be seen as ways to help teachers on the programme to engage with theoretical understandings related to the practice of teaching. The portfolio would help in the understanding of the development of curricula and organisation for learning, as well as provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on what they were learning. The guided teaching practice component is based on the idea that providing teachers with feedback could help them to improve or change their practice. By teaching in different locations,

participants could get a better understanding of the wider context in which they taught.

### ***Reasons For Doing The Diploma In Education***

Sandra, Salman, Mr. Man and Miss T&T all gave financial reasons for enrolling in the DipEd. They said that there were rumours of increased salary for those with the qualification. Unfortunately, there is still no added remuneration for the DipEd qualification. Another rumour was that in the future all teachers would have to pay regular tuition fees to attain the DipEd. This too has not yet come to pass. However, because the DipEd was not compulsory, these interviewees believed that they should do the DipEd only if they were to benefit financially.

Barbara, Portfolio, D. Jew and Harold said that they did the DipEd to enable them to do post-graduate work such as a Master of Education degree. Salohcin and James Brown recognised that they needed the DipEd as a requirement for promotion to administrative posts within the school system. James Brown, Cynthia, Salman, Bumper, Andi, D. Jew, Maya, Kowen, and Mr. Man all said that they saw the DipEd as “professional accreditation” and if they were going to stay in teaching, they should get the certification in teaching. As Bumper explained:

As far as I was concerned, if you are a professional, you are a professional. You must have professional qualification. There are places in the world where you cannot work without it, why do we settle for second best (Bumper\80).

Andi, Portfolio, Ocusu, Mr. Man, and Antonia said they did the DipEd because their colleagues told them it would help their teaching. Sid Chase, Cynthia, Poui, Maya, Kowen, Jane, Mr. Man, and Dot.Com felt that by participating in the DipEd programme, they could find out more about their teaching because as Dot.Com explained “as teachers you never know enough” (Dot.Com\93). They thought that the knowledge they gained would help them to improve their performance as teachers. For example Mr Man said, “I was wondering what I was missing out and if the Dip Ed would make me a better teacher” (Mr. Man\92). Cynthia said, “I felt I needed to be trained. I was aware that I was not trained and not reaching students, felt they needed training, I was looking forward to it in the sense that now I would find out how to teach” (Cynthia\78).

James Brown explained that he was seeking a more theoretical understanding for what he was doing. He explained:

For quite a while I said “I don’t want to do this Dip Ed; it is not really relevant. But teaching is a science. There is a body of collective experience. My 23 years would not even register on the scale in terms of that collective experience of teaching.” So I thought, “you can’t be so arrogant as to say that you don’t need to learn or you don’t need to know what other people have discovered.” That is one reason for the change of my position (James Brown\77).

I found these financial, professional and pedagogical reasons quite interesting. The pedagogical and professional ones indicated to me that the interviewees were beginning to understand that they were involved in a profession which had a body of knowledge based on educational research, with which they needed to engage to inform their practice. Even after years of teaching and knowledge constructed from the wisdom of practice these interviewees did not believe that they had tapped into this body of research, nor did they feel as though they had mastered the technical and professional aspects of their profession. So what educational discourses encountered in the DipEd helped the interviewees to (re)construct their understandings of what they should do as teachers?

#### ***Educational Discourses Encountered***

As described earlier in this chapter, many interviewees said that they did not know what to do when they first began to teach and that they used strategies of showing or telling the content. However, fifteen interviewees (CY, PU, SL, SC, DC, JN, JS, KO, MY, SN, TT, AT, HA, MN, VG; see Tables 1 and 2) said that they engaged with ideas about instructional strategies (teaching methods) during the DipEd. For example Jesse, who completed the DipEd some six years after she first began to teach explained:

I think for the first few years I wished there was some way we could have imparted more on how to teach or on what teaching was about because all I knew was about giving knowledge and it was only after I did the DipEd. I realised there are different ways on how to do it (Jesse\85).

One interviewee who taught Mathematics said he/she gained:

mainly the different strategies that could be used beside chalk and talk. I was amazed at the different things that you could use in Maths: games, puzzles overhead projector. How you could change up your lesson to make it interesting for the children.

Jane, who completed the DipEd seven years after she began teaching explained:

I learned how to use other experiences, the students’ experiences to get the lesson across to the students....I also learned how to use experiments to get across the information to the students, rather than just simply teaching

them by giving them notes. And also using problem based situations for them to understand problems (Jane\90).

Jane acknowledged that her participation in the DipEd completely changed her pedagogical style from note-giving to problem based methods. These interviewees constructed new knowledge of how to get their students more involved in the learning process by using new teaching techniques of pedagogical styles.

Earlier in this chapter I also explained that some of the interviewees thought of teaching as “doing a topic” or “following a text.” But thirteen interviewees (BA, BU, CY, PU, SC, AN, DJ, JN, KO, MY, AT, MN, VG) said that it was not until they participated in the DipEd that they engaged in constructing knowledge about organising and structuring for learning and teaching. This knowledge included time management, lesson planning, and structuring lessons. Cynthia, who completed the DipEd some six years after she began to teach explained:

I think the positive thing about the Dip. Ed. is that in terms of organising, in terms of the preparation for classes, I think that is where it had the greatest benefit because the tendency is, pre Dip Ed., to go into a class and just “do” a topic (Cynthia\78).

Similarly, Barbara said that it was only some six years after she began to teach that she learned that what she called and did as planning, was not planning at all. She said

I didn’t know about lesson plans. I made up what I thought a lesson plan should be—the aim, the testing and so on. But I later discovered my aims were flawed, the testing methods tended to be more of knowledge-based, they weren’t also including the analysis and so on (Barbara\80).

Cynthia and Barbara would have drawn upon their personal organisational skills to help them structure and present their lessons, but they did so with little access to and engagement with pedagogical reasoning or ideas such as higher order thinking skills. Thus, in Barbara’s case, her evaluation methods were restricted to lower order skills of comprehension and knowledge.

For many of the interviewees, the DipEd presented the first opportunity for them to become aware of aspects of the theoretical underpinnings of what teachers know and do in classrooms. This kind of knowledge construction coincided with the underlying purpose of the programme to introduce and orient teachers to theoretical concepts. Eleven interviewees (BA, PU, SA, SL, SC, AN,

JS, MY, OC, PO, MN) stated that they benefited from the DipEd because it enabled them to engage with educational theory. For example, Mr. Man said doing the DipEd some eight years after he began to teach enabled him to benefit:

in terms of lesson planning, theoretical psychology, sociology and philosophy of education. What I was doing unconsciously it sort of reinforced those things. I learned a lot from the psychology, sociology, the philosophy (Mr. Man\92).

Similarly Sid Chase recounted that when she did the programme some nine years after she first began to teach at secondary school, she was learning for the first time “How to teach.” She explained:

I was learning for the first time developmental issues of children, what to expect at certain developmental stages. I was learning for the first time about my own adolescence and what was to be expected of adolescents in terms of the developmental stages and so on. I might have heard but I have never interacted with the works of Piaget up to that time. Piaget and Erikson and Kohlberg (Sid Chase\73).

Thus, the DipEd provided interviewees with an opportunity to think about, read and discuss their own experiences and practice of teaching in terms of broader theoretical and research based understandings. They were able to develop an understanding that what they were doing as teachers had been theorised and researched and there was some rationale for what they were doing.

Ten interviewees (CY, PU, SL, AN, DC, JN, KO, JS, OC, PO) said that they had opportunities to engage with theories of learning and the concept of learning styles. Cynthia, Sid Chase, Andi, Dot.Com, Jane, Kowen and Ocssu said that for the first time they were made aware of the different ways in which people learn. Similarly, Jesse, Portfolio, Poui, Salman and Sid Chase explained that the DipEd helped them to focus on how students learn. Although a few of these interviewees said they may have picked up this information informally through classroom experience, or may have heard about it from a friend it did not always inform their practice.

Portfolio also explained that doing the DipEd some five years after he first began to teach helped him to focus on his students as learners. He said:

More than anything else, when I went back to the classroom, I realised that more than anything else I had to pay attention to the student. And I’m not just in the classroom to get through a syllabus and so on and not pay attention to the student as an individual (Portfolio\89).

Thus, for some interviewees participation in the DipEd was a significant point at which there was a change in understanding how students learn from ideas based

on ability to ideas of different learning styles, a concept that many of the interviewees embraced. There was also the beginning of a shift from teacher approaches to teaching, learning and thinking to those that focused more on the student as an individual learner.

The structure of the Diploma programme in curriculum groups meant that for the first time the interviewees had their teaching supervised by persons specialised in the teaching of their curriculum area. Ten interviewees (BA, CY, BU, SC, AD, AN, MY, PO, AT, MN) said that they learned a lot from this. Cynthia said: "I supposed it made me more aware of the things that I was not doing right, but I can't say it was many" (Cynthia\78). The interviewees were also able to teach in front of their colleagues and have their teaching observed and commented upon. This was significant as it enabled the participants to get some feedback on their teaching from other teachers who taught their curriculum area and it provided an opportunity for them to see other teachers teach. Eight interviewees (PU, SA, SL, SC, AN, JS, SN, VG) said that they benefited from these collegial relations. For example, Mr. Vogue explained:

Not only would we do different topics but sometimes we do a same topic and come up with different ideas. So it was like "You would teach it this way? I would not do it that way. I would do it this way." We had discussions after like if we had teaching lesson they would come to my school, we would sit down and they would watch me teach and afterwards everybody would have a comment to make. They must say something, "Well, you should not have done this" or "Well done in this part etc." (Mr. Vogue\90).

Feedback from experienced teacher educators and other teachers was quite useful in helping the teachers construct new knowledge about their teaching, through talking, thinking, rethinking, and sharing. However, authoritative texts, such as research-based, or theoretically-based textbooks also provided an indirect feedback and engagement for Portfolio on his teaching. He explained:

I realised a lot to the things that I was doing by trial and error had been subjected to academic rigor. I read it in the book and said "Oh my goodness! But that is what I've been doing all the time." And so you see, it's almost as if what I had been doing got legitimacy, having read it there in the book there (Portfolio\89).

The DipEd was also helpful to the interviewees in terms of thinking about other aspects of teaching. Cynthia, Poui and D. Jew said that they learned classroom management skills. Andi, Jane, Portfolio, Miss T&T, and Antonia said that they also learned new assessment methods. Salman, D. Jew, Jesse and Maya

said that they gained self confidence as teachers. Sid Chase said that she became an advocate for students. She explained:

What I learned was that a teacher has to be an advocate. And that advocacy means for teachers having a commitment to making a difference in the classroom and should be prepared to stand up for those things that support making a difference in the classroom and should fight against those that don't. I think those two things. Thirdly, what I learnt from that was that the children are at the centre of everything that we do. Take them away and really what are we doing in this business. I think there are others but I think those are probably three main lessons that I learnt (Sid Chase\79).

But while participation in the DipEd was helpful in many areas of teacher knowledge construction, Adrian, Sandra, Barbara, Poui, Sandra, and Miss T&T, all of whom taught in the Comprehensive system said that the programme did not help them to develop their knowledge in certain areas. For example, Sandra described that when she did the DipEd some 17 years after she first began to teach, she found it to be too theoretical, not practical enough, and not suited to her needs in a context of students with so many problems. She said:

what you learn you cannot put it into a classroom, especially a classroom like ours, where you have 50 students. You cannot say that you are using group-work. That is chaos. You cannot say that you are using things that they also taught you like overheads and visual aids. We do not have that in this school. It is a waste of time even learning it because you cannot implement it. The school system—I do not know about the prestige schools—but in this school we have no equipment. We don't even have space. We do not have anything to implement all these things that we learned. I find that is...they did not come and look into the school system first before they came and told you about these audio-visuals and this and that (Sandra\84).

In other words, the DipEd did not help Sandra to construct her practical professional knowledge with respect to teaching very large classes, or improvising in schools where when there was no media equipment. Thus, her knowledge construction was not relevant to her context and she found it to be useless and because it was not based within the reality of her teaching.

Similarly, Adrian who did the DipEd some 15 years after he first began to teach, explained that he wanted some answers. He explained:

I went there looking for answers as to how to deal with the difficult students that we have at the Senior Comprehensive school seeing that most of my experiences were with students who were really not in the top bracket; in fact those who were really poor performers. I went in there looking for quick strategies. I went in there looking to get the magic potions from the lecturers and from the course itself as to how to deal with

them. And quickly I realised that there were no magic potions as such (Adrian\84).

The DipEd did not help Adrian to construct an understanding of how he could help his students to overcome their learning difficulties and perform better in school.

Barbara explained that the DipEd was not helpful because at the end of the course, she was still unable to diagnose student difficulties and learning problems such as dyslexia, and attention deficit disorder that she faced on a daily basis with her students. Miss T&T said that the DipEd did not address professional issues regarding relationships between teachers, such as the Code of Ethics.

These interviewees did not make a connection between theory and their own context of teaching. These stories suggest that there was a mis-match between what the interviewees needed to know and what the programme designers thought the participants needed to know. The stories also suggest that the programmes were designed based upon on a “one size fits all” concept of teacher development, but this approach made it difficult for some teachers to construct their understanding of what they should do as teachers in the context of their teaching. What else could these teachers have known that would have enabled them to have some real choices in their teaching (Shulman, 1987b).

Poui best summed up the aspects of the interviewees’ practical professional knowledge that were developed as a result of participation in the DipEd Programme. He explained:

I would say that you learned the basics: the question of preparation, the question of planning, some basic teaching strategies and so on, organising your work, planning your programmes. To me that was the main thing. There was also a lot that was in a sense irrelevant or at least if not irrelevant, that was very theoretical and which you couldn’t really use. I mean we used to laugh and say “Let her come and try to teach that in a Senior Comp.” It was all very nice on paper in terms of classroom management strategies and that kind of thing. The Senior Comp. people used to be laughing at what was happening. So a lot of it you felt that you had to discard in a way but certainly, the core elements of that planning and organisation and being willing to look at different strategies. I mean we were still in the traditional ‘chalk and talk’ because that is the way we were taught before and therefore to at least to appreciate there were other ways in terms of other kinds of strategies. And I think also appreciate—we had sort of gathered intuitively I suppose during the time—that diverse learning styles, that students learn in different ways; that people think differently and therefore that you had to have a variety of approaches and that kind of thing. I think that might have been the core lesson coming out of the whole thing, even though sometimes you felt that

some of what they were saying wasn't relevant to you. And I supposed also the theoretical part, the sort of theoretical base behind the whole education and looking—although you sort of knew it instinctively before—but looking at education as more than just content and the question of the students' attitudes and norms and that sort of thing and that your job wasn't just to teach [content] or something but that it was much more (Pouit\79).

### Summary And Comment

Teaching was far more complex than these interviewees could have ever imagined. As Mr. Vogue explained:

[I thought that I would] go in there and give instructions, give tests, correct test papers, and that was it. I was thinking as well that all the students would understand from the time I gave one instruction. But I realised it wasn't so. I realised I had to do a lot of disciplining, be a father, a doctor, lawyer, all different things. Students would come and ask you for this [and that], tell...you all their problems from home: who didn't eat this morning, who doesn't have money to go home, who can't study in the house because whoever is making noise, parents arguing, things like that. So you have to be a social worker. There are students who would be sick and very often I am called upon to carry students to the hospital, the health clinic especially if there is a fight somewhere about. I thought teaching was just coming in class, delivering the syllabus, collecting the money at the end of the month, and that was it. But that was wrong. That was so wrong (Mr. Vogue\91).

Having a degree did not guarantee that as beginning teachers all of the interviewees knew the content of the school-subject knowledge as determined by the syllabus requirements. Some did not have the pedagogical content knowledge needed to transform what they knew into forms that could be accessed by students. Many did not know how to segment or break down lessons so that they could be accessible to students. They tended to do a topic. Many of the interviewees did not have a wide repertoire of teaching strategies. They were only able to access these after participating in the DipEd programme.

As beginning teachers, the interviewees tended to think of teaching as telling and learning as memorisation. There was very little understanding of the various ways in which people learn. Many interviewees thought of their teaching in a very teacher-centred way. They had little or no opportunity to engage in research and had very little or no access to local or international research. Their teaching was not examined by teacher educators until the DipEd and so the main way they measured their success in their teaching was through student scores on

tests. As beginning teachers, the interviewees were called upon to do more than transmit knowledge, they had to help students deal with social problems such as incest, physical abuse, and poverty. In many instances, the interviewees lacked the life experience to help their students deal with these problems. As new teachers, the interviewees were called upon to *be* teachers in ways that went beyond their dominant understanding of teachers as transmitters of knowledge.

Participation in teacher development programmes helped some interviewees to address aspects of their pedagogical content knowledge, such as lesson planning and organisation. In the DipEd, they had access to the body of educational research. Although no one talked of seeing their teaching in term of local research, they all had the opportunity to engage in their own research projects. However, there is very little in the interviewees stories to suggest that the DipEd helped them to explore their own understandings of their educational background and experiences and perspectives on own schooling and an understanding of the differences that do exist in the system. The stories also reflect the inadequacy of the DipEd in helping them to address their contextual knowledge.

So far, the talk in this thesis has been in response to making sense of how and why 29 graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad came to talk about and think about teaching in certain ways; why they drew upon specific ways of being as graduate secondary teachers; and how they constructed their knowledge as teachers from particular subject positions and engagement with educational discourses encountered in formal teacher education programmes. In the last chapter, I make sense of what has been said so far, in terms of an evaluation of the theoretical tools used in this study and my recommendations for the design of preparation and on-going professional programmes for graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad and future research.

## CHAPTER NINE



### BEATING YUH OWN DRUM AND DANCIN': MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

*Beating yuh own drum and dancin': Answering your own questions*  
(Mendes, 1986, p. 190)

#### Introduction

Carlson (1998, p. 541) argued that “in order to find a voice, we must find three things simultaneously: “find something to say, find a rhetorical style in which to speak or write, and find a conversation.” This study has enabled me, a graduate secondary teacher from Trinidad, to find my voice in a conversation about the construction of the identity and knowledge of the graduate secondary teacher in the social and political contexts (Herbert & Worthy, 2001) of the secondary education system in Trinidad. I was able to “slow down and reflect deeply about our ways of [being,] thinking and doing” (Phillips, 1998, p. 4) as graduate secondary teachers. I did this through an analysis of stories from 29 other graduate secondary teachers and an analysis of some of the discourses that inform policy documents and the educational institutions and systems and create possibilities and constraints for thought and practice.

In doing these analyses, I was able to identify and question the taken-for-granted assumptions (Johnson, 2002) upon which these interviewees’ practical professional knowledge as beginning teachers was based and better understand the ways of being a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad. But to what extent was the chosen theoretical framework useful in this study? How can my new understandings be incorporated into the design of in-service or pre-service programmes for the preparation and ongoing professional development (Cochran-Smith, 1998) of graduate secondary teachers? What recommendations can I make for future research on graduate secondary teacher knowledge in Trinidad? These are the questions addressed in this chapter.

## Ah Dancin' Now

In Chapter One I explained that as a Trinidadian graduate secondary teacher who had lived the experience of beginning to teach without pre-service teacher education some 14 years before I embarked on this study, I was of the view that those of us who design proposed teacher education programmes for graduate teachers in secondary schools should better “understand the assumptions upon which [our teaching] practice is based” (G. Johnson, 2002, p. 389) because as S. Johnson et al. (2000) suggested:

In rushing in to help teachers behave differently, too little time has been spent on asking the question, ‘Why do teachers behave as they do?’ Too much time has been spent on, ‘How can I make them behave otherwise?’ (Johnson et al., 2000, p. 180).

An understanding of why graduate secondary teachers behave the way they do could be then incorporated into the structure, content, and philosophy of preparation and on going professional development programmes, or be used to challenge the status quo (Taylor, 2000) about our personal beliefs as graduate secondary teachers and teaching in Trinidad.

I wanted to follow Carter’s (1990) recommendation and shift my research away from studying teachers’ knowledge as measurable and observable phenomena, to research that placed teachers’ lived experiences, and their understandings and interpretations of these experiences, at the centre of their knowledge about their practice. In Chapter One, I argued that teachers’ stories represent a way of thinking and knowing (Carter, 1995) about teaching and learning and are an interpretation of classroom events and situations. They also represent a source of teachers’ practical understanding of what they do as teachers and how they come to do it. As Hiebert et al. (2002) argued this knowledge is valuable because it is linked to practice, is detailed, specific and concrete and integrates the various types of knowledge with which teachers engage.

Although the interviewees gave their stories as answers to my specific questions, they still managed to incorporate elements of their personal life history with their practical professional knowledge of teaching. Their stories captured the ‘richness’ of being a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad. It was unfortunate that I had to juggle academic word limits between my analysis and including the words from the stories. So much is lost when stories are paraphrased. Nonetheless, the integrity of the stories was maintained.

Stories could be read in a number of ways and each way of reading yields yet another way to make meaning. For example, in this study the interviewees' stories were read within a life, in a specific historical time as exemplified by stories of Billy Joe (pp. 99-106), Poui (pp. 139-146) and Maya (pp. 178-182). Stories from groups of interviewees were read within a specific historical time as recounted in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Finally, the interviewees' stories were read through discourses across the 29 lives, as explored in Chapter Eight. But stories could be read in other ways as O'Loughlin (1995):

All [teachers] possess multiple frames of reference with which to construct knowledge by virtue of their ethnic background, race, class, gender, language usage, religious, cultural and political identities, as well as characteristics such as their sexual orientation and physical appearance (O'Loughlin, 1995, p. 337).

There is scope to examine graduate secondary teachers' knowledge construction in terms of specific ways of knowing by virtue of being female or male, Afro or Indo-Trinidadian, Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, UNC or PNM, homosexual or heterosexual, tall or short, fat or slim, union member or non-union member. For example, it would be interesting to collect even more stories to explore the question(s): "To what extent did race/ gender/ class/ ethnicity/ culture/ language/ religion/ sexual orientation or organisational membership influence how individuals thought, acted and valued as graduate secondary teachers?" This sort of analysis would help to fill in more gaps with respect to who graduate secondary teachers are and how they come to be that way.

I do not consider this flexibility in reading stories to be a weakness of the life-history method; rather, it highlights how stories can be used to address and analyse the complexity of issues such as what it means to be a graduate secondary teacher in Trinidad.

Not only did this study give me the opportunity to explore stories from 29 other graduate secondary teachers, but it also helped me to reflect on and re-think my own experiences as a beginning teacher. The historical exploration in Chapters Three to Six provided me with an opportunity to place my stories on the professional knowledge landscape of the Trinidadian graduate secondary teacher. When other graduate secondary teachers read this thesis-story, they should be able to make sense of their own experiences of beginning to teach in terms of understanding how they came to think, act and behave in certain ways as beginning teachers. Such awareness can help them to understand why some ways

of thinking and being are available to them and why others are not. Such an understanding creates the groundwork for change. As Taylor (2001) argued:

Although we cannot escape the discourse in and around us, we can nudge and push and shove, and slowly we can, with others, change the nature of a discourse or change the position or the status it holds in our society (Taylor, 2001, p. 11).

This study has enabled 29 teachers to tell their stories anonymously. But teachers need to have other safe places to tell their stories, free from negative consequences or harm. Our personal stories also need to be accessible to other local teachers, researchers and practitioners. They need to be told/heard/read in various other contexts—in staffrooms, on teacher development days, in local books written by teachers or as part of research projects. The more we share our stories, the more public they become and the more likely they will have the opportunity to be examined by others and analysed by researchers (Hiebert et al., 2002).

Teachers' stories can also be used as resources for teacher development. In a one-day workshop that I designed and facilitated for a secondary school in Trinidad, I used the following story from Tiger (with his permission) about a classroom incident to frame our discussion on classroom management.

I remember once in a history class marking some scripts and one girl was dissatisfied with my assessment. She stormed back to her seat stamping her feet, slap the book down on her table, pulled the chair, sat down...all with noise. That was a very strong reaction and she wasn't afraid to display it. And that is one thing...now I like that with them, that...and you see we kill it in them sometime and that is why they respond negatively. It might be strange to you but I like how they react. They come out; they don't keep it inside. They come out with their reaction and that is emotionally healthy. And she displayed it and I am standing in front of the class. I told her that is not good enough, you know. So I transferred it to the class because they quick to claim that adults are unfair. So I developed a scenario where they dealt with one another. So I transferred it to the class. "Class what do you think?"

I decided that I am not teaching anymore at that point in time. I am not teaching anymore from then, not next week not ever, that class until we deal with it. I am not dealing with it either. So I asked the class what should we do. I didn't leave them there to go anywhere. I stayed right there. It took a little while.

"Well, Allison you should apologise you know. You didn't really have to..."

"Find out from Sir what mistakes you make."

"Well Sir, the girl get vex. When you vex you don't think."

"Sir, give her a chance" and so on and so on.

Some were on her side and a few thought she should find out her mistakes. I said “Well, I am not doing anything about it. You all would have to do something about it.”

“Allison, you better go out the class you know. Go out the class and cool it” some of the boys in the class said.

“No I am not going anywhere” and she got up. “Make me move nah” and so on.

I let it play out because I used to be in drama too. I have no problems when they react strongly. She stood up:

“You want to make meh move, make meh move nah.”

So the rest of the class “Allison go outside nah!”

Peers could influence each other a lot. If a set of friends telling one “Do so.” Eventually you would do it. You have no choice. She left. “So all you ain’t want meh in all yuh class? All right. All right” and she left and she stood outside. I said “Now listen, stand where I could see you. If I am seeing you I could say I am aware of what you did. If I am not seeing I am not responsible for anything happening out there if I am not seeing you.” And she stood there with arms folded and I continued with the class (Tiger\85).

This story was presented as a dramatisation, but I could have got teachers to role-play. The story was relevant to the teachers involved because it was real, based on a graduate secondary teacher’s own practice, and took place and in a cultural context that the teachers could understand. The story provided the basis for significant discussions as teachers put forward how they would have responded if the situation has arisen in their classroom. This story could have served as a basis for developing shared practice.

The theoretical concepts of subjectivity, Foucauldian discourse analysis and constructivism discussed in Chapter One helped me to go beyond simply interpreting the interviewees’ stories as instances of fact. These tools enabled me to “question and challenge the common-sense understanding” (Johnson, 2002, p. 388) of the stories. I was able to dig deeper and look at the stories in the social, political and historical context of secondary education in Trinidad. It was by asking more critical questions that the experience of learning to teach which was very familiar to me was rendered strange (Roth, 1992). I was able to see the world that I have lived in as a teacher more clearly.

These theoretical tools helped me to recognise that this study was in part an investigation into the discursive construction of the subjectivity of the graduate secondary teacher in the socio-cultural context of the teachers’ experience. Phillips (1998, p. 2) argued “subjectivity, the site of the contentious self, is difficult to capture, but re-framing subjectivity may be a critical, if too often

ignored element of teacher education.” Through the use of Foucauldian discourse analysis in this study I came to understand how the interviewees’ subjectivity as graduate secondary teachers was “spoken into existence” (Davies, 1992, p. 73) through discourses available to them to speak, think an act, in the culture and society in which they lived (Weedon, 1997). In other words, this study enabled me to unravel some of the discourses that informed how and why these interviewees came to think, speak and act being a graduate secondary teacher in certain ways, in the social and political context in which they were educated and began to teach. These ways were at time complementary and at others contradictory, but were constituted through multiple discourses.

Foucauldian discourse analysis was useful in helping me to understand why at any given time, one thing and not the other was said or thought of (Ball 1990a) by the interviewees. By exploring the subjectivity of the graduate secondary teacher as constituted through and in terms of discourse, I was better able to understand that there are many ways to *be* a graduate secondary teacher such as the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge, role model, performer, actor, or a caring person. These ways of being constituted the normal way that interviewees thought of how, as teachers, they should speak, act, write, read, think, dress, move, gesture, or value (Gee, 1990). In other words these ideas “set the conditions for teaching practice and shape the normative categories that organized and restrict...thinking about [teaching] practice” (Phelan, 2001, p. 584).

My research has highlighted how, despite changes to the organisation and delivery of the secondary education system, the dominant ideas that teachers drew upon about teachers and teaching remained unchallenged and unchanged between the late 1950s and the end of the 1990s. These dominant ideas, which may seem to be right, obvious and common sense (O’Loughlin, 1995) still influence the ways of thinking about and the practice of teaching and learning. For example, as explored in Chapter Eight, the interviewees’ ways of being and thinking about teaching and learning continue to be focused on education as certification, knowledge as discrete and existing outside of the learner, and learning as memorisation.

However, there seemed to be very little space on this educational landscape for “alternative cultural and ideological assumptions” (Johnson, 2002, p. 397). Certain ideas about teachers and teaching were not imagined or spoken about in these interviews. For example, none of the interviewees spoke about the

teacher as a learner or co-constructor of knowledge. No one said that they saw themselves in these ways as beginning teachers. There was very little talk of seeing themselves as professionals who regularly tapped into a body of professional knowledge to inform their practice. This suggests that alternative ways of thinking about and doing teaching were not available to these interviewees. Thus, the interviewees were normalised into the expected ways of being and doing.

But some educational policies and practices are informed by alternative discourses. For example, the teacher as a co-constructor of knowledge is constituted within a constructivist discourse. In constructivist classrooms, “students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world” (J. Brooks & M. Brooks, 1993, p. 17). Teachers behave in an “interactive manner” (J. Brooks & M. Brooks, 1993, p. 17). Freire’s (1970) ideas are informed by a discourse of “liberating education” where, instead of the goal of education being “deposit-making” of knowledge, it is replaced with “the posing of the problems of human beings in relation to their world” (p. 60). bell hooks’ (1994) ideas of engaged pedagogy—“teaching in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students” (hooks, 1994, p. 13), O’Loughlin’s (1995) “emancipatory knowledge construction” and Cochran-Smith’s (1998) teaching for social change are all examples of alternatives to the transmission model of education. More spaces and opportunities are needed for these discourses to filter onto the educational landscape in Trinidad and for teachers to engage in knowledge construction through them.

Interpreting the interviewees’ stories about the practice of recruitment with the help of Foucauldian discourse analysis, enabled me to examine how disciplinary technologies (Chapter One, pp. 24-25) such as surveillance, classification, ranking, operate in educational practices such as the recruitment of teachers. For example, in Chapter Seven I argued that prospective graduate secondary teachers are classified based on academic qualifications rather than professional ability and this classification as specialist school-subject teachers becomes the normal way for them to think of themselves as teachers. This subject position as teacher as specialist influenced the ways in which the interviewees had acted as new teachers. For example, as new graduate secondary teachers, these interviewees policed themselves to be content-knowers and transmitters. Students, parents and other teachers policed them in the same way. Students

expected them to have a good grasp of the school-subject content. At the same time, the interviewees expected themselves to be content-knowers and capable of passing on specific knowledge to students. The interviewees classified themselves as good teachers if they knew the school-subject content and were able to get students to pass examinations. Additionally, the interviewees were not directly supervised as new teachers and so received little feedback on what they did as new teachers. Yet, surveillance—the expectation of being watched (Gore, 1998)—by students, other teachers and parents disciplined them to be, act and dress in certain ways.

The concept of constructivism helped me to focus on the graduate secondary teacher as a learner. It also helped me to examine the interviewees' stories of learning to teach in terms of a construction of various aspects of their practical professional knowledge from various subject positions. Constructivism has also helped me to re-think the way in which I thought about teacher knowledge and to change the way in which I design and implement in-service programmes. I'll illustrate with an example from my in-service work done before and after carrying out this study.

In 1998, I had designed and facilitated an in-service programme entitled *An Introduction to Effective Teaching Strategies* (De Four-Babb, 1998). This programme was presented to whole-staffs at three different secondary schools and as a one-week workshop for teachers as part of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association's (T&TUTA's) professional advancement initiative. This initiative sought to provide professional development for teachers, as well as "assist teachers in the development of their teaching skills and methods" (Clarke, 1998, p. 22). To this end my programme sought to answer the question, "How to teach?"

I used an evaluation instrument —The Texas Teachers Appraisal System (TTAS)<sup>14</sup> of 1993—to frame the content of the course (De Four-Babb, 1998). This appraisal system was informed by the research on effective schools (Purkey & Smith, 1983). The content was based on specified and observable behaviours that teachers should be aware of and seek to implement in their teaching. These behaviours were related to "Instructional Strategies," "Classroom Management," "Presentation Of Subject Matter," and "The Learning Environment". My thinking

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<sup>14</sup> I had been 'trained' to administer this instrument as part of the Master of Education programme at University of Texas at Austin, TX, U.S.A.

at that time was if I presented teachers with this body of knowledge on teaching to the teachers in a “workshop” style (Ibe, 1991), and gave them a framework to use in their own teaching, then surely, their practice would improve. I also believed that teachers had to “make sense” of what they were learning, so I ensured that they were provided with opportunities to discuss their classroom experiences and periods of quiet reading for reflection on new ideas. However, I did not plan any follow-up sessions that may have provided additional support for these teachers.

At the end of every session, the various groups of teachers were quite excited about what they had shared. Several participants described the in-service days as the best in-service they had ever had, because they had opportunities to actively engage in discussions and they had a list of things that they could do to improve their teaching practice. Most were anxious to put the new information into practice. However, through this study, I have come to realise that my approach may have simply reinforced any ideas that these teachers had about being transmitters of knowledge because I did not provide them with any alternative ways of thinking about teaching. In addition, we did not explore their views on teaching, nor the source of their ideas.

Constructivism helped me to ask my initial question behind the in-service programme in a different way. Instead of “How to teach?” I now ask “How do teachers learn to teach,” “How do teachers come to teach the way they teach,” and “How do teachers construct their knowledge as teachers.” As Grieg et al. (1968) noted:

“how to learn” is a much more difficult task for both teacher and learner than “what to learn” but emphasis on process helps the learner to develop an attitude in which self-discovery, self-evaluation and self-direction are possible (Greig et al., 1968, p. 6).

By posing the question in these new ways, I was able to theorise about the teacher as a learner and problematise the knowledge construction in which they engaged.

In 2002, after I had carried out some of the analysis for this study, I had the opportunity to work with another group of 18 graduate secondary teachers who each had fewer than three years teaching experience. This time, I did not focus on behaviours that beginning teachers could emulate. Instead, I started from their experiences as students and teachers and discussed issues related to the construction of their knowledge with respect to the ideas that were available for them to think with. For example, in one session we discussed “Views on Teaching” by posing and answering the questions: What do you understand the

job of teaching to involve? Where do these ideas come from? Are the ideas you hold about teaching still relevant today in the context of this school? If yes, why? If no, why not?

In another session, with about eight participants from the same group, we further explored views on teaching through their drawings of classrooms. I asked the teachers to draw a picture of a classroom. All of them drew a classroom with individual desks facing a teacher. Then, I asked them to draw “an alternative classroom.” Their drawings varied in that the students were placed in groups or in a circle around the teacher, but the teacher was still the focal point of the classroom. At this point each person showed his/her drawing to the group and we discussed why and how as teachers, they had come to see classrooms in this way. Many said that their drawings reflected the kinds of classrooms that they had been in as students. Finally, I asked these teachers to draw a student-centred classroom. Many were unable to begin their drawings and when asked why, they said that they had no idea of such as classroom looked like because they had never been in one. What emerged from our discussions was how seeing oneself as a transmitter of knowledge informed the way in which teachers organised their space for teaching/learning by putting themselves as a focal point. This was a significant point for all of us in understanding how and why we came to think of teaching and learning in certain ways and not others. This approach of getting to the bottom of teachers’ knowledge construction, helped me to elaborate upon the ideas that informed these teachers’ thinking. We were able to make their thinking about teaching and learning visible through our discussions and make space for new ideas. At this point, I was able to introduce other vies of teaching such as the concepts of mimetic, liberal and critical teaching (O’Loughlin, 1995).

Constructivism, Foucauldian analysis and life history enabled me to pay attention to the role of society and culture in knowledge construction. In other words, I understand how my ways of thinking and those of the interviewees are linked to the “social and political context in which we find ourselves” (Phelan, 2001, p. 584) as graduate secondary teachers. Now, I question my own understanding of teaching and learning by asking: Where are these ideas coming from? Are they still relevant in context, at this time? Who benefits from this? Who does not? How do my own educational experiences, personal biography and the socio-cultural context of my workplace influence what I am doing as a

teacher? I have found that these are very useful questions for disrupting teacher knowledge.

### **Limitations Of The Study**

This study was based on a retrospective life history method that involved the “reconstruction of past events from the present feelings and interpretations” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 166) of a group of 29 graduate secondary teachers from Trinidad. The data was based on one interview with each of the 29 interviewees. Some may argue that despite the rich quality of the stories, in some places the data could be regarded as ‘thin’ or “weak.” The interview data could have been strengthened with more interviews with all or some of the interviews so as to provide even more details on specific issues. Additionally, other narrative inquiry techniques (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) beside the interview could have been incorporated into the study. For example, oral histories, autobiographies, personal journals and photographs from all or a few of the interviewees could have been used to add to the “depth” of the interview data.

Additionally, data could have been collected with the use of an observation strand as initially proposed. The interview data could have been supported by a simple, passive and unobtrusive observation (Wellington, 2000) of the interviewees’ facial expressions, language use and behaviour in classroom teaching. Such data would have enabled me to get an even clearer understanding of how the interviewees now see themselves as teachers, a dimension that I would have been able to contrast with now they said they saw themselves as beginning teachers.

The interpretations of teacher image and the identification of available subject positions have been based on interviews with 29 teachers. Interviews with a larger group of teachers may confirm these subject positions or may turn up new ones.

This study may incorporate many elements of bias of life history research, as identified by Cohen et al. (2000) that I could not completely remove. For example, there is no way that I could be absolutely sure that misinformation was not given; that interviewees evaded certain issues; that some may have presented stories that they thought I wanted to hear; or that they were sure that as a graduate secondary teacher myself, that I understood what they were saying to me in the

same way that they did. I have no way of measuring what the interviewees did not remember or chose not to tell me. In places, I have tried to examine how my biography, my demeanour, my personality and my expectation of the project could have affected this study, but I cannot elaborate on all the ways in which my own bias as a researcher has affected this study. I can never fully explain how my interaction or “prior interaction” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 133) with the interviewees and my non-verbal communication and behaviour (Cohen et al., 2000) affected what the interviewees said or did not say to me during the interviews.

Despite these limitations, this study makes a significant contribution to understanding how graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad who begin teaching without teacher education come to see themselves as teachers and learn how to teach.

### **Implications For Practice**

In 1964, a working party on the role and status of the Teaching Service in Trinidad commented:

The system of appointing teachers without any experience whatever to teach on a ‘trial and error’ basis should be discontinued as early as practicable. The disadvantages which flow from this practice as obvious and need not be enumerated” (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1964)

Almost 40 years later, I hear similar words echoed in many of the interviewees’ stories. For example, Cynthia said:

I don’t believe anybody should enter a classroom unless they are prepared. The secondary school system is fraught with so many difficulties and so many problems I think it is—I don’t want to use the word criminal, it might be too strong a word to use—to actually take someone from university even and send them into a classroom right away and expect them to be able to function and function well. They can go into a classroom and talk, which is what most people do, and do things on the blackboard. But it is an understatement to say that a lot will be missing (Cynthia\78).

Cynthia is clear that all beginning graduate secondary teachers should be prepared before they enter the classroom, because while as new teachers they may “function” by getting students to pass examinations, much will be missing in their teaching. This study has highlighted what will be “missing” when teachers begin

to teach and continue to teach without any intervention on the part of teacher educators (Chapter Eight). In like manner, Salohcin said:

If you do not have the training and you go in there as a virtual quack, groping, guessing and tinkering with people's life, mind, brain and their future. The policy makers are going to be guilty, because they have a chance to change that and if they don't do something about it, they perpetuate the injustice to the nation's children. ... You see when they talk about "children first", that sounds nice politically, but if they really care about children first, they would not have that *bunch of teachers* in secondary schools for 25 years, who have not picked up a psychology book or who have not read a review of something on education for the past 25 years. You are going to make sure that the people who go in there to deal with those children who you say come first, deal in a professional way. If you say children come first, why do you pay your teachers so poorly? Why do you have them functioning in such dilapidated conditions, short of equipment and facilities? Why do you refuse to have them be prepared for entering a classroom, before they are actually given the job of a teacher? (Salohcin\73)

Salohcin reminded me that indeed there are teachers in the secondary system who have never had the opportunity to engage with educational discourses outside of those which inform their classroom practice. It is possible that because some of these teachers had a limited number of ideas to draw upon, that some of their students did not benefit from education in the ways that they could have. For example, these teachers may have labelled students as failures or successes when these classifications were based on a narrow definition of learning as memorisation.

I am aware of the "widely divergent view and diverse research models" (Sprinthall, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1996, p. 696) that inform the concept and process of preparation and ongoing professional development for teachers at secondary schools. For example, Sprinthall et al. (1996) argued:

Effective teacher education programmes are based on a conception of teacher growth and development; acknowledge the complexities of the classroom, school and community; are grounded in a verifiable knowledge base; and are sensitive to the ways teachers think, feel, and make meaning from their experiences (Sprinthall, 1996, p. 667).

In other words, teachers can construct new understandings of what they do but need to do so in the context of their teaching. On the other hand Cochran-Smith reasoned that:

The most promising teacher education practices are those that provide opportunities for teachers to identify, reconsider, bolster, or alter classroom beliefs and practices that support or undermine their students' learning opportunities and life chances (Cochran-Smith, 1998, p. 938).

Put another way, teacher education programmes must link teacher knowledge construction to student learning. A third view by Hiebert et al. (2002) is that:

There is a growing consensus that professional development yields the best results when it is long-term, school-based, collaborative, focused on students' learning, and linked to curricula (Hiebert et al., 2002, p. 3)

Taken together, these recommendations for teacher education programmes they suggest that in order to engage teachers in knowledge construction, programmes should reflect an understanding that: (i) teachers can improve their teaching; (ii) teacher education programmes take into consideration contextual knowledge and encourage teachers to question beliefs and practices as related to student learning and curricula requirements; (iii) professional development be on-going and school-based.

The interviewees' stories highlight that what new graduate secondary teachers are called upon to do, and the knowledge they engage with to do it, far exceeds technical and organisational skills that may be envisioned in short intensive courses. One may ask, can we really prepare graduate secondary teachers for all of these prospective tasks? Although that question may seem daunting, it becomes critical to ask, "If we want new graduate secondary teachers to better engage students in learning, how can we best prepare them?" In the next section I put forward my recommendations as a practitioner who has engaged in research that seeks to influence educational practice with respect to secondary teacher education in Trinidad.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations in this section for the preparation and on-going professional development of graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad are based on my analysis of the stories based on the wisdom of practice of 29 graduate secondary teachers. According to Shulman (1987b):

Teachers assumptions about what classrooms look like serve as starting point from which they can make subsequent adaptations and variations (Shulman, 1987b, p. 475).

I also make my recommendations in the light of a historical exploration of secondary teacher education, and educational reports and policies of Trinidad (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 1972; 1976; 1990).

My research suggests that many of the interviewees' assumptions about teachers and teaching were based upon the knowledge they had constructed about teachers and teaching while they were students in primary, secondary and tertiary classrooms. Prospective graduate secondary teachers need an opportunity to begin to construct new assumptions of teaching and learning from the perspective of teachers. I do not believe that they could develop this perspective if they remain positioned as students in pre-service teacher education programmes. As Taylor's (2000) research showed, educational discourses that informed the teacher education course that he was involved in positioned the student-teachers as technicians and children. This positioning serves to reinforce assumptions about teachers and teaching from the perspective of being a student. I re-quote Britzman:

What students tend to observe is a pattern that results from the hidden influences of teacher preparation, school policy, curricular mandates and state law. Beyond students' recognition that teachers have more police-like power in the classroom, students perceive their teachers' work as similar to their own work, and as such, reduce it to mere classroom performance (Britzman, 1986, p. 445).

I recommend that new graduate secondary teachers need to be placed in schools as teachers for two years and be given the opportunity to begin to teach, before they participate in a compulsory, one-year, full-time, university-based, Diploma in Education programme. In that way they can begin to construct an understanding of teaching from the perspective of a teacher, in the real context of teaching, as the interviewees in this study showed they did. However, these new graduate secondary teachers must be viewed as teacher-learners in terms of being involved in an on-going process of becoming teachers.

The preparation and on-going professional development of graduate secondary teachers' needs to be undertaken in various places and spaces on the professional knowledge landscape. As Sprinthall et al., (1996) argued:

Teacher education is too important to be left either to the university or the school. Alone both fail. Together both may grow (Sprinthall et al., 1996, p. 699).

University programmes offered by the University of the West Indies and by private universities such as the University of Sheffield are already in place. However, I would like to advocate an increased role for school-level teacher preparation programmes. Below, I elaborate upon these two recommendation in terms of recruitment, orientation, school-based support, the DipEd and on-going

professional development, before suggesting some principles on which the programmes at these various levels should be based.

### ***Recruitment***

The interviewees recommended that the Ministry of Education should seek to attract a new kind of individual into teaching. They recommended that as an employer, the Ministry should seek people who are “flexible and open minded” (Pou\79), willing to learn, able to make links between teaching and life, “willing to get out of teaching once in a while to see life,” (Smith\97), and who respect students and are willing to learn from them. Similarly, Lytle suggested that:

New teachers need to be ready to learn and to act on what they learn, and they need to develop a strong professional ethos rooted in caring about children as well as in critical perspectives on practice (Lytle, 2000, p. 179.)

I certainly agree with these recommendations. The Ministry of Education needs to send a clear message that more than academic qualifications are needed when one applies to teach. I believe that the recruitment practices for graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad must be more rigorous and seen as developmental. For example, prospective teachers could take part in a one-day assessment centre where their oral, written and presentation skills are observed. These future teachers could be asked to present a short lesson to experienced teachers and teacher educators. Some form of feedback could be given based on the observations made and a professional development plan created for the teacher, once he/she is accepted into the profession. In this way, from the very beginning, the teacher is positioned as a learner who is setting off to construct an understanding about teaching, not as a subject expert who knows it all.

### ***Orientation Programmes***

Prospective graduate secondary teachers should participate in orientation programmes. These programmes could be held as part of career guidance days in schools, facilitated by members of the teaching staff, union representatives or Ministry of Education personnel. Other orientation programmes could be geared towards a wider audience and be organised by the Ministry of Education, T&TUTA or groups of teachers. The aim of these programmes would be to give some insight into what teachers do from the perspective of teachers.

At the school level, all schools should have an orientation programme in place for new teachers. The aims of this programme could be to get the teacher familiar with the operation of the school as quickly as possible, to meet key

personnel, and to develop a general understanding of the context in which he/she is going to work. For example, a beginning graduate secondary teacher may spend one day with an entire class to experience life as a student. This may help the teacher to begin to see how the school operates, see other teachers teach, and begin to think of themselves as part of the whole school system.

Wherever possible, the new teacher should have a reduced teaching load to allow for a gradual entry. Specific times may be allocated for the teacher to meet with other members of his/her department, visit classes, or plan lessons with other teachers. In this way the new teacher will not feel overwhelmed by the teaching load. This will require creative time-tabling as new teachers usually fill spaces of people who have had full teaching-loads.

A teachers' handbook could be developed by the staff for all new teachers. The handbook may contain information on the school's mission and vision statements where they exist, the history of the school, the school rules, time-table structure, explanations of systems of pastoral care, demographic details of the school population and any other information that would help the new teacher to begin to develop his/her contextual knowledge. The content of the handbook should be developed and revised with input from the entire staff. Such an exercise will provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their own experiences as teachers and engage in further knowledge construction and understanding of what it means to be a teacher in their particular school context.

But Salohcin reminds us of the reality of trying to put an orientation system into place. As he explained sometimes this orientation task may be left to a principal or vice-principal who may or may not see teacher orientation as important. As Salohcin explained:

As a matter of fact to a large extent, it is dependent on the goodwill and the administrative skill of the *sitting* administration in the school, to help these people through. And sometimes that is a burden on the administrator, because if every so often if you get one new teacher and you have to spend time walking that teacher through, it takes away from your responsibility as an administrator. It takes away from the mentor teacher that you might assign to that teacher, in terms of functioning. And remember that teacher is expected to hit the road running, because that person is given a job. So it is burdensome and it affects the functioning of the school (Salohcin\73).

Thus, the responsibility for orientation should not only be that of the principal or vice-principal. All teachers should be committed to helping new teachers, not in terms of showing all to a novice who knows nothing, but in terms of helping that

person to reconstruct his understandings of teaching and learning in the context of the school.

### ***Supported Learning On The Job***

Actual teaching practice enables a new teacher to develop some practical knowledge of teaching, from the perspective of the teacher and not the student. New graduate secondary teachers need opportunities to develop their pedagogical content knowledge. Any programme of support must help teachers to make sense of pedagogical strategies and think about them in the context of their teaching, so that their learning is not seen as being done by trial and error. As this study shows, new teachers could benefit from the opportunity to share their experiences in the classroom with other teachers. This could be enhanced if a culture of ongoing professional learning among teachers is cultivated in each secondary school.

For example, a mentoring or peer tutoring programme could be put in place for all new teachers. This can be organised at the departmental level. However, such a programme will require leadership at various levels within the school. This leadership could be provided by a “learner-centred principal” Du Four (2002, p. 12), Head of Department, or a “teacher leader” (Lytle, 2000) who would work with a new teacher or groups of new teachers for the first two years of teaching. These persons will be directly involved with the new teacher to provide support in various aspects of teaching and learning. This leadership may also be provided by private teacher educators, employed to work with different groups of schools.

I have found my own involvement with professional development programmes at the school level, while still being a full-time teacher, to be quite useful. It has helped me continue to develop as a teacher, but it has also helped other teachers realise that there is a lot that we can do as teachers to continually improve our practice. For example, weekly lunch-time meetings to discuss specific issues related to the profession could make a world of difference as this practice gives teachers and opportunity to share their experiences in a non-threatening environment. Such opportunities to share our knowledge and understanding about teaching should not be missed. They require time commitments, but as I have seen with the groups of teachers that I have worked with, if we make the commitment to do it, it will happen. Teachers need to be

continually reminded that they are part of a profession with a developing body of knowledge to which they can make inputs based on their wisdom of practice.

### ***The Diploma In Education***

I recommend that new teachers participate in the Diploma in Education programme after their second year of teaching. Many of the interviewees said that they felt much more settled in their second year of teaching and participants would have the benefit of their two years' teaching experience to draw upon. Such a practice would bring secondary teacher preparation in line with the preparation of primary teachers in Trinidad. However, for this recommendation to be realised, the existing Diploma programme must be expanded to deal with the backlog of teachers who have not participated in the programmes and those new teachers who are coming into the system. An increased Diploma in Education programme would also require more teacher educators.

There are significant cost concerns involved in expanding the DipEd programme and providing full-time teacher education opportunities for graduate secondary teachers. These issues of the backlog and personnel will have to be addressed as part of the teacher education policy as they require the same financial commitments by government. Providing teacher education opportunities for graduate secondary teacher must now be approached with the same commitment that was made for the preparation of primary teachers between 1968 and 1984.

I also recommend that the DipEd programme be pursued for one year on a full-time basis, without loss of pay. A full-time basis allows for increased content in terms of the contextual issues raised by the interviewees who believed that their concerns were not addressed in the programme. These include components on special education, social problems and legal issues of teacher as employee. A full-time focus also gives the space and time for teachers to devote themselves to thinking about their teaching without having to juggle the responsibilities of full-time classroom teaching and programme participation. However, care must be taken to ensure that the graduate secondary teacher enrolled in the DipEd is not positioned as a child/student who knows nothing. The programme should seek to draw upon the participants' wisdom of practice gained from their years of schooling and teaching. The DipEd programme could also be integrated into a Master's programme, by the addition of a second year in which the participants engage in a research-based project.

### ***Ongoing Refreshment***

The professional development of teachers should be on-going and across the professional life of a teacher so as to provide a continued challenge to teachers as learners (Cochran-Smith, 1998). Teachers should never get to the stage where they think that they are no longer learning or that they have nothing new to learn about teaching and student learning. And I fear that many teachers are already at that point. In the interviews, I asked the interviewees what teaching was like for them in 2000. Their responses varied between enjoyment:

Now I enjoy teaching. Now I am more relaxed so I talk more with the students. I interact more. I also try to make sure they have learned more. I think I'm freer to do...how do I say this? I do more in the classroom in that I am more relaxed, so I get the stuff over but in different ways, you know. I also feel confident enough to ask other teachers advice in situations whereas, before I might not want even to say anything. I'll say "Well how would you handle this or how would you do this?" (Jesse\85).

tolerance—"Liveable. Doable; the time goes by" (Fluffy Starr\94), and frustration and boredom.

For me teaching is now like just a test of my strength because I can say that I still love my job enough. I am committed to students, but I am quite saturated and I am quite frustrated at that this point in time. As a matter of fact, I need a break (Bumper\80).

[Teaching now] is like an article of clothing that I no longer want to wear. I want new clothes, but until situations change, I have no choice but to stick with this wardrobe until such time. ...It is no longer a challenge. It is like a game that I've played over and over and over and I am good at it, I feel confident that I have something to offer, but I feel as if I need to do something different. It no longer makes any demands on my potential (Portfolio\89).

All teachers must be encouraged to participate in on-going opportunities for personal, professional and social development (Bell & Gilbert, 1996). This requires forging a school culture of the school as a place of learning for all, including teachers.

### ***Principles Of Programmes***

I recommend that whether school or university based, preparation and on-going professional development programmes must engage teachers in exploring what they know in terms of their biography and own educational experiences and the socio-cultural context of their place of work. Prospective teacher education programmes should incorporate opportunities for graduate secondary teachers to explore, challenge and question their own ideas about teachers, teaching, and

student learning because learning on the job does not give them the opportunity to do so. Opportunities should be created for new teachers to question some of their own understandings of teaching and learning. Discussions can revolve around the questions: Where are these ideas coming from? Are they still relevant in this context? in this school? at this time?

But teacher attitudes to challenge the kind of teaching envisioned may not be so easily achieved. As O'Loughlin argued:

Prospective teachers do not *think* teaching should be done a certain way; they *know* it from their lived experience. Appeals to reason, the posing of critical questions, and the creation of a learning community in which students can experience self-directed critical learning, can certainly plant seeds of doubt. However, since the [new teachers] have learned from experience, we must be willing to provide them with powerful counter experiences, if they are to take seriously the critical possibilities we advocate (O'Loughlin, 1995, p.114).

Teacher education programmes in Trinidad should also strive to explore the underlying assumptions of thinking about teaching in terms of transmission, since this model of teaching seems to significantly intertwined with our educational system, our thought and practice. At the same time, these programmes need to present alternative models of teaching. Constructivist teaching principles offer one example, but there are many views of teaching that shift attention to the student as learner.

Preparation programmes should also provide access to all the sources of the professional knowledge base (L. Shulman, 1987). Although graduate secondary teachers may have the content knowledge base, they still need an understanding of the curriculum requirements and pedagogical concepts. Their wisdom of practice needs to be informed by local or international educational research. Teachers work in many different social environments. Some face contextual problems such as lack of equipment, shortages of space. In other schools, teachers have to engage with knowledge with regard to the impact of social problems such as drugs, crime, violence, sexual misconduct, low levels of literacy, incest, poverty, family relationships, and teenage pregnancy. Those are the real problems and issues that our students face on a daily basis. They are the real problems that impinge on the learning that is taking place. Programmes should also enable the construction of contextual knowledge in terms of understanding one's legal rights and responsibilities as an employee and the Code of Ethics. The teachers' union T&TUTA offers opportunities to engage with this

kind of knowledge through its Study Circle programme for membership education (Watson, 1998).

Teaching without intervention took the interviewees a long time to put the student learning at the centre of the teaching/learning process. As beginning teachers they wanted answers to the question, “How to teach.” But new teachers need to be encouraged to reframe these questions in terms of. “How do students learn? How can I help students to learn? How am I learning to be a teacher?” Beginning teachers need opportunities to question their own ways of learning and challenge the idea that everyone does not learn in the same way at the same time.

In 1978, teacher educators at The University of the West Indies, School of Education commented that: “until the system is rationalised, and that there is in fact a real system of Comprehensive schools, the question of teachers in schools and their preparation will be unnecessarily complicated” (underlined in the original; The University of the West Indies, School of Education, 1978, p. 9). Indeed the question of preparation of teachers has already become more complicated. As teachers, we will be required to think of our practice in even more different ways as new populations are being added to schools. Although graduate secondary teachers have strong academic background, as Greig et al., (1968) argued, and as my research showed, this was no guarantee that they could teach. More must be done to provide beginning teachers with support and feedback about their teaching. As I suggested this support should be provided mainly at the level of the school, in all aspects of their professional, personal, social, political development (Bell & Gilbert, 1996).

### **Research Directions**

Jane, Cynthia, Sid Chase, Salohcin, Maya, Fluffy Starr, Salman, Bumper, Andi, and Portfolio, all talked about initiatives in their schools where departments or principals had programmes in place to provide support for new teachers. There is scope for research on these existing programmes in terms of how they were developed and implemented and the extent to which they have been successful in helping new teachers to develop an understanding teaching and learning. There is also an opportunity for research on the design and implementation of such orientation programmes at school level. These programmes can be produced based on the learning from programmes that are already in place. This can lead to

building a research culture at the level of the school and help teachers come to see themselves as contributing to a knowledge base for Trinidadian teachers.

The interviewees' stories were examples of retrospective reflection—reflection on past experiences (Van Manen 1995)—and were given from each teacher's present vantage-point as an experienced teacher. These stories did not give details on how the interviewees constructed their knowledge by challenging the ideas that they held and drawing upon alternatives on an hour-by-hour, class-by-class, day-by-day basis. One suggestion for a study to explore the daily construction of a graduate secondary teacher's practical professional knowledge is a "contemporaneous life history" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 166) which would give "a description of an individual's daily life in progress, here and now" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 166). For example, researchers can engage in a longitudinal case study in which they follow a group of beginning teachers for their first two years of graduate secondary teaching. This case study could employ data collection methods such as observations, participant observations, interviews, and analyses of documents, records and drawings from teachers (Wellington, 2000). These methods could be used to make sense of the "many layered narratives at work in their inquiry space" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 70).

Another research project could involve more detailed case studies of different cohorts of graduate secondary teachers: beginning teachers, those who have been teaching for a few years, but have not done the DipEd; teachers engaged in the DipEd; teachers who have just completed the DipEd and those who have completed the DipEd in more than five years ago. It should explore the extent to which teacher knowledge differs for each these groups of teachers and how the members of each group of teachers go about constructing their knowledge.

Indeed, there are many more stories to be heard, as there are even more gaps related to the construction of teacher knowledge in Trinidad to be filled. For example, I would like to hear more stories and develop more detailed case studies from teachers like Billy Joe, who were educated during the colonial period and are now at the end of their teaching careers. Their insights and interpretations could provide a social history of the secondary education system that could be useful way for other teachers to access teacher knowledge about the changes in the educational system from the perspective of teachers who had lived through

these changes. But my focus has been on the graduate secondary teacher. There are many other classifications of secondary teacher including the A'Level graduate, the primary trained teacher and the technical vocational teacher. How do these teachers come to see themselves as teachers? What discourses do they draw upon?

### **Closing Thoughts**

This thesis has been “spoken into existence” (Davies, 1992, p. 73) in many geographical locations. First, in New Zealand, where I pursued the three-year doctoral programme until December 2001; then, in Trinidad, where I collected teachers’ stories for six months in 2000 and returned to live for six months in 2002; and finally, in England where I have been living as an expatriate house-wife since July 2002. In these varied places, the talk with teachers in emails and telephone conversations, and the internet versions of the Trinidadian newspapers—the *Guardian* and the *Express*—have enabled me to keep abreast with the developments in the education system about which I write, but from which my travels have taken me.

It was via email that Portfolio brought me up to date on the educational situation in Trinidad in 2003. He wrote:

*i dont know how useful my remarks will be but here goes: pmap is as far as i can remember has not taken off. with respect to teachers it has been said that because of the diverse nature of the teachers portfolio it was or has been difficult to design an instrument that the stakeholders esp the union find acceptable. in a nut shell pmap as it relates to teachers has been still born. with respect to the process of decentralisation that is still in the embryonic stages and off to a bumpy start as a conference called by the ministry to discuss such issues was short-circuited by denom., schools when they walked out after reading a prepared statement. they felt slighted. with respect to school based management the process like so many other initiatives has been a slow one. in the pos and environs area i know that qrc has a constituted school board which is made up of the various stakeholders it ha been slow in getting to other schools. the most visible of the changes have been the introduction of a textbook rental scheme for students in lower school and a grant of 1000 for students in forms 3 4 and lvi, there is a core curriculum for the lower school in which textbooks have been standardised and where schools must choose from a given list in subjects such as science spanish maths and language arts and 2 other s which i cant recall at this time as part of their SEMP programme they have been focusing on plant upgrade and teacher training. the govt has also recently taken the*

*decision to implement on a phased basis CAPE (caribbean advanced proficiency exam). it should be noted that trinidad is the last of the territories to come on board. in a nut shell joyanne those are the issues that come to mind. i hope you find them useful (Portfolio, personal communication, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2003).*

These developments of PMAP, decentralisation, school boards, Caribbean examinations, core curriculum, standardised text-books, SEMP, and school-plant upgrades suggest that even I as I write, the context of teaching in Trinidad is changing. One wonders how the discourses that inform these new practices will create possibilities or constraints of for the way graduate secondary teachers in the future will talk, think, act and value as teachers.

Each interviewee told a different story. Yet there were significant similarities across time and place. Each of these stories represents the voices, the talk, the word, the knowledge, the “wisdom of practice” (Shulman, 1987) of what we have to share as graduate secondary teachers. In retelling their stories and constructing my own understanding of them, I have “reaffirm[ed] them, modifi[ed] them, and creat[ed]” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxvi) even more stories about who graduate secondary teachers are and how they came to think and act in certain ways and not others. I did not find the interviewees stories to be “against the grain” (Elbaz-Luwisch, 1997, p. 75). Instead, I thought of them as grains that filled the gaps of the lived experience of graduate secondary teachers in Trinidad.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**PARTICIPATION RATES IN THE**  
**IN-SERVICE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION**

**Participation Rates In The In-Service Diploma in Education  
1973 To 1999**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. OF APPLICANTS</u>	<u>NO. REGISTERED</u>	<u>AWARDEES</u>
1973-1974	111	84	71
1974-1975	262	106	89
1975-1976	265	102	92
1976-1977	210	83	79
1977-1978	201	89	67
1978-1979	171	82	63
1979-1980	169	94	64
1980-1981	155	75	53
1981-1982	140	90	58
1982-1983	152	93	69
1983-1984	145	113	103
1984-1985	196	131	107
1985-1986	202	127	101
1986-1987	157	100	97
1987-1988	181	94	83
1988-1989	174	108	90
1989-1990	166	118	100
1990-1991	128	80	76
1991-1992	177	81	75
1992-1993	144	106	n/a
1993-1994	n/a	n/a	87
1994-1995	n/a	96	87
1995-1996	n/a	103	93
1996-1997	n/a	108	97
1997-1998	n/a	94	86
1998-1999	n/a	n/a	84
1999-2000	n/a	n/a	83

Source: Unpublished data. Faculty of Humanities & Education, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, School of Education (2000)

**APPENDIX B**  
**PUBLICITY DOCUMENTS**

- ▶ **Letter To The President Of The Trinidad And Tobago  
Unified Teachers' Association**
- ▶ **Publicity Article**

(Date)

The President  
Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association  
Southern Main Road, Curepe  
Trinidad and Tobago.

Dear Trevor,

Greetings from New Zealand! I am at that point in my doctoral research where I can signal my intention to do my research to you and teachers. I would like to use the medium of the January 2000 issue of the TUTOR, as this newspaper is widely distributed and read by most teachers. I would also like you to pass on this information to the Second Vice President and the district representatives on the Professional Advancement Committee.

I have attached an *Information Sheet*, which gives details about the study. This can be reproduced in its entirety in the TUTOR newspaper. I have also asked teachers who want to take part in the study to contact the Union secretary or me. Their names and addresses can then be forwarded to me by e-mail. I would then contact them and send them *Interviewee Information Packages*.

As always I am very grateful to the union for its support in my professional development and its continued focus on the professional development of all teachers.

I look forward to discussing this research project with you when I return home in March 2000.

Respectfully,

Joyanne De Four-Babb  
7169 Firth Street, Hamilton East, New Zealand  
07-856-1615 (h); 07838-4686 (w); jbd5@waikato.ac.nz  
#3, Julien Trace Cascade, Trinidad and Tobago  
868-624-8238 (h); st.babb@wow.net

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## Are You Interested?

*Are you a secondary school teacher? Would you like to share your understandings and perspectives how you learned to teach? Well this is your opportunity!*

I am a doctoral student at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, under the supervision of Professor Sue Middleton and Associate Professor Beverly Bell. Before I started this programme in January 1999, I was a high school Geography teacher for some 12 years in Trinidad. The data and data analysis in this study will be used for a doctoral thesis and conference papers, seminars and journal articles that emerge from the analysis done in the thesis.

I am interested in talking to secondary teachers who meet all the following conditions (i) started teaching in Trinidad and Tobago between 1969 and 1998; (ii) have been teaching for at least two years and; (iii) started teaching with a subject degree, but without pre-service teacher education. Our conversations will be audio-taped and either a named typist or I will produce typed transcripts from these tapes. You will have the opportunity to consent to that person transcribing your tapes. You will then have the opportunity to make any changes that you wish. I will then produce a final copy of the transcript, which you will get to keep. You will be required to give informed consent for this process and use of data in the projects that come out of this research. If you wish, you can also volunteer to have me observe your classroom and school setting.

You will not be referred to by name in this study. Pseudonyms will be used on all the stored raw data, for all quotations from the transcripts of the audio-taped interview, and for people referred to by the interviewees. Fictitious names will be used for places observed or discussed in interviews. All tapes, computer disks, transcripts and field notes will be securely stored for a maximum of five years after completing my doctoral thesis. After this all raw data will be destroyed. I will be the only person who has access to the interview data.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, please contact me by telephone, e-mail or post at my address in New Zealand before February 15, 2000 and at my address in Trinidad between February 15, 2000 and July 30, 2000. You may also signal your interest to participate to the secretary at Trinidad and Tobago Teacher's Union. That person will then forward your name and address to me. I will then send you an *Interviewee's Information Package*. Persons who wish to take part in this research project are free to withdraw at any stage before their final transcript is returned to them.

Thank you for your time.  
Joyanne De Four-Babb

**APPENDIX C**  
**APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH**

- ▶ **Approval From The Ministry Of Education, Trinidad**
- ▶ **Approval From The University Of Waikato, New Zealand**

E: 1/3/4402



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
ALEXANDRA STREET  
ST CLAIR

31 May, 2000

Ms Joyanne De Four-Babb  
3 Julien Terrace  
Cascade

Dear Mrs Babb

I acknowledge correspondence from the High Commissioner, London wherein a request was made for this Ministry's support which will assist you in collecting data for your doctoral research project, Learning to teach without initial pre-service teacher education: Perspectives and understandings of secondary teachers in Trinidad and Tobago.

Approval is granted for you to approach schools which you should identify for this purpose. Attached is a letter of introduction.

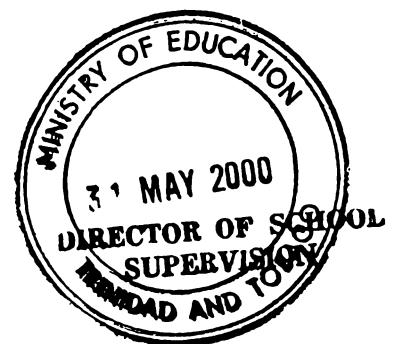
The Ministry of Education is pleased that it can be of assistance to you in this respect and shall be grateful if you will provide us with a copy of the research document.

With best wishes.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Blackman'.

**Janice Blackman**  
**Director of School Supervision (Ag)**  
**/f/ Permanent Secretary**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**



E: 1/3/4402



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

ALEXANDRA STREET

ST CLAIR

31 May, 2000

Dear Principal

This letter serves to introduce Mrs Joyanne De Four-Babb, Teacher II who has been granted a Scholarship Award for a period of three (3) years with effect from January 1999 to enable her to pursue a course of study in Educational Administration (Doctor of Education Degree) at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Mrs De Four-Babb has been granted permission to approach schools for the purpose of collecting data for her doctoral research project.

Any courtesies which can be extended to Mrs De Four-Babb will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Blackman'.

**Janice Blackman**  
**Director of School Supervision (Ag)**  
**17/ Permanent Secretary**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**



Department of Education Studies  
The University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105  
Hamilton, New Zealand

Telephone 64 7-856 2889  
Facsimile 64 7-838 4434



The  
University  
of Waikato  
Te Whare Wānanga  
o Waikato

Chief Personnel Officer,  
Ministry of Education,  
Alexandra Street,  
St. Clair,  
Port-of-Spain,  
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO.

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2000.

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Joyanne De Four-Babb: Doctoral Research Project**

We write to inform you that Joyanne De Four-Babb's doctoral research proposal, Learning to teach without initial pre-service teacher education: Perspectives and understandings of secondary teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, was considered by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the School of Education, University of Waikato, at its December 1999 meeting. The design and procedures outlined were considered satisfactory and ethical approval was given for the research to go ahead. It was recognised, however, that permission to recruit teachers and to conduct this project may also be required from your Ministry and/or other appropriate local organizations in Trinidad & Tobago.

The University of Waikato is extremely pleased to have Joyanne here in New Zealand on its EdD programme, and we wish her all the best for the successful completion of the data collection phase of her thesis work to be conducted back in her home country. We will be most grateful for any assistance and support that your Ministry can provide to facilitate this project, and sincerely hope that this research will be of benefit to the teaching profession in Trinidad & Tobago as well as contributing to Joyanne's own academic and professional development.

Yours faithfully,

Monica A. Payne, PhD  
Chairperson,  
School of Education Human Research Ethics Committee

**APPENDIX D**

**INTERVIEWEES' INFORMATION PACKAGE**

- ▶ **Letter Of Invitation**
- ▶ **Letter Of Thanks**
- ▶ **Information Sheet**
- ▶ **Biographical Data Sheet**
- ▶ **Informed Consent**
- ▶ **Author's Biographical Sketch**

## Letter of Invitation

(Date)

Dear Teachers,

This letter is to request your assistance in my doctoral study. Before going to the University of Waikato to pursue doctoral studies, I taught Geography at the high school level in Trinidad for twelve years. I have always been interested in what we, as teachers, do in the classroom and how we come to learn what we do without formal, pre-service teacher education programmes.

I am collecting stories from 30 secondary teachers in Trinidad and Tobago who began teaching with only a subject degree and no pre-service teacher education or training. I am particularly interested in talking to secondary teachers who have been teaching for at least two years. These teachers should have started in the Teaching Service of Trinidad and Tobago, in the post-independence period between 1969 and 1998. I want you to share with me your perspective and understanding on how you learned to teach. I want you to tell me about your initial teaching experiences, your reason for entering teaching, influences on how you teach, and your ideas about teachers and teaching.

Our conversations will be recorded on audio-tape. A professional typist or I will then transcribe these tapes. The professional typist will sign a statement of confidentiality and you will be informed of the name of that person at our interview. You would have the opportunity then to consent to that person typing your script. To ensure confidentiality of the data, I will label all transcripts, computer disks and tapes with a pseudonym of your choosing. I will then return the transcripts to you for editing, deleting or making changes. You would then return the edited copies to me to make final changes. I then return a corrected copy of the transcript to you for you to keep. Brief, anonymous excerpts of your oral accounts will be used to inform my writing and analysis for my doctoral thesis, and conference papers, journal articles or seminars based on the thesis. If I want to do any further analysis that uses your data, your consent to do this will be elicited at that time.

---

The purpose of my study is to make sense of how personal life experiences, social structure, and the history of education in Trinidad and Tobago have interacted to shape your experience of learning to teach. I also want to explore how some practices in educational settings such as supervising, rules, grouping, setting standards, allocating space, and ranking of groups and individuals help to shape your understanding of teaching and learning. Therefore up to fifteen interviewees will also be involved in observations in their classroom and school settings. These observations are not compulsory and you can indicate whether or not you wish to participate in them on the *Informed Consent* sheet, which is filled in before the interview process.

I believe that your experiences as a teacher are worthwhile and should be shared. This will help other teachers and teacher educators to understand how teachers learn their personal practical knowledge, without formal or supported training. Thank you for your time and consideration to be a participant. I look forward to sharing this journey with you.

Respectfully,

Joyanne De Four-Babb

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**Joyanne De Four-Babb**

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*7169 Firth Street, Hamilton East, New Zealand  
07-856-1615 (h); 07838-4686 (w); jbd5@waikato.ac.nz  
#3, Julien Trace Cascade, Trinidad and Tobago  
868-624-8238 (h); st.babb@wow.net*

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### **Letter of Thanks**

(Date)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (name of teacher),

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my doctoral study. I will be grateful if you read all the documents in this *Interviewee Package* and then complete the *Biographical Data* and *Informed Consent* sheets. You can either post these to my New Zealand address or my address in Trinidad. Alternatively, I can collect them from you when I get to Trinidad. The data on these sheets will be not be made available to anyone else without your written consent.

My supervisors for this study are Professor Sue Middleton and Associate Professor Beverley Bell. They can be contacted at the University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, New Zealand, or by telephone (64-7-838-4500) or fax (64-7-838-4555 or e-mail [edu\\_mid@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:edu_mid@waikato.ac.nz) or [b.bell@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:b.bell@waikato.ac.nz)).

I can be contacted at my address in Trinidad between March 1, 2000 and August 15, 2000. After that date I can be contacted at my New Zealand address.

Respectfully,

## Information Sheet

This doctoral study is based on the understandings and perspectives of some secondary teachers on how they learned to teach without initial pre-service teacher education. My analysis will focus on how biography, social structure and history interact to construct teachers' understandings of how they learned to teach. Secondary teachers who wish to take part in this study must have: (i) started teaching in the post-independence period between 1969 and 1998; (ii) been teaching for at least two years and; (iii) started teaching with a subject degree, but without pre-service teacher education. The project will involve teachers

- participating in one-to-one interviews
- giving informed consent for the interview process and use of data
- editing, deleting and suggesting changes to transcripts
- reviewing the final draft of the analysis of data
- participating in observations at educational settings. This is optional.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the data will be ensured by

- using pseudonyms in the thesis and on all stored raw data for all quotations from the transcripts of the audio-taped interview and for people referred to by the interviewees;
- having transcribers sign a statement of confidentiality
- using fictitious names for places observed or discussed in interviews
- storing all field notes and transcripts securely for a maximum of five years after completing my doctoral thesis; after this all raw data will be destroyed;
- restricting access to interview data to the researcher; returning copies of transcripts to interviewees;
- publicising data analysis only after interviewees have commented on the analysis

The data and data analysis in this study will be used for a doctoral thesis to be completed at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, under the supervision of Professor Sue Middleton and Associate Professor Beverly Bell. The data will also be used in conference papers, seminars and journal articles that emerge from the analysis done in the thesis. Persons who wish to take part in this research project are free to withdraw at any stage before the final transcript is returned to them.

If you have any concerns you may contact me by telephone, e-mail or post at my address in New Zealand address before February 15, 2000 and at my address in Trinidad between February 15, 2000 and July 30, 2000. My supervisors for this project are Professor Sue Middleton and Associate Professor Bell who may be contacted at the University of Waikato, Private Bag, 3105, Hamilton, New Zealand, 64-7-838-4500 (tel.) or 647-838-4555 (fax.).

Thank you for your time.

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## Biographical Data Sheet

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Please fill in the data requested in the spaces provided.

(1) **FULL NAME**

(2) **DATE OF BIRTH**

(3) **EDUCATIONAL HISTORY**

*Primary*

Place

Date

**Secondary**

Place

Date

*Tertiary*

Place

Date

(4) **TEACHING CAREER DETAILS**

Name of Institution

Dates of Service

Position

(5) **OTHER JOBS HELD**

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## Informed Consent

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This form should be read in conjunction with the *Letter of Invitation* and the *Information Sheet*. Please read this document carefully and indicate your consent by signing at the end in the space provided.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (PLEASE PRINT NAME)  
 of \_\_\_\_\_ (ADDRESS)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (TELEPHONE NUMBER) **do consent to**

- being interviewed for this project
- having the interview audio-taped
- having the tape recording transcribed to print
- being informed of the name of the person transcribing the tape and consenting to having that person transcribe the tape
- receiving a copy of the typed transcript for editing, deleting parts or suggesting changes
- ~~reviewing a draft of the analysis of the thesis~~
- having anonymous extracts from the interviews included in the researcher's thesis as well as any publications, seminars and presentations based on the analysis done in the thesis.

**I understand that I can withdraw from the interview part of this study at any time before my final transcript is returned to me.**

**I wish to take part in the observation.     YES                       NO**

~~**If I choose to be observed, I understand that I can withdraw from the observation at any time during the observation; however, withdrawal from the observation does not mean withdrawal from the interview stage, as this is a separate process.**~~

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

## Author's Biographical Sketch

*I have always wanted to be a teacher and I have managed to deal with the challenges that we as teachers face on a daily basis. I have enjoyed working with and learning from my colleagues. I believe that as teachers we make a significant impact on students through our teaching. I have always been an advocate for continued professional development of teachers, whether formally or informally through school-based programmes and interactions with our colleagues. This study gives me the opportunity to hear from teachers their own experiences in learning to teach and I look forward to sharing these stories with you..*

*I am presently a doctoral student at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. I started my programme in January 1999. Before coming to New Zealand on a Commonwealth Scholarship, I taught geography at high schools in Trinidad and Tobago—Trinity College, Moka Maraval from February 1986 to September 1998 and at Bishop Anstey High School between September 1998 and December 1998.*

*In 1985, I completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography and Geology at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. In 1991, I completed a post-graduate diploma in education at UWI, St. Augustine, before moving to the University of Texas, at Austin to pursue a Master of Education in Educational Administration.*

**APPENDIX E**  
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

(This interview schedule was not given to the interviewees. I used this list of questions as a framework for the discussions held with each interviewee.)

### **Consent**

- \* Do you agree to have this interview taped?

### **Reasons For Entering Teaching**

- \* Tell me how and why you entered the teaching profession?
- \* Why teaching? Why secondary school?

### **Process Of Entry Into Teaching**

- \* Please describe your process of entry into the teaching profession.
- \* What academic or professional qualifications did you require for the job?
- \* Please describe your interview.

### **Ideas about teachers and teaching**

- \* When you first began to teach, what was your image of a teacher? Where did these ideas come from?
- \* When you first began to teach, what did you view teaching to be? What did you think that the job of teaching involved?
- \* How did you know what you had to do in the classroom when you first started teaching?
- \* How did you know that your students were learning?

### **Experiences Of Teaching**

- \* How did you feel when you began to teach?
- \* What made you comfortable/uncomfortable in the classroom?
- \* Was there any experience in your first years of teaching that challenged your image of teachers or teaching?
- \* Can you complete this phrase for me “*My first years of teaching were like...*”

### **Support Received As A New Teacher**

- \* What sort of support did you get as a new teacher from the Ministry of Education?

- \* What sort of support did you get as a new teacher from personnel at the school level?

### **The Post-Graduate Diploma In Education (DipEd)?**

- \* Did you do the post-graduate Diploma in Education (DipEd)?
- \* What prompted you to do it?
- \* What lessons did you learn from the DipEd?

### **Closure**

- \* What have you learned about teaching from your experiences in classrooms? In staff-rooms? In the schools that you worked in?
- \* Can you complete this phrase for me “ *For me teaching is now like....*”
- \* Is there any other information that you would like to include about your experience of learning to teach?
- \* Can I contact you to clarify any questions about what you have said.
- \* Thank you very much for participating in this Interview.

**APPENDIX F**  
**LETTERS WITH TRANSCRIPT**

- ▶ **Letter And Transcript Consent/Change Pseudonym Form**
- ▶ **Follow Up Letter And Consent Form**

(Date)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (name of interviewee),

I have enclosed the transcript produced from your interview with me on (date) as part of my doctoral study. I/(name of typist) did the transcribing from the audio-tape(s) produced during the interview. I then listened to the tape and underlined in red parts of the dialogue where the names of places and people are mentioned in the interview. If any of these sections are used in the thesis, they will be replaced by pseudonyms. The enclosed version of the transcript maintains the natural rhythms of speech used in the interview. Please remember that your transcript is 'raw data' and only short excerpts will be used in the thesis or papers and presentations generated from the thesis.

I would like you to read your transcript. If you have no other changes, please complete and sign the attached form and return this form to me in the pre-addressed and stamped envelope. You may keep the transcript. If you have made any changes or suggestions, please write them onto the transcript and return it to me for re-editing. I will make your suggested corrections and return the re-edited version of the transcript to you.

I enjoyed our interviews and have relived that happy and memorable experience by listening to the tapes. These tapes will not be copied. They will be securely stored for five years after I finish my thesis. This is in keeping with the University of Waikato's regulations. At that time your tapes will be returned.

I would again like to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind co-operation.

Respectfully,

Joyanne

***Please remember to fill in and return the attached form.***

**Transcript Consent/Change Pseudonym Form**

***IMPORTANT***  
**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO ME AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE**

(Date)

Dear Joyanne,

**I have received the edited transcript of my interview.**

**(Please tick which applies to you)**

- ◇ **My transcript can be used as raw data, provided that the conditions of the original *Informed Consent Form* are met.**
- ◇ **I would like you to make changes to the transcript as indicated on the enclosed corrected version.**
- ◇ **You may to use the pseudonym decided upon before the start of the interview.**
- ◇ **I wish to change my pseudonym to \_\_\_\_\_**

**Real name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Please print your real name and sign this letter)*

## Follow Up Letter For Transcript

(Date)

Dear

I have edited your transcript as indicated by you on an earlier copy. Please re-read the changes and fill in the enclosed form.

Again thank you for your insights and you will be hearing from me soon about the progress of my research.

Joyanne

**Follow Up Transcript Consent Form**

***IMPORTANT***

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO ME AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE**

Dear

Although I have received and returned the edited transcript of your interview

- (i) I have not received your final consent form**
  
- (ii) I have received your final consent form, but you omitted the following:**
  - (a) Date**
  - (b) Indication for use of raw data**
  - (c) Indication for use of pseudonym**
  - (d) Signature**

**I have enclosed another consent form. Please complete it and return it to me in the pre-addressed and stamped envelope included in this package.**

**Again thank you for your time and stories.**

*Joyanne*

**APPENDIX G**  
**NUD\*IST INDEX TREE**

Q.S.R. NUD\*IST Power Version, revision 4.0  
Licensee:

**PROJECT: EDD Thesis, User Joyanne, 9:13pm, Nov 8, 2000**

- (1) **/Entry Process**
- (1 2) /Entry process/reasons
- (1 3) /Entry Process/qualifications
- (2) **/Teacher image**
- (2 2) /Teacher image/good teachers
- (2 3) /Teacher image/bad teachers
- (2 4) /Teacher image/source of image
- (2 5) /Teacher image/Personal interpretation
- (2 6) /Teacher image/Conflicting images
- (3) **/Descriptions of teaching**
- (3 1) /Descriptions of teaching/metaphors
- (3 1 1) /Descriptions of teaching/metaphors /early years
- (3 1 2) /Descriptions of teaching/metaphors/ Present experience
- (3 1 3) /Descriptions of teaching/metaphors /words
- (3 2) /Descriptions of teaching/thought job involved
- (3 3) /Descriptions of teaching/realities of teaching
- (3 3 1) /Descriptions of teaching/realities of teaching  
/comfortable
- (3 3 2) /Descriptions of teaching/realities of  
teaching/uncomfortable
- (4) **/Support/**
- (4 1) /Support/Types
- (4 2) /Support/administrative
- (4 3) /Support/collegial
- (4 4) /Support/ministry
- (5) **/DipEd experience**
- (5 1) /DipEd experience/yes
- (5 1 1) /DipEd experience/yes/rationale
- (5 1 2) /DipEd experience/No: Why not
- (5 2) /DipEd experience/No: Why not/what's missing
- (5 2 2) /DipEd experience/No: Why not/plans
- (5 2 4) /DipEd experience/Teaching Diploma
- (6) **/Student learning**
- (6 1) /Student learning/Perception of the process of student  
learning
- (6 2) /Student learning/indicators
- (6 3) /Student learning/constraints
- (7) **/Learning to teach**
- (7 1) /Learning to teach/lessons learned from teaching
- (7 2) /Learning to teach/Perception of own learning as a student
- (8) **/Base Data**
- (8 1) /Base Data/Age, sex, entry dates, school
- (8 7) /Base Data/previous work experience
- (8 8) /Base Data/teaching family
- (8 9) /Base Data/education
- (9) **/Interview**
- (11) **/Recommendations for Training**
- (D) //Document Annotations
- (F) **//Free Nodes**
- (F 1) //Free Nodes/school culture and teaching
- (F 2) //Free Nodes/primary & secondary dilemma

(F 3) //Free Nodes/Professionalism  
(F 4) //Free Nodes/Stories to live by  
(F 5) //Free Nodes/Colonial legacy  
(F 6) //Free Nodes/reflective practitioners  
(F 7) //Free Nodes/OJT  
(F 8) //Free Nodes/personal characteristics  
(F 9) //Free Nodes/Rural vs urban  
(F 10) //Free Nodes/teacher attitude towards teaching  
(F 11) //Free Nodes/Salary  
(F 12) //Free Nodes/race  
(F 13) //Free Nodes/politics of education  
(F 14) //Free Nodes/Male:Female dilemmas in teaching  
(F 15) //Free Nodes/marriage between teachers  
(T) //Text Searches/  
(T 1) //Text Searches/Professional  
(T 2) //Text Searches/Father  
(T 3) //Text Searches/Confidence  
(T 4) //Text Searches/Swim  
(T 5) //Text Searches/System  
(T 6) //Text Searches/Boys  
(T 7) //Text Searches/Girls  
(T 8) //Text Searches/Uncomfortable  
(T 9) //Text Searches/Female teacher  
(T 10) //Text Searches/Male teacher  
(T 11) //Text Searches/Male student  
(T 12) //Text Searches/Female student  
(T 13) //Text Searches/Leave the job  
(T 14) //Text Searches/feel when you began to teach  
(T 15) //Text Searches/Feel  
(T 16) //Text Searches/Dress  
(T 17) //Text Searches/How did you know  
(T 18) //Text Searches/DipEd  
(I) //Index Searches/  
(C) //Node Clipboard - 'practices that enhance student learning'

**APPENDIX H**  
**EXAMPLES OF NUD\*IST DATA**

## Organisation of Interview Data Using NUD\*IST

**Step One:** The original transcript data as saved on the computer disks, had to be reformatted before it could be imported into NUD\*IST. The transcript data was converted to Courier 10 font and saved as a Text Only document. Each sentence was separated for identification as a unit of organisation.

### *Example Of Reformatted Interview Data*

J: When you first started teaching, when you entered that classroom, what did you know about teaching?  
What did you think the job of teaching involved?

R: Hmm.

Well I knew that it was going to involve teaching of curriculum and syllabus etc.

, but I knew that it was going to involve so much more.

And I think that is where I felt inadequate and I felt that there was going to be the problem in that I did not feel that it was going to be difficult for me to explain literature.

I felt that it was going to be difficult for me to keep the class quiet or for me to teach values.

So I supposed the problems I had in my mind were about the teaching, which is exactly what this is about, because I felt I would not know how to teach.

I know what to teach.

But I am not sure that I was going to know how to teach.

**Step Two:** Each imported interview was coded with the interview number, the interviewee's pseudonym, the date of the interview, sex, age, type of schools they taught at, year of entry, and Diploma of Education experience.

### *Example Of A Recognition Code For Interview Data From Rhonda*

\*RhondaA1250500/F28/SC94/GS96/DipEdNO

**Step Three:** The interview data from all interviews was sorted into relevant nodes as listed in Appendix G. Data that did not fit the nodes were stored at the Free Nodes. Each bit of interview data appeared with the recognition code and line numbers.

### *Three Examples Of Data At Node Browser (7) Learning To Teach*

Window: Node Browser: (7) Mon, 27 Nov 2000 11:25:23 AM

+++++

ON-LINE DOCUMENT: 05/03Jessel180300

\*03/03Jessel180300/F39/GS85/GS98/DipEd92

+++++

[05/03Jessel180300 : 68 - 77]

Jy: How did you know how to teach?

J: You didn't.

I didn't know.

I just tried to do something that would make the class interesting but also get across the information.

So you just...and also, you spoke to other teachers.

But, unfortunately for me these other teachers—one was extremely old [Laughs] well very old and the other one was no help for me.

So I just had to go on...also what I remembered being taught back in school by [name of teacher] or whoever.

It was basically left to me to do whatever I thought was best, you know.

++++  
ON-LINE DOCUMENT: 07/08Andi180400(R)  
\*08AndiB180400/F41/AS86/DipEd95

++++  
[07/08Andi180400(R) : 182-185

J: How did you know what you had to do when you got into the classroom?

A: What I had to do? I talked to my mum a lot and although she taught infants I got a lot of good advice from her.

++++  
ON-LINE DOCUMENT: 08/13Maya B120500  
\*13MayaB120500/F34/PS89/JS89/DipEd94

++++  
[13MayaB120500 : 176-188]

J: So where would you have picked up that sort of information on how to teach?

M: The main source would have been taking like what I saw in teachers that I thought were good and try to adopt their methods.

I know for sure you could not only talk and just tell and being a Science teacher I knew for sure they had to do because as a science student we had the labs and whatever.

So as much as possible I would try to give them the labs and stuff like that.

And definitely not have children—this was in the beginning—because for me letting children write a whole bunch of notes and not even saying anything or even giving them an introduction or something to it.

I could not have learnt like that.

I like a teacher who would come into class "Good morning. How are you? Today we are going to do so and so.

" Get a conversation going before you actually get into it because as a student I found that was good for me.

And I thought well I better try it like this.

It was difficult too at first to do a lot of the labs and stuff because of where I was.

I was in the other classroom out there which was not too conducive to the lab work and stuff.

And that was it really.

**Step Four:** I printed and read the data for each node. I made comments in the margins of the printed text with coloured markers and noted items suitable for using in the thesis text.

#### *Example Of Preliminary Analysis*

M: The main source would have been taking like what I saw in teachers that I thought were good and try to adopt their methods. *adopting teachers' methods*

I know for sure you could not only talk and just tell and being a Science teacher I knew for sure they had to do because as a science student we had the labs and whatever. *influence of subject -science as practical*

So as much as possible I would try to give them the labs and stuff like that.

And definitely not have children-this was in the beginning-because for me letting children write a whole bunch of notes and not even saying anything or even giving them an introduction or something to it. *what she will not do in teaching*

I could not have learnt like that. *Personal learning style influencing what she would do in classroom*

**APPENDIX J**  
**TEACHERS' REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE**

# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TEACHERS' REGISTER



## REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

NAME .....

DATE OF BIRTH ..... REGISTRATION NO. ....

**This certifies that the above named person has been duly entered in the Register of Teachers required to be kept under section 48 (1) of the Education Act No. 1 of 1966 and that he/she is now eligible to teach in schools of Trinidad and Tobago.**

.....  
*Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Education and Culture*

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NOTE: This Certificate is the property of the Ministry of Education and Culture and must be produced on demand. A charge of \$5.00 is payable before receipt of the Certificate or any replacement of a lost Certificate.

*Government Printery*

**APPENDIX K**  
**APPLICATION FORMS FOR**  
**SECONDARY TEACHING**


- ▶ **Letter From Secondary And Further, Ministry Of  
Education**
- ▶ **Application Forms**

**S&F A.O. II  
REV 10/99**

**Secondary and Further  
Ministry of Education  
Alexandra Street, St. Clair  
Port of Spain**

**DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR  
A TEACHING POSITION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL, TECHNICAL  
INSTITUTE AND TRAINING COLLEGE**

- (1) Application for employment Form S.C. – 124 in duplicate.
  - (2) The original and two (2) copies of each of the following documents: —
    - (a) Birth Certificate with supporting Statutory declaration, if necessary.
    - (b) Marriage Certificate with supporting Statutory Declaration, if necessary (female).
    - (c) Academic Qualifications—
      - (i) Certificate/Diploma(s).  
N.B. In cases where statements from the Examination Section, Ministry of Education, are to be used in lieu of Certificate/diploma, two (2) original statements are required.
      - (ii) Two (2) copies of the official transcript of your degree(s), which must be sent by the University/Institute directly to the above address.
    - OR
    - (iii) Two (2) copies of the official transcript of the Craftsman/Technician Diploma, which must be sent by the National Examination Council of Trinidad and Tobago directly to the above address.
  - (d) Documentary evidence of at least two (2) years Industrial Experience, after having obtained the Craftsman Diploma, referred to at (c) — (iii).
  - (e) Two (2) testimonials, not from members of the Teaching Service, and not older than six (6) months at the time of application.
  - (f) Teachers' Registration Certificate.
  - (g) Two (2) passport size photographs not more than three (3) months old.
3. **YOU ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO FURNISH SOME FORM OF IDENTIFICATION E.G. IDENTIFICATION CARD OR PASSPORT. ALL APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY HAND AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS, SO THAT ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS CAN BE RETURNED.**

GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO				Do not write in this space	
<b>APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT</b>				Identification Card Number	
1. State the position required			2. Date from which available		
3. Surname		Given Names		Maiden Name (if any)	
4. Present Address			5. Telephone Number		
6. Date of Birth		7. Country of Birth		8. Nationality at birth	9. Present nationality
An original Birth Certificate must be furnished together with a copy. The original Birth certificate will be returned. Neither a Certificate of Registry of Birth nor a Baptismal Certificate is sufficient.					
10. Have you taken up legal permanent resident status in any country other than that of your nationality? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If answer is "yes," explain fully:					
12 Sex Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	13. Height	14. Weight	15. Language	16. Marital Status Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Widow(er) <input type="checkbox"/>	
17. Father's name (even if deceased)			18. Father's occupation		
19. Father's Address			20. Mother's Maiden name (even if deceased)		
21. Name of Dependants		Date of Birth (Day, Month, Year)		Relationship	
22. EDUCATION—Mention the Schools, Colleges, etc., at which you received your Education. Original Certificates, academic documents etc., together with copies must be submitted. The original documents will be returned.					
Institutions	Date of		Examinations and Year	Passed	Certificates /Diplomas Obtained
	Entry	Leaving			

