Stakeholders' Perceptions of the JBTE Teaching-Practice Benchmarks: a Descriptive Exploration of Two Teachers' Colleges in Jamaica

Hyacinth Paulina Rose
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Andrews University
School of Education

STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE JBTE TEACHING-PRACTICE BENCHMARKS: A DESCRIPTIVE EXPLORATION OF TWO TEACHERS' COLLEGES IN JAMAICA

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Hyacinth Paulina Rose
March 2007
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by

Hyacinth Paulina Rose

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE

Chair: Larry D. Burton

Member: Shirley Freed

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External: Susan Karrer

Dean, School of Education
James R. Jeffery

Date approved 03/26/07

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ABSTRACT

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by

Hyacinth Paulina Rose

Chair: Larry D. Burton
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University
School of Education

Title: STAKEHOLDERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE JBTE TEACHING-PRACTICE BENCHMARKS: A DESCRIPTIVE EXPLORATION OF TWO TEACHERS’ COLLEGES IN JAMAICA

Name of researcher: Hyacinth Paulina Rose

Name and degree of faculty chair: Larry D. Burton, Ph.D.

Date completed: March 2007

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the implementation of and perceptions of the Joint Board of Teacher Education benchmarks for teaching practice, or student teaching. Data were gathered concerning how the benchmarks were implemented and the perceptions of multiple stakeholders regarding the adequacy of their implementation. Additionally, stakeholders were asked about the possible need for including some benchmarks from the USA in order to create an ideal teaching-practice program in Jamaica.
Method

This study used a multiple descriptive case study design. Two teacher training institutions in Jamaica were purposively selected. From each of these institutions a focus group of 8 student teachers and a focus group of 8 supervisory faculty members were purposively selected as informants. Student teachers were sampled from the primary (elementary) and secondary (post-primary) programs. Both genders were included in the study. Interviews and conversations were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Document analysis and observations provided additional data that were coded, using the constant-comparison approach. Participants in the study assisted in the verification of the results by reviewing the transcriptions and making comments.

Results

Themes that emerged from the study revealed that most stakeholders perceive the teaching practice program to be important, and implementation of a majority of the benchmarks to be adequate. Stakeholders from the two teachers' colleges assert that the JBTE Assessment Instrument needs to be upgraded to reflect the changes experienced in the technology-oriented, 21st-century classroom. Stakeholders perceive that additional USA benchmarks, if included in the JBTE benchmarks, could create an "ideal" teaching-practice program for Jamaica.

Conclusion

The teaching-practice exercise is a worthwhile and meaningful learning experience, and the JBTE benchmarks are relevant and appropriate in some situations. The benchmarks need to reflect more completely the diverse needs of the student
teachers, the supervisory faculties, and all students in the classroom, including students with special needs. The benchmarks need to be upgraded to particularly measure the skills, content, and attitudes of the student teachers’ performance. Teaching practice needs a change of names, for example, “school practice” and “teacher candidate,” that reflect more precisely the role of prospective teachers.
To my husband Ralston Richard who loved, supported, and kept
Constant vigil over me throughout this labor of love;
Our daughter Pauline and our sons, Ruthven,
Dwight, Michael, and Charles, whose
Encouragement, humor, and
Financial support kept me
Awake, resilient, and
Cheerful.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................... ix
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................. x
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................................................. xi

Chapter

1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM ............................................................. 1
   Introduction ........................................................................................................... 1
   Teaching-Practice in Jamaica: Need for Reform ............................................. 3
   Perceptions and Realities of the Field ............................................................ 8
   Statement of the Problem ............................................................................... 11
   Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................ 12
   Research Questions ......................................................................................... 13
   Significance of the Study ............................................................................... 14
   Conceptual Framework .................................................................................. 15
   Validity of Benchmarking .............................................................................. 17
   Overview of the Research Methodology ....................................................... 18
   Definitions of Terms ...................................................................................... 19
   Delimitations ..................................................................................................... 23
   Summary ........................................................................................................... 23

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .......................................................... 25
   Introduction ........................................................................................................ 25
   Student Teachers as Adult Learners ............................................................... 26
   Assumptions About Adult Learners ............................................................... 27
      Adults Learn Differently ............................................................................. 27
      Benefits Gained From Adult Learning ....................................................... 28
      Research Helps Prepare Student Teachers as Adult Learners ............... 28
      Different Learners, Different Methods ....................................................... 29
      Experienced Voices Speak Out ................................................................. 30
   Theory and Practice in Teacher Preparation: Historical Perspective .......... 31
      Theory ........................................................................................................... 32
      Practice ......................................................................................................... 35
      Theory and Practice: Bridging the Gap ...................................................... 37
   Teaching-Practice Programs in Jamaica: Historical Perspective ............... 39
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining Access</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Sample</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for Selection</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Selection Criteria</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Selection and Sample</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Time Frame</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Lists</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Sources of Data</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews and Conversations</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Interview</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interview</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group Interview</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Protocols</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Notes</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Data</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures for Data Analysis</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness Issues</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalizability</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self as Research Instrument</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching-Practice Cycle</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the School Community</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mico College</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile of the Student Teacher: Mico .......................................102
Teacher Education Academic Program: Mico..........................103
The Diploma Level................................................................103
Teaching-Practice Program: Mico............................................105
Requirements for Program Completion....................................107
The Teaching-Practice Curriculum: Mico...............................109
Description of Host School: Mico............................................111
Profiles of Participants..............................................................112
Teaching Practice and Supervision...........................................114
Teaching-Practice Placement System.................................115
Evaluating the Benchmarks: Mico............................................117
Teaching-Practice Awards: Mico..............................................118
Church Teachers' College........................................................118
Profile of the Student Teacher: CTC ........................................121
Teacher Education Academic Program: CTC ..........................123
The Diploma Level................................................................123
Teaching-Practice Program: CTC ............................................123
Requirements for Program Completion  .........................124
Teaching-Practice Curriculum: CTC........................................125
Description of Host Schools: CTC............................................127
Profiles of Participants..............................................................128
Teaching Practice and Supervision...........................................130
Teaching-Practice Placement System: CTC.............................131
Evaluating the Benchmarks: CTC............................................133
Teaching-Practice Awards: CTC..............................................133
Observation: Implementing the Benchmarks ..........................134
Summary..................................................................................137

5. THE JBTE BENCHMARKS: IMPLEMENTATION AND ISSUES......138

Introduction ..............................................................................138
Descriptions of Participants......................................................139
Benchmarks: The Student Teachers’ Guide ..........................140
Descriptions of the Joint Board of Teacher Education..............143
Functions of the JBTE ..............................................................145
JBTE Benchmarks for Year 3 Student Teachers ......................145
Research Results......................................................................148
Themes From the Data Sources: Research Questions ..........149
Informants’ Perceptions: The Mico College ........................150
Knowledge and Communication of the Benchmarks... 150
Implementing the Benchmarks..............................................152
Evaluation of the Benchmarks..............................................158
Informants’ Perceptions: Church Teachers’ College.......... 159
Knowledge and Communication of the Benchmarks... 160
Implementing the Benchmarks..............................................162
Appendices

A. CORRESPONDENCE ..............................................................219
B. JBTE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT 2004 .........................228
C. INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS ..............................................231
D. DEMOGRAPHICS AND THEMES ..................................236
E. ADDITIONAL DATA TABLES ...........................................239

REFERENCE LIST ............................................................252
VITA ......................................................................................272
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Structure of the Joint Board of Teacher Education</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teaching-Practice Cycle</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teaching-Practice Placement System: Mico</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teaching-Practice Evaluation Process</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teaching-Practice Placement System: CTC</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

1. Teacher Qualification Defined ................................................................. 6
2. Teacher Classification and School Types ................................................... 8
3. Information and Sources ......................................................................... 88
4. Single-Subject Arrangement: The Mico College ...................................... 105
5. Double-Option Arrangement: The Mico College ...................................... 106
6. Curriculum Structure: The Mico College .................................................. 112
7. Single-Option Arrangement: CTC ............................................................. 125
8. Curriculum Structure: CTC ..................................................................... 126
9. Items Difficult to Implement: Mico Informants, List B ............................ 160
10. Items Difficult to Implement: CTC Informants, List B ............................... 170
11. Combined Selection of Items Difficult to Implement: List B...................... 173
12. Unlabeled Benchmarks Matrix: List A ..................................................... 183
13. Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B ............................................................... 190
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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

I have come to a frightening conclusion, I am the decisive element in the classroom; it is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized.

--Haim Ginott, Teacher and Child

Introduction

Nationally and internationally, the greatest want of today's community of learners is the want of teachers—qualified, competent, nurturing teachers. These teachers will work among students regardless of race, color, religious persuasion, language, or cultural barriers (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Moses & Chang, 2006). White (1948) expressed concern about the state of such teachers when she stated, "Promising young men and women should be educated to become teachers . . . whose hearts were filled with love" (p. 201).

Education is a perpetual process of change embracing diverse cultures (Chang, Seltzer, & Kim, 2005; Council of Europe, 2004). Teacher educators need not model the autocratic, teacher-centered behavior described by Ginott (1972). They need to provide prospective teachers with a nurturing environment in which they will learn to teach all children with diverse needs (Goldhaber, 2002). Children need facilitators, flexible
humans who can teach with understanding (Tatto, 1999), with tact, and a consciousness for existing diversities (Carter, 2002; White, 1948), and for the realities of life in the classroom (Holloway, 2001).

Jamaica, like other countries in the world, has been plagued with the problem of providing quality education for its children (Haughton, 1997). It is an undisputed fact that prospective teachers in Jamaica are accountable for the delivery of quality education which is dependent upon effective implementation of standards/benchmarks. The lack of good quality was evidenced by scathing remarks from a member of the National Council on Education, in the Jamaican press that teachers were not intellectually, physically, or psychologically prepared to cope with the training of the nation's children (Thompson, 2002).

Research evidence supports the claim that it is crucial to change the way in which prospective teachers are prepared (Ball, 2001; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Bourke, 2001; Brown & Bailey, 1997; Bush, 2002; Cannings & Talley, 2003; Carter, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Evans, 1989, 1993, in press; Goeyman, 2000; Holloway, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Lieberman, 1995; Miller, 1995, 2002; Moore, 2003; Perry, 2000; Samaras & Freese, 2006; Segall, 2003; Shantz, 2000; Taylor, 2004; Villegas-Reimers, & Reimers, 1996). Teacher preparation demands more than content and pedagogical knowledge (Evans, 1997, 1998; Evans, Davies, & Tucker, 2002; Pemberton, Rademacher, Wood, & Perez Cereijo, 2006). It needs to focus on diversity, social issues, and the special moral needs of children within the environment in which they live and learn (Bennett, 1995; Billings-Ladson, 2000; Carter, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2004; Goldhaber, 2002; Moses & Chang, 2006).
My thesis statement for this study is that The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) benchmarks (standards or principles for assessing quality in teacher performance) to a great extent determine the quality of prospective teachers (JBTE, 2003) in Jamaica. Given adequate training, student teachers can impact more positively on the lives and learning of all children (Wise, 2006a). Teachers' colleges have an important role in nurturing student teachers in administering the JBTE benchmarks in order to achieve a better quality education for all children.

This multiple descriptive case study was an effort to explore the ways in which the JBTE benchmarks were implemented during teaching practice. Teaching practice is the student teacher's first exposure to the responsibilities of the real classroom, under the joint supervision of the college supervisor and the cooperating teacher (Huling, 1998; Turney, 1982). Since such a study had never been attempted in-depth in Jamaica, this attempt is both timely and significant to the country and the field of teacher education.

Teaching Practice in Jamaica: Need for Reform

Strong consensus, both nationally and internationally, exists that the state has an important role to play in ensuring quality education (Education Commission of the States, 2006). However, there is a lack of agreement regarding the most effective ways in which to facilitate that objective (Errol Miller, personal communication, Joint Board of Teacher Education Conference, Kingston, August 2003).

Jamaica, the largest English-speaking Island in the Caribbean, has a mixed ethnic population of over 2.5 million people. The island is 150 miles long and has widths of 22 and 51 miles respectively (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2004). There are 13 public and non-public teacher-training institutions situated in the three counties of Cornwall, Middlesex,
and Surrey. One teachers’ college is located in Montego Bay, Jamaica’s second city, and six are in the capital city of Kingston. Others are located as follows: one in Portland, one in St. Catherine, two in Manchester, one in St. Elizabeth, and one in St. Ann (Rose & Rose, 1997).

During teaching practice, student teachers have been placed in host schools as far as 30 rugged, winding, traffic-jammed miles away from the institutions of training. Transportation costs to commute and the Shift School System, that is, schools operated by accommodating two different sets of school-age children for the day; one set in the morning and one set in the afternoon—have become debatable issues about teachers’ and students’ time being spent unproductively.

The education system is managed by a central governmental body—the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEYC)—in tandem with the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) and the University of the West Indies (UWI). These three organizations act in cooperation to govern the training and certifying of the nation’s teachers (Brown, 1999; JBTE, 2005a).

The school system in which the student teachers practice their teaching skills is comprised of pre-primary (early childhood), primary (elementary), all-age, junior high, and secondary schools. The system is designed for 14 to 15 years of formal education for students of 4 plus years old to 17 or 18 years old. The pupil-teacher ratio was 34:1 in the primary, 18:1 in the junior high, and 26:1 in the secondary schools (Brown, 1999; Thompson, 2002). Student teachers sometimes practice in classes of 40 or more students (Brown, 1999; Evans, 1997).
With a cohort of over 20,000 teachers in the public school system, many of them “untrained” that is not having the necessary teacher certification (Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996), student teachers are faced with the challenge of not having an experienced cooperating teacher to adequately monitor and nurture them. Subsequently, it has not been unusual for a secondary trained teacher to teach in a primary school (Evans, in press). In 1989 many of the teacher training institutions in Jamaica were staffed with faculty who held undergraduate/bachelor’s degrees.

University/college lecturers were not required to have a graduate/Master’s degree (Evans, 1989). The minimum qualification of the college lecturer was a first degree in the subject taught by the lecturer, 5 years of teaching experience, and professional qualification that is a Diploma in teacher education. Engagement in research was not a requirement (Evans et al., 2002). In addition, college lecturers’ major responsibilities included instruction in the content and methodology of subjects/courses. They were required to conduct field experiences including the supervision of student teachers (Evans et al., 2002).

In 2002, at the tertiary level, university/college faculties had a cohort of approximately 302 lecturers. Only 107 of them had graduate and postgraduate/doctorate degrees (Thompson, 2002). This meant that less than a third of the lecturers at the teachers’ colleges were at a satisfactory level of qualification, having a graduate/Master’s degree or above (Evans, 1998; Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996).

Data from the Economic and Social Survey Jamaica 2004 (Table 1) showed that 23,018 teachers serve in the education system. Of this cohort 19,294 (83%) were trained, 1,963 (9%) were pre-trained, and 1,761 (8%) were untrained (Planning Institute of...
Table 1

Teaching Qualification Defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Definition/Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trained Graduate</td>
<td>Degreed university-trained teacher with teacher Diploma and or Certificate from UWI or teachers’ college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Trained Teacher/Instructor</td>
<td>College-trained teacher/instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pre-trained Graduate</td>
<td>University graduate without teaching Diploma (professional teaching components)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Pre-trained Tertiary-Level Graduate</td>
<td>Tertiary-level teacher without teaching Diploma (Content specialist with college/university training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Untrained Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher with secondary certification, but without teaching Diploma</td>
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Note. Data taken from The Economic and Social Survey, Jamaica 2004, by the Planning Institute of Jamaica, April 2005.

Jamaica, 2005). Implications for teacher preparation and teaching-practice are that student teachers may not have seasoned or experienced cooperating teachers to mentor them during the teaching-practice training exercise. Stakeholders in Jamaica have expressed concern that the teacher preparation programs are of low quality (Evans, 1989). Teachers have been classified into categories of untrained, pre-trained, and trained.

Quality is defined as conformance to standards, or competent or adequate as meeting set standards (Merriam-Webster, 1998, p. 1858). Haughton (1997) defined quality as satisfaction of the prescribed standards for effective teaching. In this study quality refers to satisfaction and acceptance, or adequacy of the prescribed standards of effective teaching.
Thompson (2002) proposed that the quality of education reveals itself in the teaching, and qualification of teachers (Table 2). The qualification and placement of teachers in the Jamaican education system (Tables 1 & 2) indicate that only 17% of the teachers lack the necessary qualification to help prepare student teachers in the field (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2005). Although the percentage is small, this could impact negatively on prospective teachers. If student teachers are supervised by cooperating teachers who have limited understanding of the JBTE benchmarks, their teaching-practice experience could be frustrated in the process (Evans, in press).

In addition, student teachers could be frustrated from lecturers who are not adequately prepared with constructivist ways of teaching (Evans, 1989). Consequently, content and pedagogical knowledge, relevant to the academic and cultural needs of the students in the classroom, would be compromised (Bush, 2002; Carter, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). Research has shown (Goldhaber, 2002) that, contrary to public opinion, teachers’ educational levels appear to make a difference in the achievement of students, when the education is related to the subject taught, but advanced degrees do not appear to serve as a good measure of quality in general. There is also some evidence that experienced teachers are more effective with students, but the benefits of additional years of experience appear to level off early in a teacher’s career. (p. 8)
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Trained Graduate</th>
<th>Trained/Pre-trained Teacher</th>
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<th>Un-trained Teacher</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>41</td>
<td>330</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>All-age Grades 7-9</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Secondary high</td>
<td>2,760</td>
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<td>9,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Technical high</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Voc. &amp; Agro. High</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,118</td>
<td>14,176</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>23,018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Data taken from the Economic and Social Survey, Jamaica 2004, by The Planning Institute of Jamaica, April 2005.*

**Perceptions and Realities of the Field**

According to Evans (2003) the new “constructivist” ways of teaching had to be practiced during the teaching practice training period. She pointed out that student teachers should have been learning from university/college supervisors who taught and
modeled teaching in constructivist ways. The proposed change would have implications for curriculum planning and implementation in the teacher education programs. Also implied was the need for a shift in the curriculum, from a content approach to a process approach (Wang & Lin, 2005).

At a practicum workshop held August 2003 at the Jamaica Conference Center, Kingston, Jamaica, there was consensus among the teachers' colleges represented that the drastic changes suggested by Evans (2003) had to be made to the teaching-practice training in order to prepare this new kind of teacher for the new learning, learner-centered classroom in Jamaica (Hyacinth Evans, personal communication, August 2003).

A follow-up meeting of the Practicum Board of Studies, convened January 29, 2004, at the Mico Teachers College in Kingston, Jamaica, strengthened my resolve to research the benchmarks and teaching practice. It became obvious from that meeting and from reading relevant literature that a high level of fragmentation (Ball, 2001; Evans, in press) existed in teacher education programs, nationally and internationally.

In Jamaica each teachers college implemented aspects of its own teaching-practice training without reference or collaboration with the other teacher training institutions (Evans, 2003). Although the JBTE curriculum is identical for all the colleges the dissemination of content may be sometimes compromised. This type of individualized "benchmarking" creates concern for student teachers and the programs as well. One aspect of the discussion focused on the use of an internal assessment/evaluation instrument for the Year 2 teaching-practice training exercise (Hyacinth Evans, personal communication, January 29, 2003).
During the first and second years of the teacher preparation program, the teaching practice exercise is not externally evaluated (JBTE, 2003). Colleges are obliged to conduct their own internal assessment with their own evaluation instruments and record grades for internal purposes (pp. 28-29). Student teachers engage in observation and teaching exercises for brief periods of 1 week of observation and 3 weeks of teaching practice in their second year (p. 29).

One challenging aspect of teacher preparation was that of procuring exemplary clinical sites and "outstanding cooperating teachers" who could model the type of learner-centered instruction advocated by most teacher preparation programs (Huling, 1998, p. 2). That aspect was essential to student teachers' professional preparation. University/college faculty and other school practitioners need to be cognizant that they have a mutual responsibility for preparing aspiring educators who expect their cooperating teacher to be a model of good practice (Weaver & Stanulis, 1996, p. 32).

The teaching-practice exercise is considered "the single most powerful intervention, in a teacher's professional preparation" (Turney, 1982, p. 72). It is like autumn. It excites you and saddens you from beginning to end. Some novice teachers considered the teaching practice as the toughest, most challenging, frustrating, stressful and rewarding experience one can have. It had its own challenges with an uncharted path (Kane, 1996, pp. xii, 1), which showed that teaching was a practice.

Teaching practice continues to provide student teachers with the opportunity to observe and work with real students, teachers, and the curriculum in natural settings (Huling, 1998). Presently, in Jamaica approximately 18% of the teacher education
program time is allocated to the various forms of teaching practice exercise (Evans, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

The overarching problem of implementing the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice programs in Jamaica seems to be a real concern. Jamaica struggles with economic stagnation and fiscal constraints (United States Aid [USAID], 2002). These conditions result in systematic educational challenges including overcrowding—50 to 60 students in one class at the primary and secondary levels. There is also a lack of teaching materials, equipment, and other resources, and a large number of “untrained” teachers (high-school graduates teaching without certification) (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2005; Thompson, 2002).

In spite of policies, teaching-practice guides, curriculum modifications, increased time schedules of teaching practice, the teaching-practice programs in Jamaica are constantly criticized for not being adequate, or of low quality (Brown, 1999; Evans, 1998, in press; Haughton, 1997; Errol Miller, personal communication, 2003; Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). Also, there seems to be a general confluence of perceptions, internationally, that teacher preparation lacks quality (Carter, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). These issues are expressed as:

Consensus exists among researchers that student teachers are not performing at the highest level of their potential. They know their content. They are knowledgeable of the skills, attitudes, and dispositions necessary for the practice of good teaching, but are not presently implementing those practices (Anderson & Greaball, 1990; Ball, 2001;
Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Brown & Bailey, 1997; Dohrer, 1995; Evans, 1998; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Miller, 1995, 2002). Student teachers are often short-changed in the number of hours or weeks required to implement the JBTE benchmarks. In addition there is a lack of support from the cooperating/qualified teachers who were sometimes conveniently absent (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). The challenging conditions in the schools also pose a problem. How could this problem be minimized or solved?


Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this multiple descriptive case study was fourfold: (a) to discover the ways in which the JBTE benchmarks were implemented in the teaching-practice programs in Jamaica; (b) to identify which of the USA benchmarks were currently being used in the teaching-practice programs; (c) to ascertain stakeholders’ perceived need for including USA benchmarks in the JBTE benchmarks in order to formulate an ideal program for Jamaica; and (d) to broaden and enrich the knowledge base in the teaching-practice area of study.

I chose to explore the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) benchmarks for the teaching practice programs in Jamaica through the lens of two sets of research-based standards/benchmarks developed in the United States of America. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Principles describe the minimum standards (benchmarks) for adequacy and accountability requirements for

Jamaica could examine the many examples of successful education projects in countries close to and far away, in an effort to take advantage of the opportunities of partnering and collaboration with established institutions of teacher education in order to experience educational change (Rice, 2002; Smith, 1992). McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) supported the concept of collaboration or partnership. They suggested that teacher training institutions should build a strong culture that values collegiality, openness, and trust rather than detachment and territoriality.

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by five research questions which investigated the implementing of the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice programs of 2 teachers’ colleges in Jamaica.

**Research Question 1:** In what ways are the benchmarks of the Joint Board of Teacher Education implemented in the teaching-practice programs in two institutions studied?

**Research Question 2:** Which JBTE benchmarks are implemented in the two teaching-practice programs?

**Research Question 3:** How is the research-based teacher preparation standards of the INTASC and the NCATE aligned with the JBTE benchmarks?
Research Question 4: Which USA benchmarks are currently used in the two teacher preparation programs?

Research Question 5: Which of the USA benchmarks do stakeholders perceive need to be included in the JBTE benchmarks to formulate the ideal program for Jamaica?

Significance of the Study

This multiple descriptive case study was significant in that it provided an opportunity for the stakeholders to identify the strengths and/or weaknesses in implementing the benchmarks in the teaching-practice experience, with intent to make changes. The study gave multiple stakeholders, including student teachers’ a voice in expressing their concerns regarding the adequacy of their preparation for the teaching-practice experience and therefore created an avenue of potential in the teacher preparation programs.

The study created an opportunity for collegiality and collaboration with the international community of educators through exposure to the INTASC Principles and NCATE Standards, which served both state and national clientele and provided quality teacher preparation programs. The study provided data to policymakers and practitioners to inform the way in which the benchmarks could be implemented more effectively in the teaching-practice experience. The study also paved the way for further research in an area of national interest. The study could help policymakers consider meaningful changes to the teaching-practice process for the emergent teacher and 21st-century classrooms.
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study establishes the parameters for implementing the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice program. It is developed around constructivist knowledge and experiential learning (Dewey, 1964, p. 27) and relies on qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2003) to provide the foundation for this study. This framework provides a forum for understanding needed or actual directions of the area under study (Rojewski, 2002, pp. 7-10) and therefore creates openness to new and emerging information.

The framework for this study is built around six broad concepts. The first framework component is the alignment of the Jamaican JBTE teaching-practice benchmarks with those of verified, researched teacher education models, INTASC Principles, and NCATE Standards. The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) benchmarks were developed to provide quality standard-based assurance for the teaching profession in Jamaica (JBTE, 2003). The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Principles or Standards in the USA were prepared with the philosophy that what teachers know and do make the most difference in what children can learn (Darling-Hammond, 2004). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the USA represents the standard of excellence in teacher preparation, ensuring high-quality teacher output for the workplace (NCATE, 2001).

The second framework component is the concept of student teachers as adult learners. Most student teachers are adult learners in that they are above 19 years old. The university/college supervisors are also adult learners, and need to monitor their own learning (Lawler, 2003). Findings from a study (McNair, 2004) showed that “adult
learners learned differently as they brought a leavening influence on younger learners in a mixed group" setting. They also brought experience, and their expectations from the experience were different from the expectations of 17-year-olds (pp. 1-3).

The third framework component is the teaching-practice program and its development. The teacher education programs in Jamaica as well as in the USA seem more intense than other academic programs. The credit hours needed to complete most undergraduate programs are 120 credits, while in teacher education the range was between 129 and 134 credits (Feistritzer, 1999, p. 1). In the Jamaican context, the number of credit hours for the diploma program ranges from 113 to 115 credits (JBTE, 2003).

The fourth framework component is the theory and practice controversy. Theory and practice have been an area of controversy at least as far back as 1901 when Dewey (1962) advocated that practice was integral to the development of life skills. According to Evans (1993), theory was taught and learned as an academic subject, and there was little provision for relating or situating concepts in activity.

The fifth framework concept focuses on benchmarks. Larter and Donnelly (2002) described benchmarks as “information designed to demystify the goals of education, and illuminate the nature of good performances for teachers, students and parents” (p. 60). Benchmarks as an embodiment of standards or performance indicators (Pugh, Coates, & Adnett, 2005) provide a capstone experience (Desmond & Stengel, 1997; Morse, 1999; Shoaf, 2000), and are designed to instruct, guide, evaluate, modify, or change performance towards best practice or a quality experience in the educational field. Benchmarks also serve to protect the profession from developing “weak” teacher preparation programs (Blair, 2006, p. 5).
Finally, the social conditions that militate against the teaching-practice experience are many and varied. Among these challenges are the student teachers’ fears. Student teachers go through stages that cause them concern, and sometimes this frustrates them (Fuller, 1969). College supervisors are also seen as a source of frustration for student teachers as conflicts with personalities and unexpressed expectations of supervisors develop among them (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Evans, 1989, JBTE, 1997). Expressions of unreal and imagined expectations about children and the classroom (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre, Byrd, & Fox, 1996; Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996) are other sources of concern.

Validity of Benchmarking

Larter and Donnelly (2002) described benchmarks as “information designed to demystify the goals of education, and illuminate the nature of good performances for teachers, students and parents” (p. 60). Benchmarks as an embodiment of standards or performance indicators (Pugh et al., 2005) provide a capstone experience (Desmond & Stengel, 1997; Morse, 1999; Shoaf, 2000), and are designed to instruct, guide, evaluate, modify, or change performance towards best practice or a quality experience in the educational field. Benchmarks also serve to protect the profession from developing “weak” teacher preparation programs (Blair, 2006, p. 5).

Benchmarks allow institutions to compare progress and performance, provide information for student teachers to make better choices, inform policy decisions and funding allocations, and contribute to public accountability (p. 25). Benchmarks are designed to improve skill development, promote democracy, and create readiness and willingness for responsible citizenship. They provide leadership as they shape education.
policy for curriculum growth and development (Education Commission of the States, 2006).

Benchmarks/standards provide focus for the task at hand and the type of research necessary for particular situations (Robinson, 2006). They provide avenues for the application of constructivist activities, generated from lived experiences and multiple meanings (Creswell, 2003). The intent of the constructivist approach is to elicit meaningful change for the individual as well as for the organization.

**Overview of the Research Methodology**

This study used a multiple case study design. Two teacher training institutions in Jamaica were purposively selected for the study. A focus group of 8 student teachers and a focus group of 8 supervisory faculty members were purposively selected as informants from each institution. All informants were actively engaged in the teaching practice during the data collection. The student teachers’ focus groups were purposively sampled from lists obtained from the two sampled teacher training institutions. Student teachers were sampled from the primary (elementary) and secondary (post-primary) programs. I conscientiously sought to include both genders in the study.

The supervisory faculty focus groups were purposively sampled from compiled lists of the teaching-practice supervisors and student teachers, which were obtained from the two sampled institutions. Prior to receiving the lists, I telephoned the colleges and made personal visits to confirm my permission to conduct the study.

I purposively sampled 8 informants from each of those lists. Criteria for the purposive sampling were based on the availability and willingness of the faculty members to participate in the study. I then contacted each one by telephone and/or in
person, and requested participation in the study. An outline of possible questions for the interview was given them for their perusal and preparation for the interview or conversation.

Definitions of Terms

The terms for this multiple descriptive case study relating to teaching-practice represented the practice of teaching by student teachers under the supervision of the cooperating teacher in the field or real classroom. Several descriptors, such as student teaching, internship, teaching practice, and ‘practica’ are used interchangeably with practicum. However, for this study the definitions were used parsimoniously.

Adequacy of teaching practice: Relates to the sufficiency for purpose (Merriam-Webster, 1998); sufficient to satisfy a requirement or meet a need (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000). Adequacy of teaching practice implies the ability of the student teachers to satisfactorily integrate content, pedagogical and classroom management skills, with learners, within the time frame allowed and in an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Benchmarking: It is a tool for raising efficiency where the performance of one organization is measured against a standard, either absolute or relative to the performance of the other organization (Cowper & Samuels, 1997). In teacher preparation programs benchmarking refers to the integrating of the standards/benchmarks into the teaching practice program and involving all stakeholders.

Benchmarks: Standards, principles, values, or point of reference used for assessing quality in teacher performance; a level of quality or excellence that is accepted as the norm or by which actual attainments are judged; a foundation of professional
knowledge on which to base decisions (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000; NCATE, 2006).

**Capstone**: This is considered a "high point" or the highest achievement or most important action in a series of actions. Capstone experiences are specifically tailored to the needs of student teachers. These experiences are sometimes offered as courses in teacher education (Desmond & Stengel, 1997; Morse, 1999; Shoaf, 2000).

**Coding**: A system of organizing collected research data into categories to allow for the data to be communicated accurately, briefly, and intelligently. The form of coding utilized in this study is open coding—a process of selecting and naming categories from the analysis of the data. It is the initial stage in data acquisition and relates to describing overall features of the phenomenon under study. Variables are labeled, categorized, and related together in an outline form.

**Cooperating teacher**: The trained, qualified teacher employed to a public or non-public school and responsible for the "mentoring" of the student teacher during the teaching practice exercise. The cooperating teacher helps to convert student teachers into teachers. She or he is a member of the team that supervises student teachers during the internship or the teaching practice; one who teaches in a school and models techniques and practices; supervises the student teacher and/or other professional laboratory experiences.

Synonyms used are classroom teacher, teacher educator (Rose Davies, Hyacinth Evans, & Joan Tucker, personal communication, 2000); laboratory school teacher, critic teacher, master teacher, mentor teacher, directing teacher, resident teacher, and supervising teacher (Machado & Botsnarescue, 2005, p. 4).
Field experience: The experiential training of student teachers, based on the work and teaching of Dewey (1938). The activity typically consisted of observation in schools and classrooms, and student teaching. It was sometimes referred to as early field experiences (Evans, 2000; Huling, 1998; Smith, 1992).

Perceived need: Observed need for inclusion, for closing or bridging a gap in a situation.

Perception: The process that permits individuals to become aware of their environment by selecting, organizing, and interpreting evidence from their senses (Kagan & Segal, 1995, p. 98); the idea is that what one thinks or experiences through the senses may not, in essence, be reality (Knight, 1998). “Perception manifests itself in experience and is a function of the transaction between the qualities of the environment and what we bring to those qualities; It can lead to reality” (Eisner, 1998, p. 63).

Stakeholders: Persons who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group; people who influence or can influence it, as well as those who are affected by it. For the purpose of this study stakeholders are limited to student teachers, principals, college/university supervisors, teacher educators, and cooperating teachers. Parents are excluded from this group.

Student Teacher: Prospective teacher enrolled in a teacher-training institution for 3 years, and is jointly assigned to a host school under the supervision of a trained teacher and university/college supervisor; a student teacher receives a diploma upon the satisfactory completion of the program; a student teacher experiencing a period of guided teaching during which the student takes full responsibility for the work with a given group of learners over a period of consecutive weeks. Synonyms used to describe the
student teacher are teacher candidate, intern, apprentice (Machado & Botnarescue, 2005, p. 4); pre-service teacher (Brown, 1999), and trainees (Bourke, 2001).

Teacher educators: Individuals who assume the role of preparing prospective teachers. They usually lecture student teachers in various courses during the 3-year preparation period in teacher training institutions with responsibility for the supervision of student teachers in the field. Also known as lecturers, college tutors, placement officers, university/college supervisors, supervisory faculty, teaching-practice coordinators and professors (Evans et al., 2002).

Teaching practice experience: The teaching-practice experience refers to the capstone or culminating activity in teacher preparation in which student teachers encounter a first full exposure to teaching responsibilities in real classrooms with real students under the joint supervision of the cooperating teacher and the university/college supervisor (Arends & Winitzky, 1996; Huling, 1998); also referred to as student teaching, practicum, internship, and teaching practice (Brown, 1999; Evans, 1993, in press).

The Jamaica public school system: Comprised of pre-primary (ages 4-6), primary (Grades 1-6), all-age (Grades 1-9), the upper division of all-age schools (more recently renamed junior high), and secondary (Grades 7-11 or 7-13) schools, to which student teachers are sent to do teaching practice, depending on the level for which they were trained. Most of those who pursue the secondary level are not placed beyond Grade 9. With an average teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40 at all levels; several primary and all-age schools have classes as large as 60 pupils. The teacher-pupil ratio at the secondary level varies from a low of 1:20 to a high of 1:35 (Brown, 1999).
The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE): A standards-based quality assurance organization responsible for certifying teachers, and recruiting assessors, external to a given college community. These assessors are assigned the task of examining final-year teachers in classroom practice during the teaching-practice (Brown, 1999, p. 164; JBTE, 2003, 2005a).

Delimitations

This study was confined to two teacher training institutions in order to make it possible to develop thick, rich cases. Thus the results of this study are most appropriately generalized by the reader (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). The sites chosen provide for appropriate and fruitful research relationships (Peshkin, 1997). Participants included student teachers, teacher educators, and placement officers or college supervisors. Supervisory faculty comprised two focus groups, and student teachers were also organized in two focus groups. In this study the informants were purposively sampled based on criteria I established, and their willingness to be a part of a real situation.

Summary

This study drew heavily from literature analysis, speeches made at the annual Teacher Educators’ Conferences in Jamaica, and the Joint Board of Teacher Education Reports on the teaching practice. The research of Evans (1993; in press) of in-depth studies of theory and practice in the teacher education programs (Brown & Bailey, 1997), curriculum appraisal for the primary programs (Miller, 1995; Thompson, 2002), the quality of education in Jamaica, also formed part of the research base. In addition, the
international study of Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) served as a valuable data source.

The study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the background to the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, significance of the study, overview of the research methodology, definition of terms, limitations and delimitations, contribution to the study, and a summary. Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature organized around relevant concepts and themes in teaching practice, the quality indicators of the teaching practice programs and concludes with a cross-case analysis. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology used in the gathering and analyzing of the data. Criteria for selecting informants are outlined in table form.

Chapter 4 describes the teaching-practice programs of the two selected teacher training institutions and the participant population under the context for the study. The chapter concludes with a cross-case analysis. Chapter 5 describes the Joint Board of Teacher Education benchmarks, the implementation process, and the issues associated with it. Chapter 6 presents and analyzes the findings from the data collected using themes. These themes were aided by open and axial coding, triangulation, and journals and transcribed notes. Chapter 7 draws conclusions and proposes changes and suggestions for an ideal teaching-practice program in Jamaica.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. Jer. 33:3.
And be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Eccl 12:12

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research literature relating to teacher preparation and teaching-practice. The literature review was intended to help me gain a deeper understanding of the teaching-practice experience training in Jamaica. It was to help me clarify the perceptions of stakeholders—student teachers, principals, university/college supervisors, teacher educators, and cooperating teachers—regarding the adequacy of implementing the benchmarks.

The search for literature sources revealed a scarcity of studies conducted on teacher training in Jamaica. Lortie (1975) was one of the earliest studies on teaching-practice, and teacher preparation in Jamaica. Other researchers included Brown (1998); Brown and Bailey (1997); Evans et al. (2002); Evans (1986, 1989, 1993, in press); Haughton (1997), and Miller (1995).

In the studies reviewed, findings seemed to suggest that the quality of student teachers, in Jamaica, the USA, and elsewhere was in a state of decline (Brown & Bailey,
This chapter was organized into segments based on the conceptual framework. It explored fundamental issues relating to the subtopics outlined:

1. Student teachers as adult learners.
2. The teaching-practice program in Jamaica.
3. The theory versus practice controversy.
4. Realities of the field.
5. Stakeholders’ perceptions of the adequacy of the JBTE benchmarks in the Teaching-practice programs.
6. Quality indicators of the teaching-practice programs in Jamaica.

Student Teachers as Adult Learners

Most student teachers are adult learners in that they are older than 19 years old. Unlike pedagogy—the art and science of educating children, andragogy is described as the art and science of helping adults learn, and more broadly refers to learner-focused education for people of all ages (Conner, 2005; Knowles, 1998). Chickering (2005) describe the adult learner as an individual whose major role in life was something other than being a full-time student.

Student teachers as adult learners need guided exploration in authentic learning environments with readily available support systems (Schmidt, 2006). They would be able to develop their instructional skills, knowledge, attitudes, self-confidence, and an understanding of children’s behavior (p. 22). This opportunity allows student teachers to construct and apply their own meaning to the learning experience.
Adult learners bring to the program much experience (Knowles, 1998; Lawler, 2003; Lindeman, 1961) that could prove valuable if honed into constructivist learning. Constructivist inquirers engage the informants and inductively generate theories or develop patterns of meaning (Creswell, 2003).

Assumptions About Adult Learners

Several assumptions about adult learners characterize them as diverse. They vary widely in abilities, well developed personal identities, and possess reservoirs of personal experiences and cultural backgrounds. Adult learners are pragmatic learners; they want to relate content to specific contexts in their lives. They benefit from a problem-centered approach to daily issues. They prefer some degree of control over their learning and their sense of self has a significant influence on the meaning of the learning situation to each person (Dirkx & Lavin, 1995).

Adults Learn Differently

Research findings show that adults learn differently. “They bring a leavening influence” on the younger learners in mixed group settings (McNair, 2004, p. 1). They are more self-guided as they bring more to the course, expect more from the teacher, and because of their wider experience they can take away more from the program. Adult learners require learning to make sense, and won’t readily complete an assignment just because the instructor assigned it. They expect to be treated as adults. As a result certain teaching strategies are more effective than others with adult learners (Knowles, 1998).
Benefits Gained From Adult Learning

These learners bring experience to the learning environment, and their expectations from the experience are different from the expectations of the 17-year-olds. Adult learners bring with them a "culture of collaboration." They collaborate on most aspects of learning, and are primarily self-motivated, self-directed and have considerable experience, and leadership skills to draw upon (Hargreaves, 2000; Knowles, 1950; Lawler, 2003; Wynn, 2002).

Long-term benefits are derived from the experience when teachers, college/university and student teachers collaborate on an adult-to-adult level, and create learning opportunities for a richer experience (Cochran-Smith, 1991; NEA, 1999). Lawler (2003) expressed the concept that, "It is imperative that the teachers of adults view themselves as adult learners, and the professional activity they perform as adult learning." (p. 15). Their experiential methodology could prove useful in satisfying the needs of young adult learners.

Research Helps Prepare Student Teachers as Adult Learners

The philosophical underpinnings of pragmatism and essentialism suggest that the training of student teachers as adult learners embrace the concepts of change, facilitation, scholarship, meaningfulness, and collectivity on the part of the individuals (Black & Gregersen, 2002; Fullan, 2001; Knight, 1998). Those who prepare student teachers have the opportunity to improve the quality of their preparation, if they understand the characteristics of adult learners (Knowles, 1950). Knowledge of research on adult learners assists educators to plan and execute programs, activities, and learning
experiences (Bee, 2000) relevant to the needs of prospective teachers. Brock and Grady (2001) stated:

Students of adult learning reveal that motivation is primarily intrinsic. Adults are motivated to learn what interests them and what they need to know. They choose learning opportunities when they perceive a deficit in their performance or an inadequacy in coping with immediate problems. Adults prefer learning that is self-directed and performance-based. (p. 108)

It is important to consider the physical and psychological changes the experiences of adults make, and adaptations in the delivery of programs to these learners (Bee, 2000). The teachers of adult learners ought to be aware of the evidence research provides regarding the physical and psychological attributes of the aging process, and the knowledge that education, learning and other attributes lead to enhanced quality of life (Bee, 2000). Consequently, as adult learners, teacher educators need to be aware that their “educational levels appear to make a difference” when their teaching is related to the subject taught (Goldhaber, 2002, p. 9). These learners are endowed with a great deal of prior knowledge, and could benefit from opportunities that allow them to apply new ideas to previously acquired knowledge and familiar situations. In addition, adult learners learn well in groups in which teamwork, cooperation, and interpersonal interactions are fostered (Wynn, 2002).

Different Learners, Different Methods

Student teachers are prospective professionals in the field of education. They need to be prepared in ways that meet their needs as well as the needs of the students they teach (Carter, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1999c). Research results show that working with adult learners can be both exhilarating and challenging, because of the complexity adults’ lives entail (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000). Considered by many as the ‘father of
adult education,' Lindeman described learning for adult learners as "seeking meaning in experience" (1961, p. 10).

Lindeman is celebrated for his classic work *The Meaning of Adult Education* which was influenced by the philosophies of John Dewey, Nikolai Grundtvig, and Mary Parker Follett. The emphasis is on the needs, interests, and experience of the learner. According to Lindeman, adult learners need a non-restrictive environment in which to function. They work well in an environment that fosters initiatives and problem-centered applications, utilizing small groups and cooperative learning (Wynn, 2002).

**Experienced Voices Speak Out**

Knowles and Lindeman can be classified as influential thinkers who have shaped the field of adult education. Knowles contributed several books and articles on adult education with seven major works between 1950 and 1989. Knowles purported that andragogy is the technology of adult learning and in order to engage adults in meaningful learning seven steps are necessary:

1. Development of a cooperative learning climate.
3. Diagnosis of learner needs and interests.
4. Formulation of objectives based on the needs and interests.
5. Sequential activities related to the objectives.
6. Selection and execution of methods, materials and resources.
7. Evaluation of the quality of the learning experience while planning for future learning (Smith, 2004).
Knowles used Erikson's and Piaget's work to study the adult learner, and opined that the adult learner accumulated a growing reservoir of experiences that served as a source for learning. As the adults matured their self-concept moved from dependency to self-direction, and their learning readiness became increasingly oriented to the tasks of various social roles with both immediate and problem-centered application. The implication for student teachers, as adult learners, is that changes are needed in the way student teachers are prepared (Darling-Hammond, 1999b; Evans, 2003).

Theory and Practice in Teacher Preparation: Historical Perspective

The historical development of teacher preparation in Jamaica and the lack of integration between theory and practice are sparsely documented. There has been growing concern about the disconnect between theory and practice (Ball, 2001; Evans, 1993; Goodfellow & Sumson, 2000; Goodlad, 1994; Knowles & Cole, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 2000; Perry, 2000; Perry & Talley, 2001; Segall, 2003; Shantz, 2000; Stigler & Heibert, 1999; Stuart & Thurlow, 2000; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996; Weaver & Stanulis, 1996).

Over the years there have been frequent calls for the restructuring of the teacher education programs in Jamaica because of the failure to prepare quality teachers for the diverse needs of students in the Jamaican school system (Evans, 1998; in press; Miller, 2002, Thompson, 2002). These programs and the accompanying teaching-practice training of student teachers have attracted the attention of a few researchers, each seeking reform in a different way.
Researchers validated the claim that the disconnection between theory and practice is derived from a lack of collaboration between schools and colleges (Weaver & Stanulis, 1996). The failure of policymakers to initiate change, resulting from a lack of financial resources is another source of blame. H. Evans (personal communication, August 2003); Miller, 1995; E. Miller (personal communication, August 2003). This disconnect appears to be grounds for the poor quality of teachers. Darling-Hammond (2000) a notable American educator and prolific writer on teacher education, described a similar problem of a lack in quality in the United States. She asserted that it originated from the unresponsiveness of teacher training institutions to new demands, remoteness from practice, and the inability to attract bright students to the teaching profession.

Theory

Since the 19th century, theory and practice have become important elements in teacher preparation programs nationally and internationally (Evans, in press; Goeyman, 2000; Hichson, Fishburne, Berg, & Saby, 2006; Kettle & Sellars, 1996). Rather than being the merging relationship, or a *nexus*, in teacher education programs, theory and practice have become disconnected (Evans, in press). As early as 1867 theory was introduced as part of the curriculum in response to the changing views of teacher preparation in Jamaica, and changes in the entry requirements of students entering the teaching profession. During those years the syllabi of teachers’ colleges were developed by policymakers outside of the ambit of the teacher education system (Evans, 1993).

The introduction of the elements of theory in the teacher education program in Great Britain, and later in the Commonwealth territories, was to de-emphasize the apprenticeship approach in teacher education, and to allow the teacher training program
to be guided by theory (Seaborne, 1974). It is instructive to note that Jamaica was colonized by Britain, and has been greatly influenced by the British education system.

Implementing the benchmarks during the teaching-practice exercise incorporates the application of practice to theory (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Evans, 1989). Student teachers desire flexibility in teaching content and method as they blend theory with practice. They work collaboratively with the cooperating teacher, planning and sourcing materials together as they broaden their ability to teach and develop as teachers in their own way (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). The difference in style was a major problem as the student teacher taught one way and the cooperating teacher taught another way. Student teachers need relevant feedback in order to develop their confidence (Beck & Kosnik, 2000, 2002; Evans, in press; Whitney et al., 2000).

Some educators refer to this problem of theory and practice as a gap to be bridged, (Perry, 2000), a gap that fragments teaching (Ball, 2001). Others asked for “more demonstrable links between theory and practice” (Brady, Segal, Bamford, & Deer, 1998, p. 2). Still others call for a return to the nexus between theory and practice in teacher preparation programs. Failure to recognize the inter-relationships between theory and practice, has resulted in false perceptions of an existing dichotomy (Brady et al., 1998) resulting in student teachers attaching higher value to their practice studies, which is practice, than to their college preparation, which is theory (p. 2).

The literature on initial teacher education reveals that innovative programs have been designed to focus on the theory and practice nexus, focusing on specific pedagogical aspects (Brady et al., 1998). In the United Kingdom (UK) field-based experience (teaching-practice) has been increased and the time spent in lecture rooms has
correspondingly decreased (p. 3). Literature supports the value of increased teaching-practice time (Bullough, 1991; Evans, in press; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). Rather than teaching practice being a time for student teachers to show what they know (Dohrer, 1995), it will provide student teachers with a rich blend of university/college and school experiences in which “theory informs practice and practice informs theory” (p. 127).

Bullough (1991) identified three basic problems responsible for the lack of change in creating a nexus between theory and practice. He noted that there was inadequate time for the practice, not enough classroom experience during the preparation, and the realities of teaching had been oversimplified. This left the student teacher feeling unprepared for the teaching experience. Evans (in press) found in her study that student teachers could be influenced by the cooperating teacher, in applying theory to practice, as evidenced in the following description of one student teacher’s account:

You learn the method, you try it, and it doesn’t work. Then you see other teachers doing things, and they work. So you say, “That is just book telling you to do it this way.” For example, grouping—the students don’t want to go in groups. Other teachers don’t use it. So you don’t. . . . The teachers in the system do a lot of note-giving. They give notes. I find that if I used that with the class, it worked, even though the college advised against it. If they were too excited, I’d start giving notes and they would settle down. (p. 82)

Additionally, student teachers forget what they learned in teachers’ college, or they might have missed out on the relevance and/or applicability of the learning in the given situation. The guidance of an experienced teacher or supervisor could be responsible for the missed opportunity (Evans, in press). An unprepared cooperating teacher could be a greater obstacle to the student teacher than the initiative of the student teacher (Beck & Kosnik, 2002).
In the same study conducted by Evans (in press), findings showed 16% of student teachers reported "being confident in front of the class" was one of the most difficult tasks for them. The learning [theory] at teachers' colleges also seemed responsible for the lack of changes as 48% of the student teachers interviewed, said they used the methods taught to them in college all or some of the time. Conversely, 42% used the methods taught them occasionally (pp. 75, 77). In a Public Agenda survey of new teachers in New York, more than 50% of the teachers said their college classes emphasized theory at the expense of practice (Goeyman, 2000).

After reviewing 40 studies, Kagan (1992) concluded that university courses failed to provide novices with adequate procedural knowledge of classrooms and adequate knowledge of pupils. Kagan further stated that the extended practice was necessary to help student teachers acquire a realistic view of teaching in its full classroom context.

According to these theorists, too much emphasis was placed on theory and student teachers did not have sufficient time to practice the necessary skills, and knowledge gained from the preparation. This concept was endorsed by Bullough and Gitlin (1995); Evans (1998); and Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996). They also agreed that the "short time" (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996, p. 478) allotted to the teaching-practice training was not beneficial to student teachers. They supported an internship that would allow more time for the practice of teaching.

Practice

Historically, practice was seen as school craft and was based on the apprenticeship system in Britain at the time (Seaborne, 1974). Later it evolved in the monitorial system, the pupil-teacher system, and experience or practice. This was before
the development of the formal training of student teachers, and was unrelated to the content of formal teacher training (Department of Education, 1918).

Teaching-practice training during this period, in Jamaica, formed a major part of the curriculum, and it was limited to criticism lessons. Student teachers were required to prepare notes of lessons which would guide their presentation during the criticism lessons. These lessons assisted them in speaking from memory and in correcting grammatical error (D'Oyley, 1979). By 1895, colleges were required to establish a laboratory or practicing school on the premises; the first of these was Mico practicing school.

It is ironic that reports in the Jamaican press during the 21st century would include articles highlighting “grammar” as a weakness in tertiary level education (Channer, 2006; Thompson, 2002). During the 19th and 20th centuries, importance was placed on the exposure of the student teacher to practice in the preparing of lesson plans, and the teaching of a lesson in the presence of an examiner (Department of Education, 1893, 1895; King, 1972).

Teacher education in Jamaica during this period experienced constant changes. As a result, the proficiency of the student teachers was affected, owing to the limited exposure to practice. This led the inspectors of the period to call for more practice time for student teachers (Department of Education, 1897; King, 1972). The teaching-practice training program was radically revised and the internship program introduced.

During this time the student teacher assumed full teaching responsibility in a school. The program was called the Two plus One (2+1) i.e., two continuous years of preparation in the college, and one year of internship in the classroom. In 1981 this structure was changed, and a new practice period of 12 weeks of teaching-practice training was instituted in the third year to replace one year of internship (Evans, 1993).
According to Ball (2001) even expert knowledge of subject matter is often inadequate for teaching. She suggested that instead of beginning solely with the curriculum, “we must start with practice” (p. 244).

By 1990, modification of the existing teaching-practice training program transpired, and a phased introduction of the program began in the second year. The 12 weeks in the third year was reduced to eight weeks (Evans, 1993). Since 2000, the teaching-practice training program in Jamaica has been again reorganized, and the period of practice extended to 12 weeks (JBTE, 2000).

The traditional teacher education curriculum was considered fragmented and shallow, offering limited opportunities for student teachers to try out the skills they had learned in methods courses while in teachers’ college (Ball, 2001; Tom, 1997). While it is important for student teachers to demonstrate an excellent knowledge of content/subject matter, state certification and teacher licensing exams require that student teachers have knowledge about effective teaching practices as well (Carter, 2002).

Theory and Practice: Bridging the Gap

The challenge facing university/college supervisors of the 21st century is how to bridge the gap between theory and practice, identified by Dewey (1904), almost 100 years ago. The university/college supervisors can no longer assume that because student teachers know the content, they will be able to use it effectively in teaching. Teacher educators must be prepared to be facilitators, coaches and guides for student teachers’ knowledge-building processes. They must help student teachers develop constructivist approaches to teaching, and help them integrate content with pedagogy, using adequate
feedback in order to effect meaningful change (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Borich & Cooper, 2004; Carter, 2002).

Regarding the nexus between theory and practice Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) asserted:

Theory versus practice: The belief that the practice is a compliment to the teacher preparation process, rather than a fundamental part of the process, (a) it appears as if the practice is conceived only as a way to illustrate theory, rather than as an essential part of the professional preparation of teachers and the acquisition of specific teaching skills; (b) the cooperating teachers, and the practice sites tend to use traditional teaching methods, almost all the time.[ sic] Many student teachers report not taking initiative in bringing innovations into the classrooms, or trying new teaching methods for fear of receiving lower grades if they contradict the classroom teacher’s practices. (p. 478)

Ball (2001) opined that teacher education throughout the 20th century had consistently been structured across a persistent divide between subject matter (theory) and practice (pedagogy). She listed the divide as the chasm between the art and the sciences, and the schools of education, between universities and public schools and the curriculum of teacher education (p. 242).

This divide was separated into domains of knowledge—education psychology, sociology of education, foundations, methods of teaching, and the academic disciplines. These disciplines corresponded to school subjects, and even the proliferation of credit hours (Feistritzer, 2004). According to Ball (2001) the gap between theory and practice fragments teacher education by fragmenting teaching. I believe that this teaching refers to the practice of teaching, a required, decisive activity of every student teacher (Brown, 1999; Huling, 1998; Turney, 1982).

The controversy between theory and practice appears to be never-ending. There appears to be no best method for training all student teachers; neither can everything be

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taught to them (Ayers, 1993; Earley, 2000). Learning is a continuous process and this is why change is such an important part of the program of training. Listening to the student teachers voicing their concerns will be helpful in creating a shared vision for change (Whitney et al., 2000).

Teaching-Practice Programs in Jamaica: Historical Perspective

The problem with teaching-practice training and teacher preparation is not new. Dewey (1904) addressed this issue over 100 years ago in one phrase, tension between theory and practice. In spite of calls for reform, teaching-practice training has not changed significantly over the years (Evans, 1993). The teacher preparation program is criticized for not incorporating fully, the teaching-practice training aspect (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). Teaching-practice has therefore become an appendage rather than an important feature of the program.

Teacher education is criticized for having too many credit hours in the programs in addition to practice. In the USA most Undergraduate programs require 120 credit hours to complete a program. At the Undergraduate level of teacher preparation, an average of 134 credit hours is needed to complete an elementary school program. There are 131 credits hours for middle school teaching, 129 for secondary and 133 for special education teachers (Feistritzer, 1999).

At the undergraduate level of teacher preparation, approximately 51-52 credit hours are required for general studies; 36-39 credit hours are required for those teaching a major or equivalent, 24-31 required in professional studies, and 14-16 hours required in clinical experiences, which are actual practice in the field (Feistritzer, 1999). It is evident
that student teachers have a problem satisfying these hours and finding adequate time for
practice and visitation in the field.

In the Jamaican context, the initial teacher preparation program of the JBTE
requires a quota of 113 to 115 credit hours to complete the diploma program (JBTE,
2003, p. 23). Specialization for the secondary level requires between 56 and 64 credit
hours depending on the choice of specialization (The Mico College, 2004-2005).

The dominant mode of teaching-practice in Jamaica since the 1960s consisted of
coursework in the teachers' colleges accompanied by 16 weeks of field (observation)
experience and clinical (controlled teaching) practice (Brown, 1999; Huling, 1998).
Through field experiences, student teachers observed and worked with real students,
teachers, and curriculum in natural settings (that is schools) (Huling, 1998).

Evans was among many researchers calling for a change in the way in which
prospective teachers are trained. Her approach to the problem based on research findings
of Brown and Bailey (1997), supported by Bourke (2001), revealed that many of the
student teachers during their teaching-practice exercise felt that they were not adequately
prepared for their classroom experience.

The student teachers knew their content, but were not adequately prepared to
integrate the content with their skills in the classroom (Nathan, Cheung, & Hare, 1999, p.
8). Dewey (1904) wrote: “Scholastic knowledge is sometimes regarded as if it were
something quite irrelevant to method; when this attitude is even unconsciously assumed,
method becomes an external attachment to the knowledge of subject matter” (p. 160).

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Professional knowledge in the education field is no different from that in other fields and should not be compromised. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2002):

There is a growing body of research suggesting that fully prepared and certified teachers are better evaluated and more successful with students than teachers who lack either subject matter training or teaching knowledge. Numerous studies have found that teachers hired with less than full preparation are less satisfied with their training and have greater difficulties in planning curriculum, managing a classroom, diagnosing student learning needs and adapting their instruction to engage students. (p. 2)

Carter (2002) further pointed out that there were challenges facing student teachers in the classroom. These included higher expectations, children with physical and emotional disabilities, homeless and migrant children, and children whose learning was not supported by parents in the home. He emphasized that content knowledge alone cannot address these challenges, and both subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge were important for expert teaching. The study documented that:

Student teachers needed a solid knowledge base of pedagogy, a sophisticated understanding of children’s cognitive development, and knowledge of how the cultural beliefs and personal characteristics of learners influence the learning process. Student teachers need to be trained with the necessary methods for each subject area taught. (p. 1)

Schools of education are to create a supportive learning environment for student teachers by assigning experienced teachers as guides in order to develop valuable professional development. These schools should prepare student teachers for the realities of the classroom (Holloway, 2001). Teacher educators need to be aware of the realities and diversities of the learning environment, and be prepared to train prospective teachers how to survive, perform and achieve in those environments (Ball, 2001; Carter, 2002; Evans, in press; Lieberman & Miller, 2000).
Seaga (as cited in Boyne, 2002) in a media presentation appealed for the reform of the education system in order to introduce character-based education to young people, from Basic school to High school (K-12). The process should begin with the teachers' colleges. Character-based education or the "change from within" was experimented on in four All-age inner-city Jamaican schools. Some principals, who believed the environment for teaching was too volatile and needed to be more learner, and learning-oriented, adapted the "Change from Within Program" recorded in the *Story of Four Schools*, and ventured out to change the attitudes, thinking and behavior of hundreds of students of four inner-city schools (Joint Paper of the UWI, 1999).

*The Story of Four Schools* was a joint project of the University of the West Indies (UWI), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) agency of the United Nations, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The project resulted in a book for teachers and student teachers in Jamaica, and the Caribbean. It unveiled some of the stark realities of the inner-city schools, and the trauma to which student teachers were exposed during the teaching-practice exercise. Some of those conditions were unimaginable for the teachers of those schools (Joint Paper of the UWI, 1999, p. 27). Student teachers are placed into those and similar communities every year to implement the benchmarks that determine their career.

Concurrently with Seaga's call, Thompson (2002) lashed out at the declining quality in the preparation of student teachers in Jamaica, and the lack of qualified teachers in the system. He attributed blame to the teacher training institutions, which he said were under-funded, under-resourced, under-salaried, under-staffed, and lacked
meaningful incentives to attract the most qualified and competent candidates to the profession. He further stated:

There is strong evidence to suggest that a large number of teachers graduating from the local training colleges are not intellectually, psychologically, or pedagogically capable of coping with current problems endemic in the education system . . . and many teachers are not comfortable teaching Standard English. (pp. 1A, 6A)

The teaching-practice training period in Jamaica and elsewhere has been marked by fears of survival (Fuller, 1969). Student teachers often experience the absence of cooperating teacher, and teacher support during teaching-practice (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Evans, 2003; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). Student teachers experience strained peer relationships with cooperating teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). They do not receive the respect and appreciation as teachers based on their years of preparation (Goldhaber, 2002).

**Challenges of Teaching Practice**

Teacher training institutions are faced with several challenges that militate against student teachers adequately performing their role in the teaching-practice exercise. One outstanding problem emerges from the concept that student teachers develop through stages that cause them concern, and sometimes frustrates them (Fuller, 1969). College supervisors were also seen as a source of frustration for student teachers as conflicts with personalities, and unexpressed expectations of supervisors developed among them (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Evans, 1989, JBTE, 1997).

Expressions of unreal and imagined expectations about children and the classroom (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996; Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996) were discussed. Teachers and student teachers are
faced with a new wave of indiscipline, negative behavior and attack on schools. Safety has become a real issue in expediting the assigned tasks of the teaching-practice training (Joint Paper of the UWI, 1999). Violence, vandalism, bio-terrorism, and other personal attacks on schools put student teachers at risk in implementing the benchmarks. Student teachers should be trained in a different way to deal or cope with the new trends in becoming a teacher (Carter, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Boyne, 2002; Thompson, 2002).

According to Goodlad (1994) schools teach more than content. Student teachers also teach more than content; they teach values, attitudes, and other virtues and/or vices, based on the benchmarks and the elusive qualities they possess (Goldhaber, 2002, p. 4). The teacher training curriculum, structured, unstructured or invisible is influenced by ethnic, religious or political aspects that influence constant change (Ball, 2001; Carter, 2002). The goals of education are to educate citizens, select future leaders, create political consensus and socialize individuals for the political system. These goals are to help managing diversity, and provide quality intercultural education (Carter, 2002; Council of Chief State School, 2004; Gay, 2000).

Findings of a research study that explored the “field experience” or time spent in classrooms of student teachers showed that student teachers in Scotland and Canada perceived the role of the cooperating teacher as important (Shantz, 2000). Student teachers preferred to experiment with practice under the supervision of the cooperating teacher, than to practice the requirements expected from the college tutors (Evans, 1998; Shantz, 2000; Taylor, 2004). Within the Jamaican context there are several challenges facing student teachers during teaching-practice. These include low-quality teacher
preparation, untrained teachers in the schools, challenges in implementing the JBTE benchmarks, and the issue of fully implementing the JBTE benchmarks. Each of these challenges is explained below.

**Issue 1: Low-quality teacher preparation.** Consensus exists among researchers that student teachers are not performing at the highest level of their potential. They know their content. They are knowledgeable of the skills, attitudes, and dispositions necessary for the practice of good teaching, but are not presently implementing those practices (Anderson & Greaball, 1990; Ball, 2001; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Brown & Bailey, 1997; Dohrer, 1995; Evans, 1998; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Miller, 1995, 2002).

Fuller (1969) posited that student teachers develop through stages, and need nurturing environments in which to practice and develop the skill of teaching. It is necessary for the teacher education system to develop such learning environments where college supervisors can model good teaching behaviors and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for prospective teachers (Goldhaber, 2002; Roe & Ross, 2000; Whitney et al., 2000).

**Issue 2: Untrained teachers are counter-productive to the student teacher and student achievement.** The preparation of prospective teachers is in need of reform (Evans, 1998; in press; Miller, 1995, 2002). Character education should be included in the curriculum of teachers (Boyne, 2002; Task Force on Educational Reform, 2004). Teachers were not adequately prepared for the classroom. They were teaching subjects and grade levels they were not qualified to teach (Evans, 2003; Thompson, 2002). Although the numbers of untrained teachers is small in relation to the trained teachers,
the academic damage to students, especially in the lower grades, can be irreversible as unlearning early misconceptions can be a difficult task.

**Issue 3: Challenges in implementing the JBTE benchmarks.** Student teachers find it very challenging implementing the JBTE benchmarks. Diverse conditions including large student teacher ratios of 45-50 students, 45:1 or 50:1 ratio, lack of resources, absent cooperating teachers, and unsafe schools threaten the teaching-practice program. In addition, there is the Shift System and multiple disruptions that curtail the teaching-practice time from the prescribed 12 weeks to 3 or 5 weeks (Brown, 1999; Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2005; Evans, 2003; Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996).

**Issue 4: Improving the quality of teaching-practice in Jamaica through benchmark implementation.** Collaboration and partnership relations are key elements in the professional development of organizations or programs (Miller, 2002). Institutions that invest in their teachers' professional development produce the most highly qualified teachers (Russell & MacPherson, 2001). Except for the limited research done on the teaching-practice by Brown and Bailey (1997), Brown (1998, 1999), Evans et al. (2002), Evans (1993), and Miller (2002), the teaching-practice program in Jamaica is under-researched (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996).

The overarching problem implementing the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice programs in Jamaica seems to be a real concern. Low-quality teachers are inherent in the teaching-practice aspect of teacher preparation, because student teachers are often short-changed in the number of hours or weeks required to implement the JBTE benchmarks. In addition there is a lack of support from the cooperating/qualified teachers...
who were sometimes conveniently absent (Evans, 1998; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). The challenging conditions in the schools also pose a problem. How could this problem be minimized or solved?

Response to this query resides in adequately implementing the JBTE benchmarks that guide teaching-practice. The JBTE and teachers colleges need to collaborate with veteran implementers in the field of education. They need to be guided by prior research and adopt workable models (Black & Gregersen, 2002; Schultz, 2005, Senge, 1994). This prospect for preparing quality teachers through adequately implementing the JBTE benchmarks could then materialize.

**Benchmarks**

Larter and Donnelly (2002) described benchmarks as “information designed to demystify the goals of education, and illuminate the nature of good performances for teachers, students and parents” (p. 60). Benchmarks provide a capstone experience (Desmond & Stengel, 1997; Morse, 1999; Shoaf, 2000), and are designed to instruct, guide, evaluate, modify, or change performance towards best practice or a quality experience in the educational field (Jackson, 2006). Benchmarks also serve to protect the profession from developing “weak” teacher preparation programs (Blair, 2006, p. 5).

Benchmarks allows institutions to compare progress and performance, provides information for student teachers to make better choices, informs policy decisions and funding allocations, and contributes to public accountability (p. 25). Benchmarks are designed to improve skill development, promote democracy, and create readiness and willingness for responsible citizenship. It provides leadership as it shapes education
policy for curriculum growth and development (Education Commission of the States, 2006).

Benchmarks, used mostly in industry, are aligned to research in order to arrive at the “best results” and improve performance of the manufactured products. Adapted in the field of education in the United Kingdom in 1997, benchmarks focused on a multifaceted approach to performance. Used as a tool with the curriculum, and its unique brand of implementation, benchmarks, provided better and more reliable information on the nature and performance of the higher educational sector (Pugh, Coates, & Adnett, 2005).

Benchmarks/standards provide focus for the task at hand and the type of research necessary for particular situations (Robinson, 2006). They provide avenues for the application of constructivist activities, generated from lived experiences and multiple meanings (Creswell, 2003).

Benchmarks are designed to provide comparative data on the performance of publicly funded higher educational institutions in the preparation of quality graduates (Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE], 2003). It is therefore evident that stakeholders recognize the potential of the teacher preparation programs and align their benchmarks to reflect standards/benchmarks that focus on content and performance (Thurlow, 2000), which define the boundaries of the “what” and the “how” of the teacher preparation package.

Stakeholders’ Perceptions of the Benchmarks

Traditionally, the teaching-practice training was centered on the curriculum with very little emphasis on the adequacy of the practice. Brady and others (1998) commented that in the traditional teacher education programs, theory and practice were regarded as
separate entities. The responsibility for explaining theory was assigned to university/college supervisors, while the supervising of student teachers was left to the cooperating teachers.

Educators over the years have studied the concerns of student teachers regarding the teaching-practice training exercise. Fuller (1969) stated that student teachers during the teaching-practice training exercise, passed through three stages as follows: (a) "concern for self, where they worry about personal adequacy and their survival in the classroom, (b) focus on the demands of the daily task of lesson preparation, and (c) focus on providing for the needs of individual children" (p. 3).

Additionally, Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) identified seven fundamental concerns regarding the adequacy of the preparation of student teachers: (a) theory versus practice, (b) short teacher preparation programs, (c) educational isolation, (d) professional isolation, (e) neglected curricula, (f) weak preparation of student teachers and (g) segregated teaching. These aspects will be addressed appropriately in the body of the review of literature.

In addressing the concept of short teacher preparation programs in the international research conducted, Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) stated that most countries experienced shorter teacher preparation programs than in other professional fields. They affirmed that short programs do not offer adequate opportunities for student teachers to learn all the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective teachers (p. 448). In the American teacher preparation programs, it was observed that from the survey report conducted in all fifty states, all other Undergraduate programs consisted of up to 120 credit hours, but in the teacher education (early-childhood, elementary and
secondary) K-12 programs, the credit hours ranged from 129-134 credit hours
(Feistritzer, 2004, pp. 1-3).

The study noted that in many countries including Jamaica, the plans and programs
of teacher preparation did not match what teachers were expected to teach in elementary
and secondary schools (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). As a result teachers were
being prepared to execute plans and programs designed by the Ministry of Education
Youth and Culture. This was a practice of the colonial masters (Whyte, 1983).

Most teacher educators have little or no contact with elementary and secondary
schools during the period they are preparing the student teachers. They are sometimes
unaware of the cultural diversity issues (Morales, 2000; Carter, 2002), the realities of the
field, especially with the cultural, technological and behavioral changes of the new
*schoolers* and their parents’ attitude toward education (Joint Paper of the UWI, 1999).

This limited experience of the university/college supervisors affects the
effectiveness of their teaching. It is not uncommon for many teacher preparation
institutions to recruit teachers from their own graduates with no practical experience, thus
a vicious cycle of decline in quality develops (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996).
Administrators often reported that, student teachers know their subject well, but do not
know how to teach it. Some administrators believe that the teaching-practice training
exercise is too short. But more time with an ineffective supervisor won’t accomplish
much (Nathan et al., 1999, p. 8). Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) stated:

> Student teachers who were trained by people who were trained, but never
> practiced to be teachers can offer very little modeling for the new student
> teachers. Rural teachers are usually the worst prepared, yet are the most
> frequently required to work in difficult conditions. There were more teachers with
> little or no certification found in the rural areas than those who were certified. (pp.
> 478-79)
I am aware of these same practices existing in the Jamaican school system, where student teachers are trained for the secondary schools, and are teaching in the primary schools instead and vice versa.

Student Teachers' Perceptions of Benchmarks

Calderhead (1991) conducted many scholarly studies over the years and found that student teachers' obdurate beliefs about teaching and learning need to be researched further. The student teachers' knowledge of pedagogy was not well adapted to what was actually involved in good teaching. Many years of exposure in the classroom as students had led student teachers to think of teaching as: telling and showing, and of learning as memorizing, passive activities. Bush (2002) in a speech to the White House Education and Workforce Committee regarding teacher standards remarked:

We must strengthen teacher standards and the quality of teacher education programs. When I was a teacher I knew I was not prepared as I should to teach certain subjects, reading for example. Even with a degree in education and practice as a teacher candidate, I did not know how to teach a child to read. I took pride in my educational training, but the job was much harder than I imagined. I needed to know more about the concepts. Prospective teachers must be well trained in the subjects they will teach, and you can’t teach what you don’t know well. Teachers fresh out of college showed that many were not prepared for the challenges of the classrooms. (pp. 3-5)

Student teachers believed that they would be told how to teach; that on-the-job experience was the best teacher. They needed to learn nothing special in order to teach, and that knowledge of content was basically sufficient. Many others believed they could learn logically by observing exemplary teachers. Still others believed that liking children would enable the student teachers to help the children (Calderhead, 1991, p. 484). First-hand experience was considered more highly than structured intellectual discourse by the
great majority of student teachers in terms of worth and/or value to the practice of the teaching experience (Calderhead, 1991, p. 484).

A study of student teachers’ perceptions about the teaching-practice training was conducted in Scotland and Canada. The results revealed that student teachers preferred to have the opportunity of experimenting, rather than practicing tried and trusted methods. They believed the supervision of the cooperating teacher was essential (Shantz, 2000).

In another study student teachers stressed the importance of emotional support in both their positive and negative comments about their cooperating teacher. Some student teachers believed it was inappropriate for cooperating teachers to not be accommodating when there was a real problem, for example illness. Cooperating teachers seemed more distant with their student teachers than they were aware (Beck & Kosnik, 2000).

Regarding cooperating teachers, Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) stated:

Many cooperating teachers are not good role models for student teachers. . . . Frequently these teachers leave the classroom while the student teachers teach their classes. These teacher educators (cooperating teachers) are not integrated to the activities of the teacher preparation institution; they did not receive any orientation or training, to become cooperating teachers, nor did they participate in the planning activities of the teacher preparation programs. (p. 478)

In a study on “Collegial professional development for teachers” the researchers concluded that if collaborative problem-solving, planning, and peer observations become a regular part of a teacher’s professional growth across the span of his/her career student teachers’ program of teaching-practice training could benefit immensely. University or college programs, teacher educators, and schools are urged to work together to make student teachers’ and cooperating teachers’ experience a professional development opportunity for both parties. Benefits are reciprocal as supervising teachers benefit professionally when they assist the student teacher (Arnold, 2002, p. 5).
In the Jamaican context, Evans (in press) found that student teachers imitated the cooperating teachers in order to achieve their goals. Two reports from student teachers showed that the performance of student teachers, the grade from the assessors and external examiners from the JBTE mattered in passing the most important test of the teacher education program (p. 82). The study in Canada confirmed Evans's findings regarding the vulnerability of the student teacher to the cooperating teacher. Student teachers showed great dependence on the cooperating teachers, because they believed these teachers could create success or failure for them (Shantz, 2000, pp. 1-3).

**Realities of the Field: Implementing Benchmarks**

A literature analysis of the teaching-practice training provides a focused approach to the inadequacies inherent in the teacher preparation programs (Brassell, 2004; Carter, 2002; Earley, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996; Wise, 2003). The analysis complements Fuller's approach, and supports Evan's call for collaboration between teachers' colleges and schools, and among teacher-training institutions.

In addition to the conditions of adequacy inferred or experienced in the perceptions of the student teachers and other stakeholders, the literature points out several other factors that influenced the teaching-practice training. In a document published by the Council of Europe, the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education during their 21st session in Athens Greece, November 10-12, 2003, focused on "Intercultural education. This dealt with the managing of diversity and strengthening of democracy" (Council of Europe, 2004).
This declaration suggested the new role of education as a unifying force to enhance the culture of values and attitudes. It is to uplift the uneducated, deter the persistence of xenophobic and racist practices, violence and intolerance that sometimes affect education establishments. It is to promote the training of teachers, and teacher trainers in the educational use of information and communication technologies, and encourage research (Council of Europe, 2004).

Does this mean a longer period for the training of prospective teachers? Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) reiterated that the time spent in preparing prospective teachers was too short. The Secretary's Annual Report on Teacher Quality (US Department of Education, 2002) concluded that teachers performed poorly largely because they were poorly prepared, and the practice has not changed over the past 20 years (p. 7). This same concept was proposed by Thompson (2002) when he stated that the teachers were not psychologically, intellectually or pedagogically prepared to cope with the realities of the classroom.

The system was responsible, failing to support teacher education programs (Earley, 2000). Placing unprepared individuals in hard-to-staff schools was cited as a prescription for marginal performance (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996; Wise, 2003). Some prospective teachers were disinterested in learning while teacher educators were eager to teach (Brassell, 2004). Prior opinions and beliefs of student teachers, while they were students could act as blinders and even limit their teaching goals for particular students or settings (Borich & Cooper, 2004, p. 11).

Carter (2002) delineated several issues militating against student teachers in the learning community. One basic factor he suggested was the need for the delivery of
content knowledge with pedagogy. Diversity issues of poverty and race, including lack of educational resources—science labs, computers, libraries, recreational space and equipment (Williams, & Denbo, 1996) accounted for other issues.

1. **Professional isolation.** Teacher preparation institutions were isolated from each other and from other institutions preparing professionals in other fields. This isolation was disadvantageous, because there was no regular communication among the teachers’ colleges, and they did not integrate their efforts. This topic has been a recurrent feature at the annual Joint Board of Teacher Education Conferences (JBTE, 1995, 1997, 2000).

2. **Neglected Curricula.** The curriculum of teacher preparation institutions was deficient, because teacher training had been largely neglected in many education reforms. The curriculum offered was outdated and irrelevant. Some of the problems were as follows: First, plans and programs did not include any kind of preparation on how to deal with problems such as dropouts, grade repetition, and poor attendance. Second, it was rare for teacher training programs to be constantly evaluated to assess changing realities in schools and classrooms. Third, plans and programs reflected no interest or little emphasis in preparing teachers to work in disadvantaged societies. Finally, specific subject matter was taught in unrelated fashion to their pedagogy.

University commentators argued that there was a need for greater emphasis on the improvement of practice. This practice should be integrated into the regular program with an overarching conception of teacher education (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995; Carter, 2002; Fosnot, 1996; McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996; Samaras & Gismondi, 1998; Shantz, 2000; Thompson, 2002; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996; Zeichner, 1996).
3. **Weak preparation of teachers.** Teacher preparation was weak due to the limited education of teacher educators. For example, in Jamaica, teacher educators in the faculty of education, and in the teachers' colleges were required to have a bachelor's degree, while a Master's degree was not required (Evans, 1989). Despite the increase in the number of years required for teachers to go through their initial preparation, teacher educators continued to be the same people with the same kind of preparation. There has been little in-service training for teacher educators, and yet they were key players in the implementation of any innovation in teacher preparation (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996).

Another aspect of weak preparation was evidenced in the approach to teaching and learning on the part of the cooperating teacher. Student teachers experienced moral and professional problems initiated by the cooperating teacher who consistently used traditional methods of humiliation for discipline and chalk and talk in some classes and required the student teachers to model the behavior (Beck & Kosnik, 2002, pp. 93, 94; JBTE, 1997).

4. **Segregated teaching.** In the education system, where the line separating public and private schools cut across social class lines, often private schools organized their own teacher training systems which endowed them with a better supply of applicants. This reinforced a split teacher labor market for schools. Affluent children attended one type of schools and economically disadvantaged children attended another type (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996, pp. 478-482).

This practice is not uncommon to the Jamaican education system. Certain students were believed to be assigned to special schools based on their being 'low achievers'
rather than being placed because of the examination results of the qualifying examination, Grade Six Achievement Test--GSAT (Clarke, 2001). Clarke further stated that 150 school administrators of reclassified schools, at their annual retreat conceded that failure to “mix” students in the schools based on results rather than on “creaming off” resulted in the school being labeled as under-achieving. This is the type of environment in which student teachers were placed to practice their teaching skills.

5. **Personality issues.** Another dimension to the problems facing the teaching practice program in the implementation of the benchmarks was that of tension between personalities. It was described as a tension of loyalty between the intern/student teacher and the cooperating teacher on-the-one-hand, and the college supervisor on-the-other-hand. The college supervisor was isolated in that he/she gave minimal supervision during the interacting time, while the cooperating teacher was supposed to be always there, mentoring and supervising the student teacher. The student teachers saw the college supervisor of less value than the cooperating teacher (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996).

The cooperating teacher was seen as the one more readily available for direction, support, and advice during the teaching-practice training experience (Taylor, 2004). Sensitivity to the student teachers’ preparation can assist the cooperating teacher to build on the student teachers’ previous learning. The cooperating teacher can sense fears of failure, and help create feelings of security by sequencing the experiences of the student teachers from simple to complex, by giving feedback, and probing their thought processes to ensure the development of reflective thinking skills (Podson & Denmark, 2000).
Under the theme “Developing a personal view of teaching” it was noted that teaching-practice training had the potential to greatly impact the way student teachers think about teaching, and skills and abilities they acquired as they prepared for a career in teaching. It was therefore necessary for the supervisor and the student teacher to be involved in “clinical supervision”—situations in which the student teacher and his/her supervisor defined the focus of each of their supervision visit. The student teacher had the opportunity to stipulate specific problems to be addressed (Machado & Botnarescue, 2004, pp. 13, 71).

6. *Inadequate practice sessions.* In Jamaica it was observed that the student teachers were not getting the required number of hours allotted for the teaching-practice training in the schools, because of the extra curricular activities taking place at these schools. The officially required time for the teaching-practice training in year three, is 12 weeks. In reality 12 days per month instead of 20 days per month were actually realized. Some schools had only 8 lessons taught per class for the entire teaching-practice training period (JBTE, 1995). It was also pointed out that there were inadequate supervision and guidance from the classroom/cooperating teachers who were often times absent during the practice (JBTE, 1995). This phenomenon of the absent teacher was confirmed by Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996).

In a Joint Board of teacher Education (JBTE) report on teaching-practice, other weaknesses of the teaching-practice program that were highlighted included:

1. *Some college supervisors* were subject specialists and were unfamiliar with the teaching strategies and approaches to be used in evaluating the student teachers.
2. The lack of cross-college-moderation (the agreement of two or more tutors on graded work) prevented consistency in the grading of student teachers’ performance.

3. Weakness in the student teacher’s competence was observed in the use of English, statement of learning objectives, and evaluation of the lesson.

4. The physical setting, on the site was poor.

5. Shortage of places available for student teachers in the schools (JBTE, 1997).

In addition to the problems articulated in the JBTE report, the analysis of Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) and the research of Brown and Bailey, 1997, and Evans (1993, 1997, 1998, in press) regarding the teaching-practice training, there was an emergent and perplexing problem facing college supervisors. The attempt to provide quality field experience for student teachers through placement in host schools was cause for concern. The sheer number of student teachers to be placed in the public and non-public schools created a difficulty for them to be placed with outstanding and experienced teachers who could provide the type of modeling they needed to emulate (Huling, 1998).

7. Violence in the field. Student teachers must now face an added dimension to the previously normal stresses of the teaching-practice training period. The Daily Observer (Green-Evans, 2004) recorded that the Government of Jamaica was urged to do a survey on school violence, in order to determine the nature and frequency of school-related violence. Chevannes, at the launch of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF’s) publication, “State of the World’s Children Report 2004” at the Jamaica Conference Center in Kingston cited several individual studies and news reports which confirmed the growing incidence of violence among children and adolescents. One of
these reports, conducted by the Jamaica Teachers Association (JTA), documented 60 cases of attacks of students by other students or members of surrounding communities. Teachers were victims in 17 of these cases.

The article reported that 4% of the injuries in the accident and emergency departments of nine government hospitals across the island of Jamaica, occurred in schools, and 65% of the violence-related injuries affected the 0-18 age group. Perpetrators as well as victims were mainly males, usually between the ages of 11 and 18 years (Green-Evans, 2004, p. 6). Student teachers need a safe place to practice their skill of teaching, and this environment appears not to be safe for them. In May 2000 several institutions turned to the police and security guards for help to contain the growing incidence of drug abuse, and to combat crime and violence in schools. Both urban and rural schools were involved, with more urban or inner-city schools named (Wignall, 2002).

8. Shift Schools. Some of the schools happened to be “Shift Schools.” These schools had one set of students in the morning from 7:30 to 12:30, and another set of students from 12:30 to 5:30 in the afternoon. The Shifts are sometimes mixed with both primary and post-primary attending one Shift. In another arrangement, only primary students attend one Shift (morning or afternoon), and the post-primary attend the other Shift.

Between the years 2002 and 2004, headlines in the country’s leading news papers confirmed disruptions in the education system which included: suspension of classes (Sinclair, 2002), protests by students and staff members (Western Bureau, 2004). Gang warfare in schools, rape, attacks on teachers, and murder were blamed on communities
and inadequate parental guidance. One female teacher (blindfolded) was demonstrating a method to her class when she was fondled by Grade 8 boys, 13-14 year-olds (Martin, 2003). Another teacher demonstrated the use of the drum and "the student lost it," that is the student became mentally ill as the drum reminded the student of gunshots (Clarke, 2002, p. G2).

Jamaica and other Caribbean neighbors seem to be victims of the increase in violence in schools. The news media in Trinidad and Tobago reported that violence affected their school system and the acts included "Criminal type behavior such as bringing weapons to school to harm individuals" (Caribbean News Agency, 2004, p. B7). Barbados reported that officials were moving to curb student violence. Most natives believed there was a "breakdown in the moral fabric of society" (Caribbean News Agency, 1999, p. D7). Student teachers definitely need to be trained differently if they are to cope with these and similar situations in schools.

**Quality Indicators in Teacher Education Programs**

Educators, policymakers, and the public are in general agreement that students should be getting more from schools, although there is little agreement as to how to achieve that goal (American Council on Education, 1999; Galluzzo, 1999; E. L. Miller, personal communication, August 2003).

Three institutions, The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) were purposively selected as quality indicators to serve as guides in determining the adequacy of the benchmarks in the teacher preparation programs in Jamaica.
Joint Board of Teacher Education Benchmarks

The Joint Board of Teacher Education (secretariat) works in partnership with the governments, and Ministries of Education of Jamaica, Bahamas and Belize, as the quality assurance body responsible for the certifying of teachers. This institution is housed in the Institute of Education on the campus of the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. The teachers' colleges and the teaching profession are also partners in the decision making process. (JBTE, 2005a). See Figure 1.

The main function of the JBTE is to guarantee standards-based quality assurance in teacher education. This association has authorization to: (a) Consider and approve the syllabuses of teachers' colleges. (b) Examine and assess the work of student teachers. (c) Make recommendations on teacher training policy and allied matters to the appropriate authorities, and (d) Certify teachers (JBTE, 2003). Established over 40 years ago, the JBTE has certified over 50,000 teachers, and is poised to engage in the regional accreditation of teachers in the near future (Institute of Education, 2005).

INTASC Principles

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) founded in 1987 as a special project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in the United States. This association is a conglomerate of state education agencies and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of the preparation, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers. Its
major function propelled by its mission is to provide the states with effective teachers. These teachers are able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels (Council of Chief State School Offices, 2005). The INTASC Principles/Standards were prepared with the philosophy that “What teachers know and can do makes the most difference in what children can learn” (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

NCATE Standards

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is an independent teaching profession’s mechanism, designed to establish high quality teacher
preparation. Founded in 1954, this conglomerate of five educational agencies had the responsibility of accrediting teacher education programs. This association is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as a professional accrediting body for teacher preparation (NCATE, 2005).

NCATE has partnerships with over 33 national professional member organizations, representing over 3 million Americans that have united to ensure high quality teacher preparation. Foundation membership consists of local and state policymakers, school board members and chief state school officers, classroom teachers, teacher educators, school administrators, and content specialists (NCATE, 2001, 2005).

NCATE operates a performance-based system of accreditation that fosters competent classroom teachers, and other educators. It promotes enhanced quality of teaching with focus on the education of P-12 students. NCATE accredited 614 colleges of education and has more than 100 teacher training institutions seeking accreditation (NCATE, 2006b).

**Summary**

The literature showed a decline in the quality of teacher preparation and inadequacy in the teaching-practice aspect of the teacher preparation programs, internationally. There is need for a revision of the way student teachers are prepared for the classrooms. Perceptions and realities of the teaching-practice training revealed that perceptions were not reality. Some of the unfounded fears of the student teachers were not realized. Most student teachers found the exercise to be very rewarding and exciting as cited in (Evans, 1998; in press; Kane, 1996; Rand & Shelton-Colangelo, 2003).
However, there were a few student teachers who believed the experience needed much to be desired (McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996). Emergent themes from the literature suggested that the teaching-practice training experience was lacking in the following areas, and therefore lacking in adequately implementing the benchmarks:

Benchmark A. Supervision: College supervisors did not spend adequate time visiting and supervising the student teachers.

Benchmark B. Curriculum: The information learned at college and the realities in the field were somewhat at variance. Theory did not match practice. Too many hours in addition to practice were required for the teacher education programs as opposed to similar programs at the same level (Feistrizer, 1999).

Benchmark C. Collaboration: The cooperating teachers were sometimes not coordinated with the colleges’ program; for example, integration was taught in the schools and the colleges’ curriculum did not reflect that (Evans, 1998; Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996).

Benchmark D. Methodology: Student teachers would like to try out or experiment with new methods (with help from the cooperating teacher) rather than practice ‘tried and trusted’ methods taught by the colleges (Evans, in press; Beck & Kosnik, 2002).

Benchmark E. Exposure to Early In-field Training: Student teachers would prefer more exposure to early in-field experiences before the real practice (Evans, 1998; Huling, 1998).

Benchmark F. Qualification: College supervisors/teacher educators need to be adequately qualified (Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 1996). Goldhaber (2002) presented disconfirming data suggesting that qualification of teachers only valued 3% influence on
student achievement. The other 97% focused on the “elusive qualities” or intangible aspects such as enthusiasm and skill conveying knowledge (p. 4). In essence the teacher’s attitude toward teaching and the relationship with the students mattered more than credentials, even though they were important.

Many of the studies confirmed the findings regarding the short time period for practice, student teachers’ knowledge of subject matter, but failure to integrate theory and practice in the classroom. Also observed was the piece-meal/fragmented curriculum. The failure of cooperating teachers to adequately supervise student teachers, absence of cooperating teachers, and unfulfilled practice hours due to disruptions with extracurricular activities were also highlighted.

Research findings from these studies suggest that student teachers, as adult learners, desire to have a voice in the planning of their preparation. They desire feedback, and emotional support from their cooperating teachers. They want to be viewed as teachers; they need a new name other than student teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2002).

A review of studies conducted to identify the perceptions of the stakeholders revealed several issues. First, student teachers’ perceptions lacked reality in some situations, but in others such as methods they imitated the classroom teacher in order to receive the coveted grade for the practice. Second, teaching-practice training was not the “monster” they thought it to be.

Third, cooperating teachers believed that student teachers could make a difference if they observed and practiced what the cooperating teachers did and said. Fourth, what cooperating teachers did and said were not always acceptable for effective teaching.
Fifth, teacher educators conceded that collaboration with schools and colleges could make a difference, and administrators in both areas could benefit from working together.

However, the Jamaican situation needed much research in the teaching-practice aspect of teacher education. If teacher training institutions were to prepare quality teachers for the 21st-century classrooms, then greater emphasis needed to be placed on the teaching-practice training and the implementing of the benchmarks probably by aligning them with the curriculum as was practiced in the NCATE and INTASC programs in the USA, so that teaching-practice could become an integral part of the preparation, rather than an appendage.

Collaboration between the colleges and the schools could foster adequate implementing of the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice aspect of the teacher preparation programs. The curriculum of the schools should be more of an integral part of the teacher preparation programs. This would help student teachers to successfully integrate theory and practice. There should also be training for the cooperating teachers who lack training and experience, so they could be qualified to adequately mentor student teachers.

The JBTE, when compared to the USA teacher education and teaching-practice training programs, demonstrates more similarities than differences. Informed by the verified, researched, and well-developed programs such as INTASC and NCATE Standards/Principles, the teaching-practice programs in Jamaican can become quality world class programs.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An education that fails to consider the fundamental questions of human existence, the questions about the meaning of life and the nature of truth, goodness, beauty, and justice, with which philosophy is concerned, is a very inadequate type of education.

-- Harold Hopper Titus

Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the research design, informants and sample selection procedures, data collection techniques, description of the interview protocols, data analysis procedures, and a summary of the chapter. This study utilized a multiple descriptive case study approach, of two teacher education institutions. They are The Mico College in Kingston and Church Teachers' College, in Mandeville, Jamaica.

The purpose of this multiple descriptive case study was fourfold: (a) to discover the ways in which the JBTE benchmarks were implemented in the teaching-practice programs in Jamaica; (b) to identify which of the USA benchmarks were currently being used in the teaching-practice programs; (c) to ascertain stakeholders’ perceived need for including additional USA benchmarks in the JBTE benchmarks in order to formulate an ideal program for Jamaica; and (d) to broaden and enrich the knowledge base in the teaching-practice area of study.
Research Questions

This study was guided by five research questions which investigated the implementing of the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice programs of 2 teachers’ colleges in Jamaica.

Research Question 1: In what ways are the benchmarks of the Joint Board of Teacher Education implemented in the teaching-practice programs in the two institutions studied?

Research Question 2: Which JBTE benchmarks are implemented in the two teaching-practice programs?

Research Question 3: How are the research-based teacher preparation standards of the INTASC and the NCATE aligned with the JBTE benchmarks?

Research Question 4: Which USA benchmarks are currently used in the two teacher preparation programs?

Research Question 5: Which of the USA benchmarks do stakeholders perceive need to be included in the JBTE benchmarks to formulate the ideal program for Jamaica?

Research Design

This study was conducted in the form of a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry produces findings that are not arrived at by statistical methods (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Qualitative research deals specifically with “people’s lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions and feelings, social movement and cultural phenomenon” (p. 11). The inquirer often makes constructivist knowledge claims in an effort to establish meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants (Creswell, 2003, pp. 19-20).
Qualitative research possesses research-friendly characteristics (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992). It occurs in natural settings, serves as a direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument. It is process-oriented, rather than product-oriented, and analysis of the data tends to be inductive (pp. 29-32). Eisner (1998) posited that there is no codified body of procedures that tells someone "how to produce a perceptive, insightful or illuminating study of the educational world. The exploitable skills of the researcher's unique strengths, rather than standardization, and uniformity" are required for this research (p. 169).

Descriptive research involves collecting data, in order to answer questions concerning the opinions of people, on a particular topic or issue (Gay, 1996). It provides an avenue for the creation of literature in new areas.

This use of a multiple descriptive case study design for this study is based on the fact that case studies are increasingly used as a research tool (Creswell, 1998; Hamel, 1993; Meloy, 2002; Merriam, 2001; Wolcott, 1994, 2001; Yin, 2003). A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. Case study is a respected research method, especially when the objective is exploration (Slater, 1998; Yin, 2003).

Qualitative case studies provide intensive, holistic, and descriptive analysis. They contribute uniquely to the researcher's knowledge of the individual, the educational organizations, as well as communities, and social and political phenomenon relating to each participant (Merriam, 1998, 2001; Yin, 2003).
The descriptive case study approach was selected because of its unique ability to answer the research questions in this study. One purpose of this type of research is to provide “thick rich description” and to understand the participants’ perception of the phenomenon under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998, 2001). Answers to the research questions in this study were more appropriately found in this design, rather than in reverenced numbers, percentages, or forced-response mechanisms (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998, 2001).

This multiple descriptive qualitative case study covered contextual conditions surrounding the perceptions of the teaching-practice experience in Jamaica. Informants included student teachers, cooperating teachers and their principals, and university or college supervisors associated with the 2 selected teacher training institutions in Jamaica.

Gaining Access

This study required the involvement of human subjects within a school environment. In order to adhere to ethical research practices with gatekeepers and informants (Eisner, 1998), it is important to contact and inform the relevant authorities. Gaining access to the institutions involved the writing of letters and e-mails, personal visits, and telephone calls.

First, I browsed through the list of teachers colleges, using brochures, books and handbooks, and the Jamaican website, in order to identify information about the teachers colleges. Second, I decided to explore the teachers colleges that were involved in teaching-practice for over 25 years, offered diverse programs in primary and/or secondary training, and were willing to participate in the research. I purposively selected 2 colleges--The Mico and Church Teachers' Colleges--to approach them about
participating in the study. Third, I visited and talked with the principals of the 2 teachers’
colleges about involving them in my study, and got their consent.

Fourth, I wrote follow-up letters to the principals of the teachers’ colleges
informing them of the nature of the research, the topic, duration, and sent a brief outline
of the study (Appendix A). Fifth, I wrote a letter to the relevant personnel, at the Ministry
of Education Youth and Culture, Tertiary Unit, requesting permission to conduct the
research in these teachers’ colleges and followed up with a personal visit. Sixth, I
telephoned the colleges and made appointments to collect the Placement Lists, in order to
identify participants that met the criteria I had set for involvement in the study.

Seventh, I visited the host schools during the teaching-practice session to become
acquainted with the activities of the schools and to gain a better understanding of the
teaching-practice experience from a different perspective. All the contacts were made,
and the responses were positive. I then requested permission from the Institutional
Review Board (IRB) and received approval to conduct the study within one year (see
Appendix A).

Population and Sample

Criteria for Selection

Criteria for selection focused on two categories: (a) Site selection, which included
teachers colleges and host schools, and (b) participant selection, which included focus
groups and individuals. Getting things done in Jamaica requires ‘on the spot’ presence,
and at the opportune time for the researcher. The personal visit was the best means of
contact with the participants. The Mico College was selected first, because it was the
oldest teacher training institution in Jamaica and the Caribbean (Mico College, 2004-2005).

Site Selection Criteria

1. *Teachers' College*: Institution with (a) history of involvement in teaching-practice for 25 years or more, (b) present diverse programs and offerings, for example, primary and/or secondary, (c) establish a laboratory school, and (d) has easy access to visits and observations. The Mico and Church Teachers' Colleges were purposively selected to participate in the study because they met the criteria.

2. *Host Schools*: Government (public) or non-public) schools (a) involved in the teaching-practice program for at least 5 years, (b) accessible to multiple visits and observations, and (c) located in a “safe zone” in the region served by the teachers colleges.

Participant Selection and Sample

The population for this study consisted of student teachers, supervisory faculty, cooperating teachers, principals, and external assessor from the education system in Jamaica. The purposive sample was comprised of 42 participants who were willing and capable of participating in the study. Informants were delimited to 18 student teachers, 18 supervisory faculty, 2 cooperating teachers, 3 principals, one of which was a discriminate sample (DS), and 1 external assessor as DS. Two student teachers were part of the discriminate sample. Five informants constituted the discriminate sample of student teachers, supervisory faculty, and external assessor.
Rudestam and Newton (2001) noted that a sample size of 20 to 30 participants is considered a reasonable sample for a qualitative study. They also suggest that it may be "neither possible nor advisable to establish the precise sample size beforehand, based on the nature of how data is collected and explored" (p. 93). They further pointed out that "discriminate sampling" a choice of persons, sites, and documents that enhance comparative analysis could be used to allow the researcher to add needed understanding and confirmation to the study. Specific criteria developed to select the participants in this study included the following:

1. **Student teachers**: Participants were (a) currently enrolled final year student teachers at the teachers’ colleges, and (b) engaged in the teaching-practice exercise.

2. **Supervisory faculty**: Participants were (a) currently employed college lecturers or tutors, (b) accumulated two or more years of teaching-practice experience, (c) trained teachers holding a first degree or higher in education, and (d) involved in the current teaching-practice exercise.

3. **Cooperating teachers**: Participants were (a) trained classroom teachers responsible for ‘mentoring’ student teachers during the current teaching-practice period, and (b) currently employed to the host school.

4. **Principals**: Participants were (a) chief administrators of the participating host schools where the student teachers were placed, and (b) currently employed to the school.

5. **Observed Student teachers**: Informants were (a) currently participating in the teaching-practice exercise, and (b) placed in a primary, primary, and junior secondary or traditional high, host school.
In addition to the 16 student teachers who fulfilled the criteria for the focus
groups and sample, two other student teachers were selected: one to be observed and one
for a conversation. Therefore, two student teachers participated as part of the discriminate
sample.

Supervisory faculty members, as well as student teachers, participated in focus
group interviews of between 40 minutes and 1 hour. Three student teachers were
observed: one was from the junior secondary, one from the secondary, and one from the
traditional high school. The third student teacher, a discriminate sample, was selected to
give a better understanding of a larger picture of the implementing of the benchmarks in
the school types. All student teachers were given the interview and conversation
protocols that were used to interview the student teacher participants. Criteria for the
selection of the sites and participants are outlined in Appendix D.

Data Collection Time Frame

January marks the beginning of the final teaching-practice experience for the
final-year student teachers in the Jamaican education system. During this time student
teachers are assessed to determine their level of competency and suitability for the
Jamaican classroom (Brown, 1999; JBTE, 2003). The student teachers are expected to
integrate the theory learned in the classroom into their actual teaching experience. It is a
time when information-rich cases for in-depth study can be explored.

This time frame allowed me the opportunity to observe and experience the various
perceptions, expectations, and realizations of the stakeholders regarding life and learning
of the student teacher in training. It also gave me the opportunity to compare the
benchmarks of both the external and internal teaching-practice training "models" and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Jamaican program.

Placement Lists

Teacher-training institutions are required to submit lists of the student teachers and their placement locations to the JBTE before the teaching-practice training session begins. List making occurs near the end of the first semester in December (Brown, 1999). The principals of the schools are also supplied with these placement lists.

I collected the placement lists from the 2 teachers' colleges in order to ascertain the location of the student teachers, their college supervisors, and cooperating teachers. I then purposively sampled the 2 student teachers I intended to observe, 1 student teacher from The Mico first, and 1 student teacher from Church Teachers' College next.

Having gained permission from the principals, with no objections, I selected the 2 host schools that met the criteria. The primary school was selected first, and the primary and junior secondary was next. A third school--the traditional high school--was selected last as "discriminate sample" (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). The third school would help to explain additional aspects of implementing the benchmarks and would represent a good cross section of the student population in the school system that student teachers practiced with during the teaching-practice exercise. Also, the traditional high school would provide a better understanding of the entire process involved in implementing the JBTE benchmarks.

The chairperson of the Secretariat of the JBTE was informed about the study by a telephone call, followed by an e-mail with attached copy of the outline of the study. I
sought permission and received confirmation to use the JBTE reports in compiling data for the topic under study.

**Qualitative Sources of Data**

A researcher is required, after identifying the problem, to decide what information is needed to obtain an understanding of people’s perspective (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 6). Data sources for this study included structured and semi-structured interviews, conversations, documents, student teachers’ journals, observation, and field notes/texts. These provide the basis for case study (Yin, 2003).

**Interviews and Conversations**

According to Merriam (2001), interviewing is a common means of obtaining information for qualitative research (p. 71). This tool is interactive with one person eliciting information from others in a purposeful conversation (Creswell, 2003, p. 188). Fontana and Frey (2000) defined the interview as a conversation with purpose. The purpose of interviews is to listen to what people have to say about their activities, their feelings, and their lives (Eisner, 1998, p. 183) and to obtain a special kind of information. Patton (1990) said:

We interview people to find out things we cannot observe, such as feelings, thoughts and intentions. . . . We cannot observe how people organized the world and the meanings they have attached to what goes on in the world; we ask questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing is to enter into the other person’s perspective, in order to learn how the person perceives the situation in which he/she works; to make sense of the situation and to deepen our understanding of the data sources. (p. 196)

Interviews allow the researcher to concentrate, remain focused, explore and proceed to the inner thoughts of the interviewee. Yin (2003) described interviews as
verbal evidence subject to bias, but the most important sources of data for a case study. In this study, the interview and conversation protocols consisted of structured and unstructured interviews. Gay (1996) states that

an interview is appropriate for asking questions that cannot be structured into a multiple-choice format. It is used to obtain information that the participants would not give on a questionnaire, and therefore it gives a more accurate and honest response. Interviews allowed follow-up on incomplete and unclear response, and to probe. (p. 262)

In conversation, an exchange of ideas and opinions between two or more people, people give and receive information. Listening is an important part of this mode of communication. Feedback questions are useful in conversation as they help to clarify meanings and finding what made the difference (Kotelnikov, 2000).

Structured Interview

A structured interview is an oral form of a written survey. It is rigid and the questions are predetermined. This type of interview does not allow the interviewer access to the participant’s perspective and understanding of the world (Merriam, 2001). Instead it gives a reaction to the investigator’s preconceived notion of the world. As a result it is useful in gathering socio-demographic data (e.g., age, gender, years of training, education, etc.) since both the wording and order of questions are predetermined (p. 74). In this study, the first four or the first seven questions of the interview protocols were structured to elicit the necessary demographic data to report the descriptions of the participants.
Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview consists of open-ended questions. It is flexible, explanatory and involves conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. This allows the researcher to respond to the (a) situations at hand, (b) emerging worldview of the respondent, and to (c) new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 1998, pp. 72-74). The semi-structured interview allows the interviewer, through the process of exploring and probing, to obtain fresh insights and new information.

The semi-structured interviews used in this study consisted of 7 open-ended questions for the principals and cooperating teachers, and 10 open-ended questions for the student teachers and supervisory faculty. These were designed to elicit details and allow participants to freely express themselves (Appendix C). I met with each informant or group of informants, and the interviews were tape-recorded and documented on flip charts, in tabulated points. Field notes were also written, and the data transcribed and placed in a Data File in volumes.

Focus Group Interview

The focus group is an information-gathering process. Focus groups were utilized to collect data for this study. To begin the focus group interview, I instructed the participants of the expectations as outlined in the IRB document, reminding them that they were free to leave at any time they wished during the interview. The interview lasted for 40 to 60 minutes. Each participant was given an interview protocol with the questions. Each question was discussed and the data collected. An independent observer recorded the information on a flip chart, and I obtained permission from the informants to record their voices using a tape recorder.
Procedural standards developed by Creswell (2003) and Krueger (1998) contributed to the quality of the focus group data collection process in the following ways: clarity of purpose, communicating and receiving permission for the study (Appendix A), creating clear and concise protocols (Appendix C), convening in an appropriate/neutral environment, with a skillful moderator, sufficient resources, and maintaining appropriate participation, with respect and confidentiality. Other researchers added aspects such as: asking and engaging effective questions (Kitao & Kitao, 2002; Kotelnikov, 2000), and understanding how to participate in interviews (McComas, 2004).

Eight supervisory faculty from each of the 2 teachers’ colleges and 8 student teachers from each of the 2 teachers’ colleges participated in the in-depth interviews in the four focus groups.

Description of Protocols

The typical purposeful sample (Patton, 1990, p. 169) reflects the average persons and situations under study. In order to collect a wide cross-section of data from this typical purposeful sample, I constructed interview protocols using closed and open-ended questions. These protocols collected “demographic” information (Alreck & Settle, 1995, p. 23) and information regarding the stakeholders’ perceptions of the adequacy of implementing the JBTE benchmarks for the teaching-practice program in Jamaica.

Interview Protocols were designed for the student teacher, the supervisory faculty, the cooperating teacher, and the principals of host schools (Appendix C). The protocols asked critical questions relating to the realities of the student teachers’ experiences in implementing the JBTE benchmarks during the teaching-practice training exercise. They generated general demographic data from the respondents regarding gender identity, the
institution enrolled in, or employed at; the number of years associated with the teaching-practice training program, and their current affiliation with the teaching-practice program.

The questions were sequenced from the more general and most important, to the specific, and the least important to the study at the end (Appendix C). The first 4 or 7 questions requested demographic data that were more specific. This information assists the inquirer in achieving the desired goal of qualitative research, understanding, description, discovery, meaning, or generating hypothesis (Merriam, 1998, 2001, p. 9).

Student teachers were asked if they were exposed to the teaching-practice training before, and if they have, how long they have participated and at what grade level. Student teachers were asked about their perceptions of the JBTE benchmarks for the teaching-practice training. Protocol questions were designed to determine how the stakeholders perceive the benchmarks in adequately meeting their needs and the needs of the students they taught, and what could be done to make the benchmarks more ‘implementer friendly’ or adequate (Appendix C).

Principals were asked to state the period of time they had served in their present position, and how long their schools have been participating in the teaching-practice training exercise. They were asked to explain the selection process of their cooperating teachers and the characteristics they required. They were asked to explain whether the teaching-practice training program is adequately implementing the JBTE benchmarks. If this is not so, they were asked, what can be done to improve the process?

Cooperating teachers were asked to state the period of time they have been serving in that school and in the capacity of cooperating teachers. They were to state how often their classes have been used for the training of student teachers. They were asked
whether they have received training or were required to participate in training relevant to
the 'mentoring' of student teachers. They were asked to explain their perception of the
value or importance of the benchmarks in the teaching-practice training, and to make
necessary suggestions for improvement, if needed (Appendix C).

Supervisory faculty/teacher educators: In addition to tutors, this group was
comprised of college coordinators or placement officers. They were asked to state the
period of time they had worked in their capacity with the teaching-practice training
program, and the period of time their college/university had been involved in the
program. Qualification status was also required from this group (Appendix C).

Documents

Documents are a ready-made source of data (Luddy, 2002) and include a wide
range of ‘written, visual and physical materials relevant to the study at hand’ (Merriam,
2001, p. 112). They are of equal importance as interviews, conversations, and
observation, because documentary material has stability. It can ground an investigation in
the context being investigated (p. 126).

In qualitative case studies, a form of content analysis is used to analyze
documents. Content analysis refers to a systematic procedure for describing the content
of communications (p. 123), and forms part of qualitative research. Documentary data are
objective and a good source especially for qualitative case studies. They establish
stability, and are capable of lending contextual richness and meaningfulness to the
inquiry and the experience of the researcher (Merriam, 2001, p. 126). Documents used in
this research include the following:
**JBTE Regulations:** The JBTE document defines the educational programs that are designed to meet the requirements of the certification of teachers through the teaching-practice exercise. It delineates the content, skills, dispositions, and competency levels that student teachers must attain in order to be certified as teachers.

**JBTE Reports on teaching-practice:** These documents are created at the end of each teaching-practice session, and provide a rich data summary of the teaching-practice activities, successes, failures, and the future of teaching practice. The teaching-practice activities are recorded and moderated or discussed, and then a formal report (i.e., The JBTE Report, 2006) is produced and circulated to the teachers’ colleges.

**Formal or informal assessment data:** The student teacher’s feedback report consists of notes or critique from the visiting supervisors, indicating observed teaching qualities during the lesson taught by the student teacher. It provides evidence of the interaction between the student teacher and the supervisory faculty during observation of the lessons. It serves as attendance record for both student teacher and supervisors. This document is used to follow up on suggestions made by the supervisor. It can identify and correct failures early in the process.

**Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching-Practice-2004:** This document contains the listing of the benchmarks used to assess student teachers. Student teachers were familiar with the items on the document, and were required to meet these requirements during teaching practice. Supervisors are advised to use the instrument on the second or third visit to see a student teacher, rather than on the first visit.

**The Mico College Handbook, 2004-2005:** This contains all the programs, activities, and bulletin information of the institution.
The Church Teachers' College (Bulletin), 2002-2003: This represents a program/bulletin of the programs and activities of the institution.


The Student Teachers' Handbook: A Guide for Student Teachers (Rose & Rose, 1997): This is a compilation of information—facts, rules, methods, and activities—that directly relate to the teaching-practice exercise, guiding student teachers through the stages of the teaching-practice period.

Field Notes

Field notes from interview and conversation protocols were the major sources used to collect data in this study. I made copious notes of the situations. Using a legal pad, I wrote notes as I observed and scribbled in the margin. Key words, phrases, and sentences that could be used for quotes that emerged from the dialogs were identified and highlighted for further use in the analysis. Information that could be identified as quotes were underlined, bracketed, or circled (Merriam, 1998, p. 164). When the notes were re-written, the statements that could be used as quotes were italicized, and key words were placed in boldface. The settings were described using phrases that were arranged as points in lists for easy recall.

The field notes were read several times, and the corresponding tapes from the interviews were played several times to ensure consistency. The notes were coded into groups according to the five categories of informants and arranged in folders first. For
example, all data relating to the cooperating teachers’ responses were organized in one category and labeled COT: Fleecy, or COT: Ralph. Field notes for the principals were labeled, PRIN: Spruce, or PRIN: Alfred. The student teachers’ focus groups were coded and labeled as STA for the Mico focus group and STB for the Church Teachers’ College focus group. I followed the same procedure for the discriminate sample.

The supervisory faculty had similar codes and labels such as SFA for The Mico focus group and SFB for Church Teachers’ College focus group. I coded the discriminate sample as DS and organized the transcriptions into one category, which included the external assessor, 1 supervisory teacher, 2 student teachers, and 1 principal from a traditional high school. In order to reduce confusion, I drafted a “Table of Participants” with the coded names and the real names. This was to provide truthfulness to the raw data and easy retrieval of information for analysis.

The interview data were then transcribed verbatim, and the field notes were re-written and organized into Data Files. Composing texts in qualitative research is an interpretive process (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Field notes or texts are ways of talking about what transpired for data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This helps to identify emergent themes for triangulation, consistency, reliability, and generalizability (Eisner, 1998). Field notes contain what was seen and heard by the researcher. “The keen observations and important conversations that have been captured in the field cannot be fully utilized in a rigorous analysis of data, unless they are written down” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 73).
In qualitative research, observation is one of the chief means of collecting data. It allows the researcher to capture the rich and readily available source of data in classrooms (Borich, 1999). It gives a first-hand account of the problem under study, and provides valuable data when it is systematically organized. When combined with interviewing and document analysis, observation provides holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 1998, p. 111).

Three student teachers were observed teaching a lesson. One student teacher was a discriminate sample. One student teacher was placed in a primary and junior secondary school, and the other in a traditional high school. The discriminate sample taught in a secondary school. I scheduled two observation sessions for each student teacher. I designed an observation report and used it to record the data collected. I also used the Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching-Practice-2004 document to “check off” rather than evaluate the benchmarks that were implemented. Ruby was observed in a traditional high school, for one class period of 35 minutes, while Jim was observed in a primary and junior secondary school for a double period class of 70 minutes. Betty the DS was observed in a secondary school for a double-period class of 70 minutes.

I observed each participant once without recording the data, and on the second visit I recorded the activity as recommended by the Joint Board of Teacher Education documents (Appendix E). A brief conference or feedback session was held after each observation to give the student teachers an opportunity to reflect on what happened in the class, and to discuss their perception of the implementing of the benchmarks.
Ruby was observed two times, and Jim two times. A third planned/agreed follow-up visit to Jim’s class failed because he had co-curricular activities that required his absence from the school that day. I observed Betty two times and recorded the data for the visits in the observation report and in field notes. I conversed with Charms, from the primary school, about her perceptions of teaching practice and learned that she was an “evening student” at The Mico College.

**Organization of Data**

After collecting the information from the focus group interviews, conversations, observations, and document analysis, I labeled them based on the sources explained in Table 3. The “Yes” identifies the source from which data were collected for the specific informant or groups of informants. For example data for student teachers were collected through interviews only, while data for the student teachers, who were observed, were collected from 3 sources. Data for supervisory faculty focus groups, and discriminate sample used 2 sources, while cooperating teachers and principals used only 1 source. Sources from which information were gathered are summarized in Table 3.

**Procedures for Data Analysis**

Data analysis was approached through open coding for emergent themes from the interviews and conversation, rather than from pre-determined theme categories.

Preliminary data analysis began with the first student teachers’ focus group interview from the Church Teachers’ College. I listened to the tapes and examined my field notes for themes and noted them in my field notes. I identified the themes with colored highlighters and made comments in the margins of the raw data.
Tapes were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were organized, labeled, and put in folders which later became five volumes of Data Files, one for each category of participants. I engaged in a rigorous analysis of the transcripts, using multiple levels of coding. Merriam (2001) posits that the coding scheme can be quite simple, as in identifying a theme that can be illustrated with numerous incidents, quotes, and so on. Or it can be quite complex, with multilevel coding for each incident.

Detailed coding at the first level occurred after I had read the transcripts. I annotated comments and themes in the margins of the transcription documents. I listened to the tapes over and over for clarification and corrections, and selected passages.

Table 3

Information and Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants/ Data Source</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Conversations</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Teachers Focus Groups</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory Faculty Focus Groups</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discriminate Sample</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
quotes and for identifying themes. Unmarked copies of the transcriptions were independently examined and reviewed by five professional educators who read and made verbal comments to me about the data. Only one of these educators commented on the themes.

I sorted the themes I had listed, along with the comments from the educator, and arranged them into five broad categories, considering the research questions in the process. Themes included: (a) Knowledge of and communication of the benchmarks, (b) Issues implementing the benchmarks, (c) Importance and use of the benchmarks, (d) Evaluation of the benchmarks, (e) Use of the USA benchmarks, and (f) Perceived need for improving or including the USA benchmarks into the JBTE programs. The first three themes related to research questions 1, 2 and 3, and the last two themes relate to research questions 4 and 5 respectively.

**Ethical Considerations**

Many ethical issues emerge in qualitative inquiry, issues of confidentiality and anonymity; some are anticipated and prepared for (Creswell, 1998; Eisner, 1998; Meloy, 2002). My personal ethical framework is informed and guided largely by my conservative Christian beliefs and my philosophy of life. Applying the golden rule as a principle of daily living is a goal I always try to achieve.

Eisner (1998) acknowledged that in qualitative inquiry there are no simple rules to apply, or researchers could easily follow them and develop confidence in knowing they are doing the right thing all of the time (p. 213). Ethical considerations, concepts, and principles relevant to qualitative inquiry should include four basic elements: (a) Informed consent, (b) personal identity, (c) confidentiality, and (d) autonomy.
Informed consent: I sought and obtained permission from the teachers' colleges, the Joint Board of Teacher Education, and the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture, Tertiary Unit, to involve the host schools and the teachers' colleges in the study. I requested and obtained approval from the Andrews University Institutional Review Board. This information was shared with the participants before and during the interviews for the study.

Personal identity: The identity of each participant must be respected, protected, and valued throughout the study. I conscientiously sought to ensure this by concealing the identity of the participants in pseudonyms, maintaining safeguards for the passage from writer to reader (Stake, 2000), and recognizing that "qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world; their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict" (p. 69).

Confidentially: This relates to the security of the research. Research data were kept away from the public eye and only those directly connected to the data were allowed to handle it. The field notes that were recorded by an independent member for the focus groups were collected immediately and organized for analysis.

Autonomy: Informants involved in the study must be respected at all times. Participants who wanted to discontinue the process at any time were allowed to do so. However, all the informants who accepted the invitation participated in the study. Only one participant left approximately 10 minutes before the end of a session due to another appointment.
Trustworthiness Issues

The major task in this study was to find technical criteria with which to analyze the data. The data sources included literature and document analyses, interviews, conversations, reports, and field notes. The transcripts were submitted to some of the informants for review and corrections, in order to establish trustworthiness.

Reliability in quantitative research means the extent to which the results can be replicated (Merriam, 1998, 2001). However, qualitative research is conducted in ways to explain the lived experiences of people, by interpretation of the situations around them. If the results of the research make sense to the outsider, the research is considered consistent and dependable, as the aim of the researcher is to encourage the reader to concur, rather than accept the same results (Merriam, 1998, 2001).

Dependability or consistency of the results should be considered in establishing credibility and veracity (validity) (Merriam, 2001). In this study I utilized triangulation involving multiple sites and multiple sources of data collection (Appendix E). I examined the data from both colleges and identified common statements, key words, and ideas that focused on the topic under study.

Qualitative methodology is described as “research that produces descriptive data: people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The focus is on “participant perspectives” (Slater, 2004, pp. 1-2). As research instrument, the inquirer should examine the data collected to see if they are dependable and consistent. Other procedures for improving the analysis of data and enhancing veracity suggested by Merriam (1998) include:

1. The researcher’s position: This involves a situation in which the researcher
explains the assumption and theory behind the study. The basis for selecting participants and a description of the context in which the data were collected are also discussed (p. 206). I met with each participant and discussed the study and the intent to use the results to improve the implementing of the benchmarks, and therefore improve teaching practice in Jamaica.

2. *Extensive quotations:* These are transcripts of interviews, field notes and journals/feedback reports, or research data (e.g., recordings [video/audio]) (Merriam, 1998). In this study the data collected from the interviews and conversations were transcribed verbatim from tape-recorded data, field notes, flip charts, and from observation visits. Quotations from the field notes were utilized in the study to give the participants’ expression to their “inner voice” (Eisner, 1998, p. 183) in the situation.

3. *Member checks and paper trail:* This involves going back to the participants at the completion of the data collection and analysis of the study, and asking whether the data given were accurate or need correction or elaboration on constructs, in order to validate qualitative research (Eisner, 1998). Member checks and peer review were used in order to establish internal veracity. I gave the scripts to peers to read and comment on the findings. Also, informants were given the transcribed, unmarked data to read and make comments.

In this study I contacted participants and asked them to read and scrutinize the transcripts for omissions or anything that was considered sensitive. This was especially done with the observed informants, the host schools, and the colleges. Those who read the transcriptions confirmed the contents, but made only verbal comments when I
contacted them. I telephoned and visited with some of the informants to collect their response to the data. I then examined and compared the data for consistency.

4. **Independent checks/multiple researchers:** In this study I involved outsiders in the process by allowing them to check the responses for consistency and truthfulness and make necessary corrections. They were to read the data from their point of view and see that the result makes sense (Merriam, 1998; Ratcliff, 1995; Rudestam & Newton, 2001). Researchers use these strategies and tools for making professional judgment, trustworthy, credible, respectful and reflective of the researcher's values (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Generalizability**

In this multiple descriptive in-depth case study, of the 2 teachers' colleges and their host schools, generalizability is particularly delimited to the understanding of this particular sample. Using multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings, multiple sites, and situations, creates a larger picture and fosters the confirmability and transferability (generalizability) of the results of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998, 2001).

The intent is to probe in-depth and not to find out what is generally true of many (Merriam, 1998, 2001). Eisner (1998) describes generalization in qualitative inquiry as completely different from that in quantitative research. He suggests that the readers need to determine the applicability of the research findings to their own particular situations. He further states:

The ability to generalize skills, images, and ideas across situations appropriately represents one form of human intelligence. It is the generalizing capacity of the image that leads us to look for certain qualities of classroom life, features in
teaching, or aspects of discussion, rather than others. Once we secure images of excellence in these realms, we apply them to other aspects of the world to which we believe them to be relevant.

For qualitative research, this means that the creation of an image—a vivid portrait of excellent teaching, for example—can become a prototype that can be used in the education of teachers or for the appraisal of teaching. Because qualitative writing is often vivid and concrete, its capacity for generating images is particularly strong. (p. 199)

**Self as Research Instrument**

I have taught for over 30 years in the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of the education system in Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the USA. I am convinced that the most important career is teaching. A favorite maxim says, "Teaching makes all other professions possible." Teaching needs to be guided by research in order to produce quality.

The search for answers to effect some of the changes necessary for teaching-practice in the institution where I worked resulted in *The Student Teachers' Handbook: An Effective Guide for Student Teachers* (Rose & Rose, 1997). My engagement in this study is a contribution to the improvement of teaching practice in the teacher preparation programs and the Jamaican community of educators.

From observation and experience, high quality is essential in the training of prospective teachers in Jamaica. The rationale for my involvement in this study is based on the fact that as a research instrument, and reflecting on my own experiences as a beginning teacher, I can make a positive difference, as explained by Eisner (1998):

Self as a research instrument allows the researcher to engage the situation and resonate with experience, making sense of the situation; it is the ability to see and interpret significant aspects, and provide unique personal insight into the experience under study. (p. 33)
Acknowledgment of the researcher's biases gives credence and authenticity to the investigation (Piantanida & Garman, 1999). In reference to the utility value of qualitative inquiry, Russell and McPherson (2001) acknowledged that copious quantities of elegantly descriptive research data have been reported at conferences, yet many researchers fail to report any interpretation of that data. He further noted that qualitative researchers need to think about meaning-making, which is inherent in any research activity and is intimately linked to the purpose of an inquiry.

As a research instrument (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998, 2001), I have an ethical responsibility to contribute to enrich the literature and increase the database in this study. I also need to be an advocate on behalf of the stakeholders, raising questions that will generate thought and responses toward improved and adequate teaching-practice experience training programs for student teachers in Jamaica. Conversations and interviews allowed for cross-talk and two-way questions.

Involvement in this study has created new meaning for teaching practice and teacher preparation. The experience of my first day in the classroom reminds me of my un-preparedness for the classroom after college. My understanding of the findings of this research could help me to make future prospective teachers feel more confident on the first day and on successive days of school.

Qualitative inquiry offers a novel channel of expression of the senses, giving rise to explicit, emotive disclosures, not found in quantitative research (Eisner, 1998). My choice of a multiple descriptive qualitative case study evolved from the fact that I am able to be intimately involved in this study. The study explored the literature and the voices of real experiences in teacher preparation over these 20 years. I am left with more
unanswered questions than at the start. Additional research is definitely needed to explore and find answers that will inform practice.

Summary

In this chapter I dealt with the research design, selection of the sample, data sources, description of the interview protocols, and data collection procedures. I also established criteria for dealing with reliability in qualitative research, focusing on trustworthiness, consistency, and dependability. Criteria for selection of the informants are outlined in Appendix E.

The following were also established as methods/techniques for further addressing dependability and trustworthiness in qualitative research: triangulation, the investigator's position, extensive quotations, member checks and paper trails, and independent checks. Literature analysis, documents, observation, and interview protocols were used as the main tools to get first-hand information for the study. There is also a description of the interviewing process. The chapter closed with a brief account of the “self as research instrument,” followed by a summary.
CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

The longer I live the more I am certain that the great difference between men; between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant, is ENERGY INVINCIBLE DETERMINATION—a purpose once fixed, and then death or victory. That quality will do anything that can be done in this world, and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities will make a two-legged creature a man without it.

--Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton

Introduction

Two teacher training institutions were selected for this study—The Mico College and Church Teachers’ College. The institutions fulfilled the selection criteria of having a tradition of 25 or more years in preparing student teachers, and operating in several areas of curriculum offerings. The Mico College is located in the heart of the metropolis of Kingston, and Church Teachers’ College is situated in Mandeville, Manchester, a parish located in the south-central area of Jamaica.

This purposive sample allowed for a singular picture to be painted of the teaching-practice activities that are common to most of the teachers’ colleges in Jamaica, and reflect the rural, urban, and suburban environments. The teacher preparation programs of the Mico College and Church Teachers’ College are photocopies of the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) programs entrenched in the teachers’ colleges.
throughout Jamaica, Belize, and the Bahamas (College of the Bahamas, 2003; JBTE, 2003).

The syllabi for all the JBTE programs are replicated and embedded in the teachers' colleges. The curriculum committee of the JBTE meets twice per year, or when summoned to discuss issues relating to curriculum matters as outlined in the Joint Board of Teacher Education Regulations. As a past chair of the Education Board of Study of the JBTE, I have worked in the Jamaican tertiary education system for over 20 years. I am aware of the nature of the teacher education programs and practices.

The bulletins and handbooks of The Mico College (2004-2005), the Church Teachers' College (2002-2003), and The Teaching-Practice Handbook (Brown, 1999) exhibit information on the nature of the syllabi. This chapter describes the teachers' colleges, the host schools, and the communities in which this study occurred. It also describes the profiles of the participants, which are presented following a description of each institution.

The Teaching-Practice Cycle

The teaching-practice cycle begins in November or December, based on the agenda of the colleges (Figure 2). During this time student teachers engage in orientation exercises in preparation for the event of teaching practice in the field. They collect materials and other instructional tips during the 1-week observation. Teaching practice "officially" begins on that Monday morning in January when the student teacher enters the classroom to practice the theory learned in college.

In February the supervisory faculties would have visited their quotas of five or six student teachers, and obtained a pre-assessment grade for each student teacher. This
grade is used as a reference point for the external assessors in their one-time visit and assessment of the student teacher. Scheduled feedback sessions bring together the teaching-practice team. March/April terminates the teaching-practice exercise. Events for Year 3 teaching practice are chronicled in Appendix E.

Figure 2. Teaching-practice cycle.
Description of the School Community

The schools involved in this study consisted of 2 tertiary institutions. The Mico College is situated in the busy metropolis of Kingston and St. Andrew. Church Teachers' College is in the south-central, small university suburban town of Mandeville, Manchester, and its rural suburbs. More detailed descriptions will occur in individual accounts of the institutions and their subsequent host schools.

Sources of information for the description of the school communities are garnered primarily from observation, having worked as a teacher educator in Jamaica for over 20 years. Other sources are the handbooks of the teachers' colleges, the JBTE documents, the Jamaican websites, and communication with colleagues at these institutions.

The Mico College

The Mico College, established in 1835, is an affiliate of the University of the West Indies, and boasts an enviable record of over 171 years of training teachers for Jamaica and the wider global community. The institution emerged as the sole survivor of the over 300 "normal schools" of the early 19th-century during the post-emancipation era. Mico became known as the "poor man's university," because the graduates of the institution were garnered from every strata of society (Mico College, 2004-2005).

Mico embraces as its motto: "Do it with thy might," and its mission, "to offer students opportunities for academic success, and professional advancement through a rich and diverse curriculum, and extra-curricular activities" (p. 5). Mico has inspired prospective teachers to be prepared in programs of pre-primary, primary, and secondary diplomas and degrees. It continues to offer a strong liberal arts program, with first

A pioneer in the training of Special Education teachers in the English-speaking Caribbean, Mico College expanded its 2-year certificate program, established in 1976, to become the premier degree-granting institution in Special Education. The Mico Center for Assessment and Research in Education (CARE) and the Mico Youth Counseling Development Resource Center facilities provide invaluable resources and benefits for students, educators, care-givers, and the wider community.

The goal of Mico College is to offer what could be described as a four-dimensional program that encapsulates the head, the heart, the hands, and the health of the student teacher as leader. The Mico provides that leadership through its academic and applied programs, incorporating vocational and technical training commensurate with other associate and 4-year degree-granting institutions (Mico College, 2004-2005).

Committed to excellence and strong leadership in education, Mico College adheres to a rigorous program of professional development for over 100 academic faculty and staff. Consequently, the student population of over 1,500 experience and benefit from the expertise and nurture of qualified teacher educators. These teacher educators hold PhD, EdD, MA, and MSc degrees, proportionate to the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Technology (UTECH) (Mico College, 2004-2005).

Mico College has developed a tradition of firsts. It established the first practicing school for student teachers. The first Special Education program and facility for conditions including Attention Deficit and other Communication Disorders was established by this institution. It also developed a program for the identification of special
abilities and giftedness in children. It is the first teachers' college with a "Science-

Riding on the crest of the 21st century, Mico with its historical heritage, cultural,
moral, and spiritual dimensions is poised to epitomize the model for quality teacher
preparation. It has developed a network that links tertiary institutions committed to the
training of teachers. Working in collaboration with other institutions at home and abroad,
Mico College provides diversity and flexibility in foundational content and pedagogy. It
equips its graduates with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions required to function
effectively in the work environment. It also promotes and encourages its graduates to be
pacesetters in an increasingly diverse technological age (Mico College, 2004-2005).

Profile of the Student Teacher: Mico

In keeping with its mission and motto, The Mico College seeks to maintain moral
and intellectual integrity. These attributes preserve its rich heritage and traditions in the
performance of its graduates. Consequently, student teachers are educated to reflect the
preparation they received in the educational skills, social behaviors, and emotional

Student teachers are expected to demonstrate cogent communicative competence,
good civic pride, realistic ethical considerations, and the ability to manage conflict
amicably. They are expected to exhibit responsible justice and fair-play in a diverse and
distraught environment. Upon graduating from Mico, "Miconians" are to be holistically
prepared to continue the commitment and dedication to the wellness and development of
children.
Teacher Education Academic Program: Mico

The teacher preparation programs of the Mico College are replicas of the JBTE programs entrenched in the other teachers' colleges throughout Jamaica, Belize, and the Bahamas. Mico offers programs leading to certification at the diploma level for pre-primary, primary, and secondary teachers. In addition, Mico offers a Bachelor of Education in Special Education. At the time of this study it anticipated offering the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education (Mico College, 2004-2005).

The Diploma Level

The Mico College offers three programs in teacher education at the diploma level. These are primary, special education, and secondary programs. All three programs are presented here, although only the aspect of teaching practice in the primary and secondary programs will be included in the analysis.

The Primary program prepares student teachers to teach children between the ages of 6 and 12 years—Grades 1-6. The Department of Professional Studies (Education Division) at The Mico is entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the 3-year program to pre-service teachers and the 4-year program to pre-trained teachers, until completion (Mico College, 2004-2005).

The Special Education program prepares student teachers to teach children between the ages of 4 and 14 years—Grades K-9. These children typically have visual, hearing, physical, and/or mental challenges, and are not placed in the mainstream classes.

The Secondary Education program is comprised of courses and subjects that prepare student teachers to teach pre-adolescent and adolescent students between the ages of 12 and 17 years—Grades 7-11. Student teachers are guided to select two “single-
option" subjects, arranged in special combination, or the "double option" arrangement, in order to complete a program of studies in this area.

The Single Subject or Single Option Arrangement is the terminology used for the choice of courses in two subject areas (Mico College, 2004-2005; Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003; JBTE, 2003), for example English Literature and Music (see Table 4). Student teachers choose two subjects, one from each section. These two subjects comprise courses of approximately 24-30 credits to make up the total number of courses that meet the JBTE requirements. Fifteen clock hours represent one semester credit.

The principal of one of the teachers’ colleges explained this phenomenon, making reference to the fact that the "single subject" concept is not clearly explained in the JBTE documents, although the courses and the hours are clearly outlined. This has been embedded in the system, and has been functional for decades. Single subject remains as a name, rather than as an image, and needs to be more clearly defined in the JBTE document. A majority of courses are organized as three-credit courses, and utilize 45 semester or clock hours as seen in Table 5.

The Double Option Arrangement: The other focus is the "double-option" content-rich area in which subjects are chosen as areas of specialization. This arrangement or "doubling-up" of the courses and the credits allows the student teacher to choose one subject only. The double-option courses or subjects constitute: English/Literature, Mathematics, Home Economics, Science, Visual Arts, Industrial Technology, and Guidance and Counseling (Mico College, 2004-2005).
Table 4

Single Subject Arrangement: The Mico College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Library Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Science</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selection of courses in this area makes up the total number of courses needed to meet the JBTE requirement. This constitutes approximately 56 to 64 credits, depending on the student teacher's choice of subjects. For example, a choice of English comprises 60 credits, while a choice of Mathematics yields 63 credits (see Table 5).

Teaching-Practice Program: Mico

The overriding approach to teaching practice in Jamaica consists of 16 weeks of field observations and clinical (controlled teaching-practice) experiences (JBTE, 2003). These 16 weeks of teaching practice are sub-divided into categories. First, there is 1 week of observation in the first year. This is considered an introductory session, and is not accounted for grading in the 16 weeks. The 'Grade' for teaching practice weighs heavily on the performance of the student teacher during the 12 weeks of “controlled teaching” guided by the benchmarks (Brown, 1999; JBTE, 2003). Controlled teaching is a term used to describe the restrictive nature of the teaching practice to the topics and sessions apportioned to student teachers during the teaching-practice exercise.
Table 5

**Double-Option Arrangement: The Mico College**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Areas</th>
<th>Semester Hours</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Subject Areas</th>
<th>Semester Hours</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Literature</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Number Systems</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Criticism</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Algebra</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of Literature</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nature of Language</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Structure of Language</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mathematics Education</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabethan Literature</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Statistics &amp; Probability</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Literature</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pre-calculus</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Methods</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Trigonometry</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Society</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Line Algebra</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Literature</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Applied Mathematics</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mechanics Calculus</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Math-Computer Application—software</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Literature</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Math-Computer Programming</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama in Education</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Literature</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>900</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>945</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student teachers from the focus groups described their experience as “not being able to provide for the students’ needs in the classroom, because they had to slavishly follow the curriculum and prepare the students for tests.” In response to suggestions for improving the benchmarks, one student teacher from one of the focus groups stated:

When we started at where the students were, we were marked down for it. Sometimes we planned the lesson and could not teach it because the students were not academically ready. Sometimes the topics were changed and we learned about it when we arrived at school to teach the class.

We need to be planning for the students, and not for the supervisors. But sometimes I wonder if it is to please the assessors, or to qualitatively impart something to the lives of the students. We should be allowed to plan for the students and not for the supervisors who keep telling us to do things this way or that way.

Second, there is 1 week of observation, followed by 3 weeks of teaching practice in the second year. The second-year teaching practice is evaluated internally by the colleges. Finally, there is 1 week of observation, followed by 12 weeks of teaching practice in the third or final year. The final-year teaching practice is evaluated internally by the colleges and externally by the JBTE (Brown, 1999; Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003; JBTE, 2003; The Mico College, 2004-2005).

Requirements for Program Completion

With reference to minimum and/or maximum levels for completing the JBTE program for teaching practice, student teachers are allowed a minimum of 8 weeks and a maximum of 12 weeks. Failure to fulfill this time schedule results in a minimum passing grade called an “agrotot” which remains as the final grade for teaching practice. However, the student teacher can re-sit the examination the next year for a better grade and the completion of the program (JBTE, 2003).
The teaching-practice programs at Mico, as at other teacher training institutions in Jamaica, occur in the second semester of the final year of the program, as prescribed by the JBTE, the certifying organization for teacher education in Jamaica. This activity represents a challenging and decisive stage of the professional preparation for prospective teachers to showcase their skills of teaching and to be evaluated on their potential as classroom teachers (Brown, 1999; Huling, 1998; Moore, 2003).

Final-year student teachers are assessed externally by the JBTE in order to ensure that “student teachers are sufficiently competent to perform their expected classroom duties” (Brown, 1999, p. 1). Key expectations of student teachers’ performance include planning ability and clarity of lesson structure—systematic and consistent with defined instructional objectives. These are aided by good communication skills and meaningful activities. Student teachers are expected to show competence in knowledge of subject matter, knowledge and use of resources, and psychologically supportive emotional climate in the classroom (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; JBTE, 2003).

In addition student teachers are expected to demonstrate sensitivity and adaptation to individual differences, diversity (Billings-Ladson, 2000; Carter, 2002), and other positive professional attributes (Goldhaber, 2002). The major focus of teaching-practice is to facilitate the student teachers’ enhanced understanding of students and their learning processes. Teaching practice was intended as a period of exploration and self-evaluation (Brown, 1999). It gives student teachers an opportunity to reflect on their own needs for further study and professional development.
The Teaching-Practice Curriculum: Mico

*The Primary curriculum* is comprised of 100 semester hours and is equivalent to 8 credit hours for the practice of teaching (Mico College, 2004-2005). During the teaching-practice period, the final-year/Year 3 student teachers also carry 3 credit hours or 45 semester hours for a research course. This accounts for a research paper which is aligned to the teaching-practice exercise in the field (action research). Student teachers may choose their topics while on teaching practice, and collect data relevant to the study. This paper is completed when the student teachers return from teaching practice (Brown, 1999).

The curriculum schedule at Mico showed no visible indicators of courses or subjects aligned to teaching practice during the first and second years (semesters 1-4). However, courses such as Principles of Teaching and Learning, Technology in Education, and The Teacher, School and Society were identified by the student teachers as useful courses for teaching practice. Other scheduled courses for semesters 1-4 included: Use of English, The Emergent Teacher, Mathematics, Science for Living, and Social Studies. Practical subjects included Music, Art, and Physical Education. Student teachers had a choice of two subjects from this arrangement. The core courses include: Personal Development, Religious Education, Understanding the Learner, and Fundamentals of Teaching Reading (Mico College, 2004-2005).

In the first semester of the third year (semester 5), 100 semester hours or 8 credit hours are allotted to teaching practice in the schedule of subjects. The second semester of the third year (semester 6) is entirely devoted to teaching practice. Credit or clock hours are not indicated (undefined) on the schedule.
The Secondary curriculum revealed similar trends in the allocation or alignment of subjects/courses to teaching practice, during semesters 1 and 2 of the first year. In semester 2 of the first year, student teachers visit the host schools and observe students and teachers in their natural settings (Huling, 1998). During the first semester of the second year, 90 semester hours or 6 credit hours of the curriculum are allocated to teaching practice. This period marks the initial formal preparation of the student teachers for the field. During this period, they are involved in observation and other pre-field activities.

The teaching-practice activities appear to lie dormant until the first semester of the third year (semester 5), when teaching practice assumes priority focus. An allotment of 90 semester hours or 6 credit hours is amassed for teaching practice, as shown in Table 6 (Mico College, 2004-2005).

During the final semester in the third year (semester 6), the curriculum focuses on "Understanding the Learner." This is a sustained 4-credit course which begins in semester 1 in the second year, and continues through teaching practice. This course has an indeterminate number of credit hours in the schedule.

It appears that this course is indirectly linked to the teaching-practice exercise, in preparing the student teacher for the classroom. However, it is ironic that not one of the responses from the student teachers interviewed, made reference to that subject as being helpful in preparing them for teaching practice. The subjects/courses identified as being helpful were Principles of Teaching and Learning, Classroom and Behavior Management, School and Society, and Child Development.
The Mico College catered to two categories of student teachers—“day” and “evening” student teachers (Mico College, 2004-2005). As the terms suggest, student teachers attend classes at separate times, but the programs are the same, being monitored by the JBTE. Twelve weeks are allotted for the final-year teaching practice for both the primary and secondary programs. This includes 1 week for the observation and pre-field activities (Table 6).

Description of Host School: Mico

The host school selected for participation in the Mico teaching-practice experience was the Mico Laboratory School. This is a practicing primary school located on the campus of the Mico College. It is housed in a two-storey building adjacent to the Special Education building, and the High School, all part of the conglomerate of the Mico institutional legacy.

Mico Practicing Primary operates the traditional Grades 1 to 6 in classrooms that are separated by easels and chalkboards. The furniture seems adequate for the number of students enrolled. However, space is extremely limited. Ventilation and lighting are relatively good based on the construction of the building. The walls of the classrooms spoke to the involvement of the classroom teachers, who provided a rich reading and learning environment for the students.

Participants in the study from the Mico College included student teacher Charms, cooperating teacher Fleecy, and Principal Alfred. The real names of all participants in the study were changed to protect the privacy of participants. Description of these informants is narrated in the following profiles.
Table 6

*Curriculum Structure: The Mico College*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Semester Hours</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Teaching-practice Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-field Experience (1 week observation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical experience/Teaching-practice (12 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-field Experience (1 week observation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Clinical experience/Teaching-practice (12 weeks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profiles of Participants

*Student Teacher Charms:* “I never practiced to teach before, but my cooperating teacher helped me, and I am improving.” Charms, a quiet fragile student teacher who attended the “evening” program at the Mico College, was selected for conversation. Charms is enthusiastic about teaching practice. She shows interest in becoming a teacher. She is willing to learn, and as we conversed, she confided that “teaching is hard, but I am determined to do what is necessary to achieve.” From our conversation I learned that Charms obtained the theory in the college sessions, but did not get the opportunity to practice her teaching skills before going into teaching practice.

For Charms, teaching practice was like being thrown into the deep end of the water with limited life jacket capacity. She was assigned a Grade 2 class with about 15 to 20 students in a semi-open classroom, separated by dividers and easels. There was very little space in which to move around. She said she had a wonderful, nurturing cooperating
teacher. She hoped to teach in the lower grade levels as "it is not so difficult to control children of that age."

"Student teachers sometimes suffer shock, culture shock when they reach the real classroom," stated one of the faculty focus group informants. "They are shocked to realize that a majority of the students cannot read at the grade level they are at, and that a number of them do not want to be in school."

In speaking of the college supervisors, Fleecy said, "I believe their role is to impart the knowledge, and the cooperating teacher does the practical." Cooperating teacher Fleecy is an intelligent, conscientious, energetic, and nurturing trained teacher. She has been a committed, dedicated, and concerned teacher who modeled "repeatable" behaviors for student teachers over the 15 years at that school. Her commitment goes beyond assisting the student teacher to that of preparing the student teacher. According to Fleecy, "the student teacher should always have access to my resources." These could be human, intellectual, skills, and materials. She believes in the delivery of quality service and "repeatable practice." "Student teachers should be taught the skill of how to teach in the colleges, before going on teaching practice," she commented.

"There needs to be a change of name from 'teaching practice' to 'school practice'" Principal Alfred suggested. "Student teachers believe they do not have to participate in the activities of the school. All they have to do is to come for the period in which they have to teach, and then leave. Teaching practice means more than that. It is an opportunity for student teachers to get involved in all the activities of the school."

Teaching practice through teacher preparation must change the way student teachers are
prepared for the classrooms of the 21st century (National Education Association, 1999). The practicum (teaching practice) must be more than practice (Schultz, 2005).

Alfred has been a principal for 12 years at the school he serves as principal. Since its inception, Mico Laboratory School has served as a practicing school for student teachers. “As principal, I select cooperating teachers based on their ability to nurture student teachers and their wealth of experience in dealing with student teachers.” For my own part, I do my evaluation of the student teachers when they come during the first 2 weeks, and I am prepared to help them achieve.

He further stated, “It is instructive and in the best interest of the principal to assist these prospective teachers, because sometimes student teachers who perform well during teaching practice are hired for the next school year.” Unlike Spruce, the principal of the primary and junior secondary school, Alfred believes that 18-year-olds, if matured and willing to learn, can make a positive difference in the lives of the students (peers) they teach. He suggests that cooperating teachers make every effort to provide support for them during the teaching-practice period.

Teaching Practice and Supervision

The Department of Professional Studies is responsible for the teaching-practice program. The placement officer in charge works with a team of teacher educators and apportions the teaching-practice activities to the team. Further division of activities is shared between the Primary and the Secondary Heads of Departments (HODs). The Heads of Departments further divide the assigned student teachers among the subject specialists. Each specialist is responsible for “monitoring” five or six student teachers.
during the teaching-practice period. College supervisors are expected to work in teams and to adequately supervise the student teachers under their jurisdiction (Brown, 1999).

Teaching-Practice Placement System

Among the woes of implementing the benchmarks is the placement of a student teacher with a good match of a “seasoned” cooperating teacher (Huling, 1998, p. 3), one who can adequately mentor the fragile student teacher into a confident, prospective teacher. It is like nurturing a caterpillar to become a butterfly. One cooperating teacher remarked, “The student teacher should not be left on his or her own. Student teachers are taught the theory in the college, and it is the cooperating teacher who trains them in the practical aspects of teaching.”

The teaching-practice placement system was conducted differently in the two selected teachers’ colleges as shown in Figure 3. The Mico College operates a diverse program of pre-primary, primary, secondary, and special education programs for its PK-12 teachers. It administers both sections A and B as shown in Figure 3.

At The Mico College, the placement officer acts as controller for the placement of student teachers in the host schools. He or she has the sole right for the placement of student teachers. Coordinators for the primary and the secondary levels have assigned roles in the teaching-practice exercise. Heads of departments for the primary and the secondary levels also have their tasks, and all work with the supervisory faculty as a team in the various departments.

The teaching-practice events begin in June at the Mico College. They continue through April/May when the results are submitted and processed at the JBTE. “The teaching-practice team at the Mico formulates and executes the JBTE plan of teaching
practice to the letter of the JBTE,” said one supervisor, focusing on the implementation of the benchmarks. The 12 weeks of interactive teaching charted in Table 6 require intense collaboration between colleges and schools (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Weaver & Stanulis, 1996) and vigilant supervision, and feedback for satisfactory outcomes (Whitney et al., 2000). The supervisory faculty is sometimes overwhelmed with other assigned teaching responsibilities, and at times they shortchange the student teachers of the number of visits required. They often fulfill the assigned visits, but the required additional visits for struggling student teachers are sometimes ignored.
Evaluating the Benchmarks: Mico

The JBTE Internal/External Year 3 Teaching-Practice Assessment Instrument – 2004 was used to assess student teachers during teaching practice. However, because the focus of this study is on the implementation of the benchmarks, the instrument was used to identify the items that were being implemented. Student teachers perceive that the disposition of the cooperating teacher must be imitated in order to achieve a satisfactory grade. "Student teachers were marked down by college supervisors for use of Creole, even when this was sometimes the only way to reach students. Everyone wants a good grade," remarked a focus group informant.

College supervisors were to organize themselves in teams or clusters, and collaborate on the internal assessment of student teachers (Brown, 1999). At the Mico College, teams of college supervisors "cross-marked" or double checked student teachers' performance before arriving at the final grade for the student teachers who were supervised.

Three models are available for visiting, observing, and assessing student teachers. The college followed the "Model 3 Format" for practice teaching (Brown, 1999). The format required each college supervisor to be assigned a certain number of student teachers, based on enrollment. In the case of Mico, the quota for each supervisor was between three and six student teachers.

During the internal assessment, college supervisor "A" is joined by college supervisor "B" (or another tutor who has not been engaged in supervision). Both supervisors visit all the assigned student teachers of supervisor "A" and a grade is given
for the observed lessons. Both supervisors then observe and assess the assigned student
teachers for supervisor "B" and then award a grade.

The supervisors then convene internal moderation sessions to agree on the grade
to be assigned to each student teacher. College supervisors act as links between the host
schools, the student teachers, and the external assessment team. They are assisted by the
teaching-practice coordinators from each college (Brown, 1999).

The Model 3 Format creates a setting in which biases are minimized. Student
teachers have an opportunity to interact with other supervisory faculty who are not their
tutors. College supervisors are expected to visit host schools, supervise, and provide
continuous help and encouragement to student teachers. They are to monitor the student
teachers’ schedule, noting special dates, if any, when the normal school day would be
interrupted by sports, field-trips, fund-raising events, or harvest and festival activities
(Brown, 1999; Evans, 1993). An explanation of the process is illustrated in Figure 4.

Teaching-Practice Awards: Mico

Awards and prizes are part of the teaching-practice program of all teachers’
colleges connected to the JBTE. Annual prizes for student teachers, who gain
“Distinction” with the highest grades for teaching practice, in each grade level of
specialization are among the awards and trophies extended to student teachers (Church

Church Teachers’ College

Founded in 1965 by the Anglican Diocese in Jamaica, Church Teachers’ College
(CTC) was selected for this study from 12 teacher training institutions in Jamaica. The
college is situated on the periphery of Mandeville, a small university town in central Manchester. It is surrounded by small citrus-farming districts and residential areas.

The original building formerly housed the Mayfair Hotel with all the necessary amenities. A centerpiece of Church Teachers’ College is its chapel of St. Matthias, dedicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1969 (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003). This 41-year-old institution is a member of the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) in association with the University of the West Indies School of Education, and the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 4. Teaching-practice evaluation process.*

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Church Teachers’ College has as its Motto: to educate by means of love and wisdom—*caritate et sapientia educare*. Its Mission is the promotion of education based on high academic standards, supported by dedication to Christian principles that develop the whole person. Church Teachers’ College focuses on the spiritual, academic, social, physical, cultural, aesthetic, religious, and moral aspects of the student teacher (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003).

Student teachers are expected to form good character while pursuing excellence in all aspects of education, and achieve their full potential (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003). They need to produce desirable outcomes that result from strength of character (Peterson & Sikiba, 2005). Prospective teachers need to develop the core qualities of empathy, compassion, love, decisiveness, spontaneity, and flexibility in order to function as an effective teacher (Tickle, 1999). These are the intangible attributes spoken of by Goldhaber (2002).

Church Teachers’ College is a co-educational, residential institution and offers housing accommodation to student teachers and some staff members. The college operates with philosophical tenets that accentuate individual worth and excellence. CTC reckons that student teachers should achieve excellence and contribute to the social and economic well-being of Jamaica, as they seek to live harmoniously with others in a multicultural global community (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003).

As the college searched for fulfillment of the real needs of student teachers, the programs were restructured to cater to those needs. In its early inception, CTC offered the following: (a) Early childhood—pre-primary courses, (b) Primary—Grades 1-6 courses, (c) Secondary—post primary Grades 7-11 courses, and (d) a Preliminary 1-year course.
designed to upgrade student teachers lacking in JBTE pre-requisite academic qualifications. Church Teachers’ College is supported by a qualified faculty with more than 80% of them holding Master’s degrees. The college administered with distinction to its 431 student teachers, 154 of whom were Year 3 student teachers (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003).

However, rationalization of the education system reduced the programs offered to only a secondary program (Errol Miller, personal communication, August 2003; JBTE, 2003). Change came in August 2005 when Church Teachers’ College re-introduced the early-childhood education program on a full-time or part-time basis. This is to facilitate the training of “mature age” untrained teachers who are working in the Basic schools. The focus of this study was on the secondary program.

Profile of the Student Teacher: CTC

The philosophical system of beliefs of CTC continues to emphasize individual worth and excellence (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003). This institution focuses on competencies necessary for training students to become leaders in society (JBTE, 2003).

As adult learners, student teachers are expected to model professionalism that represents the teaching profession (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003; JBTE, 2003). College supervisors are expected to help prospective teachers focus on ideals and intangible attributes (Goldhaber, 2002) and to promote the awareness of positive meanings (Fredrickson, 2002). Student teachers are cultured to show awareness for growth, competence, and a thirst for knowledge in an ever-changing technological learning environment (JBTE, 2003).
Research has shown that many teacher educators are afraid to touch issues beyond the professional domain—dealing with emotional, diversity, and cultural issues—rather than the content and pedagogy (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Subsequently, student teachers trained at Church Teachers' College are expected to display characteristics of a strong sense of self that can lead to desirable outcomes (Peterson & Sikiba, 2005), enhanced emotional intelligence, commitment, and dedication to the general well-being of children (Mico College, 2004-2005).

Student teachers are trained to acquire the ability to cope, manage stressful situations, and effectively deal with the realities of the classroom (Thompson, 2002). They are to demonstrate exemplary leadership skills, exemplified by tolerance, respect, and courtesy. They are nurtured to exhibit a sense of justice, fair-play, and civic pride, and be held accountable for their actions. These attributes are lessons in character education addressed by Edward Seaga in the Task Force report (Boyne, 2002; Task Force on Educational Reform, 2004). Student teachers are subject to the laws of Jamaica, as well as the regulations prescribed by the JBTE and by the Board and Management of the College (Church Teachers' College, 2002-2003).

According to Goldhaber (2002), the influence of the teacher's measurable characteristics such as certification status, experience, and education level on students' achievement accounts for only 3%, while aspects of the "elusive qualities such as enthusiasm, and skill in conveying knowledge explains 97% of the differences in achievement" (p. 4).
Teacher Education Academic Program: CTC

At the time of this study, Church Teachers’ College offered the secondary program in teacher education at the diploma level. This program adheres to the JBTE syllabi that direct secondary teacher education in all the teachers’ colleges. The curriculum is the same at each college (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003; The Mico College, 2004-2005). However, the arrangement of courses may be different based on the combinations of subjects/courses chosen by student teachers and the idiosyncrasies of faculty.

The Diploma Level

The Secondary Education curriculum is comprised of courses, which are small categories of content, and subjects, which are broad categories of content. The subject may include courses. For example, Mathematics is a subject, but algebra and calculus are courses. This curriculum prepares student teachers to teach pre-adolescent and adolescent students. Similar to Mico, Church Teachers’ College secondary curriculum promotes a “Single Option” and a “Double Option” offering. The Double Option includes English—Language and Literature, Home Economics, Mathematics, and Science—Chemistry, Physics, or Biology. Student teachers have the option of choosing any two areas. These courses prepare content area specialists for secondary schools (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003; JBTE, 2003; Mico College, 2004-2005).

Teaching-Practice Program: CTC

The teaching-practice program at CTC is similar in structure, but somewhat different in process from that of Mico. CTC operates only a secondary program that
embraces the same curriculum of teaching-practice activities. These include the pre-field experiences, observation, and actual teaching practice. Both colleges engage in the teaching-practice activity at the same time during the academic year (JBTE, 2003).

Colleges are required to organize 16 weeks of teaching practice across the 3 years of the JBTE programs. This fulfills the requirements for the diploma in teaching (JBTE, 2003). However, the focus of this study was on the final-year teaching practice. Duration of the pre-field activities for the final-year student teachers at CTC is for 1 week. During this time student teachers observe classes in session and collect materials for the teaching-practice exercise, which is usually scheduled for 12 weeks.

Requirements for Program Completion

Similarly to The Mico, student teachers are allowed to complete a minimum of 8 weeks of teaching practice, if there are legitimate excuses such as illness, with a doctor’s certificate, death in the family, etc. The result is a minimum passing grade of an “agrotot,” and the candidate may be allowed to re-sit the teaching-practice examination in the following year to obtain a better grade (JBTE, 2003; 2005b, p. 56).

At Church Teachers’ College (CTC) student teachers begin the pre-field activities in December. The teaching-practice team is comprised of only secondary teacher educators. The size of the student population at CTC necessitates only a teaching-practice coordinator, who is also the placement officer. Student teachers’ choice of subjects, for the double and single options is based on special combinations as seen in Table 7.
Teaching-Practice Curriculum: CTC

Beginning in 1981, CTC embarked on a 3-year residential curriculum of 2,250 hours of tuition credit courses. The teacher education programs, with relevant pre-requisites, qualify student teachers for a diploma in teaching, after completing between 113 and 115 credits (JBTE, 2003). Between 56 and 64 credits made up the major area of specialization. The other areas of personal development and general studies courses constituted the rest of the hours (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003; JBTE, 2003). The arrangement of the allotted periods for teaching practice in the field is explained in Table 8.

Table 7

Single-Option Arrangement: CTC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Science &amp; History</td>
<td>Computer Studies &amp; History</td>
<td>Religious Education &amp; History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Science &amp; Geography</td>
<td>Geography &amp; History</td>
<td>Religious Education &amp; Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Science &amp; Physical Education</td>
<td>Mathematics &amp; Geography</td>
<td>Religious Education &amp; Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Science &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>Physical Education &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>Religious Education &amp; Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Science &amp; Social Studies</td>
<td>Mathematics &amp; Computer Studies</td>
<td>Religious Education &amp; Computer Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Science &amp; Computer Studies</td>
<td>Social Studies &amp; Geography</td>
<td>Social Studies &amp; Computer Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

*Curriculum Structure: CTC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Semester Hours</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-field Experience (1 week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teaching-practice (12 weeks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualification of teachers was based on the successful completion of the entire program of credit courses approved by the JBTE. This was based on the need for student teachers to hone pre-requisite characteristics and qualities suitable for teaching. Student teachers can experience this change by improving their own learning from evidence such as research (Department of Education for Qualified Teacher Status/Teacher Training Agency, 2002). Teaching practice, during the 1960s and 1980s was an “in house” activity at CTC. The exercise included 3 years of coursework, accompanied by 6 weeks of teaching practice which was internally assessed. Each college designed and implemented its own evaluation instrument, which was approved by the JBTE (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003).

College supervisors were solely responsible for all aspects of the teaching-practice exercise: pre-field activities, in-field activities, moderation exercise, documentation, and report of the proceedings. Student teachers’ performance was measured by the college-made internal assessment instrument during that period. However, in 1983, Year 3 teaching practice was initiated and installed, and external
assessment commenced, and has continued until the present (Church Teachers’ College, 2002-2003).

Description of Host Schools: CTC

The two host schools selected for participation in Church Teachers’ Colleges’ teaching-practice experience were the Moriah Primary and Junior Secondary school (pseudonym) and a traditional high school. The Moriah Primary and Junior Secondary school is located in the hilly, rural, farming district of north Manchester. The traditional high school is located on the periphery of the university town of Mandeville.

Moriah Primary and Junior Secondary school is housed in a bungalow-type building adjacent to a teacher’s cottage. According to Principal Spruce, the school had been upgraded from an All-age school, and renamed Primary and Junior Secondary school. She further stated that the school has been host to the teaching-practice exercise from its early inception up to the 1970s, when there was a break in the activity. Multi-grade teaching continued in this school for a while, and the teaching-practice exercise was suspended when the enrollment decreased. Teaching practice was recently restored.

The traditional high school is located on the periphery of the university town, Mandeville. It is a female unisex school that operates a full day school. The classrooms at this school are large, spacious, and well-ventilated, and the furniture is of reasonably good quality. The teaching faculty consists of more females than males, including the principal.

The traditional high school, Thinkelowes secondary, where the student teacher from the discriminate sample practiced, was located in the deep, rural, mountainous area of Manchester. The student teacher described the weather as sometimes very cold. The
classrooms lacked proper infrastructure such as doors and windows. The noise levels were sometimes very high and disrupted her class. Some classrooms are “open” and separated by dividers or easels.

Participants in the study from Church Teachers’ College include student teachers Ruby and Jim, cooperating teacher Ralph, and Principal Spruce. Also one of the discriminate sample of the 2 teachers was placed in Manchester. Description of these informants is narrated in the following profiles.

Profiles of Participants

Student Teacher Ruby: “I am enjoying teaching practice, and my cooperating teachers are very supportive.” Ruby is a quiet, robust, dependable, and innovative student teacher. She was enthusiastic about teaching practice, and showed interest in becoming an exceptional teacher. She was willing to learn, and as we spoke she confided that teaching is fun.

Ruby’s students were relatively “good students” and she was determined to help them achieve. She was assigned to Grades 7 and 8 classes with about 25 to 30 students in enclosed classrooms. There was much space, good ventilation, and she said she had a wonderful, nurturing cooperating teacher and understanding supervisors. She hoped to teach in the lower grade levels as it was not so difficult to control children of that age.

Student Teacher Jim: “The complexity of the learning environment and the fact that only about 10% of the Grades 7 and 8 students are reading at grade level creates a challenge.” Jim is a science major with interest in physical education. He is pleasant, but serious. He confided that he is frustrated with the problems of the “many non-readers in his classes.” He mentioned that “this holds me back, as I have to modify some lessons
beyond the normal point of modification in order to help the students, and this is not good." He was thankful that the Grade 9 students were reading at grade level and above.

Cooperating Teacher Ralph: “A trained teacher should be familiar with these benchmarks. It does not matter when she or he graduated from teachers’ college. Cooperating teacher Ralph is a matured, conscientious, energetic, robust, male physical education teacher. He believes in modeling “repeatable behaviors” for student teachers. He has been a teacher at the Moriah Primary and Junior Secondary school for 2 years. According to Ralph, student teachers should be adequately prepared for the classroom. “I have the responsibility to help nurture them.” He believes that “there should be several rather than a single visit from the JBTE external assessors and college supervisors,” because the “arrival of the assessors on” what he describes as “a ‘down day,’ could result in failure for the student teacher.” He further stated that “the 3 months for teaching practice is adequate, but the single visit of the external assessors can impact negatively on the student teacher.” He thinks collaboration between the college and the school can enhance the teaching-practice program more effectively.

Principal Spruce: “I look for experience, the cooperating teacher’s knowledge of subject areas, their communication skills, compatibility skills, and flexibility skills. I don’t think it is very practical for an 18-year-old student teacher to be teaching 15- and 16-year-olds in the All-age school. You have to examine the social implications. Student teachers are young and easily distracted. They need positive role models to nurture them.”

Spruce maintains that as principals of supporting schools, there needs to be a clear understanding of what is expected of them regarding the benchmarks, because sometimes
“it seems that we are on different wavelengths and judging each other on different standards, not knowing what the expectations are.” Spruce has been a distinguished vice principal, and is presently principal of a central Manchester up-graded All-age school for the past 8 years.

Betty: “Teaching practice can be very vigorous, yet an enriching and rewarding experience.” Betty is a social studies major, and has interest in counseling. She is very organized and business-like in her approach to teaching. She loves the children she teaches and plans real-life activities for them. She said, “As teachers in training, we have to deal with some frustrating situations. We have to compete with other classes with noise, etc. Administrators need to consider improvements for certain areas to make the teaching-practice experience beneficial.”

Of all the participants interviewed, Principal Spruce proved to be the most experienced and expressive in dealing with student teachers. She is a true “altruistic nurturer,” seeking out the best alternatives for the “self” of the student teacher (May, 1953; Rose, 1996). She has supervised multi-grade teaching in this small school with an enrollment of more boys than girls for a while. The teaching-practice exercise, she explained, was suspended when the enrollment decreased, but was recently restored. She claims that the assistance of student teachers is invaluable to the classroom teachers and especially the students.

Teaching Practice and Supervision

At Church Teachers’ College the Practicum Department is responsible for the teaching-practice program. The placement officer and the coordinator are one and the same person, in charge of a team of supervisory faculty. Based on their schedule, the

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teaching-practice team meets three times during the teaching-practice exercise. Meetings are scheduled with the student teachers and the supervisory faculty at the beginning of the teaching-practice period for orientation.

Student teachers are apportioned to the supervisors in quotas of five or six. The activities are further shared between the secondary Heads of Departments (HODs). The HODs further divide and distribute the student teachers among the subject specialists. Each subject specialist is responsible for monitoring five or six student teachers during the teaching-practice period. At "mid-teaching-practice," also referred to as mid-term; there is a meeting with the external assessors. This arrangement is for student teachers to get acquainted with the assessors, and to ask questions relating to teaching practice, assessment, and other concerns.

College supervisors were expected to (a) work in teams/clusters to effectively supervise the student teachers and (b) collaborate on the internal assessment of student teachers under their jurisdiction (Brown, 1999). At Church Teachers’ College the teams of college supervisors “cross-mark” or “double-check” student teachers’ performance before arriving at the final grade for the student teachers they supervised. The supervisors refer to this activity as “second-opinion.”

Teaching-Practice Placement System: CTC

Among the challenges of implementing the benchmarks is the placement of a student teacher with a good match of a “seasoned” cooperating teacher (Huling, 1998). Student teachers need a trained, understanding, nurturing teacher who can effectively mentor the fragile student teacher into a confident prospective teacher (p. 3). It is like nurturing a caterpillar to become a butterfly.
One cooperating teacher remarked, "The student teacher should not be left on his or her own. Student teachers are taught the theory in the college and it is the cooperating teacher who trains them in the practical aspects of teaching." The teaching-practice placement system at Church Teachers' College focused on the secondary program only as is illustrated in Figure 4.

During the internal assessment, college supervisor "A" is joined by college supervisor "B" (or another tutor who has not been engaged in the supervision). Both supervisors visit all the assigned student teachers of supervisor "A" and a grade is given for the observed lessons. Both supervisors then observe and assess the assigned student teachers for supervisor "B" and then award a grade. See Figure 4. The supervisors then convene internal moderation sessions to concur on the grade to be assigned to each student teacher (Brown, 1999). College supervisors act as links between the host schools, the student teachers, and the external assessment team.

They are expected to visit host schools, supervise, and provide continuous help and encouragement to student teachers. They are assisted by the teaching-practice coordinators from each college. College supervisors also monitor the student teachers' schedule, observing special dates, if any, when the normal school day might be interrupted by sports, field-trips, fund-raising events, and harvest and festival activities (Brown, 1999; Evans, 1993). In this setting, biases are minimized and student teachers have an opportunity to interact with other supervisory faculty who are not their tutors.
Figure 5. Teaching-practice placement system: CTC.

Evaluating the Benchmarks: CTC

Two types of assessments (internal and external) occur during the final-year teaching practice. The college supervisors perform the internal assessment prior to the external assessment by the external assessors (Brown, 1999). One of the three assessment models proposed by Brown (1999) for visiting, observing, and assessing practicing student teachers is the “Model 3 Format.” Church Teachers’ College (CTC) uses the model to assess its student teachers. The format requires each college supervisor to be assigned a certain number of student teachers based on the enrollment of the college.

Teaching-Practice Awards: CTC

Awards and prizes are part of the teaching-practice program of all teachers’ colleges connected to the JBTE. Annual prizes for student teachers who gain “Distinction” with the highest grades for teaching practice in each grade level of
specialization are among the awards and trophies extended to student teachers (Church Teachers' College, 2002-2003; JBTE, 2003; The Mico College, 2004-2005).

Based on its philosophy and mission, each college reserves the right to offer awards and prizes accordingly. Consequently, Church Teachers' College offers an award for outstanding community involvement. It focuses on the "student teacher's strength of character, depth of intellect, well-rounded personality, and the ability to be a catalyst for good" (Church Teachers' College, 2002-2003, p. 5).

Observation: Implementing the Benchmarks

In order to have a first-hand view of the use of the benchmarks by the student teachers, I observed 2 of the 3 student teachers who were selected. These student teachers were part of the focus groups, and placed in host schools within reasonable reach for visitation. However, because of disruptions in the teaching-practice program, I was unable to visit the student in the primary school, although I was able to converse with her for a short time. One student teacher was practicing in a primary and junior secondary school, and one was in a traditional high school. The discriminate sample was in a secondary school.

1. Ruby: Ruby taught History and Social Studies in a female unisex traditional high school. Attendance ranged from 30 to 32 students regularly. The setting was learner-learning oriented with a well-ventilated, spacious classroom and comfortable seating for every student. My observation of Ruby's History lesson revealed that the JBTE benchmarks were being implemented using methods taught by her college tutors. Using the Internal/External Year 3 Teaching-Practice Assessment Instrument-2004, I identified the benchmarks that were being implemented during the teaching of the lesson.
I observed and recorded the data as field notes. I noted that items E1—creative ideas and special projects developed in the class/or school, and E2—contribution to the classroom appearance, obtained a “U” or unobserved. This reinforced the supervisors’ and student teachers’ claim that some benchmarks are difficult to observe. One supervisor remarked, “If too many unobserved items are recorded, the student teacher’s grade will be negatively influenced,” because the zeros do add up.

2. Jim: Jim taught Science and Physical Education subjects to Grades 7, 8, and 9. He was observed in an overcrowded classroom separated by dividers and easels. Students sat three to a desk, making movement very inflexible. The noise was decibels above the level of communicating to the students. I could hardly hear Jim. He spoke everything two or more times in order to reach all the students.

That day I counted 42 of the enrolled 45 Grade 7 students in his class. He taught well, considering the circumstances, on the topic “Plant and Animal Cells.” Many of the activities had to be orally done as approximately 70% of the class was male and most of them reading below grade level. Using the Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching-Practice-2004, which contained the benchmarks, I identified the items implemented by Jim in his teaching. I observed that the relevant benchmarks for that lesson were compromised as the lesson content prepared for “readers” could not be realized.

Note taking or copying from the chalkboard was a seemingly laborious assignment for students as they wrote down, letter-by-letter, the assignment. In an immediate feedback session with Jim, I learned that “the benchmarks are reasonable, but it is difficult to implement some items.” Items such as T7, Technology--AV-aids,
equipment, and resources—effectively used, were difficult to observe because the student teacher had no space in which to prepare and use it.

Three items were not observed: R4, Creative management of existing physical and learning conditions; M1, Learners’ interpersonal problems/difficulties appropriately handled; and E2, contribution to the classroom appearance. These were not observed because of the complexity of the learning environment and the system. The observation report guide used to record the data is found in Appendix E.

3. Betty: Betty taught social studies. The class was held in the morning and some of the students were absent from the class. They strolled in later one-by-one or in twos. There were about 35 students there that day. She organized the class into a voting constituency. She reviewed the previous terms with the class and wrote the terms and new words on the right side of the chalkboard. As she discussed the terms with them she asked the students to give examples from their own experience.

Ballot boxes were made by the students, and the councilors for the districts were with their people/followers in groups. The groups were allowed to use party jargons and songs to motivate their councilors. These were made up by the students and guided by the student teacher. The students in her class were very supportive of the student teacher and participated rigorously in the lesson.

The student teacher confided in the feedback session that the teacher next door asked her to take her students for one of her lessons one of the times, because the teacher claimed that her students were paying attention to the student teachers’ class instead of hers. The items observed and checked off from the Instrument with the benchmarks included all except E1—Creative ideas and special projects developed in the class and
school. The benchmarks E2, and E5 were difficult to implement in that classroom. The limited space on the wall did not allow the student teacher to readily display the students' work. Most of the students' work was written in their books for display. Charts and other teacher-made materials were sometimes vandalized, if left in the classroom.

Summary

This chapter presents contexts of the two teachers' colleges and their learning communities for implementing the JBTE benchmarks. The programs of the two teachers' colleges are similar, yet different, in the organization and implementation based upon their adherence to JBTE guidelines. Profiles of each participant and group of participants are described.

The two teacher training institutions possess similar foundational structures, being controlled by the JBTE requirements. The colleges show diversity in the management and function of their programs, the structure of their offerings, and the teaching-practice placement system. These reflect the locations and needs of the colleges. The Mico College operates a multi-faceted program including pre-primary, primary, secondary, and special education programs for its PK-12 teachers. The Mico engaged a placement officer while Church Teachers' College engaged a coordinator who was also the placement officer. This occurred as a result of the size of the student teacher population and the needs of the colleges.

A summary of the similarities and differences of the colleges is provided in Appendix E. Beginning in August 2006, Church Teachers' College re-introduces an early childhood program. Student teachers believe the benchmarks are relevant and "doable" with consistent guidance from the college supervisors.
CHAPTER 5

THE JBTE BENCHMARKS: IMPLEMENTATION AND ISSUES

*When people change the way they look at things;
The things they look at change.*
Anonymous

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the JBTE and its development as the primary source of the benchmarks. Information gained from documents, interviews with the student teachers, supervisory faculty, cooperating teachers, and principals of host schools relating to the Mico and Church Teachers’ colleges are presented in themes in answer to Research Questions 1 and 2. Issues regarding the implementing of the benchmarks are highlighted and discussed, supported by data from the informants.

The primary context and themes delineated for this category include: (a) Description of the participants, (b) Benchmarks as the student teachers’ guide, (c) The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) Benchmarks and implementation, (d) Perceptions from Mico College, (e) Perceptions from Church Teachers’ College, and (f) Comparison of colleges. Each subtopic will be discussed with examples of the participants’ words included.
Providing quality education for student teachers involves much more than a curriculum, teacher educators, and a learning environment. It requires good teaching (Koppich, 2004; Tell, 2001). Good teaching requires a blend of subject matter and pedagogical preparation, or pedagogical content knowledge (Evans et al., 2002; Western Washington University, 2006), which includes the benchmarks or standards that serve as a guide in the preparation process.

In addition, teacher educators need to be conversant with the subject(s) they teach and the ways to communicate the subjects to students. They need to understand how the benchmarks/standards, curriculum, and assessments link together to create coherence in the education system (Koppich, 2004). Teacher educators need to model routine exercises and explain diversities more clearly (Whitney et al., 2000) in order to fulfill the law of collaboration on which seems to hang the success of teacher preparation.

**Descriptions of Participants**

The purposive sample of the population for this study consisted of 42 informants. These included student teachers, college supervisors/coordinators, cooperating teachers, and principals from two teacher colleges, and three host schools in Jamaica. Two student teachers focus groups and two supervisory faculty focus groups participated in the study. The student teachers focus groups consisted of eight student teachers each. Two student teachers, Jim and Ruby (pseudonyms), from the selected focus group participants were observed in implementing the benchmarks at two of the host schools. Each faculty focus group was comprised of 8 college supervisors and coordinators.

Additional participants in the study included two cooperating teachers and three principals. Five of the 42 participants (two student teachers, Betty and Charms, one
principal Kate, one external assessor, Jack, and one supervisory faculty, Neenah) were selected as the "discriminate sample" for comparative analysis (Rudestam & Newton, 2001) and the triangulation of data (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Betty was observed in a rural secondary school, and Charms in a primary school. They participated in a conversation. Both genders were represented in the study. Detailed descriptions of the participants are provided.

**Benchmarks: The Student Teachers' Guide**

"Benchmarks" is widely recognized and acknowledged as a measure of comparison for quantitative and qualitative value (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). I chose the term benchmarks, a synonym of standards, guidelines, and principles, because it characterizes a suitable expression of all the other terms—guidelines, standards, and principles. Benchmarks are therefore specifically developed for guiding student teachers. The college supervisors and external assessors use the benchmarks as "summative evaluative tools" to assess student teachers during the teaching-practice exercise (Brown, 1999).

The certification of teachers is predicated on the successful completion of the program approved by the JBTE, and the possession of qualities and characteristics suitable for teaching (Church Teachers' College, 2002-2003; JBTE, 2003). Goldhaber (2002) emphasized that the influence of the teachers' intangible attributes, such as enthusiasm and skill in conveying knowledge, contributes to students' learning (p. 2). Graduates from these programs should therefore be qualified, competent, committed professionals, ready to teach in their areas of specialization (JBTE, 2003). Consequently,
student teachers should be trained in implementing the benchmarks in order to reflect the mission and vision of the institutions that train them.

The benchmarks also serve as a "tape measure" or "progress map." They measure the progress or status of the student teachers' performance and assist in advancing them to their highest level of potential. This potential can be achieved by the interaction of content and pedagogy and by making the "what" of teaching as important as the "how" (Ball, 2001; Chickering & Gamson, 2005; Ziechner, 1996).

In the language of the JBTE, these guidelines are termed Key Expectations (Brown, 1999), or the Performance Criteria and Standards of Practice (Materials and Methods) organized in an instrument, The Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching Practice-2004, document (JBTE, 2004) (see Appendix B). In this study, I have labeled the guidelines as benchmarks—standards or principles for assessing or judging quality, excellence or attainment, in teacher performance (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000).

Educators, policymakers, and the public are in general agreement that students should be getting more from schools, although there is little agreement as to how to achieve this (Galluzzo, 1999; Errol Miller, personal communication, August 2003). With guided practice of college supervisors, student teachers can adequately implement the benchmarks and improve student learning (Brown, 1999).

Galluzzo (1999) posited that virtually every professional association has undergone the process of identifying standards or benchmarks of performance for its practitioners within the NCATE accreditation process. The increasing diversity in classrooms dictates that the education of educators needs to reflect the diversity of
learners in an information-based economy (pp. 1-5). Goldhaber (2002) stated that research dating back to the “Coleman Report” of 1966 showed students’ performance to be far more influenced by students’ socioeconomic background than by school quality, and that teacher quality accounted for a larger variation in students’ achievement than did all other characteristics of a school (p. 2).

The benchmarks, by design, are the student teachers’ chart and guide in order to help the certifying organizations fulfill their requirements, vision, and mission of quality teacher preparation. Student teachers must be prepared to help all children learn and understand the environment in which they live. They are held accountable for implementing the benchmarks because they are evaluated by them.

Student teachers are implementers of the benchmarks, while teacher educators are facilitators. Student teachers need much more than an awareness of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes involved in their preparation. Research shows that the achievement of students is strongly influenced, not to a great extent by the teacher’s educational level, but more so by the subjects (content) taught and the teacher’s pedagogical knowledge (Goldhaber, 2002).

In making an assessment of the utility value of benchmarks, Tell (2001) suggested that benchmarks should be of high standards. They should describe vividly and persuasively what teachers and students should know, do, understand, and enact. He further stated that, for best results, benchmarks should not be tied to high-stakes assessments.
Descriptions of the Joint Board of Teacher Education

The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) was purposively selected by default, as it is the only organization in Jamaica for certifying teachers at the diploma level. It demonstrates a willingness to "seek, establish, and maintain working relationships with the major overseas accreditation bodies to ensure appropriate equivalence" (JBTE, 2003, p. 23).

The Joint Board of Teacher Education, located on the campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, Jamaica, is a unique regional association. The Ministries of Education, teachers' colleges, and the teaching profession of Jamaica, Bahamas, Belize, and Turks and Caicos Islands collaborate and reflect partnership in the certification of teacher education in these territories (JBTE, 2005a, p. 2).

The beginning of the Joint Board of Teacher Education dates back to 1945. The West Indies Committee of the Commission on Higher Education recommended that the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) establish a strong department to train secondary school teachers. At the completion of a 1-year course, these teachers would receive a post-graduate diploma in education. Primary (elementary) teachers were trained in the teachers' colleges throughout the region, and benefited from this department, which served as a support base for setting examination papers, conducting examinations, and issuing a certificate in teaching to successful graduates of teacher colleges. The certificate was expected to gain recognition throughout the Caribbean (JBTE, 2005a).

In 1952 the Department of Education was established at the UCWI, and the training of university graduates for teaching at the secondary level began. The Center for the Study of Education was established within the Education Department in 1955 to support...
the primary teachers. The Center established Boards of Teacher Training at the request of Ministries of Education in Jamaica and other English-speaking Caribbean territories. These Boards functioned as advisories to governments in the areas of the training of teachers and administering of examinations (King, 1972).

During the 1960s the Department of Education and the Center experienced difficulties in adequately managing both the primary and secondary programs. They aborted the structural relationship that hampered the smooth running of both primary and secondary programs and gave birth to the Institute of Education in 1963. Two years later, most of the Ministries of Education abolished their Boards of Teacher Training and embraced the new Institute Board of Teacher Training, which became the certifying body for teacher training in the region (JBTE, 2005a).

The secretariat, situated in the Institute of Education, assumed responsibilities for academic, professional, and administrative tasks, formerly executed by the Ministries of Education. In 1971 the name of the Institute Board of Teacher Training was changed to the Joint Board of Teacher Education. This was in keeping with the need to better reflect the partnership between governments, teacher colleges, the Institute of Education, and the teachers’ organizations that were represented in the Board (JBTE, 2005a).

In order to fulfill its philosophy and mission, the JBTE recognizes five programs in which student teachers may be educated and trained as teachers. Such programs include Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, Special Education, and Literary Studies. These programs are offered every 3 years. However, student teachers can be granted advanced placement—placement based on the applicant’s acquisition of adequate credits in content
area courses (JBTE, 2003). The benchmarks are used to evaluate student teachers in these programs.

Functions of the JBTE

The main function of the JBTE is to guarantee standards-based quality assurance in teacher education. This is achieved in terms of the knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, and the personal qualities prospective teachers demonstrate at the completion of the program in which they specialized (JBTE, 2003). This body is mandated to:

1. Approve, revise, and up-date the syllabi of teacher colleges
2. Examine and assess the work of student teachers
3. Make recommendations on teacher training policy and allied matters to the appropriate authorities
4. Promote professional development of teacher educators
5. Initiate and increase the output of research in teacher education

JBTE Benchmarks for Year 3 Student Teachers

The JBTE benchmarks evolved over the years as the teaching-practice programs progressed, matured, and demanded clarity in the evaluation or assessment of student teachers. The benchmarks were developed and designed to provide standards-based quality assurance for the teaching profession through the training of student teachers (JBTE, 2003). These were organized in an instrument of 25 items, developed to measure the performance of student teachers. It endured several curriculum committee reviews.
and modifications and was rendered relevant to assess the needs of the student teachers and the learners in the schools. This document, the Internal/External Assessment Instrument, Year 3 Teaching Practice-2004 document (Methods and Materials), was organized into five stages and accompanying components (see Appendix B):

1. Planning (4 components)
2. Teaching (7 components)
3. Relating (5 components)
4. Managing (4 components) and

The stages were subdivided into four, five, or seven components. This design allowed student teachers to incorporate methods and materials into their practice. The five stages outlined in the Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching Practice-2004 document are:

1. Planning that focused on content, objectives, methods/strategies, and activities appropriate for the learners and the student teacher’s readiness to teach
2. Teaching that emphasized presentation, use of technology, teaching competence, and the student teachers’ ability to adequately instruct, engage, and interact with students meaningfully, and provide guidance and feedback
3. Relating that focused on communication, the delivery of instruction, and the student teacher’s ability to effectively connect with the learners’ needs and experiences
4. Managing that dealt with the management of the lesson, effectively organizing and handling the resources for quality control in instructional activities, and dealing with interpersonal problems during the interactivity in the classroom
5. Effecting that dealt with reflection on teaching, positive changes, and progress in performance of the learners, and the student teacher's use of creativity to promote learning (Brown, 1999; JBTE, 2004). Rubrics define the components of each stage, and describe four proficiency levels, arranged from lowest to highest on a continuum of 0-4. An unobserved--U--feature is also used for each component.

A descriptive explanation of the assessment variables for the benchmarks and interpretation of the Rating Scale is provided with the instrument for student teachers and college supervisors (see Appendix B). Items including knowledge, skills, and attitudes—outcomes—of student teachers' performance are interspersed among the list of expectations. The benchmarks were designed to positively influence early childhood through post-primary levels (K-12) of student learning, and to evaluate Year 3/final-year student teachers.

Implementing the JBTE benchmarks requires active collaboration of college supervisors, checks and balances from moderation committees and accountability for student teacher learning. Blair (2001) stated that the best teacher preparation is done when the local school personnel and college and university personnel collaborate actively (p. 13). In order for student teachers to adequately implement the JBTE benchmarks below, they must be intimately involved with the concepts that the benchmarks promote. In essence they need to “walk the talk” or model, demonstrate, and live the experience. Interactive learning becomes experiential learning, because we learn by doing (Dewey, 1962, p. 40). Practice must become the essence of theory (Ball, 2001). As the saying goes, “Perfect practice makes perfect.” Following are the seven broad categories of the JBTE benchmarks for the final-year student teachers:
1. The prospective teacher has the ability to plan and competently perform expected classroom duties, and systematic lesson presentation consistent with defined objectives.

2. The prospective teacher has knowledge of subject matter.

3. The prospective teacher illustrates effective use of learning time and monitors group and individual activities.

4. The prospective teacher has knowledge of and use of resources, and communication skills.

5. The prospective teacher fosters the enhancement of students’ self-concepts, uses meaningful learning activities, and shows awareness of classroom practices.

6. The prospective teacher shows sensitivity and adaptation to individual differences.

7. The prospective teacher fosters a psychologically supportive emotional climate in the classroom.

**Research Results**

Participants’ responses to research questions 1 and 2 were organized into categories of emergent themes that represented: (a) Knowledge of and communication of the benchmarks, (b) Issues implementing the benchmarks, (c) Importance and use of the benchmarks, and (d) Evaluation of the benchmarks. The data are discussed and analyzed in relation to the perceptions of the informants from the two institutions.

The voices of these stakeholders describe their own participation in the teaching-practice experience. Their knowledge of the benchmarks, their concerns about the students they had to teach, and the learning environments in which they were placed are...
described in this chapter. Student teachers were apprehensive about the issues faced in implementing the benchmarks and their relationship with the cooperating teacher, the college supervisor, and other members of the teaching-practice team. Narratives of their experiences provide samples for the themes and sub-themes.

Themes From the Data Sources:
Research Questions

Five research questions guided the investigation of implementing the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice programs of the selected two teacher colleges in Jamaica.

Research Question 1: In what ways are the benchmarks of the Joint Board of Teacher Education implemented in the teaching-practice programs in the two institutions studied?

Research Question 2: Which JBTE benchmarks are implemented in the two teaching-practice programs?

Research Question 3: How is the research-based teacher preparation standards of the INTASC and the NCATE aligned with the JBTE benchmarks?

Research Question 4: Which USA benchmarks are currently used in the two teacher preparation programs?

Research Question 5: Which of the USA benchmarks do stakeholders perceive need to be included in the JBTE benchmarks to formulate the ideal program for Jamaica?

The first two research questions address the implementation of the benchmarks in the teaching-practice programs. The themes that emerged indicated that the benchmarks
were important, useful, and profitable for learning, but there were challenges in implementing them:

1. Knowledge of and Communication of the Benchmarks

2. Implementing the Benchmarks

3. Issues Implementing the Benchmarks
   a. Systems' Issues
   b. Curriculum Issues
   c. Social and Environmental Issues


Informants' Perceptions: The Mico College

Responses from the interview and conversation protocols indicate that the benchmarks were communicated to student teachers and supervisory faculty, both verbally and in print forms. Supervisory faculty communicated and implemented the benchmarks through the syllabi of the teacher colleges in scheduled class sessions, in seminars/workshops, and feedback sessions with the student teachers. Student teachers implemented the benchmarks through their units, lesson plans, and actual teaching during the teaching-practice period.

Knowledge and Communication of the Benchmarks

Responding to questions from the Interview/Conversation Protocol, informants stated that they were knowledgeable of the benchmarks that were communicated to them in different ways. Student teachers in the focus group from Mico expressed that they were informed about the benchmarks in pre-teaching practice sessions, in the form of a
printed document, and in seminars and workshops conducted by the teachers’ college. In
the following narrative the student teacher focus groups from The Mico College is
represented as STA and the supervisory faculty as SFA.

Interviewer: Are you aware of the JBTE benchmarks?

Student teacher focus group from The Mico College responded unanimously that
they were aware of the benchmarks:

We are aware of the benchmarks. The tutors communicated them to us verbally
and in print form during the regular class sessions and in seminars when teaching
practice is in session. Majority of the tutors are not modeling the benchmarks for
us.

In order to clarify the question and obtain a better understanding of the situation, I
probed further by asking the question, how could the benchmarks be more practical? The
responses from the student teachers focus group were enlightening:

Allow the student teachers to teach students at the level they [students] are at, and
not according to completing the syllabus. Teachers who are currently teaching in
the school system should be part of the assessment team—they are more aware of
the realities of the present system. When the assessors come to my class and see
me teaching the alphabet to 9th graders, we should not be marked down because of
that. I am prepared to try what is necessary to help students succeed. I have to
help them start from the level they are at. Allow more hands-on practice with the
real classroom before teaching practice. Teaching experiences with our peers is
definitely not the same as in the real classroom—you don’t have the same kind of
disruptions and disrespect, or peers telling you, “You can’t teach.”

Concerning the communication of the benchmarks, the faculty focus group from
Mico stated that the benchmarks were embedded in the teaching-practice programs and
they [college supervisors] presented them to student teachers in various ways.

Interviewer: How are the benchmarks communicated to you?

Responses to this question from the supervisory faculty focus group show that
much effort was made to communicate the benchmarks
They are communicated to us through the evaluation instrument and the syllabi; also, at the JBTE meetings, in workshops, in practicum and pre-practicum sessions. We in turn communicate them to the student teachers in methods courses, the evaluation instrument, and in instructional sessions. You have to read the document with the items. During the first semester, third year student teachers are guided through 2 hours of practice in the practicing schools. They are exposed to real students and real classes. 

In response to the question of the communication of the JBTE benchmarks, two cooperating teachers and two principals of the host schools described their involvement in the process. According to them it was an opportunity to assist in molding the professional life of the teacher in training, and use reflectivity (Schon, 1991) to improve their own professional development.

Fleecy (Cooperating teacher): From my own experience as a trained teacher, I have been guiding student teachers. I have not received any information from the teachers' college regarding benchmarks in guiding the student teacher.

Alfred: (Principal): Benchmarks were informally communicated (verbally), but not by document. Regarding the expectations of JBTE, the former principal who was a member of the JBTE communicated valuable information about these to me, and I found these very instructive. Also, reflecting on my own training and experience I am able to identify and further communicate these requirements or guidelines to my cooperating teachers.

Implementing the Benchmarks

While supervisory faculty and student teachers' views of the expectations for implementing the benchmarks were generally not a source of dissatisfaction, aspects of the expectations regarding some required benchmarks were. In general, there were positive responses to the question "What steps are taken to ensure that student teachers incorporate the JBTE benchmarks into the teaching-practice exercise?" Responses from the supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College show that student teachers are assisted to focus on the benchmarks in teaching practice sessions 3 hours per week. They are guided into developing unit and lesson plans...
that reflect these benchmarks. Under the guidance of college supervisors/tutors student teachers do self-assessment. They participate in seminars and methods courses that promote the embedding of the benchmarks in their preparation and they practice with/on their peers.

Comparable to the supervisory faculty, student teachers had similar strategies for ensuring the benchmarks were implemented. They engaged in detailed lesson planning and conferenced regularly with the cooperating teachers. The student teachers focus group also from The Mico College said,

We incorporate the benchmarks in our practice in planning detailed lessons and conferencing with the cooperating teacher. I was required to use creative methods and lots of activities to bring across the lesson.

Issues: Implementing the benchmarks

Many of the advocates of quality teacher preparation have voiced their concerns about the challenges in the field. Some of these are student teachers' own fears of the teaching-practice exercise—fear of failure and restrictive and unsafe internal and external environments in which to practice. Others include behavioral problems of an overcrowded student population, and the overall unresponsiveness of some learners.

Goldhaber (2002) and Carter (2002) advocate that in order for teachers to teach in ways that are responsive to students and connect with their worlds, experiences, and assumptions, they need to know much about students—what they know, care about, and are able to do. Several of the stakeholders in this study described a growing frustration with the conditions they encountered in implementing the benchmarks during their teaching-practice experience. The challenges could be sub-divided into "sub-themes" and classified as: (a) systems issues, (b) curriculum issues and (c) environmental and social issues.
Systems’ issues: Situations embedded in the structure and function of the education system that interfere with the “flow” of things. Some examples are the shift system, lack of relevant instructional resources, examination schedules, sports, festival schedules, and some routine activities in the host schools. The supervisory faculty from The Mico College expressed their perceptions of the situation in the following statements:

[a] The Year 3 Evaluation Instrument needs to be modified to include scoring points that take into consideration the “un-observed” items, and capture the focus areas of the groups—primary and secondary—that are assessed. Some items need clarification. In fact there should be separate instruments for each program. [b] The Shift system schools create difficulties for the secondary student teachers because they have to “tug-a-long” with materials because of lack of space. Students sometimes vandalize student teachers’ work and or projects. [c] The teaching-practice period is too short for student teachers to obtain adequate practice to become good teachers, for example, in the area of Physical Education (P.E.), student teachers need even a year of constant interaction with the system so they can understand what the whole school atmosphere is about. The actual three months is too short. [d] It is important that college tutors be trained to understand the meaning of technology in order to administer the instrument. [e] Research is needed to improve the teaching for the student teachers. [f] Student teachers need to diversify their methods—they want to go and lecture—they need to put the methods into practice.

Multiple disruptions in the forms of examinations and co-curricular activities in terms of sports, festival preparation, harvest, etc., in the host schools deprive student teachers of valuable time needed to practice their teaching skills, but provided for the improvement of their observational skills. The student teachers from The Mico College express their views this way:

I was the teacher in the classroom because the cooperating teacher was on maternity leave. I had 3 or 4 cooperating teachers because of the subject areas I teach, and I had to “hunt them down” if I needed help. Disruptions lasted in the schools for 2 to 4 weeks. There was not enough time—3 to 5 weeks for practice. There were 38 to 42 students in the Grades 9 and 10 classes.
Other stakeholders believe that these challenges can be minimized and not needlessly put the student teachers at risk. There should be collaboration between host schools and colleges. In response to the question regarding the challenges, stakeholders described the situation as hopeful. Fleecy, the cooperating teacher assesses the situation and offers important advice in her comments:

Student teachers need much guidance and should not be left alone. They should be exposed to the practice of teaching before the third year practice. I am having a difficult time with the student teacher I supervise, because she never taught before. I have to be teaching her how to teach. . . . I assist her with the planning and allow her to teach, and then I teach and model for her. The improvement is remarkable, because she has a good attitude toward teaching and learning.

Challenges that confront principals during the teaching practice period are in (a) finding suitable environments for the student teachers and (b) selecting the most appropriate cooperating teacher for the supervisory role. Alfred described his challenges in ensuring the adequate preparation of the nation’s teachers in the following statement.

There needs to be a change of name from “teaching practice” to “school practice” as student teachers seem to get the feeling that they must only teach, and not get involved in the other aspects of school life. There needs to be a longer time of 6 months to 1 year to adequately facilitate the implementation of the JBTE benchmarks.

The student teachers of The Mico College saw the challenges as the learning environment, the students, the methods, and absent resources. In addition, they identified the diverse expectations from each of the teaching-practice teams, the length of the practice period, and the cooperating teachers’ attitudes toward them. The “monsters/giants” external assessors and the final grade were also grave issues for the student teachers. They voiced their concerns when they said,

There were students who continuously disrupted the class. They had problems with respect. The activities the supervisors asked us to do with the students were not easily implemented as students were not used to those methods.
I probed further using the question, Are you saying there are two ways of teaching? The responses generated provide greater clarity as the student teachers replied,

Yes. The tutors were grooming us for the external examination; they did not want to give an “A” based on what we were doing and the “externals” came and dropped it down to a “B” or “B-.” Tutors want us to work miracles; they wanted us to make a change.

Curriculum issues: Student teachers believe they could make a difference if they had a greater voice in the organization of teaching practice, especially with regard to the activities, methods, and situations experienced in the learning environment. The Mico College student teachers presented these responses:

Many students cannot read and many are de-motivated. Many are performing below grade level. Students were not in the “chart thing” or the “handouts thing.” They questioned what charts were for and they “locked off” learning when handouts were used to present the lesson. We need time to know our learners. Teaching is fun; not teaching practice.

Environmental and social issues: Student teachers felt the learning environment was a great challenge to the implementation of the benchmarks. There were obstacles on all sides. Among them were fixed furniture, preventing the mobility of the learners, excessive noise from open classrooms, and other social and physical problems. Student teachers from The Mico College had this to say,

The seating arrangement—fixed un-moveable chairs—is not conducive to some of the new methods and techniques we were taught at the college, or for implementing some of the benchmarks. There were days when students brought “spent shells” to class. Students came from diverse backgrounds and need diverse/creative ways to express themselves—songs, drama, drawing, etc. Some cooperating teachers did not stay in the class with us. Some talked rough to the students and treated them rough.

As I probed for clarity and understanding, the question asked was, Is this an open classroom? The following response painted the reality picture of the student teachers
concerns, which focused not so much on the question asked, but on the challenge they face—that of dealing with overcrowded classrooms. "No. There were 42 students in the class. Class size ranged from 38 to 42 students in Grades 9 and 10 classes."

My interpretation of the situation is that student teachers, as adult learners, have the potential to contribute more to the teaching-practice experience, but the concept of "controlled teaching" (Brown, 1999) has greatly restricted their pedagogical application of the theory learned in college. They are aware of the needs of their students, but are helpless to assist.

Importance and use of the benchmarks

Benchmarks serve as "road maps" for student teachers and teacher educators. They are of inestimable value to the preparation of prospective teachers. Supervisory faculty, student teachers and other stakeholders agreed that the benchmarks were very important to the training of teachers. In response to the question "Do you consider these benchmarks to be important?" the answers were positive. First the supervisory faculty from The Mico College said, "The benchmarks are very important because they help the student teachers to become 'rounded' teachers after being involved in adequate preparation." Principal Alfred comments were that "the benchmarks are important because they enhance the teaching fraternity. They demand that student teachers be accountable, and that they make the best use of the resource persons [cooperating teachers] to whom they are entrusted." Fleecy the cooperating teacher expressed her views in this way:

The college personnel should call in the cooperating teachers and orientate them to the aspects of the JBTE benchmarks that are to be implemented during teaching-practice. If this is not done those teachers who are lazy will pass on the
laziness and lackadaisical, indolent [non-productive] behavior to the student teacher they supervise.

**Evaluation of the Benchmarks**

Supervisory faculty, student teachers, principals, and cooperating teachers connected to the Mico cohort stated that the student teachers were evaluated based on the benchmarks that were set out in the Year 3 Teacher Evaluation Instrument. The supervisory faculty of the Mico College said, “Evaluation is based on the instrument. We focus on each segment of it. They are evaluated with the JBTE instrument. Also college tutors are assigned to visit, observe, and give second opinion of student teachers. The Principal, Alfred and cooperating teacher Fleecy agreed and comment respectively,

Yes. They are evaluated based on the benchmarks. Evaluating the student teachers in my school is optional, for me. Some time ago, I was expected to assess student teachers, but I have not been asked recently. However, I do my own evaluation in the first 2 weeks of teaching practice.

*Fleecy:* I remember once that at the end of the teaching-practice session, I was given a form and asked to evaluate the student teacher. That was a long time ago. Everyone . . . has passed. I have never had a student teacher failing teaching practice.

The supervisory faculty focus group at Mico spoke of some difficulty in implementing the benchmarks, especially in the secondary program. In addition they stated that the primary program was better suited for the implementation of certain benchmarks than was the secondary. The following statements describe the thoughts and expressions of the supervisory faculty of the Mico College:

Student teachers are aware that technology involves more than electronics. . . . As I mentioned the unobserved items affect the scoring. T8 under teaching is a problem as it is very difficult to ask student teachers to implement or show integration all the time. M1 in management of the class is difficult to observe in every lesson. And to resort to the aspect of scoring, it is important to note that the unobserved item negatively affects scoring. . . . If there are several unobserved
items the student teacher could be teaching well, yet the instrument does not show it. Student teachers have difficulty implementing E1 as students often vandalize the student teacher's materials. Student teachers set up a science corner and the students in the class destroyed it before the external assessors visited. This shows that although the student teacher made the effort to fulfill the benchmark requirement, it would be unobserved to the external assessor. At the primary and early childhood levels the E1 item seems more applicable than at the secondary level.

The student teachers focus group from Mico also voiced their concerns regarding the difficulty faced in implementing the JBTE benchmarks. Evidence of the items chosen are highlighted in Table 9 under supervisory faculty of Mico (SFA) and student teachers focus group of Mico (STA). The supervisors identified only 3 items that were difficult to implement, while the student teachers identified 11 items. The items identified were different from those the student teachers identified. The student teachers said,

Benchmark were sometimes difficult to implement because of the classroom environment, lack of resources and help from the cooperating teachers. There were students who continuously disrupted the class because they knew that they could do the work on their own. The activities our supervisors asked us to do with the students were not easily implemented as the students were not used to those methods. Many students cannot read, and many are de-motivated. The seating arrangement is sometimes not conducive to the new methods and techniques taught to us in college. We had only 3 full weeks of teaching practice.

Informants' Perceptions: Church Teachers' College

Responses from the interview and conversation protocols of informants from Church Teachers' College (CTC) indicate that student teachers and supervisory faculty received the benchmarks in both verbal and print forms. Supervisory faculty communicated and implemented the benchmarks through the syllabi of the teachers' colleges in scheduled class sessions, in seminars/workshops, and in feedback sessions.
Table 9

*Items Difficult to Implement: Mico Informants, List B*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks Stages</th>
<th>Supervisory Faculty Items</th>
<th>Student Teacher Focus Group Items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
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<td>Teaching</td>
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<td>T1, 2, 4, 5, 7</td>
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<td>Relating</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>R2, 4, 5</td>
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<td>Managing</td>
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<td>M1, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effecting</td>
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<td>E2, 5</td>
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with the student teachers. Student teachers implemented the benchmarks through their units, lesson plans, and actual teaching during the teaching-practice period.

**Knowledge and Communication of the Benchmarks**

*Interviewer: Are you aware of the JBTE benchmarks?*

The student teachers focus group from Church Teachers’ College said, “We were informed about the JBTE benchmarks through meetings, seminars/workshops, written document and verbal communication. The principal met with us once each week and coached us on the benchmarks.”

I probed for a better understanding of the student teachers’ perceptions of the benchmarks by asking, how could the benchmarks be more practical? The response from the focus group from Church Teachers’ College states:

There should be more exposure to teaching. Student teachers should be allowed to practice with live classes before going on teaching practice.
Teaching practice is a simulation exercise, but a little better than the peer practice sessions we have at the college. However, it is nothing compared to the realities of the classroom.

Concerning the communication of the benchmarks, the faculty focus group stated that the benchmarks were embedded in the teaching-practice programs and they [college supervisors] presented the benchmarks to student teachers in various ways.

**Interviewer:** How are the benchmarks communicated to you?

The faculty focus group from Church Teachers' College explains the communication process of the JBTE benchmarks in their institution:

We learned of these benchmarks through the evaluation sheet [document] that was given to us at JBTE meetings. They [benchmarks] have been discussed in several forums. They are communicated in various ways: [a] Through the evaluation instruments that are given to the student teachers; they are aware of this document as early as the first year, but reinforcement of this document occurs mostly in the final or third year of preparation. [b] During “Principals’ Option.” This is a special weekly session with the principal when these guidelines/benchmarks are discussed and student teachers are encouraged to internalize and practice them in their preparation. The “principal's options” weekly session also provides opportunity for personal development in values and attitudes and special concerns of student teachers. [c] Methodology course and subject area specialization provide outlets for most of these benchmarks.

The teaching practice coordinator of Church Teachers' College further explains intricacies of the process:

Through the Practicum Department, we are trying to inform/educate our student teachers regarding the JBTE guidelines. We discuss these benchmarks; expose student teachers to the external examiners so they can be aware of what the requirements/expectations of these assessors are when they come to assess them.

I probed further using this question, How are the benchmarks embedded in the teaching-practice program? The following responses emerged from the questioning as the coordinator explains the situation:

They are in the subjects/courses that we teach. Every subject for example, Home Economics, Physical Education, History, etc., has different requirements, but...
these requirements are relevant to the benchmarks. The syllabi reflect the benchmarks which are structured along similar lines.

The cooperating teacher and the principal of the host schools connected to Church Teachers' College (CTC) describe their involvement in communicating the JBTE benchmarks. Ralph, the cooperating teacher, and Spruce, the Principal see the process as an opportunity to assist in molding the professional life of the teacher in training, and using reflectivity to improve their own professional development. First, Ralph expresses his perceptions, and then Spruce makes her comments:

*Ralph:* I have received a written form containing these benchmarks, but they have never been orally communicated to me as a cooperating teacher. A trained teacher should be familiar with these benchmarks; it does not matter when she or he graduated from teachers’ college.

*Spruce:* I have not had a written document stating the benchmarks, but I have had informal information about them from interacting with the college supervisors during the placement of student teachers. I believe that it is important for us to know these benchmarks for the benefit of education, personal “upliftment” and the development of competent prospective teachers. As principals of supporting schools we need a clear understanding of what is expected of us regarding these benchmarks, because sometimes we seem to be on different wavelengths and judging each other on different standards, not knowing what the expectations are.

**Implementing the Benchmarks**

Supervisory faculty and student teachers’ views of the expectations for implementing the benchmarks were generally not a source of dissatisfaction; however, aspects of the expectations regarding some required benchmarks were. In general, there were positive responses to the question, “what steps are taken to ensure that student teachers incorporate the JBTE benchmarks into the teaching practice exercise?” The supervisory faculty from CTC explains the process:

Student teachers are required to prepare detailed lesson plans and a content book. A copy of the Year 3 Instrument is given to the student teachers and this
instrument is discussed with them. There are courses and/or subject areas aligned with teaching-practice, and principal’s options—a special arrangement in which the principal of the teachers’ college meets with student teachers and discuss issues, and other concerns about teaching practice. Seminars/workshops and feedback sessions are other venues for ensuring implementation of the benchmarks. Three feedback sessions are convened during the teaching-practice period, at which time student teachers are exposed to demonstrations.

Comparable to the supervisory faculty, student teachers at CTC had similar strategies for ensuring the benchmarks were implemented. They engaged in detailed lesson planning and conferenced regularly with the cooperating teachers. The student teachers focus group explains how they implemented the benchmarks, “We ensured the benchmarks were implemented by providing the class with a variety of activities, both in and out of the regular class sessions. Some of these activities were organized as projects.”

Issues: Implementing the benchmarks

Many of the advocates of quality teacher preparation have voiced their concerns about the challenges in the field. Among these are student teachers’ own fears of the teaching-practice exercise—fear of failure, and restrictive and unsafe internal and external environments in which to practice. In addition are the behavioral problems of an overcrowded student population, and the overall unresponsiveness of the learners. Carter (2002) and Goldhaber (2002) advocated that in order for teachers to teach in ways that are responsive to students, and connect with their worlds, experiences, and assumptions, they need to know much about students—what they know, care about, and are able to do.

Several of the informants in this study described a growing frustration with the conditions they encountered in implementing the benchmarks during their teaching practice experience. The challenges could be sub-divided into “sub-themes” and
classified as: (a) systems' issues, (b) curriculum issues and (c) social and environmental issues.

**Systems' issues:** Situations embedded in the structure and function of the education system that interfere with the "flow" of things. Some examples are the shift system, lack of relevant instructional resources, examination schedules, and some routine activities in the host schools. Supervisory faculty of CTC share some concerns:

One of my biggest concerns is not to change the benchmarks, but to extend the period of practice so that student teachers can achieve the expected standards outlined. The period of practicum is too short. Colleges are limited in the facilities, technology and other aspects in preparing prospective teachers. Student teachers should be able to learn the skills they will need in the classroom while at college. "You can't administer medicine and you don't know what's out there." Some schools are rooted in traditional methods of teaching.

I probed further with this question. What do you mean by this? I found that technology was a very serious issue that needed to be addressed with urgency. The supervisory faculty explains,

Technologically, we are behind at this college. We should reduce the chalk-and-talk method and show student teachers what is to be done. Some of us [tutors] are lacking in skills, for example computer skills, relevant for preparing student teachers for the workplace.

I probed for an understanding of the way in which student teachers were perceived by the supervisory faculty. I asked this question, Are student teachers treated as adults? The generated responses focused on treatment of the student teacher and language issues within the college, with just passing comments to the question. Response from one of the focus group informants states, "I have observed that student teachers are treated with respect and as a family at this institution. For example, language poses a problem."

The language concept was further probed, and to my amazement the issue was of deep and perplexing concern, not only to the student teachers, but to the supervisory
faculty as well. Reflecting on the remarks made in the press that prospective teachers are not academically ready for the classroom because they are not able to speak or teach Standard English (Thompson, 2002), it is evident that the challenge is real and solutions must be found.

Language problems occur also in the American school system, as stated in the press: "American students also struggle with grammar, averaging about 5 correct sentences in 100" for assignments (Channer, 2006, p. 1). The question asked was, what are some problems with communication? Is there a problem with Creole versus Standard English? The responses confirmed the fears and challenges of the student teachers as the supervisory faculty expressed their own observation of the situation in these comments,

It is difficult. Some student teachers are not writing Standard English. And some are not talking Standard English. They are required to deliver in Standard English, but they are allowed to use Creole to clarify statements. In terms of management of the classroom, this is difficult, because there is overcrowding and very little space in which to operate. The shift system poses a serious problem in the achievement of R4 and E1 benchmarks.

Both at the college and in the schools the learning environment is faulty—no chairs for students and teachers. Some cooperating teachers don’t co-operate. They walk away and leave the student teachers. Our student teachers lack exposure. Some student teachers have different personalities and some are "locked away into their own cocoon" needing help from their college tutors. Others need to emerge and develop. Teachers’ colleges need to provide for this situation. Student teachers are fearful—fear of failure, fear of students in the classroom, fear of the college tutors as assessors, and of external assessors and fear of themselves—their own initiatives. They lack confidence.

Multiple disruptions, in the form of examinations, and co-curricular or extra-curricular activities in terms of sports, festival preparation, and harvest in the host schools deprive student teachers of valuable time needed to practice their teaching skills.

However, these situations provide alternative learning opportunities for the improvement of student teachers’ observational skills. The education programs in the USA as well as in
Jamaica are criticized for having too many requirements or credits (Feistritzer, 1999, 2004). The student teachers voiced their perceptions in the following comments:

Too much [courses, content, activities] is required from student teachers in a limited time. Sometimes there were 50 or more students in a Grade 8 class. [This is] overcrowding. It was also difficult to enhance our classrooms due to the shift system.

Ralph thinks that these challenges can be minimized, and not needlessly put the student teachers or the students at risk. He believes that collaboration between host schools and colleges can remedy the situation. He further comments, “The three months for teaching-practice is adequate, but the ‘single visit’ of the external assessors can impact negatively on the student teacher.”

Challenges that confront principals during the teaching-practice period are in (a) finding suitable environments for the student teachers and (b) selecting the most appropriate cooperating teacher for the supervisory role (Huling, 1998). Principal Spruce made the following observation and assessment of recruiting the cooperating teacher:

I look for experience, the cooperating teacher’s knowledge of subject areas, their communication skills, compatibility skills and flexibility skills. I observe that these “supporting teachers” are not too judgmental, not overly critical. They are nurturing and will provide good mentoring for the student teachers. Student teachers are young and need positive role models to nurture and mentor them.

Challenges for the student teachers appear to include: the learning environment, the students, the methods, strained relationships between student teacher and cooperating teacher, and absent resources. In addition are the diverse expectations from each of the teaching practice team. Also, the length of the practice period and the cooperating teachers’ attitudes toward them posed problems. The “monsters/giants” external assessors and the final grade are grave issues for the student teachers. Student teachers from CTC voiced their perceptions in this way:
Nothing you do in the college prepares you for the real teaching practice. Poor student teacher-cooperating teacher relationship results in biases on the part of the assessors. Students are not motivated, so you have to spend time motivating them to learn. Student teachers need to spend more time with the students in order to adequately assess them. There seems to be no standardization in the way we should teach. The cooperating teacher wanted us to teach one way. The college supervisors for the different subjects wanted another way, and the external assessors wanted to see us teach another way—that's confusing.

I probed to find out more, and discovered that the question provided useful responses. The question asked was, are you saying there are two ways of teaching? The student teachers focus group from Church Teachers’ College said,

We should be planning for the students, and not for the supervisors. We are in the classroom on a day-to-day basis and observe what the students need. We should be allowed to plan for the students and not for the supervisors, who keep on telling us, “do things this way or that way.” Everyone wants a good grade, but sometimes I wonder if it is to please the assessors or to qualitatively impart something to the life of the students that really matters. Personally, I don’t care if the assessors want to mark me down for helping the students. My purpose is to inspire students and help them achieve.

**Curriculum issues:** Student teachers believe they could make a difference if they had a greater voice in the organization of teaching practice, especially with regard to the activities, methods, and situations experienced in the learning environment. They needed to be aware of the academic status of the students for whom they were planning, and given the responsibility (as adult learners) to be more involved in the process:

Many students were non-readers. The cooperating teacher’s emphasis was on completing the syllabus for examination. Some times the topics were changed at the time we turned up to teach the class. Students were not academically ready for planned lessons, prepared for readers. There is no standardization—cooperating teachers wanted us to teach one way, college supervisors another way, and the external assessors yet another way—confusing! We should be planning for the students and not for the supervisors who keep on telling us “Do things this way or that way.” Some students did not understand Standard English, and Creole was the only thing they responded to.

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Environmental and social issues: Student teachers felt the learning environment was a great challenge to the implementation of the benchmarks. There were obstacles on all sides. Among them were fixed furniture, which prevented the mobility of the learners, excessive noise from open classrooms, and other social and physical problems. Their response was:

Because of the shift system, charts and other instructional materials could not be left in the classroom or they would be destroyed by the other classes. Too much is required in the limited time for teaching practice. Sometimes there are 50 or more students in one Grade 8 class, and the furniture is fixed.

Importance and use of the benchmarks

Benchmarks serve as “road maps” for student teachers and teacher educators. They are of inestimable value to the preparation of prospective teachers. Supervisory faculty, student teachers, and other stakeholders agreed that the benchmarks were very important to the training of teachers. In response to the question “Do you consider these benchmarks to be important?” The supervisory faculty focus group said, “The benchmarks are extremely important. They serve as guidelines for planning and enhancing the student teacher’s performance, and give objectivity to the preparation of the ‘rounded’ teacher.” Ralph, the cooperating teacher, and Spruce, the Principal, responded favorably in their comments,

Ralph: Most certainly! Because if a person is operating he ought to know what is expected of him and as a result he is able to do a better job. In most cases the benchmarks help him meet up to the required standards. The practical is to help student teachers “build up” the weak areas.

Spruce: Standards/benchmarks are an important means of assessment. Different individuals see different pictures. The benchmarks provide a measure for standardized performance.
Evaluation of the Benchmarks

Student teachers were asked to select items from List B, an unlabeled, modified version of the Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching Practice-2004 document. It is renamed “Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B.” (See Appendix B.) The selection of items that pose a difficulty for the Church Teachers’ College cohort is explained in Table 10. Supervisory faculty is represented as SFB and student teachers as STB.

Supervisory faculty, student teachers, principals, and cooperating teachers connected to the Church Teachers’ College cohort stated that the student teachers were evaluated based on the benchmarks that were set out in the Year 3 Teacher Evaluation Instrument. The following are some responses to the question, Are student teachers evaluated based on the benchmarks? The response was overwhelming from the informants. The supervisory faculty focus group, Spruce, and Ralph said,

**Supervisory Faculty:** They are evaluated on the benchmarks, using the JBTE Instrument. We try to see each student teacher at least three times and sometimes five or more times. It depends on the situation. If there is a weak student teacher we would visit more often and use the instrument to guide [us].

**Spruce (Principal):** Student teachers are evaluated based on the evaluation sheet [Student Teacher Year 3 Evaluation Instrument]. Performance sheets/forms are sent to us and we complete and return them to the college.

**Ralph (Cooperating teacher):** Yes. There are forms that are sent to us, and we complete and return them to the teachers’ college.

The supervisory faculty focus group at Church Teachers’ College spoke of some difficulty student teachers faced in implementing the benchmarks, in the secondary program during teaching practice.

In terms of management of the classroom, this is difficult because there is overcrowding and very little space in which to operate. Student teachers
sometimes experience the vandalizing of their instructional materials. The shift system also poses a serious problem in terms of achieving item R4 and E1 of the benchmarks. Some times there are no chairs for students to sit on.

The student teachers focus group voiced their concerns regarding the difficulty faced in implementing some items of the JBTE benchmarks during the teaching practice exercise. The supervisory faculty from CTC identified eight items—T7, R1, 2, 4, 5, and E1, 2, and 5, which they considered difficult to implement. The student teachers identified three items—E1, 2, M1, and R2 in Table 10. The student teachers' focus group said, "Many students were non-readers, who did not speak Standard English, and lessons planned could not be taught [satisfactorily] within the given time. Students were not academically ready."

Table 10

*Items Difficult to Implement: CTC Informants, List B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks Stages</th>
<th>Supervisory Faculty (SFB)</th>
<th>Student Teachers (STB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>T7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating</td>
<td>R1, 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>R2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effecting</td>
<td>E1, 2, 5</td>
<td>E1, 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparison of the Colleges

This chapter provides discussion for the data category dealing with perceptions from (a) The Mico, and (b) Church Teachers' Colleges in implementing the benchmarks. The following themes were discussed: (a) Knowledge of and communication of the benchmarks, (b) Issues implementing the benchmarks, (c) Importance and use of the benchmarks, and (d) Evaluation of the benchmarks. Concerning the theme of "knowledge of and communication of the benchmarks," all 16 informants or 100% of the supervisors were knowledgeable about the benchmarks. Also, 100% of the student teachers acknowledged that the benchmarks were communicated to them.

For the theme regarding the "issues implementing the benchmarks," the student teachers focus groups clearly articulated their difficulty to a greater extent than did the supervisory faculty focus groups. Both focus groups of informants experienced different and also similar challenges implementing the benchmarks. One difficulty for the supervisors was in adequately measuring and recording the observed items. Student teachers experienced difficulty in performing based on the learning environments and other conditions that they encountered.

An interpretation of the choices is that there are more challenges with the concept of Relating or "connecting the lesson to the learners' experiences" (JBTE, 2004). The concept of Effecting, or "the ability of the student teacher to positively influence the [holistic] growth and development of the students, and the learning environment" (JBTE, 2004) has four responses. This means that the document/instrument needs to be revisited and examined in the light of these findings. If there is difficulty in implementing these
benchmarks, the grading of the student teacher will not reflect a true picture of the students’ performance.

Based on the comments of the supervisory faculty, “too many unobserved items can negatively influence the grade of the student teacher.” It was rather surprising that from the list of 25 items in the benchmarks document (Appendix B), the supervisory faculty from The Mico College chose 3 items only, while the supervisory faculty from Church Teachers’ College chose 8 items that were difficult to implement. Could it be that the schools and locations in which the student teachers are placed contribute to the difficulty? This may be a researchable topic.

Conversely, the student teachers focus groups from The Mico College chose 13 items, and the student teachers focus group from Church Teachers’ College chose 4 items that were difficult to implement. It would appear that the geographical and environmental locations of the institutions and the host schools need to be studied in relation to their unique needs, and address the situation so that teaching practice can effectively prepare quality teachers for the workplace.

The discriminate sample selected 1 item, E1 or Effecting, which relates to the influence of the student teacher on the students, and the learning environment. The creative abilities of student teachers seem thwarted and stunted because of the restrictive nature of the teaching-learning environment. Student teachers, as adult learners, need to be allowed more flexibility to take aspects of their experiences into the classroom and to “experiment” with novel methods that will work in 21st-century classrooms. The differences and similarities are summarized in Table 11.
Table 11

Combined Selection of Items Difficult to Implement: List B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks Stages</th>
<th>Supervisory Faculty of The Mico</th>
<th>Supervisory Faculty of CTC</th>
<th>Student Teachers The Mico</th>
<th>Student Teachers CTC</th>
<th>Discriminate Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>T7</td>
<td></td>
<td>T1, 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>R1, 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>R2, 4, 5</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td></td>
<td>M1, 4</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effecting</td>
<td>E1</td>
<td>E1, 2, 5</td>
<td>E2, 5</td>
<td>E1, 2</td>
<td>E1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The theme dealing with the “Importance and use of the benchmarks” obtained 100% positive support of the informants. They believed the benchmarks serve as an invaluable guideline for student teachers. Some informants believe that except for a few items that need to be re-visited, the benchmarks are relevant. However, one supervisor and coordinator from The Mico College felt that the entire instrument containing the benchmarks needs to be examined and modified to cater to the needs of the student teachers and their students in more meaningful ways. Special mention was made of the “scoring of the items” and the inability to adequately measure un-observed items.

The theme “Evaluation of the benchmarks” received 100% confirmation from all informants that the benchmarks were evaluated based on the JBTE student teacher Year 3 instrument. The concerns regarding the implementing of the benchmarks that are expressed by the informants in my study, could also be found in the research done by...

Summary

Chapter 5 focused on the implementation of the Joint Board of Teacher Education benchmarks and the issues associated with the process. It describes the difficulties faced by the stakeholders in implementing the benchmarks. The perceptions of the stakeholders are described and discussed in detail. Answers to research questions 1 and 2 are described and discussed. A constant-comparison analysis explains the issues that emerged.
CHAPTER 6

PERCEPTIONS OF NEEDED BENCHMARKS

What lies behind you and what lies in front of you,
Pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.
--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Introduction

This chapter describes: (a) the Interstate New Teacher Assessment Support Consortium (INTASC), (b) the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); (c) Informants’ perceptions from The Mico College, (d) Informants’ perceptions from Church Teachers’ College, and (e) Perceptions of the “ideal” teaching-practice program. Data collected from interviews and conversations provide examples of informants’ voices for the discussion. In addition, responses from the observation and “discriminate sample” are discussed, following the perceptions. Chapter 5 focused on the implementation of the JBTE benchmarks and answered Research Questions 1 and 2. This chapter focuses on the themes from the research questions 3, 4, and 5.

Description of INTASC Principles

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), founded in 1987 is a special project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in the United States. The association is a conglomerate of state education
agencies and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of the preparation, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers. The INTASC program was designed and drafted by representatives of the teaching profession along with 17 state education agencies (INTASC, 1992). INTASC is a quality-control mechanism that provides the tools or foundational base for quality student teacher preparation, and its "model standards" serve as a resource for teacher education throughout the United States (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2006).

The standards/principles of INTASC represent a common core of teaching knowledge, skills, and attributes developed to help all students acquire knowledge and skills for the 21st century. These standards/principles are compatible with the national standards. They focus on professional teaching, knowledge, dispositions, and performances essential for all teachers regardless of their areas of specialization (Miller & Darling-Hammond, 1992).

Propelled by its mission, INTASC provides the United States with qualified and effective teachers who are able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students, to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2006). The INTASC program was established for: (a) Enhancing collaboration among states interested in rethinking teacher assessment for initial licensing, (b) Preparation of new teachers, and (c) Induction of teachers into the profession (Miller & Darling-Hammond, 1992).

The standards/principles were developed based on five major propositions that guide the National Board’s standard setting and assessment work:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to diverse learners.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and mentoring student learning.

4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

The INTASC Principles/Standards were prepared with the philosophy that “what teachers know and can do makes the most difference in what children can learn” (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The major focus of INTASC was to harness the coordinated efforts of support and assessment to develop better teachers for the United States of America, and to ensure the easy transfer of teachers across state boundaries. INTASC developed 10 teacher performance standards/principles, which encompassed a wide range of content knowledge, pedagogical methodologies and strategies, and personal behaviors that promote student learning (Jacobsen, Eggen, & Kauchak, 2006). These principles are stated as Principle #1, Principle #2, Principle #3, and so on. Specific standards for knowledge, dispositions, and performances accompany each principle (Miller, 2006).

Ten INTASC Principles are listed as broad goal statements, incorporating the “what” and “how” of teaching. Student teachers could easily incorporate these concepts into their instructional models in order to foster social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation (Jacobsen et al., 2006). The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches.

1. The teacher understands how children learn and develop.

2. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning.
3. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies.
4. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation.
5. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media techniques.
6. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter.
7. The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies.
8. The teacher is a reflective practitioner.
9. The teacher fosters relationships with colleagues, parents, and agencies.

**Description of NCATE Standards**

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is an independent teaching profession’s mechanism, located in the USA. NCATE is designed to establish high-quality teacher, specialist, and administrator preparation. Founded in 1954, this conglomerate of five educational agencies had the responsibility of accrediting teacher education programs. The groups instrumental in the creation of NCATE included the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the National Education Association (NEA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA). NCATE replaced the AACTE as the agency responsible for accreditation in teacher education (NCATE, 2006a).

NCATE is synonymous with standards—benchmarks—providing guidelines for curriculum and assessment development (Pearson, 1994). NCATE is the teaching profession’s mechanism to help establish high-quality teacher preparation. This
organization accredits schools, colleges, and departments of education. NCATE espouses the philosophy that every student deserves a caring, competent, and highly qualified teacher, and the nation’s future depends in large part on how well this is done (NCATE, 2006a). Wise (2006a) describes NCATE as an independent, non-profit, non-partisan accreditation agency. It is recognized by the Federal Government and nearly every state. NCATE exhibits the professional dispositions of fairness and the belief that all students can learn.

NCATE operates a performance-based accreditation system. Currently, it accredits 614 colleges of education and has a waiting list of almost 100 schools seeking accreditation. It is a coalition of 33 member organizations of teachers, teacher educators, content specialists, and local and state policy makers. All 3 million individuals are committed to quality teacher preparation. Because the NCATE processes are effective, they achieve their intended goals and continue to stimulate the college of education in the assessment of its programs (NCATE, 2006a).

NCATE proposed six standards for preparing quality teachers: Standard 1—Candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions; Standard 2—Assessment system and unit evaluation; Standard 3—Field experiences and clinical practice; Standard 4—Diversity; Standard 5—Faculty qualifications, performance and development; and Standard 6—Unit governance and resources.

The standards were divided into two sections: (a) candidate performance (Standards 1 & 2), which focused on learning outcomes necessary to impact P-12 students, and (b) unit capacity (Standards 3-6); which addressed the components of teacher education programs that support student teacher learning. NCATE standards
apply to both the initial teacher preparation and advanced levels. Each of the six standards contains three components: (a) the language of the standard itself; (b) rubrics that delineate the target outcomes of each standard, and (c) a descriptive explanation of the standards (NCATE, 2005).

The focus of this study was on Standard 3—Field Experiences and Clinical Practice. Rubrics for Standard 3 were designed to help student teachers develop and demonstrate competence in (a) the professional roles for which they were preparing, and (b) the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that would help students learn. All student teachers were expected to participate in the field experiences that included students with exceptionalities, and those from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, and socioeconomic groups (NCATE, 2005).

Implementing the NCATE standards requires systematic assessment, increased faculty collaboration, strict attention to program design, and accountability in order to maximize student teacher learning. Working in partnership and collaboration among the schools and the unit, the focus is on the student teachers’ ability to develop and demonstrate competencies in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn (NCATE, 2006a).

NCATE Standards include the following targets for the student teachers it prepares: (a) The school and unit share and integrate resources and expertise in the interest of the student teacher, (b) Field experiences allow student teachers to apply and reflect on their content, professional and pedagogical knowledge, and skills in a variety of settings with students and adults, (c) The supervisory faculty model correct teaching behaviors for the student teachers, and (d) Student teachers demonstrate mastery of
content areas and pedagogical and professional knowledge before admission to and
during clinical practice (NCATE, 2006b).

According to Grismick (2006), NCATE focuses on the evidence of competent
teacher candidate performance with the aid of multiple assessments. NCATE is
consistent and systematic in its pursuit of excellence, especially in technological
integration in teacher preparation (NCATE, 2006a). The NCATE standards are outlined
below. The new teacher is trained to assume responsibility for a classroom on the first
day of school, and not on-the-job-training.

1. The new teacher knows the subject matter and a variety of ways to teach it to
   ensure student learning.

2. The new teacher is able to manage classrooms with students from widely
divergent backgrounds.

3. The new teacher has a broad liberal arts education.

4. The new teacher is able to explain why he or she uses a particular strategy
   based on research and best practice.

5. The new teacher reflects on practice and changes what does not work.

6. The new teacher is able to apply effective methods of teaching to students of
different backgrounds.

7. The new teacher has had a number of diverse clinical experiences in P-12
   schools and studied under a variety of master teachers during a coherent program of
   clinical education.

8. The new teacher nurtures the growth and development of each student in his
   or her classes (NCATE, 2006c).
Alignment: Value/Use of the Benchmarks

Themes are used to explain stakeholders’ responses in relation to Research Questions 3, 4, and 5 outlined below.

Research Question 3: How is the research-based teacher preparation standards of the INTASC and the NCATE aligned with the JBTE benchmarks?

Research Question 4: Which USA benchmarks are currently used in the two teacher preparation programs?

Research Question 5: Which of the USA benchmarks do stakeholders perceive need to be included in the JBTE benchmarks to formulate the ideal program for Jamaica?

Two themes emerged indicating that the USA benchmarks were important and advantageously aligned to the JBTE benchmarks: (a) Perceived need for inclusion/or improving the benchmarks and (b) Benchmarks overlap in the three programs. Two research tools are used to collect data for the research questions.

First, an “Unlabeled Benchmarks Matrix: List A” (UBM) is used to collect the data (see Table 12). This document is a compilation of benchmarks from the three purposively selected teacher education programs in this study. The items are arranged in three columns—“A” for the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE), “B” for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and “C” for the Interstate New Teachers Assessment Support Consortium (INTASC) benchmarks. The participants were required to select items from this list based upon the instructions.

Second, an “Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B is used to collect data for research questions 3, 4, and 5. The document is a modified version of the Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching Practice-2004 consisting of 25 items (see
Table 12

*Unlabeled Benchmarks Matrix: List A*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks for Student Teachers</th>
<th>Benchmarks for Student Teachers</th>
<th>Benchmarks for Student Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Planning: content, objectives, methods, activities</td>
<td>Focus on candidate performance</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Teaching: Presentation, questioning, introduction, instructional strategies, technology</td>
<td>Focus on subject matter and multiple strategies</td>
<td>Content Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Focus on classroom management and diversity</td>
<td>Motivation and Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Relating: Communication skills</td>
<td>Focus on a broad liberal arts education</td>
<td>School and Community Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Managing: interpersonal and intra-personal relationships</td>
<td>Focus on technology</td>
<td>Multiple Instructional Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Effecting: self improvement creativity, reflection</td>
<td>Focus on research base and best practice</td>
<td>Reflective Practice: Professional Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Focus on the application of effective methods for diverse backgrounds of students</td>
<td>Diverse Learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Focus on multiple, diverse, and improved clinical experiences in P-12 schools; exposure to a variety of master teachers during a coherent program of clinical education</td>
<td>Communication and Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Psychologically supportive emotional climate in the classroom</td>
<td>Students’ growth and development</td>
<td>Student Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix B). The items are organized in five stages of between five and seven items for each stage. Stakeholders were asked to select items from the List B based upon the instructions given.

**Informants’ Perceptions: The Mico College**

Participants from the Mico College believe it was necessary to include benchmarks from the USA models to complement the unobserved JBTE benchmarks. They selected items from the unlabeled “List A” in Table 12. Supervisory faculties and student teachers selected items from columns B and C that were unobserved in the JBTE benchmarks. According to the supervisory faculty:

> The benchmarks [of the 3 programs] are more similar than different and although elements of the selected ones were evident in the program there needs to be a greater reflection of all the items of the benchmarks in the program.

**Unlabeled Benchmarks List A**

Benchmarks selected by the participants from List A are described in this section. There was particular concern for the primary program regarding item 4C—school and community involvement. Informants stated that the primary program was more suited for implementing 4C than the secondary was, because of time constraints and the integration aspect. The supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College states that there needs to be more research to improve the teaching activity for the student teachers.

> The methods need to be diversified, to include more access to technology and exposure to new ideas. Creativity and availability of resources are lacking, and the time period is definitely too short to complete all the activities that could be linked to the benchmarks.

Kate, from the discriminate sample, proposes that “the community involvement in 4C is an excellent idea for student teachers to develop their professional skills. However,
the projects will benefit more if they are long-term, lasting for a year, or as term projects.” Neenah believes that “sometimes the standards/benchmarks are too inflexible and do not provide adequate leverage for student teachers to explore and develop real learning opportunities.”

Student teachers selected items that they perceived to be important, but were not identified in List A. They selected but did not comment on the items. The items they selected were similar to those of their supervisors and included benchmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9. These items were considered essential in creating an ideal program for teaching practice.

Benchmarks Overlap

Participants noted that there were several overlaps in the benchmarks. This accounted for the greater similarities than differences in the JBTE programs. Student teachers’ choice of the items that were different from their supervisors included: Item 5B that focuses on technology, item 7C that focuses on diverse learners, and item 8C that deals with communication and technology. The Mico College student teachers focus group aligned all the benchmarks of columns “B” and “C” with column “A” benchmarks, stating that “there is little or no difference between and among them.”

Unlabeled Benchmarks List B

Participants described the list of benchmarks (List B) as important, but lacking in certain aspects. The informants stated that these benchmarks should reflect the needs of the student teachers and students. The supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College mentioned that
there are special areas of interest in the primary level, for example, how they deal with manipulative. Student teachers need to be evaluated in this area. However, the instrument [benchmarks] does not capture this. Also the primary and early childhood programs focus on activity, unlike the secondary program which is content oriented. I would use different instruments instead of the one “blanket instrument” for all the programs.

According to the supervisory faculty focus group from the Mico College (SFA), some items are for the primary level and do not “fit in” with the secondary level. In addition, technology should not to be confined to “electronics” but should include the use of charts, the chalkboard, and other aids that clarified the concepts in the lesson. The supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College said, “Each program has a different focus and the needs of those students should be addressed. For example, item E1 is not easily achieved at the secondary level; it depends on the subject area. At the primary and early childhood levels this item seems applicable, but not at the other levels.”

Student teachers also voiced their concerns as they selected items they perceived necessary to contribute to an ideal teaching-practice program. Apart from the lack of interest students had in learning, many of them were not willing to engage in the learning activities. Student teachers were concerned that many of the benchmarks did not meet the needs of all the students in their classes, considering that every student can learn and needs to learn (Wise, 2006b). The student teachers focus group from The Mico College stated that when they used charts in presenting a lesson in the secondary school, one student’s comment was

“Miss, what is the chart for?” Students wanted to find out what was on the examination for them to be attentive. They were interested in “free time.” They expect to be given dictation and if this does not happen they think they have free time to do nothing. If I wanted to use an overhead projector or a television for a
class presentation, I had to request it two to three weeks in advance. By then teaching practice would be over.

Limited high technology resources are scheduled so that all the teachers are able to access and utilize the scarce commodities. Student teachers were asked to examine List B and state which benchmarks they would include in an ideal teaching-practice program. The supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College identified three items from List B that need to be modified. The items were selected from three of the five stages of the benchmarks document. The informants stated their concerns and remarked that these items were not easily observed and evaluated—Relating—R2 Relevance of projects/activities to lesson content and objectives indicated; Management—M1 Learners’ interpersonal problems/difficulties appropriately handled, and Effecting—E1 Creative ideas and special projects developed in the class and/or school. In the aspect of scoring, it is important to note that the unobserved items negatively affect scoring. Some aspects of the instrument need to be more specific, for example E1. This item is somewhat vague. Also, the needs of special education students in the regular classroom are not addressed.

The supervisory faculty believes that the instrument should be modified to address the needs of younger children and to accommodate the shift system in which secondary student teachers were usually placed. It was strongly emphasized that the scoring of the items be addressed, especially as it relates to the “unobserved” items (see Table 12).

Another concern of the supervisory faculty focus group informants of The Mico College is that student teachers have difficulty implementing item E1—creative ideas and special projects developed in the class and/school—of the JBTE benchmarks, because students often vandalize the student teachers’ materials. They stated,

Student teachers set up a science corner and the students in the class destroyed it before the external assessors visited. This shows that although the student teacher made the effort to fulfill the benchmark requirement it would be unobserved to the external assessor or internal assessor. In probing the question further, the
student teachers describe some of the difficulties they face in a shift school. They experience difficulty implementing, for example, items T7 and E1. They said, “We have to tug-a-long with materials, because of lack of space and the behavior of students who vandalize our work or projects.”

Supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College identified three items from List B that need to be modified. They were selected from three of the five stages of the benchmarks document. According to the informants, these items are not easily observed and evaluated: Relating—R2 Relevance of projects/activities to lesson content and objectives indicated; Management—M1 Learners’ interpersonal problems/difficulties appropriately handled, and Effecting—E1 Creative ideas and special projects developed in the class and/or school.

**Informants’ Perceptions: Church Teachers’ College**

Informants from Church Teachers’ College believe it is necessary to include benchmarks from the USA models in order to complement the unobserved JBTE benchmarks in the unlabeled List A. The unlabeled List A constitutes benchmarks from three teacher training institutions. Supervisory faculty and student teachers were requested to select items from columns “B” and “C” of List A that were unobserved in the JBTE benchmarks in column “A.”

It was surprising that the supervisory faculty spoke with comparable voice to that of the supervisors at Mico. They also agreed that “there are definitely more similarities than differences in the programs. Inclusion of additional benchmarks such as community involvement and reflective practice could position the JBTE program for ‘world class’ acclaim.” This statement was made by Neenah who proposes that Jamaica has the potential of becoming the best leader in teaching practice, if things are done right. We have all the resources, yet we seem to be re-inventing
the wheel every time. We need to be informed by research in order to be purposeful and relevant.

Unlabeled Benchmarks List A

According to the student teacher informants from the CTC cohort, there needs to be a more explicit reflection of the “unobserved” items in the JBTE program. Supervisors from Church Teachers’ College selected and considered for inclusion one item each from columns B and C. The item needing modification is 8C—communication and technology. They noted that the use of technology and availability of computers and other teaching aids at some of the host schools are lacking. They also pointed out that some tutors are lacking in the technology skills as well.

Benchmarks Overlap

Reflecting on the Unlabeled Benchmarks: List A, student teacher informants of Church Teachers’ College identified four items as overlaps or needing to be modified. They also acknowledge all items of column “C” as comparable to column “A” (see Table 12). However, they suggested four items that could be modified or excluded from the benchmarks. They assert that there is either an overlap, or these benchmarks are not meeting the needs of the student teachers or the students in the given situations.

Unlabeled Benchmarks List B

The Church Teachers’ College student teachers focus group asserts that most of the benchmarks (Table 13) are relevant, but a few should be modified or discarded, as “they serve no useful purpose in the quality preparation of student teachers.” They commented that
Table 13

*Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Performance Criteria and Standards of Practice (Materials &amp; Methods)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>P1. Content is valid, well researched/organized and developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P2. Objectives, appropriate, clearly stated and valuable to learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P3. Methods/strategies are learner-focused and content appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P4. Activities appropriately developed &amp; integration shown where necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>T1. Introductory learning activity useful &amp; consistent with lesson development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T2. Presentation of ideas and explanations clear and effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3. Questioning techniques and interactivity appropriate and effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T4. Teaching competence and confidence shown during the instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T5. Instructional strategies appropriately developed and managed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T6. Learners adequately instructed and exploration encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T7. Technology (A/V-aids, equipment, and resources) effectively used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating</td>
<td>R1. Respect for learners, their experiences, interests, and differences shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R2. Relevance of projects/activities to lesson content and objectives indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R3. Communication, language and style appropriate and learner friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R4. Creative management of existing physical and learning conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R5. Examples of practical applications of lesson clearly shown to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>M1. Learners’ interpersonal problems/difficulties appropriately handled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M2. Lesson appropriately sequenced and adequately timed for the learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M3. Student/student and student/teacher intersections encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M4. Assessment of objectives and activities evident and appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effecting</td>
<td>E1. Creative ideas and special projects developed in the class and/or school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E2. Contribution in improvement of the classroom appearance indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E3. Consistency in planning; and between lesson planning &amp; teaching activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E4. Reflection on teaching and self-evaluation evidently &amp; appropriately done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E5. Evidence of students’ work &amp; progress, as a result of the teacher’s efforts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the learning environment is not ‘learner friendly’ for motivating and leading students to maximize their academic potential. The restrictive learning environment in which they are placed makes it impossible for the benchmarks to be realized. This is compounded by the reduced time of 3 weeks for practice due to disruptions and the shift system. Most of the criteria for teaching practice are for the ‘First World’ and need to be revised. Some of these items include Relating—R2, Managing—M1, Effecting—E1 and E2. Some times we planned lessons and could not teach them because the students were not academically ready. There are too many criteria to be observed and implemented in one lesson.

The supervisory faculty focus group from Church Teachers’ College delineated eight items for improvement. These were selected from three stages of the unlabeled List B document. They noted that exceptionality should be addressed distinctly, and that student teachers need more exposure in order to adequately implement R5. They suggest that examples of practical applications of the lesson should be clearly demonstrated to student teachers.

The supervisors further state that the overlaps in Relating—R1 to R5 in the Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B—need to be corrected. College supervisors need to model the benchmarks for student teachers. I consider this an excellent expression of self-evaluation by the focus groups. It would appear that an in-depth interpretation and self-assessment of the benchmarks by more informants could yield greater positive results.

The supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College felt that, with the exception of three items, all others were considered relevant for an ideal program. These three items include R2, relevance of projects/activities to content and objectives indicated; M1, Learners’ interpersonal problems/difficulties appropriately handled, and E1, Creative ideas and special projects developed in the class and/or school. They were in agreement that the benchmarks of the three organizations were more similar than
different. Neenah and Kate suggested the inclusion of the concepts of involvement in the community and reflective practice from List A.

In selecting benchmarks from the Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B, the student teachers selected items to create an ideal teaching-practice program, which constitute the following 11 items:

1. P4, activities appropriately developed and integration shown where necessary
2. T1, Introductory learning activity useful and consistent with lesson development
3. T2, Presentation of ideas, clear and effective
4. T4, Teaching competence and confidence shown during the instruction
5. T5 instructional strategies appropriately developed and managed
6. T7, Technology (A-V aids, equipment and resources) effectively used
7. R4, Creative management of existing physical and learning conditions and
8. R5, Examples of practical applications of lessons clearly shown to students
9. M4, Assessment of objectives and activities evident and appropriate
10. E2, Contribution to improvement of the classroom appearance indicated
11. E5, Evidence of students' work and progress, as a result of the teacher's efforts.

**Triangulation of Data Sources**

This triangulation matrix was designed to acknowledge the responses of the participants and to eliminate biases. The document (Appendix E) displays common themes and unique items in the responses. It helps the researcher to make interpretations that are trustworthy and credible. The responses were coded (Merriam, 2001) for easy
identification. For example, R1 represents the supervisory faculty focus group from Mico College (SFA).

R2 represents the supervisory faculty focus group (SFB) from Church Teachers’ College. R3 represents the student teachers’ focus group (STA) from Mico College, and R4 represents the student teachers’ focus group (STB) from Church Teachers’ College. R5 represents the cooperating teacher Fleecy, and R6 represents the cooperating teacher, Ralph (F & R). R7 and R8 represent the principals Alfred and Spruce (A & S) respectively.

Fourteen themes and sub-themes emerged from the data. The research questions 1 and 2 yielded 11 themes. Research questions 3, 4, and 5 yielded three themes. Three unique themes (themes that were rare) emerged. For example, R7 focused on renaming teaching practice to “school practice.” This would allow student teachers to realize that the activity relates to the entire educational process of the school day, weeks, and year, a concept suggested by Alfred.

It is noted that the student teachers from the secondary program are inclined to behave like a visiting teacher, teaching the assigned class and then leaving the school. The explicit purpose of teaching practice is to expose student teachers to the rigors of the entire school day and the school system, and to prepare them for life in the classroom. Regular attendance, tacit application of the lessons learned in college, and keen observation to details, including diversity, are very important characteristics of the preparation.

Another unique item R4 relates to the addition of the course *Oral Communication* to the curriculum for more effective delivery of content. Student teachers’ comments
suggest that many of the students in their classrooms were not “academically ready” for
the instruction they planned. They also describe communication in Standard English as a
serious problem “Many students understand only the Creole dialect, they comment.

Teaching, interacting, and using Standard English present a challenge for student
teachers, especially when their lesson plans are prepared for “readers.” Also, there is the
challenge of class size of between 35 and 50 students in a Grade 7 or 8, and sometimes
Grade 9 classroom. The concept of including Oral Communication as a “capstone”
subject originated with the student teachers focus group from Church Teachers’ College
(Pennsylvania State University, 1999). The emphasis of R8 was that “student teachers not
be allowed to take other courses while they were engaged in the Year 3 teaching-practice
exercise.” This was a concept noted by Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996).

The triangulation tool was utilized in order to validate observation and field notes
as text (Eisner, 1998, Merriam, 2001). It also helped to interpret the concepts and themes
from the interviews and conversations, as well as for verifying, or making self as the
research instrument’s professional judgments trustworthy, credible, respectful, and
reflective of my values. Brooker and MacPherson (2004) in their Interpreting and
Reporting in Qualitative Inquiry: Profiling the Researcher or the Research suggest that
copious quantities of elegantly descriptive research data have been reported at
conferences, but there has been little reporting of any interpretation of that data. They
believe that qualitative researchers need to think about meaning which is inherent in any
research activity, and show how it is intimately linked to the purpose of any inquiry.

Themes that emerged from the focus groups’ interviews and conversations
conducted in relation to the two research questions were analyzed on the basis of
common and unique themes. These themes were further calculated in percentages, in order to determine and identify verisimilitude (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998, 2001). The distribution of scores is calculated using the formula of “common themes” divided by total themes, multiplied by 100 (100%) (see Appendix E).

**Comparative Benchmarks for Student Teachers**

In order to adequately analyze the benchmarks in all three institutions—JBTE, INTASC, and NCATE—it was necessary to formulate a structure that would compare the differences and similarities. The document and content analysis resulted in the development of a matrix, which is named the Comparative Benchmarks Matrix. It shows the alignment of the benchmarks of all three institutions, and provides a comparative “chart” for easy reference.

The matrix of comparative benchmarks used in this study was constructed to reflect the similarities and differences of the three teacher education organizations—JBTE, INTASC, and NCATE—all at one glance. Using deductive interpretation and document analysis (Merriam, 1998), I examined each document carefully, and observed similarities/differences in the themes that emerged from the benchmarks.

These themes were organized based on their function. The benchmarks of each institution were organized according to the themes from the “focus of the field experience/clinical practice.” The themes include:

1. Candidate (student teacher) performance
2. Subject matter
3. Classroom management
4. Exposure to depth and breadth in education
5. Best practice

6. Improved clinical practice

7. Dealing with diversity

8. Exposure to research base and best practice

9. Student growth and development (Appendix E).

All items, except #5 (best practice) and #8 (exposure to research base) were common themes in the JBTE, INTASC, and NCATE organizations. The language, wording, or arrangement of the items might be different, but the concepts were similar.

The contents of each organization were abbreviated and organized into a structure that would allow for easy comparison. For example in item #1 the major focus of “field experience/clinical practice” is on candidate performance. The expectation of the JBTE was that the student teacher plans and performs classroom duties competently and that systematic lesson presentation was consistent with defined objectives (Brown, 1999).

For the same item the expectation of INTASC for student teachers is summed up in one word—planning. This encompasses knowledge of subject matter, the community and curriculum goals (Miller, 2006), and learning for all children within the jurisdiction of the student teacher.

The NCATE item states explicitly that student teachers are trained to take full responsibility for a classroom on the first day on the job. In fact NCATE ensures that the student teacher is trained before he/she is admitted to the field experience/clinical practice. Training occurs under the guidance of master teachers (NCATE, 2001). All three organizations require the same responsibilities of the student teacher.
Item #2 focuses on the subject matter/content. The JBTE identifies the benchmark as the student teacher “has knowledge of the subject matter.” The INTASC column relates to this as “content pedagogy,” and the NCATE column refers to it as the student teacher “knows the subject matter and a variety of ways to teach it to ensure student learning.”

Two unobserved items, “best practice” and “exposure to research base,” were noted in the JBTE program. It is likely that these items could have been incorporated into other benchmarks. For example, the student teacher’s ability to have knowledge and use of resources could be interpreted as exposure to research base.

Because these benchmarks are not explicit in the listing, it may be safe to label them as unobserved. In addition, the student teacher’s ability to use meaningful learning activities could also be considered as an integral part of #6—improved clinical practice, or #1—candidate performance. It is important for the concepts to be explicitly articulated to avoid confusion. Comments from the interviews and conversations show that the “unobserved” items need to be adopted into the repertoire of the JBTE benchmarks in order to develop an ideal teaching-practice program for Jamaica.

**Constant-Comparison Analysis**

Findings of the study indicate that there are more similarities than differences in the three teacher preparation programs. The JBTE benchmarks and INTASC Principles appear to share more commonalities than those of the NCATE benchmarks. The student teachers’ focus groups at The Mico College and Church Teachers’ College aligned all the INTASC benchmarks with the JBTE benchmarks. They seem to see no significant
differences in all three programs as presented. I interpreted this to mean that the wording may be different, but the concepts are similar.

Seven USA benchmarks are currently being used in the JBTE teaching-practice programs. Stakeholders identified 11 USA benchmarks to be included in the JBTE benchmarks in order to create an ideal teaching-practice program. Six of these benchmarks were selected from the INTASC, and nine were from the NCATE programs. A summary of the selection of those INTASC and NCATE benchmarks is outlined in Table 14.

Of the five groups of participants that examined the 18 items in List A, the focus group of student teachers from Church Teachers' College chose a minimum of three items—4B, 7B, and 8B. They believe that these were not included as part of the JBTE benchmarks, but could be considered for inclusion. There were 26 responses identifying benchmarks that could be adopted from the INTASC and NCATE models. Six or 25% of the responses focused on the INTASC benchmarks, and selected six items—4C, 6C, 7C, and 8C—as possible choices for an ideal teaching-practice program. In addition, items 2 and 9 were unanimously selected as inherent in the JBTE program.

Twenty or 74% of the responses focused on the NCATE benchmarks, selecting six items—1B, 3B, and 5B; 6B, 7B, and 8B—as benchmarks necessary for inclusion to form an ideal teaching-practice program in Jamaica. The supervisory faculty and student teachers' focus groups identified 3B and 5B and 7C and 8C (unique choices) as being absent from the JBTE benchmarks. All four focus groups or 100% of the participants unanimously selected items 2 and 9 of the INTASC and NCATE models from List A as fully comparable to the JBTE benchmarks.
Table 14

Informants' Choice of Items for Inclusion: List A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Supervisory Faculty Mico</th>
<th>Supervisory Faculty CTC</th>
<th>Student Teachers Mico</th>
<th>Student Teachers CTC</th>
<th>Discriminate Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

My interpretation of the phenomenon is that there are more similarities than differences, and more cohesion between the JBTE and INTASC benchmarks. I believe that although all three organizations certify teachers, NCATE stands head and shoulders above and beyond the certification process. It also certifies educational institutions (NCATE, 2006a; 2006c).

Concerning the Unlabeled Benchmarks: List A with the benchmarks of three teacher training institutions, both supervisory faculty and student teachers selected items from columns B and C that were unobserved in the JBTE benchmarks (Table 14). The general comment is that although minor elements of the selected items are evident in the program, there needs to be a greater reflection of the items in the program. The benchmarks need to be more explicit and recognizable in the JBTE programs.
There is one particular concern regarding item 4C, in that the primary program is believed to be more suited than the secondary for implementing this benchmark because of time constraints and the need to include integration.

Overall, the student teachers focus groups from both colleges felt that most of the benchmarks are relevant, but a few of them should be modified or discarded as “they serve no purpose in their area of preparation.” Student teachers argued that the “restrictive” learning environments in which they were placed made it impossible for many of the benchmarks to be realized. This was further compounded by the reduced time of 3 to 5 weeks for practice, due to disruptions and the shift system. Regarding the management of behavior, the student teachers believe that “students are not interested in learning, and motivation is a difficult task to accomplish.”

There is little or no respect for us because “we are labeled ‘student’ teacher, and school during this 21st century is a different place.” Additionally, student teachers are not equipped to handle some of the social issues affecting students in today’s classroom.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*To thine own self be true and it shall follow as the Night the day; thou canst not then be false to any man.*

--William Shakespeare

Background to the Study

Jamaica, like other countries in the world, has been plagued with the problem of providing quality education for its children (Haughton, 1997). It is an undisputed fact that prospective teachers in Jamaica are accountable for the delivery of quality education, which is dependent upon effective implementation of standards/benchmarks. The lack of good quality was evidenced by scathing remarks in the Jamaican press that teachers were not intellectually, physically, or psychologically prepared to cope with the training of the nation’s children (Thompson, 2002).

Research evidence supports the claim that it is crucial to change the way in which prospective teachers are prepared (American Council on Education, 1999; Ball, 2001; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Bourke, 2001; Brown & Bailey, 1997; Bush, 2002; Cannings & Talley, 2003; Carter, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Evans, 1993; Goeyman, 2000; Holloway, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; King, 1972; Miller, 1995, 2002; Moore, 2003; Perry, 2000; Samaras & Freese, 2006; Schultz, 2005; Segall, 2003; Shantz, 2000; Taylor, 2004; Villegas-Reimers, & Reimers, 1996). Teacher preparation demands
more than content and pedagogical knowledge (Evans et al., 2002; National Education
Association, 1999; Pemberton et al., 2006). It needs to focus on diversity, social issues,
and the special moral needs of children within the environment in which they live and
learn (Billings-Ladson, 2000; Carter, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Goldhaber, 2002).
However, virtually no research has focused on the implementation of the Joint Board of
Teacher Education (JBTE) benchmarks during the teaching-practice programs in
Jamaica.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study sought to (a) discover the ways in which the benchmarks of the Joint
Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) were implemented in the teaching-practice programs
in Jamaica, (b) determine how these benchmarks were implemented, (c) identify which of
the USA benchmarks were currently used in the programs, and (d) ascertain stakeholders’
perceived need to include USA benchmarks in the JBTE benchmarks in order to
formulate an “ideal” teaching-practice program in Jamaica.

**Population and Sample**

The population for this study was comprised of student teachers, supervisory
faculty, cooperating teachers, principals, and external assessor from the education system
in Jamaica. The purposive sample consisted of 42 willing and capable participants from
two different teacher training colleges that met the criteria for the study. Informants were
delimited to 18 student teachers, 18 supervisory faculty, 2 cooperating teachers, and 2
principals. Five informants constituted the discriminate sample of 2 student teachers, 1
principal, 1 supervisory faculty, and 1 external assessor. The teacher colleges and individuals sampled for this study met the purposive criteria delineated in chapter 3.

**Research Design**

This study was conducted in the form of a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry produces findings that are not arrived at by statistical methods (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Qualitative research deals specifically with “people’s lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions and feelings, social movement and cultural phenomenon” (p. 11). The inquirer often makes constructivist knowledge claims in an effort to establish meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants (Creswell, 2003, pp. 19-20).

The use of a multiple descriptive case study design for this study is based on the fact that case studies are increasingly used as a research tool (Creswell, 1998; Meloy, 2002; Merriam, 2001; Wolcott, 1994, 2001; Yin, 1994, 2003). Case study is a respected research method, especially when the objective is exploration (Slater, 2004; Yin, 1994, 2003). The descriptive case study approach was selected because of its unique ability to answer the research questions in this study.

One purpose of this type of research is to provide “thick rich description” and to understand the participants’ perception of the phenomenon under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998, 2001). Answers to the research questions in this study were more appropriately found in this design, rather than in reverenced numbers, percentages, or forced-response mechanisms (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998, 2001). This multiple descriptive qualitative case study covered contextual conditions surrounding the perceptions of the teaching-practice experience in Jamaica.
Rationale

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) teacher preparation programs appear to produce confident and satisfied prospective teachers, and positively impact the quality of prospective teachers in the United States of America. After closely reviewing both models/programs and comparing them with the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) program, I recognize that Jamaica, a developing country, might benefit from collaboration with these institutions, and positively influence the quality of teacher preparation and teaching-practice. Therefore, I chose to use these organizations as quality indicators for the study.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative case study approach. Two teacher training institutions in Jamaica were purposively selected for the study. The supervisory faculty focus groups were purposively sampled from compiled lists of the teaching-practice supervisors and student teachers, which were obtained from the 2 sampled institutions.

Criteria for the purposive sampling are listed in chapter 3, and also include the availability and willingness of sampled individuals to participate in the study. I then contacted each participant by telephone and/or in person, and requested participation in the study. An outline of possible questions for the interview was given them for their perusal and preparation for the interview or conversation (Appendix C). Structured and semi-structured interviews, conversations, observations, documents, and feedback reports were used to collect data for the study (Appendix C).
The data collected were analyzed using open coding, member checks, peer reviews, document analysis, and triangulation. The first section of the interview and conversation protocols assessed the demographic data, and the second section addressed the themes relating to the research questions. Of the 42 participants in the study, 100% were aware of the benchmarks. Fifteen of the 16 supervisory-faculty members, or 94%, were trained teachers with graduate and post-graduate degrees. Two of the informants were Ph.D. candidates. The institutions, principals, cooperating teachers, and student teachers fulfilled the criteria for participating in the study.

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by five research questions that investigated the implementing of the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching-practice programs of two purposively selected teachers' colleges in Jamaica.

Research Question 1: In what ways are the benchmarks of the Joint Board of Teacher Education implemented in the teaching-practice programs in the two institutions studied?

Research Question 2: Which JBTE benchmarks are implemented in the two teaching-practice programs?

Research Question 3: How is the research-based teacher preparation standards of the INTASC and the NCATE aligned with the JBTE benchmarks?

Research Question 4: Which USA benchmarks are currently used in the two teacher preparation programs?

Research Question 5: Which of the USA benchmarks do stakeholders perceive need to be included in the JBTE benchmarks to formulate the ideal program for Jamaica?
Results

This section focuses upon the answers to the 5 research questions that were stated at the beginning of this study. Two data collection "tools" were designed to collect data for the Research Questions.

The first is the Unlabeled Benchmarks Matrix: List A (Appendix E). This document is a compilation of benchmarks from the three purposively selected teacher education programs in this study. The items are arranged in three columns—"A" for the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE), "B" for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and "C for the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) benchmarks.

The second is an unlabeled list of benchmarks that is a modified copy of the Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching Practice-2004 document, renamed the "Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B" (see Table 13). The 25 items in this document are arranged in five stages which include: Planning, Teaching, Relating, Managing, and Effecting.

Using the Unlabeled Comparative Benchmarks: List A (Appendix E) student teachers were to select items from the columns labeled A, B, C. They were to identify benchmarks used in the JBTE programs. Also, stakeholders were to use the Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B to select items from the 25 benchmarks. The participants were required to utilize these lists based upon specific instructions.

Research Question 1: In what ways are the benchmarks of the Joint Board of Teacher Education implemented in the teaching-practice programs in the two institutions studied?
Responses from the interviews, conversation protocols, and observations indicate that student teachers and supervisory faculty received the benchmarks, both verbally and in print forms. Supervisory faculty further communicated, and implemented the benchmarks through the curriculum of the teachers' colleges in scheduled class sessions, or in seminars/workshops. Feedback sessions with the student teachers during the teaching-practice period were also used to communicate or reinforce the benchmarks.

Student teachers implemented the benchmarks through their units, lesson plans, and actual teaching during the teaching-practice period. The cooperating teachers and principals had a different experience, because they did not receive hard copies of the document during this teaching-practice period, although they acknowledged that they received copies of the benchmarks in the past. They said that they relied on their own experience to assist the student teachers in implementing the benchmarks.

Stakeholders from both colleges had similar experiences. Responding to questions from the Interview or Conversation Protocol, informants stated that they were knowledgeable of the benchmarks that were communicated to them in different ways. Student teachers in the focus group from Mico expressed that they were informed about the benchmarks in pre-teaching-practice sessions, in the form of a printed document, and in seminars and workshops conducted by the teachers' college.

Research Question 2: Which JBTE benchmarks are implemented in the two teaching-practice programs?

The themes relating to the number of JBTE benchmarks that were being implemented in the teaching-practice programs were not adequately discussed in the data. Student teachers identified all six items of column "A" and included item 7 from column
“B” and item 9 from column “C.” Items 2 and 9 were unanimously selected as JBTE benchmarks embedded in the programs. Overall, from the list of 15 benchmarks, 10 were selected as being embedded in the JBTE programs. My interpretation is that elements of the listed benchmarks of columns B and C are explicitly evident in the JBTE-listed benchmarks.

The stakeholders from The Mico and Church Teachers’ Colleges were more interested in discussing the issues surrounding the implementation, rather than the number of items that were implemented. Both focus groups agreed that the benchmarks were embedded in the curriculum of the teacher preparation programs.

They spoke of the systems, curriculum, and environmental issues that posed challenges in implementing the benchmarks. Supervisory focus groups from The Mico and Church Teachers’ Colleges agreed that certain benchmarks did not address the real needs of all students, including students with special needs. The student teachers focus groups had similar issues regarding the benchmarks.

Stakeholders were to select JBTE benchmarks that were implemented, as well as those that were difficult to implement in the programs. The choice resulted in items selected from four of the five stages: Teaching, Relating, Managing, and Effecting (see Appendix B). There is a general agreement from the choices made that all the benchmarks are “implementable.” One supervisory faculty from The Mico College expressed that the document containing the benchmarks needed up-dating to reflect the needs of the stakeholders—student teachers, students, and supervisors. Some items were considered vague and need more clarification for adequate implementation and ‘measurement.’
Stakeholders were to identify items implemented in the JBTE programs. Student teachers identified all six items of column ‘A’ and items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 as items that were implemented in the JBTE teaching-practice programs. Items 2 and 9 were unanimously selected as part of the JBTE benchmarks embedded in the programs.

The stakeholders from Mico and Church Teachers’ College were more interested in discussing the issues surrounding the implementation than they were the items that were implemented. Both focus groups noted that the benchmarks were embedded in the teacher preparation programs in the curriculum. They spoke of systems, curriculum, and environmental issues that posed challenges in implementing the benchmarks. It was noted by both supervisory focus groups, from the two colleges (SFA and SFB), that certain items did not address the real needs of all the students, including those with special needs.

However, the choice of items difficult to implement in List B allowed the supervisory faculty focus groups to highlight the items that were implemented. Among these were items from the Teaching, Relating, and Managing and Effecting areas (Table 15). There was general agreement from the choice of items that all the benchmarks were “implementable.” One supervisory faculty thought that the instrument containing the benchmarks needed updating to reflect the changes of the 21st-century classroom and the needs of the students. Stakeholders at Church Teachers’ College shared their frustrations with the implementing of the benchmarks in the secondary program. They commented that some benchmarks were more suitable for the primary than for the secondary.

Research Question 3: How are the research-based teacher preparation standards of the INTASC and the NCATE aligned with the JBTE benchmarks?
Two themes emerged indicating that the USA benchmarks were important and advantageously aligned to the JBTE benchmarks: (a) Perceived need for inclusion/or improving the benchmarks and (b) Benchmarks overlap in the three programs.

Research Question 4: Which USA benchmarks are currently used in the two teacher preparation programs?

Responses for this question were derived from the document analysis, interviews, and conversation protocols. Research results reveal that of the 18 USA benchmarks identified in the documents, 15 are included and used in the JBTE programs at the two colleges studied (see Table 12, chapter 6). They identified items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 as USA items currently used in the JBTE program (Appendix B). Items 2 and 9 were unanimously selected as embedded into the JBTE benchmarks. These benchmarks are important for the development and professionalism of prospective teachers, and for achieving success in schools.

Six items were from the INTASC program in column “C” and all nine of NCATE items from column “B” were selected as being currently used in the programs of the 2 colleges. Items 5 and 8 were unobserved in the JBTE programs. In conversation with some college supervisors it was noted that items 5 and 8 seemed evident as aspects of the JBTE benchmarks. My understanding of this situation is that, for example, item 5 or “best practice” could be integrated into item 1 or 6 of the JTBE benchmarks. Selection of USA items used in the JBTE programs included:

1. Candidate performance
2. Subject matter
3. Classroom management
4. Exposure to depth and breadth in education
5. Best practice
6. Improved clinical practice
7. Dealing with diversity
8. Student growth and development

Research Question 5: Which of the USA benchmarks do stakeholders perceive need to be included in the JBTE benchmarks to formulate the ideal program for Jamaica?

The “Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B” was used to generate answers for research question 5. Using List B (Appendix E), student teachers and supervisory faculty were asked to identify the items that would make an ideal teaching-practice program for the JBTE. Items in the INTASC column was coded “C” and items in the NCATE column were coded “B” for easy selection. Twenty-seven responses from the student teacher and supervisory faculty focus groups identified 15 benchmarks to be considered for inclusion in the JBTE program.

Stakeholders from The Mico College felt that the unobserved benchmarks that were lacking from the JBTE program could be included from the INTASC and NCATE benchmarks. They saw school and community involvement, and exposure to research base and best practice as excellent choices. Church Teachers’ College stakeholders had similar views of including the same USA benchmarks to formulate an “ideal” program.

The supervisory faculty focus group from The Mico College (SFA) felt that with the exception of three items, all others are considered relevant for an ideal program. These three items include R2, or relevance of projects/activities to content and objectives.
indicated; M1 or Learners’ interpersonal problems/difficulties appropriately handled, and E1 or Creative ideas and special projects developed in the class and/or school. They concur that the benchmarks of the three organizations are more similar than different. Neenah and Kate also suggested the inclusion of the concepts of involvement in the community and reflective practice as benchmarks necessary for making an ideal program.

The choice resulted in six responses from the INTASC benchmarks in column C. All nine items from NCATE in column B were chosen (see Table 14 in chapter 6). Twenty responses focused on the NCATE benchmarks, and informants selected all nine or 100% of the items for inclusion. Overall research results reveal that stakeholders consider the benchmarks important for the development and professionalism of dedicated, committed prospective teachers, and for achieving success in schools.

The total items for inclusion in the JBTE teaching-practice programs included 15 of the 18 or 83% of the items. Much discussion surrounded items 4, 6, and 8 especially from the supervisory faculty. The involvement of the school and the community was highly recommended by Principal Kate who thought that “community projects could be long term, and create more learning opportunities for student teachers.”

Items selected from the “Unlabeled Benchmarks: List B” (Table 13) by the student teacher and supervisory faculty focus groups, to create an ideal teaching-practice program, constitute the following items listed below. Other items were considered for either deletion or modification.

1. P4 as activities appropriately developed and integration shown where necessary

2. T1 as Introductory learning activity useful and consistent with lesson
development

3. T2 as Presentation of ideas, clear and effective
4. T4 as Teaching competence and confidence shown during the instruction
5. T5 as instructional strategies appropriately developed and managed
6. T7 as Technology (A-V aids, equipment and resources) effectively used
7. R4 as Creative management of existing physical and learning conditions and
8. R5 as Examples of practical applications of lessons clearly shown to students
9. M4 as Assessment of objectives and activities evident and appropriate
10. E2 as Contribution to improvement of the classroom appearance indicated
11. E5 as Evidence of students’ work and progress, as a result of the teacher’s efforts.

Conclusions

This study suggests that the teaching-practice program in which The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) benchmarks are embedded needs much more “connectedness” with student teachers in order for them to perform at the expected high competency levels. The quality of prospective teachers that emerges from the teaching-practice programs in Jamaica can be improved if the recommendations of the stakeholders are implemented. In an effort to utilize the benchmarks effectively and raise the level of student teacher performance and student achievement, the following concepts could be considered:

1. Teaching practice is an experience that should be more appealing and less frustrating to the student teacher. It is presently the only channel for demonstrating the competencies and skills that were learned in teachers’ college.
2. The JBTE benchmarks and the INTASC and NCATE benchmarks have more similarities than differences, so collaboration and collegiality could make a significant positive difference in the teaching-practice programs.

3. Stakeholders desire the inclusion of USA benchmarks into the JBTE program in order to create an ideal teaching-practice program for Jamaica.

4. Stakeholders desire that the teachers' colleges examine the curriculum, assess the needs of the student teachers based on placements in rural or urban areas, and provide the necessary guidance in terms of the performance levels and other social conditions of the students in the host schools.

5. Stakeholders and policy-makers need to agree on methods of curtailing disruptions in the host schools so that student teachers can fulfill their requirements and expectations in implementing the benchmarks in the assigned 12 weeks of teaching practice.

6. Stakeholders desire greater collaboration between teachers' colleges and host schools, and among the teaching-practice team—the external assessors, the college supervisors, and the coordinators—as there are benefits to share that may not interfere with the uniqueness of the institution.

**Recommendations for Practice and Research**

The JBTE teaching-practice programs in the Jamaican tertiary education system are closely representative of the INTASC and the NCATE programs in terms of the standards/benchmarks set for their prospective teachers in achieving quality teachers and teaching. However, the constant and systematic upgrading and "checks and balances" utilized by INTASC and NCATE in order to implement their benchmarks in all their
supervised schools and programs based on verified research have not been as consistent in the JBTE programs.

Developing an ideal teaching-practice program for prospective teachers would mean that stakeholders include additional benchmarks from the two USA based programs. Stakeholders would need to align specific courses to the teaching-practice curriculum as was suggested by the student teacher focus group from Church Teachers’ College. Such courses’ capstone could develop greater confidence in the delivery and presentation of content, and foster effective implementation of the benchmarks.

Stakeholders also need to carefully examine the actual time allowed for the “practice of teaching” by the student teachers. Most stakeholders concede that the time allotted seems adequate, but the other activities at the host schools constantly militated against the “real time” spent in practicing the teaching skills and creating the theory and practice nexus that are required. Three to 5 weeks are definitely not adequate for teaching practice.

Consistent with the literature and findings from my research, I strongly suggest that stakeholders consider the following suggestions for a more satisfying teaching-practice experience and better quality teachers:

1. Study the needs of the student teachers based on the location—urban, suburban, or rural—of each teacher college, and address these needs.

2. Seek to improve the practice period of 12 weeks that the student teachers are allotted. They desire more time for the practice of teaching.

3. Student teachers desire additional training in “Oral Communication.” The
teacher training curriculum, too, would build student teacher language and confidence levels, and so improve performance.

4. Allow student teachers, as adult learners, to initiate and use their own concepts and ideas in their practice. They would like to initiate changes by trying out new ideas rather than practicing the concepts taught and required by their supervisors.

5. The Internal/External Assessment Instrument Year 3 Teaching-Practice-2004 document should be discussed and modified in light of the new 21st-century classroom and the “special needs” and programs of student teachers and students.

6. Implement the additional recommended USA-based benchmarks in the JBTE benchmarks and assess the difference in the teaching-practice programs.

7. Investigate, in order to validate using quantitative research the effectiveness of the JBTE benchmarks in the teacher preparation programs.

8. Compare and contrast the perceptions of the supervisory faculty and the student teachers from all the teacher colleges in Jamaica.

9. Conduct further research as well as a quantitative study on this topic in all the teacher colleges nation-wide, using survey research in order to build a statistical database document.

10. Replicate this study in 5 years and compare the results.

**Implications for Teaching Practice in Jamaica**

Findings from the study have important benefits or repercussions on the institutions and participants being studied. In this study the implications for how each of the five groups of the stakeholders perceive and fulfill their roles are described as follows:
Final Year Student Teachers

Establish realistic expectations for yourself, demonstrate self-confidence, seek opportunities to network with peers in similar content areas, and be knowledgeable of developmental psychology and age-related needs of the students you intend to teach. Prepare and practice self-preservation and conflict management skills. "It is difficult to teach everything in the program," and within the limited time constraints.

Supervisory Faculty

Model the benchmarks and other virtues for student teachers. Prepare them for the realities of the classroom. Arrange and meet with them in multiple feedback sessions. Give student teachers "a voice" in the process and help them to become independent adult learners. Help them plan for the students, and not for you, the supervisor.

Cooperating Teachers

Plan to nurture the student teacher that is assigned to you. Be present in the classroom and available to assist and encourage the student teacher. Share teaching tips with the student teacher and build confidence. Your job is protected if you are classified as a good mentor, and your professional development is enhanced because of the student teacher.

Principals of Host Schools

Select the best cooperating teachers to mentor student teachers. Provide seminars and/or workshops "with incentives" for their involvement in the teaching-practice programs. Cooperating teachers who mentor student teachers well could earn a certificate.
of appreciation for portfolio development. Create in your school a safe and learner-friendly environment. Forward your observations to the JBTE and/ the colleges regarding any inadequacies in the teaching-practice program, and offer suggestions for growth. You are part of the teaching-practice team and can help build a cadre of quality teachers through staff development programs.

External Assessors

Present a “human face” to the student teachers; help them to grow and develop, rather than expecting them to be perfect teachers during the practice period. Research and inform yourselves of new developments in teaching practice. Study the effectiveness of professional development programs and be aware of 21st-century changes in the education system. Use feedback sessions and “more frequent visits” to allay the fears of student teachers.

Teachers’ Colleges

Ensure all student teachers practice to teach before engaging in the teaching-practice exercise. All student teachers should be assessed and declared ready for teaching practice. Prepare qualified, confident teachers for the first day of school. Study carefully the programs of INTASC and NCATE and implement practices that result in quality and qualified teachers in every classroom.
APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE
May 23, 2005

Hyacinth Rose
8712 George Ave.
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Dear Rose,

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

IRB Protocol #: 05-043  Application Type: Original  Dept: Education
Review Category: Exempt  Action Taken: Approved  Advisor: Larry Burton
Protocol Title: Perceptions of the Adequacy of Teaching Practicum in the Teacher Education Programs in Jamaica.

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your proposal for research. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form, after initiation of the project, require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

Some proposal and research design designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If your project is one of this nature and in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Institutional Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University physician, Dr. Loren Hamel, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,

Wendy H. Acevedo-Lopez,
Graduate Assistant
Institutional Review Board
Cc: Larry Burton

[Signature]

APPROVED
Office of Scholarly Research

Office of Scholarly Research
(269) 471-6160  Fax: (269) 471-6246  E-mail: irb@andrews.edu
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104

COPY

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From: "Hyacinth Rose" <hrose@andrews.edu>
To: <webmaster@moecc.gov.jm>
Subject: RE: Request for Permission to Research
Date: Thu, 29 Jul 2004

The Tertiary Unit Representative

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Hyacinth Rose, and I am a citizen of Jamaica, from the parish of St. Mary. I am currently a PhD candidate at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA. I am a faculty member of Northern Caribbean University, and presently completing my proposal toward my Doctoral Degree.

I am requesting permission to study "Perceptions of the adequacy of the Teaching Practicum in the Jamaican Teacher Education Programs". I intend to involve three teacher training Institutions: Mico Teachers', Church Teachers' and Shortwood Teachers' colleges, for the school years, 2004 to 2005. The research is Qualitative, employing interviews, conversations and observations as the main data collection methods.

I have been working at NCU as a Teacher Educator since 1986, and was in 1996 elected to serve as board chair for the Education Board of Studies. The intent of this study is to add to the knowledge-base of research in this area and to assist in making the teacher education program in Jamaica a model for the western Caribbean.

I presently need urgent clearance as I am in Michigan at this time and would like to obtain approval before I leave next week. I have been making telephone contacts with the three Teachers Colleges, beginning with CTC.

I am committed to conducting my research in the most efficient and least intrusive manner. Please respond either by E-mail or Fax 1(269)471.6374 at Andrews University. Any further information needed, I will be happy to supply.

Thanks for your kind consideration, and I await your prompt response.

Yours truly,

Hyacinth P. Rose
Assoc. Prof. NCU.
The Study

Topic: Perceptions of the adequacy of the teaching practicum in the Jamaican teacher education programs

Design: Qualitative Study

Proposed Population Sample includes: (approx. 25 participants)
1. Teacher candidates
2. Teacher educators/lecturers
3. Cooperating Teachers (classroom teachers)
4. Alumni (past trained teachers)
5. Principals of the host schools
6. Coordinators and supervisors of the practicum programs
7. Three leading teacher training colleges—Mico, Church and Shortwood

Methodology: Interviews, Conversations and Observations

Duration: August to December and January to April, the normal Teaching practice period
For planning and placement.

Purpose: To determine whether the teaching practice (practicum) programs are adequate, and seek solutions, using research, for improving the quality and adequacy. This is with the view to make the programs in Jamaica a model for the Western Caribbean.

Any other details needed please feel free to call me at Ph: 625-8448 or 383-0271

Hyacinth P. Rose
NCU.

Hyacinth P. Rose
NCU.
Mrs. B Gordon, Principal  
Church Teachers' College  
Manchester Road  
Mandeville

Dear Mrs. Gordon:

The purpose of this letter is to seek permission to have access to your institution, and the professional personnel responsible for directing or coordinating the teaching practicum exercise.

I am currently enrolled as a student at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, and in the process of preparing the proposal for my Doctoral Dissertation. I have enclosed information about my study. I would like to include your college and the practicum coordinator in my study. This involvement will be in the form of an interview of approximately 45 minutes with the practicum faculty member, and historical information (literature) regarding Church's involvement in teaching practicum over the years. The interview could be convened between August and December 2004.

I realize that this request will impact the faculty planning time or scheduled work day. I would be grateful if arrangements could be made to accommodate me for one day convenient to you. In addition, I would like to observe one of your teacher candidates during the practicum exercise - January to April, 2005, with the distinct purpose of determining the adequacy of the teaching practicum experience. I would also appreciate a list of the schools in which your teacher candidates are usually placed, so I can begin to examine the travelling arrangements for observation.

I know you are extremely busy and that this request requires your time and attention. I am committed to conducting my research in the most efficient and least intrusive manner. Please respond either by E-mail, Fax or Letter as soon as possible. We will then discuss dates and details for proceeding with my request.

Thanks for your time and kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Hyacinth P. Rose  
Assoc. Prof. N.C.U.

Enc.
September 3, 2004

Mrs. Bridgette Gordon  
Principal  
Church Teachers' College  
Mandeville Road  
P.O. Box 41  
Manchester

Dear Mrs. Gordon

Ms. Hyacinth R. Rose, a doctoral candidate at Andrews University is conducting research on the "Perceptions of the adequacy of Teaching Practicum in Jamaica Teacher Education Programs".

She is seeking permission to use your institution in collecting data mainly through observation and interview.

Kindly extend to her the necessary courtesies in this exercise. Her e-mail address is hrrose@andrews.edu

Thanks.

Yours sincerely

Philbert Dhyll (Mr.)  
Assistant Chief Education Officer  
Tertiary Unit  
for Permanent Secretary
Dr. C. Packer, Principal
Mico Teachers’ College
Morescaux Rd
Kingston

Dear Dr. Packer:

The purpose of this letter is to seek permission to have access to your institution, and the professional personnel responsible for directing or coordinating the teaching practicum exercise.

I am currently enrolled as a student at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, and in the process of preparing the proposal for my Doctoral Dissertation. I have enclosed information about my study. I would like to include your college and the practicum coordinator in my study. This involvement will be in the form of an interview of approximately 45 minutes with the practicum faculty member, and historical information (literature) regarding Mico’s involvement in teaching practicum over the years. The interview could be convened between August and December 2004.

I realize that this request will impact the faculty planning time or scheduled work day. I would be grateful if arrangements could be made to accommodate me for one day convenient to you. In addition, I would like to observe one of your teacher candidates during the practicum exercise — January to April, 2005, with the distinct purpose of determining the adequacy of the teaching practicum experience. I would also appreciate a list of the schools in which your teacher candidates are usually placed, so I can begin to examine the travelling arrangements for observation.

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Thanks for your time and kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Hyacinth P. Rose
Assoc. Prof. N.C.U.

Enc.
September 3, 2004

Dr. Claude Packer  
Principal  
The Mico College  
1A Marescaux Road  
Kingston 5

Dear Dr. Packer,

Ms. Hyacinth R. Rose, a doctoral candidate at Andrews University is conducting research on the "Perceptions of the adequacy of Teaching Practicum in Jamaica Teacher Education Programs".

She is seeking permission to use your institution in collecting data mainly through observation and interview.

Kindly extend to her the necessary courtesies in this exercise. Her e-mail address is hrosa@andrews.edu.

Thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Philbert Dhyll (Mr.)  
Assistant Chief Education Officer  
Tertiary Unit  
for Permanent Secretary
Dear Participant

Thank you kindly for taking time out from your busy schedule to participate in my dissertation research. I appreciate your willingness to make the contribution to improve the teaching practice programs and the delivery of quality education in a broader sense.

Thanks again and all your educational pursuits materialize.

Wishing you the best of everything always.

Hyacinth P. Rose (Neil)
Assoc. Prof. N.C.U.
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<th>Stage</th>
<th>Performance Criteria and Standards of Practice - (Materials &amp; Methods)</th>
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<td>P2. Objectives appropriate, clearly stated and valuable to learners</td>
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<td>P4. Activities appropriately developed &amp; integration shown where necessary</td>
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<td>Teaching</td>
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<td>T2. Presentation of ideas and explanations clear and effective</td>
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<td>T4. Teaching competence and confidence shown during the instruction</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related</td>
<td>R1. Respect for learners, their experiences, interests, and differences shown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R2. Relevance of projects/activities to lesson content and objectives indicated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R3. Communication, language and style appropriate and learner friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R4. Creative management of existing physical and learning conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R5. Examples of practical applications of lesson clearly shown to students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>M1. Students' interpersonal problems/difficulties appropriately handled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M2. Lesson appropriately sequenced and adequately timed for the learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M3. Student/student and student/teacher interactions encouraged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M4. Assessment of objectives and activities, evident, and appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>E1. Creativity, ideas, and special projects developed in the class and/or school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E2. Contribution to improvement of the classroom appearance indicated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E3. Consistency in planning, and between lesson planning &amp; teaching activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E4. Reflection on teaching and self-evaluation evidently &amp; appropriately done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E5. Evidence of students' work &amp; progress, as a result of the teacher's efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Score** = (Overall sum of the sub-totals from all the columns): **TOTAL SCORE =**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Grade:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Rep:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Examiner:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation of Scores:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Definition of the Assessment Variables:

PLANNING: The selection and preparation of instructional materials and strategies for delivery of lessons - as evidenced by written plans, secured & displayed resources and other indicators of the teacher's readiness to teach.

TEACHING: The employment of useful means & techniques to facilitate the events of instruction (e.g., Gaining attention; Explaining objectives and ideas; Soliciting and challenging performance; Providing guidance; Providing feedback; Assessing learning outcomes).

RELATING: The appropriate matching of the learners' characteristics, capabilities, needs and interests with resources and realities of the learning environment; and effectively connecting lessons to the learners' experiences.

MANAGING: The effective organization and handling of resources (personnel & material) for quality-control in instructional activities, as evidenced by the student-teacher's utilization of resources, classroom management, and learning assessment.

EFFECTING: The extent to which the efforts of the student-teacher have influenced the work & development of the learners - as evidenced by positive changes and progress in performance and overall improvements in the learning environment/community.

Interpretation of the Rating Scale:

0 = Absence of related evidence, where it is normal/reasonable to expect it.

1 = Little or poor effort and/or weak presentation with significant errors.

2 = Significant effort but weak knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the delivery.

3 = Accurate knowledge, skills, & attitudes; but not adequately developed.

4 = Accurate & Adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes creatively explored.
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS
Interview Protocol

Stakeholders' Questions: Student Teacher Focus Groups

Topic: Perceptions of the adequacy of the JBTE benchmarks for student teachers in teaching practice programs in Jamaica

Please take the time to respond to the following questions in order to assist the inquirer in finding answers to the question of adequacy (importance or value) of the JBTE benchmarks (standards), and to achieve the objective of providing adequate teaching practice experiences for teacher candidates and so improve the quality of teacher education in Jamaica.

QUESTIONS: (Circle the correct answer where necessary, and tabulate points for others)

1. State your gender
   a. Male  
   b. Female
2. Have you completed all the requirements for entry into the teacher education program?
   a. Yes  
   b. No  
   c. Not sure
3. Have you any prior teaching experience?
   a. Yes  
   b. No  
   c. Not sure
4. In which program are you enrolled?
   a. Pre-primary  
   b. Primary  
   c. Secondary
5. Are you aware of the JBTE benchmarks that direct teaching practice? How many of these benchmarks are you familiar with? How are they communicated to you?
6. Which of the benchmarks/standards are important to include in what you would consider an “ideal” teaching practice program for Jamaica? Examine Documents A and B and follow instructions.
7. Do you consider these benchmarks important in your preparation? How do you include these benchmarks in your teaching practice exercise?
8. Do you think you are adequately prepared for teaching practice based on the JBTE benchmarks? Explain.
9. Describe for me how you incorporate these benchmarks in your teaching exercise.
10. Are you evaluated during teaching practice? How is this done?
11. Are you aware that your evaluation for the teaching practice is based on the JBTE benchmarks?
12. Do you think that the benchmarks when implemented adequately meet the needs of the students you teach? Describe how they are meeting the needs of the students.
13. In your teaching practice preparation what courses were most helpful in understanding and incorporating the JBTE benchmarks?
14. If you were to make suggestions for the improvement of the JBTE benchmarks for teaching practice, what would these be? Why?
15. Examine the lists provided and indicate on: List A, the benchmarks that you consider important to be included in an “ideal” teaching practice program (V).
   List B: the benchmarks that could be discarded or modified (X).
Interview Protocol

Stakeholders Questions: Teacher educators including teaching practice coordinators/supervisors (Faculty focus Group)

Topic: Perceptions of the adequacy of the JBTE benchmarks for student teachers in the teaching practice programs in Jamaica

Please take the time to respond to the following questions in order to assist the inquirer in finding answers to the question of adequacy (importance or value) of the JBTE benchmarks (standards), and to achieve the objective of providing adequate teaching practice experiences for student teachers and so improve the quality of teacher education in Jamaica.

QUESTIONS (Circle the correct answer where necessary, and tabulate points for others)

1. In what capacity do you work with the teaching practice programs?
   a. Supervisor  
   b. Tutor  
   c. Coordinator  
   d. Other

2. How long have you worked with the JBTE in this capacity?
   a. 0 - 2 years  
   b. 3 - 5 years  
   c. 6 - 8 years  
   d. 9 years & over

3. Which degree do you have?
   a. BA/BSc  
   b. MA/MSc  
   c. PhD.  
   d. Other

4. Which programs have you worked with?
   a. Primary  
   b. Secondary  
   c. Other

5. Have you worked with student teachers who were placed in rural schools?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

6. Have you worked with student teachers who were placed in urban (inner-city) schools?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

7. Have you worked with student teachers who were placed in suburban schools?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

7b. Are you aware of the JBTE benchmarks that direct the teaching practice programs? How are they embedded in the teaching practice programs?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

8. How are they embedded in the teaching practice programs? Explain.

8b. How are these benchmarks communicated to you? Explain.

9. How important are these benchmarks in the preparation of student teachers?

10. How do you communicate these benchmarks to student teachers?

11. What steps are taken to ensure that student teachers incorporate the JBTE benchmarks in the teaching practice exercise?

12. Are student teachers evaluated based on the JBTE benchmarks? How are they evaluated?

13. If you were to make suggestions for the improvement of the JBTE benchmarks for teaching practice, what would these be? Why?

14. Examine the lists provided and indicate on:
   - List A, the benchmarks that you consider important to be included in an "ideal" teaching practice program (V)
   - List B, the benchmarks that could be discarded or modified (X)
Conversation Protocol

Stakeholders Questions: Cooperating Teachers of Public & non-public Schools

Topic: Perceptions of the adequacy of the JBTE benchmarks for student teachers in teaching practice programs in Jamaica

Please take the time to respond to the following questions in order to assist the inquirer in finding answers to the question of adequacy (importance or value) of the JBTE benchmarks (standards), and to achieve the objective of providing adequate teaching practice experiences for teacher candidates and so improve the quality of teacher education in Jamaica.

QUESTIONS: (Circle the correct answer where necessary, and tabulate points for others)

1. How long have you been working with student teachers during teaching practice?
   a. 0-2 years       b. 3-5 years       c. 6-8 years       d. 9 years & over

2. Have you received any training from the college/university that placed student teachers in your school?
   a. Yes           b. No             c. Not sure

3. Are you required to keep abreast with changes in supervisory or evaluative practices?
   a. Yes           b. No             c. Not sure

4. State your gender
   a. Male          b. Female

5. Do you believe cooperating teachers should be required to do compulsory training to adequately monitor student teachers who are doing teaching practice? Explain.

6. Are you aware of the JBTE benchmarks that direct the teaching practice programs? How are they communicated to you?

7. How do you use these benchmarks with the student teachers that you supervise?

8. Do you consider these benchmarks to be important in the preparation of student teachers? Why?

9. Are you required to assist in evaluating the student teachers that you monitor? How are they evaluated?

10. Do you think student teachers are evaluated based on the JBTE benchmarks? Explain.

11. If you were to make suggestions for the improvement of the JBTE benchmarks for teaching practice, what would these be? Why?
Conversation Protocol

Stakeholders Questions: Principals of public and non-public schools

Topic: Perceptions of the adequacy of JBTE benchmarks for student teachers in teaching practice programs in Jamaica

Please take the time to respond to the following questions in order to assist the inquirer in finding answers to the question of adequacy (importance or value) of the JBTE benchmarks (standards), and to achieve the objective of providing adequate teaching practice experiences for teacher candidates and so improve the quality of teacher education in Jamaica.

QUESTIONS : (Circle the correct answer where necessary, and tabulate points for others)

1. How long have you been a principal at this school?
   a. 0-2 years  b. 3-5 years  c. 6-8 years  d. 9 years & over

2. How long has this school served as host school for teaching practice?
   a. 5-10 years  b. 11-17 years  c. 18-24 years  d. 25 years & over

4. State your gender
   a. Male  b. Female

5. In selecting cooperating teachers for the student teacher what characteristics do you look for and why?

6. Are you aware of the JBTE benchmarks that direct the teaching practice programs? How are they communicated to you?

7. How do you use these benchmarks with the cooperating teachers in your school?

8. Do you consider these benchmarks to be important in the preparation of student teachers? Why?

9. Are you expected to assist in evaluating the student teachers who are placed in your school? If yes, how is this done?

10. Do you think student teachers are evaluated based on the JBTE benchmarks? Explain.

11. If you were to make suggestions for the improvement of the JBTE benchmarks for teaching practice, what would these be? Why?
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHICS AND THEMES
Qualification of Tutors

Regarding the qualification of teacher educators in the teachers' colleges in Jamaica, it is noteworthy that currently the entire supervisory faculty groups interviewed from the two teachers' colleges were qualified to train prospective teachers. Of the 16 supervisory faculty five had bachelor's degree and ten had master's degree; three faculty members were pursuing a PhD degree.

Reflecting on the literature review, Thompson, (2002) suggested that the prospective teachers were not psychologically, intellectually or socially prepared to cope in the workplace called school. Evans, (1993) and Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (1996) acknowledged that tutors in the teachers' colleges were not required to have a graduate/master's degree. In my opinion a degree is immaterial if the attitude, content and skills (content pedagogy) of the faculty are not aligned to the practice of teaching.

Goldhaber (2006) stated that research shows that the “intangible attributes” of teachers (97%) seem to elicit greater achievement in students than the academic certificates they acquire. Those academic gems are important but they are not the best motivators of achievement. In 1911 H.H. Piggott in an Education Report suggested that a classroom under a tree with a dedicated teacher could achieve more than a well established “self-contained” classroom. Teaching is a disciplined attitude.

Qualification of Supervisory Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification Degree</th>
<th>College A</th>
<th>College B</th>
<th>Discrim. Sample</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Certificate (Physical Education Certificate)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts/Science BA/BSc</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3-9+</td>
<td>2-9+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts/MSc MA/MSc</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-9+</td>
<td>2-9+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy Doctorate PhDc (Candidate)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td>7+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Themes from Interviews and Conversations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Teachers (ST)</th>
<th>Cooperating Teachers (CT)</th>
<th>Principals of Host Schools (P)</th>
<th>College Supervisors (CS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong> poses a challenge: Students reading below grade level. Environment restrictive to new methods of teaching...fixed furniture. Students do not cooperate or want to learn (AA &amp; BB)</td>
<td>Student teachers controlled to perform to the prescribed curriculum... They should have minimal teaching experience before engaging in teaching practice. Student teachers ... should not be left alone. Cooperating teacher should model for student teachers. (CT)</td>
<td>Information about the JBTE benchmarks communicated to me either by reflecting on my own preparation as a trained teacher, or from a former principal colleague. (FR)</td>
<td>Classrooms structured to the curriculum and exams (B) JBTE benchmarks are adequate except for a few which need to be modified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real Needs</strong> of students not considered in the benchmarks 38-50 in Grades 7-9 classes (AA) Shift System frustrates us; Vandalism rampant (AA, BB); Lack of respect; need name change -teacher candidate—is a suggestion</td>
<td>Student teachers can’t be creative—marked down by assessors; not allowed to develop their expertise Many teacher educators are not aware of what is happening in schools, as most of them visit schools only at teaching practice time. (CT)</td>
<td>Most experienced teachers utilized as cooperating teachers (ALL) Student teachers should be free from other courses during the TP exercise. (SP)</td>
<td>Real needs of students not considered in the benchmarks (A,B) Class size too large—up to 50 students in one class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Varied Expectations</strong> from TP team...lack of collaboration—You don’t know which one to please. (AA,BB)</td>
<td>Student teachers not prepared psychologically, socially and intellectually for the situations in the classrooms—a different kind of students. (CT)</td>
<td>Benchmarks relevant to needs of Student Teachers...Few including technology need revision (SP)</td>
<td>Teaching practice period is too short; needs one year of internship (B) Student teachers are prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shortened TP Time</strong> to 3-5 weeks of 2-3 days per week. Standards for TP to be created by collaboration among: JBTE, cooperating teachers, college tutors and student teachers (BB)</td>
<td>Cooperating teacher responsible to ....observe and use reflective experience to assist, guide, advise and model repeatable skills and behaviors for student teachers. Three months are adequate for teaching practice. Standards important. They build expectations and benefit TP team. (CT)</td>
<td>There needs to be a change of name from teaching practice to “school practice” Student teachers need to be involved in every aspect of school life. (A)</td>
<td>Disruptions during TP reduces practice time by more than 50% Student teachers experience only 2 or 3 days per week for approximately 5 weeks. (A, B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Data collection Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Host Schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Government (public) schools, and non-public schools involved in the teaching practice programs for at least five years.</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Teachers’ College</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Institution/college of teacher education with a history of teaching practice involvement for 25 or more years. Located in rural, suburban and/urban areas of Jamaica. Responsible for diverse offerings and programs i.e. primary, secondary, special education and continuing education. Department of teacher training directly linked to the JBTE Focus on secondary program i.e. emphasis on content area e.g. Business studies Allows easy access to visit and observe Established laboratory school</td>
<td>Documents and Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Principals/Designate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chief administrators of the participating schools where student teachers are engaged in teaching practice</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Cooperating Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Classroom trained teacher responsible for mentoring the student teacher, currently employed to the host school</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Student Teacher</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Teacher-in-training, currently enrolled at a teachers’ college and engaged in teaching practice. In the final year of preparation</td>
<td>In-depth interview Focus Group/Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F College Supervisors/ or Teaching practice coordinators (Faculty)</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>College lecturer and/supervisor for student teachers Holds an undergraduate degree or above (emphasis in education) Has experience with student teachers and Teaching Practice for two or more years. Currently employed at a teachers’ college.</td>
<td>In-depth interview Focus Group and Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>How Selected</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Teachers' Colleges</td>
<td>Purposive sampling of two teacher training institutions based on specific criteria</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Host schools</td>
<td>Selected by default; from the schools where the sampled student teachers are placed. Schools were further &quot;purposively sampled&quot; based on proximity, &quot;safe zone&quot; location and accessibility.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Principals</td>
<td>Selected by default: Principals of schools where sampled student teachers are placed.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Cooperating Teacher</td>
<td>Teachers assigned by the principals to mentor or supervise the sampled student teachers in the host schools during the teaching practice period. (Default)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Teacher Educators Placement Officers/Teaching Practice Coordinators</td>
<td>Selected by purposive sample: Teacher educators of the sampled teacher training institutions.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Student Teachers</td>
<td>Selected by purposive sample: Obtain a list of the names of the enrolled student teachers from the two sampled teachers' colleges. Two student teachers were selected from the sampled list for observation.</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17

*Observation Report: Student Teacher Ruby*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observational Field-notes #1</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
<td>Our Cultural Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong></td>
<td>AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> Classroom (Traditional High School) Grade 7</td>
<td>The cooperating teacher was not present, but a subject teacher was there for the beginning of the class. Conditions of the room: spacious, adequate ventilation, relatively clean; students seemingly well-behaved—one or two speak out of turn; Few charts; students sit in groups; They show much enthusiasm and involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of Observer:</strong></td>
<td>Observer of Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Observation:</strong></td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Teacher:</strong></td>
<td>Ruby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Lesson:</strong></td>
<td>Presentation by student groups based on assigned topics: John Canoe, Cumina, etc. Using &quot;props&quot; students demonstrate and inform the rest of the class as they present. They incorporate parts of the textbook, referring students to pages for information. Student teacher allows students to ask questions of the presenters, and the responses are discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMENTS:</strong></td>
<td>Student teacher begins on time. Students in this class are readers. Report on use of JBTE Internal/External Year 3 Teacher Evaluation Instrument--2004 As outlined in the instrument student teacher showed: Good use of multiple instructional materials and methods. Student teacher exhibits good classroom management; Excellent interaction with students; good questioning techniques. Based on the JBTE benchmarks the ST has demonstrated in this lesson, the implementing of the benchmarks. However Items: M4, R2, R4, E1, E2 were not easily observed. The ST was very confident and showed promise for a good teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18

**Observation Report: Student Teacher Jim**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Field-notes #2</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>Integrated Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
<td>Grouping Things into Living &amp; Non-living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong></td>
<td>AM-PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> Classroom (Junior Secondary)</td>
<td>Conditions of the Classroom: lack of adequate space, overcrowded; noise from the adjoining classrooms create distractions. I can hardly hear the student teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade 7</strong></td>
<td>(35-40 students, mainly boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of Observer:</strong></td>
<td>Observer of Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Observation</strong></td>
<td>80 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Teacher</strong></td>
<td>Jim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Lesson:</strong></td>
<td>Lesson begins on time. Many students participate in the lesson—walking up to the chalkboard and identifying items on the diagram. (Students seem interested and show they understand the concepts taught). ST writes notes on the chalkboard and reads the notes to students. He reads the descriptors on the chart and asks students to go to the c/board and identify the labels. Students seem enthusiastic. When asked to write answers to 3 brief questions they spent the time writing down the words letter-by-letter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS:**

Report on use of JBTE Internal/External Year 3 Teacher Evaluation Instrument--2004
As outlined in the instrument student teacher showed relatively good use of the benchmarks.

Many of the students are non-readers or reading Below grade level, as the ST reported. Activities had to be verbal and hands-on most of the time. The content seemed too advanced for the students. Student teacher had to tabulate the information so the students could understand, and copy the material in a shorter time. Information had to be given in small amounts.

The ST had to simplify and repeat almost everything he said. Based on JBTE benchmarks the ST managed R4 excellently. It was difficult to observe M1, E1, and E2. A brief talk with the ST revealed he was frustrated, and his "creativity challenged."
Table 19

*Observation Report: Student Teacher Betty*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Field-notes #3</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic</strong></td>
<td>The Democratic Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting: Classroom</strong></td>
<td>Students borrowed chairs next door. Adequate seating, noisy when chairs are moved. Secondary School – Good ventilation Room – simulated Polling station and campaign platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of Session</strong></td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of Observer</strong></td>
<td>Observer of Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size</strong></td>
<td>35 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Lesson</strong></td>
<td>Lesson begins approximately 5 minutes late as students came from another classroom. Students were organized into groups, and sat with their representative/councilor of the electoral region where they have voting rights. The student teacher puts key words from the previous lesson on the chalkboard, at the right hand corner, and proceeds to review the previous day's lesson. Individual students were asked to respond to questions, and parts of the students' answers were written on the chalkboard. Students are encouraged to make their campaign speeches and use their slogans, including the words that were discussed. The students seemed somewhat shy, probably because 2 of us assessors were in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comments</strong></td>
<td>Students were energetic and participated in the activities. The Internal/External Assessment Year 3 Teaching Practice – 2004 document/Instrument was used to “check off” rather than to evaluate the JBTE benchmarks. Items used by the student teacher included all except – E1, E2 and E5 (Appendix B) Classroom conditions do not readily facilitate the use of these benchmarks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20

*Annual Calendar of Events for Teaching-practice: Mico*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/ Month</th>
<th>Teaching Practice Events for Year 3 Student Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Letter sent to Principals of host schools informing/reminding them of imminent TP exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June/July</td>
<td>Principals respond with list of possible needs based on Sick leave, maternity leave or other emergencies. N.B. Teaching practice creates a reciprocal exchange of service and expertise between the teachers’ colleges and the host schools. Placement officer creates Placement Lists for departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October/November</td>
<td>Student teachers are sent to the host schools to observe and collect syllabuses and other instructional guidelines as well as instructional materials for teaching practice. Placement of student teachers finalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Student teachers meet with college tutors/teacher educators for final briefing on performance, application of the benchmarks, deportment and assessment of teaching practice. Student teachers assume their position of placement in the host schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Pre-assessment grades are due at the JBTE College supervisors observe, assess, and grade their assigned student teachers at least 2 times, using the benchmarks outlined in the Assessment Instrument. College supervisors administer “second opinions” on grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Assessment by the external examiners/assessors Moderation exercises are convened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>End of Teaching Practice Exercise Post assessment is conducted to discuss student teachers’ performance of the benchmarks, and reflective practice. (Weak) candidates may be allowed to be seen a second time by external assessors. Unsuccessful candidates return next year. Teaching Practice Report to the colleges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/May</td>
<td>Teaching Practice Report to JBTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Institution “A” engaged a Placement Officer responsible solely for the placement of student teachers. Duration of the final year teaching practice is for 12 weeks, including observation and the practice of teaching. Principals and cooperating teachers receive the benchmarks in the form of the Assessment Instrument (Appendix B).*
Table 21

*Annual Calendar of Events for Teaching-practice: CTC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Month</th>
<th>Teaching Practice Events for Year 3 Student Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Teachers’ college requests schools for student teachers; Schools also identify areas for special subjects for which they need help in. A letter is sent to the schools to request placement for the student teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Student teachers go to the host school sites for syllabi, timetable and other instructional materials. Year 3 student teachers observe host schools for one day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Student teachers meet with college tutors/supervisory faculty for final briefing on performance, application of the benchmarks, deportment and assessment of teaching practice. Student teachers assume their position of placement in the host schools. Cooperating teachers and principals receive Assessment Instrument with benchmarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Pre-assessment grades are due at the JBTE Feedback sessions held with student teachers and supervisory faculty. Supervisory faculty members observe, assess, and grade their assigned student teachers at least 3 times, using the Assessment Instrument with benchmarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Feedback sessions held with external examiners, supervisory faculty and student teachers Assessment by the external examiners/assessors Moderation exercises are convened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>End of teaching practice: Additional moderation exercises are convened Post-assessment is conducted in the college to discuss the performance and reflective practice. Weak candidates may be allowed to be seen a second time by external assessors. Unsuccessful candidates return next year. Report to colleges on teaching practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/May</td>
<td>Report to JBTE on teaching practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Institution “B” engaged a coordinator responsible for the placement and supervision of student teachers during the 12 weeks of the teaching practice exercise. The Assessment Instrument containing the benchmarks are given to principals and cooperating teachers when the student teachers are placed.*

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### Table 22

**Triangulation Matrix: Questions and Data Collection Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data Source #1</th>
<th>Data Source #2</th>
<th>Data Source #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In what ways are the benchmarks of the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) implemented in the teaching practice programs of two institutions studied?</td>
<td>Publications and research on teaching practice: Brown, 1999; Brown &amp; Bailey, 1997; Evans, 1998, in press; Haughton, 1997; <em>JBTE Year 3 Teacher Evaluation Instrument</em></td>
<td>In-depth Focus group Interviews with two purposively sampled supervisory faculty from two purposively sampled teacher training institutions in Jamaica</td>
<td>Field notes from Focus Group Interviews with two purposively sampled groups of student teachers from the 2 institutions studied;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Which JBTE benchmarks are currently implemented in these two teaching practice programs?</td>
<td>Documents describing current JBTE requirements; <em>The Teaching Practice Manual</em> <em>JBTE Regulations, 2003</em></td>
<td>Field notes from Interviews of SFA &amp; SFB</td>
<td>Journal, feedback reports, other relevant sources used by Student Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How is the research-based teacher preparation standards used in the United States aligned with the JBTE benchmarks?</td>
<td>Focus group Interviews with supervisory faculty, and student teachers; Conversations with principals and cooperating teachers</td>
<td>Journals/ or field notes from student teachers organized in Data File volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, &amp; 5</td>
<td>Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) reports from external examiners on teaching practice; Conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Which USA benchmarks are currently used in these 2 teacher preparation programs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes from interview protocols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Which of the USA benchmarks do stakeholders perceive need to be included in the JBTE benchmarks to formulate the ideal program for Jamaica?</td>
<td></td>
<td>INTASC &amp; NCATE Documents (Document analysis)</td>
<td>Feedback sessions with student teachers and supervisory faculty groups; Field notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23

**Triangulation of Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #</th>
<th>Themes and Sub-Themes</th>
<th>R1 SFA</th>
<th>R2 SFB</th>
<th>R3 STA</th>
<th>R4 STB</th>
<th>R5 F</th>
<th>R6 R</th>
<th>R7 A</th>
<th>R8 S</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1</td>
<td>Communicating the Benchmarks</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knowledge of Benchmarks</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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<td>@ @</td>
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<td>@ @</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Implementing benchmarks</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Challenges with Benchmarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Systems’ issues and Benchmarks</td>
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<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Renaming Teaching Practice “school practice”</td>
<td>@</td>
<td>@</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Curriculum issues and benchmarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Curriculum—new course Oral Communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Curriculum—no courses during TP</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Socio-environmental issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Importance and use of benchmarks</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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<td>@ @</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Evaluation of benchmarks</td>
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<td>Sub-Total</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ 2</td>
<td>Stakeholders’ Perception...</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Use of USA benchmarks</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Inclusion of USA benchmarks</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Improvement of benchmarks</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
<td>@ @</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Total</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The symbol "@" is used to represent the responses of each participant. A blank space means there is no response. The asterisk * identifies the 3 unique items.
Table 24

*Theme Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Themes</th>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>R4</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>R5</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>R6</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>R7</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique Themes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Common Themes</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Table 26

*Comparison Matrix of The Mico and Church Teachers Colleges*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Similarities and Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 Curriculum          | Similarities: Instrument for evaluating student teachers; Established over 25 years of conducting teaching-practice; Established practicing schools. Three years of Intra-mural studies and three months of teaching practice  
Differences: Mico— Multiple programs: Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary and tertiary; multiple offerings.  
CTC—Secondary programs, with multiple offerings |
| 2 Practicum Structure | Similarities: Twelve weeks (12) teaching practice  
Engagement of Teaching practice teams—external assessors, coordinators, Ministry of Education personnel, and supervisory faculty  
Differences: Pre-Practicum activities for Mico begin in November. Student teachers may submit schools of preference.  
CTC begins in December; Student teachers |
| 3 Supervisory Faculty | Similarities: Trained teachers with 2-9 years experience in TP. Most faculty exposed to rural and urban schools  
Differences: Mico—All faculty with BA/BSc or above  
CTC—All except one faculty with BA/BSc or above |
| 4 Host Schools Placement | Similarities: Distances of schools from institutions  
Public and non-public schools engaged  
Differences: Mico—Assignment mostly in urban schools  
Pre-primary, primary and secondary  
CTC—Assignment mostly in rural schools  
Secondary schools only |
| 5 Checks and Balances | Similarities: Student teachers exposed to “Feedback” sessions; External assessors during teaching practice; A minimum of three visits to each student teacher  
Differences: Mico—Supervisory faculty installed a “second opinion” check for each student teacher assigned  
CTC—Student teachers were observed by 2 supervisory faculty members, not necessarily for second opinion. |
### Comparative Benchmarks for Student Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Focus of Field</th>
<th>JBTE Benchmarks for Student Teachers</th>
<th>INTASC Standards for Student Teachers</th>
<th>NCATE Standards for Student Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Candidate Performance</strong></td>
<td>Has the ability to plan and competently perform expected classroom duties; Systematic lesson presentation consistent with defined objectives</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Trained to assume full responsibility for a classroom on the first day on the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Subject Matter</strong></td>
<td>Has knowledge of subject matter</td>
<td>Content pedagogy</td>
<td>Knows the subject matter and a variety of ways to teach it to ensure student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Classroom Management</strong></td>
<td>Illustrates effective use of learning time; monitors group and individual activities</td>
<td>Motivation and management</td>
<td>Has the ability to manage classrooms with students from widely divergent background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Exposure to Depth and Breadth in Education</strong></td>
<td>Has knowledge and use of resources; Communication skills</td>
<td>School and Community involvement</td>
<td>Has a broad liberal arts education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Best Practice</strong></td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
<td>Multiple Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>Has the ability to explain why he/she uses a particular strategy based on research and best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Improved Clinical Practice</strong></td>
<td>Fosters the enhancement of students’ self concepts; Uses meaningful learning activities; Awareness of classroom practices</td>
<td>Reflective Practice: Professional</td>
<td>Reflects on practice and changes what does not work Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7 Dealing with Diversity</strong></td>
<td>Shows sensitivity and adaptation to individual differences</td>
<td>Diverse Learners</td>
<td>Has the ability to apply effective methods of teaching to students of different backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8 Exposure to Research Base</strong></td>
<td>Unobserved</td>
<td>Communication and Technology</td>
<td>Has multiple diverse clinical experiences in P-12 schools and studied under a variety of master teachers during a coherent program of clinical education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9 Students’ Growth and Development</strong></td>
<td>Psychologically supportive emotional climate in the classroom</td>
<td>Student Development</td>
<td>Nurtures the growth and development of each student in his or her classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The JBTE benchmarks in this table were compiled from the Year 3 Evaluation document and the *Teaching Practice Handbook for Teacher Education Institutions and External Examiners* (Brown, 1999; Year 3 Teacher Evaluation Instrument, 2005).*
REFERENCE LIST


Joint Board of Teacher Education. (2003). *Regulations for teacher certification.* Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies.


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Luddy, E. F. (2002). *A case analysis of three middle-school boys who have Down syndrome and have been in regular education classes since preschool.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.


VITA
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Teacher Educator & Clinical Faculty Member

1984-1986 Benton Harbour School System K-12
Kalamazoo Junior Academy, Kalamazoo, MI
Substitute Teacher

1978-1982 Edmer Academy, Cayman Islands
Primary School Teacher, Grades 5-6 and Grades 7-9

1972-1974 Pierson High School, Turks and Caicos Islands B.W.I.
Secondary School Teacher, Grades 7-12

1970-1972 Edmer Academy, Cayman Islands
Primary School Teacher, Grades 5-6 and Grades 7-9

Education

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Lansing

Andrews University MA Curriculum and Instruction, 1983
West Indies College BA English, 1977
West Indies College Diploma Primary Education, 1970
University of the West Indies Teacher Certification, 1970

Presentations


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Awards & Professional Associations
Sabbatical Leave for completion of doctorate, 2004-present
Fellowship of $60,000 (US$1,000)
Phi Lambda Theta (April, 2006)
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
Education Week
Jamaica Reading Association
Jamaica Association of Teacher Educators (JATE)
Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE), Curriculum Board of Studies

Publications