“The Teaching of Pupils Who Experience Difficulties in Learning in a Spanish Classroom in Two Government Secondary Schools in Trinidad, West Indies.”

Submitted by Danielle McDougall to the University of Exeter
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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ……..

ABSTRACT

Title: The Teaching Of Pupils Who Experience Difficulties In Learning in a Spanish Classroom in Two Government Secondary Schools In Trinidad, West Indies.

This study investigates the teaching approaches used with pupils who experience difficulties in learning in a Spanish classroom in two secondary schools in Trinidad, West Indies. Much literature focuses on teaching approaches for pupils with clearly defined special educational needs or on teaching approaches in general. Pupils who experience difficulties in learning, however, represent an amorphous category and research regarding teaching approaches for this less defined group of pupils is scarcer.

Spanish is a core subject in most secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. As a foreign language, however, Spanish is different to other subjects as it represents the acquisition of another linguistic system. The acquisition of grammatical and communicative competencies may therefore be the goal of teaching approaches but these may be problematic areas for pupils who experience difficulties in learning. The teaching approaches used with these pupils were under investigation in this study.

This study adopts a qualitative approach which incorporates a dual case study design. The cases are represented by one urban and one rural secondary school. The participants are the pupils and Spanish teachers of a selected form two class within each school. Non-participant classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and pupils, task-based interviews with pupils were used to collect data. The study spanned 12 weeks in the first term of the 2017-2018 academic year. The time in the field was divided into three phases. Phase one represented a Reconnaissance Phase which facilitated acquaintance with the context of each case. During this phase, the practices of each school were observed. Phase two represented a formal data collection phase. At the end of Phase two, the data was preliminarily analysed and data collection methods were adapted for Phase three.

The findings of this study suggest that teaching approaches with pupils who experience difficulties in learning vary according to a number of factors: composition of the class; teacher perceptions of pupil ability and the degree of difficulties pupils

face; and teacher perceptions of the most effective methods to acquire competency in a foreign language. Key issues arose from this study: the role of English and vocabulary; learner issues such as interest, engagement and pupil learning responsibility; and impact of lack of school resources on teaching approaches and preparation for national standardized tests. The findings suggest that teaching approaches with pupils who experience difficulties in learning are hinged on teacher perceptions, learner behaviour and school and Ministry of Education constraints.

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To the children of Trinidad and Tobago, this research project was for you. I have long been concerned about the quality of education you receive and it was my utmost duty and privilege to dedicate my doctoral research to investigating some of the conditions, constraints and issues surrounding your learning. While I acknowledge that the issues involved are complex, I believe firmly that you deserve the best quality education possible and will continue to work tirelessly to research the state of your educational provision.

To the participants of my two research schools, many thanks for accommodating me at your school for the duration of data collection. A special thanks to the two teachers who took part in this study as it was your willingness to accommodate me (a complete stranger) in your classroom that made the study possible.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Study

This thesis presents a research study which investigated the teaching of pupils who experienced difficulties in learning within a Spanish classroom in two government schools in Trinidad, West Indies. The teaching approaches used as well as the perspectives of the teachers and pupils regarding this teaching were examined alongside a consideration of wider influences emanating from the school and national context.

The chapter continues by outlining the context for the study which includes a brief synopsis of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago including the sociocultural and political factors that frame education in Trinidad and Tobago. I then present my personal and academic rationale for embarking on this study.

1.2 Context for the Study

Trinidad and Tobago are the most southern islands in the Caribbean with Trinidad's location a mere seven miles from Venezuela (Khan & Khan, 2017). The importance of Trinidad's proximity to Latin America, a mainly Spanish speaking continent will be addressed later in this chapter. English is the official language of Trinidad and Tobago but exists alongside Trinidadian English Creole in Trinidad (Siegel, 2010). Trinidadian English Creole exists on a continuum ranging from a basolectal to an acrolectal form with the acrolectal form closely resembling Standard English to the extent that it is considered a 'badly spoken form of English' (Siegel, 2005, p.144).

With a population of 1.36 million, Trinidad represents the commercial, political and administrative capital for the two islands. There is a high literacy rate of 97.7% (UNESCO, 2013) and free compulsory education for all citizens up to the age of 16. Universal secondary education was only achieved in 2000 although universal primary education was achieved in the 1950s (James, 2013). Although primary and secondary education is free, it is arguably not equitable. Vast differences exist within the system (Superville, 2017) that may impact upon the educational experiences of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. Before considering elements that contribute to this

educational inequity, I will first present a brief synopsis of the historical development of the education system focusing on secondary schools followed by an exposition of its current structure. This synopsis is necessary to provide a context for the development of the government school system in Trinidad and Tobago.

1.2.1 Brief Synopsis of History of Education Structure in Trinidad and Tobago

The education system in Trinidad and Tobago emerged out of the British colonial era (Blair, 2013). Following the abolishment of slavery in 1834, increasing educational access amongst the former slaves became a consideration for the British government and local governors (Blair, 2014). Post-abolishment schools were mainly established and run by denominational (Catholic, Anglican and Protestant) bodies who endeavoured to promote and preserve religious beliefs and practices amongst the newly freed African population (Newton & Braithwaite, 1975). As spaces in these schools were limited, only a small sector of society received an education and these schools therefore became known as institutions for the privileged few. In 1845, indentured labourers from India were brought into Trinidad and Tobago and their presence created a layer of complexity to the religious and cultural fabric of Trinidadian society as they had no competency in English and introduced non-Christian religions (Campbell, 1997).

The burgeoning society resulted in the need to increase educational provision for the masses and state involvement in the education system became more pronounced (Newton & Braithwaite, 1975). Government schools (modern secondary schools) were built to increase educational access to the masses in addition to the establishment of more denominational schools which were managed by religious boards. The Ordinance of 1870 outlined the conditions by which denominational schools were to exist alongside government schools. Denominational schools were allowed to maintain their religious order but were mandated to follow the same national curriculum as government schools (Feheney, 2011). Under the terms of the Concordat of 1960, the state reserved the right to assign pupils to 80% of the places in denominational secondary schools (based on academic performance at the primary school leaving examination and parental choice) (Feheney, 2011). The remaining 20%

was designated at the discretion of the school board. The dual system of education in Trinidad and Tobago became established.

Increase in population placed greater demands on the government of Trinidad and Tobago to make educational provision more widespread (Campbell, 1997). In addition to modern secondary schools, the two-cycle secondary school system was introduced (Campbell, 1997). The two-cycle system involved a shift system whereby pupils were assigned to either the morning or afternoon shift (Newton and Braithwaite, 1975) which was intended to cater for more pupils and a range of abilities and interests (Gurr, 1965). The principles for the establishment of this two-cycle system – junior and senior secondary schools – was outlined by the UNESCO Mission of 1965 (Campbell, 1997). Pupils entered the junior secondary system at 11 years old until 14 years after which they either entered into full time employment or progressed onto senior secondary where they were introduced to 'agricultural, practical and vocational subjects' (Campbell, 1997, p.110) - a range of subjects which contrasted with that of denominational schools. This two-cycle system was abolished in 2004 and all shift schools were converted to five year (ages 11-16 years) secondary full day schools (Superville, 2017).

1.2.2 Current Education Structure in Trinidad and Tobago

The current education structure in Trinidad and Tobago reflects the two streams of educational provision provided by denominational and government schools although private schools also form part of the fabric of the education structure (UNESCO, 2006). All schools operate within a tiered system of management and funding from the Ministry of Education (MOE). Private schools are managed and funded entirely by private entities (UNESCO, 2006). Denominational schools are partly managed and funded by the Ministry of Education and government schools are fully managed and funded by the government (UNESCO, 2006). According to MOE (2017a), there are 444 primary schools and 182 secondary schools across eight educational districts (as shown in Table 1.1).

Type of School	Primary	Secondary
Private	0	48
Denominational	307	43
Government	137	91

Table 1. 1 – Number of schools in Trinidad and Tobago according to level and type (courtesy MOE (2012)).

Children typically enter primary school at the age of five until 11 years (George & Quamina-Aiyejena, 2003). Their primary education culminates in a sitting of the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) examination which consists of three papers – Creative Writing, Language Arts and Mathematics (MOE, 2017b). Children typically enter secondary school at age 11 (UNESCO, 2006), although exceptions exist where a child's literacy or numeracy level is not deemed suitable for the secondary stage and therefore repeats the final year of primary school (MOE, 2017b). This scenario represents the most extreme of cases and most children progress onto secondary school after sitting the SEA examination (De Lisle, Smith, Keller and Jules, 2012). As places at denominational schools are limited, they are reserved for higher performing pupils (Feheney, 2011). Pupils begin secondary school at Form one and continue at least to Form five. At Form three, they sit the National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) examination and at Form five, the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination which marks the end of their compulsory education. They, however, have the option to pursue further studies at the Form six level where they sit the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE). The Ministry of Education oversees all schools and examination processes in Trinidad and Tobago (James, 2014).

The current education system has as its foundation the aim set out by the government of Trinidad and Tobago to make educational access a lived reality for all (James, 2014). James (2014) stated that accessing an education was one matter, the quality of education once accessed was another and he proposed that all educational provision was not equal. According to James (2014), educational disparities amongst denominational and government schools deepened with time with the denominational schools rising as beacons of academic success. Government schools therefore emerged as the antithesis of denominational schools, the latter harnessing a

reputation of high academic performance, discipline and sound moral values (James, 2014). This reputation of denominational schools coupled with oversubscription for their limited spaces translated into an apparently meritocratic process that selected pupils with high academic capacities, inadvertently contributing to the perpetuation of academic success within these schools (Feheney, 2011).

Although denominational schools tend to surpass government schools in terms of academic performance, twenty-nine years ago, Jules and Kutnick (1990) warned against blanket applications of failure against government schools. Furthermore, James (2014) noted that, historically, schools were judged by academic performance which represented a narrow measure for assessing school success. The Education Policy Paper 1993-2003 acknowledged this limitation in assessing school quality and widened measures to include the way schools cater for those who are 'educationally at risk' (MOE, 1993). Although raising academic performance remained on the agenda, increased participation of *all* pupils in learning grew as an important educational aim.

This shift in focus from access to participation is noted in the *Education for All* (EFA) mandate outlined by UNESCO (2000), of which Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory (MOE, 2012). EFA sought to increase educational opportunities for all school aged pupils and acknowledged that increasing the quality of education to ensure the participation in learning of all pupils, especially those from marginalised groups, was also necessary. These marginalised groups included 'dropouts, underachievers, pupils with learning or other disabilities, pupils who are gifted and talented, pupils affected or infected with HIV and pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties' (UNESCO, 2007, p.7). Within Trinidad and Tobago educational policy (MOE, 2017a), quality teaching is placed as one of the core aspects of achieving this quality education (MOE, 2012).

1.3 Quality Teaching

According to the Strategic Plan for the Education Sector 2011-2015 (MOE, 2012), quality teaching entails the ability to address the learning needs of pupils. Knowledge of pupils and learning in general are therefore regarded as foundational elements to teaching and the policy outlined basic tenets regarding these two elements which are

expected to be interwoven into teaching philosophy and practice. A key principle within the policy – every child can learn but children vary in their abilities, interests and capacities – encourages teachers to develop an inclusive orientation to teaching which entails the adoption of diverse and interesting approaches to cater to all pupils. According to the policy, the aim is to create 'a learning system that accommodates all types of learners, not limited to the academically gifted' (MOE, 2012, p.2). The policy further outlines principles for teaching approaches – a) the understanding that learning is cumulative and approaches need to assess and build on pupil prior knowledge (MOE, 2012), b) teacher knowledge of content and the curriculum act as grounds for differentiated programmes and c) 'relevant instructional material' is key to creating an interesting and inclusive classroom (MOE, 2012, appendix 1).

Quality teaching does not ignore the educational issues in Trinidad and Tobago that pose challenges for teachers. According to the Strategic Plan, 'poor attainment and literacy levels, pupil demotivation, low academic achievement of boys, drug use and other anti-social behaviour' (MOE, 2012, p.11-12) are issues that need to be addressed within the education system. A holistic pupil centred approach which involves all stakeholders, from the school level to the Ministry of Education, is regarded as the means to combat these issues. Therefore, the Ministry of Education acknowledges that quality teaching does not exist in isolation but lies within a framework of wider educational policy and practice.

1.4 Difficulties in Learning

Central to this thesis is the term *difficulties in learning*; therefore a clear definition is necessary, although such a term can incorporate a range of definitions and interpretations thus rendering a precise definition elusive. Furthermore, the term does not appear verbatim in Trinidad and Tobago education policy although the term *learning difficulties* does (MOE, 2012; MOE, 2017a). While *difficulties in learning* and *learning difficulties* are not distant concepts, the nomenclature *difficulties in learning* is distinct.

Before addressing *difficulties in learning,* the term learning difficulties will be discussed to show the distinctions between the two terms. According to the Dyslexia Association of Trinidad and Tobago (DATT, 2019), a learning difficulty (referred to as specific

learning difficulty in the United Kingdom (Gallardo, Heiser and McLaughlin, 2015) is a 'congenital organizing disability which impairs hand skills, short term memory, and perception so inhibiting the development of a child's literary skills – particularly reading, writing and spelling, and sometimes numeracy' (DATT, 2019). Using this definition, learning difficulties would include dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia which incorporate diagnosable traits. The term *learning disability* is also used in Trinidad and Tobago and according to Peters et al. (2008) is used interchangeably with *learning difficulty.*

On the other hand, the term *difficulties in learning* carries a much broader connotation than specific diagnosable special needs categories and for this thesis, they are represented by pupils who have not been formally assessed for specific special needs categories but who, nevertheless, are at risk of educational failure. The term 'at risk' is found in Trinidad and Tobago educational policy (MOE, 2007, MOE, 2012) and represents the effects of *difficulties in learning.*

Learning disabilities/learning difficulties is therefore distinguished from, although related to, difficulties in learning. Whereas the former is hinged on a formal diagnosis or 'checklist' of traits, the latter can be conceptualised independent of a diagnostic label. The two terms are related in the sense that there may be pupils who experience difficulties in learning as a result of having a learning difficulty, dyslexia, for example. Teachers can recognise when pupils experience difficulties in learning when these pupils do not progress educationally. Even though the presence of a learning difficulty may never be formally known, the presence of difficulties in learning may be undeniable for some teachers. This point is important to note, given the educational context in Trinidad and Tobago.

Assessment for special needs is not a prolific practice in Trinidad and Tobago and as such many children enter the secondary school system with learning difficulties that have not yet been diagnosed (Peters et al., 2008). Many teachers within the secondary school system suspect some of their pupils for having a learning difficulty of some kind (Peters et al., 2008). Due to the number of suspected cases, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of children with a learning difficulty, especially as these difficulties exist on a continuum making an exact number even more tenuous (Peters et al., 2008).

Peters et al. (2008) attributed children being at risk of failure in the system to the lack of formal diagnoses, supporting the assumption that redress to learning needs must be preceded by a formal diagnosis. However, this premise is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, many children will spend their entire secondary school career without being formally diagnosed, yet they are expected to have their learning needs addressed according to educational policy (MOE, 2012). Secondly, diagnosing the difficulty will not take away the risk factor of educational failure if teaching approaches are not modified to ensure the child participates in learning (Norwich, 1999). In other words, diagnosis simply provides a category to place the child but is worthless if teaching approaches that meet their learning needs do not follow this diagnosis.

Not disbarring the importance of formal diagnoses, a focus on formal diagnoses tends to assume that all difficulties in learning emanate from biological or cognitive differences within the child and therefore denies the role that teaching approaches, the school and wider educational system play in the construction of difficulties in learning (Ainscow, 2000). For example, the quality of literacy and numeracy instruction at the primary stage can translate into varied levels of pupil preparation for the high stakes SEA examination (Superville, 2017) used to designate pupils to secondary schools (MOE, 2017). Once in secondary school, difficulties in learning may be exacerbated through teaching approaches that are irrelevant to pupils' learning needs.

The discussion above demonstrates the complex situation regarding the relationship between learning difficulties (diagnosed or not) and difficulties in learning in mainstream schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Figure 1.1 illustrates this with regard to learning in the Spanish classroom and to this study in particular.

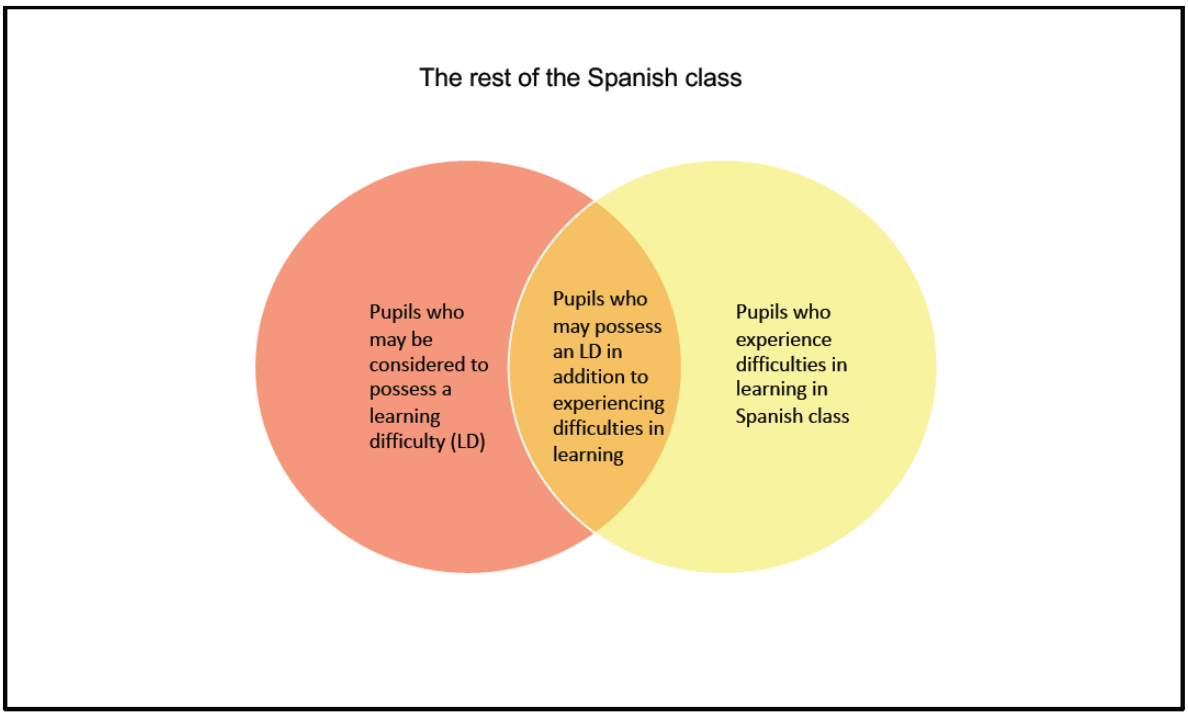


Figure 1.1 Groupings for difficulties in learning in relation to learning difficulties in the Spanish classroom

In the research classrooms, there may have been some pupils who may be considered to possess a learning difficulty (red zone). This learning difficulty may have been diagnosed or not; if diagnosed, this information was not available to me, the researcher, nor necessarily to the teachers, at the time of the study. Therefore, it was not certain if there were any pupils represented by the red zone in Figure 1.1. There were some pupils who were considered to experience difficulties in learning in the Spanish classroom, and this may have been independent of a learning difficulties label (yellow zone). These pupils may be considered to be 'at risk' in terms of their learning in the Spanish classroom.

As shown in Figure 1.1, pupils may have been considered to possess a diagnosable learning difficulty, yet not experience difficulties in learning (red) as the 'presence' of a learning difficulty does not automatically represent difficulties in learning. The orange zone, however, indicates that some pupils may be considered to possess learning difficulties as well as experience difficulties in learning in a Spanish classroom, implying perhaps (at least for some cases) that the difficulties in learning may be experienced as a result of the learning difficulties. Pupils who were not considered to

have learning difficulties nor to experience difficulties in learning are represented by 'the rest of the class' grouping.

These groupings were relevant to the definition and operationalisation of difficulties in learning in this study. Based on this description of Figure 1.1, it is evident that subjectivities surround the definition of difficulties in learning. For this study, the term 'difficulties in learning' was used to apply to pupils who were considered to experience learning challenges (in Spanish class) to the extent that they may be considered by teachers to be educationally 'at risk'. In other words, due to issues connected to their learning, their educational progress was considered to be problematic. Their difficulties in learning may be characterised by poor academic performance (Razer, Victor and Warshofsky, 2013), low motivation, low educational achievement (Hofman and Steenbergen, 2004), behavioural issues (Irving, 1993) and gaps in learning that are noticeable to teachers. Unlike learning difficulties, the 'identification' of difficulties in learning does not depend on an externally agreed upon set of traits or criteria. As shown in Figure 1.1, pupils may experience difficulties in learning alongside learning difficulties or independent of learning difficulties. Therefore, contextual and environmental factors, which may differ from classroom to classroom, may contribute to how difficulties in learning are defined and applied.

In using the term 'difficulties in learning', it is thus considered that both pupil-related and contextual and environmental factors may contribute to pupils experiencing difficulties; teaching approaches may be one of the latter factors and are the focus of this research. Difficulties in learning may be considered to emanate from the pupils and/or may also be connected to teaching approaches and other environmental factors. Tensions therefore arise as to the source of these difficulties in learning. Can difficulties in learning be considered a pupil issue, an issue for teaching approaches or both? This tension is covered within the literature and will be explored throughout this thesis. This research is unlikely to resolve this tension and, therefore, this was not the aim of this thesis. Rather, this thesis investigates the issues and challenges surrounding this tension with a view to increase understanding of teaching and learning in relation to pupils who experience difficulties in learning. The conceptualisation and operationalisation of difficulties in learning by the teachers and

pupils within this research gives insight into how this tension manifested in this study. The operationalisation of the term 'difficulties in learning' is addressed in Chapter four.

1.5 Spanish in Trinidad and Tobago

In this section, I outline briefly the importance of Spanish to Trinidad and Tobago delineating the educational implications for pupils.

Trinidad and Tobago is considered one of the most developed nations in the Caribbean with 'the second highest gross domestic per capita in the region' (Khan and Khan, 2017, p.8). Traditionally, the economy of Trinidad and Tobago has depended on oil and gas exports (Khan and Khan, 2017) but efforts to diversify the economy is high on the government's agenda (MTII, 2013). Trinidad and Tobago is also a regional leader in intra industry trade with an index comparable to global standards (Fullerton, Sawyer and Sprinkler, 2010). According to the Trade Policy and Strategy Report 2013 -2017 put forward by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment (2013), Trinidad's location and economic standing makes the nation a prime trade partner to Latin American countries.

In addition to trade links, Trinidad and Tobago has also forged strong educational and cultural links with Spanish speaking territories. Scholarships are available for nationals to study in Cuba and Chile (SATD, 2017) and cultural exchange programmes are offered by the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad. Furthermore, Latin American countries are popular travel destinations for Trinidad and Tobago nationals.

Considering the above, the government of Trinidad and Tobago has recognised the importance of Spanish to the citizenry. The Secretariat for Implementation of Spanish (SIS) was established by the Ministry of Education with the goal to develop Spanish speaking competencies amongst the population (MOE, 2017c) through online courses and workshops. An emphasis is also placed on learning Spanish at the secondary level and Spanish is a core subject up to NSCE level at most schools with the option of continuing at the CSEC level (MOE, 2017a). The learning of Spanish is therefore an important part of the secondary school career of most pupils in Trinidad and Tobago making the teaching of Spanish equally important. Given the importance of teaching

and learning of Spanish at the secondary level, this study investigates the Spanish teaching approaches used with pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

1.6 Personal Rationale

My interest in teaching approaches with pupils who experience difficulties in learning emanated from my experience as a Spanish teacher in both Trinidad and Tobago. I worked at two government schools in Tobago for a year and a half before migrating to the United Kingdom for two years where I worked in several primary schools across London as a Teaching Assistant to pupils with special needs. Upon return to Trinidad, I procured a teaching post at an all boy denominational school where I worked for seven years before returning to the United Kingdom to pursue the Doctorate in Education.

The experiences at the two types of schools in Trinidad and Tobago gave me some level of insight into the educational experiences of pupils at both government and denominational schools. I acknowledge that the specific context of each school may not be characteristic of every school of that type in the nation. Nevertheless, I believe that I was afforded a holistic insight into the two types of schooling.

At the government schools, it was evident to me that many of the pupils experienced difficulties in learning. Some pupils scored thirty percent or less in their SEA examination and some exhibited socioemotional and behavioural challenges that impacted the flow of classes. Although they were not violent, their attitudinal posture within the classroom made using passive teaching methods difficult – but that was all I knew. Outside the classroom, I tried to engage the pupils through activities that might increase their interest. For example, I collaborated with the pupils to plan and execute a Spanish concert. Inside the classroom, I tried to forge relationships with the pupils to make the classroom more comfortable for their learning. Addressing the relational gap was important but my teaching methods remained virtually untouched. To some extent, I felt that the pupils' difficulties were 'inherent' to them and therefore outside the scope of my teaching.

This experience opened my eyes to pupils experiencing difficulties in learning but it was only when I worked as a Teaching Assistant in London schools that I began to

see that teaching approaches made a difference to pupils' learning. In one school, I worked with a boy, Timothy, who had mild autism and moderate dyslexia. With a strong desire to help this child, I employed strategies that seemed to allow his talents to emerge. For example, I praised him a lot and assisted him in writing down his ideas for poems whilst letting him know that his ideas were innovative and creative. During my tenure as his teaching assistant, I saw him progress from being completely demotivated in class and completing no school work to working on his own without the aid of a teaching assistant.

This case highlighted to me that every child, despite experiencing difficulties, can learn and participate in a classroom. It also highlighted that it was up to the teacher to not just recognise that pupils experience difficulties but to devise strategies to assist pupils to overcome their difficulties. Timothy's progress occurred despite my lack of training in autism or dyslexia but within a context of my desire to meet him at his point of need. Beyond specific intervention strategies for his special needs, it seemed that what was more important to Timothy to progress educationally was a suitable learning pace, a space for expression of his ideas and support in building his confidence. It was at this point that I began to consider the important role that teachers, even if untrained, play in helping children who experience difficulties in learning to make educational progress. The way teaching approaches shape the learning environment for pupils who experience difficulties in learning became a point of interest.

Following this experience with Timothy, I returned to Trinidad and Tobago and started work as a Spanish teacher in an all-boys Catholic school. This school was one of the top performing schools in the country and was oversubscribed. The pupils in this school performed well on their SEA exam averaging ninety seven percent and above. Their capacity for academic work was significant and most pupils obtained a full CSEC certificate. Despite being a top performing school, however, I became very concerned about the intense focus on academic success that seemed to surpass an emphasis on the holistic development of the pupils. The teaching for the most part was content focused and driven by mid-term and end of term tests. In many respects, I felt the school exploited the academic capacities of the children to produce academic results that harnessed the school's international and national reputations whilst neglecting their individual learning needs. Additionally, I recognised that not all pupils coped with

the rigour of the work at secondary school and some pupils experienced difficulties in their learning despite performing so well on the SEA examination. From this experience, I saw first-hand the impact that school culture can have on teaching approaches which in turn affect learning. It was apparent to me that teachers at the school, at least those in my department, felt the demands placed upon them to ensure pupils are prepared for and successful in examinations. Despite this culture, it also became apparent that there were a few pupils whose learning did not match an examination mode of learning and who were at danger of 'slipping through the educational cracks'. I learnt that even pupils who are considered highly academically capable can experience difficulties in learning if teaching approaches do not address their learning needs.

During my tenure at this school, I left to pursue a Masters in Special Needs and Inclusive Education at the University of Roehampton in London. For my dissertation, I researched the learning of African Caribbean boys who were working above the expected level. At the time of this study, African Caribbean boys represented a group that were failing academically within the British education system (Christian, 2005). It was through this experience that my thinking shifted somewhat towards pupils who were not considered to possess a special need but who were experiencing academic failure and who experienced difficulties in learning. I considered the impact of teaching approaches in the construction of difficulties in learning as my experience taught me that African Caribbean boys, albeit those being educated in the Caribbean, were highly capable of excelling academically. I considered that it was certainly not the case that all African Caribbean boys were failing in the United Kingdom. My research investigated the contributions to learning of three boys who were succeeding academically. The findings revealed the range of strategies teachers used to enhance the participation of the boys, for example, explicit conversations about confidence building, using reading books that interested the pupils and relating the curriculum to the pupils' real-world context.

I returned to the boys' school in Trinidad after my studies in the United Kingdom and endeavoured to do more to ensure all my pupils were enabled to participate in learning and not just train them to pass examinations. While I always believed in investing the moral and emotional development of my pupils, I became painfully aware that my

teaching methods needed to be upgraded to ensure I engendered a learning environment where the learning needs of my pupils were being met. The following academic year, I pursued the teacher training course, Postgraduate Diploma in Education (DipEd), which emphasised pupil centred learning. This course enhanced my ability to use teaching approaches to increase the pupils' participation.

An upgrade in teaching approaches was particularly important for me for another reason. Whilst the boys seemed engaged and willing to learn other subjects, their willingness to learn Spanish seemed diminished which was reflected in their class attitudes and overall performance. As a Spanish teacher in that context, I endeavoured to discover teaching methods that catered to my pupils' learning needs with the hope that they might become more interested in learning Spanish. With the influence of the DipEd programme, I incorporated more pupil centred approaches that included their sporting interests, their need to be more tactile, group and pair work and whole class discussion to allow the expression of every pupil in the class. To me, it seems that the engagement of the pupils improved as well as performance at standardized examinations although a direct link between my approaches and their success is not known.

My teaching career has been impacted by the myriad of experiences in different schools interacting with pupils who were considered to have special needs, pupils who experienced difficulties in learning and pupils who were academically capable but considered by myself to experience difficulties in learning nonetheless. Through my experiences, I examined teaching approaches from various angles – as an untrained teacher, as a teacher in a government school, as a teacher in a denominational school, as an educational researcher and as a teaching assistant. A common point amongst the experiences was that teaching approaches appeared to be crucial in improving the educational experiences of pupils and thus this emerged as my main area of interest for this doctoral research.

1.7 Academic Rationale

Research regarding pupils who experience difficulties in learning is not as ubiquitous as research regarding specific special needs categories. This research is therefore expected to contribute to understanding issues surrounding the identification, teaching

and learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. This thesis provides clarity concerning the term 'pupils who experience difficulties in learning' and the criteria used to 'identify' these pupils by their teachers. How these pupils are identified by teachers will give insight into the perceived source of difficulties in learning; that is whether the difficulties are considered to be inherent to the child or systemic. The positioning of teaching approaches in relation to the pupils' difficulties, that is, the extent to which the teachers considered that their teaching approaches can help pupils overcome their difficulties is another significant aspect of the study. In recognition that teaching does not exist in isolation (Ainscow, 2000), how school and national influences interact to impact teaching offers insight into the specific systemic influences within the context of Trinidad and Tobago. The Spanish classroom provides a rich context to investigate the teaching approaches used to allow pupils who experience difficulties in learning to acquire an additional linguistic system. These teaching approaches provide insight into the challenges and issues surrounding this second language acquisition.

1.8 Research Questions

Drawing on the personal and academic rationale, this study aims to answer the following questions.

1. What teaching approaches are used with pupils who experience difficulties in learning by two Form two Spanish teachers in two government secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?

2. What are the perspectives of the teachers and pupils regarding teaching approaches in Spanish lessons?

3. How does wider education policy and practice influence the teachers' approaches for these pupils who experience difficulties in learning?

1.9 Organization of the Chapters

Chapter one has introduced the research aims and rationale and the historical, educational and social context of pupils who experience difficulties in learning in Trinidad and Tobago.

Chapter two presents a review of the literature regarding key concepts and studies related to general quality teaching approaches, particularly for those who experience difficulties in learning, teaching approaches in a Spanish classroom and wider educational influences.

Chapter three outlines the ontological, epistemological and methodological framework for this study. The beliefs that shaped this study as well as the research design which includes sampling, data collection methods, ethical considerations and data analysis are critically discussed.

Chapter four - presents the findings from the two case study schools. The findings are then consolidated to demonstrate the similarities and differences amongst them.

Chapter five - discusses and synthesises the key ideas emanating from the findings with the concepts that emerged from the Literature Review and other relevant literature.

Chapter six – concludes the study, presents the contribution to knowledge based on the discussion points, outlines recommendations and implications for practice and addresses strengths and limitations as well as areas for further study.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature regarding teaching approaches with pupils who experience difficulties in learning in Spanish classrooms. Central to this thesis is the understanding that pupils who experience difficulties in learning are considered to experience learning challenges but have not been assessed for or diagnosed with specific special needs. As such, literature regarding specific special need categories, though not entirely irrelevant, form a limited part of this review. Instead, literature regarding general quality teaching approaches and more specifically quality teaching approaches for Spanish classes have been included. In recognising that pupils who experience difficulties in learning represent a lesser defined niche of pupils, this review will discuss literature, including empirical studies, which provide an examination of these approaches within the context of pupils considered to experience difficulties in learning.

The literature was accessed mainly through databases such as Taylor and Francis online and EbscoHost but Google searches for key concepts also retrieved literature from wider sources such as online periodicals, international organizations and societies (for example United Nations) and journals. The references from journal articles were perused and relevant articles were searched for through Google and databases mentioned above. As far as possible, literature based in developing nation contexts were sought as these contexts mirror educational conditions in Trinidad and Tobago. However, literature from developed contexts as well as non-Western contexts were also reviewed.

2.2 Organization of Literature Review

This chapter is organized according to the following sections.

2.3 – I relate international Inclusive Education policies to the Trinidad and Tobago context to set the background for the importance of including pupils who experience difficulties in learning in education.

2.4 – I return to the discussion on the term *difficulties in learning* by discussing concomitant concepts such as *ability* as constructions by the school system.

2.5 – A definition for teaching approaches and literature regarding general teaching approaches are discussed here. Teaching approaches are placed in the context of quality teaching with references to how these approaches can be applied to pupils who experience difficulties in learning. The approaches presented here are not intended to be a complete list but rather the more salient aspects of teaching approaches.

2.6 – Literature regarding teaching approaches in the Spanish classroom is discussed with foreign language specific issues that may arise for pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

2.7 – Literature regarding wider organizational and governmental agencies influences are discussed.

2.3 International Inclusive Education Policy

International inclusive education policies provide an overarching context for inclusive education policies in Trinidad and Tobago which in turn influences teaching approaches. Underpinned by the foundational principle that 'every child has a right to an education' (UN, 1989, article 28), international inclusive policies also assert that schools should accommodate all pupils regardless of their learning need. The Salamanca Statement, for example, states that 'schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions (UNESCO, 1994, p.6).

The Salamanca Statement highlights that special educational needs may arise from disabilities, giftedness and marginalisation and urges schools to 'find ways' (p.7) to accommodate all their children (UNESCO, 1994) through a child centred pedagogical approach and more specifically 'appropriate curricula and teaching strategies' (p.12). Trinidad and Tobago education policy (as discussed in Chapter 1) echoes these principles by adopting a framework for teaching that is pupil centred and suited to a range of abilities, talents and interests (MOE, 2017a).

Trinidad and Tobago inclusive policy is also reflected within the Education for All (EFA) mandate (UNESCO, 2000) which sought to make educational opportunity a universal reality (MOE, 2012). This mandate recognised that many children around the world were excluded from basic education and sought to challenge governments and by extension school systems to increase the 'presence, participation and achievement' of all pupils (Ainscow & Miles, 2008, p. 21). The mandate asserted that 'learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes' (UNESCO, 2000, p. 8).

While EFA urged governments to work towards bringing *all* children from the fringes of the education process, this aim was not without its challenges. For one, *all* signified a determination by governments to focus on those children traditionally excluded from education, namely those with disabilities (Mazurek & Winzer, 2015). In acknowledging that children with disabilities face far greater discrimination than their non-disabled peers (Azam & Mullick, 2010), some governments, in response to EFA, targeted the increased inclusion of children with disabilities in the education process. For example, Azam and Mullick (2010) highlighted the response of the Bangladeshi government to EFA by addressing the educational barriers to children with disabilities in schools.

Not disbarring the importance of a disability focus in EFA applications, Ainscow and Miles (2008) point out that educational exclusionary forces apply to a wider group of marginalised children beyond those with 'impairments or those categorised as having special educational needs' (p.20). Singal (2006), for example, highlighted the educational marginalisation of girls and members of lower caste in India. Therefore, efforts to increase access to primary education in the first instance followed by secondary education access for non-disabled marginalised groups became an important attendant goal of EFA.

2.3.1 Inclusion in the Classroom

In considering Education for All, Ainscow and Miles (2008) put forward the importance of classroom practices in fulfilling the aim of including marginalised pupils in learning. Even if governments take account of the intricacies of their national context in

transferring international inclusion mandates to national policy (Ainscow and Miles, 2008), classroom practices can, it is argued, either promote or deny their effectiveness (Carrington, 1999). Therefore, in applying international inclusion mandates to a national context, classroom practices are important to consider.

Inclusion can incorporate varied interpretations with implications for practice at the classroom level. On the one hand, inclusion, being interpreted within a disability framework, may place emphasis on the support structures (for example specialised teacher training, teacher aides, extra space and equipment (Norrell,1997)) deemed necessary to increase the participation of pupils with disabilities in learning activities (Leatherman and Niemeyer, 2005). On the other hand, inclusion, being interpreted as a means to increase the participation of *all* pupils, regardless of individual differences, will take into account the learning needs of every pupil within the classroom with the acknowledgement that even non-disabled pupils would be at risk of exclusion from learning without this consideration.

Consideration for the learning needs of every pupil forms, therefore, a crucial component of an inclusive classroom (Horne and Timmons, 2009). Underpinning this consideration, however, is the creation of a learning space where all pupils feel worthy and accepted. In this respect, Nilholm and Alm (2010) regard an inclusive classroom as one which acknowledges that learning needs of pupils extend beyond academic attainment to a sense of social and emotional belonging.

2.3.2 Teachers as the Agents of Inclusion

According to Ainscow and Miles (2008), teachers, in direct contact with marginalised pupils, are the agents through which inclusion within the classroom becomes a reality. Teacher willingness to meet the learning needs of all their pupils (Pantić, & Florian, 2015) as the foundation for teaching approaches may result in appropriate modifications to teaching and learning according to pupil need (or difficulties in learning) (Väyrynen and Paksuniemi, 2018). Väyrynen and Paksuniemi (2018) assert that creation of a learning space where pupils feel they belong is an essential basis for addressing pupil learning needs.

Teaching approaches, at the heart of including marginalised pupils, raise a key issue. The perspective by Ainscow and Miles (2008) noted above seems to assume that marginalised pupils are present at school in the first instance and therefore within the reach of teachers to mediate. In Trinidad and Tobago, as is the case with many developing nations, attendance at school for 'at risk' pupils remains a pertinent issue (MOE, 2012). Efforts to curb school dropout is a key consideration of the Trinidad and Tobago government (UNESCO, 2007) and free school meals, free transportation on public buses and construction of schools in rural areas signify measures to 'draw in' those at risk (MOE, 2017).

In considering the importance of teaching approaches to inclusion, Kugelmass (2003) notes that teaching approaches do not occur in isolation. Firstly, school and societal pressures may imprint upon models of inclusion that are adopted at the class level (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Ainscow and Miles (2008) therefore assert that the 'inclusionary/exclusionary' forces in the wider education context are important to consider when examining teaching approaches (p. 20). Secondly, at the teacher level, teaching approaches may emanate from teacher beliefs about learning and learners and teacher role in relation to their pupils (Ahonen, Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2014) which in turn influence practice. These beliefs surround the source of pupils' difficulties in learning, notions of ability and intelligence and the positioning of teaching approaches in relation to these concepts (Ahonen et al, 2014). These concepts are discussed in the next section.

2.4 Difficulties in Learning

This section addresses the issue of difficulties in learning. The definition of the term *difficulties in learning* as well as how the term differed from learning difficulties has already been discussed in Chapter one. In this section, I discuss how the term might be applied to educational contexts as well as associated constructs of ability and achievement. Noteworthy is that any child, during their school career, may experience difficulties in learning. According to Montgomery (2009), even highly capable pupils may experience difficulties with particular subject areas. However, there are some pupils who experience difficulties in learning to the extent that their educational success may be in jeopardy (Ainscow, 2000). Difficulties in learning, for the purpose

of this thesis, represent those children who exhibit difficulties in attainment, achievement and/or behaviour and who may be considered to be failing by their Spanish teachers.

Ainscow's work (see Ainscow 2000; Ainscow 2016) on whole school practices provided an adequate starting point for exploring *difficulties in learning* in the literature. His research focused on children who do not fit learning or behaviour norms and are therefore considered to experience difficulties in learning. In researching these pupils, Ainscow (2000) examined the contribution of the established education structure in the construction of the difficulties that pupils experience. He argued that difficulties in learning may arise out of or are exacerbated by the incapacity of schools to respond to pupils' learning needs. Ainscow (2005) added that pupils' difficulties are often pathologised and seen as inherent to the child, exculpating the school from responsibility. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) examined teacher processes as part of whole school practice and found that the pathologising of pupils at the classroom level was a barrier to their inclusion. Ball and Harry (2010) added that teacher assumptions of pupil ability and intelligence underpin teaching approaches and inadvertently provide a lens through which difficulties in learning are conceptualised.

2.4.1 The Construction of Ability

Ability, as a concept, remains virtually unchallenged in education, yet can be a powerful underlayer to teacher perceptions of pupils and their difficulties (Hart, 2010). Of the journal articles that were consulted for this section, few provided explicit context for their use of the term *ability,* yet based findings from their studies on concepts such as ability grouping, ability tracking and setting (see Hallam & Ireson, 2008; Kulikand & Kulik, 1987). Assumptions on the part of the authors that ability incorporates homogenous applications amongst readers and educational practitioners suggest the unchallenged nature of *ability* that may filter into teachers' conceptualisations.

Hart (2010) describes ability as the capacity to do something and, in an educational sense, defines it as the extent to which one can learn and succeed academically. Hallam, Rogers and Ireson (2008) noted that ability is sometimes assumed to be innate, fixed and immovable thus unchallenged by teachers. Dudley, Marley and Gurn (2010) indicate that this positioning by teachers can be deleterious to the academic

progress of pupils since notions of ability as fixed and unalterable assume that pupils at a certain level of attainment will remain at that level for their entire school careers thereby denying the positive influence that teaching approaches may have in altering pupil learning. This positioning carries the implication that the difficulties in learning experienced by pupils may remain unaddressed by teaching approaches.

Dixon, Drummond, Hart, and McIntyre (2002) rejected the notion that ability is fixed and highlighted instead the transformative power of teaching approaches to improve pupil learning. In their project *Learning without Limits*, they sought teachers who regarded their teaching approaches as a mediator in pupil ability. Their study of four primary and five secondary teachers included quality data collection methods of classroom observations and teacher interviews which facilitated in-depth investigation into the teachers' perspectives, even though the sample was small (Silverman, 2016). According to the findings, the teachers in the study challenged their own conceptualisations of ability and crafted learning environments that promoted pupil learning whilst confronting actions that were deemed limiting to pupil progress. For example, Dixon et al. (2002) highlighted the 'ethic of everybody' stance adopted by the teachers whereby everybody has a valued place in the classroom, everybody can learn and everybody has talents and interests that are important to the learning environment. As such, teachers in this study viewed their approaches as instrumental in helping pupils overcome their difficulties.

Despite Dixon et al.'s (2002) study findings, Hallam et al. (2008) noted the practice of teachers to apply conceptualisations of ability to their teaching by allocating pupils to ability categories, such as high or low. This practice, they indicate, denies the vast intricacies that may be found amongst pupils considered to 'belong' to the same ability grouping. The denial of differences at the pupil level may inadvertently create difficulties in learning as teachers apply approaches that ignore the learning needs of individual pupils in favour of attending to a general ability grouping (Eder, 1981).

It is not only teachers that hold conceptualisations of ability. According to Hallam and Ireson (2007), pupils hold notions of their own ability. Nagengast and Marsh (2011) stated that pupils construct notions of their ability by comparing their academic

achievements to that of their classmates while Eder (1981) highlighted that teacher actions such as criticism and ridicule filtered into pupil construction of difficulty.

The influence of teacher actions in pupil construction of their own ability can be seen in the differential approaches that teachers exhibit according to pupils they perceive to possess high and low ability. According to Braddock and Slavin (1992), pupils who are perceived to possess lower ability are exposed to lower quality instruction characterised by less challenging work, more basic skills and less content. Eder (1981) added that 'lower ability' pupils are given less opportunities to answer questions and are subjected to more condescending feedback from their teachers. According to these authors, these behaviours are in direct contrast to those shown to pupils considered to be higher ability, even within the same class. Braddock and Slavin (1992) pointed out that negative teacher behaviour towards pupils can result in those pupils developing a low concept of their ability.

Teachers can be instrumental in shaping pupil conceptualisation of their own ability for another reason. Teachers may be regarded by pupils as 'expert judges' of ability (Eder, 1981). Jussim and Harber (2005) considered that teachers have direct contact with pupils daily and can directly observe their learning behaviours which can filter into teachers making 'accurate' assessments of pupil ability. However, Brown and McIntyre (1993) argued that teachers crystallize their view of pupils' ability based on very narrow and limited interactions with pupils and that teachers may also enter the classroom with preconceived notions of pupils' ability which may be difficult to shift even with contrary evidence. Nevertheless, even with familiarity with pupils' classroom behaviour and academic performance, belief in the transformative power of teaching approaches can positively affect pupil learning (Dixon et al.,2002).

2.4.2. The Construction of Difficulties in Learning

Added to the construction of ability is the construction of the central term of this thesis – difficulties in learning. To discuss difficulties in learning as a construction, I return to Ainscow's (2000) view that difficulties in learning are exacerbated by the school system. Ainscow's view highlights that, while difficulties in learning may be seen to be inherent to the child, the classroom and school context contribute to what are

considered *difficulties*. A number of researchers (for example Graham, Harris & Macarthur, 2006; Cooper, 2005) agree that, although some pupils may have inherent biological, social and psychological difficulties, their ability (or lack thereof) to conform to teaching approaches may be a further source of their difficulties in learning.

In his analysis of school structure, Veck (2009) discussed the way in which 'within child' perspectives of difficulties are interwoven with perspectives on what constitutes a 'good pupil' (p.43). His perspectives relate to learning support assistants but are applied here to teachers. Veck (2009) indicates that pupils are considered to possess difficulties in learning when they do not live up to perceptions of good pupils, that is 'an able, efficient, obedient, industrious pupil who 'fits in'' (p. 43). Difficulties in learning, according to Veck (2009), therefore emerge from perceptions of good pupils and pupil inability to live up to them.

Cooper (2005) puts forward a perspective that coheres with Veck's (2009) view noted above. While Cooper's (2005) perspective relates to pupils considered to have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), he highlighted the way teacher conceptualisation of appropriate behaviour leads to pupils regarded as having difficulties. The 'factory model of education' (p.128), as he calls it, is characterised by intense rule structures, restricted pupil movement and limited peer interactions and contributes to pupils being designated as experiencing difficulties in learning in cases where they are unable to conform to rigid structures of learning (Cooper, 2005).

Another perspective on the construction of difficulties in learning emerges from Mendez, Lacasa and Matusov (2008). They put forward the notion of the ***situated*** nature of difficulties in learning. They argue that what constitutes a difficulty in one context may not necessarily be characterised as such in another. For example, pupils who experience difficulties in learning in one class with a particular teacher may find that they flourish in another class with a different teacher (Mendez et al, 2008). Similarly, pupils who experience difficulties in one school may find that their difficulties may be 'erased' if they were to attend another school. In the same vein, what one teacher may regard as difficulties may not be regarded as such by another teacher

(Mendez et al, 2008). This notion of situated difficulties brings to the fore the pedagogical and institutional influences in the construction of difficulties.

The teaching effect on the construction of difficulties is further highlighted by the notion that difficulties in learning may expand as pupils progress through formal schooling. By the time children reach secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago, they have generally had six or seven years of compulsory primary schooling (MOE, 2012). The skills that they should have acquired at the primary stage are considered pivotal to success at the secondary stage (Ireson et al., 1992). However, skills like literacy and numeracy are not acquired automatically (Hartas & Warner, 2000), they must be taught. Depending on the quality of teaching regarding these skills, children may enter secondary school with gaps in knowledge in crucial areas that are necessary to their secondary school success (Hartas & Warner, 2000). In this regard, gaps in learning at the primary level can manifest in greater difficulties in learning at the secondary level.

2.5 Teaching Approaches

Throughout this thesis thus far, reference has been made to *quality* teaching approaches as the means to educate all pupils. The previous sections imply that the absence of this quality within approaches contributes to pupils experiencing difficulties in learning. In this section, I discuss what constitutes *quality* within teaching approaches by outlining a definition for teaching approaches and discussing principles for quality teaching approaches. Teaching approaches related specifically to the Spanish classroom will be discussed in a subsequent section.

Trigwell, Prosser and Taylor (1994) define teaching approaches as the pedagogical strategies as well as the intentions underlying those strategies. Intentions relate to beliefs held and decisions made regarding factors related to the teacher, pupils and learning environment (INTO, 2007). According to INTO (2007), these include choice of teaching style, selection of activities based on pupil characteristics and classroom related factors such as time of day and space. Teaching approaches, therefore, is a holistic term for the beliefs and actions of the teacher in relation to pupil learning.

To position quality teaching approaches in relation to pupils who experience difficulties in learning, I use the positioning of Norwich and Lewis (2005). They applied their arguments to the teaching of pupils with SEN, but the principles here will be extracted to apply to pupils who experience difficulties in learning. In referring to specific SEN categories such as visual impairment, they asserted that specialist teaching approaches may be required as the curricular goals for these pupils may differ from typically developing pupils. Where the curricular goals are the same for all pupils within a classroom (such as in the case of pupils who experience difficulties in learning), they suggested a *continua of approaches,* whereby necessary modifications are made to the same approaches used for other pupils rather than application of different approaches altogether. Applying their principles to the context of pupils who experience difficulties in learning, teachers would make necessary modifications to their approaches to accommodate the learning needs of all their pupils and in so doing devise strategies that limit, if not eliminate, difficulties in learning. According to Norwich and Lewis (2005), this accommodation is not in a vacuum but depends on intricate teacher knowledge of pupils – their characteristics, stage of development and level of learning need.

If teachers do not need to apply separate approaches to teach a group of pupils within the same curricular framework, then it follows that teachers require the necessary pedagogical awareness and skills to be able to alter their approaches accordingly. Norwich and Lewis' (2005) argument, therefore, draws out another pertinent issue which is the quality of the approaches to begin with. If the approaches used by teachers are of poor quality, according to Desimone and Long (2010), it is likely that their application would produce little effect on pupil learning. Therefore, at the basis of teaching approaches is the issue of quality.

While Livingston, Schweisfurth, Brace,and Nash (2017), in their UNESCO Education 2030 report, place quality teaching at the heart of how teachers can promote learning, consensus on what constitutes *quality teaching* is tenuous within the literature. Tenuous and varied definitions place quality teaching within various frameworks and this inconsistency may also be evident in practice (Cohen & Brown, 2016). Despite the varied stances for quality teaching approaches, authors agree that it must incorporate

approaches that produce learning gains for pupils (Desimone & Long, 2010; Forrest, Wright & Pearson, 2012).

If the basis of quality teaching approaches is that they must bring benefit to pupil learning, it is important to consider the type of approaches that are likely to do so.

The literature categorises learning according to cognitive processes – deep or surface; mode of learning – active or passive; context for learning – pupil centred or teacher centred. Each will be discussed briefly.

Learning can be defined in terms of the cognitive processes that occur within the learner. Deep learning is regarded as triggering *deep* cognitive processes in pupils. Critical and creative thinking, applying learning to other contexts and making links between ideas with content (Smith and Colby, 2007) are considered to be elements of deep learning. Pupils engage with subject content in meaningful ways (Beausaert, Segers and Wiltink, 2013). Surface learning, on the other hand, involves shallow processing of information (Beausaert et al., 2013) characterised by memorization of facts for the sake of regurgitation.

Active learning approaches, according to Bonwell and Eison (1991), seek to actively involve the learner in the learning process by incorporating, for example, problem solving, critical thinking and decision-making activities in lessons. Activities may include discussions, group projects and pair work (Kyriacou, 1992). Passive learning approaches, on the other hand, encourage memorization of facts through knowledge transmission activities (Michael, 2007) with the aim of regurgitation of information (Nuñez et al., 2011).

Pupil centred approaches seek to place the pupil at the core of learning and therefore incorporate their interests, prior knowledge, background and real-life contexts into lessons (Miller & Cheetham, 1990). In the pupil centred classroom, the teacher is positioned as facilitator whereas in the teacher centred classroom, the teachers is placed at the centre of learning and approaches are characterised by teacher dominated talk and activities (von Wright, 2006).

The literature draws a close association among cognitive processes, modes of learning and contexts for learning. Deep learning is associated with active learning within pupil-centred learning environments (Kitchens, Means and Tan, 2018). Surface learning, on the other hand, is associated with passive learning approaches within teacher-centred environments (Beausaert et al., 2013). However, the synonymous relationship between cognitive process and mode of learning is unwarranted.

Amongst approaches that are seemingly passive, pupils may be applying deep cognitive processes. For example, Kyriacou and Marshall (1989) states that notetaking can engage pupils' mental processes while amongst active learning strategies such as group discussions, they can be passively engaged. Secondly, the associations assume that teachers either adhere to one mode of learning or the other but according to Yeung, Craven and Kaur (2014), teachers may use strategies from both approaches within one lesson. Kitchens et al. (2018) point out that teachers need to decide what aspects of their lessons require active learning engagement and what aspects require didactic approaches.

2.5.1. Pedagogical Strategies

In this section, I outline specific actions, strategies and techniques that the literature suggests are important to constitute quality teaching approaches, but the issues outlined here are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Castor (2000) put forward the importance of pedagogical content knowledge, that is, the ability to know how to teach the content of one's subject as important to quality teaching. Shulman (1986) describes pedagogical content knowledge as 'the most useful forms of representation (....) , the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations—in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others' (p. 9). It is worth noting that it is not the mere use of these strategies that makes them effective but rather their use in a way that benefits pupils' learning (Kennedy, 1996; Heritage & Heritage, 2013). For example, questioning can be an effective foreign language learning strategy by contributing to the development of language form (Farrell & Mom, 2015) but as

Heritage and Heritage (2013) noted, too many questions that elicit facts and information can serve to demotivate pupils.

In addition to pedagogical content knowledge, Selmes (2012) adds well-planned lessons, time management and constructive feedback as part of quality teaching. Their perspective echoed within the study of Kayode and Ayodele (2015). In their study of 4,101 teachers in 176 public secondary schools in Nigeria, they concluded that planning quality lessons as well as efficient time management skills within the classroom had significant impact on pupil performance in examinations. However, it should be noted that their study attributed examination success as a marker of quality teaching and therefore used examinations results in exploring the effects of time management on learning.

In considering the components of a well-planned lesson, the UK Department for Education and Skills (DFES) (2004) outlined elements they considered important – provision of lesson objectives, effective use of teaching strategies and adherence to a lesson sequence (set induction, main body, plenary). In addition to this, they outline teacher consideration of pupil learning needs – prior knowledge, interests and difficulties in learning of pupils – as important to the construction of a quality lesson. This interweaving of pupils' factors into lessons is an approach agreed upon by Keller (2000) who put forward the ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) denoting the key outcomes for pupils within a lesson. According to the model, lessons must be interesting to pupils, relevant to their personal interest and life experiences, provide opportunities for learning accomplishments and be perceived as equitable in terms of teacher treatment of pupils. Keller (2000) states that these elements are key to increasing pupil motivation in lessons (a factor that is addressed later in this chapter).

Assessment of/for Learning

Even with well-planned lessons, learning is not guaranteed (Silcock, 1993). The insertion of measures to assess and track pupils' learning is therefore put forward as an essential component of quality teaching approaches (Peterson and Irving, 2008). Assessment is regarded as a tool by which teachers can know pupils' current learning and ascertain how they can improve (Weurlander, Söderberg, Scheja, Hult,& Wernerson, 2012). Brown et al. (2014) make a distinction between formative and

summative assessment. While formative assessment is regarded as assessment *for* learning, summative assessment is considered assessment *of* learning (Brown, Bristol, De Four-Babb & Conrad, 2014).

Formative Assessment

Formative assessments inform teachers about pupils' current learning status with the purpose of highlighting areas for redress (Peterson & Irving, 2008) while shaping and guiding pupils' learning towards greater knowledge and skills (Sadler,1989). According to Brown et al. (2014), formative assessments can be formal or informal in –class support for learning which may take the form of teacher questioning, observations, pop quizzes or projects (Cauley & McMillan, 2010; Dixson & Worrell, 2016). While formative assessments have been put forward as a way teachers can improve pupils' learning (Orrell, 2006), they also seem to represent a problematic area for foreign language teachers (Cheatham, Jiminez-Silva & Park, 2015) and teachers within the Trinidad and Tobago context (Brown et al., 2014).

In writing about the Trinidad and Tobago context, De Lisle (2015) pointed out that primary school teachers used formative assessments to fulfil summative assessment goals. In other words, teachers use formative assessments for knowledge of pupils' attainment rather than to serve the diagnostic aim of indicating pupils' areas of strengths and weaknesses and devising individual strategies for how they can improve (DeLisle, 2015). He stated that teachers in Trinidad and Tobago lacked the specific skills needed to give constructive feedback. His conclusion was drawn from a wider study to evaluate continuous assessment at the primary level. According to De Lisle (2015), the passive mode of teaching, which he stated was prominent in schools in Trinidad and Tobago, contributed to teachers' dilemma as teachers favoured the passive intake and output of information which seemed to negate opportunities for teachers to engage critically with pupils' work (De Lisle, 2015).

Feedback quality was also regarded as a problematic area for EFL teachers (Cheatham et al., 2015). Lee (2014) noted that the feedback of EFL teachers generally surrounded correction of language production errors rather than providing detailed, specific and diagnostic feedback to individual pupils about their learning. Additionally, Edgerly, Wilcox and Easter (2018) noted that in giving feedback, teachers use vague

and platitudinous phrases such as *good work* or *you can do better* (p. 43) which do not provide clear points for improvement.

Summative assessments

Summative assessments assess pupil learning at the end of a stage, providing information about their attainment (Peterson & Irving, 2008) and may take the form of standardized in-class or national tests. Brookhart (2001) regards in-class summative assessments as being beneficial to pupil learning but adds only if they are strongly linked to instruction and the curriculum. The issue of instruction in relation to summative assessments raises key issues. Harlen (2005) argued that summative assessments, especially high stakes national tests where the outcome filters into decisions made about individual pupils, teachers and schools put 'pressure' on teachers to raise pupil scores with detrimental effects to the learning experiences of pupils (p. 208). To ensure pupil success at these tests, Harlen (2005) stated that teachers adapt instruction to train pupils in the structure and knowledge of these tests which may result in 'transmission style of teaching' (p. 209) and use of lesson time for practice of examination past papers which may have demotivating effects on pupils. With respect to foreign language learning, Green (2013) noted that 'teach to the test' teaching approaches may deny pupils the opportunity to develop language production competencies for the sake of skills needed for standardized examinations.

Learner Related Issues

In addition to instructional approaches, there are learner-related issues that the literature highlights as important for quality teaching approaches. Although this thesis surrounds teaching approaches, adherence to the issues pupils may encounter point to areas of learning need and therefore denotes key consideration for quality teaching approaches. The issues that will be discussed here relate to learner engagement, motivation and interest, discipline and relationship.

Engagement is regarded as a 'commitment and investment in learning and school life' (Virtanen, Lerkkanen, Poikkeus & Kuorelahti, 2015, p.963) which incorporates the willingness, interest, curiosity and passion that pupils bring to their learning environment. Virtanen et al. (2015) postulated that engagement can exist on three levels – emotional, cognitive and behavioural: emotional engagement involves the relationships within the classroom; behavioural engagement manifests in on-task behaviour and active participation in lessons; and cognitive engagement relates to the

level of motivation that pupils bring to the learning process (Virtanen et al., 2015). Engagement and motivation are therefore viewed as intertwined concepts but according to Virtanen et al. (2015) can exist independent of each other. For example, pupils can lack motivation whilst being fully engaged in lessons if, for example, they need to study certain subjects for future goals (Sun & Chen, 2010). This point links to the issue of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) describe extrinsic motivation as doing something because it leads to a 'separable outcome' (p. 55), for example, for the sake of good grades, teachers or parents' approval or rewards. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is participation in tasks because they are 'inherently interesting or enjoyable' (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.55). Having externally motivated pupils can be important for teaching as not every task or topic within a subject will be naturally interesting to pupils. However, intrinsic motivation is regarded as more beneficial for learning as learners who are intrinsically motivated apply more attention, focus and effort to tasks (Bolkan, 2015). In this sense, interest can lead to motivation which leads to increased engagement.

Engagement, motivation and interest seem to represent important issues for pupils, especially those who experience difficulties in learning with implications for teaching approaches. Finn and Rock (1997) state that disengaged pupils are more at risk of poor behaviour, low achievement and even dropping out of school. However, the disengagement of pupils does not exist in a vacuum and according to Hagel, Carr and Devlin (2012) is most often the product of teaching approaches. They see engagement as the result of 'useful and productive activities' within the classroom (p. 476), the absence of which would lead to disengagement.

The link between teaching approaches and the disengagement of pupils who experience difficulties in learning has been presumed through empirical studies. In efforts to address the factors surrounding low achievement, Matela, Ferreira and de Wet (2014) conducted a case study of four teachers and four pupils in a secondary school in Lesotho. Although their study included a very small sample, their findings nevertheless indicated the impact of teaching approaches on pupil disengagement. They found that teacher action, for example, showing favouritism, humiliating pupils, administering corporal punishment and using English, which is a second language to pupils in this context were reasons pupils became disengaged from lessons. This

study also highlighted the limited resources at the school which seemingly forced teachers into passive teaching mode, further contributing to disengagement.

In an action research study conducted by Brown and Fletcher (2006) in Modern Foreign Language classes in Norwich, United Kingdom, pupils cited negative relationships with the teacher as well as unclear explanations in lessons as reasons they became disaffected. Noteworthy in this study, however, were the pupil related factors in disengagement. The pupils cited their perception of low ability to understand the language and their perceptions that the languages held little relevance to their future.

The issue of perceived relevance of learning Modern Foreign Languages to pupils' engagement cannot be overlooked. According to Crumpton and Gregory (2011), the relevance of lessons to future goals allows pupils to make links between their current learning and future lives which is likely to increase their engagement. In Brown and Fletcher's (2006) study, the pupils perceived a misalignment between foreign language learning and their future jobs which contributed to their disengagement. On the other hand, Albrecht and Karabenick (2007) points out that desired future jobs may change therefore relevance of subjects should be more in tune with pupils' current interests, sociocultural background and learning needs. Making teaching relevant to pupils' lives therefore serves a motivational purpose and can impact pupil engagement (Albrecht & Karabenick, 2007).

Relationship

The value of *relationship* to the (dis)engagement of pupils is another learner related issue, especially for those who experience difficulties in learning. Relationship refers to the socio-emotional interactions and connections that are formed within the classroom among the pupils and teacher (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt & Oort, 2011). According to Frymier and Houser (2000), the level and type of relationship pupils have with the other members of the classroom can affect learning outcomes. A positive socio-emotional climate within the classroom creates a space where pupils feel welcomed, accepted and cared for (Ainscow, 2000; Virtanen et al, 2015) while negative relationships can contribute to disengagement (Fan, 2012). With positive teacher pupil relationships, pupils can freely express themselves, make mistakes and

share their concerns while negative relationships may produce counter effects (Marsh, 2012).

Relationship building, however, is not an automatic component of teaching and learning and must therefore be harnessed through deliberate actions by the teacher (Holloway, 1994). Marsh (2012) places the teacher at the centre of approaches that build positive relationships within the classroom, arguing that neither teacher-pupil relationships nor peer relationships would develop without the active input of the teacher.

To create a warm and inviting classroom, Fan (2012) proposes that teachers adopt a positive teacher disposition through 'kindness, sense of humour, use of positive language and encouraging facial expressions' (p.489). Antithetical traits such as aggressive and hostile demeanours, according to Fan (2012) may be counterproductive to relationship building. However, as Kaplan (2000) noted, even teachers who possess positive personality traits may still work in counterproductive ways for pupils who experience difficulties in learning. He noted that the use of encouraging words at a time when a pupil needs directed assistance with schoolwork can be interpreted as patronizing and therefore unhelpful. In-depth knowledge of pupils' needs is therefore necessary to build relationship dynamics that benefit pupil learning.

Discipline

Discipline is a term used in Trinidad and Tobago to refer to standards of behaviour amongst the pupil population (MOE, 2018). This term is also popular in the wider English-speaking territories in the Caribbean (see Semple-McBean & Rodrigues, 2018). Indiscipline, denoted by inappropriate pupil behaviour, is a major issue affecting government schools in Trinidad and Tobago (Superville, 2017). According to MOE (2018), this behaviour is characterised on one level by poor attendance of pupils to class and school but on a graver level by gambling, vandalism, substance abuse, fighting and physical violence with dangerous objects. The government of Trinidad and Tobago seeks to curb acts of violence within the nation's schools by adopting a zero-tolerance policy towards indiscipline (MOE, 2018). Measures by the Ministry of Education to address severe cases of indiscipline include police intervention, expulsion, suspension and detention (MOE, 2018). However, the Ministry of Education

regards pupil behaviour management as a school-based issue (MOE, 2018) and has therefore charged the personnel of all schools with the responsibility of managing the behaviour of their pupils. The Trinidad and Tobago Violence Prevention Academy, which involved 25 participating schools, implemented training programmes to 'enhance the skill of school violence prevention specialists and the capacity of schools where they work to implement and sustain successful violence prevention programmes' (Katz, Choate, Maguire, Webb & Armstrong, 2010, p.i.).

Cohen and Brown (2016) agreed that discipline is a school-based issue. School based discipline policies, that is the rules and expectations implemented at the school level, will affect the teaching and learning in individual classes (Cohen & Brown, 2016). In line with this view, Morrison (1996) states that whole school approach to discipline promotes an inclusive ethos which creates a positive atmosphere for learning. However, whole school strategies for discipline will be ineffective if teachers, at the class level, are negligent in maintaining discipline (Short, Case & McKenzie, 2018). Discipline strategies, therefore, are an important part of teaching approaches (Cohen & Brown, 2016) as without these strategies, the learning of pupils can be adversely affected (Salmi, 2009). Indiscipline creates a volatile and unsafe learning environment (Salmi, 2009) and can also decrease instructional time if teachers need to constantly address disruptive behaviour (Lewis, 2001).

Although discipline involves the application of rules at the class level (Thornberg, 2007), Roache & Lewis (2011) went further to postulate that teacher maintenance of discipline lies in the quality of teaching approaches that are implemented. According to them, pupils who feel 'locked out' of the learning process may become disenchanted which may manifest in discipline challenges for the teacher. Therefore, teaching strategies that engage pupils and encourage relationship act as a factor in discipline maintenance (Roache & Lewis, 2011). In agreement, Lewis (2001) found that pupils who saw the value of schoolwork acted more responsibly in class and misbehaved less. He investigated the effects of classroom discipline strategies on pupil responsibility within 21 primary and secondary schools.

In Cohen and Brown's (2016) study which examined the teaching quality across various classroom settings in lower socioeconomic areas found that the more engaging classes with the more effective strategies experienced fewer discipline

issues. These classes involved scaffolding strategies, clear explanations, elicitation of pupil ideas and positive relationship dynamics. The classes that had the most discipline issues experienced teaching approaches that were considered less effective, for example, vague instructions for tasks, unclear explanations and unstructured feedback. Engaging lessons, therefore, are an indirect source of behaviour management and an essential part of quality teaching.

Teacher Beliefs

To begin the discussion on teacher beliefs, I return to the definition for teaching approaches outlined by Trigwell et al. (1994) who state that teaching approaches are not only actual teaching strategies but the intentions underlying those strategies. Hancock and Gallard (2004) define a belief as 'an understanding held by an individual that guides that individual's intentions for action' (p. 281). Teaching approaches are therefore connected to the underlying belief system of teachers where their intentions, decisions and perceptions emanate. Teacher belief is not a straightforward concept and involves a complex network of perceptions, attitudes and conceptualisations towards various aspects of practice (Devine, Fahie & McGillicuddy, 2013). As beliefs affect the approaches teachers eventually adopt, they are important to consider in the teaching of pupils (and here, in particular those who experience difficulties in learning).

Firstly, teachers hold general beliefs towards the nature of teaching and learning, that is, the teacher's and pupils' role in the classroom within their chosen framework for teaching and learning. Buehl and Fives (2009) state that teachers who see their role as transmitters of knowledge will likely adopt passive learning strategies, positioning the teacher as the 'holder' of information which needs to be transferred to pupils. Similarly, Ahonen et al. (2014) claim that teachers who see their roles as facilitators of learning are likely to adopt strategies that actively involve pupils. Teacher's beliefs about their own role will likely impact the role that pupils adopt (Ahonen et al., 2014). If teachers believe that they are transmitters of knowledge, they may require pupils to adopt passive roles to accommodate intake of information whereas teachers as facilitators may seek opportunities for pupils to take control of their own learning through pupil centred activities (Tangney, 2014).

Teacher beliefs also surround pupils' ability, difficulties and learning capacities (Wall, 2016). These conceptualisations can profoundly impact the learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning as they may constrict the type of activities teachers believe pupils are capable of participating in (Devine et al., 2013). For example, Brown and Wendel (1993) examined the perceptions of seven early career secondary teachers towards lesson planning in Kansas, in the United States, and found that teachers were prone to plan less cognitively demanding lessons according to how they perceived pupils' difficulties. In addition to this issue, teachers may also perceive limitations within their approaches to include pupils who experience difficulties in learning (Devine et al, 2013). Such teachers may perceive the difficulties of pupils to be a 'within child' issue therefore outside their control and not a factor of their approaches (Devine et al., 2013).

However, not all teachers believe that their approaches are limited in impacting the learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. Specht et al. (2016) proposed that teachers with an inclusive orientation believe that all children should participate in learning and therefore implement approaches to accommodate them. This view is corroborated by Tatto (1996) who alluded that teachers who believe in the alterable nature of pupil performance would tailor approaches to meet the needs of all learners.

This issue points to another element of teacher belief – *teacher efficacy*. Guskey and Passaro (1994) describe teacher efficacy as 'a belief or conviction that can influence how well students learn, even those who may be considered difficult or unmotivated' (p. 628). Teachers with high efficacy who teach pupils who experience difficulties do not regard the difficulties of pupils as outside the parameters of their approaches. Rather, these teachers have confidence to implement strategies that raise these pupils' participation. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) regard these teachers as resilient and determined as they persevere in the midst of challenges raised by pupil behaviour or difficulties in learning. They are willing to devise new strategies to better meet pupil needs, they are open to new ideas and create a space for pupils to make mistakes (Tschannen- Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers with high efficacy are considered to have a greater impact on pupil outcomes such as motivation, engagement and achievement (Chan, 2008). While teachers with high efficacy may be better for pupils, especially those who experience difficulties in learning, according

to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), even teachers with high efficacy may not always feel efficacious in every learning situation or environment. For example, in terms of instruction, teachers may feel more confident teaching certain topics or skills than others (Chan, 2008).

While teacher beliefs may have a profound impact on practice, it is important to note that beliefs are malleable and can therefore be changed (Fetters, Czerniak,Fish, & Shawberry, 2002). Tatto (1996) highlighted the value of teacher training courses as a conduit through which teachers can confront and adjust their current beliefs. According to Wall (2016), preservice teachers may enter training programmes with misconceptions about teaching and learning but Borg (2003) iterated the value of teacher training courses to adjust these misconceptions. However, teacher training courses are not always able to alter teacher beliefs. Despite the encouragement by the Postgraduate Diploma in Education for Spanish teachers to adopt communicative strategies in their approaches, Jennings (2001) noted that teachers in Trinidad and Tobago who favour passive approaches may not be willing to adopt those strategies.

On the other hand, teacher lack of response to advice offered by teacher training programmes may not be a feature of their beliefs but of the financial and sociocultural constraints within their work environments (Ernest, 1989). Lack of resources, school wide discipline issues and administrative decisions may impact teachers' beliefs as to the type of approaches they can implement (Ernest, 1989). In agreement, Singh and Billingsley (2013) noted that teachers' judgements regarding the implementation of certain approaches depended on the level of resources and administrative support at their school.

Dissonance also occurs when teachers act in ways contrary to their beliefs (Devine et al., 2013). It is not always the case that practice is hinged on existing beliefs (Polly & Harrafin, 2011). Teachers may hold strong beliefs towards the best approaches for their pupils and yet adopt approaches in contradiction to those beliefs (Devine et al., 2013). They noted the significant influence curriculum objectives and standardized examinations exerted on teaching approaches. 'Teach to the test' approaches which focus on the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in examinations reflect the systemic constraints that filter into the classroom (Lam & Kember, 2006). These

constraints may impact the pace, structure and curricular focus of teaching approaches. Teachers may therefore adopt approaches that train pupils for examinations at the expense of preferred approaches that interest and engage them (Hursh, 2007).

2.6 Teaching Approaches in a Spanish Classroom

In this section, I discuss teaching approaches that are pertinent to the Spanish classroom. While the issues discussed above are also relevant to this context, Spanish, as a foreign language, presents specific challenges and issues with implications for teaching and learning. The literature presents these considerations for teachers of Spanish in the context of approaches for all pupils. However, specific issues related to those who experience difficulty in learning in a Spanish classroom will be drawn out.

The importance of learning Spanish to pupils in Trinidad and Tobago was mentioned in Chapter one. Employability and communicative opportunities with native speakers are likely outcomes (MOE, 2012) of learning Spanish and inadvertently represent goals for Spanish teaching approaches. Teachers are expected to ensure pupils uphold performance expectations of the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2017) but also develop practical communicative skills.

Spanish teaching has been dominated by two main approaches – *Grammar Translation Method* (GTM) and *Communicative Approach* (CA) (Assalahi, 2013). The literature presents these approaches as oppositional as they seek to develop distinct competencies in pupils. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), teachers adopting a GTM approach regard accurate language form production as primal to language learning and therefore place emphasis on grammar rules and translation of whole text and sentences. Strategies under GTM include explicit deductive instruction of grammar rules, drills and vocabulary lists (Assalahi, 2013).

This intense focus on grammar, however, has been denounced as an appropriate approach to foreign language learning. According to Krashen (1982), grammar rules and translations decontextualize language by focusing on language form rather than meaning. He argued that languages were for active communication with native

speakers and as such learners' competencies in language functionality should be developed. This view is supported by the Postgraduate Diploma in Education course which promotes the development and use of CA in Spanish classrooms. The advent of CA has not eliminated the presence of GTM amongst foreign language approaches as, according to Assalahi (2013), it favours teacher centred, passive style teaching. This view is corroborated by Morita (2017) who lamented the continued use of GTM in Japanese secondary schools despite the perspective that CA is more beneficial to EFL learning.

The dichotomous relationship between these two approaches is hinged on the notion that teachers either adhere to one approach or another (Abbas and Ali, 2014). It is as if to say explicitly teaching grammar rules somehow signifies the absence of approaches that develop pupils' communicative competencies (Orel, 1995). However, in contrast to Krashen's (1982) view, Orel (1995) argues that developing pupil communicative competence happens by way of grammatical competencies especially for novice learners or those who experience difficulties in learning and therefore incorporation of both approaches is beneficial to pupils' learning. It is therefore not the case that one approach needs to replace the other but rather teachers need the dexterity to extract elements from both approaches that would enhance pupils' learning (Gxilishe, 1992). In essence, approaches which incorporate an emphasis on both form and meaning may provide the more holistic language learning experience needed for pupils (Gxilishe, 1992). Within this framework of Spanish teaching, development of pupil grammatical and communicative skills mainly through speaking, listening, reading and writing proficiencies are considered important (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

While the incorporation of both language teaching approaches may be deemed beneficial to language learning, according to Horwitz (1985), the degree to which either is incorporated into lessons depends on teacher beliefs towards language teaching and learning which may filter into their conceptualisations of pupils' difficulties in learning. Horwitz (1985) asserts that these beliefs may be based on teacher conceptualisations of a) the specific nature of the target language, b) the nature of foreign language learning and c) contextual factors. Each of these factors will be discussed in turn.

With regard to the nature of the target language, teacher beliefs surround the structure of the language and perceptions towards the degree of difficulty in understanding it. Spanish, for example, is regarded as an 'easy' language to understand due to its orthographic transparency (Koda, 1999) as the grapheme-phoneme correspondence in Spanish follows a more predictable pattern (Ford et al., 2018). For example, the vocalic letters *a, e, i, o* and *u* in Spanish are pronounced the same regardless of their orthographic environment within a word. For example, the vocalic sounds in *giro, tiempo* and *consecuencia* maintain phonemic consistency despite different placement in each word. Although, the consonants in Spanish do not maintain strict consistency, they are still governed by rules that affords predictability to their decoding. For example, *g* changes pronunciation according to the vocalic environment so followed by *e* and *i* as in *gente* and *giro*, it is pronounced /xẽn̪.te/ and /xi.ro/ respectively, but followed by *a* and *o* as in *gato* and *goma*, it is pronounced and /ga.to/ and /go.ma/, respectively.

If teachers regard Spanish as an easy language to learn, Horwitz (1985) indicates that they may attribute pupils' difficulties to their lack of ability or aptitude to learn foreign languages and in turn may opt for 'straightforward' grammar based strategies (Liu and Shi, 2007) to make the structure of the language more salient and accessible to pupils.

Teacher choice of approach may also be due to their beliefs surrounding how languages are best learnt. Borg (2011) points out that teachers' experiences of language learning when they were pupils themselves impact greatly on their current choice of approaches. For example, teachers may judge the GTM to be effective if it was instrumental in allowing them to acquire proficiency in the foreign language (Peacock, 2001). Farrell and Lim Poh Choo (2005) further point out that specific strategies within GTM such as drills and error corrections may feature strongly in teachers' current approaches if these strategies formed a significant part of their own learning experiences.

Teacher beliefs towards the purpose for learning a foreign language and the best perceived way to achieve that purpose may guide their choice of approach. Brown (2009) pointed out that teachers who believed in the purpose of foreign languages for real world communication favoured communicative approaches, although they incorporated explicit grammar strategies within their teaching. On the other hand,

Farrell and Lim Poh Choo (2005) pointed out that teachers who believed that languages must be produced accurately incorporated error correction strategies within grammar-based approaches.

Contextual factors may also impact on the degree to which teachers incorporate either approach in their teaching. Teacher perceptions concerning examination pressures (Underwood, 2012), large class sizes and limited class time (Nishino, 2008) may also influence teacher focus on grammar-based approaches whilst also incorporating elements of communicative approaches. Liu and Shi (2007), however, highlighted the pupils as a major contextual factor affecting the degree to which teachers incorporate either approach in their teaching. The age of pupils, their current proficiency level and teacher perceptions of their difficulties in learning can influence teacher decision making regarding choice of method (Liu & Shi, 2007).

2.7 Wider Influences on Teaching Approaches

In this section, I discuss wider influences on teaching approaches. Thus far, teaching approaches, general and specific to the Spanish classroom, have been discussed with particular reference to pupils who experience difficulties in learning. These approaches, however, need to be situated within the wider school system in which they are embedded. Several authors (see Quinn & Andrews, 2004; Hauserman & Stick, 2013; Lesinger, Dagli, Gazi, Yusoff, & Aksal, 2016) regard the organizational culture of schools, actions of senior administrators and other staff, policies and practice at schools as major influencers on teaching approaches. The way these school elements influence the approaches within the classroom is discussed below.

To outline school influences, I return to Ainscow and Miles's (2008) positioning that teachers are the agents of inclusion. They added that 'individual features of practice only make sense in relation to the whole' (Ainscow & Miles, 2008, p.22). Notwithstanding the importance of individual teaching approaches to pupil learning, Ainscow and Miles' (2008) perspective highlights the notion that consideration to the wider school environment is necessary to fully understand those approaches.

The actions of senior administrators are considered to be a significant influence on teaching approaches (Gurr, Drysdale & Murford, 2006) but the manner in which this influence is exerted is not straightforward but multidimensional. Lesinger et al. (2016) points out that principals exert influence on the overall school culture. They define

culture as the ‘system of habits, beliefs, values and behaviours and norms that shape the manner of people’ (p. 178). According to Lesinger et al. (2016), principals shape the school culture through expectations for teachers and pupils and policies and practices that are implemented. For example, discipline (previously discussed in this chapter), though relevant to individual classes, outflows from whole school ethos surrounding appropriate behaviour. In addition to the shaping of school culture, Eneume and Egwunyenga (2008) states that principals can exert a direct influence on teaching approaches through instructional input, for example checking lesson notes, supervising classroom teaching and offering advice and feedback. They added that these actions of the principal can impact teacher job performance positively but Kwan (2016) noted that without appropriate curricular knowledge, instructional input by principals can be negative. To assist Spanish teachers, for example, principals need appropriate knowledge of Spanish curricular content and constraints. Kwan (2016) also asserted that the positive impact of instructional input is not automatic but must exist within a framework of trust. Trust is encapsulated by principal confidence in teacher abilities, by respect and mutual regard between principal and teachers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Without these qualities within principal-teacher relationship, Kwan (2016) states that instructional input by principals will be ineffective.

Negative relationship dynamics between principals and teachers can affect teaching approaches. Blasé and Blasé (2007) stated that negative principal behaviour (unduly criticising teachers, making unreasonable demands, providing no recourse for teachers to vent issues against pupils, insults and name calling) can adversely affect teachers in the performance of their duties. Singh and Billingsley (1998), however, indicated that teachers can remain unaffected in the midst of negative principal behaviour where teachers are resilient. According to Coladarci (1992), teacher resilience in the face of opposition is a feature of high teacher efficacy.

Principal teacher relationship may represent an indirect influence on teaching approaches but is just one aspect of relationships that can exist within a school environment. Peer teacher relationship is another aspect and it may be beneficial for teachers of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. Teachers involved in a *Community of Practice,* a term coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) to describe positive working relationships, share their experiences and knowledge in free flowing, creative

ways that foster new approaches to problems (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p.140). Nonetheless Bredo (1980) pointed out that peer teacher relationships are not always beneficial to teaching approaches if teachers within the same department coerce teachers into adapting approaches contrary to their beliefs. Wenger and Snyder (2000) state that collaboration, advice and support from other teachers may support teachers in the face of pupils' difficulties.

In as much as teachers operate within wider school environments, schools operate within wider educational systems, which can exert a profound influence on teaching approaches (Lesinger et al., 2016). The way wider systemic policies and practice influence teaching approaches will now be discussed with particular reference to Trinidad and Tobago and other developing or non-Western contexts. Developing contexts experience unique challenges and constraints that are important to consider in addressing governmental influence on teaching approaches.

Trinidad and Tobago's adherence to EFA (MOE, 2012) and other global educational mandates has manifested in educational policy reform with the drive for quality teaching within a framework of pupil centred approaches as one offspring of this educational reform (James, 2010). However, empirical studies conducted in Trinidad and Tobago have found that the influence the Ministry of Education exerts at the school level, in some cases, impacts negatively on overall school operations which in turn affects teaching approaches. In his study of 14 secondary principals and 100 teachers from government and denominational schools, James (2010) found that the centralised system of education in which schools operate dictated principal action to the extent that the principals felt powerless to implement policies at the school level that suited their individual context. In turn, the teachers felt their roles whittled down to mindless application of the Ministry of Education's mandates and clamoured for more collaboration with the Ministry of Education (James, 2010). The participants in this study also highlighted the haste with which they were expected to implement government policy and emphasised the Ministry of Education's disregard for the intricacies of their individual school context (James, 2010). These findings resonate with another study by Conrad and Brown (2011) who researched the attitudes of 18 principals towards inclusion of pupils with special needs in Trinidad and Tobago. They found that the negative attitudes of the principals towards inclusion were due to the

Ministry of Education's drive to enforce inclusive projects at the school level without adherence to the financial, physical and material constraints of the schools. These studies highlight two pertinent and somewhat related issues for the education system in Trinidad and Tobago – centralisation and economic resources. Each will be discussed briefly. Centralisation will be discussed in relation to its antithesis, decentralisation.

Decentralisation is a phenomenon familiar to most education systems around the world (UNESCO, 2018). Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson (1989) define decentralisation as 'the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government to field agencies, subordinate units or levels of government…' (p.59). In education terms, decentralisation refers to the transfer of power from the central government to local educational districts and schools (Hlalele & Mashele, 2012). In referring to developed nations, van Amelsvoort and Jaap Scheerens (1997) highlighted that decentralisation of the education system has the possible effects of enhanced teacher quality, improved pupil performance and overall increased school effectiveness. They state that management control at the school level increases teacher autonomy which in turn positively affects teacher creativity, motivation and ability to cater for pupil learning needs.

Although Trinidad and Tobago has endeavoured to reinvent the education system along decentralisation lines (London, 1996), UNESCO (2018) noted that such an enterprise is challenging for developing nations. Economic constraints render the control of limited state funds at the district or school level difficult (UNESCO, 2018) as strict decision-making concerning expenditure is necessary. Allocation of resources in terms of personnel and materials is also governed by economic constraints.

In as much as decentralisation links positively to school effectiveness, centralisation produces opposite effects. In centralised systems, London (1996) indicated that teacher freedom to act in ways that benefit pupil learning is sacrificed for the sake of adherence to bureaucratic rules and regulations. In this sense, despite the inclusive education ethos promoted by the government of Trinidad and Tobago, the centralised system of governance may force teachers to act in ways contrary to this ethos.

The economic constraints of developing nations also have implications for teaching approaches. According to London (1993), limited financial resources may result in dilapidated infrastructure which Lackney (1994) states diminishes the comfort of the learning space for teachers and pupils. In Nigeria, Akindele and Fasakin (2014) noted that economic constraints resulted in poor classrooms and laboratories which limited the quality of tasks teachers can execute. As such, economic constraints can negatively affect teaching approaches with like effects on pupil learning. Sheperd (2011), however, challenged the notion that economic constraints automatically translate into poor quality teaching approaches. She argues that despite limited economic resources, some schools and even teachers can implement strategies to bring gains to pupil learning. Nevertheless, given the centralised system of education and limited economic resources, teachers working in government schools in Trinidad and Tobago may feel constrained in their teaching approaches.

Assessment for/of Learning which was previously discussed is not separate from wider educational aims to improve teacher quality. Wagner (2010) noted that educational quality is judged by degree of pupil learning which in turn is judged by test scores. In efforts to meet international standards, Wagner (2010) indicated that developing countries reassessed their assessment standards, which for Trinidad and Tobago resulted in more scrutiny of examination scores at the school level, closer monitoring of schools' assessment strategies and systematic recording of statistics (MOE, 2017a). Inevitably, the focus on assessments also brought a focus on teaching, albeit in negative ways in terms of 'teach to the test' approaches (Hursh, 2007).

The Ministry of Education may also exert influence on teaching approaches through class sizes. In Trinidad and Tobago, allocation of pupils to secondary schools depends on the Ministry of Education (DeLisle et al., 2012). Therefore, the onus is on the Ministry of Education to decide the number of pupils that attend each school. While Pedder (2006) states that the literature remains inconclusive regarding the effects of class size on teaching approaches, he also states that heavy enrolment of pupils in classes can limit the quality of teaching approaches, for example, the amount of attention teachers can devote to particular pupils. However, he warned that class size must be viewed in relation to other variables such as 'teacher resourcefulness, expertise, and personality characteristics' (p.223). In Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry

of Education exerts significant influence on teaching approaches, in direct and indirect ways. An investigation of teaching approaches, particularly for those who experience difficulties in learning, in government schools in Trinidad and Tobago would be incomplete without examining the role the Ministry of Education plays in policy and practice in this educational context.

2.8 Conclusion of This Chapter

This chapter has reviewed pertinent literature regarding teaching approaches for pupils who experience difficulties in learning. While the term ‘pupils who experience difficulties in learning’ is rarely used in the literature, the decision to use this term was justified and examined in the context of other terms such as ‘at risk learners’. While caution was taken against applying literature that related to pupils designated as having special educational needs, the supposition of Norwich and Lewis (2005) around the issue of ‘special approaches for special teaching’ provided a useful starting point for discussion of the teaching approaches presented here. General quality teaching approaches were discussed in addition to those directly related to the Spanish classroom. Specific issues that are noteworthy for Spanish teachers of pupils who experience difficulties in learning were discussed. The school and society structure were also discussed to encase teaching approaches within the wider influences. The developing nation context provides sociocultural and economic complexity to the examination of teaching approaches.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the methodological framework – the philosophical foundation, research design and ethical considerations – for this study.

3.2 Philosophical Foundation

The philosophical foundation, that is the ontological and epistemological beliefs which influenced the research design for this study, provides an adequate starting point for this chapter. Crotty (1998) asserts that research aims emerge out of the problems we see which in turn are influenced by our beliefs about the world. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) add that our research paradigm influences our interests and the issues we wish to investigate.

In this research, I aimed to research the teaching of pupils who experience difficulties in learning by answering the following questions: -

1. What teaching approaches are used with pupils who experience difficulties in learning by two Form two Spanish teachers in two government secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?
2. What are the perspectives of the teachers and pupils regarding teaching approaches in Spanish lessons?
3. How does wider education policy and practice influence the teachers' approaches for these pupils who experience difficulties in learning?

In line with Crotty's (1998) perspective, these research interests emerged out of my engagement with the education system in Trinidad and Tobago but are influenced by my beliefs that the experiences, events and circumstances were constructed by the people within the education system.

3.3 Interpretive Paradigm

To this end, the interpretive paradigm was deemed most appropriate for this study. Interpretivism adheres to the ontological belief that reality is actively and socially constructed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In contrast to positivism where reality is regarded as objective and fact based (Garrick, 1999), independent from human

influence, interpretivism states that humans in interactions with one another are actively constructing what is considered reality (Robson, 2011). Reality therefore represents a conglomeration of attitudes, perceptions and behaviours that are constantly changing and cannot be understood apart from the context they are created in (Garrick, 1999). In relation to this study, the phenomenon of teaching pupils who experience difficulties in learning was not a static, pre-existing construct but one that was constantly being moulded by the teachers, pupils and wider school system. The construction associated with teaching approaches, pupils who experience difficulties in learning and wider school and national influences was contextualised, dynamic and influenced by subjective notions of how the participants see the world (Flick, 2006).

3.4 Critical Theory Paradigm?

Interpretivism highlights the role of human interactions in reality construction. Critical Theory Paradigm acknowledges that not all roles are equal and seeks to unearth the power structures and ideologies that influence humans in construction of reality (Scott & Usher, 1999). According to Scott and Usher (1999), the role of critical theory is to 'unmask beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice and democracy' to engage in action that brings those about (p. 35). Within this paradigm, the researcher addresses the inequality and injustice that surrounds aspects of teaching and learning. Having this political aim for this research was conceivable as issues of equity and justice were likely to be pertinent in research regarding pupils who experienced difficulties in learning.

However, critical theory was deemed inappropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly, while I agree with looking at issues from ideological standpoints, the practical limitations of fieldwork make uncovering ideologies difficult if not impossible. Participants may not be aware of their ideologies let alone be able to express or confront them. Secondly, I contest the notion that interpretive studies merely describe and do not challenge the underlying forces that control human action. Describing the nuances in human interactions makes glimpses into the power structures in schools possible. Without a politicised agenda for change, interpretive studies can explore issues of inequality, injustice and participation (Scotland, 2012). It is not to say either that interpretive researchers cannot acknowledge the influence of wider society on

phenomena within schools. Without acknowledging the wider societal effects on teaching and learning in this study, understanding the phenomenon in context would have been jeopardized (Jones, 1998).

3.5 Epistemological Positioning

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge and regards what researchers and participants know and how they come to know what they know (Vasilchis de Gialdino, 2009). The epistemological stance for this study stems from the ontological positioning that meaning is constructed and reconstructed based on interactions in the social context (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Therefore, the teaching and learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning is not an objectively occurring phenomenon but is constructed daily by the teachers and pupils (Robson, 2011).

The epistemology for this study was influenced by aspects of phenomenology, although it should be noted that this study was not intended to be a phenomenological study. Phenomenology is described as a study of lived experiences of social groups (Kim, 2012). Lived experiences, on one level, entail the everyday interactions, conversations and activities that the participants are a part of but, on another level, entail the underlying meanings that are constructed as a result of engaging in human interactions (Ayer, 1956). Lester (1999) pointed out that knowledge is based on subjectivities – the personal perspectives and interpretations that individuals form about their world. According to Ayer (1956), it is the interpretations and perspectives of experiences rather than the experiences themselves that shapes the knowledge of participants. Both levels are of interest to this research.

The influences that phenomenology had for understanding knowledge in this study were drawn out of the connection between participant experiences and subsequent construction of those experiences. Firstly, since knowledge is dependent on experience and experiences vary, so would the knowledge that is subsequently constructed. As Ayer (1956) puts it

> Subjects have certain experiences and they are convinced of the truth of whatever it was that these experiences led them to assert (p. 24).

Knowledge, therefore is subjective and connected to the varied experiences of the participants. Allard-Poesi (2005) regards this subjective knowledge as the basis for

multiple realities. The concept of multiple realities suggests that in as much as the teachers and pupils are members of the same classroom, they may experience the same phenomenon differently and therefore hold different perspectives or realities concerning the phenomenon (Allard-Poesi, 2005). However, he contests the notion of shared meaning, as the ways persons experience situations are too diverse to be considered shared or even common. His viewpoint carries significance for this interpretive project in terms of the way everyone's perspective is important to creating a holistic picture of the phenomenon of teaching.

On the other hand, intersubjectivity considers how perspectives are constructed and reconstructed in relation to others (Cunliffe, 2011). Cunliffe (2011) does not deny the subjective nature of reality but acknowledges that this subjectivity may become intertwined with the subjectivity of others to the point that knowledge is renegotiated. In a classroom of several pupils with varying perspectives, it is possible that knowledge is altered through engagement with others (Cunliffe, 2011).

Adopting aspects of phenomenology within the epistemological positioning was useful to provide a context for how the 'knowledge' derived from the subjectivities of the participants was acknowledged and viewed. However, as pointed out earlier, this study was not intended to be a phenomenological study. For one, Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, viewed phenomenological researchers as those who detach their preconceived notions, assumptions and interpretations from situations (Brewer, 2011). However, detachment from the phenomena was neither possible nor necessary for my study. My own subjectivity in the research process was equally important (Smith & Pangsapa, 2011). Even though I did not want to impede the knowledge construction process of the participants by imprinting my own values, intentions and prejudices onto the data collection and interpretation process, as Smith and Pangsapa (2011) add, researcher subjectivities can be the very thing that enables access to the participants' knowledge construction.

The choice of methods also indicates that this study was not intended to be a phenomenological study. The methods used in this study were designed to allow the participants' perspectives regarding teaching and learning for pupils who experience difficulties in learning to emerge. The methods were, however, not designed to lead to

in-depth descriptions of the participants' life world (Todres and Holloway, 2004); this was especially important, given that it was not the aim of this research.

3.6 Qualitative Research Design

In regarding reality as socially constructed and subjected to the people and situations of a context, it was important to choose a research design that reflected this stance. Not every author agrees that the research design and paradigm are so intricately linked. Creswell (2014) states that research design should emanate from the topic rather than the philosophical stance as researchers need to ascertain the best way to answer their research questions, while Phillips and Burbules (2000) state that research designs are not paradigm specific and that any method can be used within any paradigm.

These perspectives were all important because in choosing qualitative research design, I considered the benefits to answering my research questions but also the suitability to investigating the subjectivities of the participants, the interconnectedness of their constructed realities and the context in which they are all created (Denzin & Lincoln, 1992). According to Chesebro and Borisoff (2007), qualitative research involves

> a focus on how people communicate in their natural settings, when they are guided by their own personal objectives, and how they give meaning to their communication, especially when they are using communication for those pragmatic objectives that determine and control day to day existence (p.12).

A qualitative approach therefore suited the aims of this research. According to Lichtman (2010), qualitative research uses methods that aim to discover and understand how participants experience their world. This process of sense making is facilitated through methods such as interviews and observations which allows for the capture of naturally occurring data and discovery of deep underlying perspectives regarding phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative research, however, raises some concerns for research with regard to the input of the researcher in the daily lives of participants. The researcher's first-hand interactions with participants create a contentious positioning within the research as the presence of the researcher may cause obstruction to the daily lives of the participants (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).

However, being ‘unobstructive’ in this research was unrealistic. Firstly, my interactions with the participants laid the foundation for the sense making that took place within the research (Lichtman, 2010). Although I aimed to reduce my influence within the field as much as possible, this influence was never totally eliminated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The value of qualitative research is, however, not within the elimination of this obstruction but how I used my input to assist the participants in making sense of their world. Holloway and Todres (2007) regard the researcher as a co-participant since the researcher is intricately involved with the participants in bringing to the fore their interpretations regarding the phenomenon.

3.7. Case Study Approach

This study adopted a case study approach. Creswell (1994) defined the case as a single instance or unit such as a person, a classroom or school. In this study, the unit is represented by two Form two Spanish classrooms in the two schools. Yin (1994), however, does not adhere to the strict boundary lines for a case and as such describes case studies as

> An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident (p. 16).

For Yin (1994), it is the phenomenon within the unit rather than the physical location that is paramount, but he acknowledges that the phenomenon cannot be separated from the physical location in which it occurs. For this research, the physical location and the phenomenon are therefore intertwined and crucial in investigating the teaching and learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

This detailed and specific capture of what happens in a context highlights the main benefit of case studies but also points to one of its apparent shortcomings. Silverman (2005) stated that case study findings are not easily applicable to large populations and this study which investigated two schools makes transposing the findings to other schools in Trinidad and Tobago problematic.

While it is agreed that widespread generalisability may not be possible for this study due to the limited number of cases, the goal of this research was not generalisability. In line with Yin’s (1994) view that case studies offer *understanding* of complex phenomena by providing rich descriptions of the processes embedded within the lives

of participants, this study sought to give insight into the teaching and learning that took place in these two schools for pupils who experience difficulties in learning with a view to highlighting some of the conditions and circumstances that surround these pupils' participation. Such an insight can bring understanding of the factors that promote or hinder their participation. While Bassey (1999) warns that not all educational research informs educational policy and practice, he advocates that the use of case studies in educational settings is highly beneficial to raising awareness of the complex issues surrounding teaching. Bassey (1999) also suggests that the inadvertent role of some educational research is to lay the groundwork for other researchers to build on, thereby increasing opportunity for impact on educational policy and practice.

This study adopted a dual case study design incorporating an urban and a rural secondary school. It was possible to conduct this research in only one school and investigate two Form two classes within that school. However, since the wider organizational structure of each school was also under investigation, it was deduced that investigating two classes within separate schools added a layer of complexity to data analysis and thus lend greater understanding to the phenomenon (Stake, 1995).

3.7.1 Urban and Rural Categorisation

The schools were designated as urban and rural. According to Montgomery (2008), urban and rural definitions can be amorphous and can vary from country to country or even region to region within the same country. In line with Öğdül (2010) definitions, urban and rural areas in Trinidad and Tobago are characterised by the density of the population, infrastructural and commercial development and degree of agricultural activity. The urban areas, in contrast to rural areas, are characterised by high density population, high rise buildings, hub of commercial activity and minimal agricultural activity. In the map of Trinidad (see Figure 3.1), the location of the urban school (Eagle School) is marked off by  and the rural school (Fairview School) is marked off by  .

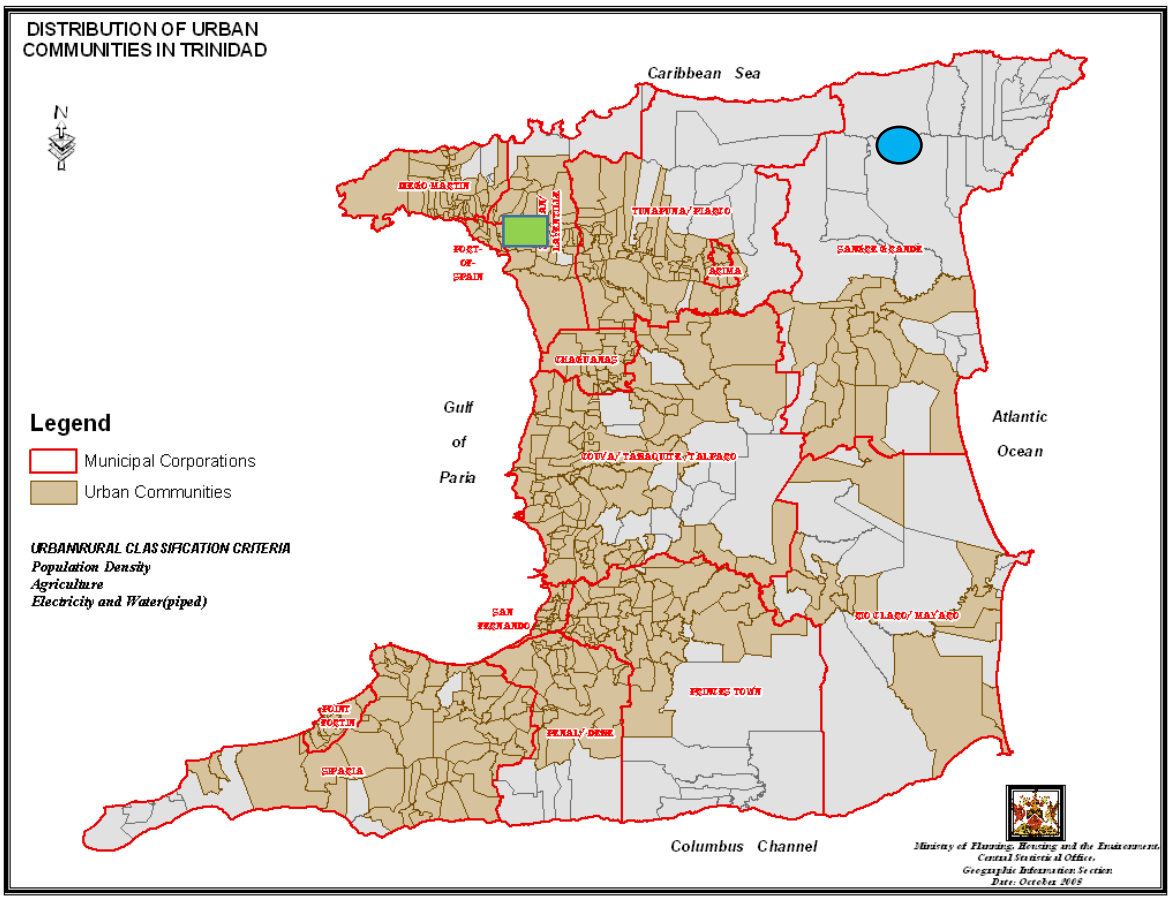


Figure 3. 1 – Map of urban and rural area distribution in Trinidad

3.7.2 Description of the Case

Eagle School

Eagle School is located in North Trinidad. Although this school is not considered to be in a high crime area, a large proportion of the school population reside in high crime areas. It converted from a Junior Secondary to a five-year secondary school in 2007. The school has a population of 700 pupils. There are six Form one, Form two, Form three and Form four classes and five Form fives.

The staff consists of the Principal, Vice Principal and a team of 13 Middle Managers including seven Deans of Discipline and Academic Studies. There are 57 teachers of which three are Spanish teachers.

The teacher for the research class is Ingrid. She was in her late forties and a qualified Spanish teacher with 25 years teaching experience. She has taught at Eagle School for 23 years, her second teaching assignment. Despite her length of service, she only

recently completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Education. Spanish is the sole subject she teaches but she also performs Form teacher duties. She normally teaches Form one to five but in the academic year the research was conducted, she taught Forms one, two, three and five. Her classes included three Form twos. She considered all the pupils in the Form twos to experience difficulties in learning. The pupils' ages ranged from 12 – 15 years. There were 17 boys and 10 girls who mostly came from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Fairview School

Fairview is in the eastern part of the country. The school was formally a Junior Secondary School, converting to a five-year secondary school in 2006. The school's population is 700 pupils. There are five Form one, Form two and Form three classes with four Form four classes and five Form fives. The staff consists of the Principal, the Vice Principal, nine Middle Managers and regular teachers. There are 66 teachers at the school, four of which are Spanish teachers.

The teacher of the research class, Lorena, was is in her twenties. She has not pursued a formal teaching qualification but holds a Master of Arts in Spanish. She has been a teacher at Fairview School for seven years, which is her second teaching assignment. Spanish is the sole subject she teaches along with Form teacher duties.

The Form two class contained pupils who were considered to be of mixed ability. There were 15 boys and 18 girls with an age range of 12-15 years. The portion of the class who are considered to experience difficulties in learning was moderate and consisted of mostly boys. The pupils came from low to middle income homes.

3.7.3 Criteria for Schools

The two schools were carefully selected. Robson (2011) suggests that the criteria for selecting schools determines the suitability of the schools to the research aims which Cohen et al. (2011) adds is necessary to ensure the validity of the findings.

Schools were selected based on their enrolment of pupils who attain between 0 and 30% at the SEA examination. The Division for Educational Research and Evaluation (DERE), the department of the Ministry of Education that manages educational statistics for Trinidad and Tobago schools, holds information that is not publicly

available and can only be accessed through special request. The assistance of this Department was sought to identify schools that had an intake of pupils who scored between 0-30 percent in the SEA examination. The exact number of pupils in these schools was supplied by DERE whilst maintaining the anonymity of the pupils.

Eagle School and Fairview School received a disproportionate number of these pupils. It is not to say that all pupils who scored between 0-30% were considered to experience difficulties in learning nor that pupils who scored above this cut off mark did not experience difficulties themselves. As indicated in previous chapters, difficulties in learning are likely to be experienced by all pupils at some point in their school careers. Performance in the SEA examination was therefore not considered an indication of inherent difficulties but of difficulties in learning that relate to coping in the education system in Trinidad's schools.

I omitted schools that experienced grave indiscipline or violence issues. With insider knowledge of the Trinidad society, I considered the unfortunate effect violence has on certain schools and the hindrance to research that would have caused. Additionally, Robson (2011) points out that the safety of researchers is an important consideration as researcher's concerns about safety in or around the schools can affect the quality of data collected.

It was also important that the schools were of mixed gender. The teaching of solely boys or girls raises specific gender related issues that were outside the scope of this research. It is not to say that the way the teacher dealt specifically with either gender was not noteworthy.

Once determining and identifying a range of suitable schools, permission had to be sought from the Ministry of Education to conduct the study. An official application outlining the aims of the research along with the research design and samples of the observation and interview schedules were sent to the Chief Education Office. Upon being granted permission, I was furnished with letters granting me access to all schools in the nation.

3.7.4 Selection Process for Schools

A random selection process was used to select the urban and rural school from amongst the schools that received pupils who scored between 0-30% on the SEA examinations. Although all government secondary schools received pupils who met this performance criterion, not all schools received a significant proportion of these pupils. Some schools on the list had less than five pupils who scored between 0-30% on the SEA examinations and were therefore omitted from the selection process. Out of 30 schools, 14 schools were selected for the next tier of selection. The remaining 14 schools had 10 -132 pupils who fulfilled the performance criterion for this study. The urban schools were separated from the rural. Out of the 14 schools, there were nine designated as urban and five as rural. The urban schools were placed in separate envelopes and then numbered. On a random number table, a cluster of numbers were randomly chosen so that a number corresponding to an urban school could be reached. As there were nine urban schools, the numbers were taken in single digits. Where the chosen numbers did not correspond to a number allocated to a school, the next number was considered. This process continued until a number that was allocated to a school was selected. This process was repeated for the rural schools.

In the end, Eagle School was selected as the urban school and Fairview School as the rural school. However, Eagle and Fairview were not the first schools chosen for their category. Upon visiting the schools that were selected first, the Principals or Heads of Department refused to participate in the study. The random selection process was therefore repeated each time until consenting schools were found. Additional issues regarding ethics are discussed in a subsequent section.

3.8 Participants

To select the participants for this study, a purposive sampling strategy was used. According to Creswell (2014), such a strategy deliberately targets participants due to characteristics they possess. It was necessary to choose Form two classes that contained pupils who were considered to experience difficulties in learning. These pupils were identified by the teachers as pupils who exhibited low attainment and achievement, disengaged behaviour, poor attendance and indiscipline. In addition to these pupils, their Spanish teachers and their classmates (except those who refused

participation) formed the participant group. As the observations took place in the regular Spanish class, pupils who refused participation were still expected to attend. However, notes were not recorded on them.

3.8.1 Research with Children

Before discussing data collection methods, it is important to acknowledge briefly the issue of including children (pupils) as participants in this research. Some issues related to their participation, for example, building relationship and dissent, are discussed throughout this chapter. However, it is worth discussing my positioning regarding their inclusion in this research project.

The ontological stance of this research is that the participants, including the pupils, are actively constructing their reality and therefore hold specific perspectives concerning the events and circumstances around them. Contrary to the stance that children are incompetent in expressing these perspectives (Christensen & Prout, 2002), it was acknowledged in this research that the pupils could articulate their opinions regarding teaching and learning in their Spanish class (Gallagher, 2008). This positioning is in line with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12, which states that children have the right to be heard on matters concerning them (UN, 1989).

Expression of perspectives on the part of the child is, however, not a straightforward issue. Punch (2002) states that the sociocultural context in which children exist filter into notions of childhood which may limit their freedom of expression in research. In Trinidad and Tobago, where teachers and by extension adults have authoritative control over children, pupil's may be unwilling to 'open up', especially in cases where their teachers may be implicated (Punch, 2002). With this in mind, Christensen and Prout (2002) state that it is vital to involve methods that are sensitive to the concerns of pupils. The chosen data collection methods for the pupils are discussed in the next section. The particular ethical considerations regarding the pupils are discussed later.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

Data for this research was collected using three main methods: non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews and task-based interviews. The non-

participant observations were conducted with members of the class. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two Spanish teachers and with selected pupils from each class. The task-based interviews were conducted with all the pupils from Fairview School and four girls from Eagle School. Table 3.1. presents an overview of type of data collected and Table 3.2 presents the structure for data collection.

Data Collection Method	Eagle School	Fairview School	Particulars
Non-Participant Observations	6	6	Eagle – 40 minutes Fairview – 35 minutes
Semi-Structured Interviews – Teacher	2	2	35-40 minutes each
Semi-Structured Interviews – Pupil	3	5	8-12 minutes each
Task-Based Interviews	1 group of 4 pupils	3 groups of 6 pupils 1 group of 2 pupils	15-20 minutes each

Table 3. 1 – Overview of data collection methods for each school

Data Collection Phases

Phase one

RECONNAISANCE PHASE	Duration of Time
Preliminary Observations of Schools and Informal Interactions with Staff and Pupils.	4 (2 weeks in each school)

Phase two

School	Method of Data Collection	Duration of Time
Eagle School	Observations Task-Based Interviews Semi-Structured Interviews	3 weeks 1 day 1 day
Fairview School	Observations Task-Based Interviews Semi-Structured Interviews	3 weeks 2 days 1 day

PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS

Phase three

School	Method of Data Collection	Duration of Time
Eagle School	Observations Semi-Structured interviews (Teacher) Semi-Structured Interviews (Pupil)	2 weeks 1 day 2 days
Fairview School	Observations Semi-Structured interviews (Teacher) Semi-Structured Interviews (Pupil)	2 weeks 1 day 2 days

Table 3. 2 – Structure for data collection over three phases (12 weeks in total)

As shown in Table 3.2, data collection commenced with a two-week Reconnaissance Phase in each school which facilitated familiarity with each school. Hockey (1993) advocated this phase for researchers who are unfamiliar with their research settings and require a period of 'nurturing and socializing guidance' (p.201) from members of the field. Without this 'socialization' process, O'Leary (2017) states that the researcher would remain unaware of the politics, relationships and history of situations that are key to understanding meaning making. During the Reconnaissance Phase, I interacted with several staff and pupils, observed school practices and sat in various teaching sessions. This phase facilitated my transition from being a stark outsider to someone with an understanding of the systems at each school (Hockey, 1993). This Phase was also important to allow the participants to grow accustomed to my presence at the school.

Following the Reconnaissance Phase, Phase two of data collection was implemented. This Phase signalled the start of formal data collection. During this phase, I oriented myself to the teaching approaches (teaching topics, teaching strategies, teacher behaviour, teacher pupil interactions) of both Spanish teachers, became more familiar with the pupils (pupil behaviour, pupil peer interactions) and the physical surroundings of the classroom.

The data collected in Phase two was analysed and several themes emerged related to Pace, Discipline, Peer Support, Attention to Particular Pupils, Types of Strategies. These themes represented points of more focused observations in Phase three. From the analysis of Phase two data, it was decided that it was best to interview individual pupils even though this was not part of the initial research plan as I felt that to gain more intimate understanding of the issues in Phase two, I needed to interview some pupils as well.

The data collection methods will now be discussed.

3.9.1 Non-participant Observations

To investigate teaching approaches with pupils who experience difficulties in learning, it was necessary to enter the real-life context where these teaching approaches take

place (Flick, 2014) to gain first-hand knowledge of what the teachers actually do (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Non-participant observations were used for this purpose.

Clarification concerning what is meant by *non-participant* observations is necessary. Participant observations is sometimes defined as observations where the researcher enters the real-world context of participants, builds relationship and takes part in activities (Kemp, 2001) while with non-participant observations, the researcher does not build relationship with the participants, does not take part in activities, remains distant from the participant (Patton, 2002) and in some extreme cases does not inform the participants that they are being observed (Robson & McCarten, 2016). This research, however, did not adhere to those principles. For this research, non-participant observations meant that while I endeavoured to build relationships with the participants and interact with the participants (albeit not in the intense way as participant observations), I endeavoured to not participate in classroom activities hence *non-participant.*

Non-participant observations did not completely erase my 'participation' in the classroom. Once I entered the classrooms, I 'participated' by infusing my presence in the classroom to capture data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Furthermore, my presence was undeniable to the teachers and pupils who held conversations with me during observations (Kemp, 2001). However, non-participant observations were necessary for two reasons. Firstly, in noting the socio-cultural positioning of teachers in Trinidad and Tobago where they are regarded as authority figures in their classrooms, their autonomy could have been perceived as threatened by my intense engagement with the pupils. Maintaining a 'distance' from the activities while still engaging my senses seemed a reasonable compromise. This stance was not only useful for the teachers but also the pupils, as invading their personal space while they struggled to grasp subject content may have been counterproductive for both their learning and this research.

Secondly, my former position as a teacher could have hampered my unbiased engagement with the participants. The observations represented an area where my past teaching experience could have influenced the research the most as they incorporated a first-hand look at the approaches of another Spanish teacher.

Therefore, adopting a stance of non-involvement in classroom activities was one way to constrain the influence of my teaching background (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

The observations were split into two phases. For both phases, a structured observation schedule (Opie, 2004) was not used but rather what Spradley (1980) called a 'protocol of situation' (see Appendix I). These refer to activities and situational features' that are crucial to answering the research questions. A structured observation schedule was deemed inappropriate for this research as what constituted crucial was not known from the onset (Flick, 2014). I now outline the particulars of the observations.

Particulars of Observations

Each school ran a Day six timetable instead of a Monday to Friday timetable. A Day six timetable meant that classes were scheduled according to the Day of the timetable rather than the day of the week. For example, Day two having Spanish at period three at Fairview could have fallen on a Tuesday in one week and a Wednesday the following week. This created complexity to organising observations in the Form two class for any given week. At Eagle, the pupils had Spanish on their Day one and Day three while Fairview pupils had Spanish every day. It was my aim to observe the classes at Fairview on the days that Eagle School did not have Spanish, but this did not work out quite as succinct in the field. The schools' timetables were not synced so a Day 1 at Eagle may have been a Day 3 at Fairview. Also, I had to confirm with each teacher their availability for observations on the day of observations. On one occasion, after confirming an observation with Lorena the day before and driving for two hours to her school, observations were cancelled due to a Divali concert that day. For this reason, observations had to be confirmed on the day. I also depended on the teachers to keep track of the Days as the schools cancelled a Day or repeated a Day because of an event or a circumstance, for example, if there was no water or electricity or some other situation that detracted from actual teaching on that day. (see Appendix II for Observation Timeline).

Once within the classroom, the actions of the teacher and pupils were observed and recorded in a copybook which was then transferred to the laptop (see Appendix III for an excerpt of these notes). Aspects related to the protocol of situation as mentioned

by Spradley (1980) were recorded. These include space, activity, goal and feelings. See Appendix I for the description of each school using these factors.

Building Relationships

Developing trust and rapport with the participants was necessary for the observations (Glesne, 1989). For this research, trust represented a spiralled process. The more the participants trusted me, the more they seemed comfortable to share which evoked more trust on their behalf. Trust was built through rapport with the participants and formed the bedrock for my continued existence in the classes but also served a greater methodological purpose. The observations entailed my physical presence in the classroom, thereby increasing the possibility of hampering the flow of activities or behaviours that would have normally occurred otherwise. This *Hawthorne Effect*, as recounted by a number of authors (see Creswell, 2014, Cohen et al, 2011) is deemed detrimental and unproductive to research. Although Robson and McCarten (2016) states it is difficult for researchers to determine what is 'usual' behaviour as observations are time and space locked constructs, observing as natural as possible behaviour was desired for this research and crucial to answering the research questions.

The following is an account of how rapport was built with some pupils at Fairview.

'Miss, I know she'

One day, during the Reconnaissance Phase, I was looking for a quiet space to have lunch and I was graciously offered a chair by a security employee. While eating, some Form two pupils surrounded us. They started asking me questions concerning my presence at the school. After learning that my research would be conducted in a Spanish class, they began asking me how to say things in Spanish. Over the subsequent days, it became their expectation that I would have lunch with them. These pupils ended up being in my research class. In the session to gain informed consent, one pupil (with whom I had lunch regularly) exclaimed to the teacher, 'Miss, I know she'. He indicated that he, along with his parents, would be happy to give consent.

Rapport building was even more crucial for the teachers as they were the gatekeepers of the classrooms (Kennedy-Macfoy, 2013). From the start of the Reconnaissance Phase, WhatsApp connections were created. This facilitated communication outside

of work hours. WhatsApping in conjunction with lunch time 'limes' (Trinidadian word for socializing) facilitated a building of rapport.

3.9.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers and selected pupils. According to Cohen et al. (2011), semi-structured interviews contain a set of open-ended questions pertaining to the research questions which allows flexibility in the structure and free flow of information.

The semi-structured interviews served two purposes – firstly, as a method in tandem with the observations to triangulate the data (Robson, 2011) and, secondly, as a tool to gain insight into the teachers' and pupils' opinions and experiences regarding the teaching approaches (Flick, 2014). The interview is therefore not merely an exchange of words between researcher and participant but rather a mutual engagement in the process of meaning making (Creswell, 2014) which contrasts with Longhurst's (2003) view that interviews are simply 'question and answer' sessions with participants.

Why Semi-Structured Interviews?

Semi-structured interviews were deemed more appropriate than structured or unstructured interviews based on the level of structure and flexibility it offers (Opie, 2004). Participants can share their insights in an open yet focused way to address the issues crucial to answering the research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) but it is not to say that the semi-structured interviews were without limitations.

Power Relations

In as much as the interviews allowed the exploration of mutual understanding, according to Tracy and Robles (2010), the asymmetric relationship between researcher and participant may become more pronounced. This perceived asymmetric relationship can potentially limit the free flow of participant information with negative effects on data quality. The perception that I was an 'expert' in the field of Special Needs and Inclusive Education with a teaching background in a high performing school may have created an imbalance with the teachers. Furthermore, they were addressing *my* questions and concerns and therefore they may have perceived that I was in control of the interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

For me, however, the perceived asymmetry was bidirectional as I saw my participants as having a great measure of control. It was their experiences, beliefs and thoughts

that I sought, and they were in control of how much they were willing to share. Furthermore, as they were guaranteed their rights to withdraw or refuse participation (Robson, 2011), they had the power to limit the quality of information they gave or worse, choose to not give any information at all.

For the pupils, however, this asymmetry of power presented new challenges to the interview process. Whereas the teachers may have regarded the interviews as an interaction between two adults, for the pupils, an age differential was introduced that may have also translated into an authority differential (Christensen, 2004). The authority differential could have made them reluctant to share or say negative things about their teacher. Although the power differential can never be totally erased (Cohen et al., 2011), it was my goal to make the participants at ease to interact and share. It was my experience that the pupils were willing to share their experiences, even negative experiences with their teacher.

Particulars of the Interviews

The two Spanish teachers along with three pupils at Eagle and five pupils at Fairview were interviewed. The pupils were identified by their Spanish teachers as having the most difficulties in learning citing low attainment, poor learning attitude, poor attendance and literacy gaps. The teachers were interviewed at the end of Phase two and three. The pupils were interviewed at the end of Phase three. Galetta (2013) advocates having interviews conducted over several sessions as it allows time to focus on particular topics while giving time for points to be revisited. The first teacher interview concentrated on the teaching approaches and issues from the observations. The second teacher interview focused on the wider influences on the teaching approaches.

Interview Schedule

The starting point of the interview process was the interview schedule, that is, the list of questions used with the participants (see Appendix IV for teachers' and pupils' interview schedule) which should correspond to the research questions (Opie, 2004). In as much as I wanted the teachers' perspectives regarding their teaching approaches, it was not the case that I wanted them share everything they knew about the phenomenon. There was neither time nor necessity for that. In relating the questions to the research aims, the interviews became more focused and structured. However, as the participants were free to share their thoughts and experiences, data

emerged that was not directly related to the research questions, but which still held relevance to understanding the learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

According to Opie (2004), questions should not be leading but should be clear and open-ended. Great care was taken to ensure that the participants were not asked any questions that 'begged an answer' or that coerced them to respond in a particular way. Having a schedule did not mean that I adhered strictly to its content (Gillham, 2000). The teachers addressed questions already on the schedule, thereby cancelling the need to ask them. Questions were also asked that were not on the schedule. These questions, called probes, were asked to gain greater clarification or explanation from the teachers (Flick, 2014). According to Gillham (2000), probes are useful as they allow the participants to give more insight and clarity to their words (Galetta, 2013). For me to understand the participants' points of view, it was necessary to not make assumptions on the meanings they attached to their experiences (Gillham, 2000) and probes allowed me to gain further clarification.

Greater explanation and elaboration were also facilitated through silent pauses. In some instances, after the participants responded, I remained silent until they continued their point and elaborated. Gillham (2000) regards these silent pauses as important to creating a space for participants to elaborate further.

Structure of the Interview

Gillham (2000) guideline for interviews, as shown in Figure 3.2, was used to structure the interviews for this research.

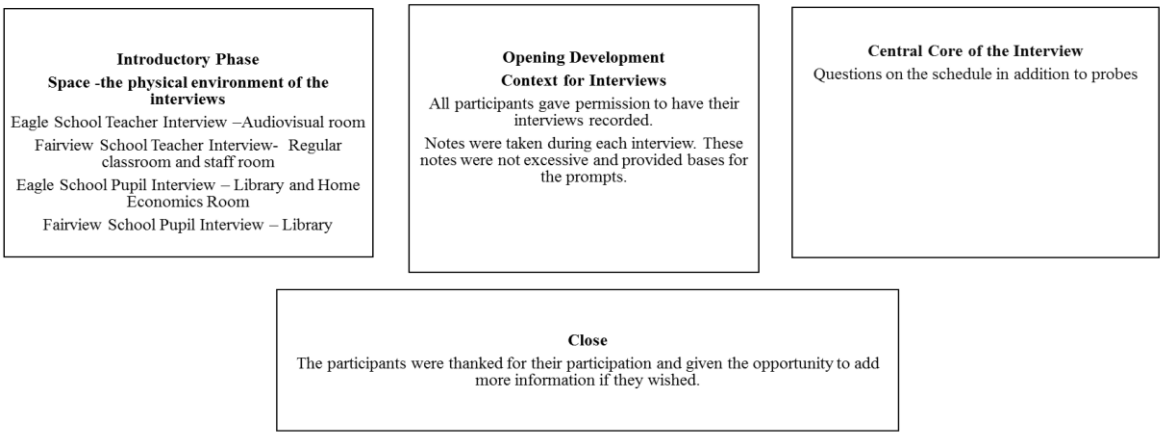


Figure 3. 2 – Structure of the Interview

Particulars of Teacher Interviews
Eagle School

- Introductory Phase

Eagle School teacher interviews, which lasted between 36 and 44 minutes, took place after school in the AV room. The teacher and I sat on two pupil desks facing each other.

- Opening Development/Context for Interviews

Permission was sought from the teacher to record the interviews on two mobile phones and to supplement the recordings with note taking (which provided the basis for probes and clarifications). The teacher was informed of her rights to participate or withdraw.

- Central Core of the Interview

The interview schedule (questions related to teaching approaches and pupils who experienced difficulties in learning) was executed.

- Close

The teacher was thanked for participating and asked if there was anything she would like to add.

Fairview School teacher interviews were conducted similarly to Eagle School except that the first teacher interview took place in the classroom next to the staffroom whilst the second interview took place in the staffroom in a quiet space. Both interviews were conducted during school hours and lasted between 28 and 33 minutes.

Particulars of Pupil Interviews
Eagle School

- Introductory Phase

Eagle School pupil interviews, which lasted between eight and 15 minutes, took place in the school library during school hours. The pupil and I sat adjacent to each other. As the library desks were larger, to sit opposite meant that I would have been too far from the pupils.

- Opening Development/Context for Interviews

Permission was sought from the pupils to record the interviews on two mobile phones and to take slight notes. The pupils were informed of their rights to participate or withdraw from the interview at any time.

- Central Core of the Interview

The interview schedule (questions related to teaching approaches and their own learning) was executed.

- Close

The pupils were thanked for their participation and asked if there was anything they would like to add.

At Fairview School, a similar structure for the individual pupil interviews was used

3.9.3 Task-Based Interviews

Houssart and Evens (2011) define task-based interviews as those that require children to perform a task while discussing the topic at hand. They build upon the concept of the focus group. Robson (2011) describes focus groups as interviews conducted in groups which involve many other complex issues that are not included with one-on-one interviews. The hybrid, task-based interviews were no exception to this. The issues that emerged as well as the particulars of the task are discussed below.

Particulars for the Task-Based Interviews

The task-based interviews surrounded an activity whereby pupils had to write their opinions surrounding four questions on pieces of coloured Bristol board with coloured markers (a factor which added interest for the pupils).

The four questions were

1. What are some of the ways your teacher teaches you?
2. What does she do that helps your learning the most?
3. Does she do anything that is not helpful to your learning? If so, what?
4. What would you like to see her do that would be helpful to your learning?

Figure 3.3 below demonstrates an example of a response for the first question from a pupil at Eagle School (see Appendix V for more examples).

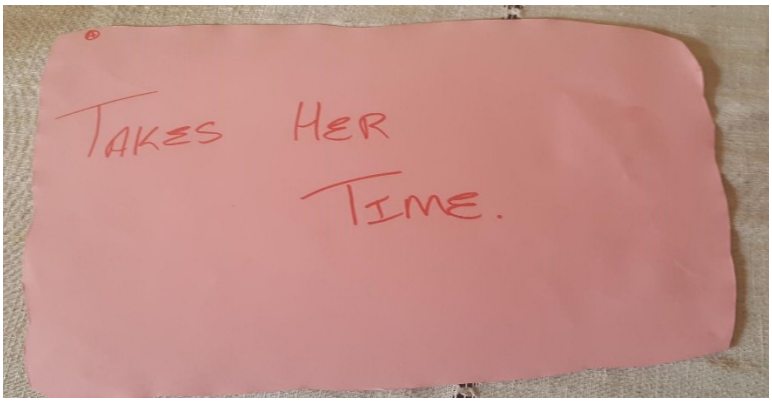


Figure 3. 3 – Example of Task-Based Interview response from Eagle School

After writing their responses, the pupils were required to show their responses to the rest of the group which generated discussions. Pupils agreed or disagreed with what other pupils said and gave justifications for their positioning. One such disagreement occurred at Eagle School. One pupil wrote *Miss sings* however the rest of the group disagreed with this approach by stating 'Miss never sing to we'. The pupil then gave instances to justify her point. These 'disagreements' added richness to the discussions as it was interesting to witness how the pupils constructed meaning with one another.

Eagle School Particulars of Task-Based Interviews

For Eagle School, only one task-based interview was conducted and it took place in the AV room during a Spanish period. Only four girls participated as the rest of the class refused participation. This was not a reflection of the activity itself but the general attitude of the pupils within this class to 'extra work'. Nevertheless, the girls shared their perspectives in a rich and meaningful way.

The interview lasted 30 minutes. The children sat around a table with Bristol board pieces. They were free to choose as many as they liked to write their perspectives regarding the three questions above. However, they were told to put only one idea on a sheet. This was to ensure clarity during the discussions. The pupils seemed open in sharing and justified their answers with examples.

Fairview School Particulars of Task-Based Interviews

All the pupils at Fairview were eager to participate and some stated that the activity was interesting to them. However, their eagerness to participate may also have been because their presence at the interview translated into absence from class. The children were put into groups of six. Punch (2002) suggests five to six persons as an appropriate number for these groups. To me, an adequate number is one where there were enough persons to generate rich discussion but also where the group was manageable. Six persons therefore represented the maximum number to have in one group. As far as possible, the groups contained three boys and three girls. The pupils were interviewed on a circular table and chair outside their regular classroom. The Bristol board pieces were placed in a pile in front of them. Like Eagle School, they were free to choose as many to note their ideas but only one idea was allowed on each piece. The interviews lasted 30 minutes. Not all the interviews took place within Spanish period, but permission was sought from the other subject teachers to conduct the interviews.

The task-based interviews were beneficial to the aims of this research as it encouraged openness among children (Punch, 2002) which may be due to sharing amongst people they were familiar with (Punch, 2002). This familiarity encouraged rapport within the group and willingness to engage (Punch, 2002). Houssart and Evens (2011) added that the group gives confidence to more reticent children to express themselves. Indeed, this was the case at both schools. As pupils began to write their opinions and start the discussions, other pupils seemed more comfortable to join in.

The group dynamic was also beneficial for the asymmetric power dynamic between myself and the pupils. Milligan (2016) asserts that group interviews are useful in eroding the seemingly power imbalance that may exist between researcher and pupil. Houssart and Evens (2011) adds that the numerical imbalance between researcher and pupils and the support of peers contributes to this erosion.

3.10 Reflexivity

In this section, I reflect on my own personal and professional positioning within this research project as I felt it was important to acknowledge how these positionings

affected the research. I built reflexivity into this research project for two reasons. Firstly, the research project finds its genesis in my personal assessment of the gaps in the Trinidad and Tobago education system. Therefore, my opinions and biases towards the system required radical confrontation from the beginning of this research project (Etherington, 2004). This process of acknowledging and confronting my internal positioning was an important step to reducing personal bias, and thereby increasing the trustworthiness of the findings (Finlay, 2002).

The second reason surrounds the ontological and epistemological stance taken for this research and how my consciousness about my own subjectivity provided the foundation for other subjectivities within the research to emerge. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, this study adopted a phenomenological approach which encourages the understanding of lived experiences of the participants. I reflected that it was the participants' lived experiences that were the catalyst of this research project and allowing their thoughts, perspectives and opinions to emerge was desirable, but moreover primal to the success of this research. Band-Winderstein, Doran and Naim (2014) advocates a system of transparency whereby the researcher examines her subjective positioning at every stage of the research.

However, while I wanted to address my subjectivity, it was not my goal to completely erase my subjectivity from this research project. That was neither possible nor necessary. It is my subjectivity that plays a role in the knowledge construction with the participants to bring matters pertinent to understanding the phenomenon to the conscious level (Band-Winderstein et al., 2014). Without my subjective input, it may be the case that such exposure of the participants' perspectives is not possible (Finlay, 2002).

Nevertheless, it is not my lived experiences that were the goal of this research but the participants' and I did not want my personal notions or previous lived experiences to taint my understanding of their lived experiences. Reflexivity allowed me to address my subjectivity with the aim of allowing the flow of perspectives from the participants. I adopt Band-Winderstein et al.'s (2014) method of addressing reflexivity within every phase of this research project.

3.10.1 Pre-Research Phase

The issues that led to my research have already been discussed in Chapter one. Noteworthy were the range of emotions I felt in confronting my educational experiences. I felt frustrated and disempowered as a teacher in Tobago, in a school where the pupils were not expected to perform well and indeed many lived up to this expectation. From time to time, I would observe the teaching of my colleagues or listen to stories in the staffroom and I quickly came to realise that teaching in this school followed a distinct mould of textbook heavy 'chalk and talk'. I wondered if these methods, though prolific, were effective in transforming the learning of these pupils or in some way contributing to the pupils' difficulties.

Reflecting on my teacher practice, I acknowledge the role I played in the construction of the pupils' difficulties regarding them as an outworking of the pupils' lack of effort. I had to confront notions of ability and difficulties and the place my own teaching approaches played in their construction but also acknowledge that these constructions may happen unconsciously to teachers. I therefore had to confront areas of judgment in examining the teaching methods of the teachers for this research.

I also had to confront comparisons in approaches between the two teachers and what I would do as a teacher as this study was not intended to be an evaluation of approaches but a description. Given this positioning, my notions about the attitudes and approaches of teachers needed to be confronted, as I risked the possibility of funnelling the approaches I observed during my data collection through a mould of my preferred approaches.

3.10.2 Data Collection Phase

The 'emptying' of my personal attitudes and notions continued into the data collection phase. However, I acknowledged that I could never be fully 'emptied' and it was my background and experiences that acted as a pivot point for my engagement in the field. I needed to confront my bias as I was an outsider to the two research schools and therefore had to be open to what I would eventually see and hear.

My outsider-insider positioning in this research was defined by my role as a researcher unfamiliar with the schools and as a Trinidadian and former teacher in Trinidad. The issues surrounding my outsider-insider positioning are discussed below.

3.10.3 Outsider Positioning

My outsider positioning existed on two levels. The first level was attributed to my research intentions. My primary goal for entering the field was to engage with the participants to gain understanding about the teaching and learning of pupils who experienced difficulties. My primary role in the field was therefore a researcher and, despite my nationality, I was at the schools to critically observe and gather data related to my research aims (Hellawell, 2006). For this purpose, I relished being an outsider in the sense that I was not a current member of the education system, far less the research schools. According to Hellawell (2006), this outsider positioning was beneficial because outsiders can more easily notice and challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions. However, in contrast to Hellawell's (2006) view that outsider positioning leads to greater objectivity, I reiterate that objectivity was never my goal. For this project, I acknowledged that I can never be truly objective. I sought rather to use my outsider positioning to increase understanding of the phenomenon.

The second level of my outsider positioning was more critical to the research as it entails my initial engagement with the field. Although I have taught in a secondary school in Trinidad, the school I taught at was a denominational school. Therefore, not only the physical environment of the research schools was strange but the culture, the organization and discipline structure which all filtered into the learning of pupils who experience difficulties. I recounted how 'brand new' everything seemed – the uniform of the pupils, the mannerisms of the Principals and Vice Principals, the interactions of the teachers and pupils with one another. The peculiarity was beneficial in applying a *tabula rasa* stance to learn as much as possible about the two research schools.

3.10.4 Insider Positioning

Despite my outsider positioning emanating from my position as a researcher from a foreign university, I could not deny that possessing certain personal characteristics worked to my advantage in the field. These characteristics afforded me an insider positioning that brought great benefits to this research project. Wegener (2014) describes the insider researcher as 'someone who has lived in familiarity with the group being researched' (p.154). Considering these definitions, the view that familiarity can only be achieved through being a member of the workforce at the school has been

challenged (Hellawell, 2006). Rather, Hellawell (2006) states that intimate knowledge can be gained through familiarity with the socio-political context in which the schools are embedded. I was a member at neither research school but nevertheless had insider positioning that came with being a citizen and former teacher of Trinidad and Tobago. However, I acknowledged that familiarity afforded to me through nationality may not automatically translate into familiarity amongst the participants.

Familiarity by nationality was beneficial in terms of the background knowledge of the Trinidad and Tobago education system which made me privy to national educational issues. I discuss below the various areas where my nationality and former teacher status had been influential in this research project.

Trinidad English Creole

The coexistence of Trinidad English Creole (TEC) and English was mentioned in Chapter one. TEC was common amongst the pupil population and was their language of choice for oral communication. Trinidad English Creole may pose comprehension difficulties for foreigners, but as I understood and spoke Trinidad English Creole, comprehensibility of the teachers and pupils was facile. This immediate ability to understand the pupils provided access into their world and a basis to build rapport with them. On many occasions, the teachers used local expressions such as ‘bacchanal’ and ‘throw waist’ which I understood immediately.

Physical Traits

My ability to build rapport with the teachers and staff seemed to be further enhanced by sharing physical traits with the participants. I thought about the apprehension that might have arisen had I been of another ethnicity from the same University.

Structure of School Terms

In designing my fieldwork, I considered the way the school terms are structured and the best time periods to schedule the observations and interviews. I knew that I had to consider the public holidays which were as frequent as one per week. During fieldwork, the schedule was seriously affected by the number of public holidays and the school events associated with them, for example, the previously mentioned Divali concert at Fairview. I also knew that pupil attendance tends to diminish in the last week of the school term, and data collection may not have been best during this time. The examination period at the end of the term may have also rendered data collection

impossible. In this regard, my insider knowledge of the term structure facilitated a more realistic design of the research.

Former Teaching Experience

My former experience as a teacher enhanced my familiarity with the role of a teacher. Firstly, I understood the daily pressures of teaching in Trinidad which allowed me to value the time of the teachers. I found myself treading carefully as I arranged observations (which was a daily task), as I did not want to encroach on the teachers' free time nor abuse my welcome in their classrooms. As a result, I was careful to not appear 'pushy' but negotiate daily with the teachers regarding observations. Secondly, I was familiar with the Form two Spanish curriculum which had not changed since I left teaching. In this regard, I was careful to be open to the approaches that I saw. Thirdly, emptying myself of my own pedagogical notions of what would be appropriate for the pupils who experienced difficulties in learning was an active process before fieldwork began but continued throughout my time at the schools. I was there to observe not pass the teaching through a pre-ordained funnel.

My outsider-insider positioning was not a static construct but one that needed to be constantly renegotiated (Milligan, 2016). According to Milligan (2016), outsider-insider positioning goes beyond sharing of similar characteristics to incorporate the nuances inherent in each situation and interaction in the field (Hellawell, 2006). In learning the culture at each school, I was careful to view the practices as different not as better or worse than the practices I experienced at the schools I worked at.

The pupils represented another dimension for which my outsider-insider positioning needed to be negotiated. While it was not my intention to gain inner access to the friendship networks of the children, it was the goal to gain access to their perspectives and interactions in the classrooms. However, my outsider positioning as being a 'strange' adult amongst the pupils could have impeded this goal (Helawell,2006). Developing rapport with the pupils was therefore crucial.

3.11 Ethics

In this section, I discuss the ethical considerations for this research. Among the ethical considerations were issues of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, data storage procedures, undertaking research with children and undertaking research in

my particular cultural context. Conducting research in Trinidad brought specific ethical issues and procedures.

In addition to permission from the Ministry of Education, permission to conduct this study was also sought from the University of Exeter Ethics Committee, a requirement set forth by the University for all researchers embarking on fieldwork. The feasibility of the study was judged by the committee who determined that the study had met the ethical standards of the University. Meeting the ethical requirements of the University was necessary even though this research was undertaken in Trinidad by a Trinidadian (BERA, 2004).

On the application, information related to the rationale of the study, the research questions, the potential participants, data collection methods and the protection of the rights and wellbeing of the participants were included (see Appendix VI). During Phase two, I decided that it was best to interview individual pupils, therefore, I reapplied for ethical approval from the University whilst in the field. Approval was granted to include this new data collection method. The two Ethics certificates confirming the approval of the research are presented in Appendix VII.

While generic ethical issues were presented to the Ethics Committee at the University, Hammersley (2009) stated that many ethical aspects are 'situated' and can only be ascertained upon entry in the field, especially, according to Cohen et al. (2011), those that take place in unfamiliar settings. Ethical standards therefore depend on the personal judgement and integrity of the researcher (Ebrahim, 2010), a stance relevant to this study as many situations required my sensitivity and judgement.

3.11.1 Informed Consent

Approval from the Ministry of Education and the University of Exeter were important precursors to informed consent from each school. In approaching the principals of each school, they were keen to confirm that I had procured approval from the Ministry of Education before they proceeded with my research request. In addition to explaining my research aims, I had to furnish the Principals with Ministry of Education approval letters. They were also given information letters outlining the aims of the research and consent forms to sign (see Appendix VIII). Once approval was gained from the

Principals, I approached the teachers and subsequently the pupils. I was not able to access special education information about the pupils, including whether they had a 'learning difficulty' or not.

Eagle School

Eagle School was visited in the week preceding the opening of the school term. Upon meeting Ingrid, I discussed the aims and reasons for the research with her. I addressed her concerns and she was given an information leaflet and a consent form (see Appendix IX). She was informed of her rights to refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any time. We exchanged contact details and she added me to WhatsApp which proved useful in communicating with her in and out of the field. Her contact information and WhatsApp messages are kept on a password protected mobile device which will be deleted once the degree has been awarded.

Having gained the consent of the Spanish teacher to conduct the study, approval was sought during the Reconnaissance Phase from the pupils and their parents. During one of the Spanish periods in the AV room, I introduced myself to the pupils, discussed some details about my background and discussed the aims of the study. I informed them of the practicalities of the observations and their parents' right to refuse or withdraw their participation from the study at any time.

Signalling that I came from the University of Exeter piqued their interest. Having foreign experience stood out to the pupils and they questioned me about my experience in England. Furthermore, my last name became of interest as it is of Scottish origin and the pupils felt that my heritage was somehow connected to the United Kingdom. This intrigue provided a basis to build rapport with the pupils. Personal attention was given to individual pupils who were having difficulty understanding the aims of the research. The research was explained using different terms and they were free to ask me personal questions. A parent information sheet and consent form (see Appendix X) was given to each pupil along with my mobile number in case the parents wanted further clarification. A time frame of two days was given for the pupils to return their parents' consent forms. However, Ingrid informed me that I should expect pupils to bring in the signed consent forms from the parents intermittently rather than all at once. The fluid nature of the return of consent forms highlighted to me the way informed consent has to be achieved once in the field. The

forms were returned in a sporadic manner and some pupils gave verbal consent from their parents.

Permission from the pupils was equally important. Groundwater-Smith, Dockett and Bottrell (2014) asserts that though children cannot legally give consent, they must be allowed to express their wishes regarding participation and these wishes must be respected. Assent from the children was coded into informed consent process and steps were taken to ensure that the pupils were willing to participate in the study. They were informed that their own assent to participate was crucial to this study and that even if their parents indicated willingness to have them participate, their wishes concerning participation will be upheld (Robson, 2011). During a scheduled Spanish period, and in the absence of the teacher, the pupils were addressed. The aims of the study and the requirements, expectations and rights for the pupils were explained again. Their rights to withdraw from the study at any time or refuse participation were explained. They were concerned about changing their minds about participation as the study progresses. They were also informed that they can involve their participation in the future. Four pupils refused participation at this point.

Dissent

While giving the pupils opportunities to express their assent, their dissent was equally valued. While ascertaining the assent of children may be straightforward, detecting their dissent was more problematic (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014). It was made clear to the pupils that they were free to refuse participation. At Eagle, four pupils indicated that they did not wish to take part in the study but this was after I emphasised that their participation is completely voluntary and there are no sanctions for lack of participation. Bourke and Loveridge (2014) pointed out that children may find it difficult to say no to adults and may therefore show their dissent in nonverbal ways. The body language and facial expressions of the pupils were therefore important to note as these could have been areas where dissent was indicated. In one instance, a boy at Eagle ran away as I approached to interview him. From this I ascertained that although he previously indicated willingness to be interviewed, it was not his wish to take part.

With issues of assent and dissent in mind, I added another layer of consent in addition to the consent forms (see Appendix XI for pupil consent form and information sheet). I was concerned that pupils may indicate assent in the presence of peers to ‘fit in’.

However, I wanted their true commitment to participate. A consent card system was created. An example of the card is shown in Figure 3.4.

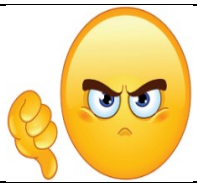
Name:	Class:
	I am happy to take part in this study.
	I want to take part in this study but I need more information.
	I do not wish to take part in this study

Figure 3. 4 – Pupil Consent Card

To administer the card, the classroom was vacated. In groups of four, pupils were given cards and in a separate corner of the class, they were asked to place a tick next to their option for consent and fold the paper in a prescribed manner. The cards were then given back to me. The pupils were required to put their real names on the card as it would be necessary to determine who wanted to participate or not. The consent card added a layer of privacy for the children as the rest of the class did not know their choice.

Fairview School

The procedure for informed consent at Fairview was similar to that at Eagle. Before visiting this school, a telephone call was made to have an informal conversation with the school Principal. For Fairview, the Vice Principal was spoken to as the Principal was not available. I introduced myself, stated that I had been given permission by the Ministry of Education to conduct this research, and briefly described the aims of the study and the requirements for the participants. The Vice Principal expressed willingness for the research to go forward but indicated that I would have to meet separately with the Principal and the Spanish teacher of the Form two class. A visit to the school was made for this purpose. The Principal was informed of the aims of the study and his rights of refusal and withdrawal. I furnished him with the letter from the Ministry of Education. After gaining his consent, I approached Lorena in the staffroom

where she sat alone. The research aims, the practical issues such as the length of time in her class and the requirements for the pupils were discussed. After giving consent, she shared personal stories. Her openness at this point provided a starting point to building rapport.

During the Reconnaissance Phase, the pupils of her Form two class were approached during a Spanish period. The rapport I had already built with some of the pupils seemed to make my engagement with the class easier. I introduced myself, informed them of the aims of the research and the practical implications for their consent, for example, that they will see me sitting at the back of their class making notes. They were given information leaflets and consent forms for their parents. The next day, almost all the pupils returned their signed parent consent forms. The rest of the pupils returned their signed consent forms during the week. Informed consent from the pupils was also necessary. They were given information leaflets and consent forms and informed of their right to refuse and/or withdraw participation. The consent card system as described for Eagle School was also administered.

3.11.2 Anonymity

The participants were granted anonymity. Taylor (2015) describes anonymity as the removal of identifying information of the participants. On a basic level, anonymity was afforded to every participant by changing their real names to pseudonyms. These pseudonyms were either chosen by the participants, as with some of the pupils, or chosen by me. The teachers requested that I choose their pseudonyms.

According to Novak (2014), apart from pseudonyms, researchers can also remove or change demographic data of participants. The names of the schools were changed as well as the names of the classes. While it was necessary to protect the participants in this way, affording full anonymity to the extent that all identifying information was removed was not possible for this study. This study involved only two schools and to provide context, a thick description of the processes and practices at each school was necessary, therefore as Taylor (2015) acknowledges, it is difficult to anonymise details that contribute richness to the context. Removing the ‘juice’ of the data compromised the richness of the reporting (Taylor, 2015). It was therefore necessary to maintain details about each school to provide context for the readers. Information such as the

school's general geographic location, school population and the social issues they encountered was necessary for context. However, a layer of anonymity was provided to the schools through keeping their identity hidden from the other research school (Moosa, 2013). Many times, in the field I was asked 'what other school are you at?' as the participants were aware that my study involved two schools but neither school's identity was disclosed.

The guarantee of anonymity seemed to contribute to the richness of data, especially for the pupils as it was difficult to trace their specific information. Taylor (2015) asserts that anonymity for pupils is a doorway to gathering authentic information. As there was only one teacher for each school, tracing information to the teachers was more facile, even the sensitive information they shared concerning the negative aspects of their practice. To add a layer of protection, the teachers were asked to review the transcripts of their interviews to see if they wanted to remove such sensitive information (Thomas, 2017). The participants were not concerned with member checking of this nature (Taylor, 2015).

3.11.3 Confidentiality

As part of the Ethics Application, the participants were assured confidentiality. They were assured that their data would be kept secure and that they would be protected from harm. How these principles worked out in the field, however, were not as straightforward.

This research project required participants to divulge their perspectives concerning teaching approaches. The participants revealed information that contained their deep emotions concerning positive and negative experiences. Assuring the participants confidentiality meant that this information would not be disclosed especially to persons in their school. This aspect of confidentiality was important to the pupils as they ensured at the start of interviews that their teachers would not be made privy to the information they share. The teachers' and pupils' information were all kept private.

However, Wiles et al. (2008) noted an aspect of confidentiality that is in the hands of the participants themselves in that they are holders of their own information. They may share their information with other participants or even other members of the school.

This aspect of confidentiality is difficult to control. In one instance in the staffroom at Eagle, Ingrid was sharing her negative opinion about a pupil in her class. This opinion was divulged to the pupil by another member of staff who was involved in the conversation.

In addition to non-disclosure, standard ethical procedures also uphold *primum non nocere* especially with the pupils which is ensuring that the participants were not harmed in any way as a result of the research. Although it was indicated on the Ethics application that this research was considered low risk in that it was unlikely to cause physical or emotional harm to the participants, it was likely that time in the field might reveal otherwise. While physical harm was not a concern, given the social contexts of the schools, the participants may have recounted scenarios that may have caused them distress. This was not a feature of this research even though the participants shared deeply. If, however, in their sharing they revealed information related to abuse or criminal activity, the participants were informed that this information would have been disclosed to the relevant authorities.

3.11.4 Data Storage

The data collected for this research amounted to interview transcripts, task-based interviews transcripts, audio recordings and observation fieldnotes. The way the date is stored is a key ethical concern and is discussed below.

Observation Fieldnotes

Notes for each school were recorded in a separate copybook. The copy books were kept in my research bag which was kept with me always. The notes for Phase one (Reconnaissance Phase) were transferred to a password protected laptop at the end of each day. For Phase two and three, the notes were reviewed then transferred to the password protected laptop as a back up to the observation notes.

Interview Transcripts and Audio recording

The interviews were initially recorded via two mobile phones. The recordings were named under the participants' pseudonyms. The audio recordings were transcribed on the laptop and filed using the pseudonyms. All the transcriptions were kept in a file folder on the laptop. The audio recordings were also transferred to the laptop and

stored in one file folder. See Appendix XII for an excerpt of teacher and pupil interview transcription from both schools.

Task-Based Interviews and Audio Recordings

Task-Based interviews were stored in a way similar to the semi structured interviews. Two mobile phones were used to record the task-based interviews. The recordings were transcribed and kept on the laptop along with the audio recordings. See Appendix XIII for excerpt of task-based interview transcription from both schools.

All data will be kept for five years. The computer files will be transferred to Dropbox. In this way, if the computer crashed or is lost or stolen, the files will still be accessible (Given, 2008). The paper data will be stored in a locker for five years.

3.12 Data Analysis

This section outlines the procedure for analysis of the data.

3.12.1 Data Collection Phase

To facilitate analysis during data collection, a memo book was kept and was used to jot down thoughts regarding the data, no matter how seemingly insignificant (Jamieson, 2016). See Figure 3.5 and 3.6 for excerpts of the memo book.

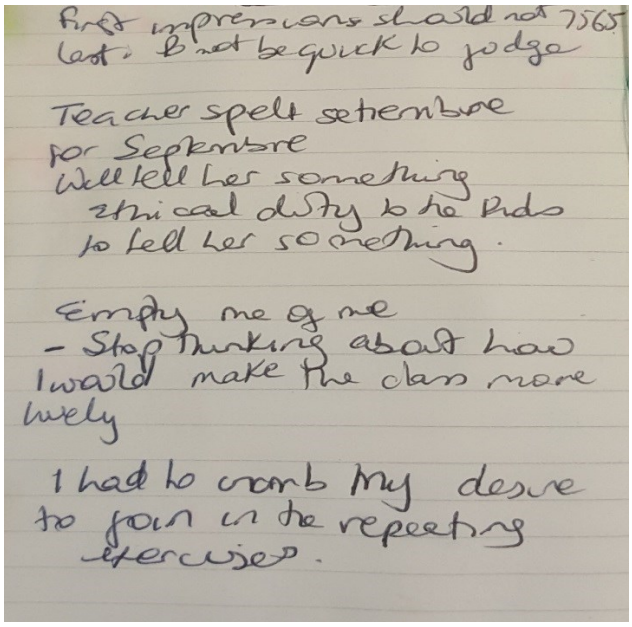


Figure 3. 5 – Example of a reflexive memo with ethical implications

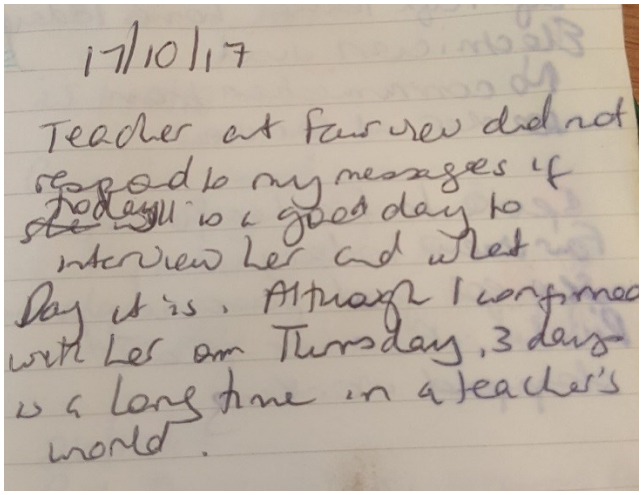


Figure 3. 6 – Example of a memo reflecting the daily challenge of organizing observations.

According to Birks et al. (2008), memoing offers the ability to build awareness of the meanings locked within the data. Memoing, therefore, provided a pathway to transition from the 'concrete to the conceptual' (Birks et al., 2008, p.71).

While my observation notes consisted of classroom occurrences, my memos went beyond these occurrences to analysis of connections between situations and events. As the observations progressed, recurring issues emerged. For example, I noticed that both teachers translated all their Spanish phrases into English. This made me consider the role of English in the Spanish classroom for pupils who experience difficulties in learning and the teachers were asked about this occurrence at interview.

Preliminary analysis also took place during all three phases of data collection.

Phase one

The data from this phase was collected through observations in various classrooms of different subject teachers and around each school's compound and informal interviews with staff and pupils. This data was not intended to form part of the eventual findings for this research but rather to provide orientation to the research contexts. Therefore, the analysis that took place in this phase was solely for the purpose of achieving greater clarity to the bulk of data collected during Reconnaissance. In light of this purpose, only one level of coding was applied before progressing onto theming in this phase as the data. It is not to say, however, that data collected during this phase was completely irrelevant to participant data. For example, data collected that related to pupil behaviour around the school and in various classrooms was beneficial to

understanding overall school discipline structure which filtered into my understanding of pupil behaviour within each class, especially at Eagle School where pupil discipline seemed to be a pertinent issue.

To analyse the data in this phase, the handwritten notes were read twice. On the third reading, different segments of data were marked off with colour markers. In reading the data for the third time, it became evident that segments of data related to one another and these were collated and themed. For example, observations at the Library revealed that pupils were encouraged to learn a new word every day. In a classroom observation of another Spanish teacher, there were explicit conversations imploring pupils to try at things they find difficult. These two segments of data seemed to relate to each other and were themed Expectations of Pupils. Other themes included Physical Surroundings, Teacher Pupil Relationship, Teacher Expectations and Examination Related Talk.

Phase two and three

The data collected during Phase two and three were more crucial to answering the research questions. The data from Phase two was used to inform and refine the data collected in Phase three and as such a preliminary data analysis period between phase two and three was crafted into the design of this research. Phase two observation notes were read at the end of each day as far as possible. This was done to gain familiarity with the data, to ensure the notes were sufficiently detailed and to become aware of any issue or occurrence that needed further clarification. Samples were also sent to the supervisors of this research project to ensure the validity of the observation notes. For preliminary analysis of the data, the observation data was read several times then colour coded according to recurring themes (different colour codes to phase one were applied). Once coded, the data was read again to examine how the segments of data related to one another. In this preliminary phase of analysis, themes emerged that related to Pace, Discipline, Teacher Pupil Relationships, Pupil Peer Relationships, Teaching Strategies (specific strategies were highlighted), Teacher Attention to Individual Pupils. These represented areas where the observations were honed in Phase three. Phase two interviews (only teachers were interviewed in this phase) were transcribed and issues that warranted further

clarification or elaboration were highlighted. These were areas where further insight into the approaches were needed. Questions were then formulated to address these issues in Phase three interviews. As the teaching approaches in the two classes highlighted different issues, the interview schedule for Phase three was different for the two teachers. The data collection methods also informed each other in Phase two and thus facilitated greater honing of data collection in Phase three. For example, in her first interview, Lorena indicated that '*the herd can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo*' indicating that the pace of her lessons is determined by those who experienced difficulties in learning. Observations of the issues surrounding pace in her lessons was therefore adhered to in a deeper way in Phase three.

Noteworthy is that the teaching approaches did not change from Phase two to Phase three. What changed was the way my analysis of those approaches became more focused. Also noteworthy was that the same phenomenon did not necessarily carry similar meanings in the two schools. Therefore, the data from each school was analysed separately and the issues emerging from the two schools, although similar, were treated as separate entities. This is not to say that the analysis process of one school did not affect the other. Instances of when and how this occurred is mentioned in a later section.

3.12.2 Post Data Collection

Once the data from the observations, semi structured interviews, task-based interviews were collected from both Phases, a thematic analysis approach was used. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.76) describe thematic analysis as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data'. It is these patterns that facilitate the answering of the research questions. Before the themes could be identified, the data had to be organised to facilitate easy review (Tuckett, 2005). The process is described below.

Data Preparation and Organisation

Observations

The observation notes for the two schools were transferred from handwritten notes to a Word document in tabular form. This table consisted of three columns. The main section included the particulars of each session, that is, the date, the location of the

class (whether regular classroom, AV room or other location), the Day, the time of class and the materials being used. Notes according to the protocol of situation were also typed in this section. The second column was used to record issues regarding the teaching approaches, teacher and pupils that occurred to me as I typed out the notes. It was useful to make notes of my thought process which included ideas for follow up with the teachers or issues of personal reflection. The third column was used for the first level of coding. A separate Word file was created for each school. An observation timeline was also created to portray the dates of observations at each school and to account for the days where no observation took place at either school. The memos facilitated this tracking as I made notes throughout the data collection period of the reason I was not able to visit one school or the other. The observation notes were then printed for the analysis stage.

Semi-Structured Interviews

To prepare the interviews for analysis, transcriptions were necessary (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003). Manual transcriptions rather than software transcriptions were preferred to build greater familiarity with the data. Furthermore, Jamieson (2016) points out that transcription software can misinterpret colloquial expressions as in the case of Trinidadian expressions, prevalent amongst the participants' speech. To transcribe the data, the audio recording from each participant's interview was listened to in its entirety and on the second listening, verbatim representations of the interviews were recorded in a Word document. A separate Word file was kept for each participant. In addition to the actual words, Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2005) advocate paying attention to 'response tokens' (p.1284) which include expressions such as 'uhm' and 'uh' during the transcription process as they can give insight into meaning making. These 'response tokens' were noted and added to the transcriptions.

During the transcriptions, it was necessary to replay the audio recordings intermittently to capture accurately the participants' words. Once completed, the transcriptions were then matched against the audio recordings in a final listening to ensure greater accuracy (McLellan et al., 2003). The transcriptions were then printed for the next stage of analysis. A size 14 Times New Roman font was used with a line spacing of 70. This facilitated the manual coding process.

It was important to preserve the meaning making of the participants during the transcription process by allowing their subjective realities to breathe through their verbal and nonverbal expressions (Oliver et al., 2005) especially as the interviews were the space where the participants gave profound insight into the feelings, thoughts and circumstances that framed teaching approaches in the two classes. However, according to Halcomb and Davidson (2006), interpretation is inevitable during the transcription process. Some initial analysis took place during the transcription process as comments were underlined which related directly to the positioning of teaching approaches to pupils who experienced difficulties. For example, Ingrid's statement '*there is only so much we can do'* was underlined.

Task-Based Interviews

The pupils wrote on Bristol board during these interviews. The content of the boards was transferred to a Microsoft Word file under the following headings which represented the questions for the task-based interviews.

- In what ways does Ingrid/Lorena teach you?
- What helps you learn best?
- Does she do anything that is not helpful to your learning?
- What would you like to see her do that would be helpful to your learning?

The audio recordings of the interviews were each listened to in entirety then transcribed verbatim. The need to re-listen to the recordings during and after the transcription was more pronounced as more than one pupil spoke at the same time making transcription difficult. The file and transcripts were printed with the same size and spacing as the semi-structured interviews transcripts.

3.12.3 Coding

After the data was transcribed and organised, the coding process began. Tuckett (2005) defines coding as 'assigning tags or labels to delegate units of meaning to pieces of data' (p.81). The schools were kept separate for this process even though the coding followed a similar pattern for each school. Coding was tiered as initial codes were built upon with secondary and then tertiary codes and eventually themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Code condensation took place manually (Basit, 2003) rather than with the use of analysis software. Analysis software such as NVivo could have been used but as Basit (2003) points out, such software does not replace the researcher's role in creating and collating the codes. Furthermore, Davis and Meyer (2009) point out that greater flexibility is afforded to manual coding to adjust initial codes than software coding.

To begin the coding process, the files were printed, as stated above, and the data for each school (observation notes and memos, interview transcripts) was read three to four times (as recommended by Miles et al, 2014). This was to gain further familiarity with the data and to become familiar with how segments of data related to others. For example, in the interviews both Lorena and the pupils at Fairview recounted the strategy to keep eyes on the word while reading and this strategy was also a feature of the observations.

Upon the fourth reading of the data, segments of data were underlined and marked with one, two or three to represent the research question that they corresponded to. In some cases, the same segment of data corresponded to more than one research question, in which case, they were marked with two numbers. In addition, as Adair and Pastori (2011) indicated, the same piece of data sometimes also represented more than one idea within the same research question. For example, in his individual interview, Victor stated 'she put me outside I does just miss a lot in class' to refer to when he was asked to leave the classroom during lessons by Lorena. This segment of data was deemed to correspond to the second research questions concerning perspectives about teaching approaches and was assigned the initial codes – *forced absence from class* and *missed lessons*.

It was also the case that some segments of data did not relate specifically to any of the research questions. For example, Ingrid mentioned in her second interview former pupils who were working at the Alliance Francaise while Lorena mentioned that she felt that the increase in pupil population was due to *'people…having too many kids'* .Along with numbering, initial (in vivo) codes were written within the space above the segment of data. See Appendix XIV for an initial coding example. These codes were short phrases from the original data, allowing the ideas of the participants to emerge. Most of the initial codes from the interview data were verbatim words. The Eagle School data yielded 854 initial codes while the Fairview data yielded 1044.

The initial codes for all data were placed in two Excel files according to school. Each file was designed as shown in Table 3.3. See Appendix XV for an Excel file coding sample. The secondary and tertiary codes section of the table will be explained later.

(NAME OF SCHOOL)

Name	Initial Codes	Pg.no.	RQ	Secondary codes	Sec Group	Tertiary Codes
The name of the school, the type of data	The initial codes were written out verbatim	The page on which the initial code can be found in the original data	The research question that the initial code corresponded to			

Table 3. 3 – Example of Table for Coding

Where a code corresponded to more than one research question, the code was input twice in Excel. Not all the codes were exactly relevant to the specific research questions and as such *nil* was placed in this column as Broman and Woo (2018) pointed out that fields should not be left blank in Excel files as this can negatively affect the manipulation of the files later.

Once all the data for the first four columns were input, the subsequent column was used to input secondary codes. In order to identify secondary codes, the file was manipulated to organise the data by research question. The nil data appeared at the bottom of this data.

The secondary codes built upon the initial codes by incorporating minimal interpretation. For example, after initially coding the phrase ‘classes are too big’, the secondary code became *large class size.* While some initial codes rendered more interpretation, others were coded more descriptively, that is they involved little interpretation from one level to the next (Miles and Huberman, 1984). For example, *class is messy* was secondary coded as *messy classroom*. Adair and Pastori (2011) suggest that the level of interpretation that is applied is up to the researcher. While

care was taken to not overly interpret the data at this point, interpretation was inevitable (Adair and Pastori, 2011). The extraction of meaning from the participants' words and the meanings derived from the data was necessary to moving the data from the 'concrete to the conceptual' (Birks et al., 2008, p. 71).

Through secondary coding, coherence within the data became more apparent (Tuckett, 2005). For example, during the task-based interview and semi-structured interview respectively, teacher punctuality emerged as a recurrent issue. These pieces of data were given similar secondary codes. Jamieson (2016) suggests that finding similarity among the data of this kind is necessary to answering the research questions.

The codes that were applied were, however, subject to change. If upon reading the initial codes again, the secondary code did not fit, these were changed to more suitable ones (Adair and Pastori, 2011; Jamieson, 2016). This iterative process of coding was part of letting the data 'breathe' by not constricting the data to fit into predetermined codes (Gough and Scott, 2000).

Following the secondary coding process, a further layer of coding took place, tertiary coding. To do this, the secondary codes were reviewed and codes that cohered were designated the same tertiary code and given the same letter. For example, for Eagle School, all the secondary codes that related to pupil attendance were assigned the same letter. Codes that also related to the teacher's attendance were also given the same letter. This was to ensure that in the manipulation of the file, those codes would appear together as they were all related. While I followed this procedure for the secondary codes for the two schools, for Fairview I was more conscious to place similar codes together by lettering them more closely to one another. The tertiary codes far exceeded the 26 letters of the alphabet. As such, A1, B1 and so on, then A2, B2 and so on were used. The file was then manipulated again to group according to tertiary code regardless of research question. This file was then printed for further analysis. After grouping by tertiary codes, the secondary codes within each tertiary code were reviewed and put into clusters. For example, codes relating to pupil attendance, pupil lack of attendance, teacher punctuality, pupil punctuality, teacher attendance formed clusters within the overall tertiary code *Attendance*. The clusters

were formed to identify the secondary codes within the tertiary code. Both schools were coded in this manner.

Initially, Fairview School was coded using different letters to Eagle School. However, for organization purposes, it was deemed better to have the same letter for the same tertiary code for the two schools. The tertiary codes from each school were thus put into a table alongside each other. The tertiary code lettering was then adjusted for the two schools on the Excel file as far as similarity in codes existed. Fairview yielded additional codes that were not relevant to Eagle, for example, *noise effects.* While similar codes arose for the two schools, the issues inherent in those codes (in the clusters) were different therefore some measure of caution was necessary in this stage of the coding process.

The tertiary codes were then examined to be reduced further into themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Another table was formed for this purpose. The tertiary codes were grouped into themes according to the ideas they represented (see Appendix XVI for the tertiary codes that corresponded to each theme). The themes along with their inherent issues will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected at Eagle School and Fairview School. The chapter is organised into three parts – Part one Eagle School; Part two Fairview School; Part three Consolidation of Findings. Within each part, the research questions (RQs) and main themes are used for the overall organisation and presentation of data and findings. As noted in the previous chapter, similar themes emerged from the data from both schools although the issues inherent in them differed.

4.2 Part 1 – Eagle School

Throughout the presentation of findings for Eagle School, data codes are used to represent the source of the finding. These codes are outlined in Table 4.1.

Ingrid's First Semi- Structured Interview	ESIINT1
Ingrid's Second Semi- Structured Interview	ESIINT2
Task-Based Interview (only one conducted at Eagle School)	ESTBI
Samantha's Individual Interview	ESSINT
Brittany's Individual Interview	ESBINT
Deshantay's Individual Interview	ESDINT
Classroom Observation 1	ESOBS1
Classroom Observation 2	ESOBS2
Classroom Observation 3	ESOBS3
Classroom Observation 4	ESOBS4

Classroom Observation 5	ESOBS5
Classroom Observation 6	ESOBS6

Table 4. 1 – Data codes for Eagle School

Eagle School, as described in detail in the previous chapter, is a mixed urban school with a high enrolment of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. According to Ingrid, the Spanish teacher for the Form two class in which the study was conducted, ***all*** the pupils in this class experienced difficulties in learning. Therefore, separate teaching approaches were not used for those who experience difficulties in learning. Rather, the whole class strategies she was observed using were intended for ***all*** pupils. As she said, '*I teach to the class*' (ESIINT1). In light of this, in presenting the findings for Eagle School, 'pupil(s)' signifies any pupil in the class. The topics covered during the observations were *Physical and Personality Descriptions* and *Weather*.

4.3 Teaching Approaches

Research Question	Main themes
What teaching approaches are used for pupils who experience difficulties in learning by two Form two Spanish teachers in two government secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?	Language Structure Strategies Teaching Strategies Discipline Strategies

Table 4. 2 – Eagle School themes for RQ1

4.3.1 Language Structure Strategies

Language Structure Approaches describes the approaches Ingrid used to teach the Spanish structure to the pupils. From the observations, it appeared that Ingrid divided the language structure into 1) vocabulary acquisition and understanding and 2) communicative areas such as speaking, writing and reading. Listening was not a feature of her approaches.

For the acquisition and understanding of vocabulary, Ingrid presented Spanish words through PowerPoint presentations or writing on the board (ESOBS1, ESOBS2). The

presentations usually included orthographical and pictorial representations of the words (ESOBS1, ESOBS2). According to Ingrid, this approach was important for her pupils to capture the 'units of vocabulary' more easily. As she said,

> '*I try to do it in a way that's visual and that breaks down the grammar into its…. structures. The structures would be like units of vocabulary that they would have to learn.'* (ESIINT1)

It seems that Ingrid's approach to visually presenting vocabulary was to facilitate greater understanding and processing of the vocabulary. She also translated words from Spanish to English and vice versa and required the pupils to do so also (ESOBS1). In showing pictures, pupils were asked to state the ideas related to the pictures in both languages. For example, in ESOBS3, a picture of an umbrella was shown and pupils were asked in English 'what type of weather is that?' and were required to respond in both English and Spanish. Exercises, such as this, where pupils had to demonstrate their knowledge of the meaning of words in both languages were common and seem to support Ingrid's aim of vocabulary development in pupils, further demonstrated by her approach to introduce new vocabulary to every lesson (ESOBS1).

> '*I am introducing a new word, what does /pero/ mean?'*

The nature of the words was also important to note. Not only did she teach topic related words but also high frequency words such as /*pero*/ (but) and /*muy*/ (very). As the pupils met these words repeatedly, it seemed that Ingrid wanted to ensure the pupils had conceptual understanding of them. She built awareness of their grammatical relevance in addition to their meaning.

Ingrid's vocabulary approaches seem to encompass breadth of vocabulary in terms of ensuring the pupils acquired a range of words and also depth in terms of acquiring conceptual and grammatical understanding of them. It is likely that the goal of this emphasis on vocabulary building is to develop pupils' communicative competencies in the language. According to Ingrid,

> *'If you are learning a language, you need to be able to hear somebody say something in the language and understand it. You too should be able to say something in the language and have somebody understand you. You should*

be able to express some of your thoughts in the language. You should be able to read.' (ESIINT2)

Thus, whilst the learning of vocabulary was considered important, as evident from lesson observations, Ingrid considered skills in speaking, listening and reading as equally important. However, activities which incorporated development of oral and listening skills were not observed. Ingrid indicated that activities that developed pupil oral skills were difficult as they invited discipline problems. She stated that every time she tries to do oral work, the class descended into chaos (ESIINT1). Pupil speaking in Spanish took the form of rote pronunciation drills whereby the whole class would repeat phrases after Ingrid then practise them on their own.

Reading skills were developed mainly through reading comprehension exercises which were presented as tests (ESDOC4). Before these exercises, Ingrid rehearsed the meaning of key words with pupils by asking them the meaning of the words and giving the meaning when they were not sure. It is likely that in understanding the meaning of the words, Ingrid felt the pupils would better comprehend the passage. This approach highlights again the apparent importance of vocabulary knowledge in her approaches. Reading of Spanish passages to build pronunciation competency was not common in this class as most reading activities took place with a comprehension purpose.

Writing was also observed as a major aspect of Ingrid's teaching approaches. Writing, however, did not seem to be used to developing communicative skills, in that the pupils were not given opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas in writing. Writing, rather, was for note taking. Pupils were expected to make exact notes of everything Ingrid wrote on the board including the date (ESOBS2, 3, 4). In addition, pupils were expected to keep those notes as reference for future lessons, even their notes from previous academic years. In ESOBS1, after showing the sentence '*no tiene muchos amigos'*, Ingrid reminded the pupils that they met the word '*tiene*' before – for physical descriptions. She told them to '*look back on your notes*' (ESOBS1). It seems that note taking was regarded as important for the recall of content in order to make connections from one lesson to another. If pupils experienced difficulties in remembering words or their meaning, Ingrid's strategy was frequently to refer them to their notes (ESOBS5).

4.3.2 Teaching Strategies

Teaching Strategies relate to strategies that Ingrid used to teach the language structure. The elements of this theme are discussed below.

Multisensory Strategies

Multisensory strategies that used different senses, included the use of audio-visual, tactile and kinaesthetic strategies. Audio-visual strategies included use of videos and pictures, mainly in PowerPoint presentations. Although Ingrid recounted tactile and kinaesthetic strategies as part of her approaches, for example, activities that involve sticking pictures in books (ESIINT1), these were not a feature of the observations. She used visual stimuli such as pictures of cartoon characters, Homer Simpson and audio stimuli such as songs which the pupils sang along to (ESOBS3). It seems that these multisensory strategies were used to engage pupils' interest. The issue of pupil interest or lack thereof in learning emerged as a significant finding (this will be discussed in a subsequent section in this chapter).

Simplification Strategies

Simplification strategies were adopted by Ingrid to 'break down' the work for the pupils. Ingrid simplified the work in three ways – by breaking down the work into smaller parts; by setting easier tasks; by dealing with difficulty within tasks.

To break down vocabulary, her strategies were to dissect words so that the spelling and pronunciation could be ascertained. For example, in ESOBS4, the spelling of /hace/ and /hoy/ were broken down through whole class call out activities. Phrases were also dissected for the meaning of each word. For example, in ESOBS4, 'Qué tiempo hace hoy' was broken down so that pupils can capture the meaning of each word.

Setting easier tasks may have also been to increase the 'doability' of tasks as Ingrid expressed that '*students struggle when the bar is set too high*' (ESOBS2). Ingrid also dealt with the difficulty of tasks by giving answers to some pupils (ESOBS2) or suggesting they bypass difficult questions (ESOBS2). Ingrid's concern to reduce the difficulty of tasks seems to suggest a desire to see pupils complete tasks successfully.

Explanations

Explanations were mostly used to bridge pupils' understanding of grammar rules, for example, explaining how to form adverbs out of adjectives (ESOBS6). In this instance,

Ingrid explained how to transition an adjective into an adverb but did not explain the functionality of either. Ingrid mentioned in ESIINT1 that the pupils experience difficulties in language awareness in English (a point that will be presented in detail later), suggesting that such awareness should be raised. She, however, indicated in ESIINT2 that limited time decreases her ability to be more explicit about English structure in her teaching. As she puts it, '*I am too busy teaching content'*. Her perception of limited time may have been a factor in the type of explanations she gave.

Explanations were also used to support understanding of the nuances in vocabulary; for example, during a lesson on personal characteristics, she explained the reasons why *lazy* and *shy* are considered negative, rather than positive words (ESOBS1). Explanations were also used to relay her expectations concerning tasks (ESTBI).

However, not all explanations were task related. Ingrid also used explanations to increase pupil interest in learning. On one occasion, she explained to pupils the time she spent planning and preparing activities as a means to persuade them to attend class (ESOBS3).

Examples

The provision of examples was a strategy used to provide clarity for pupils. In one lesson about personality characteristics, Ingrid gave examples from her personal life to supplement the lessons and asked pupils to give their own examples (ESOBS1). Examples had another dimension in terms of the tasks, being used as a form of modelling to demonstrate to pupils how to perform a task (ESTBI; ESOBS5). For example, in ESOBS1, the task was to provide opposites for given adjectives in Spanish and Ingrid provided the opposite for the first word /simpático/ which was /antipático/. This kind of modelling seemed to be useful in allowing the pupils to see how to complete tasks. In this sense, teacher modelling through examples may have bridged gaps in understanding tasks as it may have provided clarity to pupils on how to carry out their activities.

Repetition

The use of repetition in this class was twofold. Firstly, repetitions took place as a means of practising aspects of language structure such as pronunciations of vocabulary. As such, drills whereby pupils would repeat the structure over and over was a common feature of the observations. In these instances, Ingrid modelled the

pronunciations for the pupils to repeat after her (ESOBS1) whilst insisting that the pupils do not attempt the pronunciations before her.

Secondly, repetition was used as a tool to revisit content in subsequent lessons. Ingrid repeated teaching of parts of lessons especially for pupils who were absent (ESOBS5). Repetitions may have served as a reinforcing role within Ingrid's teaching and will be presented in the Memory section as it may have also served as a tool for pupil memory.

Questioning

Questioning was multifaceted in this class in that it fulfilled many purposes.

Questions were used

a. To check for pupils' understanding – '*Do you understand*' (ESOBS1)
b. To ascertain pupils' prior knowledge – '*Everyone knows this word. How do you say this word?*' (ESOBS1)
c. To extract pupil opinion – '*would you like to have a lazy husband?'* (ESOBS1)

d. To jog pupils' memory – '*Let's see if you remember, how do you call someone who is serious?*' (ESOBS1), '*Anybody remember what /muy/ means?*' (ESOBS6).

e. To gauge pupil interest – '*Do you all like the song?*' (ESOBS3)

f. To translate phrases – '*How do we say 'it is raining'?*' (ESOBS3)

g. To allow pupils to deduce structure – '*What am I not pronouncing?*' (ESOBS3).

h. To guide pupils through grammar – '*If I put (no), what does that mean?*' (ESOBS6)

i. To discipline pupils – '*What are you sitting on?*' (to Deshantay who wanted to take another pupil's chair, ESOBS2), '*Where are you now coming from?*' (to a pupil who walked in late to class, ESOBS2)

The majority of questions were specifically related to the lesson content. Pupil recall, understanding and processing of content were determined through questions. Ingrid used questions to ascertain pupil recall of pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary and other elements of the language structure. She asked '*What is…… (in Spanish or English)?* '*How do you say …. (in Spanish or English)?*' as a means for pupils to recall

their vocabulary. This recall was required for present topics as well as content covered earlier in the term and in the previous academic year (ESOBS4). Pupils were also asked questions to decipher grammatical nuances within words and phrases (ESOBS6). Such questions were seemingly designed to encourage pupils to think more deeply about the structure.

While Ingrid seemed to use questions to allow pupils to allocate adjectives into positive or negative categories in one lesson (ESOBS1), it was not observed that she advanced the discussion by asking pupils to justify their answers. Pupil expression of their ideas therefore ended with their initial response to her questions. Questions were also used to make behaviour expectations explicit to pupils whose behaviour was regarded as disruptive. Ingrid asked the pupils direct questions concerning their conduct.

These findings suggest that questions played a significant role in teaching in this class. The type of questioning, in particular, seemed to steer pupils towards recall of structure, to allow pupils to make connections between aspects of the content and to ascertain their understanding of current content. It was observed that pupils rarely asked questions of the teacher. In the few instances where pupil questions were asked, they related to personal issues about the teacher, for example, her family rather than issues related to their learning. This finding suggests that questioning in the classroom was teacher dominated.

Targeted Approaches

Targeted approaches for individual pupils formed a part of Ingrid's approaches. Although Ingrid considered all the pupils as experiencing difficulties in learning and therefore used whole class teaching approaches, she nevertheless applied strategies that targeted specific areas of difficulties for specific pupils. Ingrid frequently walked around the class to gain proximity to pupils who might need individual attention. In addition to this, pupils appeared to feel comfortable to raise their hands or even call out for individual assistance (ESOBS2).

Ingrid's targeted approaches included individual book checks (ESOBS6), individual marking (ESOBS6), targeted examples and explanations (ESOBS1), individual assistance with pronunciation (ESOBS1) and targeted corrections (ESOBS5). The need for this individual targeting mostly arose as pupils signalled that they were having

difficulty. For example, during an exercise of matching positive personality descriptions to their antonyms, Brittany exclaimed she was having difficulty and Ingrid modelled an additional example for her (ESOBS1). Repetition of content also formed part of targeted approaches as lessons were repeated for the sake of individual pupils. In addition, Ingrid also selected pupils who she felt needed individual attention and asked questions specifically to that pupil (ESOBS4).

This finding suggests that, although Ingrid regarded all her pupils as possessing difficulties in learning, she acknowledged that pupils had individual difficulties that were personal and specific and that her teaching approaches, whilst general, were also able to be modified to support individual pupils. In light of this, it can be said that Ingrid was willing to acknowledge individual differences among her pupils and adjust her approaches accordingly.

Corrections

Correcting pupil language production was also a feature of the observations. It seems that Ingrid valued correct form and as such corrected pupil language output (ESTBI). Additionally, in light of pupil errors, she modelled the correct form of the language and engaged the pupils in repetitions to ensure they were able to reproduce the correct form themselves (ESOBS1).

Pace

Pace refers to the timing of the lessons. This includes the speed at which Ingrid taught, the time frame given for activities and the sensitivity and willingness of the teacher to adjust this timing for individual pupils. Pace related to the whole class and to individual pupils.

Whole Class Pace

In reference to whole class pace, Ingrid stated

> *'I try to teach less at a time although I guess I can work on that more. I can still teach even less.'* (ESIINT2)

Ingrid's sensitivity to the pace of learning of her pupils was manifested in various ways in the observations. For example, she presented PowerPoint slides containing minimal vocabulary. She gave pupils time to take notes from each slide and gauged pupils' readiness to move on by asking their permission to change slides (ESOBS4), waiting if they were not. She also gauged pupils' ability to move at a faster pace (ESOBS3).

However, it was not always that the pupils dictated the pace of the lessons. With respect to activities, Ingrid gave specific time frames for them to be completed. Nevertheless, in this regard, to ensure pupils were able to complete them within the given time frame, she provided support such as the necessary vocabulary (ESOBS6). It seems that the provision of support was to ensure that pupils were able to successfully complete the tasks within time.

Pace for Individual Pupils

The pace of lessons also related to individual pupils in the class. At the request of individual pupils, Ingrid stopped and repeated the lessons to ensure pupils were able to write the content from slides (ESOBS4). Ingrid also repeated work for children who were absent from class and therefore missed a significant proportion of notes. This deceleration of lessons was not always appreciated by the other pupils in the class as they pleaded with the teacher to move quicker (ESOBS4).

Ingrid's willingness to adjust her pace of teaching for the sake of her pupils suggests an example of how she accommodated individual pupils through her teaching approaches. As notetaking was deemed important to their learning, her pace may have been adjusted for this purpose. It was not the case that all the pupils agreed that the pace was adequate for notetaking. Samantha and Brittany indicated that they would like more time to write (ESSINT; ESBINT). In this regard, it appears that there was disagreement amongst pupils regarding the adequate pace for teaching as some required a faster pace whilst others desired a slower one.

Ingrid sometimes answered questions she posed to the class (ESOBS4). It may have been the case that navigating through pupil recall concerning the response would have been perceived as time consuming. Not giving the pupils time to answer questions whilst giving them time to take notes indicates that her pace is linked to the pupils' acquisition of content. As subsequent lessons seemed to build upon the content covered in previous lessons, having notes in the first place may have been deemed necessary and they were afforded the time to do so.

Strategies to Support Memory

Ingrid regarded memory as crucial to learning (ESIINT2) and therefore incorporates strategies to support memory within her teaching. She perceived that the pupils

experienced difficulties with memory which had an adverse effect on her ability to progress her lessons.

> *'It is difficult to move on 'cause you come back the following day and they don't remember what you taught them the last day.'* (ESIINT2)

Therefore, adopting approaches to aid pupils' memory were implemented. The frequent administrations of tests (ESOBS2), for example, may have served as a tool to ensure the pupils remembered their work. Whole class exercises where Ingrid called out previously met words may have also been to ascertain pupils' memory of vocabulary.

It is likely that notetaking was a tool to help buttress the memory of the pupils. As Ingrid said,

> '*I let them do things. Try to do it from memory and then when they can't remember, you look back and you try to do it from memory again.*' (ESIINT2).

Notes facilitated pupil ability to revisit content repeatedly, thereby facilitating their memory. In this regard, repetitions of structure by Ingrid may have also been to aid pupil memory. As Brittany shared, the repeating was to have words '*stick in her head'* (ESBINT). This view was corroborated by Samantha. As she said,

> *'I have a hard time remembering stuff, so to make sure I know the word properly, I would repeat it over and over in my head.'* (ESSINT).

It seems that the ability of pupils to store and retrieve information was regarded as vital to learning by Ingrid and the pupils, and that without this store of information, both Ingrid and the pupils may have felt they lack the grounds to move on with learning.

Building A Comfortable Learning Environment

It appears that Ingrid used her language and behaviour to cultivate a supportive learning environment for the pupils. She gave the pupils praise and high fives for their correct responses (ESOBS1). She encouraged them to keep trying when they encountered difficulty. '*I love the effort you are making*' and '*try try try*' were some of the phrases she used (ESOBS4). Brittany corroborated this in ESBINT. Ingrid also allowed pupils to express their differing opinions regarding aspects of the lessons, thereby creating a space for the pupils to disagree with her (ESOBS1).

It seems that Ingrid endeavoured to create a warm and welcoming environment for her pupils. She employed approaches that seemingly allowed the pupils to feel more

comfortable to offer answers which may have served to raise pupil confidence especially as she perceived they struggled with confidence.

4.3.3 Approaches to Discipline

Both positive and negative pupil behaviours were observed. The negative behaviour that was observed seemed to disrupt the flow of Ingrid's teaching and was therefore deemed an important factor to the teaching and learning of her pupils. This theme incorporates the ways that Ingrid managed the negative behaviour of her pupils. From the observations, it appeared that Ingrid administered few strategies to control this negative behaviour.

Negative pupil behaviour was characterised by outbursts – shouting at and quarrelling with one another and Ingrid; leaving seats or the classroom entirely; indifference at teacher entry into class; swearing; skipping class. For example, in looking for her own chair, Deshantay walked around the class during teaching, quarrelling with pupils (ESOBS4). In another instance, two girls chased each other around the class to retrieve a shoe (ESOBS5).

Ingrid's strategies to control pupil behaviour were to scold the pupils and on occasion reason with them by asking them to assess their own behaviour. She stated,

> *'It is very disappointing with the people in the class but you have no shame running around the class.'* (ESOBS5)

From the observations, it appeared that the behaviour of the pupils posed challenges to the flow of Ingrid's teaching. She had to stop lessons to address pupils' outbursts and pupils walking out of class. However, from the observations, it did not seem that Ingrid reprimanded the pupils for their behaviour until the behaviour appeared 'out of control'.

4.4 The Perspectives of the Teachers and Pupils Regarding Teaching Approaches

The perspectives of participants gave deeper insight into the teaching approaches. The themes related to this research questions are shown in Table 4.3.

Research Question	Main themes
2. What are the perspectives of the teachers and pupils regarding teaching approaches in Spanish lessons?	Beliefs about Pupils Beliefs about Approaches Pupil Learning Factors

Table 4. 3 – Eagle School themes for RQ2

4.4.1 Beliefs about Pupils

The beliefs that Ingrid held towards her pupils emerged as a significant finding within the data. Her beliefs seemed to provide a foundation to her approaches as they influenced her decision-making regarding lessons.

It was previously mentioned that Ingrid '*teaches to the class*'. This stance was based on her belief that all her pupils within the class, year group and school class experienced the same kind of difficulties.

> '*I am teaching three Form twos and ... basically I think they are all the same and they need the same kind of help so I prepare these activities with all of them in mind.'* (ESIINT2)
>
> '*All the classes in our school are basically the same, from Form five go down. They all have the same kind of learning disabilities.'* (ESIINT2)

Ingrid indicated that these 'learning disabilities' contributed to pupils' poor learning and failure at school (ESIINT2). She identified issues such as literacy and numeracy gaps, gender differences and lack of confidence in learning and attendance issues as the foundation of why pupils experienced difficulties in learning. Each will be presented in turn.

Literacy and Numeracy Gaps

According to Ingrid, the pupils experienced gaps in English knowledge that impeded their capacity to be successful Spanish language learners. Ingrid indicated that these gaps may have started at the primary level and widened as the pupils progressed though secondary school. Lack of knowledge of punctuation markers such as question marks, classification of words such as verbs or nouns and connecting words such as '*but'* and '*and'* were examples of the gaps she perceived the pupils to possess (ESIINT2). As she stated,

> *'I realise that they are not really aware of the concepts in English far less to be able to know how to do it in Spanish.'* (ESIINT2)

Despite being aware that the pupils may possess literacy gaps, Ingrid acknowledged that she planned and executed lessons based on her expectations of pupils' literacy knowledge rather than their actual literacy knowledge.

> *'You make the presentation with the idea that there are certain things that they know and if they know this, then they will be able to pick up on certain things. But if they don't know some of the basic things that you think they should know then they really won't catch it.'* (ESIINT1)

She highlighted her need to be aware of pupil literacy gaps in order to address them in her teaching. She admitted, however, that her awareness was not always acute as some would only arise in the course of teaching.

> '*When I observe that they don't understand something that they should understand based on previous knowledge … I fill it in for them but I am not aware of all that they don't know, that they should know.'* (ESIINT2)

This finding suggests that, for Ingrid, a solid foundation in English was considered important as a basis for learning Spanish and without the requisite foundation, these pupils experienced difficulties in learning Spanish. Ingrid felt her approaches were competent enough to fill the gaps where necessary; however, these gaps were not always known and therefore it may have been the case that lessons were conducted without addressing certain areas of difficulty. This lack of awareness of or attention to their gaps may have resulted in key areas of content evading pupil understanding.

Although English is the official language of Trinidad and Tobago and the language of formal instruction, Trinidadian English Creole is more widely spoken in the pupils' homes and Ingrid considered the latter to be the first language of the pupils. In light of pupil lack of awareness of English, she suggested using Trinidadian English Creole as a medium of instruction instead of Standard English to make the grasp of content easier for her pupils.

On the other hand, Ingrid stated that English is ubiquitous in Trinidad and Tobago and therefore felt the pupils had sufficient exposure to it outside their homes. Nevertheless, raising pupil literacy awareness was therefore an important consideration for her teaching approaches.

In addition to literacy gaps, Ingrid also alluded to numeracy gaps in which she perceived the pupils to experience difficulties: subtraction skills, telling time and counting (ESIINT2). Ingrid felt that these numeracy gaps were the base of pupils' difficulty with telling the time in Spanish. Similarly, she felt that her approaches could be used to elevate pupil competencies in these areas.

Confidence in Learning

Compounding these gaps were the lack of confidence that Ingrid perceived the pupils to possess (ESIINT1). She attributed this lack of confidence to the past failures they had experienced as learners which resulted in the pupils being timid in taking risks in their learning. This included attempting activities on their own or working without the direct input of the teacher. Ingrid recounted that the pupils have little belief in their ability to succeed and therefore needed constant encouragement.

> *'Our children are not able to work on their own … Always have to help them and tell them what to do … They always need assurance from you that they are doing it correctly … They have no confidence in their ability'* (ESIINT1)

Ingrid's acknowledgement of her pupils' lack of confidence in their learning may have translated into her explicitly and deliberately building a class environment where the pupils feel encouraged and able to succeed. As Brittany said,

> *'Most of the times she does be happy for me when I getting the words and thing. Tell me I'm doing good. It does really bring me up … knowing she have faith in me.'* (ESBINT)

This confidence building was corroborated by the pupils in ESTBI,

> *'She confident in us.'*
>
> *'She's not a negative person.'*

This finding puts into focus two aspects of Ingrid's approaches. Firstly, her desire to increase the independence of the pupils may have been a way to engender their self-confidence, although it seems that her involvement in tasks appears to be counterproductive to this aim. Secondly, her use of encouraging words with her pupils may have also been to increase their confidence in tasks.

Gender-Related Issues

Another pupil-related challenge to Ingrid's teaching was the high proportion of boys in her Spanish class. The class consisted of 17 boys and 10 girls. While Ingrid was

confident in being able to reach the girls, she expressed difficulty in constructing approaches that were appropriate to the boys. As she indicated,

'I still haven't found anything that really reaches the boys.' (ESIINT1)

Ingrid tended to locate the challenge of reaching the boys as being within the pupils themselves citing their dislike for and lack of interest in learning Spanish. As none of the boys were willing to be interviewed or take part in the task-based interviews, their perspectives concerning the teaching approaches and issues with their own learning were not ascertained.

Attendance

Attendance emerged as an issue that had a significant effect on Ingrid's teaching approaches. This related to pupils' attendance at school and attendance and punctuality at class. From the observations and interviews, it was evident that this pupil lack of attendance at school was a challenge faced by Ingrid. Some of the pupils were frequently absent from school and consequently missed lessons. While Ingrid faced difficulties with progressing in lesson content, as she had to repeat lessons, the pupils also noticed difficulties caused by their own lack of attendance.

> *'Well how I stay home nah, I could not figure out the Spanish words and thing.'* (ESBINT)

Lack of attendance at school presented one challenge while lack of attendance to class presented another. Some pupils, though being present at school, failed to attend Spanish class which seemed to make teaching difficult for Ingrid (ESOBS1) as she would have planned activities with the whole class in mind. One on occasion, the lack of attendance was so chronic that she solicited the assistance of the Vice Principal to persuade the pupils to come to class (ESOBS1). Deshantay expressed her own attendance issues.

> *'Sometimes I does not be there…when I am not feeling for class.'* (ESDINT)

From the observations, it seemed that attendance was a particular issue for the boys as they were mostly absent for all the classes. On one occasion, as Ingrid entered the class, the boys departed (ESOBS5). During other lessons, pupils left while the lesson was in progress. These actions seemed to cause disruptions to the flow of Ingrid's

teaching. In one instance, Ingrid stopped teaching to allow a late pupil to catch up (ESOBS6), she exclaimed,

'I do not want to say this is why you should come to class on time'

This finding suggests that pupil lack of attendance affected Ingrid's teaching. Apart from the disruptions and the gaps to learning that followed, Ingrid had to employ remedial strategies to allow pupils to 'catch up'.

Ingrid viewed pupil attendance as being outside her control as she attributed pupil absence, especially the boys', to lack of interest and therefore a pupil induced factor. Attendance also related to the teacher as the pupils indicated the impact of Ingrid's own attendance and punctuality to class on their learning. According to ESTBI, the pupils stated that Ingrid's punctuality meant that more work could be covered. Her consistency in attendance, however, seemed to convey a noteworthy message to the pupils, indicative of effort on her part which translated into respect for the pupils. The pupils placed her attendance in the wider framework of teacher attendance at the school, as Brittany pointed out,

'*It have some teachers who don't show up and she make the effort to show up to make us learn about Spanish.*' (ESTBI)

4.4.2 Beliefs about Approaches

Both teachers and pupils held beliefs concerning teaching approaches. The perspectives that they shared in the interviews will be presented here.

Limitations of Teaching Approaches

Ingrid believed that there were limits to her approaches to 'reach' her pupils. According to her,

> '*There is only so much we can do. You can only do so much and no more. You can't fix everything that is preventing them from being able to learn.'* (ESIINT2)

While being aware of approaches that did not accommodate some pupils (for example the boys), she was aware that her teaching may not have been able to accommodate any of her pupils (ESIINT1). She perceived hat her pupils possessed inherent difficulties (such as the literacy gaps previously mentioned) that could not be overcome

by her approaches. In addition to inherent difficulties, she mentioned other perceived limitations as a Spanish teacher.

Subject as a Difference

Spanish is a core subject in most government schools in Trinidad and Tobago and was therefore a compulsory component of study for Ingrid's pupils. However, according to Ingrid, the pupils, especially the boys, were averse to learning Spanish. She attributed the ineffectiveness of her teaching approaches to the boys' apparent dislike of Spanish (ESIINT1). She perceived that the boys viewed Spanish as irrelevant to their current or future life context, a view which may have been shared by other pupils in the class

> '*They don't see why they have to be learning any foreign language. In Trinidad we speak English.'*
>
> *'You don't see how verb conjugations and learning to say the date in Spanish adds up to the reality of your world.'* (ESIINT2).

Pupils' negative views seemed specific to Spanish as Ingrid indicated that the pupils, even the boys, held positive attitudes towards other subjects. Ingrid mentioned the boys' positive attitudes towards Metal Work and the girls' positive attitude towards Clothing and Textiles, adding that Metal Work may be considered more 'manly' and Clothing and Textiles a tactile subject. The girls also mentioned their amenability towards other subjects while expressing their difficulties with Spanish.

> *'I love Maths … any Maths problem you give me I will try my best to solve it.'* (ESSINT)
>
> '*Maths and English, that's two subjects I real like so I does push myself to do that. Spanish is kinda like a hard subject. It go be too much for me.*' (ESBINT)

It was not the case, however, that all pupils perceived Spanish to be irrelevant to their lives. Some girls mentioned their preferred future professions as flight attendants which required proficiencies in Spanish (ESTBI; ESSINT). It seems that these long-term future goals shaped their attitudes towards Spanish as these pupils attended most classes and seemed more engaged.

Teacher as a Difference

In addition to subjects making a difference to pupil interest, Ingrid also perceived that the personality of the teacher made a difference (ESIINT2). She recounted the personality of the Metal Work teacher as a factor in being able to engage the boys

(ESIINT2). While the girls from the task-based interview held positive perspectives towards Ingrid's disposition by stating she was '*nice, respectful and helpful*' (ESTBI), Ingrid herself may have felt that her inherent capacity to reach the pupils was limited.

> '*It is hard for me to understand children. I mean to say I am a human being so I should understand people but I guess I don't always understand people.'*

In addition to the status and relevance of Spanish, Ingrid perceived that her personality also played a role in pupil interest and engagement.

4.4.3 Pupil Learning Factors

Beliefs about pupil learning also emerged. Although this research project focussed on teaching approaches, acknowledging the learning-related issues that affect them is equally important. The themes related to Pupil Learning are *Pupil Learning Habits*, *Pupil Engagement, Pupil Learning Responsibility* and *Individual Learning Strategy.* Each will be presented in turn.

Pupil Learning Habits

Ingrid perceived that her pupils possessed poor learning habits which contributed to their difficulties in learning. According to her, her pupils lacked learning how to learn strategies that might help them become more proficient learners.

> '*They don't know how to learn. They don't know what's the process you need to use so that you could learn.'* (ESIINT2)

Ingrid felt that her teaching approaches could be used to teach the pupils learning strategies such as memory techniques which she perceived were effective for pupils who experience difficulties in learning. However, she highlighted the personal responsibility of each pupil to discover their own learning strategy.

She also highlighted that she did not always make learning strategies explicit to the pupils. In the course of her teaching, she expected that pupils deduced these strategies for themselves. According to Ingrid:

> *'I don't tell them directly. I don't tell them that this is a strategy that you can use to learn other things too. I am hoping that it will come to them. I don't have the time in the class to tell them. I am too busy trying to teach them content.'* (ESIINT2)

Although Ingrid felt that she could have addressed pupils poor learning habits through teaching approaches, however, the primacy of content prevented her from making learning skills a focus.

Pupil Engagement

Many of the challenges faced by Ingrid in her teaching related to the engagement of the pupils. In her view, the pupils lacked interest in Spanish and were therefore disengaged from her lessons. Pupil lack of interest in classroom activities was coupled with their refusal to engage in work.

The disengagement of pupils was manifest in 'breaking class' and in classroom behaviours: placing their head on desks (ESOBS4), refusing to take notes (ESBINT) and displaying disruptive behaviour while in class (ESOBS4). Ingrid felt that this lack of interest placed a strain on her teaching as she had to persuade the pupils to learn.

> *'I have to be running them down to try. I have to be forcing them to learn. Whereas they should be showing interest for themselves. I always have to be battling with them.'* (ESIINT1).

The pupils seemed to be aware of their own disengagement. Deshantay reported '*sometimes I does not be feeling for class*' (ESDINT) and Samantha indicated that she looks for distractions when she does not want to write (ESSINT).

Individual Learning Responsibility

Ingrid indicated that it was the responsibility of her pupils to adopt behaviours that ensure their readiness and willingness to learn. This responsibility entailed the following

- Having class materials – the pupils often came to class without their books or writing utensils (ESOBS1). They were considered by Ingrid as being disorganized and ill-prepared for class.

-Paying attention – Ingrid recounted that her pupils did not pay attention in class (ESIINT1).

- Revising work at home – Ingrid also indicated that she expected the pupils to revise their work at home (ESIINT1). The pupils in ESTBI indicated that Ingrid corrects their mistakes so that they can review them at home.

Ingrid considered the pupils to play a role in their own learning. Their interest, attitudes and behaviour to learning were considered pupil personal responsibility.

Individual Learning Strategies

While Ingrid surmised that the pupils lacked personal learning strategies, the pupils related personal strategies that helped them to learn Spanish. Samantha used a Google application to help her translate words into English and Spanish which helped her revise vocabulary (ESSINT). Deshantay conversed with her Spanish speaking relatives as a way to develop her conversational skills (ESDINT).

The pupils developed personal learning strategies despite appearing to Ingrid that they did not. This finding suggests that pupil learning was not limited to Ingrid's teaching approaches.

4.5. Wider Education Policy and Practice Influences on Teaching Approaches

In this section, I will present the themes related to the third research question. These are shown in Table 4.4.

Research Question	Main themes
3. How does wider education policy and practice influence the teachers' approaches for these pupils who experience difficulties in learning?	Postgraduate Diploma in Education (DipEd) School Influences Ministry of Education NCSE/CSEC

Table 4. 4 – Eagle School themes for RQ3

The issues within each theme will be presented in turn.

4.5.1 Postgraduate Diploma in Education (DipEd)

Ingrid identified the DipEd as a main influence on her teaching approaches. As mentioned before in Chapter one, the DipEd course is an in-service teacher training programme administered by the Ministry of Education and the University of the West Indies. According to Ingrid,

> *'Children weren't learning at all … so when I went to DipEd, I went for help.'* (ESINT2)

Ingrid credits the course for transforming her teaching.

> *'When I did the Diploma in Education, I really did try to apply what I learnt because I found what I was doing wasn't working at all.'* (ESIINT2)

She stated that the DipEd emphasised pupil centred teaching approaches. Practical principles in line with this emphasis were instrumental for the change in Ingrid's teaching. With the learning needs of pupils in mind, she said teachers were taught to plan, execute and evaluate lessons. Ingrid identified the practical effects of this training course on her approaches as follows.

- Teach small bits at a time to allow the pupils to process information.
- Teach one skill (speaking, listening, reading and writing) at a time.
- Evaluate only the skill taught
- Start lesson with an interesting activity to stimulate pupils
- Give examples
- Be explicit about teaching
- Teach them to become independent learners

Ingrid indicated that the DipEd's approaches were in sharp contrast to her past approaches of 'chalk and talk' which were characterised by

- Grammar focused approaches
- Considerable use of text book
- Insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise structure.

It seems that the DipEd course provided Ingrid with awareness to improve the structure and pace of her lessons. From the observations, however, it appears that implementing all the principles from the DipEd may have proved challenging for Ingrid. As mentioned before, approaches that made strategies explicit and built pupil's independence were not prolific. Ingrid mentioned the disparity between intended and

actual approaches and although she desired to implement more independent approaches, she recognised school constraints that prevented her from doing so.

4.5.2 School Influences

There were some ways in which the policy, practice and structure of the school influenced Ingrid's approaches. While she mentioned that senior leadership had no direct influence (ESIINT2), there were other elements of the school that had a profound impact: timetabling and school resources.

Timetabling

The timetabling of class seemed to relate closely to the weather. All the Spanish classes for this Form two were scheduled after lunch, the last periods for the day. Ingrid claimed that this timing of classes affected the concentration and willingness of pupils. She indicated that the temperature at that time of day, when the heat is most intense, may have contributed to the apparent listlessness and restlessness of pupils.

> *'All of their classes are in the evening so they are never in the mood to do any work so I always have to be battling with them.'* (ESIINT1)

Brittany pointed out the impact of the weather on her learning,

> '*What does really bring me down is the hotness…you does can't function. It real hot and thing…last period real hot.*' (ESBINT)

As teachers had little input into the creation of the timetable, this represents a manner in which senior administrators influenced her approaches.

School Resources

It is expected by most teachers in Trinidad and Tobago that the school provides teaching resources. Ingrid, however, mentioned the lack of resources at her school and the resultant impact on her teaching approaches. She mentioned a lack of space, projectors, white board markers and printing facilities (ESIINT1).

The use of the audio-visual room was in high demand by teachers and therefore access to the projector for PowerPoint presentations was not always guaranteed. In the instances where this facility was not available, Ingrid resorted to using solely the white board. However, she indicated that even access to resources to execute these approaches were limited at times (ESIINT1).

4.5.3 Ministry of Education

According to Ingrid, the Ministry is responsible for the provision of finances from which school resources are expected to be purchased. She also indicated that the Ministry of Education is responsible for the national curriculum and the administering of national standardized tests.

National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) /Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)

NCSE and CSEC represent nationwide standardized examinations undertaken at the Form three and Form five levels respectively and Ingrid mentioned these examinations as influencing her teaching approaches. Being an official marker for these examinations made her aware of the elements of structure that were important to success in the examinations. She stated that she tailored her teaching accordingly.

> '*I observe the way the papers are structured or what it is they are looking for. I begin to recognise those structures are more important than other structures; I really need to focus on this skill because anyone who tries to do Spanish is going to need this skill for the exam at least.'* (ESIINT2)

The examinations therefore provided Ingrid with a framework for her approaches. It seems that she disregarded or at least diminished her focus on elements of Spanish that were not important to the exam.

Having an exam-focused teaching approach may have served two purposes. Ingrid stated that tailoring her approaches for these examinations might increase pupil success as they would have had ample exposure to the structure and skills valued by the markers. Also, she indicated that pupil success improved the image of the teacher. According to Ingrid, teachers were judged according to pupil performance in examinations.

> '*At the back of my mind, I always do have the exam because teachers tend to be valued according to exam result.'* (ESIINT2)

She indicated that her pupils rarely passed Spanish (ESIINT2) and felt that adjusting her approaches to suit the exams might increase their chances of success.

This finding suggests that pupils' future sitting of examinations guided Ingrid's teaching approaches. Though Ingrid's pupils were almost two years away from NCSE, Ingrid nevertheless tailored her approaches to prepare them for it. 'Teaching to the exam'

was seen as a way to ensure pupil success but also to elevate the perceived effectiveness of her teaching.

4.6 Summary

The findings from Eagle School revealed that vocabulary-based approaches were particularly important to Ingrid's teaching. Underlying these approaches were conceptualisations about pupils' difficulties and attitudes in relation to learning Spanish. In some instances, the pupils' conceptualisations matched Ingrid's as in the case of attitude towards Spanish and effects of weather. There were instances where Ingrid's perceptions of her pupils did not match the pupils' reality, for example, the home learning strategies that the pupils adopted which seemed to be outside Ingrid's knowledge. The Postgraduate Diploma in Education and examinations seemed to be the most influential external force on Ingrid's teaching approaches.

4.7 Part 2 – Fairview School

In this part, I present the findings from Fairview. The data codes for Fairview School are outlined in Table 4.5.

Lorena's First Semi-Structured Interview	FSLINT1
Lorena's Second Semi-Structured Interview	FSLINT2
Task-Based Interview 1	FSTBI1
Task-Based Interview 2	FSTBI2
Task-Based Interview 3	FSTBI3
Task-Based Interview 4	FSTBI4
Bale's Individual Interview	FSBaINT
Brandon's Individual Interview	FSBrINT
Jerry's Individual Interview	FSJINT
Tara's Individual Interview	FSTINT
Victor's Individual Interview	FSVINT

Classroom Observation 1	FSOBS1
Classroom Observation 2	FSOBS2
Classroom Observation 3	FSOBS3
Classroom Observation 4	FSOBS4
Classroom Observation 5	FSOBS5
Classroom Observation 6	FSOBS6

Table 4. 5 – Data codes for Fairview School

Fairview, as described in the previous chapter, is a mixed rural school. The pupils in the Form two class in which the research took place represented mixed abilities. Although there were pupils who experienced difficulties in learning, there were also some pupils who were considered to be high performing. Lorena, the Spanish teacher for this class, therefore adopted approaches that seemed to cater for a range of abilities. The topic covered during observations were *Family* and *Physical and Personality Descriptions.* Like Eagle, the research questions will be used as a basis for the presentation of findings.

4.8 Teaching Approaches

The themes for RQ1 are shown in Table 4.6.

Research Question	Main themes
What teaching approaches are used for pupils who experience difficulties in learning by two Form two Spanish teachers in two government secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?	Language Structure Strategies Teaching Strategies Discipline Strategies

Table 4. 6 – Fairview School themes for RQ1

4.8.1 Language Structure Approaches

Language Structure Approaches refer to the approaches Lorena used to teach the Spanish structure to the pupils. From the observations, it appeared that Lorena had two main foci for language structure – 1) vocabulary acquisition and understanding and 2) communicative areas such as speaking, reading and writing.

Vocabulary acquisition and knowledge were observed to be the most prominent aspect of the language structure approaches used in Lorena's teaching. To enhance vocabulary acquisition, it appeared that knowledge of the alphabet was necessary. Whole class alphabet recitals were conducted and seemed to be for pronunciation mastery (FSOBS1). Within these recitals, Lorena used English words to make the pronunciation of Spanish letters clearer to the pupils. For example, she told the class that the /ñ/ is pronounced like the /ni/ in onion. Pupils also read from the text book and incorrect pronunciations were corrected.

There also seemed to be an emphasis on vocabulary knowledge and acquisition within Lorena's approaches. The strategies used were: introduction of new words, vocabulary and spelling tests, translations exercises, peer tutoring and *the handout*. Lorena frequently introduced new words to the pupils (FSTBI1, FSLINT1) and encouraged them to find new words for themselves through the internet. She also administered vocabulary tests (FSOBS2) and translation exercises (from Spanish to English and vice versa) (FSLINT1) which seemed to be for pupil recall of vocabulary. In addition to the meaning of words, the correct spelling of words also seemed important. To enhance pupil spelling of Spanish words, Lorena administered spelling tests. She also used Juanita, a pupil originally from Puerto Rico, as a peer tutor to demonstrate the pronunciation and spelling of words. Juanita pronounced and spelled the Spanish words and required to the pupils to repeat after her (FSOBS2).

The handout was described by Lorena as a document from the Secretariat for the Implementation of Spanish (SIS) that contained 16 pages of vocabulary from various topics. This handout was mentioned by Lorena and her pupils as contributing to their vocabulary development. Upon 'breaking class', pupils were made to write out the entire handout as punishment which allowed pupils to remember the spelling and meaning of words.

From these findings, it seems that Lorena incorporated a strong emphasis on building pupil vocabulary. In a discussion with Lorena after FSOBS2, she mentioned that the alphabet and vocabulary are important components to acquiring a new language. Developing pupil knowledge in the spelling, meaning and pronunciation of words seemed vital to her approaches.

Speaking

From the observations and the task-based interviews, it seemed that Lorena endeavoured to develop pupil speaking competencies by engaging the class in free response exercises (FSOBS2, FSTBI1). These were exercises where Lorena posed open questions in Spanish to individual pupils and they were required to respond in Spanish. These exercises seemed to encourage the creativity and spontaneity of pupils. However, As Lorena expressed in FSOBS3, developing pupil oral skills served another purpose – preparation for the NCSE oral examination. As she told the pupils,

> *'You have an oral exam in NCSE … You will also have oral questions. The reason why I do that is to prepare you for that exam.'* (FSOBS3)

Reading

From the data, it seemed that Lorena endeavoured to develop the pupil's sight reading and comprehension skills (FSOBS2; FSOBS3; FSTBI). The pupils were given reading comprehension exercises (FSOBS5) as well as opportunities to read passages verbatim in Spanish (FSOBS1). Like the orals, developing pupil reading skills seemed to have an exam focus. As Lorena told the pupils in FSOBS3,

'*Orals in Form three so you need to practise reading aloud'*

Writing

Writing was a prominent aspect of Lorena's language structure approaches. Note taking, which manifested in various ways throughout the lessons, was the main form of writing activity. Pupils were expected to take notes from the board or make their own notes of English words and their Spanish equivalent, mainly from translation exercises. Lorena emphasised notetaking as an important strategy for the learning of new words.

'*Anytime we bounce up a word, we will make a note of it.*' (FSOBS1)

Pupils were also required to retrieve all their notes, even those from previous years (FSOBS1). Notes, therefore, acted as a reference tool for pupils as they were required

to refer to their notes to remember content (FSOBS1). According to Brandon in FSBrINT, the pupils were given a strategy to facilitate easy retrieval of notes.

> '*Keep all the notes in the same book until you finish up and when you done stick it, staple it together and have it in one place'*.

Apart from notetaking, Lorena developed the pupils' creative writing skills through paragraph and essay writing. Bale and Brandon stated difficulty with this type of free writing (FSBaINT; FSBrINT).

4.8.2 Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies represent strategies used to teach the language structure to the pupils. The themes related to teaching strategies are discussed below.

Multisensory Strategies

Multisensory strategies included audio-visual and experiential strategies. The audio-visual strategies included use of movies and music while experiential strategies involved cooking. Lorena stated these approaches in FSLINT1 and FSINT2 and was corroborated by Jerry (FSJINT). These multisensory strategies were not features of the observations but were mentioned by Lorena and her pupils as forming an essential part of her teaching approaches. She mentioned lack of facilities at the school that prevented her from cooking and film activities. She also mentioned incorporating Spanish songs by writing lyrics on the board and also encouraging pupils to search for songs at home. She incorporated Spanish songs (lyrics) as a means to expose the pupils to Spanish grammar and vocabulary (FSLINT2). This strategy was also not a feature of the observations.

> '*I give them lyrics. I tell them go look for this song, go look for that sing(er). It would help them reproduce the pronunciation in the way I would like them to repeat it. It is a fun way to learn it*.' (FSINT2).

It seemed that Lorena sought to incorporate these multisensory strategies as a way to increase pupil interest and also a way to increase her own interest. In describing these strategies, she said,

> *'I would try to have fun with it, I would try to make it fun for me.'* (FSLINT2)

Simplification Strategies

These were strategies where Lorena attempted to make the work easier for her pupils. They were seen in two ways: by breaking down the work into smaller parts and by dealing with difficulty within tasks.

To break down the work into smaller parts, Lorena dissected phrases such as the date to demonstrate to the pupils the meaning and pronunciation of each word (FSOBS2). For verb conjugations, she only presented the first person to third person singular (FSOBS3), instead of the verb's full conjugation. In cases when pupils wanted to use more complex structure, they were advised by Lorena not to do so. It may be that Lorena wanted to ensure the pupils had mastery of the simpler structure first or it may have also been that Lorena perceived that the more complex structure may have given the pupil difficulty.

To deal with the difficulty within tasks, Lorena enlisted the assistance of pupils she perceived to be higher performing to simplify the structure to pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. In one pronunciation activity, she chose Juanita to select words she perceived were easy for the pupils to pronounce (FSOBS2; FSTBI1; FSBaINT).

Questioning

Questioning was multifaceted and fulfilled many functions in this class. Lorena posed questions but also allowed the pupils to pose their questions. Questions were used:

a. To gauge understanding – '*Everybody understand*?' (FSOBS3)
b. To capture nuances in vocabulary – '*Alto refers to ... a tall wha*t?' (FSOBS4)
c. To guide pupils to correct answer – '*what is cómo son, are you hearing the plural in it?*' (FSOBS4).
d. To ascertain pupil comfort with topic – 'Are *you comfortable with Physical Description?*' (FSOBS6).
e. For translation purposes – '*How do you say 'I have'?'* (FSOBS6)
f. To reign in disengaged pupils – '*Son nuestros nietos, what is that?*' (FSOBS3)

Lorena's questioning seemed to be to elicit pupil understanding, knowledge and recall of structure. Pupil understanding was sometimes elicited through the blanket question to the class '*Do you understand?*'. She also gauged pupil understanding by asking pupils for the nuances in vocabulary, for example, the appropriate form of the adjective (alto or alta – tall) to be used in a sentence (FSOBS3).

Questions were used to elicit pupil knowledge of vocabulary as in the Spanish for English words and vice versa by asking '*how do you say … in Spanish (or English)?*'. In one instance, she used a common mistake of the pupils to ascertain their knowledge of the correct structure – '*would I say soy el pelo?*'.

For pupils who seemed disengaged, questions about content were directed specifically to them (FSOBS; FSTBI1). It was observed that the pupils asked questions as well, although these questions were equally based on content. Bale (FSBaINT) indicated that he asked Lorena questions concerning the spelling of words.

Explanations

According to the pupils in FSTBI3 and Bale in FSTBaINT, Lorena offered clear explanations that bridged gaps in their understanding. As Bale puts it, '*she goes down to details'* (FSBaINT). It was observed that Lorena offered explanations about content, for example, she explained the differences in pronunciations between Spanish letters and English (FSOBS1). Explanations were either on a whole class basis or targeted to individuals. (Targeted approaches will be elaborated in a later section). Bale mentioned the helpfulness of explanations to his learning. According to him,

> '*What I don't understand, I does ask she and she does explain everything to me'* (FSBaINT).

As Lorena's teaching was mostly based on activities from the textbook, the explanations appeared to surround concerns that emanated from those activities, thereby fulfilling a content-based aim. However, as Bale pointed out, explanations also seemed to fulfil a procedural purpose in terms of explaining to pupils how to execute their activities. Both forms of explanations may have guided the pupils towards successful completion of tasks.

Targeted Approaches

Targeted approaches were implemented to support pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. Apart from explanations, there were other ways that Lorena targeted her approaches towards these pupils.

She walked around class to check pupils' books. It was in this checking that pupils took the opportunity to ask Lorena questions concerning their gaps in knowledge (FSBrINT, FSBaINT, FSTBI1 and FSTBI2). She targeted questions to pupils who appeared to be struggling (FSOBS5). These questions were either task related or

based on language structure. The pupils also received individual attention with respect to the correction of homework (FSOBS1). Calling pupils to her desk and calling them on the board to do tasks was also a practice, although these pupils represented mixed ability ranges.

In summary, then, it appeared that within whole class teaching, targeted approaches were used to further assist pupils who were experiencing difficulties allowing Lorena to specifically address the concerns of individual pupils.

Repetition

Lorena engaged the class in exercises where they repeated pronunciations and phrases after her. For example, Lorena read Spanish sentences verbatim from the textbook for pupils to repeat after her (FSOBS4). Incorrect pronunciations were adjusted through repetitions where pupils repeated the correct structure multiple times (FSVINT; FSBaINT). Repetitions were also used to bridge pupil understanding. According to Brandon,

> *'When she knows that you don't understand something, she will make you do it over and over'* (FSBrINT).
>
> '*Like when I don't know nothing, I ask she to repeat it again and she does*' (FSBaINT).

Tara, Bale and Victor reported the benefit of repetitions to their learning. It seems that repetition of structure, especially after teacher modelling, allowed them to revisit and grasp content they may have missed.

Strategies to Support Memory

Some of Lorena's approaches surrounded support for pupils' memory of content. The spontaneous administration of tests seemed to be for the purpose of aiding pupil memory (FSLINT1). In some instances, pupils were tested on content that had just been taught. The pupils in FSTBI and FSBrINT corroborated the approach of the teacher to administer vocabulary tests.

The pupils were expected to remember content from Form one. As the pupils were required to stick their notebooks together, Lorena expected that they had access to the content she taught them in Form one. The pupils also seemed to regard memory as important as they perceived their lack of memory of pronunciations and vocabulary as a source of their difficulties (FSVINT; FSJINT).

Pace

As mentioned for Eagle School, pace refers to the timing and speed of the lessons. To define the pace of her lessons, Lorena used the expression '*the herd can only go as fast as the slowest buffalo*' (FSLINT1). Therefore, she regarded her lessons as moving at the pace of those who experience difficulties in learning. She stated that she explained to the class,

> *'Listen, I want to move forward and we will move forward but it does not make sense moving forward if half the class does not get it'* (FSLINT2).

According to the pupils, Lorena's approach was to '*ensure everyone understands the topic*' (FSTBI1) and to '*ensure everyone is doing the same thing'* (FSTBI2). To this end, she also indicated that she stopped the class to assist those who experience difficulties in learning. It was also observed that she gave more time to some pupils to finish activities while setting additional work for those who worked faster (FSOBS5).

There were, however, instances when the pace of the class did not seem to benefit those who experience difficulties in learning. For example, she moved on from pupils who were reticent to participate in class activities (FSOBS3; FSOBS4) and was also observed to move according to the pace of her higher performing pupils to the apparent detriment of those who experience difficulties in learning. In FSOBS5, Bale was asked a question; Hannah (a pupil considered to be high performing) interrupted with the answer; Hannah was praised by Lorena.

Lorena mentioned the frustration her higher performing pupils experience when the pace is tempered too much to accommodate those who experience difficulties in learning.

> '*Hannah, one of the students gets pretty frustrated and says 'Miss, let's move on nah'* (FSLINT2).

However, the pupils in the individual interviews stated that the perceived fast pace of lessons may be incongruent to their learning. Bale indicated that he cannot pick up fast, yet the teacher reads quickly for him (FSBaINT) while Jerry indicated that it takes time for him to understand (FSJINT) and the pace of lessons does not always facilitate this.

From this finding, it seems that the pace of Lorena's lessons might be a source of tension within her teaching approaches – a tension that seems to be brought on by

the presence of pupils perceived to be of mixed ability. The dilemma for Lorena seems to be how to tailor her pace to suit all her pupils.

Peer Support

This code reflects the way Lorena used her pupils who were considered to be high performing to assist those who experienced difficulties in learning. The former acted as peer tutors to provide whole class or one-on-one support to pupils experiencing difficulties.

The role of peer tutor by Juanita has already been mentioned. In relation to her, Lorena stated,

> *'I said she will help me with the weaker ones. She thinks that it shouldn't be her responsibility to help but if you are distracting the students by talking to them 'cause you know everything I might as well give you something to do so that everybody can learn.'* (FSLINT1)

Although it seems that Juanita was unwilling to perform the role of peer tutor, her expertise as a native speaker seemed useful to increase the participation in learning of other pupils. Peer support also manifested in other ways. Pupils provided one-on-one support to pupils experiencing difficulties. In FSOBS2, after Lorena expressed displeasure at the standard of a pupil's family tree, a pupil she considered to be high performing was allowed to sit with the pupil to help him make adjustments. Pupils' work was also used as models so that other pupils could see what Lorena considered to be acceptable standards (FSOBS2). In FSOBS4, when a pupil struggled to answer a question, 'high performing' pupils were allowed to help him.

It seemed that Lorena used the presence of those she considered to be high performing for the benefit of pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. This finding seemed to support her philosophy that the class can only progress if they all progress.

Building a Comfortable Learning Environment

Creating a comfortable learning space seemed to be important to Lorena. The pupils stated that Lorena engaged them in chats about the future (FSTBI1); gave motivational speeches; made jokes and listened to them as they expressed their feelings. Brandon and Bale, in their individual interviews, mentioned their positive sentiments towards the teacher. However, not every pupil agreed that Lorena created a comfortable learning space. Tara in FSTBI1 and FSTINT stated that Lorena called her names and also indicated that Lorena spoke to her aggressively.

'She does be getting on grumpy. I don't like how she does loud we up because we could always have a better tone to talk to we in a way.' (FSTINT)

Victor also mentioned negative issues with Lorena;

'*The last time I did ask Miss if I was doing good first, she did say she did never like me so I just say.*' (FSVINT)

The pupils, therefore, had mixed feelings over the socioemotional atmosphere Lorena created in the classroom. While some pupils recounted the positive language she used towards them, others regarded her language, tone and approach as negative.

4.8.3 Approaches to Discipline

This theme describes the approaches Lorena used to manage the classroom behaviour of the pupils. From the observations, it appeared that Lorena regarded discipline as important as she enforced strict standards for pupil behaviour. As she stated,

'*You're talking, then you're gonna distract. I am not going to hear. I am not going to be able to focus.'* (FSLINT)

It was observed that she urged pupils to be quiet during activities (FSOBS1; FSOBS4) especially in instances of pupils answering questions. She made pupils raise both arms in the air in instances when they were deemed noisy (FSOBS2). A quiet environment seemed beneficial to the learning of pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. Jerry mentioned noise in the classroom as a hindrance to his learning (FSJINT), a sentiment echoed by other pupils in their individual interviews.

'People does real talk. Not one second you cannot see them hush their mouth.' (FSJINT)

'*Like I do better by getting all the children in the class to be quiet and who are talking, send them out the class.*' (FSBINT)

The efforts of Lorena to temper the noise level in the class was therefore an important approach to assist the learning of those who experienced difficulties.

Apart from noise control, other strategies were used to manage the behaviour of pupils. She seemed to pay careful attention to the posture of pupils. Pupils were not allowed to rest their heads on the desks or sleep. In one instance, a pupil was perceived to be ill and as such wanted to rest his head on the desk. Lorena sent him

to the Principal's office while exclaiming '*nobody is sleeping in my class'* (FSOBS5). Pupils were also expected to stand to answer questions and to not eat in class (FSTBI).

Lorena's discipline expectations were enforced through punitive measures. *The handout* (previously mentioned as a vocabulary aide) also served as a punishment tool when pupils broke class (FSVINT; FSTBI1). They were made to write out all sixteen pages of the handout and were not allowed back in class until it was completed. As Lorena mentioned,

> *'I will give the handout for breaking class and being rude.'* (FSLINT)

Lorena also implemented punishment strategies for pupils whom she felt were disengaged. She would ask them to remain standing or keep them back after class (FSOBS1). Lorena's discipline strategies seemed to help minimise pupil distraction and increase their engagement.

4.9 The Perspectives of the Teachers and Pupils Regarding Teaching Approaches

In this section, I present the themes for RQ2, as shown in Table 4.7. These themes reflect the perspectives of Lorena and her pupils about the teaching approaches. Each theme will be presented in turn.

Research Question	Main themes
2. What are the perspectives of the teachers and pupils regarding teaching approaches in Spanish lessons?	Beliefs about Pupils Beliefs about Approaches Pupil Learning Factors

Table 4. 7 – Themes related to RQ1- Fairview School

4.9.1 Beliefs about Pupils

This theme relates to Lorena's beliefs about her pupils which included their pupil capabilities and the difficulties some pupils experienced.

Capabilities of Pupils

Lorena perceived that her class contained pupils of mixed abilities as she considered some of her pupils to be high performing while others to experience difficulties in learning. As she stated,

> '*There are a couple of students who really really are bright … then there are other students who the opposite side of that spectrum.'* (FSLINT1)

While Lorena was sensitive to the challenges faced by those who experienced difficulties ('*I notice Bale is lost'* (FSLINT2)), she stated that they are all capable of learning

> *'They are all capable … they are not a lost cause.'* (FSLINT)

However, she stated that she found it to be a challenge in having a class that contained pupils of mixed abilities. According to her, the pupils who experienced difficulties in learning tended to 'hide' during whole class activities. This dynamic of the class was observed in FSOBS3 where those who were considered to experience difficulties in learning were silent during whole class response activities. As Lorena stated,

> *'If I am teaching, they are not going to pay attention all the time if I am not focusing on them all the time. So, if they realise that the class is answering, they just going to stay quiet and not pay attention and sleep or look in the mirror.'* (FSLINT1)

Apart from the pupils 'hiding', Lorena found it a challenge to ensure the engagement of those who experienced difficulties as they often became distracted during activities (FSOBS3).

This finding suggests that a class of mixed abilities presented challenges to her approaches in terms of her ability to engage the entire class in learning.

Pupil Disposition

Lorena held beliefs about the attitudes of her pupils towards particular activities which in turn seemed to determine the type of activities she was willing to introduce to the class. For example, Lorena perceived pupils' positive attitude about cooking and therefore felt comfortable to introduce them to such activities.

> *'So, in a situation like a kitchen I would trust them enough to not quarrel constantly over something and to actually be excited about a particular thing and do it. My past other Form twos….it would have been a disaster. They wouldn't have bothered to participate.'* (FSLINT1).

In addition to pupil attitude, her trust of pupils seemed to be an essential component in including these activities. Her trust of her pupils seemed to emanate out of her long-term relationship with the pupils (FSLINT1).

> '*This class was a bit noisy and a bit unmanageable in the beginning but after we got to know each other and after they got to know what I wanted … they know when I want something, they do it'* (FSLINT1).

4.9.2 Beliefs about Approaches

In addition to Lorena's beliefs about her pupils were beliefs about her approaches. She believed that her approaches should be engaging and interesting to the pupils and herself.

'I will do my part…'

'I try to engage them'

'I try to be interesting'

'I also try to make it fun for myself'

(FSLINT; FSLINT2).

Limitations of Teaching Approaches

Lorena, however, recognised limitations to her approaches in being able to reach pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. Lorena felt that the class size caused her to exclude some pupils, mainly those who experienced difficulties. In one observation, she exclaimed to the pupils '*I cannot monitor a class of 30 students*' (FSOBS3). She felt that these pupils needed individual attention which was not facilitated by large class sizes. According to her, due to class size, the focus and engagement of these pupils diminished while their ability to 'hide' in activities increased (FSLINT1).

These findings suggest that although Lorena endeavoured to make learning interesting to the pupils, especially to those who experience difficulties in learning, she felt that class size hampered her ability to engage some of her pupils.

4.9.3 Pupil Learning

As mentioned for Eagle School, themes related to pupil learning emerged and were deemed important to understanding the issues affecting teaching approaches within

this particular Spanish classroom. The themes addressed issues of *Pupil Engagement, Pupil Learning Responsibility, View of Spanish* and *Individual Learning Strategy*. Each will be presented in turn.

Pupil Engagement

From the observations, it appeared that some pupils who were considered to experience difficulties in learning exhibited 'disengaged' behaviour in lessons. These behaviours included talking to peers during teacher explanations (FSOBS3), sleeping during activities (FSOBS4) and breaking class (FSOBS5).

Perspectives from the teachers and some pupils emerged concerning pupil engagement. Both Lorena and some pupils who experienced difficulties in learning attributed pupil disengagement to lack of interest or effort for school work. As Lorena and Brandon stated,

> *They get distracted and they at different levels in the class and little things going on in the class that have certain pupils not paying attention or interested at all.,* (FSLINT1)
>
> *'I know the Spanish good but sometimes I does not really be into it. I can't do with Spanish all the time.'* (FSBrINT)

From the observations, it seemed that maintaining pupil engagement was important to Lorena as pupils who appeared disengaged were selected to answer questions, read or work on the board (FSOBS1; FSOBS4; FSTBI; FSLINT2). However, she considered pupil engagement to be a feature of their overall learning responsibility.

Pupil Learning Responsibility

Lorena perceived that her pupils were responsible for their own engagement and considered that pupil disengagement indicated their lack of learning responsibility. As she said in FSLINT1,

> *'If you are not willing and you are not paying attention, you're not doing at least your part then I am going to move on.'*
>
> '*He (Bale) is very playful so he doesn't think it is his responsibility to sit and write and what not.'*

Victor mentioned behaviour that contributed to his disengagement and indicated that this behaviour may prevent him from learning.

> *'I does give trouble sometimes and that does keep me from learning … make noise and thing in class. Pelt around things in class.'* (FSVINT)

From the findings, it seems that appropriate learning behaviours filtered into engagement of pupils who experience difficulties in learning and therefore indicate that pupil responsibility is a key factor in the learning of these pupils. Where this responsibility did not exist, Lorena may have perceived a limit to her approaches to assist pupils who experienced difficulties in learning.

View of Spanish

The pupils' view of Spanish may have been a factor in their disengagement. Lorena perceived that the pupils regarded Spanish as a difficult subject and therefore they were more prone to lose interest in learning Spanish (FSLINT) than their other subjects. Both Victor and Jerry acknowledged their difficulties in learning Spanish.

> *'I love Spanish … it just hard for me to learn.'* (FSVINT)
>
> *'I am a little slow in Spanish.'* (FSJINT)

Jerry mentioned difficulties with pronunciation, spelling, writing and remembering vocabulary. Jerry stated,

> *'Since I was smaller it was real hard for me to learn to spell. So Spanish was like much much harder. I does get some of them but then some minute I does forget it.'* (FSJINT)

Struggling with specific areas that are emphasised in Lorena's approaches may have filtered into the pupils' perception that Spanish is a difficult subject.

Individual Learning Strategy

Although it may be perceived by Lorena that the pupils lacked a learning responsibility, the pupils who were interviewed all mentioned ways that they supported their own learning. Jerry mentioned that he played music while revising (FSJINT), while Tara mentioned that she repeated words and spelt them forward and backward to remember them (FSTINT). Brandon mentioned that he knelt down on the carpet at home to help him concentrate (FSBrINT). Victor and Bale mentioned the assistance from family members they receive for their learning. As Bale said

> *'My sister teach me something what I don't know. She does let me write down which countries and places is, which part is Spanish names and she check it and tell me if it wrong or correct.'* (FSBaINT)

These pupils seemed to devise methods to support their own learning despite Lorena's apparent view that they lacked responsibility for their learning. Based on the perspectives of Jerry, it appears that the structure for learning provided within the

classroom acted as a barrier to his learning and he preferred more unstructured learning contexts. He stated his viewpoint by referring to Lorena's examination focus.

> *'Without the exam I would learn 'cause you have how much you want to learn and you could learn whenever but when you have the exam now you have no choice but to revise a certain topic even if you don't want to or you want to do it so I would say it better to have no exam.'* (FSJINT)

4.10 Wider Influences on the Teaching Approaches

In this section, the findings for RQ3 are presented. The themes for this RQ are shown in Table 4.8

Research Question	Main themes
How does wider education policy and practice influence the teachers' approaches for these pupils who experience difficulties in learning?	School Influences Ministry of Education Weather

Table 4. 8 – Themes for RQ3 – Fairview School

4.10.1 School Influences

School factors impacted the type of approaches Lorena executed. Apart from large class sizes (previously mentioned), she also mentioned issues related to space and resources. Although Lorena desired to include more multisensory strategies in her teaching, the lack of space at her school was a hindrance. There was one audio- visual room at the school which was oversubscribed and she felt that if she used the regular classroom, she would disturb other classes. She mentioned the deplorable conditions of the available space which she felt presented health and safety issues (FSLINT2). Lack of CD players to conduct listening activities as well as limited photocopying services and furniture for the pupils were also mentioned (FSLINT2; FSOBS3).

Senior Leadership Influences

In addition to a lack of physical resources, Lorena perceived that her relationship with senior leadership affected her teaching approaches. Lorena indicated that her Principal was demotivating to her which in turn negatively impacted her approaches.

'He speaks to us, it's a bit condescending.' (FSLINT2)

'*I have lost zeal to do a lot of things because of his attitude.'* (FSLINT2)

'I asked him about the room for my Spanish … He brushed me off and left. He walked off and he was very rude and I was pissed off.' (FSLINT2)

On the other hand, Lorena reported that her Vice Principal, who was a former Spanish teacher, was a source of support to her teaching approaches as he offered her encouragement, feedback and advice. She was able to share ideas and concerns about her teaching with him.

'If I have an issue or if I wanted to do something, I would run it through him. He is really encouraging' (FSLINT2).

Head of Department (HOD) Influences

According to Lorena, the HOD for Languages exerted a profound influence on her approaches. She stated that he dictated to the Spanish teachers the teaching approaches regarding vocabulary acquisition that they should adopt even though these approaches ran counter to Lorena's desired way of teaching. Instead of teaching the alphabet, the HOD preferred that the teachers teach vocabulary for everyday objects such as fridge and stove.

'I taught the alphabet anyway but then I brought in the vocabulary.' (FSLINT2)

Lorena felt compelled to conform to the HOD's wishes. She indicated that this compromise created tension in her teaching as she was unable to finish the syllabus and had to rush topics which was to the detriment of her pupils (FSLINT2).

4.10.2 Ministry of Education (MOE) Influences

Lorena indicated that the MOE had an indirect yet profound impact on her approaches. She attributed the large class sizes to the MOE.

'We are taking in too much students and the buildings are becoming an issue …the classrooms are getting larger. We would like the school to have more space… take in less students every year but the Ministry refusing to do that …They not even decreasing. It is increasing.' (FSLINT2)

Due to the large class sizes, Lorena perceived limitations in her teaching approaches to assist pupils who experience difficulties in learning. However, to some extent, Lorena felt the issue of class sizes was an issue at the Ministry of Education level rather than the school level indicating it was beyond the control of the school to lower

pupil intake. She offered team teaching as a way to overcome the large class size effect as she felt that through team teaching, pupils who experience difficulties in learning could get the attention they needed.

Lorena also mentioned the influence that the Ministry of Education had on the choice of Spanish teaching approaches. She stated that the Ministry of Education preferred that Spanish teachers teach in communicative ways, but this preference was at odds with her own beliefs about teaching Spanish.

> *'the Ministry does not like you to focus on grammar. You kind of have to uhm insert grammar into the lesson so, uhm, some teachers prefer to just have because sometimes it is easier that way where you just have an entire class doing verb conjugations because it is kinda difficult for them to grasp it at first* (FSLINT1).

For Lorena, the teaching of grammar (for example explicit teaching of verb conjugations) was essential to ensure pupils understood language form and therefore she may have opted to adopt explicit teaching of grammar despite being against the policies of the Ministry of Education.

NCSE/CSEC Examinations

National standardized tests were another area where the MOE exerted influence for Lorena. Ensuring pupils acquired the skills and knowledge to be successful in these examinations seemed important to Lorena's approaches. Her lessons included explicit teaching on the structure and requisite skills for standardized examinations, especially the areas where pupils experience the most difficulties (FSLINT2). She identified Orals and Listening Comprehension as such areas.

> *'They need to listen to how I sound in Spanish so that when we have the NCSE Orals I read aloud to them for the Listening Comprehension'* (FSLINT1).

Lorena's role as an official marker for this exam may have elevated her concerns for the pupils' performance in NCSE. She stated that in marking the papers of pupils who attend government schools, the gaps in knowledge that hindered the pupils' success became apparent. Therefore, she sought to bridge those gaps with her own pupils. She stated,

> *'They have a little foundation now and like if I show them the exams like tell them this is what is coming in exams, they tend to kind of like connect the dots ... And when they connect the dots, they stick with it.'* (FSLINT2)

Connecting approaches to pupils' eventual examinations seemed a way to highlight the relevance of current learning to pupils and therefore increase their engagement and understanding in lessons. It seems, therefore, that national tests acted as a motivator for Lorena's teaching approaches as they seemed to be funnelled through the structure of these tests. Exposing pupils to the structure whilst ensuring that they undertook sufficient practice in the necessary skills may have been a way to improve the performance of all her pupils.

4.10.3 Weather

The temperature was another influence for Lorena. As some of her classes took place in the afternoon, the heat contributed to pupil disengagement. The heat seemed to demotivate both Lorena and her pupils as they all complained about the heat (FSTBI1; FSLINT5). Lorena stated that it was difficult to conduct classes in the hot classroom. Her strategy to overcome the heat was to take the class outside (FSTBI). When this was not possible, she altered her approaches within the classroom by switching from writing activities to orals.

> *'If it is a hot day and they are really not, they don't want to write. I would sense it.'* (FSLINT1)

Although the heat is an uncontrollable factor, it exerted an influence on the teaching approaches. Lorena adjusted her approaches in an attempt to alleviate the effects of the heat. Some pupils reported that Lorena sometimes did not teach at all in these circumstances (FSTBI2).

4.11. Summary for Fairview School

The findings from Fairview School revealed that vocabulary acquisition and knowledge were important to Lorena's teaching approaches. These approaches were hinged to wider school and national influences in terms of HOD's wishes for vocabulary teaching and standardized tests. Underlying Lorena's approaches were conceptualisations towards learning Spanish, pupil engagement and limitations of her teaching approaches to assist pupils who experience difficulties in learning. Having a class of

mixed abilities produced tensions in her teaching which emanated from her desire to cater to the learning needs of all her pupils.

4.12 Part 3

In this part, I consolidate the findings from the two schools and present similarities and differences. This research project is not intended to be a direct comparison between the two schools; however, acknowledging the areas where the data from the two schools find coherence adds to the understanding to the specific challenges and constraints related to teaching approaches used with pupils who experience difficulties in learning in Trinidad.

The population at both schools was approximately 700 pupils yet the proportion of pupils who were considered by the study's participants to experience difficulties at Eagle School was much higher than that at Fairview. This may have affected the type of teaching approaches each teacher felt they were able to adopt and the challenges they faced. To a large extent, however, they exhibited similar teaching approaches that incorporated similar emphases. This part is divided into three sections which reflect the three research questions. Firstly, a consolidation of the teaching approaches is provided, then a consolidation of the perspectives of the participants regarding teaching approaches followed by a consolidation of the wider influences.

4.13 Teaching Approaches

The findings revealed that both teachers placed vocabulary (spelling, pronunciation and meaning of new words) at the heart of their approaches – indicating that both teachers regarded vocabulary knowledge as important to learning Spanish. In addition to vocabulary, both teachers emphasised exposure to language proficiency areas. Lorena, however differed to Ingrid in that she attempted to develop pupils' spontaneous and creative skills in these areas while Ingrid did not, citing challenges she faced in pupil behaviour.

Writing activities in both classes almost entirely took the form of notetaking. Both teachers highlighted this strategy as a way to connect former learning to current

lessons. Notes, therefore, served as a reference tool for pupils and also as a tool for memorization of content.

Both teachers alluded that remembering content was vital to pupil learning and as such, they both implemented strategies to facilitate the memory of the pupils. Apart from notetaking, repetition was employed. The repetition of structure in the form of drills or even parts of lessons seemed to be for the purpose of memory. Memory can be placed in the context of examinations which was a focus that undergirded the approaches of both teachers. The ability to remember content was regarded as a requisite for examination success.

Despite this memory focus, both teachers endeavoured to engage the interest of their pupils through multisensory strategies. As part of these strategies, Lorena's pupils were exposed to aspects of Spanish culture which was not an element of Ingrid's approaches. On the other hand, Ingrid's approaches involved greater use of technology than Lorena's. It seemed that the use of PowerPoint facilitated the incorporation of more visual stimuli which Ingrid indicated was important to her pupils. Both teachers, however, incorporated writing as a visual tool. Through writing, the pupils were able to visualise the vocabulary.

Both teachers employed strategies that were intended to simplify the work. Their strategies included the selection of 'easier' task structure for selected pupils as well as simplification strategies applied on a whole class basis.

Questioning was also a major part of their approaches. For the two teachers, questioning seems to be content based and served as a memory aid in the recall of content. It also seemed to be a way for the teachers to assess the level of understanding of content.

Targeted approaches for individuals were employed by both teachers. Both teachers found ways to address the individual learning concerns of pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. The teachers used similar strategies that were applied on a whole class basis, such as explanations or questioning, to provide targeted assistance to individual pupils. This suggests that both teachers recognised that pupils may experience difficulties apart from the rest of the class and they may experience these difficulties in different ways.

Pace was an area where the difference in proportion of pupils who experience difficulties in learning appeared to have an influence. It seemed that Ingrid had greater opportunity within her lessons to alter the pace to suit her pupils. As all her pupils were considered to experience difficulties in learning, slowing down the pace of lessons may have been deemed beneficial to all pupils. Lorena, on the other hand, encountered issues when attempting to slow the pace to suit some pupils. The pupils disagreed with one another as to the appropriate pace for lessons.

There were some contradictions in the teachers' espoused and actual approaches. Whilst Ingrid stated that developing independence in pupils was important to her approaches, this emphasis was not apparent in the observations. Instead, it seemed that Ingrid employed strategies, such as giving answers herself, which seemed to restrict pupils' independence. For Lorena, contradictions were seen in the pace she presumed to adopt. While she indicated that she taught according to the pace of those who experienced difficulties, this was not always observed. These contradictions can be seen in the context of teachers' desired versus actual approaches. Both teachers articulated this disconnection between what they like to do and what they actually do.

While Ingrid seemed to limit her pupils' independence, Lorena seem to encourage independence through peer support and home learning strategies. It may be that Ingrid's perception of her pupils (i.e. their abilities, behaviour) affected her willingness to incorporate more independent activities. As Lorena's class had high performing pupils, she may have felt more confident to incorporate more independent activities. Furthermore, as Lorena experienced fewer discipline challenges, this perhaps enhanced her ability to implement independent approaches.

4.14 Perspectives of the Teachers and Pupils towards the Approaches

Both teachers and pupils from the two schools expressed their perspectives towards the teaching approaches. Teacher conceptualisations of their pupils (pupils' abilities, the nature of their difficulties in learning and their level of interest and engagement) emerged as an important factor in this study as both teachers' perceptions of their pupils played a role in teaching approaches. Whereas Ingrid surmised a low learning capacity of her pupils and planned lessons accordingly, Lorena perceived all her pupils, including those who experience difficulties in learning, to be capable. Lorena

engaged the pupils who experienced difficulties in learning in the same activities as her high performing ones, although support systems such as peer support were put in place for the former while additional activities were set for the latter.

Teachers' conceptualisations of pupils' difficulties in learning seemed to provide a basis to how they operationalised it in their classrooms. For both teachers, 'within child' difficulties and school factors contributed to how they perceived the manifestations of difficulties in learning in their classrooms. For the teachers, observable manifestations of difficulties in learning included pupil disengagement from lessons characterised by low concentration, inattentiveness and perceived low motivation, lack of discipline during lessons, low self-confidence, literacy and numeracy gaps, poor attendance to class and school, lack of individual learning responsibility, poor examination performance and a need for a slower learning pace. Based on the teachers' operationalisation of difficulties in learning, they seemed to have absolved their teaching approaches from contributing to pupils' difficulties.

With respect to pupils' learning habits, both teachers perceived the pupils' individual learning responsibility as an important supplement to their teaching approaches. Their attitudes towards learning in class, their engagement with the activities and their diligence to revise content, for example, were regarded by both teachers as important to learning progress but outside the remit of their approaches. It was up to the pupils to adopt a 'learning hygiene' to facilitate their adaptation to the teaching approaches.

The pupils held perceptions of their own. Their views towards their own difficulties, their abilities and the teaching approaches in some ways corroborated those of their teachers but in other ways contrasted with teacher perspectives. The pupils held positive views about their own ability; at both schools, they regarded themselves as competent to do well in their overall learning. They, however, expressed the source of and reason for their difficulties in learning Spanish. At Eagle, absenteeism, difficulty with memory and inability to write and difficulty with pronunciations and spelling were regarded as sources/reasons for difficulties. At Fairview, Jerry mentioned long-term difficulty with spelling as a source, whereas memory, spelling, pronunciations and writing were regarded as areas of difficulty. It seems that the pupils regarded the source of difficulties as learner generated, not as a function of the teaching approaches. Nevertheless, in both schools, the teaching approaches influenced the

areas of difficulties pupils experienced because they were all areas emphasised by their teachers as important to learning Spanish.

The individual learning strategies of the pupils revealed that the pupils were interested in learning Spanish and were willing to put effort into devising their own ways to help their learning. This effort is contrary to the perspectives of both teachers that the pupils lack responsibility for their learning. However, despite having home strategies for learning, the pupils seemed disengaged from Spanish lessons and this disengagement contributed to the teachers' view that they lacked responsibility for learning.

The status of Spanish emerged as a possible factor that may have contributed to pupils' difficulties in learning. Both teachers stated the perception of pupils that Spanish is a difficult subject which may have influenced their perceived lack of pupils' interest and engagement in class. For the pupils who were interviewed at Fairview, however, a different view emerged. The issue was not that the subject was unpopular or disliked, rather the pupils found it a difficult subject to learn. Some of the pupils at Fairview expressed their love for Spanish despite experiencing difficulties.

Another key aspect that emerged for the pupils was the nature of the teacher pupil relationship. The pupils in the task-based interviews and Victor and Tara at Fairview alluded to the importance of relationships as part of teaching approaches. For the pupils, teaching approaches seem to go beyond the activities and strategies used to teach Spanish content to the words and actions of the teachers in relating to the pupils. The teachers themselves may have regarded relationship as important to teaching and learning as they recounted that trust and familiarity with pupils as important elements to their planning and execution of activities.

The issue of relationship is noteworthy for another reason. It seems that the type of relationship teachers developed with the pupils sent messages to the pupils regarding the importance of their presence in class and the value of their progress in learning to the teacher. It can be suggested that relationship from the pupils' point of view is not an adjunct to teaching approaches but a crucial phenomenon for teachers to consider. How the pupils view the teachers or presume the teachers view them may have an impact on learning.

4.15 Wider Influences on Teaching Approaches

With respect to wider influences on the teaching approaches, standardized examinations seemed to be the most influential. Both teachers mentioned the manner in which the NCSE examinations steered their approaches towards a focus on certain aspects of language structure. The teachers, however revealed different reasons for doing so. Ingrid expressed the constant failure of pupils and the need to raise her teaching image as one of her reasons, while Lorena expressed the gaps in understanding experienced by the pupils and how awareness of examination structure can help to bridge those gaps. 'Teaching to the exam' was regarded by both teachers as a necessary approach. Although both teachers stated the need to relate current teaching to pupils' future examinations, Lorena made the structure of these examinations explicit to the pupils while Ingrid did not.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) also emerged as an influence, although in different ways for the two teachers. For both teachers, the MOE represented the source of funds for school resources. However, Lorena regarded the large class size as a feature of the MOE's influences which she perceived contributed to limitations in her teaching approaches to assist pupils who experienced difficulties in learning.

Lorena had not followed a teacher training course or gained any teaching qualifications. For Ingrid, the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (DipEd) was regarded as having a profound influence on her approaches. The disparity in training between the two teachers may account for the difference in the structure of their lessons. While Ingrid's lessons included set inductions, evaluations and use of more technology, Lorena's teaching was textbook dependant.

The temperature emerged as another influence for the teachers and pupils in both schools. Although it is expected that as a tropical nation, Trinidad and Tobago would experience high temperatures, the heat nevertheless impacted teaching and learning in negative ways. Lorena, however, devised a contingency plan to counteract the effects of the weather.

Timetabling was also an issue even though it did not emerge as a prominent finding as Lorena did not mention timetabling effects on her approaches but having Spanish

scheduled in the afternoon hampered Ingrid's approaches. Timetabling reflects the impact of administrative decisions on teaching approaches. While Lorena may not have regarded the timetabling as an issue, the frequency and time of day she met her pupils may still have exerted an influence on the planning of her lessons and mood of the pupils.

The similarities and differences between these two schools seem to highlight the way that conceptualisations towards the pupils, the organizational context of each school and the cultural and social context all contribute to the shaping of the approaches used by each teacher. The findings presented in this chapter provide the basis for the discussion of ideas related to wider issues in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of this research in relation to literature and the main ideas and issues that have emerged. To determine the main ideas and issues for discussion, points from the findings were compared and contrasted with the relevant literature. This study investigated influences on teaching approaches at different levels in the education system and these levels became apparent in the collation of points. Figure 5.1 demonstrates four levels which emerged and which will be used to organize this discussion – 1) Pupils who experience difficulties in learning as learners, 2) Teaching approaches 3) School influences and 4) National/environmental influences.

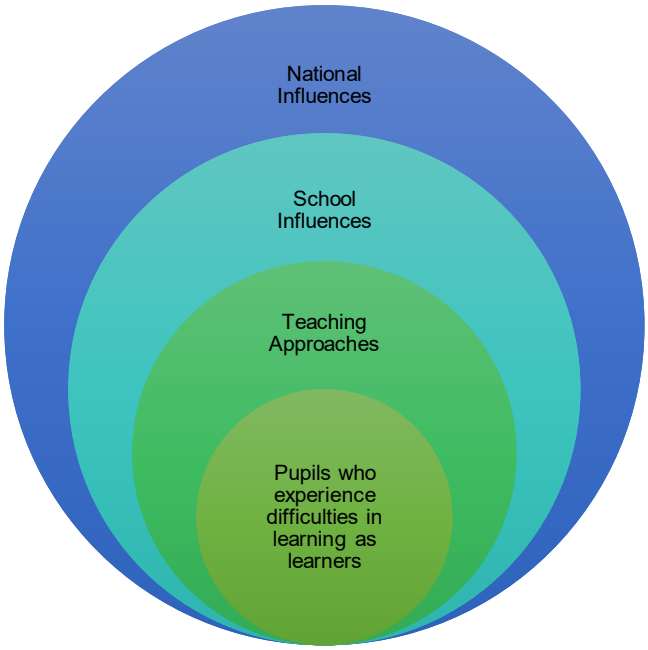


Figure 5. 1 – Nested diagram reflecting the positioning of teaching approaches within the wider educational system

The findings reflect the positioning of teaching approaches in relation to the education system which is demonstrated in the nested nature of the diagram in Figure 5.1. Embedded within the teaching approaches are the strategies, decisions and perspectives of the teachers towards the learning of pupils who experience difficulties but these teaching approaches are also subjected to school and national influences.

The teaching and learning of pupils who experience difficulties are therefore impacted by factors within the classroom, school and nation. This diagram in Figure 5.1. will be returned to at the end of this chapter.

In Chapter four, the actual teaching approaches used by two Spanish teachers were presented as well as the perspectives of the teachers and pupils surrounding those approaches. An underlying factor to these perspectives was the meaning making (discussed in detail in Chapter three) of the participants which seems to permeate every aspect of this study, especially the manner in which the participants perceived the situations and events within the classroom. The discussion in this chapter acknowledges the ways the participants constructed meaning regarding the teaching approaches. Points of divergence amongst perspectives are acknowledged as different viewpoints which reflect how participants interacting with the same phenomenon can construct different meaning. Ravet (2007) refers to this divergence as 'perception gaps' (p. 343) which according to her point to a lack of awareness of the viewpoints of the other participants. For example, instances where the teachers may have been unaware about how the pupils viewed their own disengagement may be referred to a perception gap. It is noteworthy that whilst the perspectives of teachers and some of the pupils were explored in depth, some pupils' perspectives were not explored sufficiently to warrant greater interpretation of their viewpoints.

5.2 Pupils Who Experience Difficulties in Learning as Learners

The ideas discussed in this section relate specifically to pupils who experience difficulties in learning as individual learners. From the findings, issues emerged regarding their learner characteristics and how they impact teaching approaches. These issues related to a) *Source of Difficulties in Learning* – the factors that contributed to the pupils' difficulties and b) *Responsibility for Learning* – issues that related to the pupils' responsibility for learning.

5.2.1 Source of Difficulties in Learning

In Chapter two, the notion that *difficulties in learning* may be a construction of the school system was discussed drawing upon the perspectives of Ainscow (2000), Cooper (2005), Veck (2009) and Mendez et al. (2008) who, among them, noted 'within

child' and school related factors – biological and cognitive deficits, structure of lessons, teacher perceptions of 'good' pupils, differences in teaching approaches – as the genesis of pupils' difficulties. Ainscow (2000) pointed out that teacher conceptualisations of the child underlie perceptions towards the 'source' of pupils' difficulties which may also serve to divert attention away from their teaching approaches. Consistent with Ainscow's (2000) assertion, the Spanish teachers from each of the two case schools attributed 'within child' and school related issues as the source of pupils' difficulties which they perceived hindered pupil response to their teaching approaches.

The ES teacher (Ingrid) seemed to apply a multidimensional pupil deficit approach to viewing pupils' difficulties. She accounted cognitive deficits (literacy and numeracy gaps, memory incapacities), personality deficits (lack of confidence) and behaviour deficits (poor punctuality and attendance, disengagement, lack of interest) as the source of pupils' difficulties to the extent that she regarded pupils in need of being 'fixed'. Although the FS teacher (Lorena) seemingly held positive views of pupils' ability, she also accounted behavioural and school related factors to the pupils' difficulties highlighting school infrastructure and pupil disinterest and disengagement as primary sources.

The perspectives of the teachers highlight their positioning to regarding pupils' difficulties as outside their own remit and unconnected to their teaching approaches (Ravet, 2007), thereby giving credence to Ainscow's (2000) view noted above. Penso (2002) noted the practice of teachers to 'blame' factors external to their approaches for pupils' difficulties in learning. She posited that teachers perceive difficulties as a result of learner characteristics such as 'cognitive and affective' deficits rather than features of their approaches (Penso, 2002, p. 25). Ravet (2007) adds that pupil disengagement may be accounted to their (in)abilities.

However, the ES teacher's pursuit of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education programme as a means to modify her approaches to suit her pupils' learning needs and her quest to find approaches that suited the learning needs of the boys indicated that she acknowledged that her approaches can be used to target pupils' difficulties in learning. She perceived that modifications such as the use of more technology and structure to lessons made learning gains for her pupils, especially the girls. This finding

seems to indicate that despite having notions that pupils' difficulties were inherent, the ES teacher acknowledged that her approaches could be used to mitigate some of their difficulties. This finding therefore gives credence to the premise outlined by Ainscow (2000) that teaching approaches act as a medium of change in the difficulties that pupils experience.

The extent to which the meanings attached to the source of pupils' difficulties were shared by the pupils also emerged within the findings. The pupils that were individually interviewed also perceived personal deficits in areas such as memory, spelling and writing as contributing to their difficulties in learning Spanish; one FS pupil attributed long standing difficulties with spelling to the difficulties he faced in learning Spanish. These 'inherent' difficulties were, however, not reflective of their perceived overall learning capacity as the pupils reported high capacities to learn other subjects. Their difficulties seemed to relate closely to Spanish, and most notably the areas that the Spanish teachers regarded as important to learning Spanish and therefore emphasised in their lessons. As the teachers' in-class activities involved many strategies for memory, spelling and writing, pupils may have perceived their lack of competencies in these areas as indicative of innate deficiencies regarding these, despite stating success in these areas in other subjects. This finding reflects the manner in which the teachers' emphases in their approaches seemed to affect pupil construction of their own difficulties in learning Spanish.

Difficulties as a construction of teaching approaches represented an area of tension for this research. This tension was explored through literature and expressed through the findings. On the one hand, it is acknowledged that difficulties may have been constructed through teaching approaches, in the manner that the teachers conceptualised pupils' abilities and difficulties, but moreover through teacher choice of emphases within Spanish language. On the other hand, in acknowledging that the difficulties do exist, teachers then attempted to construct approaches to assist pupils in overcoming them. This dilemma is further exacerbated by the notion that the teachers appeared virtually unaware of the extent to which their teaching approaches aided in the construction of the pupils' difficulties. Teacher conceptualisation concerning the 'within child' genesis of difficulties as well as limitations to teaching approaches corroborate this issue. Therefore, it can be said that, in as much as pupils

who experience difficulties in learning, at least as far as these two classes were concerned, *depend* on teaching approaches to assist them in overcoming their difficulties in learning, these approaches may actually be what *contributes* to their difficulties in the first place.

The pupils held notions concerning the status and relevance of Spanish as a subject which may have contributed to their difficulties in learning. Reminiscent of the findings from Glas' (2016) study on secondary school pupils learning English in Chile, the boys at ES school regarded Spanish as irrelevant to their real-life context, as they felt it fulfilled no communicative purpose in the Trinidadian society. Their perceived lack of interest in learning Spanish seemed to relate to perceptions regarding the usefulness of Spanish as a subject rather than the approaches used to teach it. However, Glas (2016) regarded building pupil awareness of the relevance of subjects to real world contexts as the duty of teaching approaches. Glas (2016) goes beyond Crumpton and Gregory's (2011) strategy of raising pupils' awareness of future relevance of Spanish (as discussed in Chapter two) to raising awareness of the immediate relevance of Spanish.

5.2.2 Responsibility for Learning

Responsibility for learning emerged as a key finding concerning pupils who experienced difficulties. As indicated in Chapter two, Ainscow and Miles (2008) regarded teachers as the agents of change in the education of marginalised groups and therefore charged teachers with the responsibility of ensuring these marginalised groups become full participants in the learning process. The view of Ainscow and Miles (2008) is echoed in international inclusive education policies as well as in Trinidad and Tobago's educational policy mentioned in Chapter two.

Both teachers in this study, however, presented a different perspective about the responsibility they held for pupil learning, regarding pupils as responsible for their own learning and attributing pupils' difficulties to the absence of this responsibility. Pupil negative behaviour, for example, lack of engagement in class, indiscipline during lessons, poor attendance and lack of motivation to learn Spanish were regarded as manifestations of lack of pupil learning responsibility. Denying Hagel et al.'s (2012) and Crumpton and Gregory's (2011) view that engagement and motivation are the

derivative of teaching approaches, both teachers seemed to regard those concepts as a factor of pupil learning disposition.

This positioning of teachers seems to add credence to Penso's (2002) perspective that teachers assign 'blame' to pupils for their difficulties. However, the teachers' positioning is not distant from the viewpoints of Silcock (1993) who regarded teaching approaches as limited to bring about learning gains in the absence of pupil responsibility. According to Silcock's (1993) stance, the best teaching approaches cannot ensure learning and learning as a process occurs independently of teaching and is the product of pupil agency. Difficulties, Silcock (1993) suggests, arise therefore when pupils fail to adopt appropriate learning habits which relate to attitude, motivation and disposition to facilitate their own learning. Crick (2007) agrees with these viewpoints and asserts that learning is within the control of pupils and therefore pupil responsibility. Both teachers in this study regarded adoption of a 'learning hygiene', that is, behaviours that support a positive learning posture, as the responsibility of the pupils. Behaviours that the teachers highlighted were: to attend class; pay attention; concentrate; engage; bring learning materials to class.

Pupil responsibility for learning emerged within the perspectives of the pupils. Four pupils, two from each school, stated perspectives regarding their learning behaviours and expressed awareness of their behaviours that negatively affect their learning in Spanish – lack of class attendance, displaying troublesome behaviour in class, wilful distractions during lessons. Ravet (2007) studied the 'disengagement' of nine primary school pupils in North East Scotland by drawing on teacher and pupil construction of the patterns of behaviour of these pupils during lessons. Her findings suggest that 'disengaged' patterns of behaviours were due to pupils' desire to detach from teaching due to boredom or difficulty of the work. Ravet's (2007) finding is consistent with the view of one pupil in this study, Samantha, a pupil from Eagle School who mentioned her wilful distractions as a means to avoid writing in Spanish class. However, the reasons for displaying negative behaviours by the other pupils were not sufficiently explored therefore the meaning pupils have attached to these behaviours and its relations to teaching approaches cannot be fully determined.

These points regarding *Responsibility for Learning* raise the notion that responsibility for learning may neither be solely the responsibility of the teacher nor of the pupils but

rather a shared entity. The findings indicate that consideration must be given to pupils as they may determine the extent to which teaching approaches can be effective in pupil learning.

Pupil responsibility for learning is not automatically achieved but is a feature of pupil agency which in turn is a feature of teaching approaches (Crick, 2007). This point places responsibility for learning in a context of partnership between teacher and pupils (Silcock, 1993). The findings revealed that the teachers attributed some of the pupils' difficulties in learning to lack of confidence due to past failures, ineffective learning strategies and literacy gaps. Crick (2007) described pupils with these attributes as 'fragile' learners (p. 141) who may lack the necessary skills to overcome these difficulties. Moreno and Martin (2007) posit that teaching approaches which incorporate 'learning how to learn' strategies improve pupil efficacy, learning capabilities and awareness and therefore set them on a path to become more competent learners. These strategies however require deliberate action on the part of the teacher as it would seem that these would need to be explicitly taught in order to formulate part of the learning habits of pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

This finding suggests that the acquisition of content may have superseded the creation of space within lessons for meta-learning skills even though these skills might engender the type of learning responsibility that the teachers desired from the pupils. On the other hand, this finding may have also indicated the lack of awareness, knowledge or confidence of the teachers to support the development of these skills in their pupils. While modelling strategies have been suggested as a means to make learning-to-learn skills explicit (Ley &Young, 2001), teacher modelling in this study surrounded the practice of content as opposed to the practice of cognitive processes (Crick, 2007). Therefore, it can be said that in as much as awareness of learning-to-learn skills are not automatic for the pupils, neither are they for the teachers who perhaps may need to be taught how to develop these skills with their pupils. The incorporation of learning-to-learn approaches are, however, absent from the Ministry of Education's curriculum guidelines for teaching Spanish (see MOE, 2008) indicating that these approaches are not regarded as key to pupils' learning by the Ministry of Education (MOE) or teachers and therefore not imposed within the practice of teachers in Trinidad and Tobago.

5.3 Teaching Approaches in the Spanish Classroom

In this section, I discuss the key ideas that emerged from the findings that related to the actual teaching approaches used by the two Spanish teachers – Use of English and Vocabulary (see Figure 5.2). Each will be discussed in turn.

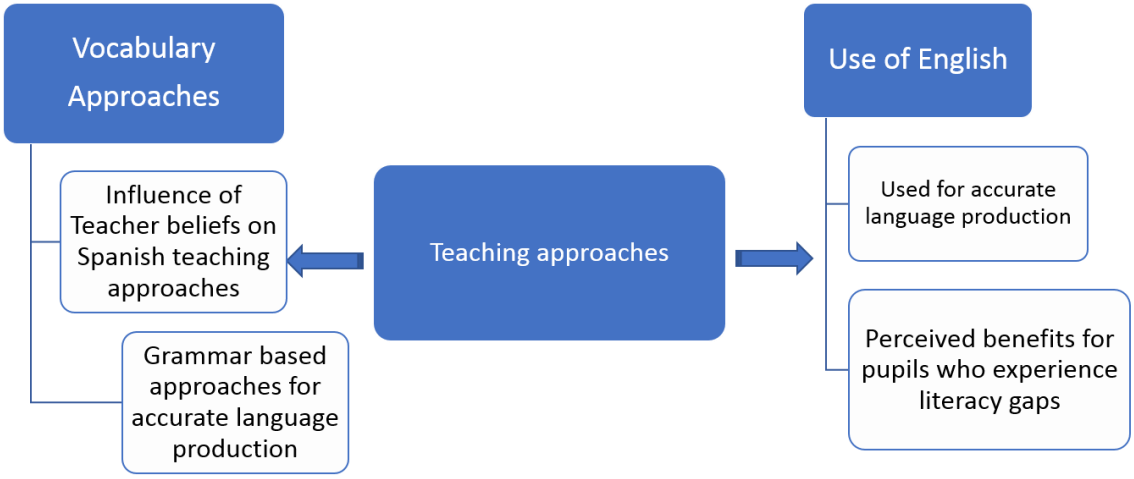


Figure 5. 2 – Themes for Teaching Approaches in the Spanish Classroom

5.3.1 Vocabulary

From the findings, it emerged that both teachers appeared to regard vocabulary acquisition and knowledge as important aspects of learning Spanish and therefore implemented strategies to aid the acquisition, conceptual understanding and memory of new words by the pupils.

According to Sadoski (2005), vocabulary represents the building blocks of literacy in any language and acquisition of a sound vocabulary base is therefore necessary to developing foreign language literacy skills. The ability to speak, listen, read and write in the foreign language depends largely on knowledge and understanding of words (Sadoski, 2005). Vocabulary in this research, therefore, provided a layered tool for teachers to raise pupil phonological, orthographical and lexical awareness in Spanish – as a basis for building communicative competencies giving credence to Ford et al.'s (2018) perspective that awareness in these areas is essential to foreign language learning.

The prominence of vocabulary within the teaching approaches highlights a number of issues for the teaching of Spanish in relation to pupils who experience difficulties in learning. In line with Horwitz' (1985) perspective that teachers come to the classroom with pre-conceived notions of how languages are best learnt, these teachers seemed to regard vocabulary learning as crucial to learning Spanish. From the findings, it seems that the teachers' views towards vocabulary emanated from their beliefs regarding the purpose for learning Spanish which was highlighted both as communication with native speakers and examination success.

With these purposes in mind, the teachers may have regarded vocabulary knowledge and acquisition as the best way to accomplish these goals. However, it is noted from the findings that both teachers seemed to favour grammar-based approaches such as spelling, translations, drills and error corrections as a means to teach vocabulary. This finding indicates that the teachers regarded accurate language production as essential to accomplishing the goals of learning Spanish.

Teacher choice of grammar-based approaches therefore is an indication of teacher beliefs towards language teaching and learning. The strength of their beliefs was expressed within the finding that these grammar-based approaches were exercised despite teacher acknowledgement that they counteracted the advice and wishes of the DipEd programme and the Ministry of Education who preferred that teachers teach in communicative ways.

Therefore, it can be said that the desire for pupil accurate language production of Spanish may have fuelled teachers' use of grammar-based approaches as these approaches emphasised exposure to and correction of Spanish language structure.

However, the pre-eminence of more grammar-based approaches to teach vocabulary may have been due to school constraints. Both teachers indicated the lack of resources for communicative approaches such as limited access to audio-visual equipment, large class sizes and limited class time which according to Ingrid resulted in a focus on content. Liu and Shi (2007) pointed out that grammar-based approaches are more straightforward, easier to implement and therefore less demanding on teachers. Therefore, the prominence of grammar-based approaches may have also been due to the perceived limited resources at each school.

With respect to the learning of pupils who experience difficulties, the effects of grammar-based approaches are noteworthy. A number of authors (see Kern, 1995; Peacock, 2001; Brown, 2009) agree that difficulties in learning a foreign language may arise when teaching approaches do not match pupil expectations of how the language should be taught. Considering the findings from the individual pupil interviews, it appears that the grammar-based approaches (teacher emphasis on writing, spelling) may have contributed to the pupils experiencing difficulties. The teachers and pupils expressed the negative effects of these strategies on pupil engagement and interest in Spanish. One pupil from Fairview School directly addressed his preference for more communicative approaches while Ingrid indicated that the impetus to pursue teacher training was to depart grammar-based approaches as she was aware of the negative effects on her pupils' learning. Her continued incorporation of these grammar-based approaches therefore indicated her profound beliefs concerning their importance to language learning.

Elements of communicative approaches were, however, also present in the approaches of both teachers. In line with Gxilishe's (1992) perspective that the incorporation of both grammar-based approaches and communicative approaches are beneficial to pupils' learning, Liu and Shi (2007) highlight that explicit teaching of grammar does not prevent the incorporation of communicative approaches and that the two approaches are necessary for language learning. While grammar aids the comprehension of form and structure, communicative approaches develop the functional skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking (Liu and Shi, 2007).

It is noteworthy that both teachers in this study regarded vocabulary building as an essential component of their approaches despite the different compositions of their classes. While the FS teacher's class held pupils of mixed abilities, all the pupils in the ES teacher's class were considered to experience difficulties in learning. Having a common aim of vocabulary building for ***all*** their pupils suggests that vocabulary acquisition and knowledge is seen to be a common learning need for all novice learners of a foreign language, regardless of whether the pupils experienced difficulties or not. The similar class wide approaches (questioning, repetition, strategies for memory, emphasis on notetaking) that they both used for ***all*** their pupils further support this finding.

In the midst of the same vocabulary emphasis for ***all*** pupils, issues of differentiation arose for pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. In addition to using class wide approaches to teach vocabulary, both teachers were also observed using targeted approaches (explanations, examples, pace) to give individual attention and support to pupils who experienced difficulties during lessons. These teacher actions seem to reflect their awareness that particular pupils may possess learning needs different to other pupils and may therefore require differentiated support. This point is particularly salient for the ES teacher. Despite regarding all her pupils as experiencing difficulties in learning, she seemed to recognise that they perhaps did not experience the same difficulties or in the same manner and therefore needed differential, extra support at particular points to progress.

This finding reflects the positioning outlined by Norwich and Lewis (2005) in Chapter two concerning their *continua of teaching approaches* supposition which suggests that teachers can make adjustments to the same teaching approaches used for the rest of class to accommodate pupils who experience difficulties in learning. The teachers in this study seemed to adapt their class wide approaches to the learning needs of those who were experiencing difficulties.

Differentiated support also manifested in the adjustment of whole class pace of lessons which created dilemmas for both teachers. The FS teacher revealed the challenges she encountered in attempting to cater for the different speeds at which pupils learn in her class. Class composition seem to not affect this dilemma, as the observations revealed that the ES teacher also encountered similar challenges. In her study of differentiated practices of French and English teachers at the primary level, Raveaud (2005) found that French teachers who used the same teaching approaches for all their pupils and did not differentiate according to task encountered issues with pace in terms of adjusting it to suit the learning needs of everyone. The FS teacher seemed to respond to this dilemma by setting additional tasks for her pupils while the ES teacher seemed to have regarded that a slower pace at times may have benefitted all her pupils.

5.3.2 The Use of English

The emphasis on vocabulary places teacher use of English in both classrooms in perspective, with respect to the learning of pupils who experience difficulties. In

contrast to principles from the DipEd programme and Steed and Cantero's (2018) view that teachers should conduct classes almost exclusively in the target language, both teachers regarded prolific use of Spanish as detrimental to the learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning, as pupils became 'lost' in terms of their grasp of Spanish content. Instead, both teachers regarded English as crucial to the learning of Spanish for pupils who experience difficulties in learning. In line with De la Campa and Nassaji's (2009) view that through the use of English in Spanish classes, pupils are better able to efficiently draw links between 'new and pre-existing knowledge' (p. 743), both teachers in this study regarded English as necessary for pupil understanding and grasp of Spanish content and therefore used English for purposes that included translating Spanish vocabulary, giving instructions, asking questions, and explaining content (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009).

The use of English therefore seems to demonstrate a twofold purpose within the teaching approaches of both teachers. On the one hand, English, as the pupils' native language, was used for teaching, so as not to exacerbate pupils' difficulties in learning. This finding seems to re-assess the role that target language plays in the learning of a foreign language for pupils who experience difficulties in learning. On the other hand, it seems that English served the purpose of accurate language production for communication and examination success. Firstly, the use of English to translate Spanish content facilitated pupil knowledge of the meaning of words and the contexts in which they should be used. More importantly, English as a translation tool may have indicated to pupils that words in Spanish have an English equivalent that must be matched accurately increasing the accuracy of their language production. Given the perception that the pupils experienced difficulties, the teachers may have concluded that English was the most appropriate means to ensure pupils' understanding of vocabulary became solidified.

The use of English seemed to be significant for another reason – the perceived benefit to pupils' literacy gaps. It was perceived by the ES teacher that pupil literacy gaps in English hampered understanding in Spanish giving credence to Ganschow and Sparks' (2000) view that pupils who experience difficulties in their native language may also experience difficulties in learning a foreign language. The use of

English in Spanish class therefore allowed the ES teacher to explicitly address these literacy gaps which in turn may have enhanced understanding of Spanish content.

The teaching of topics through English served to highlight English literacy gaps, at least to the ES teacher, which in turn facilitated instruction to address those gaps. Despite literacy gaps in English, the use of English therefore seemed to enhance pupil understanding of Spanish but also developed their competencies in English through teacher modelling of English and explicit instruction to address literacy gaps. In this sense, in teaching Spanish to pupils who experience difficulties in learning, the use of English was perceived by Ingrid to bring benefits to pupil understanding of English and Spanish. It seems that by enhancing pupils' understanding of English, Ingrid perceived that pupil grasp of Spanish content improved.

These benefits are reflected in a cyclical nature in Figure 5.4.

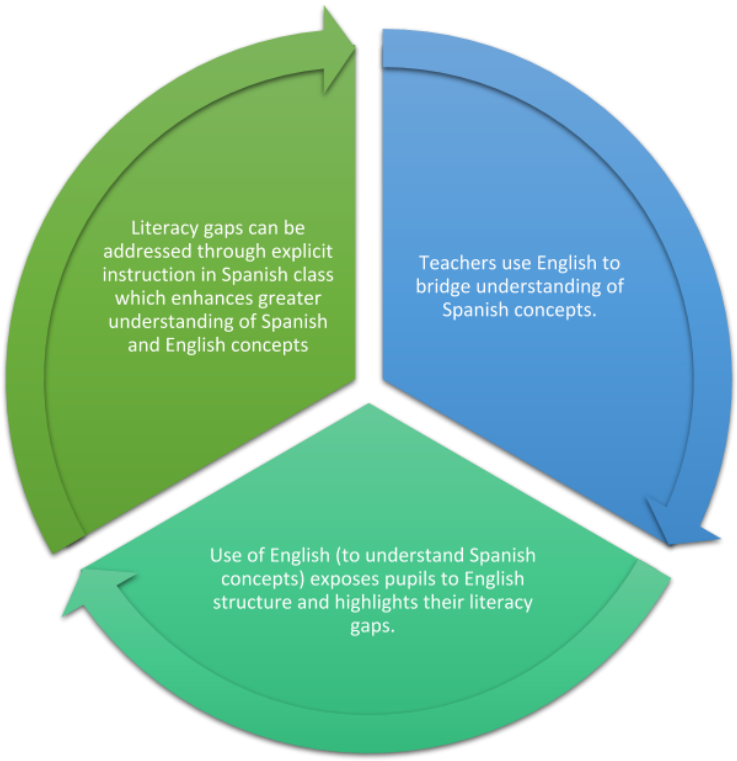


Figure 5. 3 – Cyclical benefits of English usage in Spanish class

The perceived benefits of the use of English to the learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning is important to note as English goes beyond a translation tool to a medium through which pupils' difficulties in learning can be addressed.

5.4 School Influences

In this section, I discuss the findings regarding school influences on teaching approaches. The main idea that emerged was the way the school environment seemed to constrain the ***creativity*** of the teachers in direct and indirect ways.

From the findings, it seems that creativity in this study was contextualised in terms of multisensory activities, for example, activities that incorporated PowerPoint presentations, music, dance, and cooking. Both teachers seemed to regard these activities as indicative of creativity in their approaches and essential to increasing the interest and engagement of pupils.

The school environment was perceived as a hindrance to teachers' ability to conduct these activities as there were limits to physical and material resources which were seen as constraints to more creative approaches. ES teacher highlighted that this resource limitation forced her to depend on 'chalk and talk' approaches. The extent to which the teachers perceived the schools' infrastructure and resources as limitations to involving more creative approaches reveals the way the teachers regarded the school environment to influence their creativity as teachers as they perceived the execution of certain activities were limited or impossible due to school constraints. This positioning was not only reflected in the infrastructural and resource limitations but in the influences of administrative staff. The FS teacher alluded that the leadership at her school either supported or constrained her creativity depending on the nature of the relationship she had with them. While the ES teacher did not mention the administrative staff at her school as an influence on her approaches, she did mention the timetabling of Spanish on afternoons which she perceived negatively impacted the engagement and attention of pupils.

A school's ability to constrain teacher creativity has been challenged by Jeffrey (2006) who argues that teaching for creativity entails that teachers are creative themselves and therefore need to adapt and be flexible in the midst of school constraints. For

example, Jeffrey (2006) suggested modifying the classroom space if, as in the case of the two schools in this study, it was the only space that was available. He also suggested making use of school grounds in creative ways. The FS teacher mentioned that she occasionally moves her class to outside locations although this act was not a feature of the observations. Furthermore, Jeffrey (2006) suggests that creative teaching goes beyond activities to the extent to which pupils can engage in meaningful lessons that allow for knowledge construction.

On the other hand, the teachers may not have been unreasonable in perceiving the limited access to resources as an actual hindrance to their approaches. The findings indicate that even access to elementary resources such as photocopying services at both schools was difficult for teachers which they stated resulted in difficulty in procuring handouts for pupils. The ES teacher also mentioned lack of chalk materials that made the most rudimentary of teaching difficult. Furthermore, resources to execute multisensory activities seemed important as these activities seemed to have a positive effect on the learning of pupils who experienced difficulties in this study. Both teachers and the pupils mentioned the impact of interest and engagement that using PowerPoint or involving cooking had on the pupils. The FS teacher also mentioned that through engagement with the activities, the pupils learned collaboration and leadership skills.

The limitations in resources reflect the impact that national economic constraints can have on teaching approaches for all pupils, not just those considered to experience difficulties in learning. In line with the findings of Akindele and Fasakin's (2014) study, limitations in physical and financial resources adversely impact the execution of more creative teaching approaches which may increase the interest and engagement of pupils. This finding is noteworthy for government schools in Trinidad and Tobago as they receive all their funding from the state (MOE, 2012) and therefore depend on the allocation of resources to perform even the most basic of approaches. However, in line with Jeffrey's (2006) and Shepard's (2011) view that teachers can devise quality teaching approaches despite accessibility to these resources suggests that teachers, in accounting for the economic realities of their teaching contexts, may still be able to make creative adaptations to their teaching approaches.

5.4.1 Trust as a Function of Teacher Creativity

Further analysis of the findings suggests that opportunity for teacher creativity went beyond accessibility to resources to the level of trust they had with their pupils. Both teachers alluded to the trust they had in their pupils and the manner in which this trust impacted on the type of activities they were *willing* to introduce in their approaches. The FS teacher mentioned that her trust in the pupils propelled her confidence to include more creative activities, while the ES teacher indicated that her lack of trust in pupils signified that she disregarded the implementation of more creative activities. The findings therefore suggest that both teachers regarded trust as an important element in terms of creativity in their approaches.

Applebaum (1995) defines trust as the 'reliance, faith or confidence in a particular individual' (p. 444). Van Meale and van Houtte (2010) suggest that teacher trust in pupils determine the type of learning experiences pupils have as teachers make decisions for approaches based on it. The findings suggest that trust developed from the level of teacher-pupil relationship (the FS teacher recounted familiarity with her pupils while the ES teacher recounted lack of familiarity); level of discipline (the FS teacher enforced strict discipline measures while the ES teacher faced discipline challenges); teacher conceptualisations towards pupil ability (the FS teacher felt confident to develop pupil independence through, for example, peer work while the ES teacher seemingly did not). Van Meale and van Houtte (2010) point out that teacher trust in pupils emanates from conceptualisations of their abilities, behaviour and difficulties. Based on these conceptualisations, teachers hold expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and plan lessons accordingly.

From this finding, it seems that teacher creativity was influenced by pupil related factors in addition to school effects. However, it seems that even with the availability of resources, teachers may have perceived limitations to their creativity in light of these pupil factors. It seems therefore teacher conceptualisations of pupils (behaviour, ability) are powerful determinants of willingness to adopt more creative approaches implying therefore that teacher creativity, and even teaching for creativity (Berggraf Sæbø et al., 2007), goes beyond schoolwide resources to the extent to teachers perceptions of which approaches are possible based on how they view the particular set of pupils within their class.

5.5 National Influences

The ideas under this topic pertain to issues relating to the nation of Trinidad and Tobago. These issues include the operations and practices of the Ministry of Education, national standardized tests and the hot temperatures of Trinidad and Tobago. The influences of the Ministry of Education and national standardized tests will be discussed under *Assessment of/for Learning,* and the hot temperature will be discussed under *Environmental Factors*.

5.5.1 Assessment Of/For Learning

Assessment of/for Learning emerged from the findings as a significant influence on the teaching approaches of both teachers, reflecting the manner in which policies and practices of the Ministry of Education directly impacted upon the beliefs and practices of both teachers.

The relationship between assessment and learning is a well-documented one (Black & Wiliam, 1998; McLean, 2018; Zhang & Zheng, 2018). This relationship is acknowledged and encouraged within the SEMP Spanish curriculum by the Ministry of Education (MOE) which states that 'assessment and evaluation are vital components of any teaching or learning situation' (MOE, 2008, p. 95). The value of assessment, both formative and summative, was discussed in Chapter two. Both types of assessments formed an essential part of the teaching approaches in this study, as both teachers incorporated approaches related to in-class tests, end-of-term examinations and national standardized tests. Beyond the administering of tests was the emphasis on preparing pupils for these examinations within the approaches of both teachers. This intense focus on examination preparation was attributed to one of the influences of the Ministry of Education on their teaching approaches.

The Form two SEMP Spanish curriculum suggests a tight link between the curriculum, teaching and assessment. It states that 'assessment strategies must be appropriate to the way the curriculum is designed and delivered' (MOE, 2008, p. 7) suggesting that teaching approaches and subsequent assessment strategies are derived out of the curriculum (Figure 5.5).

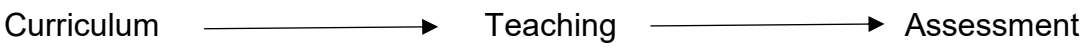


Figure 5. 4 – Relationship of Teaching Approaches to Assessment according to the Ministry of Education (2008)

However, the findings suggest that both teachers tailored the curriculum and their approaches towards assessments (namely standardized tests) (as shown in Figure 5.6).

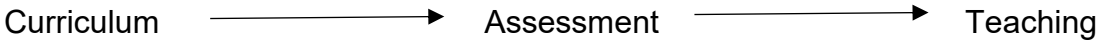


Figure 5. 5 – Relationship of Teaching Approaches to Assessment for Teachers in this study

Assessments seemed to provide a funnel for teaching approaches, suggesting a 'teach to the test' framework as outlined by Hursh (2007) and Lam and Kember (2006), referred to in Chapter two concerning teaching approaches within examination cultures. Their stance is supported by the teachers' perspectives in this study. They both indicated that they were highly concerned with pupils' performance in the NCSE and CSEC examinations and therefore used their lessons to familiarise pupils with the structure and knowledge necessary for these tests. The strategies used by both teachers – strategies for memory, notetaking, content-based questioning – seem to have the aim of preparing pupils for examinations through acquiring the content necessary for success in standardized tests.

This finding seems to contradict the stance of the SEMP curriculum regarding the connection between teaching and assessment. However, more recent education policies, for example the Draft Education Policy 2017-2022 (MOE, 2017), present a different view of assessment. Assessment, according to this policy paper, is expected to inform and influence teaching approaches, as the MOE seeks to monitor and evaluate the learning experiences of pupils who are deemed to be failing. The MOE's positioning of increased monitoring of pupil performance may have inevitably strengthened the connection between assessment and teaching approaches for the teachers in this study to the extent that they perceived that their approaches needed to be used as a preparation tool for examinations.

While 'teach to the test' approaches of the teachers may be interpreted as a direct influence of the MOE, across educational policies in Trinidad and Tobago, teachers are also implored to adopt approaches that cater to the different needs, abilities and

interests of pupils. The SEMP Spanish curriculum states ‘teachers should teach the required knowledge and skills in ways that suit pupils’ interests and abilities’ (MOE, 2008, p. 7). The Education Sector Strategic Plan (2012) states ‘all students will learn in a welcoming environment, regardless of place, culture or learning needs’ and that ‘students vary in natural ability, schools therefore should provide for all students, programmes which are adapted to varying abilities (p. xii). These tenets suggest that whilst having the aim of improving pupil examination performance, MOE expects teachers to also ensure that their pupils participate fully in the learning process through approaches that are appropriate to their learning needs.

Are these aims of the MOE contradictory or are teachers expected to search for ways to merge them in their practice? Rinkevich (2011) challenged the stance that pupil learning needs must be sacrificed for the sake of ‘teach to the test’ approaches in high stakes examination cultures. She posits that activities that engage and motivate pupils are likely to be more meaningful to pupils and therefore encourage them to engage more with the content, thereby suggesting possible positive effects on examination preparation. While the teachers may have perceived MOE pressure to ensure pupils succeed, their decisions to adopt an intense examination focus was linked to their beliefs about their efficacy and worth.

The ES teacher indicated that teachers are judged and their worth evaluated according to pupil examination performance. Therefore, even though she regarded learner centred activities as important, the measurability of standardized test outcomes provided a greater influence on her teaching approaches. Given the apparently dual stance of the MOE to focus on examination performance as well as the overall learning experience of pupils, these teachers may have opted for the former as they may have perceived it represented a measurable tool for their effectiveness.

In the teachers’ view, poor pupil performance is accounted to the effectiveness of the teacher rather than pupil differences. This view resonated with Sanders, Wright and Horn (1997) who suggested that poor pupil performance is not an indication of pupil ability, but the effectiveness of the teacher as ineffective teachers produce little gains for pupil academic achievement regardless of ability. Therefore, the teachers’ intense focus on examinations may have been due to perceptions that the MOE regards the outcomes of assessment as a gauge for their effectiveness.

In line with Buehl and Fives' perspectives (2009) that teachers' beliefs form their orientation to teaching (methods, assessment strategies), both teachers seemed to interpret acquisition of content as the most efficient means to bridge the gap between classroom learning and examinations. This perception of content was partly due to their experience as markers of standardized tests which built awareness of the areas of learning that were important to examination success, but which presented challenges to pupils. These areas became the focus of their teaching. Affording pupils opportunities to 'connect the dots', as the FS teacher puts it, was seen as an important strategy to pupil learning and eventual examination success. It is noteworthy that the teachers' role as transmitters of content were not specific to the type of pupils within the class. In other words, it did not seem that teachers adopted different roles for their pupils who experienced difficulties in learning.

However, the effect on the learning of pupils who experience difficulties is noteworthy for this study. It has been previously mentioned that both teachers focused on areas of learning Spanish that presented difficulties to pupils. However, it seems that the intense focus on examinations influenced the areas of learning but also the manner in which they were taught. The way the areas of Spanish were taught may have impacted the difficulties pupils experienced.

Pupils' views concerning assessment were not sufficiently explored in this study. However, the views expressed by one FS pupil in Chapter four suggests that the intense focus on examinations within his teacher's approaches hampered his learning. He alluded to the amount of class time spent on rehearsing examination structure as well as the teaching approaches used to teach Spanish structure as detrimental to his learning and suggested use of more 'free' approaches to learning Spanish such as games.

This finding suggests the influence that the teacher's decision towards content-based approaches for examination performance had on the learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. It was discussed that the Spanish structure areas – spelling, pronunciations, writing – that were the focus of lessons also posed difficulties for pupils. It seems, however, that these areas were compounded by the way teachers chose to teach those areas.

5.5.2 Environmental Factors

Weather

A key finding in this study that could have been easily overlooked was the impact of the hot temperatures on the teaching and learning within the two classrooms. This will be discussed in a subsequent section. Firstly, an exposition of the weather patterns in Trinidad and Tobago and studies on weather are necessary to give an understanding of the significance of the impact of the weather.

Trinidad and Tobago experiences two seasons – dry and rainy. The dry season occurs January to May, with the rainy season occurring the rest of the year (TTMS, 2019). According to the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service (TTMS), the average maximum temperature in Trinidad and Tobago is 31.3 degrees Celsius, with an average minimum of 22.7 degrees Celsius. The hottest weather of the year (during rainy season) occurs between September and November (TTMS, 2019), which coincided with the period of data collection. The average temperature during this period was 30 degrees Celsius.

The literature on the effects of heat on learning is sparse with many references consisting of online media articles. These articles reference research conducted in the United States which, according to Coughlan (2018, British Broadcasting Cooperation), is more relevant to examining the effects of heat on learning as there are wider variations in weather, compared to regions such as the United Kingdom, for example. However, even given the wide weather variations in the United States, the seasonal variations experienced in that country will not be akin to those experienced in tropical countries such as Trinidad and Tobago where there is consistent hot weather throughout the year, even during rainy season (TTMS, 2019).

Goodman et al. (2018) conducted empirical research to examine the link between the hot temperature and learning and seem to be the first, if not only, research linking the two concepts. This research was conducted in the United States; therefore caution is applied in referring the findings to Trinidad and Tobago. Nevertheless, they highlight the effects of periods of extended hot weather on learning; and therefore, barring differences in weather patterns for Trinidad and Tobago, their main findings will be discussed. Noteworthy was the absence of data or references concerning the heat on the MOE's website in Trinidad and Tobago.

Goodman et al. (2018) analysed the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) scores of 10 million American secondary pupils across a 13-year period. Some of the pupils took this test multiple times. They examined school day temperatures, and tested the impact of these hot school days on test scores. They also conducted a nationwide survey with pupils and guidance counsellors to examine the impact that air conditioning had on learning. They did not state the exact states in which the survey was conducted but they indicated that the Northern and Southern regions were included. From their findings, they state that pupils retaking the PSAT test following a hotter year rather than a cooler year received lower test scores. The survey revealed the impact that air conditioning had on learning within the classroom. According to Goodman et al. (2018), air conditioning in almost all cases was able to mitigate against the effects of heat. However, apart from stating that 'heat interferes with learning on the majority of hot days' (p. 19), the study falls short of stating the exact areas in which heat impacted on the pupils' learning. They postulated that heat effects were more adversely experienced in more disadvantaged communities where air-conditioned classrooms or other coping mechanisms were likely to be reduced.

Out of the educational setting, some studies have examined the effects of heat in workplaces. Seppanen, Fisk and Lei (2006) examined the effects of heat in an office setting and found that higher temperatures (above 23-24ºC) reduced work productivity as measured by the complexity of tasks and time frame of completion. In their study, Albouy, Graf, Kellogg and Wolff (2016) linked changes in weather to welfare and comfort, adding that adjusting to hotter temperatures is more difficult than cold temperatures, thereby producing more negative effects.

These studies hint that hot temperatures can have adverse cognitive and physiological effects. Transposing to learning, Goodman et al. (2018) put forward the possibilities of reduced instructional effectiveness, higher pupil indiscipline and reduced focus due to hot temperatures.

The findings from this study revealed that the hot temperatures were considered to adversely affect the teaching and learning at both schools. The FS teacher mentioned the heat as a reason to alter activities or even halt classes altogether. She mentioned her contingent strategy was to take pupils outside although this was not a feature of the observations. The ES teacher acknowledged that she had to persist, although

difficult, with teaching despite the heat. The pupils acknowledged their own discomfort, low concentration and disengagement as a result of the heat. When the classroom is hot, they recounted, it is difficult to pay attention.

The ES teacher also perceived that the scheduling of Spanish for the afternoon periods, when the hot temperature was most intense, compounded her issues, particularly with the boys in her class. She perceived that the weather contributed to their disengagement and indiscipline. The boys were not willing to be interviewed; therefore, her views could not be verified. An alternative explanation, apart from weather, was that the periods following the long lunch break made it difficult for pupils to settle into learning regardless of the temperature or subject area as pupils.

Hot classrooms, therefore, presented an uncontrollable element that seem to affect the learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning in Trinidad. Several issues emanate from this finding. It seems that the teachers in this study had limited alternatives to respond to the heat other than to alter in class activities. The effectiveness of this strategy for pupils was not ascertained. It seems, however, from the views of the ES teacher that the school exerted influence regarding the timetabling of Spanish at a time of day when the heat is likely to be most detrimental to pupil learning. Given the nature and status of Spanish (discussed in a previous section), it seems that the difficulties of pupils are likely to be exacerbated through this administrative decision.

Even though the weather is an uncontrollable factor, Goodman et al.'s (2018) study highlighted that air conditioning can cancel the negative effects of the heat – this raises further implications for government schools in Trinidad and Tobago that receive centralized funding. Installation and maintenance of air conditioning units represent a costly venture and, given economic constraints, may not represent a priority for funding. Goodman et al. (2018) also highlighted that heat effects are more severe in more disadvantaged schools as wealthier schools are able to afford air conditioning. This factor may be relevant to Trinidad and Tobago, as denominational schools are better poised to acquire additional financial resources through fundraising or donations from parents and alumni groups and therefore have the financial resources to install air conditioning. Goodman et al. (2018) also state that wealthier pupils develop other coping mechanisms such as extra tutoring that help mitigate against the effects of

weather while at school. The pupils in this study mentioned the use of fans as an alternative to air conditioning.

5.6 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter suggested the interrelatedness of teaching approaches with pupil, school and national factors. This interrelatedness is also suggested by international (EFA) and national education policy and by authors who address issues surrounding inclusive education for marginalised groups (for example Ainscow, 2000). However, empirical research surrounding the interplay of factors at the pupil, class, school and national level within a single study is not known, especially for pupils who experience difficulties in learning in a developing educational context. Investigation of the influences of all these factors within specific teaching approaches within one class with pupils who experience difficulties in learning seemed to have highlighted that teaching approaches are not isolated but intricately interwoven with perceived constraints that filter into teacher decision making about teaching approaches.

National issues, which all had implications for the Ministry of Education, permeated most of the issues discussed in this chapter. Responsibility for Learning and Vocabulary sections discussed points that had implications for teacher training programmes while Teacher Creativity and Weather carried implications for funding. From the findings, it seems that factors at the school level are controlled by national influences. The specific context of Trinidad and Tobago brings to the fore the direct (rather than indirect) role that the Ministry of Education plays in influencing teaching approaches in state run schools.

The learning of pupils who experience difficulties was also influenced by teacher conceptualisations of the pupils which also seemed to permeate various aspects of the findings. In a very fundamental sense, the teachers' conceptualisations of ability and difficulty seemed to influence their decision making towards lesson planning, activities and discipline; therefore the thoughts teachers hold towards the pupils who experience difficulties in learning were important to consider. Equally important to consider was how the decision making of teachers affected pupils' conceptualisation of their difficulties and learning and also the type of difficulties they experienced. Investigating pupils' perspectives was a vital aspect of this study as it provided a

holistic perspective to the teaching approaches. The main contribution of this study to knowledge along with the implications for policy and practice will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the contributions to knowledge, outline implications and recommendations for policy and practice based on the findings, present the strengths and limitations of this study and outline areas for further research.

As stated in Chapter one, this study was borne out of my research interest in educational provision for children who have not been formally assessed for a special need or disability, yet experienced learning challenges. The term 'pupils who experience difficulties in learning' reflected the notion that these pupils were not designated as having special needs yet were deemed at risk of educational failure by their teachers. As pointed out in Chapter one, these pupils enter mainstream schools and it was my interest to investigate the teaching approaches used to facilitate the participation in learning of these pupils.

The aim of this study was thus to investigate the teaching approaches used with pupils who experience difficulties in learning in two government Spanish classrooms in Trinidad. The research questions were

1. What teaching approaches are used with pupils who experience difficulties in learning by two Form two Spanish teachers in two government secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?
2. What are the perspectives of the teachers and pupils regarding teaching approaches in Spanish lessons?
3. How does wider education policy and practice influence the teachers' approaches for these pupils who experience difficulties in learning?

Following data collection using non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews and task-based interviews in an urban (Eagle School) and a rural (Fairview School) school, the data was analysed and key findings emerged. The key findings of this study are – a) both teachers regarded difficulties in learning as situated within the child, b) both teachers perceived limitations to their approaches in assisting pupils in overcoming their difficulties in learning, c) both teachers considered pupils who

experienced difficulties in learning to have responsibility for their own learning, d) use of English was crucial to bridging understanding of Spanish and English, e) vocabulary knowledge and acquisition was considered important to learning Spanish by the participants, f) both teachers had an intense examination focus in their lessons and g) the hot temperatures in the two classrooms seem to affect teaching and learning.

6.2. Contribution to Knowledge

There are a few ways in which this thesis contributes to knowledge. One main contribution is the use of the terminology *pupils who experience difficulties in learning*. An exposition of how this term was defined and operationalised in this study has been provided throughout this thesis. The teachers' conceptualisations of the pupils, (the limitations of) their teaching approaches and the pupils' conceptualisations of their own difficulties all gave insight into how difficulties in learning were constructed. It was postulated that the tensions regarding the origination of difficulties in learning (pupil, system or both) were unlikely to be resolved by this research. Given the findings and the issues raised in the previous chapter, this stance remains.

The subjectivities, judgements and conceptualisations which the literature and this study's findings *suggest* may surround *pupils who experience difficulties in learning* indicate that uniformed application of the term across educational settings would be problematic. This thesis highlighted the constructed nature of *difficulties in learning* within the findings which was connected to teacher beliefs about pupils and their teaching approaches. The constructed nature of difficulties in learning may serve to move the discourse within special needs beyond issues of diagnosis and assessment within developing nations to teaching approaches and school structures. How the difficulties in learning were constructed by the teachers and pupils was particularly poignant as a key finding in this study. The nested diagram in Figure 5.1 reflecting the levels of the pupil, teaching approaches, school and nation may be relevant here. The teachers placed the source of pupils' difficulties within the pupils, the school and the Ministry of Education. However, teacher emphases in their approaches filtered into pupils' construction of their own difficulties therefore it can be said that the pupils *in this study* inadvertently placed the source of their difficulties in teaching approaches. This study contributes to knowledge of how difficulties in learning can be socially and even culturally constructed.

Another way in which this thesis contributes to knowledge was the exposition of the interplay of pupil, teacher, school and national influences within a single empirical study investigating teaching approaches. Examining the influences at these various levels on a single teacher's approaches offers insight into the impact that the social, cultural and political context can exert on teacher actions within the classroom. While regarding teaching as connected to wider social and political forces within the society is familiar positioning of authors researching teaching approaches (see Smyth, 1999; Strand, 2010; McCoy, Banks & Shevlin, 2012), the literature may have suggested an indirect and somewhat distant effect of these forces on teaching. This study, however, has found that national influences can directly impact teaching approaches in terms of the pressures teachers feel, the impact on teacher belief system and their choice of daily classroom activities. The teachers in this study believed that actively preparing pupils for national standardized tests (despite these examinations not being sat by pupils for another two years) as best for the pupils' learning and also their image as a good teacher. These beliefs filtered into classroom activities which involved familiarising pupils with the structure and knowledge of the standardized tests.

The direct impact of national influences on teaching approaches, according to this study, is further enhanced by considering the input of the Ministry of Education in the operations of the two schools. The centralised mode of operations of the Ministry of Education particularly in relation to government schools suggests that the operations of schools and, by extension teachers, are controlled and managed by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, this mode of operation coupled with the (lack of) provision of resources of the Ministry of Education translated into perceived direct 'pressures' within the teaching approaches.

With respect to the hot weather on learning, this study adds a contribution to knowledge. The hot temperature was regarded as a national influence as it represented a quality inherent to the nation of Trinidad and Tobago. The impact of hot temperatures on learning has been seldom researched. The limited research in this area has taken place in regions which experience seasonal changes in weather, for example, the United States. As Trinidad and Tobago is a tropical country and therefore

perpetually hot, it may be a taken-for-granted reality that hot temperatures would represent the context for learning. However, the hot temperature emerged as an issue that negatively affected the teaching and learning in both classes. Both teachers and pupils indicated that the hot temperature was a factor that limited their functionality in lessons. Previous research in the United States has centred on the impact of hot weather on test scores (Goodman et al., 2018). Although this study did not set out to research the impacts of weather on learning, it seems that the hot temperatures negatively impacted daily classroom activities and learning.

The national context of Trinidad and Tobago also adds a methodological contribution in terms of understanding how the wider social and cultural context contributes to the construction of the case. This study was conducted in two classrooms in two entirely different geographic regions of Trinidad and Tobago, yet yielded similar results which suggests that the role teachers and pupils adopt within and across classrooms may be borne out of engaging with the same educational and national context, characterised by the centralised operations of the Ministry of Education as well as national issues, for example, the weather and the coexistence of Trinidad English Creole with English. These issues add a dimension of understanding to teaching and learning not just within the two classrooms in the two schools but also to schools in general in Trinidad and Tobago and therefore highlight the need to include examination of the national context to empirical studies involving school settings.

Another related contribution to knowledge was the teachers' perceived limitations in their approaches to assisting the learning of pupils who experienced difficulties. The perception of limitations on the part of the teachers reflect the positioning of teachers in the learning context of pupils who experience difficulties in learning, in terms that the teachers may not view their teaching approaches as a contributor or source of alleviation to pupils' difficulties in learning. In other words, teaching approaches may be viewed as unconnected to difficulties in learning. The finding on shared responsibility for learning where pupils were implored to adopt a 'learning hygiene', that is, responsible learning behaviours, supports this claim. While teachers may have perceived their approaches as having limitations, this stance is not without merit as they regarded pupils to adopt positive learning behaviours to assist their own learning.

This study also makes contributions to knowledge concerning teaching approaches in Spanish class. The use of English emerged as important to the teaching and learning of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. Teachers in this study believed that the use of English facilitated pupil understanding of Spanish and English (especially in cases where the pupils experienced difficulties in literacy). While target language is encouraged by the literature and teacher training courses (Postgraduate Diploma in Education, for example), the use of target language was viewed as detrimental to the learning of pupils who experienced difficulties. English, on the other hand, was considered crucial to their learning of Spanish.

6.3 Implications and Recommendations for Policy and Practice

To discuss the implications and for policy and practice, the nested model in Chapter five (Figure 5.1) will be used. The key findings suggest implications and possible recommendations for pupils, teachers, schools and Ministry of Education officials. Each will be addressed in turn.

Pupils who Experience Difficulties in Learning as Learners

The pupils were regarded as fundamental stakeholders in their own learning by the teachers who highlighted the need for pupils to become more responsible in their learning. Absence of positive pupil learning behaviour was one of the reasons teachers perceived limitation in their approaches. A 'learning hygiene' was therefore regarded as necessary supplementation to teaching approaches and a means for pupils to overcome their difficulties. The study therefore suggests that pupils who experience difficulties in learning may benefit from a positive learning attitude which supports greater engagement in lessons (Wall, 2012).

Teachers

The main implication for teachers is the level of awareness they apply to their practice with respect to pupils who experience difficulties in learning. Teacher awareness of their role in the construction of pupils' difficulties and the approaches they can adopt may help pupils overcome their difficulties.

The findings in this study suggest that strategies, activities and even teacher disposition emerge from teachers' beliefs about pupils' abilities and difficulties. Awareness of how those beliefs are being actively constructed by teachers may serve

to help teachers confront areas of their practice that may be detrimental to pupils' learning. This study suggests the incorporation of non-judgemental sessions where teachers can learn about pupils' views concerning teaching approaches that are helpful and unhelpful to their learning (McIntyre, Pedder and Rudduck, 2005) as a means for teachers to confront the effects of their constructions on pupils' learning.

The issue of pupil responsibility for learning also carries twofold implications for the teachers. On the one hand, teachers also may have a responsibility for pupils' learning in terms of ensuring that pupils remain motivated and engaged in their lessons (O'Brien & Iannone, 2018) through planning and executing lessons that are meaningful and interesting to pupils. On the other hand, teachers may need awareness that pupils who experience difficulties in learning may lack the skills needed to become more responsible in their learning and may therefore require teachers to explicitly teach these skills (Wall, 2012). This study suggests the incorporation of learning how to learn skills in the teaching of pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

School

Spanish was regarded as a difficult and somewhat irrelevant subject by the pupils. Therefore, increasing the motivation and engagement of the pupils was a key challenge for both teachers. This issue may be compounded by weather effects brought on by the scheduling of classes in the afternoon. According to Chambers (1992), the timetabling (time of day) of foreign languages can affect pupil learning and performance. He acknowledged the value of morning sessions where pupils are more alert and attentive. While it may be the case that the morning sessions may be valued by all subject teachers, given the status of Spanish to pupils, a time slot where the pupils are more attentive and when the hot temperature is not as pronounced may be a way forward for administrative planning.

Ministry of Education

Some of the findings could have implications to how teacher training programmes may be enhanced to cater specifically to the learning needs of pupils who experience difficulties in learning. According to the findings, pupils who experience difficulties in learning imbibe messages from the learning environment regarding their difficulties which emanate from teaching approaches. Teachers may be alerted to how their perceptions affect their learners through teacher training courses. Apart from awareness of teacher perceptions, teachers may benefit from knowledge of strategies for better learning as highlighted by the discussion on *Responsibility for Learning*.

These points highlight the need for teacher training programmes that train teachers to be aware of the psychosocial issues of the specific learners in their classroom and train them in learning-to-learn strategies specifically for pupils who experience difficulties in learning (Cornford, 2002).

With respect to teaching Spanish, vocabulary emerged as a key element in foreign language acquisition for the pupils in this study. Teacher training in strategies for long term vocabulary learning may also be necessary. These may include strategies for building breadth as well as depth of vocabulary knowledge.

The effects of learning in hot temperatures was outlined in the previous chapter and installation of air conditioning has been put forward as the main way to overcome this issue. While the economic costs of installation and maintenance of air-conditioning units have been acknowledged, given the impact that the heat may have on the pupils learning, a strategic plan to introduce air conditioning units to classrooms can be formulated by the Ministry of Education.

6.4 Strengths and Limitations of this Study

In this section, I outline the strengths and limitations that arose from this research project.

6.4.1 Strengths

A key strength of this study was that it was conducted in a developing, Caribbean nation, thereby adding to the repository of limited educational research of the developing South. The unique economic, political and socio-cultural conditions of contexts like Trinidad and Tobago give understanding to the international research community about specific issues surrounding teaching and learning in non-Western contexts.

This study also exhibited some key methodological strengths that rendered the collection of rich data. One strength was the incorporation of diverse data collection methods which allowed exploration of the phenomenon of teaching approaches with pupils who experience difficulties in learning from different angles. The different data

collection methods facilitated insight into a range of perspectives from the different participants. Added to this strength was the incorporation of methods that suited the participation of the pupils. The task-based interviews, individual pupil interview methods and even the voting cards were all designed to allow the pupils to freely express themselves without fear of chastisement (Davis, 1998). In acknowledging that some pupils who experienced difficulties in learning may not have felt comfortable expressing themselves amongst their classmates, the incorporation of individual pupil interviews was added to investigate more in-depth perspectives of these pupils.

The Reconnaissance Phase was a major strength in this study as it served to orient me to the practices of each school. This orientation was an important basis for data collection in the subsequent phases as it allowed me to learn somewhat the culture of the school before engaging with teaching and learning within the classes.

6.4.2 Limitations

There were, however, limitations associated with this study. One limitation was the limited number of observations. It is acknowledged that the six observations conducted at the schools may be considered a limited number from which to draw conclusions. My initial research plan catered for a greater number of observations; however, due to interruptions to the schools' or teachers' daily schedule, this was not possible. Public holidays, school activities such as the Divali programme at Fairview and personal matters of both teachers prevented the execution of more observations. Nevertheless, the observations that were conducted were detailed and systematic, thereby capturing valid data for analysis. Furthermore, the other data collection methods triangulated the data from the observations (Heale and Forbes, 2013), thereby enhancing the validity of the observation data.

Another limitation was the reluctance of the boys at Eagle School to be interviewed. It was mentioned in several parts of this thesis that while the boys at Eagle gave consent to be observed, they were not willing to be interviewed. They were neither present for the task-based interviews nor individual interviews. Their rights to refuse participation as outlined by Robson (2011) were upheld and respected. Nevertheless, as the teaching and learning of boys at this school presented particular issues to understanding teaching approaches for pupils who experience difficulties in learning,

assessing their perspectives regarding the teaching approaches may have been beneficial. Although the boys' attitude towards the research was reminiscent of their overall behaviour and attitude within the classes, specific research methods to motivate their involvement may have been necessary. Nicolaidou, Sophocleous and Phtiaka (2006) suggests having pupils act as researchers where they can interview other pupils. The boys may have felt more comfortable sharing with their peers than an adult.

In Chapter five, the areas where further exploration of pupils' views were warranted were discussed (effects of teacher examination focus, for example). McLean (2018) pointed out that pupils' views concerning assessments are not sufficiently ascertained. Even though some pupils provided data in these areas, greater exploration of pupil perspectives would have channelled greater understanding of how an intense examination focus affected their learning. Greater exploration of pupils' perspectives in other aspects such as responsibility for learning would have offered a more balanced view of specific aspects of teaching and learning with pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

6.5 Areas for Further Research

In this section, I outline areas for further research based on the findings of this study.

6.5.1 The Teaching and Learning of Boys who Experience Difficulties in Learning

From this study, it emerged that the boys presented specific challenges, particularly to the teacher at Eagle School. Further research can explore teaching approaches particularly for boys who experience difficulties in learning, incorporating data collection methods suited to the aims of the study.

6.5.2 Peer Support by Pupils who Experience Difficulties in Learning

The Discussion chapter outlined that the FS teacher incorporated peer support for pupils who experienced difficulties in learning while this element was absent from the ES teacher class. This peer support was unidirectional towards pupils who experienced difficulties in learning. In other words, pupils who were considered to be

high performing were asked to help pupils who experienced difficulties but not the reverse as pupils who experienced difficulties in learning were not asked to support other pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

Bishop (2003) and Charlton and David (2010) noted the value of peer support to pupil socioemotional wellbeing while Quicke (1986) noted the peer support that higher performing peers can offer to those who experience difficulties in learning. Further research into the support that pupils who experience difficulties in learning can lend to other pupils in the class may add understanding to constructions of ability and difficulties.

6.5.3 The Impact of Heat on Teaching and Learning

The relationship between heat and teaching and learning emerged as a consistent theme amongst the participants. The dearth of research regarding this environmental condition in learning renders the impact of heat on learning a viable research topic. Research into the specific effects of heat in the learning of particular subjects may be an adequate starting point. Chambers (1992) suggests that the time of day for less liked subjects has an effect on learning.

Further areas of research may also include a study with similar aims but at the primary and university level.

6.6 Conclusion

This thesis began with a desire to research the teaching and learning of pupils who were being educated in mainstream schools, who were deemed to be at educational risk but who were not diagnosed with a special need or disability. For a long time, the education of pupils who experience difficulties in learning has concerned me and this research project afforded me the opportunity to gain deep insight into the challenges and issues that surround the learning of these pupils. The insight gained will be carried forward into future research in this area.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I Protocol of Situation for Observations

Space

Eagle School

The observations took place in two locations - the audio-visual (AV) room which was in a separate building close to the entrance of the school and the regular classroom of the Form two class. This classroom was located on the second floor of the nearby block. When the AV room was not available, classes were conducted in their regular classroom.

Fairview School

Most classes were conducted in the regular Form two class room. On only one occasion was another room used which was located close to the staff room.

None of the rooms for either school were air conditioned although there was a fan in the regular classroom at Eagle School.

Activity

Activities refer to the teaching approaches and strategies executed by each teacher. The activities included roll taking, pace, discipline strategies, degree of technology use, teaching strategies.

Event

These refer to specific occurrences that are substantive to answering the research questions. There were instances in each classroom that occurred as one-off events but nonetheless factored into understanding the challenges faced by the teachers. For example, at Eagle School, in one instance, two girls chased each other around the class while teaching was in session which relayed information about discipline in the classroom.

Goal

Goals refer to the lesson topics and objectives which provided a context for the Spanish language approaches. Physical/Personality Descriptions and Weather were covered at both schools.

Feelings

Feelings refer to the emotions of the teacher and pupils. While it is highly subjective to ascertain the feelings of the participants at any given moment during the observations (Cohen et al., 2011), it was the case that the participants sometimes vocalised their emotions during teaching.

Appendix II Observation Timeline for Eagle and Fairview School

Date	School	Particulars
02.10.17	Fairview School	Observation day
03.10.17	No Observation at either school	No Observation at either school No Spanish session at Eagle and no confirmation from Fairview
04.10.17	Eagle School	Observation day
05.10.17	Fairview School	Observation day
06.10.17	No Observation at either school	No Spanish session at Eagle and Fairview has Spanish 1st period
09.10.17	No Observation at either school	No Spanish for Eagle and no confirmation from Fairview
10.11.17	No Observation at either school	No Spanish for Eagle and no confirmation from Fairview
11.10.17	Eagle School	Observation day
12.10.17	No Observation at either school	Divali Programme at Fairview. Upon arriving at the school for the scheduled observation, I was informed by Lorena that there are no classes due to the programme.
13.10.17	No Observation at either school	National Holiday- First People's Holiday
16.10.17	No Observation at Eagle School	Reached to Eagle High but teacher had to go visit sister in hospital.
17.10.17	No Observation at either school	No activity at either school- Fairview teacher did not respond to messages, Eagle High teacher said today is not a good day
18.10.17	No Observation at either school	National Holiday- Divali
19.10.17	No Observation at either school	Fairview teacher off sick with food poisoning. Eagle School teacher at home to facilitate electrician visit.
20.10.17	Eagle School	Observation day
23.10.17	No Observation at either school	Task-Based Interviews at Eagle
24.10.17	Fairview School	Observation day
25.10.17	No Observation at either school	Reached to Eagle School but no observations due to Departmental meeting
26.10.17	No Observation at either school	Task-based interviews at Fairview School
30.10.17	Fairview School	Observation day
31.10.17	Eagle School	Observation day
01.11.17	No Observation at either school	No Spanish for Eagle and no confirmation from Fairview
02.11.17	Eagle School	Observation day

03.11.17	No Observation at Fairview.	Heritage Day at Fairview therefore no classes
06.11.17		Phase two interviews
07.11.17		Phase two interviews
08.11.17	Eagle School	Observation day
09.11.17	No Obs	Spanish teacher at Fairview told me the wrong Day. By the time I reached the school to observe the class that corresponded with the Day she told me, the Spanish session had already passed.
10.11.17	Fairview School	Observation day
13.11.17	Fairview School	Observation day
14.11.17	No Observation at either school	
15.11.17	No Observation at either school	
16.11.17	Eagle School	Observation day
17.11.17	No Observation at either school	Field trip at Fairview
20.11.17	No Observation at either school	Course work at Fairview
21.11.17	No Observation at either school	Course work at Fairview
22.11.17	No Observation at either school	Course work at Fairview
23.11.17	Semi-structured interviews at Eagle School	No observations

Appendix III Excerpt of Observation Field notes from Eagle and Fairview School

Eagle School

DATE : 04.10.17

LOCATION: AV room

Day 3

Materials: Projector, Laptop.

3 pupils show up for class. Rest of class is breaking. Male pupil asks if they will do work as a result of the missing pupils.

T exclaims that of course they will still do work.

Pupils are shouting around school. Lunch has just ended and school has not settled down as yet.

Teacher writes date on board. She asks the class – how do you say Wednesday in Spanish? How do you say 4 in Spanish?

Some girls answer.

Teacher tells pupils to write topic that is from a Powerpoint slide

On the slide, the topic is in Spanish with pictures below.

Como es tu padre de caracter?

Teacher leaves to talk to Principal. In teacher's absence 6 more pupils show up. Pupil tells me sorry for being late. Teacher returns and scolds pupils for coming late. Another pupils strolls in. Deshantay says she left her book in class. She leaves to get it and returns 5 minutes later. She leaves again to get a pen.

Teacher tells pupil to sit down and he tells her to hold on.

To class, teachers asks pupils to repeat the topic. Teacher then asks them what they think it means.

Pupils, who have arrived late, make popping noise but do not enter class.

Fairview School

Date: 02.10.17

Location: Classroom

Time:1.05pm

Day 3

Teacher talks about dirty class. Teacher makes pupils pick up garbage. Teacher enquires where the missing pupils are.

Teacher gives handout. Pupil comes to talk to me to ask how to say 'Good evening'. Pupil also asks me for a pen. Teacher calls pupil to the front to sit.

There are not enough handouts for everyone.

Class recites alphabet. Class starts lethargically. Teacher stops them. Class starts again. Teacher asks class to pull out notebook. Teacher tells pupils to refer to 1st page of Viva. Teacher tells pupils they revised it yesterday (wasting time if they do not say it properly).

Teacher tells pupils to refer to notebooks for notes.

Some pupils refer to a handout of notes.

Doble ve:

Teacher explains different pronunciation in Spain.

Teacher: Remember from Form one, how do you pronounce x,y,z. Teacher wants to ensure pupils have correct pronunciation.

One pupil stands to read out a couple sentences for pronunciation.

Teacher: when you are reading out loud, do not look away from paper. This leads to mispronunciation.

Pupil constantly looks away.

Teacher urges her to keep her eyes on the paper.

Teacher tells pupil to pronounce the ñ like the sound in onion.

Me llamo… Me despierto a las seis.

The rest of the class must pay attention to her read.

Teacher tells her – Sientate

Teacher lets pupil choose someone else.

The next pupil that is chosen stands to read.

Pupil: Yo cipillo.

Teachers : how do you pronounce the e , like an a right?

Teacher walks to the back of the class while looking at a child's paper.

Teacher urges children to shut up.

Pupil continues: desa-uno.

Teacher: what are you doing with the y?

Pupil struggles.

Teacher asks another pupil to help her.

Pupil continues: Yo cepillo

Teacher: Yo me, why do you keep forgetting the 'me'

Teacher walks to other side of class. Pupil who was reading chooses a boy behind her.

Teacher urges her to choose someone on other side of class.

Teacher tells pupil that he cannot sleep in class.

Pupils: Yo tomo desayuno las sis

Teacher: seis

Teacher corrects pronunciation as she goes along and tells her to do it over.

Teacher recognises pupil is havinga problem with 'e' pronouncing it like an 'a'.

Teacher urges class to be quiet while children read.

Teacher tells pupil not to pronounce h.

Pupil about to clap for the pupil who just read.

Teacher tells him not to clap as he has to read it over.

Pupil pronounces h again.

Teacher tells him it is silent so pretend it is not there.

Appendix IV Interview Schedules (Teachers and Pupils for both schools)

First Teacher Interview Schedule (Eagle and Fairview School)

Advise of Confidentiality and Anonymity rights.

1. How long have you been a teacher at this school?
2. Have you worked at any other school besides this one?
3. Is this the first time teaching a Form two class?
4. Did you teach your current Form two class while they were in Form one?
5. What other Forms do you teach?
6. Tell me about the ways you teach your Form two class?
7. Why have you decided to teach them in this way?
8. Are there any other ways of teaching you would use with other classes/ year groups that you do not use with this class? Why?

Thanks participant for participating in interview session.

Second Teacher Interview Schedule

Eagle School

1. I would like to talk to you about the influences on your teaching approaches? What would you say are some of the influences on the way you teach?
2. Does the Principal/ Vice Principal/ Ministry of Education have an influence?
3. You mentioned in the last interview that some pupils have literacy gaps and these gaps affect their learning of Spanish. What approaches do you use to fill those gaps?
4. You mentioned in the last interview that most of the boys to quote you ‘end up learning nothing because they do not like Spanish. What are some of the ways you think you can get them more interested in Spanish?
5. You mentioned in the last interview that Trinidadian English Creole can be used instead of Standard English or in the addition to Standard English to increase the language awareness of the pupils and that you might adopt this as an approach to bridge some of the literacy gaps? Were you able to adopt this as an approach?

6. I notice that you explain things to the pupils and if a child says ‘Miss I don’t understand’, you will explain again. Why do you do that?
7. I notice that some of the pupils walk out of class while you are teaching? Do those pupils catch up on the learning they have missed?
8. Why do you attach marks to the activities the pupils do in class?
9. I notice that you let them look back on their notes to do a marked activity. Why do you let them do that?
10. Is there anything else you would like to mention that is related to my research focus- how pupils who experience difficulties in learning are taught in a Spanish classroom?

Thanks participant for participating in interview session.

Fairview School

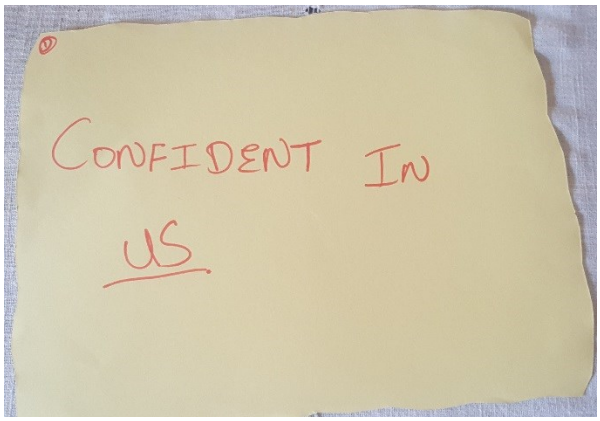
1. I would like to talk to you about the influences on your teaching approaches? What would you say are some of the influences on the way you teach?
2. Does the Principal/ Vice Principal/ Ministry of Education have an influence?
3. You mentioned in the last interview that there are certain pupils who do not pay attention or are not interested at all. What approaches do you adopt to (bring them in?- Lorena’s words).
4. You mentioned in the last interview that the things you emphasise in class are so that the pupils will be prepared from examinations. For example, your reading in class is so that they will get accustomed to your voice as you will have to read for their Listening Comprehension examination. Why do you think it is important to have this examination focus in your class?
5. You mentioned that the vocabulary focus is due to the wishes of the Head of Department. What are your preferred teaching approaches for this class?
6. Is there anything else you would like to mention that is related to my research focus- how pupils who experience difficulties in learning are taught in a Spanish classroom?

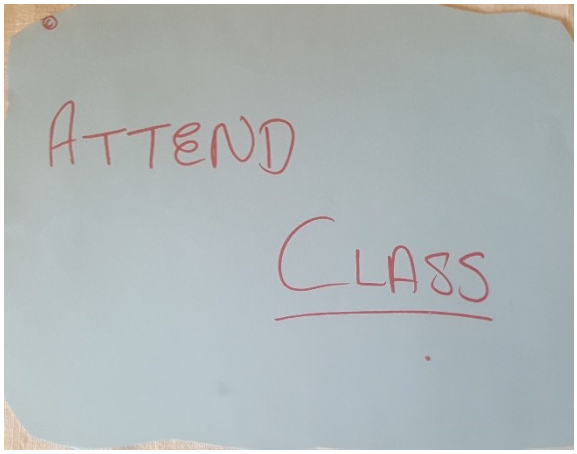
Thanks participant for participating in interview session.

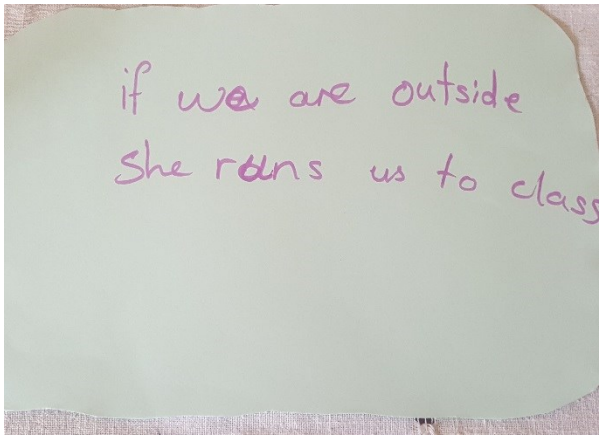
Pupil Interview Schedule (Eagle and Fairview School)

1. You learnt about (Weather, Physical and Personality Descriptions) in Spanish. What do you think about this topic? Was it easy to follow?
2. How would you describe your own ability to learn Spanish?
3. What do you think (Spanish teacher's name) thinks about your behaviour/ ability to do well in Spanish?
4. Can you describe some of the difficulties or problems or issues you encounter in learning Spanish?
5. What do you think about the time frame that Miss allows you to do your work? Is it enough?
6. In what ways do you learn best?
7. Do you think Miss teaches in a way that helps you learn?
8. What changes would you like to see in your Spanish class?
9. Is there anything you would like to tell me about your learning in Spanish class?

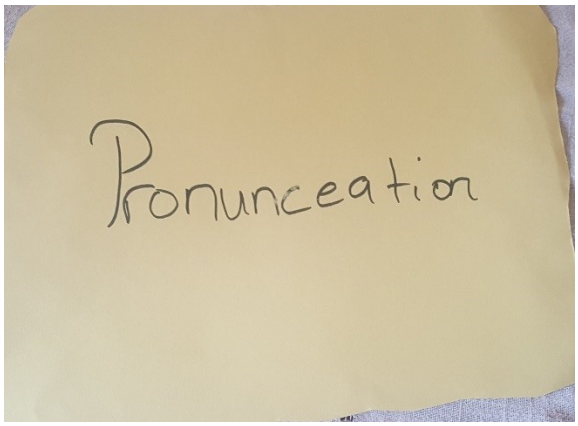
Eagle School

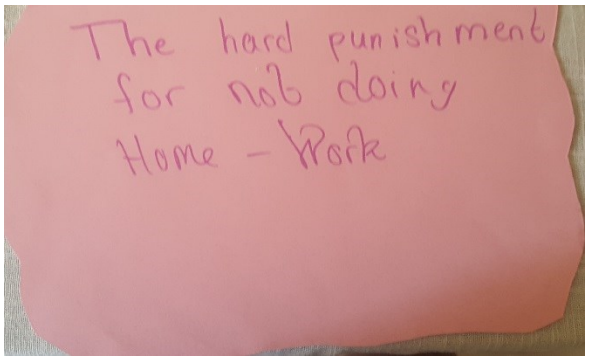


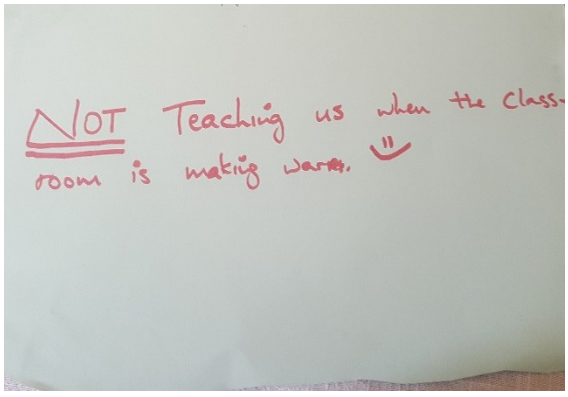




Fairview School







Appendix VI University of Exeter Ethics Application Form

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Ref (for office use only)

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

All staff and students within SSIS should use this form; those in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology should return it to ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk. Staff and students in the **Graduate School of Education** should use ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk.

Before completing this form please read the Guidance document

which can be found at http://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/ethics/

Applicant details	
Name	Click here to add text
Department	Click here to add text
UoE email address	Click here to add text

Duration for which permission is required		
Please check the meeting dates and decision information online before completing this form; your start date should be at least one month after the Committee meeting date at which your application will be considered. You should request approval for the entire period of your research activity. Students should use the anticipated date of completion of their course as the end date of their work. Please note that retrospective ethical approval will never be given.		
Start date: Click here to enter a date	**End date:**Click here to enter a date	**Date submitted:**Click here to enter a date

Students only	
All students must discuss (face to face or via email) their research intentions with their supervisor/tutor prior to submitting an application for ethical approval. **Your application must be approved by your first or second supervisor (or dissertation supervisor/tutor) prior to submission and you MUST submit evidence of their approval with your application, e.g. a copy of an email stating their approval.**	
Student number	Click here to enter student number

Programme of study	Select programme from dropdown list If you selected 'other' from the list above please name your programme here
Name of Supervisor(s) or Dissertation Tutor	Click here to enter text
Have you attended any ethics training that is available to students?	Select from this dropdown list EG the Research Integrity Ethics and Governance: http://as.exeter.ac.uk/rdp/postgraduateresearchers OR Ethics training received on Masters courses. If yes, please specify and give the date of the training: Click here to specify training Click here to enter a date.

Certification for all submissions

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given in this application and that I undertake in my research to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research. I confirm that if my research should change significantly I will seek advice, request approval of an amendment or complete a new ethics proposal. Any document translations used have been provided by a competent person with no significant changes to the original meaning.

Click here to enter your name

Double click this box to confirm certification ☐

Submission of this ethics proposal form confirms your acceptance of the above.

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

Ensure that your title has meaning to both yourself and the participants of your research. The title will appear on your certificate of approval and should match the title shown on your associated files such as the information sheet and consent form.

ETHICAL REVIEW BY AN EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

Select from this dropdown list

If you selected yes from the list above you should apply for ethics approval from the appropriate organisation (the NHS Health Research Authority or the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee). You do not need to complete this form, but you must inform the Ethics Secretary of your project and your submission to an external committee.

MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005

Select from this dropdown list

If you selected yes from the list above you should apply for ethics approval from the NHS Health Research Authority. You do not need to complete this form, but you must inform the Ethics Secretary of your project and your submission to an external committee.

SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Maximum of 750 words.

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

This should contain a brief description of the project including background and main research questions and where (which country) the research will take place. A maximum of 750 words is permitted.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

If your research will take place within the UK you may skip this question UNLESS your participants are in another country (even if you will not travel there). This includes EG Skype, email or telephone contact with participants.

If your research will take place in a country other than the UK you should give details of the ethical practices followed in the country/countries you will be working in. It is your responsibility to ensure that you work within the ethical requirements of that country and you should confirm if you have applied to a research ethics committee within the country/countries you will be working in. If this has not been done you should explain why.

You should provide details of any locally employed research assistants or other staff who you will employ to carry out the research in the country/countries. Consideration of the safety issues of these staff should be provided later in this form; see assessment of possible harm.

The following sections require an assessment of possible ethical consideration in your research project. If particular sections do not seem relevant to your project please indicate this and clarify why.

RESEARCH METHODS

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

Provide details of data collection, forms the data will take and analysis.You should include a detailed description of the methods (design, sampling, procedure). You should list any expected project outputs (in addition to the dissertation) including academic (conference presentations, seminars, journal articles) and profession outputs (reports).

In particular you should note if the study involves discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)? Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study? Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life? Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?

PARTICIPANTS

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

Provide a list of participants and the expected numbers of each type of participant. If applicable provide ages of any children and/or young people involved, and if the project involves one-to-one or other unsupervised research.

If applicable provide details of any special needs that the participants are expected to have; including communication difficulties, learning difficulties, learning disabilities or other reasons to be considered vulnerable.

If applicable provide details of any financial inducements that will be offered.

THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

You should include a brief outline on how participants will be recruited (advert, online, through contacts) and whether written consent is obtained.

Working with children *- You must satisfy yourself that there is a real need to involve children in the research and be able to justify this. You must check and comply with any legal requirements, such as vetting procedures for working with children, before you proceed with such work. The responsibility for checking and complying with such legal requirements is yours.*

Informed consent is required for activity which goes beyond normal classroom teaching:

1. *if what you are doing is in line with normal teaching and aligned to the National Curriculum or GCSE syllabuses, you do not need students to give consent to being taught. They need to give consent to their data being used in your research;*
2. *if you are trying out some intervention which is not usual in normal teaching: eg. having a dog working with a group for reading aloud, then you do need consent;*
3. *if you are extracting a group of children just for your research, then you do need informed consent. However, if this group would be normally extracted for intensive work, then you do not need informed consent.*

Research studies may involve some form of testing to establish a baseline or to determine the characteristics of a group. There is a fine line between research testing and normal assessment:

1. if your test is an assessment of their achievements against curriculum expectations, and will be used to inform your future teaching, this does not require consent. If the results will be used as data for your research, this does require consent.
2. if you are administering a test that is distinct from the curriculum eg a self-efficacy test; a resilience test; a writing process test etc then this is beyond what you would normally do and does require consent.

Where children in schools are involved the consent should be sought from both headteachers and parents. Where consent is given by parents, it is still important to try and obtain real consent from the child; assuming the child is old enough to understand this principle. For older children, they would normally be expected to give their signed agreement to take part in the same way as adults. Even where children are younger, where the child is capable of understanding, the researcher should explain to the child that what they are doing is entirely voluntary and that they can refuse to take part if they wish.

Working with potentially vulnerable adults *- You must satisfy yourself that there is a real need to involve potentially vulnerable adults, for example those with severe learning*

disabilities, and be able to justify this to the Committee. You should ensure that you have familiarised yourself with the relevant legal position, where it is intended to conduct research with adults who may not be able to give a legally valid consent to take part in research.

Where the proposed research participant is in a dependent relationship to the researcher (for example, where the research participant is a student) the researcher must make it clear that a decision to take part or not to take part in the project will in no way affect the individual's relationship with the researcher and the researcher must ensure that this is the case.

Where the proposed research participant is in custody the researcher must make it clear that a decision to take part or not to take part in the project will in no way affect the individual's situation and the researcher must ensure that no informal coercion takes place.

***Researching persons engaged in potentially illegal activities** - Before starting a project that will involve research with persons engaged in potentially illegal activities you need to consider under what circumstances you might be legally required to divulge information about your research participants. You need specifically to consider when to anonymise your research data.*

You also need to consider under what circumstances you might become implicated in the illegal activities and how you will ensure that this does not happen.

***Recruiting participants** - The doctrine of valid consent operates here. That is, participants should enter into the research freely and willingly and know and understand what they are agreeing to when they take part. They should be told they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Wherever possible, anonymity and confidentiality should be maintained. If the experimental design necessitates some deliberate deception then, after the experiment is finished, participants should be told the purpose of the experiment and why information was withheld or why they were misled.*

If people are being observed as part of a participant observation, or online, you must consider: a) accessibility: to what extent they would reasonably expect to be observed (is it a public space, or a private chatroom?) and b) how private they perceive the event/place (do they expect their discussions to be repeated outside?).

It is usual when observing conferences, for example, to obtain the permission of the organiser but not individual participants. Pretending to be someone else in cyberspace is

usually considered unethical; however, deception can sometimes be justified if participants are informed later on, and given the opportunity to withdraw (King, 1996).

Consent form *- Consent should cover: a) confidentiality; b) anonymity; c) information about the project and d) the right to withdraw at any time without disadvantage to the participant. An example of your personalised consent form should be submitted with this proposal.*

Find template information and consent forms here:
http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/templates/

If written consent is not obtained (e.g. it is deemed to be very culturally insensitive), this must be justified and a script for oral consent should be included.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text

Provide details of special arrangements that will be made for participants with special needs such as providing documents in large font, or providing extra time etc.

THE INFORMED NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

Give a description of how participants will be informed of the nature of the project and whether they will be given an information sheet. Any information sheet should clearly state any possible disadvantages participating in the study may have. An example of your information sheet should be attached when you submit this application. Find template information and consent forms here:
http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/templates/ If you do not intend to provide an information sheet to the participants you should justify this.

ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE HARM

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text.

Assessment of possible harm covers both harm to participants, and harm to you and any other researchers employed on the project.

Participants could potentially be harmed: a) psychologically, for example, if they get distressed or an interview provokes earlier trauma; b) legally, politically or economically, for example, if confidential information from the interview was shared or if their anonymity were compromised without consent, or their employer felt it didn't represent their organisation, or the police felt the material to be criminal; and c) physically, for example, interviewing where there is a power differential (e.g. women in domestic violence situations, political prisoners, in regimes with punitive measures for talking to researchers, taking part in new clinical drugs testing).

You do not need to exaggerate the potential harm to participants. You just need to think through how you will ensure that your project adheres to the principle of 'do no harm'.Any information sheet should clearly state any possible disadvantages participating in the study may have.

Researcher safety is also important to consider, particularly where the researcher is researching alone (e.g. interviewing in people's homes), with groups which may pose difficulties (prisoners, mentally ill, in situations of conflict, women researchers in cultures which have traditional roles for women) or in countries with known risks (e.g. war zones, terrorism). You need to create a plan of how to manage these risks and tell us about it. For example, a PhD researcher researching alone might provide their supervisor with an email before a home visit with details of where they are going and arrange to call them within a specified time frame following the visit; it should be made clear what will happen if the call is not made as planned.

A researcher visiting a country with known risks must state how such risks will be avoided or minimised, confirming they will keep up to date and comply with Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice and take UoE travel insurance. Researchers in countries which may be dangerous need to gain local knowledge (e.g. from other researchers in the same area) and visit governmental updated websites when in situ to assess risk (as well as using their common sense). Where FCO advises against 'all but essential' travel it should be noted that research is <u>not</u> sufficient justification and is not 'essential'.

You should also consider your own safety. University of Exeter staff and students will be insured to travel and carry out fieldwork but for the insurance to be activated a <u>fieldwork risk assessment form</u> and <u>international travel form</u> (if the fieldwork is outside the UK) must be completed in advance of the activity.

DATA PROTECTION AND STORAGE

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text

Describe how and where you will collect and store your data and for how long. In general you should only ever use password encrypted devices and upload to the University U drive at the earliest possible opportunity. You may use One Drive or Sharepoint. University of Exeter IT do not support and recommend against the use of other file sharing software such as Dropbox. If using unsupported software you must ensure the version you use is GDPR compliant (usually this means using a paid rather than free version) and you are should seek advice from Exeter IT before doing so.

GDPR

Before submitting your application you should check UoE guidance which can be found here:

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/gdprforresearchers/

Specifically you should review the section 'Conditions for processing personal data in research and consent' which includes links to GDPR compliant Information and consent sheets and ***data privacy notice*** *for research.*

The Committee generally prefers anonymity by default IE participants should only be potentially identifiable if there is compelling justification.

You need to state how long your data will be kept and whether you will anonymise it (there is no possible way any participant can be identified even by compiling a range of information) or pseudonymise it (participants will be given a pseudonym or number which could be linked back to their identity using a key). Personal data include any identifying characteristics such as names, photograph or video images, or information relating to someone's occupation or location from which their identity could be inferred. Sensitive personal data (gender, ethnicity, medical information etc) is subject to particular legal safeguards. The key principle you should apply is that you will only collect the minimum of personal or sensitive data absolutely necessary to your research (if age is not relevant to your study do not ask participants to say how old they are).

You should include details of if and how participants' identities will be protected and how the security of the data will be guaranteed, including where and how it will be stored, and how long it will be held for. You must include this on the information sheet.

Extensive information about data management including UoE policies can be found at http://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/toolkit/managing/data/storage/ For further information please also visit the Information Governance pages at http://www.exeter.ac.uk/ig/

Students need to choose a suitable level of storage security for the level of risk involved; the following lists storage methods in order of declining security:

- *encrypted data (highest security)*
- *password protected files stored on University U- Drive*
- *University U drive: this should be regarded as the default option*
- *Where it is necessary to store data on EG a password protected PC or laptop this should be for the shortest possible length of time with an explanation included here as to why it is necessary.*

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text

A conflict of interests does not only arise if you have a commercial motive for research, it can also arise if your job title, position in life or source of funding might affect your impartiality in relation to participants (e.g. if you are a Christian minister researching non-Christian faiths, you are funded by a charity with a particular aid agenda). The solution is to inform participants if this is the case, let them know who your funders are, how and what the research will be used for, and how and where the results may be published.

You should include:

i) an indication of how the participants are informed of any commercial or other interests involved in the project;

ii) who funds the research (please ensure to specify the organisation);

iii) how and for what purposes the results will be used;

iv) how and where the results will be published.

USER ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own text

It is becoming more usual to include participants in the design, executing and reporting of their own study. Some researchers engage in highly reflective processes with participants reviewing their own transcripts and feeding back their thoughts on published work. However, be realistic: it can be time-consuming to go back to every participant and let them review their work and not all projects require this. Also, if you have used oral consent, consider how your participants can find out about the outcomes of the study.

INFORMATION SHEET

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own 'information sheet' text.

Your information sheet(s) must be written in a way to be accessible to a wide audience. Ensure that your information sheet contains the same research project title as used in this application form. Find template information and consent forms here: http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/templates/

The Committee will wish to review your information sheet alongside your application so please include all documentation within this application form.

CONSENT FORM

Click on this guidance information to replace it with your own 'consent form' text.

If written consent is not obtained (e.g. it is deemed to be very culturally insensitive), this should be justified here. Your consent form should cover: a) confidentiality; b) anonymity; c) information about the project and d) the right to withdraw at any time without disadvantage to the participant.

Your consent form(s) must be written in a way to be accessible to a wide audience.

Ensure that your consent form contains the same research project title as used in this application form. Find template information and consent forms here: http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/templates/ The SSIS Ethics Committee will wish to review your consent form alongside your application so please include all documentation within this application form.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Staff and students should follow the procedure below.

Post Graduate Taught Students (Graduate School of Education): Please submit your completed application to your first supervisor.

All other students should discuss their application with their supervisor(s) / dissertation tutor / tutor and gain their approval prior to submission. Students should submit evidence of approval with their application, e.g. a copy of the supervisors email approval.

All staff should submit their application to the appropriate email address below.

This application form and examples of your consent form, information sheet and translations of any documents which are not written in English should be submitted by email to the SSIS Ethics Secretary via one of the following email addresses:

ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk This email should be used by staff and students in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology.

ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk This email should be used by staff and students in the Graduate School of Education.

Please note that applicants will be required to submit a new application if ethics approval has not been granted within 1 year of first submission.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus Heavitree Road Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: The Teaching of pupils who experience difficulties in learning in two secondary mainstream Spanish classrooms in Trinidad, West Indies.

Researcher(s) name: Danielle McDougall

Supervisor(s): Hazel Lawson Alison Black

This project has been approved for the period

From: 14/06/2017 To: 01/09/2019

Ethics Committee approval reference:

D/16/17/49

Signature: Date: 14/06/2017

(Dr Christopher Boyle, Graduate School of Education Ethics

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus Heavitree Road Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: The Teaching of pupils who experience difficulties in learning in two secondary mainstream Spanish classrooms in Trinidad, West Indies.

Researcher(s) name: Danielle McDougall

Supervisor(s): Dr. Hazel Lawson Dr. Alison Black

This project has been approved for the period

From: 12/11/2017 To: 01/09/2019

Ethics Committee approval reference:

D/17/18/15

Signature: Date: 12/11/2017

(Professor Dongbo Zhang, Graduate School of Education

Information Leaflet for Principal at [Name of School]

Project Title: The Teaching of Pupils who Experience Difficulties in Learning in Two Secondary Mainstream Spanish Classrooms in Trinidad, West Indies.

Dear Principal,

I request consent to conduct research for my doctoral thesis at your school. I am a Trinidad and Tobago national currently studying at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom. I am interested in investigating the teaching that occurs in a Form two Spanish class at your school. My research focuses on what Spanish teachers do in classes where some children may experience difficulties in learning.

Permission has been granted by the Ministry of Education to have this study conducted at your school.

This research seeks to answer the following questions

4. What teaching approaches are used for pupils who experience difficulties in learning are used by two Spanish teachers in two schools?
5. What are the perspectives of the teachers and pupils regarding those teaching approaches?
6. How does wider education policy and practice influence the teachers' approaches for these pupils who experience difficulties in learning?

Who do I wish to involve in this research?

This research involves the students of the Form two class and their Spanish teacher. All participants will have an opportunity to refuse to participate in the study. Permission will be sought from the participants before commencement of research. I will hold a face to face meeting with the Spanish teacher to inform of the study and address any questions and/or concerns about the study. The teacher will also be presented with an information leaflet concerning the study.

For the students, I will hold a meeting with the entire class. At this meeting, I will address any questions and/or concerns that the pupils may have. They too will be presented with an information leaflet concerning the study.

What will they have to do?

The data will be collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and interactive group interviews.

For the classroom observations, I would like the opportunity to sit in the class and observe the teaching that goes on in the class (approximately 3 classes per week). Neither the teacher nor the students would be required to do anything different from what they normally do. My presence is not likely to cause any disruption to the class.

I would like the opportunity to interview the teacher to hear his/her views concerning their teaching. During this interview, I will ask them about their pedagogical decisions and strategies particularly for pupils who experience difficulties in learning. I will allow the teacher to choose the best time and place to have this interview.

It is important for me to hear from the students as well. I would like the opportunity to interview them. These interviews will be interactive. The students will have opportunities to draw, act, tell stories and engage in other creative activities. I will interview them as a group and in a location that has been chosen by the Spanish teacher. The interviews with the pupils will take place during one of the Spanish periods. It is expected that the Spanish teacher will continue the lesson with the remaining pupils in the regular Spanish classroom.

What will I do with the information I collect?

It is very important to me that I safeguard the information given to me. The names of all participants will be changed as well as the name of your school. All other identifying markers to you, your school, the teachers or students will be removed. The information they provide will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Other than myself, the information provided will be reviewed by the examiners for this thesis. A summary of the main findings can be presented to you, the participating teacher and the students. I will not report on the school performance to the Ministry of Education and only will collect information relevant to the purposes of the study.

It is possible that elements of this thesis will go for publication. If so, you will be notified before. All identifying elements to you, your school, the teacher and the students will not be included in the publication.

How long will data collection last?

This research takes place from September 2017- December, 2017. During this time, I will collect data from your school as well as another secondary school. During this period, therefore, my presence will be split between the two schools. The exact

timetabling of my research days at your school will be negotiated with you prior to commencement of data collection.

What happens now?

If you are happy with the information I have provided and you are happy for the research to go forward in your school, I invite you to sign the consent form attached to this information leaflet and return to me as soon as possible. If you wish to contact me concerning this research project, I can be contacted at

Danielle McDougall

(email address)

(telephone number)

My doctoral supervisors can be contacted at

Professor Hazel Lawson

H.A.Lawson@exeter.ac.uk

Dr. Alison Black

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information I give will be treated as confidential

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....…….. .....

(Signature of participant) (Date)

……

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s):……..

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Ms. Danielle McDougall

Dhm201@exeter.ac.uk

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Appendix IX Teacher Information Sheet and Consent Form

Information Leaflet for Teacher at [Name of School]

Project Title: The Teaching of Pupils who Experience Difficulties in Learning in Two Secondary Mainstream Spanish Classrooms in Trinidad, West Indies.

Dear Teacher

I would be delighted if you agree to take part in my research for my doctoral thesis at the University of Exeter. This research explores the work that you do with your Form two pupils. The aim of my research is to investigate the teaching that takes place in a Spanish classroom for pupils who may experience difficulties in learning.

The questions I intend to answer for this research is as follows

1. What teaching approaches are used for pupils who experience difficulties in learning are used by two Spanish teachers in two schools?
2. What are the perspectives of the teachers and students regarding those teaching approaches?
3. How does wider education policy and practice influence the teachers' approaches for these pupils who experience difficulties in learning?

What does your involvement in this research project entail?

As I am interested in teaching and learning, I request permission to observe a series of lessons in your Form two Spanish class. I will be observe your teaching approaches as well as the interactions within the classroom. Neither you nor your students are required to do anything different from what you would normally do.

I would like the opportunity to find out more about your teaching strategies and possible influences on your teaching and propose to do this in an interview. This interview will take place at your convenience and at a time during the school day. The interview is expected to last 30-40 minutes.

For the interactive group interview session, I will host a group chat with 10-15 pupils at a time. They will be taken to a separate room from the classroom for this purpose. This chat session will take place during one of your Spanish classes. The remainder of pupils will therefore remain in the classroom for your teaching as usual.

How will I use the information you provide?

The information you provide will be anonymised and confidential. Your name and the name of the school and students will be changed and any identifying markers will be removed from the final thesis. All identifying elements will also be removed.

The interview will be audio recorded. The audio recording will not be heard by anyone other than myself. The interview will be transcribed and kept on a password protected laptop.

I will ask you to read over the transcripts and provide any corrections, adjustments and comments. You do not have to do so if you do not wish to

The information you provide will be used for my doctoral thesis. The final thesis will be reviewed by myself and the supervisors and examiners for this course. A summary of the main findings can be provided to you if you wish. Your principal and the Ministry of Education may also request a summary of the main findings.

It is possible that elements of this thesis will go for publication. If so, you will be notified before. All identifying elements to you, your school, and the students will not be included in the publication.

I am grateful for your participation in this research project. If however, you feel like it is not something you want to be a part of, you are not obliged to, and if you do consent to take part you have the right to withdraw at any point for any and no reason.

What happens now?

If you are happy with the information I have provided and you are happy for the research to go forward in your Form two Spanish class, I invite you to sign the consent form attached to this information leaflet and return to me as soon as possible. If you wish to contact me concerning this research project, I can be contacted at

Danielle McDougall

(email address)

(telephone number)

My doctoral supervisors can be contacted at

Professor Hazel Lawson

H.A. Lawson@exeter.ac.uk

Dr. Alison Black

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

Consent Form for Teachers

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation.

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

any information I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between the markers of this research project in an anonymised form.

all information I give will be treated as confidential.

the researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....……. .....

(Signature of teacher) (Date)

……..

(Printed name of teacher)

One copy of this form will be kept by the teacher; a second copy will be kept by the researcher

Contact phone number of researcher: _____

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Dr. Hazel Lawson

H.A.Lawson@exeter.ac.uk

Dr. Alison Black

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Information Leaflet for Parents

<u>Project Title:</u> The Teaching of Pupils who Experience Difficulties in Learning in Two Secondary Mainstream Spanish Classrooms in Trinidad, West Indies.

Dear Parent,

I am a doctoral researcher at the University of Exeter exploring teaching and learning in your child's Spanish class. The participation in learning of your child is very important to me and I wish to find out more about the teaching that takes place in his/her Spanish class.

How will I collect information?

I will sit in your child's Spanish class and observe the way the class is being taught. My presence is not likely to cause any disruption to the lessons and the teacher and students will not be required to do anything different to normal classroom practices.

I would also like the opportunity to hear from the children about their views. I think it is better to hold a pupil group session where the students can talk and share their views towards the teaching in their Spanish class. This pupil group interview will involve creative activities such as drama, art and storytelling. With your permission, your child will be a part of this session along with 10-15 more of his classmates. This pupil group interview will take place during a Spanish period and is expected to last between 30-40 minutes.

How will the information be used?

The information your child provides will not be traceable to him/her. I will change all names including that of your child, his/her teacher, and the school. Any identifying information will be removed. The group session will be audio recorded but this recording will be heard only by me. It is possible that this thesis will go for publication. In this instance, the Principal will be notified of such. The school, the teacher and students will not be identified.

This research project is for the thesis of a doctorate programme. The thesis therefore will be reviewed by the supervisors and examiners of the thesis. A summary of the main findings will be presented to the Principal, the Spanish teacher and the members

of the class if they wish. Upon request, a summary of the main findings may also be provided to the Ministry of Education.

Does he/she have to take part?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary for your child. If you decide that he/she should not participate in this research project, no observation information will be collected about him/her and he/she will not be asked to take part in the pupil group interview.

What happens now?

If you are happy with the information I have provided and you are happy for the research to go forward in your child's Spanish class, I invite you to sign the consent form attached to this information leaflet and return to me as soon as possible. If you wish to contact me concerning this research project, I can be contacted at

(email address)

(telephone number)

My thesis supervisors can be contacted at

Dr. Hazel Lawson

H.A. Lawson@exeter.ac.uk

Dr. Alison Black

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM (for parents)

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for my child to participate in this research project and, if I do choose for him/her to participate, I may at any stage withdraw his/her participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about my child

any information which my child gives will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information, which my child gives, may be shared between the markers of this research project in an anonymised form

all information my child gives will be treated as confidential

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve his/her anonymity

.....…….
.....

(Signature of parent) (Date)

……

(Printed name of parent)

One copy of this form will be kept by the parent; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s): 011447525401100

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Dr. Hazel Lawson

H.A.Lawson@exeter.ac.uk

Dr. Alison Black

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Information Leaflet for Form two Pupils at [name of school]

<u>Project Title:</u> The Teaching of Pupils who Experience Difficulties in Learning in Two Secondary Mainstream Spanish Classrooms in Trinidad, West Indies.

Hello (Name of Pupil)

I am delighted that you are taking the time to find out about my research. Your learning is important to me so I will like to find out a bit more about your experiences in your Spanish class. I am particularly interested in the teaching that takes in this class.

What is expected of you?

I will collect information in two ways. In one instance, you may notice me sitting at the back of your Spanish class taking notes. I am observing the way your teacher teaches you. Everything within the class will be observed but in particular, I will pay attention to the strategies your teacher uses, the conversations he/she has with you and your classmates and the activities you are asked to do. For these observations, you are not be required to do anything different from what you would normally do.

I will also ask you to be part of a group talk that involves creative activities such as drama, drawing, storytelling. If you decide to take part, you will be placed in a group with about ten of your other classmates. As a group, I will ask you to creatively express your feelings towards the teaching that takes place in your Spanish class. I hope you will feel comfortable to share your views. This session will be audio-recorded.

How long will it take?

The observations will take place during your normal classes.

The interactive group interviews will take place during one of your Spanish periods and in a location that is quiet and private. The interviews will last between 30-45 minutes. You will be informed well in advance of where and when this interview will take place.

What will I do with the information you provide?

The information I collect during observations and that which you provide during the interviews will be used for my final doctoral thesis. I will change your names so that no one will be able to trace the information back to you. The information will be kept for a few years until I receive my doctorate award.

Do I have to take part?

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to. I have asked permission from your parents but it is ultimately up to you whether you want to take part in this research or not. If you decide not to, no information will be written about you during the classroom observations and you will not be asked to take part in the interactive group interviews. You will also not be included in the final write up of the thesis.

What happens now?

If you are happy to take part in the research, please sign the consent form attached to this information leaflet and return to your Spanish teacher as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact me using the details below.

Danielle McDougall

(email address)

(telephone number)

My doctoral supervisors can be contacted at

Professor Hazel Lawson

H.A. Lawson@exeter.ac.uk

Dr. Alison Black

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM (Pupil)

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation.

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

There is no compulsion for me to participate in the individual interview and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw the information I provide at any time.

any information I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between the markers of this research project in an anonymised form.

all information I give will be treated as confidential.

the researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....…….. .....

(Signature of pupil) (Date)

…….

(Printed name of pupil)

One copy of this form will be kept by the teacher; a second copy will be kept by the researcher

Contact phone number of researcher: _____

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Dr. Hazel Lawson

H.A.Lawson@exeter.ac.uk

Dr. Alison Black

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Eagle School

Teacher Interview two

Dan: I notice that in some of the classes you use English but you have the Spanish vocabulary and then you would ask them uhm how do you, what is it in Spanish or how do you say this in English.

Ingrid: Right

Dan: Why have you decided to

Ingrid: to make sure that they are understanding they uhm what I am trying to teach them because I have found even though in Diped we were told to teach them in Spanish, teach them in the target language and to use as little English as possible. The children did not react very well to that. They found it very , they resisted that a whole lot and many of them told me that they didn't understand what I was trying to teach. No matter how obvious I tried to make it so that they would grasp it so that in my mind, it's obvious what you're supposed to be. Don't you see what is happening here. To them, it wasn't obvious. It really wasn't obvious.

Dan: why do you think that is?

Ingrid: I think that like what it is I was telling you just now there, many of them don't know how to use question marks. In the so, that is uh that is an illustration of you make the presentation with the idea that there are certain things that they know and if they know this, then they will be able to pick up on certain things. But if they don't know some of the basic things that you think they should know then they really wont catch it. They wont catch it. If they cannot tell the difference between a word that is functioning as a noun. I'm not telling you that they supposed to know what a noun is and what a verb is in the way that we want them to know it in grammar. But I mean I mean you're supposed to have a sense after a while, after speaking a language for a while I think you are supposed to develop a sense when you hear a sentence and you see that even though you don't know the word is noun that this word is behaving differently from this other word. But my children don't know that. They would hear the word. The simplest things uhm. And they confuse nouns, for example, even my Form fours when I am trying to teach them that adjectives in Spanish have to agree with the nouns so therefore uhm la chica es bonita right alright eventually when they finally get that and then I am trying to teach them verbs and they say la chica regresa and then I am teaching them el chico

regresa and they say ‘miss why regresa, if it is chico’ and I am telling you but regresa is a verb. It is a totally different thing we are talking about. This is not an adjective and they are not getting it because they are not seeing that those two words are operating differently. Even if they don’t know what an adjective is, they must have a sense that this word is operating differently in the sentence from the other word and they don’t get that. Our children don’t have that.

Dan: you think that the foundation in English is important to building a foundation in Spanish.

Ingrid: Yeah Yeah, I think that if they had a better foundation in English they would do the Spanish better and they really don’t have the foundation that they should. They don’t have the kind of language foundation. Let’s say not even talk about English because I mean honestly, even if you say that our native language in Trinidad is Trinidadian Creole. I don’t know I don’t know if I try to explain in if I try to explain the grammar to them in terms of difference with our Creole and Spanish I wonder if it would make a difference. I don’t know I tend to say that their language awareness is not there. One of these days I would try to make reference to the Creole and see if that works. But yeah definitely. Their English is not there. They don’t have sufficient English.

Dan: can you tell me about some other approaches you use in class? You mentioned PowerPoints and visuals to teach the grammar? Are there any other strategies you would use?

Eagle School

Individual Pupil Interview (Samantha)

Dan: Or ok, and how would you describe your own ability to learn Spanish?

Samantha: I …will… describe it as a little challenging. A lil challenging.

Dan: What about it is challenging? Why do you say it is challenging.

Samantha: Because you see whenever Miss say the word and when I want to say it again just to make sure I does mix up the words.

Dan: Or ok, so that is about the pronunciation. Anything else you know would say about your ability to learn Spanish?

Samantha: No.

Dan: Or Ok. And what do you think Miss Clifton thinks about your ability to learn Spanish?

Samantha: I would say good because I am an extremely miserable child.

Dan: (laughs) you are good but you re miserable.

Samantha: Yes

Dan: Explain that one for me.

Samantha: you see whenever Miss writing down something on the board..Somehow I would just look for some kind of distraction so I wouldn't have to write it but otherwise I does do my work because I want to become a flight attendant so…

Dan: Or yeah

Samantha: Spanish has to be one of them and I don't only learn Spanish from Miss Clifton. I have this app on my tab (let) where I could learn all the

Dan: or ok, what is the name of the app?

Samantha: I think it is google translation

Dan: ok

Samantha: I don't know exactly.

Dan: And how do you use the app? What do you use the app for?

Samantha: Like in you have to download certain language right but I only have two which is Spanish and French. So on the app you have the press the..this…something like this and whenever you press it, you seeing English on one side and Spanish on the other side. So if is the English you say whatever it have to say and it will translate it in Spanish and when you press the both, just press the

middle, you say whatever you have to say in English or Spanish and it will come back in English or Spanish.

Dan: And how does that help you?

Samantha: Like it have somebody whenever I say how old am I it will come back and say in Spanish and then whenever I say it again I will say it over and over just so I could…

Dan: And can you describe some of the difficulties or problems you meet in learning Spanish?

Samantha: Writing down the stuff. Writing down certain words in Spanish. That's one. Pronunciation and…that's all.

Fairview School

Teacher Interview one

Lorena: Uhm, no so I have 2 Form ones, a Form two and a Form four.

Dan: And you will go up with the current Form ones into Form two and

Lorena: Correct, well I asked for the Form ones this year. Usually I would teach the upper forms but I figured that… well the H.O.D. and I had and he. I just tried to give the eldest teacher a break, Ms … so I asked for. They would have given her the Form ones because she is accustomed teaching the Form ones

Dan: Lower form

Lorena: Yes

Dan: Or ok. Can you tell me about the ways you teach your , this class, the Form two class you just had.

Lorena: Well I notice that they, in the beginning. First of all it is a large class. So if you notice, there was the students on this side, Moesha, extremely bright. She is extremely alert.

Dan: This one (points to the chair where the student would have been sitting)

Lorena: and she gets extremely bored. But at the same time, you have the others so you trying to kind of make. I have this thing where the herd can only go as fast as the slowest buffalo so cause you can't but at the same time she gets bored so it is kind of a struggle to me to try to finish the lesson, make sure the syllabus is delivered. At the same time, everybody has to understand and learn and you want to, you don't want to have the brightest, the students who are more capable bored and they kept back. So right now that is a struggle. In general. Now I have an issue with…I thought originally having the girl who is from Puerto Rico would have been an asset because she is really not supposed to be in this class. She is supposed to be in the Form four class because the thing is she gets bored very fast in the class. If she talks to a couple students in the class, it is not her fault she will talk because she knows everything pretty much and then they wouldn't really learn if she keeps giving them the information and they talk. They, you know, she is a teenager. I thought if I had her. Originally, they put her in the Form four class because she can do the Spanish at Form four level then she can write her Spanish exam in Form five but for some reason, the teachers and her didn't work out. She kept breaking a lot of the classes so she got put out and she came back here so I said ok fine no problem. She will help me with the weaker ones but she has a problem with that.

Dan: What is her problem?

Lorena: She doesn't like the fact that she has to. She thinks that it shouldn't be her responsibility to help but at the same time if you're not doing, if you're distracting the students by talking to them cause you know everything already I might as well give you something to do so that everybody can learn.

(talks to pupils who have walked in)

Right so that's not working out so I just said if you distract the class, if you pull out a hair brush and comb your hair, if you do things like that. I separate the other girl next to her because the other girl if I ask for something she wouldn't know but if I look away and ask another student and I ask her again she knows the word. Jennifer tells her. She doesn't learn in that way of she just says whatever Jennifer tells her to say. That's not understanding or learning so I separated them and I have this girl Jennifer by herself so I don't know what else to do in that situation because youre not willing to work. You could speak the ~Spanish. Her grammar is a lil off because she hasn't spoken the Spanish in a while

As she in Trinidad and if you don't use it, you lose it but there's nothing else I could do. I thought that would help the class try to come together and say we would have learn because there's a couple students who really really are bright and they they like sponges. Then there are the other students who they opposite side of that spectrum. They in the same class. So they (brighter students) end up complaining that I moving too slow or if it is you go and you talking and trying to figure how to get the others to learn, then you're talking then you gonna distract. I am not going to hear. I am not going to be able to focus. So I say ok, help the other one in the meanwhile to like finish this. And it doesn't work out like so now I just try to warn them 'listen you need to try, I will do my part and ask you questions' with the weaker ones but I need to move on. Because if you are not willing and you are not paying attention, you're not doing at least your part then I am going to move on. I will try. The best I can do is ask but given the large size of the class. I can't. if I had 20 students maybe. But it is almost a class of 37 or 40 close to 40. It is impossible to have everyone move at the same pace because I could do that but then she would suffer (points to char where brighter student was sitting), the brighter ones. So I just have to day by day if it depending on they in the back if they genuinely want to know and they genuinely don't understand. I would stick with them and like no you need to figure this out but if you lying down, sleeping, I will just move on. So uhm that's the predicament right now. The classes are really kinda large so that's the only problem. But in general teaching approaches are vocabulary because H.O.D. insisted on the vocabulary, you know, you introduce the vocabulary. So he wanted us to introduce the class to common objects in the house but we were trying to explain to him that we need to teach them teach the class at least the alphabet first cause that is what we usually do but he insisted on teaching them objects first so that they will relate to the language so that's what I try to do. So I will put the vocabulary in a test (…) anyway. Uhm and also the vocabulary helps them with just the if they want to express themselves or write a sentence they have the vocabulary so uhm I try to introduce vocabulary. As soon as I teach vocabulary, I tell them close your eyes. Let's test your memory and I will if we have minutes extra or depending on the behaviour of the class. If it is a hot day and they are really not…they don't want to write…I would sense it. If I talking and everybody talking at the same time, I would just stop and we will turn it into an oral conversation class. I would prompt them to

answer questions. So it depends. I would follow the syllabus but I will have a lil contingency plan. If I know it's too hot I will you know what I can't let them write this today. I would do orals and I would prep them to talk to me so that they would pay attention. Uhm but other than that we have the NCSE syllabus that we try to prep them for then we have the textbooks and our scheme of work so we try to be on the same page but if my class moves faster because they are more capable and if we have a remedial class, I will be different, my strategies will be different than the other teachers. So uhm I make them write the date everytime we have Spanish so in Form one, I introduced them to numbers. I have uhm a vocabulary list. I don't think I showed it to you. From SIS, from the implementation of Spanish Secretariat. Somewhere here. It has basic vocabulary , numbers, days, week, months for the year. Uhm likes, dislikes. I gove everybody the handout or I at least make them write it out so that they have a strong vocabulary and they at least so I use them inForm one. They get that as punishment as well, 16 pages so if they break my class, the payment to come back into my class, I need 16 pages of that vocabulary written in (your notebook). Don't break my class.

Dan: How often do they break class?

Lorena: Not often because they don't like that handout.

Fairview school

Individual Pupil Interview (Jerry)

Dan: You have been learning about weather and before physical descriptions. Was there any topic you have done in Spanish that was not easy to follow?

Jerry: Well, one was hard to follow was the descriptions.

Dan: Right

Jerry: Because the words like they long and hard to spell and stuff and it have family too. Family as well, some things is like *stepmother, stepfather* I does can't remember it because it real long. And numbers on and off. What else boy?

Dan: Numbers

Jerry: Yeah, on and off.

Dan: Ok

Jerry: Other than that I good.

Dan: Ok, but what strategies have you like Miss have done or you have put in place to help you.

Jerry: Miss, is like Miss would like call me and stand up and watch the watch the word and don't take your eye off the word. And she say by doing that you would understand the word better. You could see the word better. Cause like if you look away you would be distracted and you would like miss a word, I mean a letter. You could miss a letter and then mess up the word. That's the strategy what Miss does use.

Dan: Ok, is it helpful to you?

Jerry: Yes, it is helpful to me.

Dan: Why do you say that?

Jerry: Well I realised that certain words I couldn't say before, I can say now

Dan: Ok

Jerry: I am a little slow in Spanish.

Dan: Eh?

Jerry: I'm a little slow in Spanish

Dan: Why do you say that?

Jerry: Cause like when Miss just teach something, I would be real paying attention like ok, don't understand. When Miss teach it again, ok a little bit and like the third or fourth time she teach it then I would understand it.

Dan: But do you think you get, what do you think about the time frame that you get to understand in class? Or to grasp the work in class, is it enough for you or?

Jerry: It is enough because every day we have Spanish, yeah everyday we got Spanish. So that's good.

Dan: So that helps you

Jerry: To understand

Dan: That's enough time everyday to pick up the work?

Jerry: Yeah

Eagle School

Dan: ok, so write that down. What are some of the other ways

She writes on the board, she uses the laptop. Right? What else?

Leila: She sings

Kimono: Give us work

Dan: She sings, ok maybe you can write that.

Kimono: Miss does sing?

Leila: Yes, remember the time when we was singing

Brittany: Miss never sing to we, miss never sing

Dan: You remember when she sang? (to group)

Group: NO!!!

Leila: well she was singing and she was like something something like lalalala

And she start to sing.

Brittany: Miss she make sure we understand the work before she move on

Dan: that's, hold on. She sings. She makes sure that you understand the work. So what does she do to make sure you understand. What does she do? I don't want you to tell me she helps, how does she help. What does she specifically do.

Group chatter : she does (unintelligible) and then she does give examples.

Dan: Give examples

Leila: Say the pronunciations

Dan: Pronunciation of words

What does she do to make sure you understand?

Brittany: Take she time?

Dan: Ok, write takes her time.

Kimono: she explains

Dan: Right good good explanations

What else, pronunciation, good

Examples, good

Brittany: Check over we work?

Dan: check over work, good.

Samantha: shows us what to do

Dan: she shows you what to do, good. Excellent

Kimono: Miss, she helps us pronounce the words.

Fairview School

Dan: Right, I want you to think of the ways on this paper that Ms. (teachers's name) teaches you and write down as many that you can think about. Anything that she does in the class, that she does to teach you write it down.

Nathan: Spanish.

Dan: so what can you think about?

Tara: Raise our hands to be quiet.

Dan: Ok, that's one. You don't have to write all. So she is writing that.

And use the space, make it big, use the space.

What else does she do to teach you? What other ways does she teaches you?

Jacob: Like picking on person who not focusing.

Dan: So what you said

Jacob: Picks on the person who not focusing so like everybody answering and you there sitting down.

Dan: so she calls, picks on people who are not focusing so that's a way.
Go ahead.

Bale: Like writing a paragraph of me.

Dan: just write it.

Kirsten: she gives us vocabulary and spelling when we're not…

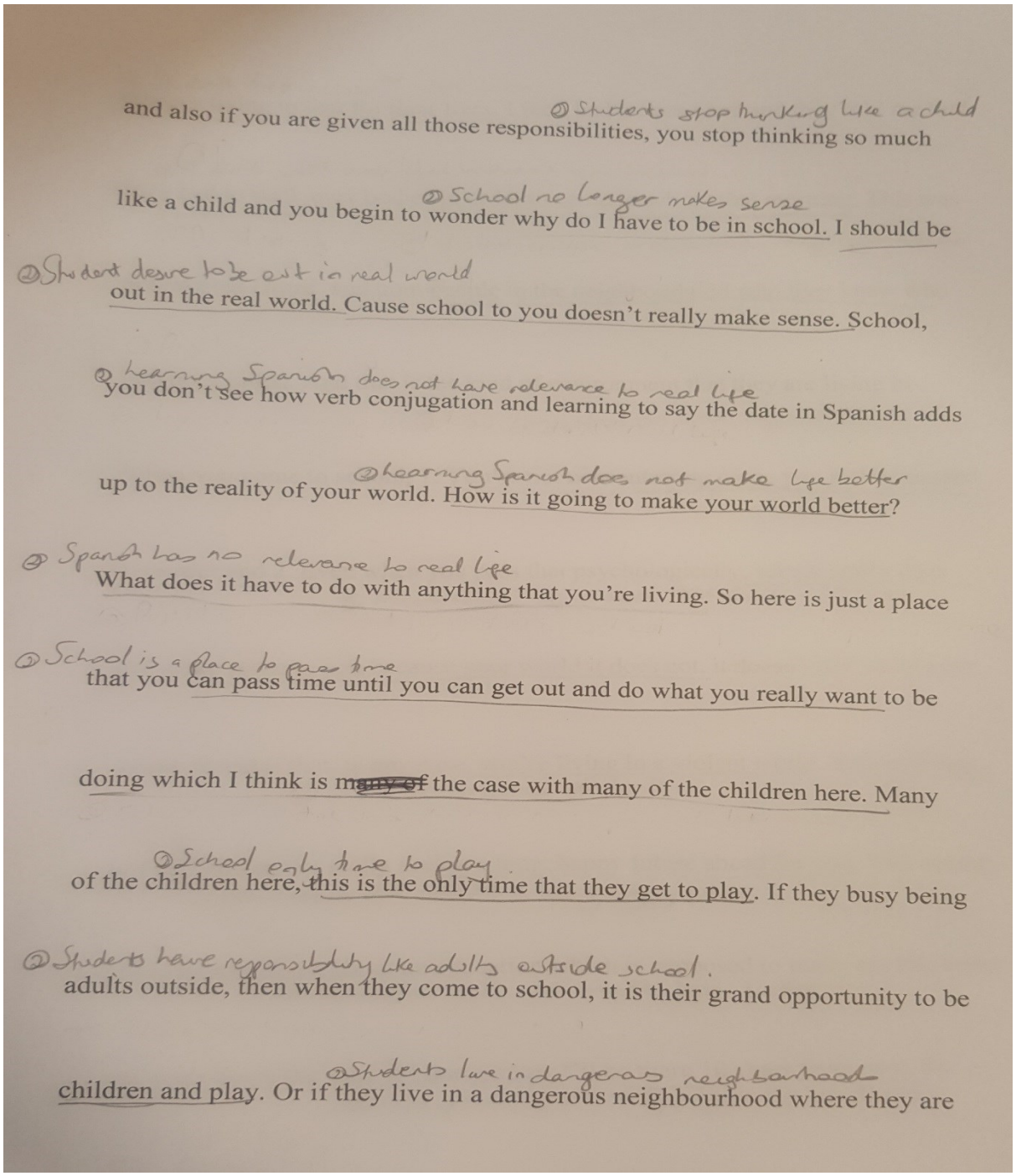
Dan: Right, so use another one. This is why I want you to use the space so that have only one on each one. Right so write it big.

Chef: write it so or so.

Dan: Write it anyhow but I just want it big.

Nathan: Only one thing ent

Appendix XIV Example of In vivo Coding



and also if you are given all those responsibilities, you stop thinking so much ② Students stop thinking like a child

like a child and you begin to wonder why do I have to be in school. I should be ② School no longer makes sense

out in the real world. Cause school to you doesn't really make sense. School, ② Student desire to be out in real world

you don't see how verb conjugation and learning to say the date in Spanish adds ② learning Spanish does not have relevance to real life

up to the reality of your world. How is it going to make your world better? ② learning Spanish does not make life better

What does it have to do with anything that you're living. So here is just a place ② Spanish has no relevance to real life

that you can pass time until you can get out and do what you really want to be ② School is a place to pass time

doing which I think is ~~many of~~ the case with many of the children here. Many

of the children here, this is the only time that they get to play. If they busy being ② School only time to play

adults outside, then when they come to school, it is their grand opportunity to be ② Students have responsibility like adults outside school.

children and play. Or if they live in a dangerous neighbourhood where they are ② Students live in dangerous neighbourhood

Appendix XV Sample of Coding on Excel Spreadsheet (Secondary and Tertiary codes with Themes

40	attends class	2		1	Teacher attendance to class	A	Attendance
41	missed classes made following subject hard	1		2	Lack of attendance as area of difficulty	A	Attendance
42	stayed at home so couldn't figure out the Spamish words	1		2	Lack of attendance as area of difficulty	A	Attendance
43	I does miss class	3		2	Lack of attendance as area of difficulty	A	Attendance
44	sometimes I does not be feeling for class	3		2	Lack of attendance as area of difficulty	A	Attendance
45	Teacher always comes to class	4		2	teacher attendance at class	A	Attendance
46	teacher comes to class no matter what	5		2	teacher attendance at class	A	Attendance
47	T needs to focus more on children who are coming to class	14		2	student attendance	A	Attendance
48	students sneak out of class	6		2	student attendance	A	Attendance
49	there are some teachers who don't show up for class	20		2	teacher attendance to class	A	Attendance
50	she makes the effort to show up to learn Spanish more	20		2	teacher attendance to class	A	Attendance
51	she reaches class on time so we can finish our work faster	20		2	punctuality of teacher	A	Attendance
52	Come early, more time to help students understand the work	20		2	punctuality of teacher	A	Attendance
53	some students absent on day of marked activity for marks	22	nil		student lack of attendance	A	Attendance
54	students leave class	5		1	Student individual attendance	A	Attendance

Appendix XVI Tertiary Codes that Contributed to Each Theme

Research Question One

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Language Structure Approaches	Vocabulary Speaking Pronunciation Writing Spelling Reading Grammar Translation	Vocabulary Alphabet Speaking Pronunciation Writing Spelling Reading Grammar Translation

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Teaching Strategies	Multisensory Strategies Questioning Explanations Examples Targeted Approaches Corrections Repetitions Strategies to Support Memory Pace Whole Class Strategies Building a Comfortable Learning Environment	Multisensory Strategies Experiential Strategies Questioning Explanations Examples Targeted Approaches Corrections Repetitions Strategies to Support Memory Pace Peer Support Strategies Whole Class Strategies Building a Comfortable Learning Environment Physical Learning Environment

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Approaches to Discipline	Discipline Strategies Pupil Behaviour	Discipline Strategies Pupil Behaviour Noise Effects

Research Question two

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Beliefs about Pupils	Attendance Literacy gaps Numeracy gaps Pupil View of Relevance of Spanish Pupil View of Relevance of School/ Education Gender-based Differences Home factors Capacities of Pupils- Similarities among pupils	Pupil View of Relevance of Spanish Capacities of Pupils- Differences among pupils

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Beliefs about Approaches	Limitations to Approaches Teacher makes a Difference Subject makes a Difference Teacher meta-approach Teacher Pupil Relationship	Limitations to Approaches Teacher meta-approach Teacher Pupil Relationship

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Pupil Learning Factors	Pupil Engagement Pupil Disposition Pupil Learning Responsibility Individual Learning Strategies	Pupil Engagement Pupil Disposition Pupil Learning Responsibility Individual Learning Strategies

Research Question three

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Postgraduate Diploma in Education	Teaching Approaches from DipEd course	Uselessness of DipEd course

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
School Influences	Timetabling School Resources	School Resources Senior Management Relationship with Principal and Vice Principal Head of Department for Languages Influences

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Ministry of Education	School Funding NCSE Examination CSEC Examination	School Funding Class Sizes NCSE Examination CSEC Examination

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
NCSE examination **CSEC Examination**	Examination Focus Examination Strategies Examination Marking	Class Sizes Examination Focus Examination Strategies Examination Marking

Theme	Tertiary Codes- Eagle School	Tertiary Codes – Fair view School
Weather	Hot Classrooms Effect of Hot Weather on Pupil Learning	Hot Classrooms Effect of Hot Weather on Pupil Learning