IDENTITY, INDUSTRY AND CITIZENSHIP: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON BASIC EDUCATION REFORM IN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

ZAHRA L. HENRY
London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

ABSTRACT

The postcolonial states of the English-speaking Caribbean inherited unequal political, social, and economic institutions from British rule. Although the region's forefathers made decided strides towards rebuilding new nations, independence and equality still elude modern Caribbean societies. The systemic challenges that the region faces, situated within the threats and opportunities of globalization, have implications for education and other social services. This paper explores the challenge of education reform by asking the question: What do students' perspectives contribute to the agenda-setting of basic education in the Caribbean Community? Using a grounded theory lens to analyse the site of Kingston, Jamaica, through focus groups and thematic analysis, the paper investigates students' perspectives on basic education reform. The research finds that students view identity, industry, and citizenship as fundamental aims of Caribbean education, but consider standardized testing as an impediment to achieving these objectives. The study recommends the incorporation of identity, industry and citizenship through progressivist curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment into the reform of basic education in the region.

BACKGROUND

In 1973, newly independent Commonwealth Caribbean (CC) countries organized themselves into the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), an organisation which seeks to strengthen the socio-political and economic capacity for its member-states through functional cooperation and regional integration (Integrationist Caribbean, 2020, Economic Integration: An Introduction, para. 2). Despite these objectives, socioeconomic inequalities persist, evidenced by the region's high rates of youth crime, violence, and unemployment. The CARICOM Secretary-General reported that in 2017, 80% of the region's prosecuted crimes was committed by youth aged 19-29, attributed to the high youth unemployment rate of 25% (LaRocque, 2019). That CARICOM registered 63% of the region's population as under age 30 (CARICOM 2012, Draft CARICOM Youth Action Plan 2012-2017), underscores the stymied capacity of member-states to develop their social services, leading to a vicious cycle of underdeveloped human capital, reduced social cohesion and brain drain (Almendarez, 2013).

The region's colonial legacy of socioeconomic and political inequalities, which pose challenges to youth development, has direct implications for Caribbean education policy. CC countries inherited the British grammar school model, based heavily on examinations and cognitive pedagogy (Bacchus, 2005). Scholars have argued that socioeconomic inequalities, manifested noticeably through first language differences amongst students, have had disparate effects on their achievement in standardized tests (Smith et al., 2020), whilst emphasis on behaviourist pedagogy has stunted constructivist teaching and learning (Cummings & James, 2014). The CARICOM Human Resource Development (HRD) 2030 Strategy seeks to improve access, participation, and quality in education, promote personal development and foster Caribbean citizenship, whilst at the same time remain

sensitive to global market demands (CARICOM, 2017). However, the Strategy's emphasis on labor market preparedness (LMP) may conflict with its objectives for quality in Caribbean education and citizenship.

In this context, postcolonial Caribbean education scholars have recognized the importance of adopting a region-centric approach to education policy in an increasingly globalized environment by incorporating native curriculum, progressivist pedagogy and assessment into Caribbean education systems. Though students' perspectives have been sought to address specific elements of schooling, existing Caribbean education research and policy has not yet taken a comprehensive, participatory approach to including student voices in the agenda-setting of education reform.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This study problematizes Caribbean education within the Jamaican context and submits that students, as the primary beneficiaries of education services, should have a significant stake in the agenda-setting of education reform. It contends that the marginalization of Caribbean students' input into their curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is in part the cause of the crisis of youth identity, unemployment and socio-political disengagement faced by Caribbean education and social policymakers. The research seeks to i) broaden comparative education scholarship to the Caribbean context and ii) offer Caribbean policymakers a practical framework for the design of curricular reform. The study is therefore developed to explore the following question:

What do students' perspectives contribute to the agenda-setting of basic education in the CARICOM?

More specifically, the following sub-questions are developed:

a. What do Upper-Sixth Form students perceive as the major challenges with their schooling?
b. What are the recommendations of the Upper-Sixth Form students for education reform?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The title of Louisy's 2004 paper "Whose context for what quality? Informing education strategies for the Caribbean" aptly illustrates the quandary that Caribbean nation-states face in reforming their education systems that, whilst being sensitive to global economic trends, must remain relative to local circumstances. Trowler (2003) explains Britain's historical trajectory through four political and corresponding educational ideologies: neoconservative/traditionalist; neoliberal/enterprise; social democratic/progressivist and social reconstructionist, which are used as the theoretical framework for this research.

The neoconservative ideology places importance on maintenance of the socioeconomic status quo and views state control as essential to the socialisation of its subjects. It upholds this existing societal order through traditionalist schooling, where students are streamed according to academic ability, with priority given to conventional academic disciplines.

The neoliberal orientation looks pessimistically at centralised education planning, maintaining that state-administered education should be minimized to facilitate freedom of educational provision and choice. The enterprise facet contends that education should equip students with skill sets needed in an increasingly technology-oriented and global knowledge economy.

The social democratic approach views universal access to social services and state-administered education as essential to addressing socioeconomic inequalities and enhancing citizens' life chances. The progressivist adopts student-centred pedagogy, regarding learners alongside educators as co-creators of knowledge, integrating information across what would be viewed by the traditionalist as distinct subject areas.

The social reconstructionist perspective considers education as instrumental to positive societal change. It contends that dialogue and development of critical thinking faculties in the classroom are crucial for challenging traditionalist norms and for social transformation.

This typology is used to frame the literature on the course of education and social policy in the Caribbean, as well as to discuss the research findings, policy recommendations and conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education in British Caribbean Colonial and Postcolonial Society

Socioeconomic and political systems in British Caribbean colonial society were reminiscent of neoconservative, traditionalist and enterprise aims. Education was originally reserved for owners of sugar plantations (Turner, 1997), who reckoned that expanding this service would 'unfit [enslaved people] for that role in life that must necessarily be theirs' (Jules, 2008, p. 205). Though humanitarians successfully advocated for the abolition of slavery and expansion of basic education to enslaved people (Miller, 1988), education still served the planters' interests, providing peasants with the requisite skills to farm their estates for as much profit as could be derived (Oestreich, 2002).

The massification of education occurred with the attainment of universal adult suffrage (Buddan, 2004). Soon, the electorate started the engines that turned towards independent societies. Postcolonial Caribbean states adopted social democratic objectives. Through social services, they sought to equalise opportunities for investment in individual autonomy and Caribbean society (Miller, 2008). Though Caribbean policymakers sought to transmit nationhood and cultural heritage through schooling (Nettleford, 2007), education, like other domains of life within postcolonial Caribbean societies, remained anchored on the skeleton grafted from its colonizers, reinforcing systemic inequalities (Bacchus, 2005).

Postcolonial Caribbean States and Globalized Education

Towards the 21st century, national governance of education became increasingly challenged by transnational stakeholders, reflecting enterprise impetus to develop human resources for the labour market (Sen, 1999). Youth unemployment resulting from the 1970s oil crisis drew greater international policy focus to appraising how schooling equipped young people for the labour market, revealing that governments knew little about in-school processes (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, *A Nation at Risk*). Consequently, the market share of multilateral organizations in education financing increased, with growing focus on standardized testing and monitoring and evaluation of education programs (Lingard & Sellar, 2013). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development became an important player within this movement by administering the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which, in providing a transnational evidence-base of scholastic performance, held governments accountable to improving educational outcomes (Alasuutari et al, 2018). Though the region has established its own standardized assessments through the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), CARICOM and other developing states are

incentivised to participate in international tests like PISA to remain competitive in negotiations, project funding and qualifications at the international level (Miller, 1998).

Scholars refer to this policy shift as the 'global education reform movement', under which falls Education for All (EFA), an international initiative seeking to provide universal primary education through multilaterally financed development projects (Mundy et al., 2016). Though the EFA adopts social democratic principles in seeking to widen education access and devolve power to local authorities, in reality the ability of recipient small states to determine their educational priorities comes second to the economic conditionalities of project financing (George & Lewis, 2011). Many CC countries had exceeded the EFA goal of primary education through public provision of secondary education, which encroached on the region's ability to obtain international financing in support of its own education policy direction (Jules, 2008).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s *Education 2030 Framework for Action* establishes benchmarks for countries to devote 15-20% of public expenditure on education (UNESCO, 2015). However, this quantitative benchmark may not necessarily lead to improved educational quality. Though many multilaterally funded projects in the Caribbean have focused on developing tangible educational infrastructure such as classrooms, textbooks, and technology (World Bank, 2014), 13 Caribbean countries saw emigration of over 60% of their tertiary graduates in 2000 (ECLAC, 2014). It casts doubt on whether public investment in examination-centric, globally oriented schooling will foster the region-hood amongst youth necessary for the region's sustainability.

Caribbean Education Quality Research: Pointers for Reform

Education quality research suggests that decisionmakers engage more substantively with classroom processes and less with tangible elements of schooling for education policy and planning. Jacob (2002) contends that emphasis on high-stakes testing pressures educators to 'teach to the test' and confines students to narrow curriculum objectives, subject-disciplines, pedagogies, and assessment. Tyson (2003) underscores this view, positing that the replacement of the Cambridge Assessment International Education with the CXC in 1972 presented a dilemma to educators to reify Caribbean identity amongst students within the parameters of test-based learning objectives. Nevertheless, the traditionalist school system remains, where overtraining student-teachers leaves little space for honing innovative pedagogies. Faced with crammed CXC syllabi, teachers frequently resort to 'chalk and talk' instruction, marginalizing learning activities conducive to developing students' critical thinking faculties (Heap, 2011).

Some research has concluded that educators' training and beliefs affect their teaching methods and have implications for disparate learning outcomes amongst Caribbean students. J. Jules (2019) finds a correlation between lecturers' beliefs and values regarding English language and their pedagogical approaches to the subject. Given that most CC citizens speak a Caribbean Creole as their native language rather than the language of instruction, Standard Caribbean English (Roberts, 2007), the minority of native English-speaking students dominate teacher-student dialogue and perform better in formal tests than their Creole-speaking peers (Craig & Carter, 1976; Smith et al., 2020). These differences underscore the conflict between postcolonial inequalities amongst students and social democratic aims of equalizing opportunities. Further, the differential ability to finance private tuition and examination fees has implications for equity (Hickling-Hudson, 2004).

Given the multiplicity of interest groups in education policy, views about its goals are subjective and therefore require comprehensive stakeholder engagement. Although market research has engaged Caribbean students' views on various aspects of their education (Griffith & St. Hill, 2008; Davis-Morrison, 2018), existing studies have not engaged students holistically in both retrospective and prospective discussion on education reform. Although Trowler's 2003 typology explains conflicting political objectives faced by Caribbean decisionmakers, it offers little practical insight into how policymakers may conceptualize these challenges to design a strategy for education reform. 'Identity, industry, citizenship (IIC)', a conceptual framework synthesising key challenges and opportunities for reform, is articulated by Caribbean education scholars.

IIC: A Three-Pronged Conceptual Framework

Identity

Nettleford (2007) contends that civic empowerment through native culture is essential to nation-building in postcolonial CARICOM countries and to remedy crime, violence, and poor educational outcomes. George and Lewis (2011) support this argument, maintaining that the integration of popular language and performative methods, arising from students' real-life experiences, validates their contributions and enables them to engage confidently in learning. Action research incorporating Caribbean poetry (Conrad et al., 2013), indigenous music (Tucker & Osborne, 2007) and traditional ecological knowledge (Kalloo, 2014) has found to enhance joy and competence in teaching and learning, fostered sustainable engagement with the wider environment and renewed in students an authentic sense of identity.

Industry

The creative industries contribute significantly to the sustainability of Caribbean livelihoods and the CARICOM single market. This significance has been officially acknowledged by the UNESCO which designated Nassau, Bahamas as a Creative City of Craft in 2014, as well as Kingston, Jamaica and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, and Tobago as Creative Cities of Music in 2015 and 2019 respectively (UNESCO, n.d., *Creative Cities Network*). Situating the region in geopolitical proximity to major global actors in the cultural political economy, Louisy (2001) underscores Nettleford's 2007 imperative for identity-building in Caribbean education, positing that education should inculcate regionhood "…in a frontierless land of cultural globalization, a battle for the heart and soul of people" (P.A.B. Anthony, 2000 as cited in Louisy, 2001, p. 432). Through comparative education, Caribbean citizens may understand and exploit their cultural differences as competitive advantage in the global marketplace (Louisy, 2004). In light of the region's fiscal limitations, education policymakers may consider how to engender authentic national and regional consciousness in order to usher youth into creative entrepreneurial endeavor.

Citizenship

Hickling-Hudson (2004) contends that "[t]he 'Ideal' Caribbean person is not only highly educated but an ethicist; not just an entrepreneur but a civic activist; not just a citizen-worker with 'multiple literacies', but one with critical and highly-developed intellectual competencies" (p. 295). From the social reconstructionist standpoint, she argues that quality in Caribbean education implies equipping students with the skills necessary for active socio-political citizenship, understanding injustice and empowering them to tackle challenges on national and international levels. Caribbean education research has essayed innovative pedagogical methods to combat 'prescriptive teaching' by developing students' critical thinking skills, such as improved competence in and attitude towards

creative writing (Manning-Lewis, 2019). Nurture of these reflexive practices may cultivate citizens who can be critical of their postcolonial realities, engaging within social and political systems to contribute to Caribbean advancement (Davis-Morrison, 2018).

Neoconservative intent and traditionalist pedagogy in colonial education have endured in Caribbean nation-states, which rely on socioeconomically equitable decision-making for their sustainable development. This is increasingly imperative in the face of globalization, which requires Caribbean policymakers to strike a balance between local, regional aims and demands of the global economy. The challenge of curriculum reform to postcolonial Caribbean states is multi-fold and suggests inquiry using the IIC framework.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Choice of qualitative approach

This investigation is a grounded theory (GT) study, as it is designed using the essential GT elements, namely memoing, iterative coding, constant comparative analysis and theoretical sensitivity (Chun Tie et al, 2019).

Choice of Site

Kingston, Jamaica, is a representative location for problematising the local-global nexus in Caribbean education reform. Jamaica is the largest country in the CC, whilst its capital, Kingston, is host to the largest campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), making it an important locus of education dialogue and decision-making in the CARICOM (Drew, 2016).

Sample

Schools and students were sampled using convenience and snowball approaches respectively. I selected four public secondary schools in Kingston (which I could access through my social networks), three traditional and one non-traditional, engaging students I knew to enlist their peers as participants. This sampling method facilitated participant recruitment, whilst the selection of familiar peers enabled authentic interaction amongst students. However, this convenience sampling, a result of inaccessibility to rural and non-traditional urban schools stemming from Coronavirus travel restrictions, served to exclude these schools.

In this study, Upper-Sixth Form students are of particular interest for their retrospective insight, being in the last of the final two years of secondary education. Sampling of this single cohort facilitated consistency in data units across the focus groups but excluded the perspectives of other upper-secondary cohorts, thus reducing the population of students from which to sample. As the limited scope for discussion of findings does not allow for in-depth analysis of many focus groups, the representativeness of the sample of schools and of students is limited. I address this by maintaining a degree of symmetry within the sample, selecting two coeducational and two same-sex (one all-boys and one all-girls) secondary schools. Therefore, though the findings are not generalizable to the entire Upper-Sixth Form population of Jamaica, they respond to challenges and recommendations in existing Caribbean education scholarship, offering rich qualitative evidence which can inform education policy in Jamaica and the wider CARICOM.

Data Collection and Analysis Rationale

The focus group method was chosen for its amenability to engaging disenfranchised groups

and novel, complex topics (Liamputtong, 2011). Despite Caribbean students' stakes as primary beneficiaries of education reform, they are considered neither specialists in policy, nor in curricular reform and consequently, their perspectives on this topic have been marginalized in education policy and planning. Given the popularity of focus groups in market research for feedback from existing or potential clients on products and services (Magill, 1993), focus groups have been adapted to policy design and evaluation, including curricular reform. The focus groups in this research test Drew's 2016 recommendation of meta-pedagogical dialogue by engaging students on their views about their curriculum. The informal setting of the groups imitated students' natural interactions (Liamputtong, 2011), in which response convergence and divergence are insightful for analysis (Kitzinger 1994). However, though focus group discussion enabled students to develop ideas together, depth is sacrificed. While interviews would have allowed for more detailed responses from individual, possibly shyer students, focus groups had to be moderated to ensure that diverse perspectives were heard, which, given time constraints, came at the cost of limiting the extent of what students shared.

Thematic analysis offers a degree of theoretical independence in that a theoretical framework is not embedded in its method, as in other methods such as discourse analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This facilitated freedom to select Trowler's typology (2003) as the basis of the analytical framework. Moreover, the lack of necessity of a theoretical framework in thematic analysis allows for flexibility in coding, making the method amenable to open-ended conclusions and therefore to the exploratory research question. Though this allows for a broad range of possible interpretations from findings, it presents a challenge to determine which aspects and in which ways to present data for analysis. This is mitigated through the use of both theoretical and conceptual frameworks to discuss the research findings, as well as Attride-Stirling's 2001 methodological guidelines to ensure rigour in the analytic process. Finally, the presentation of prevalent themes is easily digestible for policymakers, who may not be familiar with text analytic methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data collection processes

Four semi-structured focus groups were conducted via Zoom with Upper-Sixth Form students, each group representing a different high school in Kingston, Jamaica. The focus group schedule comprised nine questions, corresponding to the IIC concepts by referencing a variety of local and regional debates, online articles, and videos as prompts to guide conversation (Figure 1). Students were placed in breakout rooms to discuss one of three questions per concept, and then returned to the plenary group for discussion, including recommendations for curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Participants' utterances in the plenary discussions were recorded via Zoom video and Zoom transcripts, which were re-played and memoed. These memos were interpreted by thematic analysis, using both theoretical and conceptual frameworks to discuss prevalent themes and to incorporate them into existing academic and policy discussion on Caribbean education reform.

Ethics

As with all data collection but particularly with that done online, specific ethical checks were necessary. All participants received an email to which they had to reply explicitly indicating consent, inviting them to participate in the research, and containing information about its objectives, recipients, data anonymization and confidentiality, recording and storage. At the beginning of each focus group, I reiterated this information and obtained consent once more (recorded on Zoom) from all participants. There is, however, a risk that individual participants may have broken this confidentiality, especially given familiarity within each group. Such risk is nevertheless minimized by the low level of sensitivity of the topic discussed. In order to maintain participants' anonymity

whilst differentiating between their responses in the findings, focus groups were coded by letter, while participants were coded by number.

Coronavirus adjustments

The shift from in-person to online data collection due to the Coronavirus outbreak induced various changes to the research. Online focus groups were convenient for following physical distancing protocol during the pandemic. The collection of data via the Internet, versus on school grounds, removed the need for school administrators to intercede with respect to students' participation in the research. Online discussion also eliminated transportation costs and facilitated flexible scheduling of focus groups, making the endeavour more feasible for both researcher and participants. However, the requirement for access to the internet and electronic devices meant that more economically disadvantaged participants were excluded from the sample.

FINDINGS

Student's Views on Education Reform: Challenges

Figure 2 encapsulates students' views on education reform by a thematic network comprising three Organizing Themes, each addressing one concept in the IIC framework and twelve Basic Themes which further analyse each IIC concept.

Identity. Identity cultivation was perceived as an essential curriculum objective with the Jamaican Creole (JC) language, indigenous knowledge, and Jamaican/Caribbean-ness considered as facets worth cultivating for identity-building.

Language legitimacy and standardization. Though students recognized JC as the native tongue of the majority and an essential part of Jamaican identity, they considered Jamaican Standard English (JSE) as the language of mainstream society. Despite mass enrolment in education, they perceived JSE fluency as lacking in most Jamaicans, and native JSE speakers as having a learning advantage in the classroom. Despite JC's cultural significance, they viewed JSE fluency as necessary for integration into society. "D1" posited that "[p]ersons who speak English at home have a learning advantage… they will learn more quickly at school, respond to questions more effectively."

In the context of the Communication Studies (COS) curriculum, which introduces Lower-Sixth form students to the linguistics of Caribbean creole languages, students discussed their views on the potential standardization of JC and its mainstreaming into education. On the one hand, students attributed their scepticism towards JC legitimacy to a crammed COS curriculum. On the other hand, students viewed COS as insightful to understanding the criteria of a language and to persuasively presenting JC as meeting these qualifiers. This empowered students to embrace JC as validating postcolonial identity in a global context. "C9" suggested that "[i]t represents embracing our culture, saying we don't have to adapt to colonial powers."

Indigenous knowledge (IK). Students discussed the uses of natural resources but were unable to provide examples of natural medicines. They attributed this indifference to broader Jamaican ignorance of indigenous identity: citizens aspiring to foreign rather than national selfhood. "W7" remarked that "[e]ver since independence, Jamaicans have wanted to feel a part of the world, so we try to understand everyone else's culture and leave ours behind." Students viewed local knowledge as a necessary curricular element to protect Jamaican identity and promote sustainable development within a global environment. Given this perceived imperative, students reasoned that

basic education should offer a foundation in IK, preceding subject specialization. "W7" proposed that "[c]ultural retention is important and only way to do it is through education. If not, this leads to cultural eradication and adopting others' cultures and we lose our identity." Though students perceived IK as important for national identity and economic growth, its inclusion in CXC curricula was considered unfeasible due to the crammed and repetitive nature of existing curricular content.

Jamaican identity. Participants discussed reasons for their stated (non)identification with Jamaica, relating this to citizens' character and national versus international achievement. Whilst students were proud of the international reputation of Jamaica's icons, this sense of identity was regarded as superficial, due to its implication of other Jamaicans rather than oneself, as well as its globally, rather than locally derived validation. "W8" thought that "[w]hen people talk about Jamaican pride they talk about … what other Jamaicans have accomplished for Jamaica internationally, not about what makes Jamaica, Jamaica. We don't know enough about ourselves."

Caribbean identity. Though students acknowledged social media and CXC History education as contributing to their understanding of the Caribbean, they did not wholeheartedly identify with Caribbean identity, which they felt their education should cultivate. "C5" thought that "Caribbean identity is a 'strong word' to describe the Caribbean because we are very disjointed.", whilst "C9" reasoned that "That should be the purpose of Carib Studies - to foster an understanding of us as West Indians."

Experiential knowledge. Ownership of Jamaican and Caribbean identity varied amongst participants according to the extent of their involvement in civic and sociocultural fora. Students who identified strongly as Jamaican attributed this to their extracurricular involvements; whereas most participants had little exposure to other Caribbean students, some identified as Caribbean due to sustained extra-curricular exchange with other Caribbean youth. "D3" expressed that they got "a sense of Caribbean identity from my fellow Caribbean Youth Parliament members. You know you can look at Caribbean people and say yeah, man... that's us."

Industry

Students discussed education and careers in the creative industries with reference to the Alpha Boys Institute (ABI), a private, faith-based secondary school focused on music and vocational skills training, as well as to the tertiary education offered at the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts (EMCVPA), both based in Kingston, Jamaica.

Secondary creative education. In a discussion about music and arts education in Jamaica, students struggled to name and chronologize Jamaica's indigenous musical genres and saw this as evidence of the endangerment of Jamaica's musical heritage. After reflecting on ABI's secondary school model, participants considered their own arts education as narrow and insufficient for pursuit of a creative career. "C4" opined that if "[they] did a survey now and asked if people know about Mento and Niabinghi, most people wouldn't know about them or how to identify how they sound." Given that in Jamaica, creative education is not compulsory after Third Form, students saw the importance of its quality being improved in order to provide sufficient exposure to those considering this educational path. Students thought that vocational training, particularly music education, should be available at all levels of schooling and expressed the desire for more equitable mainstreaming of the arts in curriculum and pedagogy. "A2" considered that "the Alpha style of education is good... they have skills education and not just books because that is more easily monetised."

Creative careers. Students identified Kingston and the wider Jamaica as rich in creativity, another defining component of Jamaica's global identity. In this context, they viewed the creative industries as a dynamic and progressive sector, with prospects for their own entrepreneurial endeavours. Nevertheless, the creative economy was deemed as stigmatised and unsupported by society, which they attributed to the sector's economic instability:

> C4: "There isn't high demand for tertiary creative education in Jamaica because the common motivation is to go to college to get a good job and the perception is that a creative career doesn't provide a good, stable job. People are afraid of not having a good job."

Thus, though students perceived the local creative sector as emerging and important to Jamaica's economy, given the economic instability associated with the domain and their conviction that higher education is intended for labour market preparation, they were hesitant to pursue creative education at the tertiary level.

Tertiary creative education. Students regarded the EMCVPA positively as an engaging environment in which to explore arts education. Nonetheless, they perceived that their experiences of the arts as marginalized in their educational institutions, exacerbated the ignorance of creative careers, thus reinforcing a cycle of stigma and non-pursuit of tertiary creative education. As "D4" stated, "People do not visit the EMCVPA booth on College Day, because they are not familiar with career opportunities in music."

Citizenship

Prescriptive teaching. Participants' views on prescriptive teaching and its impact on critical thinking and creative writing skills were sought. Students associated the prevalence of JC as a first language as a contributor to the problem of JSE written expression. They thought that this challenge was exacerbated by teachers' nonchalant pedagogical approaches. Students viewed adherence to JSE and other examination standards as inhibiting authentic expression:

> D2: "We think of English as something we can't achieve as Patois speakers."

> C2: "Lack of interest from the teachers compounds the problem for students who already struggle with English."

> W3: "Teacher always say you know what you want to write but don't know how to write it. If you write in English, it may not bring across the same message you want, so you want to include [JC] in your essay … but exam stipulations limit that."

> A7: "Exams ask 'what is your opinion on...' but they will still mark it wrong because there is a specific opinion you're supposed to have."

Though students partially attributed teachers' indifference to top-down imposition of the CXC curriculum, they viewed teachers as ultimately responsible for achieving the balance between standardised curriculum objectives and innovative classroom pedagogy.

Civics education. Given the thrust for civics education on nationally appointed heroes in postcolonial Caribbean societies, students reflected on education about National Heroes, particularly

Marcus Garvey, and how it impacted their perception of the significance of these historical figures to national development. They maintained that course content on the Heroes was sometimes inconsistent and contradictory, leading to scepticism about their existence and the legitimacy of their national recognition. This was underscored by the differential knowledge gained based on subject choice, as students who pursued Sociology at the Sixth-Form level acquired more critical awareness of National Heroes due to experiential learning activities:

> D4: "To this day, I don't believe that the heroes are real ... When you reach a higher level, you hear a totally different story about the same heroes… the knowledge that people are getting now compared to knowledge in primary school is two contrasting stories."

> W3: "I went to Liberty Hall for a Sixth-form History trip, where they presented different African movements and Pan-African leaders. I didn't know that Marcus Garvey influenced a lot of Pan-African and Black leaders and movements."

Students therefore considered it important to develop the quality of compulsory civics education on National Heroes in order to promote deeper understanding for all students, regardless of subsequent subject choices.

Ethics and activism. Students were engaged in discussion about the CARICOM Reparations Commission (CRC) campaign for Native Genocide and Slavery and its Ten-Point Reparation Plan (TRP) (CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d., 10-Point Reparation Plan). Most students were unfamiliar with the CRC's agenda, regarding it as mostly an economic campaign, without knowing its treatment of literacy, health, and psychosocial issues. Participants were doubtful of the legitimacy of other components of the TRP and how to achieve them:

> W4: "How strong is the link between colonialism and today's illiteracy rates in the Caribbean?"

> C2: "Look at Haiti's example – they only recently paid off debt to France from independence. Though they have poor governance, carrying this debt has had a huge impact on their economy and society."

Nonetheless, students perceived CRC objectives such as psychological and cultural rehabilitation as warranting pursuit; in particular, debt cancellation was viewed as essential to equitable economic development for previously colonised territories. Students viewed activism more broadly as a neglected yet important component of their schooling, perceiving the lack of critical thinking and civic engagement in basic education as contributing to socio- political disaffection amongst youth; moreover, they considered the inculcation of ethics, morals, and civic agency to be important in developing citizenship education:

> C6: "Many Jamaican youth are indifferent to Jamaican politics… we should be voting but we are not taught about politics, how it works."

> D2: "Reintroduce civics into the curriculum from first form. We don't have knowledge of persons who are serving us such as MPs, counsellors, the roles they play."

> C4: "Teaching morals from a young age could help inculcate activism."

Overall, students perceived identity, industry, and citizenship (IIC) as crucial components of Caribbean education to foster authentic selfhood, domestic economic outlook, and socio-political participation. Given the prevailing view that higher education should train students for employability, basic education was seen as essential for setting a universal and equitable IIC foundation. Nevertheless, the globalized model of standardized testing was perceived as inhibiting local imperatives of IIC cultivation through the CXC curriculum. That authentic IIC learning was attributed to mostly extracurricular activity suggests intervention in Caribbean curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

Students Views on Education Reform: Recommendations

The discussion below presents students' recommendations for the reform of Caribbean curricula, pedagogy and assessment and contributes to research on the implications for education policy and planning of the region.

Identity

Language. In order to mainstream Creole languages in basic education, students considered incorporating JC systematically through bilingual education, gradually transitioning emphasis on education in JC to JSE progressively in schooling. This was thought of as equitable for the JC native-speaking majority, affirming the worth of both JC and JSE in society.

Indigenous knowledge. Students recommended increased IK integration throughout basic education with greater focus on interactive pedagogy and assessment. Recommendations particularly concerned education on natural resources to develop local agro-processing industries. To this end, students suggested the use of tropical plants in Chemistry laboratory activities.

Jamaican and Caribbean identity. Students suggested early induction and progressive formation on knowledge about CARICOM and Jamaica contemporaneously, with a focus on Jamaican and Caribbean IK.

Industry

Creative education. Students recommended more equitable timetabling of vocational subjects as against traditional subjects, with an increased focus on experiential, rather than theoretical learning activities. They also suggested increased expenditure on arts education infrastructure, such as creative schools, training, instruments, and equipment, as well as workshop and showcasing venues at both basic and higher education levels.

Citizenship

Civics and activism. Students recommended fewer lessons each day to facilitate progressivist and social reconstructionist teaching through the incorporation of JC and IK in order to develop their critical thinking competencies. They suggested the reintroduction of the civics curriculum with increasingly advanced citizenship education, both nationally on National Heroes, as well as through current regional campaigns such as Reparations. They envisioned a deepening of their critical thinking competencies through experiential knowledge, engaging citizenship critically through artistic productions and cultural exhibitions, or through employing social media for activism.

DISCUSSION

Caribbean education scholars have demonstrated the importance of fostering identity through indigenous knowledge and language (Craig & Carter, 1976; George & Lewis, 2011; Conrad et

al., 2013; Kalloo, 2014; Manning-Lewis, 2019; Nettleford, 2007; Smith et al., 2020), as well as industry (Louisy, 2001; Louisy, 2004) and citizenship (Davis-Morrison, 2018; Griffith & St. Hill, 2008; Hickling-Hudson, 2004) in basic Caribbean education. Students viewed standardized CXC examinations as impediments to the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment necessary for fostering IIC formation. This was reflected in the tension between national and regional priorities on one hand and global agendas on the other. Underpinning this tension is the negotiation between the concept of quality in education as relative to local contexts, and the universalist, standardised approach to education quality, imposed top-down from global actors. In the post-independent CARICOM, social democratic aims of improving life chances through education, as well as nation-building and regional integration are threatened by the global education reform movement and its focus on LMP. Although the HRD 2030 Strategy intends to reconcile local and global mandates by delivering standardised yet relative education, the examination focus of CXC curricula presents a conflict between the objectives of regional integration and global assimilation.

Despite CXC's transmission of native knowledge, IIC awareness was viewed as superficial and measured consistently against international standards. Jamaican identity was seen as propagated not through local education but through international recognition of Jamaicans' achievements, whilst Caribbean awareness was perceived through cultural representations on Western social media platforms rather than through CXC curricula. Similarly, though indigenous resources were recognised for their domestic uses, they were nonetheless identified with their global, enterprise purposes.

As such, mainstreaming of IK in education was viewed as important for fostering nationhood and region-hood, renewing joy in learning, affirming students' perspectives and their contribution to their own learning, and improving academic attitudes and performance. IK was also seen as important for sustainable development of domestic industries, with students seeing profound IK as necessary for building national and regional resistance against neoliberal agendas. In support of this, students perceived the mainstreaming of creative IK in education as critical to exploiting the cultural and creative industries as CARICOM's competitive advantage in the global economy.

Despite the limitations within its standardization, students recognized the Communication Studies curriculum as contributing positively to their understanding of JC as a language. Notwithstanding, students acknowledged that this understanding was in part externally derived from the language's international reputation. Equally, JC was stigmatized by its speakers due to the perceived requirement for JSE competency in the global economy. The elevated status of JSE was reinforced by the traditionalist pedagogies and beliefs of teachers as the custodians of the English language. The dissonance between JC as students' native language and its marginalisation in the classroom in turn undermined students' confidence towards critical reading and writing in JSE and their standardized test performance. However, progressivist and social reconstructionist pedagogical methods essaying equity for JC speakers through bilingual education, multimodal tools and inter-student dialogue have seen improvements in JSE fluency, as well as critical thinking and creative writing skills. The development of these reflexive competencies may facilitate more holistic perceptions of heroes and civic values necessary for youth agency in society and polity.

Overall, whereas higher education was seen as intended for labor market preparedness, basic education was considered fundamental to building students' identity, industry, and citizenship. This suggests the need for basic education quality research and development with a view to providing equitable IIC education to students preceding higher education specialisation. Whereas students

viewed standardized testing as inhibiting this formation, they considered progressivist pedagogy and assessment as facilitating it. Altogether, this points to the imperative for basic education reform in the CARICOM.

CONCLUSIONS

Students perceived standardized testing as inhibiting IIC formation needed to promote locally originated identity, economic and socio-political agency amongst CARICOM youth. They attributed this to the legacies of colonial attitudes towards indigenous knowledge, reinforced by traditionalist pedagogy and narrow objectives of test-based curricula. Students therefore recommended inclusion of progressivist pedagogy through experiential learning activities, which was seen as conducive to authentic IIC formation.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Methodologically, the population of schools from which the focus groups were derived was not representative of Jamaica, and far less, of the CARICOM. Further inquiry should widen the research population to other CARICOM countries, as well as triangulate focus group data with online surveys, the latter of which would widen accessibility and aid in representativeness of the findings.

Conceptually, although Caribbean scholarship and policy on basic education have identified gender as a cross-cutting issue (Smith et al, 2020), in-depth exploration of this topic was beyond the scope of this research. Moreover, the research problem could be considered from single concepts suggested from the findings, such as bilingual education, skills mismatch, and citizenship education, which implies the use of these concepts and related literature to interpret further research into this topic. Finally, although the research focuses on basic education reform through the curriculum, a sector-wide approach is needed for capacity-building in education. In light of the CARICOM HRD 2030 Strategy's identification of teacher training as important to educational outcomes, future enquiry could problematise this aspect of education reform.

REFERENCES

Alasuutari, P., Rautalin, M., & Tyrkkö, J. (2018). The rise of the idea of model in policymaking. *European Journal of Sociology*, *59*(3), 341–363. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003975618000164

Almendarez, L. (2013). Human capital theory: Implications for educational development in Belize and the Caribbean. *Caribbean Quarterly*, *59*(3–4), 21–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2013.11672495

Anthony, P. A. B. (2000, October 9–12). *Culture and national development* [Paper presentation]. Sixth Conference of CARICOM Heads of State, Castries, St. Lucia.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *1*(3), 385–405. https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410100100307

Bacchus, M. K. (2005). *Education for economic, social, and political development in the British Caribbean colonies from 1896–1945*. Althouse Press.

Ball, S., & Junemann, C. (2012). *Networks, new governance, and education* (1st ed.). Policy Press.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Buddan, R. (2004). Universal adult suffrage in Jamaica and the Caribbean since 1944. *Social and Economic Studies, 53*(4), 135–162.

Caribbean Community. (2012, June). *Draft CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan 2012–2017*. Caribbean Community Secretariat. https://caricom.org/documents/13930-caricom_youth_development_action_plan.pdf

Caribbean Community. (2017). *CARICOM Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy: Unlocking Caribbean human potential*. Caribbean Community Secretariat. https://caricom.org/documents/16065-caricom-hrd-2030-strategy-viewing.pdf

CARICOM Reparations Commission. (n.d.). *10-Point Reparation plan*. Retrieved April 16, 2020, from https://caricomreparations.org/caricom/caricoms-10-point-reparation-plan/

Chun Tie, Y., Birks, M., & Francis, K. (2019). Grounded theory research: A design framework for novice researchers. *SAGE Open Medicine, 7*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1177/2050312118822927

Conrad, D., Forteau-Jaikaransingh, B., & Popova, D. (2013). Poetry to Rapso: Localized narrative in the classroom. *Caribbean Curriculum, 20*, 1–29. https://journals.sta.uwi.edu/ojs/index.php/cc/article/view/554/486

Craig, D., & Carter, S. (1976). The language learning aptitudes of Jamaican children at the beginning of secondary school. *Caribbean Journal of Education, 3*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.46425/c10301s6045

Cummings, E., & James, C. (2014). Constructivist approaches to education in Jamaica: Challenges, limitations, and possibilities. *Caribbean Journal of Education, 36*(1–2), 40–66. https://www.mona.uwi.edu/soe/publications/cje/article/1168

Davis-Morrison, V. (2018). Educating for democratic citizenship: Views of selected Jamaican secondary students. *Caribbean Journal of Education, 40*(1–2), 53–79. https://www.mona.uwi.edu/soe/publications/cje/article/503

Drew, R. (2016). *It is in the syllabus: National narratives and curricular politics in postcolonial education*. (Publication No. 10191684) [Master's thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database. https://www.proquest.com/docview/1840802336/?pq-origsite=primo

George, J., & Lewis, T. (2011). Exploring the global/local boundary in education in developing countries: The case of the Caribbean. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 41*(6), 721–734. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2011.579712

Griffith, A., & St. Hill, S. (2008). Addressing social participation as a major goal in social studies: A case study of a fifth-form group pursuing the CXC/CSEC social studies programme in a Barbadian school. *Caribbean Curriculum, 15*, 1–23. http://hdl.handle.net/2139/6585

Heap, B. (2011). "If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more": Developing creative approaches to the teaching of dramatic literatures in the Caribbean. *Caribbean Journal of Education, 33*(2), 276–302. https://www.mona.uwi.edu/soe/publications/cje/journal/cje-vol-33-no-2

Hendershott, A., & Wright, S. (1993). Student focus groups and curricular review. *Teaching Sociology, 21*(2), 154. https://doi.org/10.2307/1318636

Hickling-Hudson, A. (2004). Towards Caribbean 'knowledge societies': Dismantling neo-colonial barriers in the age of globalisation. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 34*(3), 293–300. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305792042000257130

Jacob, B. A. (2005). Accountability, incentives, and behavior: The impact of high stakes testing in the Chicago public schools. *Journal of Public Economics*, *89*(5–6), 761–796. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2004.08.004

Jules, D. (2008). Rethinking education for the Caribbean: A radical approach. *Comparative Education*, *44*(2), 203–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060802041142

Jules, J. E. (2019). Pedagogical beliefs and choices in communicative language teaching and grammar instruction: A Caribbean focus. *Caribbean Journal of Education*, *41*(1), 105–146. https://doi.org/10.46425/c054101z786

Kalloo, R. (2014). Birds in the schoolyard: The impact of an inquiry action project of local bird ecology on the environmental attitudes and knowledge of Grade 4 Trinidadian students. *Caribbean Journal of Education*, *36*(1–2), 67–95. https://www.mona.uwi.edu/soe/publications/cje/article/1169

Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, *16*(1), 103–121. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep11347023

LaRocque, I. (2019, January 15–16). [Conference session]. Caribbean Youth Summit on Violence Prevention, Georgetown, Guyana.

Liamputtong, P. (2011). *Focus group methodology: Principle and practice* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://methods.sagepub.com/book/focus-group-methodology

Lingard, B., & Sellar, S. (2013). 'Catalyst data': Perverse systemic effects of audit and accountability in Australian schooling. *Journal of Education Policy*, *28*(5), 634–656. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2012.758815

Louisy, D. P. (2001). Globalisation and comparative education: A Caribbean perspective. *Comparative Education*, *37*(4), 425–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060120091238

Louisy, D. P. (2004). Whose context for what quality? Informing education strategies for the Caribbean. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *34*(3), 285–292. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305792042000257121

Magill, R. S. (1993). Focus groups, program evaluation, and the poor. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, *20*(1), 103–114. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2059&context=jssw

Manning-Lewis, T. (2019). I hate writing: Making a case for the creation of graphic novels in the Caribbean English classroom to develop students' creative writing skills. *Changing English*, *26*(4), 392–404. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684x.2019.1643228

Miller, E. (1988). Church, State, and secondary education in Jamaica: 1912–1943. In *Perspectives in the History of Caribbean Education* (pp. 109–144). University of the West Indies. https://errolmiller.com/book/church-state-and-secondary-education-in-jamaica/

Miller, E. (1998). Successful innovations in Caribbean education. In J. Delors (Ed.), *Education for the Twenty-First Century: Issues and Prospects* (pp. 135–155). UNESCO Publishing. https://errolmiller.com/book/successful-innovations-in-caribbean-education/

Miller, E. (2008). *Education and social mobility: The case of the Jamaican peasant*. https://errolmiller.com/book/education-and-social-mobility/.

Mundy, K., Green, A., Lingard, B., & Verger, A. (Eds.). (2016). *Handbook of global education policy (Handbooks of global policy)* (1st ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Nettleford, R. (2007). Address: The arts and post-colonial certitude. *Caribbean Quarterly*, *53*(1–2), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2007.11672301

Oestreich, J. B. (2002). *Social studies curriculum development in Belize: 1950–2001.* (Publication No. 3086782) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database. https://www.proquest.com/docview/305476425/?pq-origsite=primo

Roberts, P. A. (2007). *West Indians and their language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.

Smith, P., Warrican, J., Kumi-Yeboah, A., Cheema, J., & Alleyne, M. L. (2019). Disrupting (mis) representation in the literacy achievement of "(under)performing" youth. *Journal of Education and Development in the Caribbean*, *18*(2), 111–165. https://doi.org/10.46425/j518021775

The Integrationist Caribbean. *Economic integration: An introduction*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 18, 2020, from http://www.theintegrationistcaribbean.org/economic-integration/economic-integration/

Trowler, P. (2003). *Education policy: A policy sociology approach (Gildredge social policy series)* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Tucker, J., & Osborne, A. (2017). Play yu pan! Successes, challenges, and the future of music education in Trinidad. *Caribbean Journal of Education*, *28*(2), 127–143. https://www.mona.uwi.edu/soe/publications/cje/article/1256

Turner, T. A. (1977). The socialization intent in colonial Jamaican Education 1867–1911. *Caribbean Journal of Education*, *4*(1–2), 54–108.

Tyson, E. (2003). Uncharted territory: Teachers' adaptation to the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Literatures in English curriculum. *Caribbean Journal of Education*, *25*(2), 170–174. https://www.mona.uwi.edu/soe/publications/cje/article/1210

UNESCO. (2015, October 27). *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.* http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED_new/pdf/FFA-ENG-27Oct15.pdf

United Nations Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean. (2014, March). *Implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action in the Caribbean (1994–2013): Evaluating progress and renewing commitment*. United Nations. https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/37207-implementation-cairo-programme-action-caribbean-1994-2013-evaluating-progress-and

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation. (n.d.). *UNESCO Creative Cities Network*. United Nations. Retrieved August 8, 2020, from https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/creative-cities-map

United States Department of Education. (1983, April). *A nation at risk*. https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html

World Bank. (2013, April). *Jamaica - Reform of Secondary Education Project (English)* (No. P5974). http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/327501468283768607/Jamaica-Reform-of-Secondary-Education-Project

Figure 1

Sample of Focus Group Questions

BREAKOUT SESSION 1: IDENTITY

Group 3

From primary school to third form, your curriculum has a national focus, learning about Jamaican places, people, national symbols etc. Upon reaching 4th form, you officially begin the CXC-CSEC syllabi, moving from a local to a regional system of education.

1. Are you proud to be Jamaican? Why/why not? Do you have the same feeling towards Caribbean identity? In other words, do you strongly identify with Caribbean identity or not really? Why/why not?
2. Do you feel as though you are familiar with the contexts of other Caribbean countries? If so, through what means (is it through the CXC syllabus or through other ways? Please specify)? Has being a student of Caribbean Studies changed your perspective of Caribbean identity or knowledge of the Caribbean? If so, how? If not, how not?
3. What, or who, would you like to see reflected in your Caribbean learning, content-wise and experience wise? Design a proposal (pick a subject, grade level, mode, etc) and tell us what the learning objectives/outcomes of your proposal would be.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2: INDUSTRY

Group 2

The Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts (EMCVPA) is the first institution of its type in the Caribbean region, offering education at the tertiary level in arts management, drama, dance, fashion, visual communication and art. Peek at a promotional video for the College here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB0eh2DbjTc

Now, watch the snippets from the EMCVPA Visual Arts final year exhibition 2017, where students showcase the project they have been working on throughout their last year. Take a quick skim through the video here: https://youtu.be/zkflaMYYyC0

1. Is anyone in your breakout group considering a career in the creative field? If so, in what, to be specific? If not actually, then in an ideal world, would you pursue a career in the creative field? If so, which field? Would you consider attending the EMCVPA? Have these videos changed your opinions on the EMCVPA or a career in the arts? If you would not pursue a career in the arts, why not?
2. How does the current high school system prepare/not prepare students for creative careers? How would you change things to facilitate this? (Once again, tell us the mode, grade level, subject you have in mind, as well as intended learning outcomes). Think out of the box too - would you have career fairs? Tertiary programme fairs? Interviews or talks by Jamaicans leading in their respective creative fields? Be specific about what you envision and of course... be creative!

BREAKOUT SESSION 3: CITIZENSHIP

Group 1

Tanya Manning-Lewis, former English teacher and principal examiner and marker for CXC, notes that in her experience, she "...has marked thousands of transcripts and see[n] firsthand the devastating effect of prescriptive teaching on students' creative writing as many of their stories lack creativity and originality." (Manning-Lewis 2019, 394). As a solution, she argues that Caribbean educators should find innovative ways to engage 21st century learners that are digitally literate to enhance their ability to engage in the classroom.

1. What do you think she means by 'prescriptive teaching'?
2. Recall your topic for the Communication Studies IA last year and the process of writing your reflective piece. Do you think you could have engaged more with critical thinking? How could your teachers better facilitate this?
3. Would you recommend a completely different approach to writing a reflective piece being assessed in the Communication Studies IA? Given some of the digital creative tools and other software available nowadays, what are some of the ways you would recommend? Alternatively, do you have a completely different assessment proposal in mind? Make your proposal, specifying grade level, learning outcomes and assessment/activity, tools to be used... be as detailed and as imaginative as possible.

Figure 2
Thematic Network: Students' Views on Education Reform