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Textbooks and teacher decision-making: The case of Jamaican teachers using sociology textbooks in the sixth form

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Abstract

Textbook pedagogy and the textbook competence of teachers are relatively new areas of inquiry in Caribbean countries. This study investigates the decisions teachers made in how they used textbooks in the sixth form where mastery of complex content is required for high-stakes examinations at the end of secondary school. Another line of inquiry pertained to calls for the development of the ideal Caribbean citizen by regional bodies and explored whether a textbook dependent pedagogy could meaningfully address the broader goals of education. Sixty four sociology teachers participated in this qualitative study using focus groups and questionnaires in Jamaica. The findings revealed that the print textbook was an integrated core resource (Horsley, Knight and Huntly,2010) and that teachers displayed conceptions of the curriculum as either fidelity to the textbook or drawing upon it (Remillard, 2005), even though the textbook was too costly for most students and many were reluctant readers.

Keywords: Textbook pedagogy, Teacher decision-making, Textbook competence, Sixth-form.

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Resumo

A pedagogia do livro de texto e a competência dos professores em livros didáticos são áreas de inquérito relativamente novas nos países caribenhos. Este estudo investiga as decisões que os professores tomaram quanto à forma como eles usaram livros didáticos no *sixth form* (12º e 13º anos), onde o domínio de conteúdo complexo é necessário para exames de alto nível no final da escola secundária. Outra linha de indagação referiu-se a solicitações para o desenvolvimento do cidadão ideal do Caribe por órgãos regionais e explorou se uma pedagogia dependente de livros didáticos poderia abordar significativamente os objetivos mais amplos da educação. Sessenta e quatro professores de sociologia participaram deste estudo qualitativo usando grupos focais e questionários, na Jamaica. Os resultados revelaram que o livro de texto impresso era um recurso básico integrado (Horsley, Knight e Huntly, 2010) e que os professores apresentavam concepções de currículo como fidelidade ao livro de texto ou construído a partir dele (Remillard, 2005), mesmo que o livro fosse muito caro para a maioria dos estudantes e que muitos deles fossem leitores relutantes.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogia do livro didático, Tomada de decisão docente, Domínio do livro didático, Final do Ensino Médio.

Resumen

La pedagogía del libro de texto y la incumbencia de los profesores en los libros didácticos son áreas de investigación relativamente nuevas en países del Caribe. Este estudio investiga las decisiones que han tomado profesores sobre cómo utilizaron los libros didácticos de sixthform (12 y 13 años) donde el dominio de contenido complejo se requiere para exámenes en el final de escuela secundaria. Otra línea de investigación que se refirió a solicitudes para el desarrollo del ciudadano ideal caribeño por organismos regionales y exploró si una pedagogía dependiente de libros didácticos podría abordar significativamente los objetivos más amplios de la educación. Sesenta y cuatro profesores de Sociología participaron en este estudio cualitativo utilizando grupos focales y cuestionarios, en Jamaica. Los resultados revelaron que el libro didáctico impreso era un recurso básico integrado (Horsley, Knight y Huntly (2010) y que los profesores tenían concepciones de currículo como fidelidad al libro didáctico o construido sobre el (Remillard, 2005), aunque el libro fuera demasiado caro para la mayoría de los estudiantes y muchos de ellos fueran lectores renuentes.

Palabras clave: Pedagogía de los libros de texto, Toma de decisiones de los profesores, Dominio de los libros de texto, Final de la escuela secundaria.

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Introduction

Textbooks are one of the most enduring aspects of schooling, akin to the centuries-old image of the teacher at the front of the classroom facing an orderly array of desks and students. Yet, interest in textbook research has grown up only over the last 30 to 40 years, mainly in developed countries, and is little-known in the Caribbean. However, the findings of research investigating textbook use by teachers are making increasingly strong connections between the teacher, the text and the student, deeming it an important emerging pedagogical issue.

Early research into how teachers used the text revealed - that students were not likely to read their textbook if teachers did not put it to explicit use (Rieck, 1977); that the ways secondary teachers used textbooks to reinforce instruction and to give assigned readings was a passive use of the text and did not engage students in higher level thinking (Davey, 1988); and, that there was a need for teachers to be trained in evaluating the curriculum materials they use (Herber, 1978), a skill often overlooked by content specialists. Recently, researchers have seen congruence between teachers' conceptions of curriculum and how they use textbooks (Remillard, 2005); and, have called for developing countries to get more involved in textbook research (Evans & Ghosh, 2008). The issue of *textbook competence* has emerged – the ability of teachers to evaluate the quality of learning materials against well-defined criteria and effectively use those materials within their teaching – though it is noted that the contexts in which teachers operate influence their optimal use of resources (Visser, 2015).

Caribbean researchers, teachers and teacher educators can benefit from a deeper understanding of the decisions teachers make about how they use textbooks, in their various contexts. This exploratory study is an attempt to make a contribution to this body of research from a small, developing country, Jamaica, interrogating how sixth four sociology teachers use textbooks with their students.

Background

The sixth form is a peculiar context in secondary schooling in the English-speaking Caribbean. High-status grammar schools, many established in the colonial era, offer five years of secondary education leading to the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), set by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), the regional examining body. The most successful students are eligible for a further two years of secondary education (the sixth form) leading to the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE), also set by CXC. (The CSEC and CAPE qualifications have replaced the British-set GCE "Ordinary" and "Advanced" Levels, respectively). Success in CAPE puts students in a competitive position in their transition to university, further study or the world of work. There are also relatively new secondary schools with 6th forms, and enrolment of more mature students for CAPE subjects in community

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colleges and other tertiary institutions. This study however focuses only on teachers and students in secondary schools with 6th forms in Jamaica.

While the 6th form is an elitist, colonial relic (Miller, 1972), today it is an opportunity for lower income, higher-achieving students to access social mobility. However, it comes with much struggle and sacrifice as textbooks are expensive and students may need several for each subject. Even in this age of social media and online learning, the textbook continues to be dominant (Daniel & Woody, 2013; Myrberg & Wiberg, 2015) and, therefore central to this struggle for social upliftment. Traditionally, teaching and learning in the sixth form has been strongly influenced by preparation for high-stakes examinations (whether the Cambridge GCE 'A' Level of yesteryear or its CAPE equivalent today) and the text looms important in this regard. However, it is not known how teachers actually use the text (and, digital materials) or how they deal with students who may not have a text.

An issue to also consider is that the 6th form is strategically placed to make a significant contribution to development as students are on the brink of a career path and taking up their role as adult citizens. The Caribbean Community or CARICOM has outlined certain competencies and dispositions desired in the 'ideal Caribbean citizen', notably that such a person ….

> *sees ethnic, religious and other diversity as a source of potential strength and richness*; *demonstrates multiple literacies, independent and critical thinking, questions the beliefs and practices of past and present and brings this to bear on the innovative application of science and technology to problems solving; has an informed respect for the cultural heritage; and demonstrates a positive work ethic* (CARICOM, 1997: 9).

It is expected that an investigation of teachers' use of textbooks can shed some light on pedagogical practices, which may also give some insights as to whether, or how, these broader purposes of education are being addressed in the sixth form sociology classroom. Sociology as a discipline is remarkably suited to the development of socially competent citizens especially in relation to an awareness of equity and social justice issues. The decisions teachers make in using textual and other materials in this subject may be able to give some sense, in lieu of a more direct investigation, on the extent to which the development of the ideal Caribbean citizen is addressed by sixth form sociology teachers.

The Problem

How teachers use textbooks (or, other resources) with their students is indicative of their purposes and can bring clarity to our understanding of the pedagogical decisions they make. Such decisions may be based on a wide range of factors such as constraints in the context, student characteristics, teachers' own convictions about textbooks and, education in general or, their competence in the subject. Additionally, reliance

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on the textbook as the major resource for teaching and learning in schools has been challenged in recent years, in international contexts, by digital and online media. A research gap exists in all these areas in the Caribbean. Moreover, gaining textbook competence has not figured prominently in teacher education programmes (Tulley & Farr, 1990; SITE, 2006). Therefore, the study is seeking to explore a hitherto taken-for-granted issue in teaching and learning – teacher decision-making in using textbooks. A secondary focus is the particular context of the sixth form, traditionally associated with rigorous and in-depth coverage of subject matter, mandating the importance of textbooks, and exploring the extent to which teachers address the broader intentions of developing the ideal Caribbean person.

Research Questions

1. What decisions do teachers make in how they use the text (and, other resources) in the sociology sixth form classroom?

2. What influences these decisions?

3. What implications are there in how teachers use the text (and, other resources) for teaching and learning in the sixth form?

Literature Review

From the outset it should be noted that the use of a text (orother curriculum resource) constitutes an integral part of a teacher's approach to teaching; the textbook is a tool for the teacher. While this study is not an exploration of teaching per se, the focus on the decisions teachers make in using textbooks cannot veer very far from strategies to foster teaching and learning. Notwithstanding, the study tries to remove decisions about the use of the textbook far enough so that they can be studied as a sub-set of the practices of a teacher.

A textbook presents subject specific knowledge customized to fit assumed learner characteristics such as prior knowledge of the subject, age, literacy level and the purposes of users. 'Purposes' usually refer to whether learners are enrolled in an introductory course for general understanding or an in-depth, rigorous exposition of a discipline as is the case in the sixth form. Textbooks have always been synonymous with teaching and learning and are fairly ubiquitous across classrooms in the developed and developing world in almost all subject areas (Marsden, 2001) and at all grade levels (Woodward & Elliott, 1990). While this study investigates teachers' use of sociology textbooks in the sixth form, the research literature (largely from the USA, Europe and Australia) has been influenced primarily by issues relating to how teachers use mathematics, language, science and social studies textbooks at the elementary

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level and in secondary schools, but not sixth forms. As a result, existing research into the use of textbooks may or may not be directly applicable to the contexts of this present study, but at the same time such findings are a useful jumping off point to begin to explore this issue in the Caribbean.

Textbook research is not a widely known genre of educational research and initially interest did not lie with teachers' use of the text. In the 1970s and 80s, the World Bank and other organizations promoting their idea of development in newly-independent countries sought to treat textbooks as an input into education (along with libraries, laboratories and other variables), their focus being the impact of textbooks on student achievement (Heyneman & Jamison, 1980; Heyneman, Jamison & Montenegro, 1983). Admittedly, the availability of textbooks was an issue in the developing world, but such research was not focused on learning and did not pursue how the texts were actually being used.

The *text* itself constitutes an abiding interest of textbook researchers. Factual content, readability, comfort level, eye tracking, and graphics are general areas of interest but so also are the micro-features – organization of the page, how main ideas are introduced, whether key words or concepts are outstanding enough to the reader and whether there is enough variety to overcome boredom (Platt, 2008). The focus is on design principles and good pedagogy. Publishing houses mandate their writers to follow these trends and there is keen rivalry to capture markets in the developing world by producing 'better' textbooks. Consequently, textbook writers follow similar guidelines and create similar products, sociology textbooks are a good example, what Platt (2008) and others refer to as "… the standard package of the American-style blockbuster textbook" (p. 170).

Digital media (e-books, interactive websites, podcasts, videos, and virtual libraries) represent another aspect of textbook research - namely exploring student preferences for digital versus print resources (Rockinson-Szapkiw, Courduff, Carter, & Bennett 2013), how students use the materials (Simon, 2001), designing e-books, and other interactive resources (Noorhidawaldi & Gibb, 2008), and investigating the combinations of digital and textual resources that seem to appeal to students (Bodomo, Lam & Lee, 2003). Here the focus is trained more on the student than the teacher, perhaps because of the assumption that students are digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Interestingly, there is no definitive position that digital is 'better' than the printed text and both students and teachers seem to rely on some combination of both to get the job done (Knight & Horsley, 2013). Publishers have responded to the digital 'threat' by producing a package of materials to accompany their textbooks - CD-ROMs, DVDs, workbooks, teachers' guides and companion student websites. They cater to both student and teacher characteristics (it is teachers who recommend texts for parents to buy) by providing what each may find useful in learning materials, and begin to confront, in a practical way, how a textbook can emulate good teaching.

Textbook pedagogy is a fairly new term within the larger area of textbook research and refers to the ways "…*that teachers use texts in the classroom, access to texts which creates a context for their use, as well as to text features and characteristics that may improve or constrain learning*" (Horsley & Walker, 2005, p. 47). The term has emerged amongst textbook researchers in the developed world who used ethnographic type studies, going into classrooms and, through observations and interviews with teachers and students sought to learn more about how textbooks were being used and how that influenced learning (Alverman, 1987; Moulton, 1994; Lambert, 1999). This body of research yielded a general finding that teachers used textbooks in varied ways. Even in contexts where materials were prescribed by educational authorities and came with teachers' guides, teachers acted as autonomous beings and selected materials from those prescribed, and sometimes not at all (Moulton, 1994). Such decisions were based largely on the expertise of the teacher and what they perceived the needs of their students to be. A persistent finding was that effective teachers used textbooks very differently from novice teachers (SITE, 2006); the latter relied heavily on the text and other prescribed media for guidance. More experienced teachers were likely to construct their own curriculum rather than allow the text to dictate the organization and coverage of material; they used a selection of other resources to create activities and set assignments; and were aware of their own pedagogical goals in choosing their strategies (Horsley, 2004).

Styles of textbook use emerged as an indicator of teacher pedagogical strategies. Research into the use of mathematics textbooks at the elementary level revealed teachers who were 'textbook bound', or those who emphasized the 'basics' or were primarily concerned with 'management by objectives' (Freeman and Porter, 1988). Another study examined teacher decision-making in grades six through eight in the subjects of social studies, science, literature and language, health and human development, and remedial reading (Alverman, 1987). The researcher distinguished between "preactive decisions" (in planning lessons) and "interactive decisions" (during the teaching-learning process), for example when teachers used the text to keep students on track during discussion as a means of mediating classroom discipline; when the text was used to go back to verify information covered before; and, to prompt answers to teacher questions. Sosniak and Stodolsky (1993) attest to the wide variation in how teachers used texts – while they regarded textbooks as essential to learning, they were not dependent on them and utilized them as tools to get the job done, not necessarily in the same sequence as advocated by the text. Kon (1993), investigating how teachers treated with a new social studies textbook in California, USA, noted that their prior experiences influenced how they approached the textbook – the radical ideas of the text were translated by the teachers into the tried and tested ways of yesteryear.

As it pertains to the present study where there is some interest in whether teaching and learning in the sixth form may be too dependent on textbooks, Stodolsky (1999)) noted that even if teachers seemed to be textbook-driven that did not necessarily equate with teacher-directed instruction or, vice versa, that a student-centered pedagogy does

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not necessarily signal less use of the textbook. These observations suggest that it is incumbent for researchers to bear in mind that while teachers' use of a textbook may indicate an approach to teaching, approaches may vary even with a single teacher based on contexts and the resources at hand.

While many of the studies described in this review were conducted in developed countries in elementary and secondary schools where examinations are not as high-stakes as they are in the Caribbean, the study by Horsley, Knight and Huntly (2010) took place in higher education in Australia, and resonates with the present study of textbook use in the sixth form. Platt (2008) also makes a case for considering sixth form and first year sociology textbooks in a similar light as both claim to 'bridge the gap' between secondary and tertiary study. Students made decisions about how central certain texts and resources were to their course of study based largely on how important they were in helping them pass examinations. A *typology of centrality* in how textbooks were used emerged. One or two texts (recommended by lecturers) were treated as an *integrated core resource*; a *core resource* covered the major elements of the course; *related resources* provided background reading; and, p*eripheral learning resources* represented materials that were wider ranging and not considered vital to successful completion of the course. Lecturers were aware of the equity issue in that the materials most central to success in the course were expensive, and directed students to a range of options such as free resources on the university's e-platform.

Wanting to delve deeper into teacher decision-making, researchers interested in textbook pedagogy directed their attention to the enacted curriculum (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986), what really happens in classrooms, as opposed to the formal curriculum enunciated in education policy documents and translated via textbooks, or even the intended curriculum (Remillard, 2005). Previously, use of a text assumed a certain conventional linear logic but more and more the ways in which teachers combined their content knowledge with their pedagogical knowledge, what Shulman (1986) described as their *pedagogical content knowledge*, have extended to teachers' evaluation of their textbooks and other media. Teachers have been actively seeking texts that lend themselves most effectively to the 'teachability' of the subject (Shulman, 1986, p. 9).

Responding to the inherent variation and dynamism in how teachers used textbooks, Remillard (2005) sought to conceptualise the issue as an epistemological one – examining the perspectives teachers used in their processes of constructing the enacted curriculum, with a focus on use of textbooks and curriculum materials. Four conceptions of the relationship of teachers to the text were revealed, with some degree of overlap between them. Historically, textbooks were authoritative bodies of required knowledge and teaching put a premium on fidelity to the text. This represented a positivist view of teaching where close correspondence between the official and enacted curriculum was deemed to be desirable. However, the wide variations in how teachers actually

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use texts showed that many teachers rely on their sense of agency, drawing on the formal curriculum or text as a guide, but freely adapting and using a range of materials to suit their ideas of relevant and appropriate learning experiences for students. A third conception revealed very little fidelity between teacher and text with the teacher acting as an interpreter of the curriculum based on his or her own experiences of teaching, of the particular discipline and of textbooks. This harkens to a phenomenological sense of meaning making resulting in the teacher interpreting the intentions of textbook writers.

The fourth conception emerging from the literature, 'teachers participating with the text', saw teachers as designers of curriculum. Whilst textbook authors originally designed the materials in use in classrooms, teachers do another level of design by creatively treating with textbook design features such as expository text, case studies, activities, exercises, and research ideas. Brown & Edelson (2003) found that a teacher made decisions about 'offloading' responsibility for instruction to the textbook, meaning that s/he made explicit use of the textbook, or 'improvising' with minimal reference to the text, or freely 'adapting' materials based on the teacher's understanding of the topic, the context and teacher resources. Practitioner-driven design is a little-known area in teaching but has the potential to unlock for teachers their own perspectives on how they actually use curriculum materials thereby unearthing epistemological connections of which they might not be aware.

Caribbean research on how teachers use texts in classrooms is rare and so is any research related to textbook use and other materials in the sixth form, whether for sociology or other subjects. There are a few references for secondary schools such as a national education report for St. Kitts which found a heavy reliance on textbooks and traditional teaching methods (Spencer-Ernandez, & Edwards-Kerr, 2013); ethnographic research in Jamaican schools which spoke of teaching being circumscribed by the paucity of textbooks and teaching materials (Evans, 2001); how textbooks treat with a particular discipline such as biology and integrated science (Soyibo, 1995, 1998) or, social studies (Mohammed, 2009a); and, representations of gender (Whitely, 1996, Mohammed, 2009b) in textbooks.

This review of the literature suggests that conceptual frameworks such as the *centrality of textbook use* (Horsley, Knight and Huntly, 2010), and Remillard's (2005) *conceptions of curriculum use* can be deployed to clarify how Jamaican teachers use textbooks in the sociology 6th form classroom. In addition, the concepts of *pedagogical content knowledge* (Shulman, 1986) and, *textbook competence* should also prove useful.

Methodology

The researcher took the opportunity, while introducing a new sociology textbook to teachers in three urban centres in Jamaica - Kingston, Mandeville and Montego Bay – to broaden the discussion to sociology textbooks in general. The invitation to attend

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the workshop was sent to all schools where CAPE Sociology was taught - 64 teachers responded (11 males and 53 females). They were asked for their permission to represent their views in on-going research and filled out a questionnaire on their qualifications and how they used their sociology texts (see Appendix). Field notes were also taken of, what amounted to focus group discussions, three day-long sessions at each venue. I suggested that they could contact me by e-mail afterwards and 10 teachers responded. For purposes of data analysis, certain questionnaire items (numbers 1 – 4 and 7, 9 and 10) were tabulated, whilst the other items, as well as the field notes, and e-mail correspondence were organized into themes relating to decision-making and use.

Data Analysis/Findings

Demographic and Background Data

The majority of CAPE Sociology teachers attending the workshop held education qual-ifications (91%), however it was difficult to determine how many of them had sociology content knowledge required at the sixth form level (Table 1). About 78% held an under-graduate degree, which would have included some sociology courses – some more so than others. Only 7 persons had post graduate qualifications in sociology. It is likely that teachers with a non-specialist first degree would need to exert a great deal of effort to achieve the mastery of the subject necessary for teaching at the 6th form level. That 6 teachers did not respond to the item asking for their highest level of qualifications in ed-ucation could mean that they are untrained; similarly, 7 persons indicated that they had no background in sociology. For these three groups of teachers (those having non-spe-cialist degrees, untrained teachers, and those with no sociology background) the im-portance of the textbook would loom large. The latest textbooks, especially those by Caribbean authors, mirror the organization of the syllabus, defines and explains terms in text as well as in a glossary, gives examples, case studies, exercises, activities and assessment items based on the CAPE model as seen in past papers. For most teach-ers in the sample then, the text would be a useful one-stop shop; more experienced teachers and those familiar with the level of sociological knowledge required at CAPE would be confident enough to navigate away from the text to explore other sources.

Highest Education Qualifications	Kingston [35]	Mandeville [14]	Montego Bay [15]	Totals
M.Ed./M.A.(Ed)	10	5	6	21
Diploma in Ed. (PG)	18	4	3	25
B. Ed.	4	5	3	12
No response	3	-	3	6
				64
Sociology Qualifications				
UG (B.A., B.Sc)	27	8	15	50
MSc	7	-	-	7
No response	1	6	-	7
				64

Table 1 Teacher Qualifications in Education and Sociology

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Table 2 reveals the criteria teachers used to select sociology textbooks for booklists. Some teachers specified more than one way. Items 2-12 actually clarify the criteria for justifying such texts to the head of department. It is to be noted that they rely heavily on workshops where new texts are circulated and analysed, and their main concerns relate to congruence of the text with the syllabus and how affordable it is to the student.

	Major ways in which textbooks are selected	No. of schools
1.	Teacher recommendation to the Head of Department	39
2.	Workshops, Promotions by book sellers	11
3.	Affordability	9
4.	Syllabus – coverage, relevance to	8
5.	Availability/Accessibility	5
6.	Recommendations from the CAPE syllabus	5
7.	Reader-friendly	4
8.	Teacher inquiries and networking with other teachers	3
9.	Willingness of school administration to purchase texts (book loan)	1
10.	Authority of the writer	1
11.	Recommendations from specialists in the field	1
12.	Activity-based	1

Table 2 - How Schools Select Textbooks

Table 3 below shows that Montego Bay had the largest number of teachers with upwards of 20 years' teaching experience at the secondary level. This is based on the sample – those who heeded the call to the workshop – and cannot therefore lead to strong generalizations. However, most of those 11 teachers *have only recently begun to teach the subject* - only 2, for example, have been teaching the subject for more than 11 years. This suggests that experienced teachers have been gradually called into teaching CAPE Sociology (some schools only recently began to offer the subject). In Kingston, the capital city, there is evidence that the subject has been taught for over 11 years, most likely because of the larger number of secondary schools in the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA), some of them being the older, traditional grammar schools, which would have offered CAPE Sociology since its inception in 2000. On the whole though, in addition to more schools deciding to offer sociology, there are some new secondary schools with sixth forms. This means that sociology is not a long-established subject in most schools where it is being taught and there are 31 teachers in the sample who have been teaching the subject for 4 years or less (Table 3). While the workshop would have been especially beneficial to new teachers to the subject (and hence their presence at the workshop), contextual factors such as experienced teachers being drawn in to teach sociology as a new offering and, sixth forms appearing in new schools, indicate that the sociology text would grow in importance to experienced and novice teachers alike.

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Teacher Characteristics	Kingston	Mandeville	Montego Bay	Totals
(A) Number of years teaching at the secondary level:				
20+ years	8	5	11	24
16-20	3	3	-	6
11-15	7	2	-	9
6-10	11	3	3	17
0-5	6	1	1	8
	35	14	15	64
(B) Number of years teaching CAPE Sociology:				
11+ years	7	3	2	12
9-10	4	2	-	6
7-8	6	-	2	8
5-6	2	4	1	7
3-4	4	2	5	11
1-2	8	-	4	12
0-11 months	4	3	1	8
	35	14	15	64

Table 3 – Years of Teaching at the Secondary Level and teaching CAPE Sociology

Teachers' Use of the Text

According to the literature, teachers use textbooks in classrooms in many different ways. In this study, teachers indicated how they used the text but were unsure about quantifying their various uses proportionally (Table 4) as requested. In the group discussions they maintained that the fluid nature of teaching with decisions being made minute by minute according to circumstances made it difficult to assign relative percentages to the amount of time they engaged in one particular use. This makes a case for interviews and observations in this genre of research.

Two categories on the questionnaire - *to supplement instruction* and *as a basis for my lectures or instruction* - were seen as too closely linked and teachers made their own distinctions. It was intended that the latter was the stronger of the two and the former to be interpreted as the text being more of a guide. An interesting finding is that 19 teachers did not indicate whether they used the text to facilitate discussion or group work. One of the concerns of the study is the implications for teaching and learning in the sixth form in relation to the broader aims of education in a developing country. A deeper analysis of how these 19 teachers actually used the text (Table 5) showed that most relied heavily on the text as a basis for their lectures and did not use it as a source of activities. Either these teachers were making use of other materials to facilitate discussion, activities, and group work, or they were conducting classes where the text was dominant only as a basis for instruction. However, to say that their classes would most likely be text-centred, cannot be established just from the evidence here, observational data would be needed.

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	Use of the Text	Supplement Instruction	Facilitate discussion/ group work	Activities	Assigned Readings	Basis for lectures
1.	Most of the time (71-100%)	11	10	12	17	22
2.	Often (51-70%)	8	2	4	3	6
3.	Sometimes (21-50%)	11	11	18	15	12
4.	Seldom (1-20%)	10	13	12	13	8
5.	Indicated use but not % of time	16	9	7	11	7
6.	Did not indicate	8	*19	11	5	9
	Totals	64	64	64	64	64

Table 4 Different Uses of the Text

	Use of the Text	Supplement Instruction	Activities	Assigned Readings	Basis for lectures
1.	Most of the time (71-100%)	4	2	4	8
2.	Often (51-70%)	2			
3.	Sometimes (21-50%)	3	3	4	4
4.	Seldom (1-20%)	1	4	3	2
5.	Indicated use but not % of time	4	2	4	2
6.	Did not indicate	5	8	4	3
	Totals	19	19	19	19

Table 5 Profile of Use of the *19 teachers who did not use the text for student discussion and groupwork

Qualitative data provided by teachers were analysed using *Horsley's centrality of textbook use* and *Remillard's conceptions of curriculum use* (Table 6). Statements were categorized according to whether the teachers seemed to regard the text as an integrated core resource, a core resource, or related and peripheral resources. Those statements also indicated decisions teachers made about how they used the texts and were categorized according to Remillard's conceptions of fidelity to the text, drawing on the text, interpreting the text or participating with it. The two sets of analysis were brought together seeking more explanatory power for how teachers used textbooks (Table 6).

The dominant way in which teachers spoke about the sociology textbook was as an integrated core resource indicating that the book provided not only the required scope and sequence of content and learning activities but also a range of assessment items and research information suitable for students' research projects. Some referred to the Caribbean-authored texts as providing much-needed examples and case studies of the regional context which well-known international textbooks did not do. For those who were concerned that many students did not own a text, it was not clear if they treated it as related or peripheral materials. Mapping Remillard's conceptions of curriculum use on to statements analysed according to Horsley's centrality of textbook use, yielded the finding that the large majority of teachers regarded the text as an integrated core resource and they used it in ways that showed the importance of fidelity to the text and drawing on the text. The latter could be done sparingly or in more robust active-seeking ways but we do not know which pre-dominates in this case.

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Horsley's et al Typology of the Centrality of Textbook Use	Remillard's Conceptions of Curriculum use
(A) The Text as an Integrated Core Resource	
The text helps in SBA completion and the Internal Assessment. Students need to read …so as teachers …the textbook is critical for discussion and general preparation for discussion in classes. A good textbook will enable the teacher to assign reading assignments and additional readings. (43)	Fidelity to the Text/ Drawing on the Text
Most of the textbooks used are main texts for the subject so it is important to make reference to them as much as possible. (7)	
Well the text is used for different reasons/activities at different times. To put it simply, the text is used 98% of the time….based on the plan for that day. (41)	
Students must read, therefore textbooks give them that opportunity to seek knowledge and make their own conclusion. Group work is also encouraged to promote good relationships. (31).	*Drawing on the Text/ Interpreting the Text*
They are used to give activities, the textbook has a very good range of activities that test the students scholastic ability in many ways. (34)	Participating with curricular features
(B) The Text as a Core Resource	
The examination body has come up short in terms of providing or making resources available to assist teachers in the teaching of Sociology and other subjects in the CAPE programme. (54)	Fidelity to the Text
It is very good to have the knowledge of what you are teaching. You can always make reference to a particular topic. It is very helpful in giving assignments. (37)	
Helps to assist both teachers and students in covering content (51)	
One way in which I use the text is to gather information for my content to pass on to my students (24).	
Textbooks are used as a guide however the evolution of technology make some textbooks obsolete very quickly (30)	Drawing on the Text
Textbooks are used as a guide for each module of the syllabus as determined by the syllabus. Teachers' notes may not originate from the textbook. (30)	

Table 6 Teacher statements: centrality of use and conceptions of curriculum use

While not explicitly stated it is likely that the teachers making the statements below must necessarily treat with the text as a *related resource* and utilize conceptions of the curriculum that speak to *drawing on* and *interpreting* the materials. *Participating with* the text would not be possible in the scenarios depicted below.

- *Can't use texts for assigned readings – students can't afford it; the library does not have many copies; and teachers can only photocopy a limited number of pages* (25)

- *All students do not have access to texts – difficult to use as a basis for discussion or group work* (42)

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Readability, Usability and Desirability of Sociology Textbooks

Few teachers are satisfied with their textbook, neither are they content to supplement it through other sources. There is a striving in the statements below for one omnibus text that can satisfy all or most of the needs of students and teachers. In Table 7 a large number of teachers see the need for study guides which would be a specific teacher resource to help them better prepare for classes. None of the textbooks in use have study guides indicating that teachers not only want a textbook with certain desirable features but also feel that they would be more confident in delivery if they had a sense of the author's intentions. Here we see teachers willing to take their cues about teaching a topic from the textbook and not necessarily interested in alternative sources. Table 7 shows that only two teachers felt that re-writing portions of the text for (or, with) their students would be something of value – an exercise that could be described as both *drawing on the text* or *interpreting the text*.

	What teachers feel would make texts more readable/usable	No. of times indicated by teachers
1.	Graphics and Activities	42
2.	Highlighting main ideas	41
3.	Use made of Study Guides	37
4.	Text reviews and previews vocabulary (key terms)	31
5.	Based on a variety of sources	19
6.	Oral reading	9
7.	Re-writing the text or portions of it	2
8.	No responses	4

Table 7 Making the Text more Readable /Usable

In their specific comments on texts with commendable layout and other features, teachers display some expertise in textbook competence. For example –

- *A few are student-friendly in terms of the layout, font and size and colour. Books that have too many words without pictures or boxes, cause students not to read the text because they find it boring.* (16)

- *Textbooks that are properly organized and have graphics tend to be student-friendly and students tend to show more interest in wanting to use them.* (36)

In discussing the content of their sociology texts, teachers said –

- *Texts often lack examples of concepts students are unfamiliar with having more examples of Caribbean context* (11)

- *Previous texts tend to separate mainstream sociology from Caribbean sociology (theory and research). This has merit but at the same point there must be an attempt to draw the comparisons and highlight the connections between the two.* (14)

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However, in commenting on the readability of sociology textbooks a plethora of issues and complaints emerged, not only that the texts were unfriendly to the reader, but more all-encompassing conditions surfaced such as the reluctance of students to read the texts and the inaccessibility of texts to the majority of students because of cost. (A sociology textbook costs approximately US$40).

In addressing the readability issue teachers said –

- *Students are of the view that the sociology texts are difficult to read and understand. This is particularly due to the fact that the subject is new to many of them and so it is difficult to assimilate.* (7)

- *Students complain that most of the sociology texts are difficult to follow. They express that texts' paragraphing is complex.* (13)

- *Students really do not read the text as they should. The text is most read for the preparation of an examination. Irrespective of the fact that it is used during lectures and for class activities, students complain about the content of what is to be read*. (45)

And, to that is added,
- *Sociology books are expensive according to the students thus it is only used by students in class or if they borrow from their teacher* (28)

Via e-mail teachers spoke of the limitations of the government's textbook rental scheme:

- *The problem with textbooks is still a sore point at my school. It is even worst now although the book rental system is still in place. The Ministry of Education is supplying the school with less than half of the books that are on the book rental list and majority of the students have to do without if they have no relatives or friends to borrow from because they cannot afford to buy.*

Contextual factors raised by teachers, largely that their students are reluctant readers, the sociology texts are difficult to negotiate and, not many students actually own a textbook, provide the setting for teacher decision making in relation to how they regard and use textbooks. Contextual factors also pertain to teachers - many are new to teaching the subject, even experienced teachers, and few teachers have a specialist sociology degree. These factors seem to have explanatory power for the finding that the majority of teachers hold to a view of the text as a core integrated resource and that fidelity to the text and drawing on the text are the main ways of delivering the curriculum.

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Teacher Decision-Making

It may not be the case that teachers consider fidelity to the text desirable in teaching and learning but the unique context(s) of the 6th form culminating in extremely high stakes examinations, makes it a necessary strategy. This may be at the root of the position teachers take when in the face of the scarcity of the text they insist that it is an all-important resource and great efforts should be made to procure it. It is not difficult to understand their thinking – what would the classroom scenario be like if all students did not own a text? The onus would be on the teacher to prepare as comprehensively as possible, using a range of digital and print resources, and to strive all the time to impose on instruction a sense of how the syllabus was laid out and what was stipulated content and what was not. The teacher would have to assign readings of books available online or in the school's library, knowing the students' reluctance to read. A classroom anchor then would be absent, one that was designed and customized especially for students sitting the CAPE Sociology examination.

The more recently Caribbean-authored texts are replete with pictures, charts and diagrams to elicit discussions; quizzes, multiple choice items and objective tests to be completed as class activities; case studies of regional examples to apply sociological theories; guidance on how to complete a sociology research project using the exact criteria of the CAPE syllabus; and, completed essay questions with notes on how to craft better responses. It is also feasible to consider that the text is an anchor in another way – it is a class management tool par excellence, its presence acts as a comfort to students, a blueprint of where they are and how much more they need to cover. Using other curriculum materials would be a hard sell for teachers – whilst students do not seem to want to read much, while they criticize the texts in use and while many cannot afford the text, in their eyes it is considered to be *the* legitimate resource (an *integrated core resource*). Use of the text assures them that their programme is on the right track.

The recent editions of sociology texts by Caribbean authors (Mohammed 2014; Chinapoo, Paisley & James 2014; and, Mustapha 2009) and, the generic introductory sociology texts by international authors (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Giddens & Sutton, 2009) all promote this idea of a *one-stop shop* text. Publishers in the extremely competitive textbook market mandate their writers to mirror the sequence of the syllabus, to be student-friendly, and to give as much guidance as possible in answering examination questions. Responding to this kind of marketing, students attempt different ways of accessing the text – two or three students would buy one text and share; or, one would buy say, the Caribbean Studies text and the other would buy the Sociology text; and, they also borrowed from past students, or tried to photocopy as much as possible.

The decisions teachers make in the face of the inaccessibility of the sociology text on the part of their students serve to reinforce a situation of 'fidelity to the text' and 'drawing

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on the text' rather than alternative strategies. Teachers interacted with booksellers for bulk purchase but noted that many bookshops were going out of business. They attempted to find ways to make sections of the textbook available to students - they lent their text to students for them to photocopy or, to take a picture on their phones of several pages, but not all schools allow smart phones and tablets.

- *In teaching and using the text, especially if not many students have the text, the pictures, maps etc are projected on the board using a projector and a document camera.* (50)

Teachers organize their face to face interactions with students to minimize the scarcity of textbooks – for example, most of them use group work as their premier, multi-pronged strategy which allows for sharing of textbooks, ensuring that some reading takes place and, fulfills some of the higher, cognitive goals of education as well as affective goals such as co-operation, sharing of knowledge and values, and fostering a student-friendly environment.

- *The text is sometimes used in small groups to have the students read different perspectives on some issue. This evokes critical thinking.* (7)

- *For assigned readings whether individually or group, because the students are reluctant to read. Also students tend to retain more when they do things together on their own, they also learn new things ideas that they would not have gathered in the regular class room setting. N.B. For assigned readings, students would get guided questions to answer along the way.* (4)

The contextual features of the sixth form learning environment in Jamaica influence teacher decisions about how textbooks and other resources are used. Teachers have to find ingenious ways to encourage students to read the text and other resources. One variant of group work outside the classroom is preparation for class where students have to play their role, and thus do the necessary reading, or else the activity fails. Another strategy is to tie what is to come in the next class with assignments related to the textbook which if they do not comply becomes obvious to their teacher and classmates.

- *Textbooks are sometimes used as a means of students preparing presentations to deliver to their classmates. This facilitates both peer instructions as well as peer reviews.* (19)

- *Questions and Answers i.e. students are given questions and have to use their textbooks to find the answers. Done to get students to think and to read.* (16)

Teachers also have to be vigilant with those students who own texts as well as those who do not, to encourage them to read.

- *One such way is when students are given open book tests. This forces them to read for information in order to answer the questions satisfactorily.* (36)

- *I sometimes use the text to do reading in class on a particular topic mainly because students do not purchase the text and they do very little reading on their own* (21)

At the same time, teacher decisions must also take into account the specific nature of the discipline, namely that sociology calls for reading a variety of sources.

- *To compare information given on specific topics with other "similar' texts. To help with comparative skills and to illustrate the way different authors emphasize different aspects of the syllabus. It also shows differences in opinion/thoughts. I give assigned readings with focus questions*. (22).

- *Students are reluctant to read – I encourage them to watch the news (CNN, BBC)…* (58)

- *I want students to read a bit more, and so they have to read 2-4 authors and as such encourage them to cite sources*. (15)

In discussing the decisions they have made about textbook use, teachers demonstrate their pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). They are well-aware of their students' learning needs and strive to organize ways for them to access relevant sources of content (usually the textbook) but they also manipulate use of the text to serve various pedagogical goals. To this end they are constantly evaluating textbooks on the market seeking those that might hold more appeal for students. While they will not easily find a sociology text that will make avid readers of their students, a text can also appeal in other ways, for example if it caters to the immediate instrumental goals of students. In other words, textbooks seem to be increasingly judged by their closeness of fit with the CAPE Sociology syllabus, namely that the organization of content mirrors how content is outlined in the syllabus, even down to sub-headings. Both teachers and students hold to the conception of textbook use as fidelity to the curriculum or drawing on the curriculum undoubtedly because of the salience of high-stakes examinations.

Teachers also display some levels of textbook competence stemming from their search to find the most appropriate textbook for students, especially for reluctant readers who find great difficulty in unraveling the complex sociological knowledge represented in textbooks. While most teacher education programmes do not address textbook competence as a foundational competence of teaching (Horsley, 2015), these teachers have developed their own ways of evaluating curriculum materials largely based on their own and their students' experience. Nevertheless, they could benefit from a more formal introduction to the field of judging the quality of learning materials against clearly defined criteria, and where weaknesses occur to be able to develop supplementary

materials themselves – for example, customising and adapting teaching and learning materials as well developing alternative ways of utilising available material resources (Visser, 2015).

It is apparent therefore that teachers in the 6th form are dependent on textbooks largely because of the depth and complexity of content they have to impart and the high stakes nature of the examinations. Publishers require that their writers maintain close fidelity to the syllabus which reinforces the value of the text to both teachers and students. However, when teachers diagnose a difficulty with certain parts of a text, they do not consider re-writing as an option, though they may mediate in other ways – clearer explanations, or, recommend other sources. Teacher mediation of materials is an area of textbook pedagogy that needs to be further studied as it goes on all the time, and may throw further light on Remillard's (2005) conception of curriculum use as *participating with the text*.

While there were references to freely available digital materials, teachers did not seize the opportunity to organize those materials in ways that mirror the syllabus so that students without a textbook would not be so much at a disadvantage. Digital sources are accessed for content in an ad hoc way and need to know basis but there is no overarching sense, while relying on these materials, of being within the confines of a fixed programme, with a specific scope and sequence to keep one on track. In other words, there is the sense that digital materials are useful when one wants further or clearer explanations but then one 'comes back' to the main text as the anchor and integrated core resource. For those without a text, migrating from one topic to another in cyberspace can lead to a less coherent grasp of the emphases of the syllabus.

Conclusion

The decisions teachers make in how they use the textbook in sociology 6th form classes stem directly from the context of preparing students for a high stakes examination. The need for mastery of complex content matter on the part of their students encourages a dependence on textbooks, a dependency capitalized on by textbook publishers whose products closely mirror the sociology syllabus. While teachers strive to assist students who are reluctant readers and who cannot afford expensive texts by using many varied pedagogical practices and approaches, they rarely seek to create or modify the existing text or produce their own materials. Finally, it seems that in a measured way teachers do address the wider goals of education for their 6th form charges through discussion, group work and class presentations which call for critical thinking, empathy, and a grasp of equity and human rights issues and, reliance on the textbook does not necessarily reduce the likelihood of this happening in classrooms. Further research into teacher decision-making and mediation of resources is needed especially through observations and more focused interviewing.

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APPENDIX

Teacher Questionnaire

Please respond to a few questions below which are seeking to find out how teachers use their sociology textbook for instruction. There are no right and wrong responses.

1. Some background on yourself as a teacher:

- Male or Female ………………….
- Highest level of qualification in Subject or Discipline ……………
- Highest level of qualification in Education ………………………..
- No. of years teaching at a secondary school ……………………
- No. of years teaching CAPE Sociology …………………………..
- Any other pertinent information ………………………………… …

2. How are textbooks selected at your school for CAPE?

3. Tick off the responses that apply to you - How do you <u>typically</u> use the textbook in CAPE Sociology classes or a related subject at CAPE.

- To supplement instruction -
- For student discussion on group work -
- As a source for activities -
- For assigned reading -
- As a basis for my lectures or instruction -

4. For those items you ticked off above go back and assign a rough estimation of how often (%) you tend to use the text in that way.

5. You may use this space to write further on any aspect of #4 and #5 that you care to elaborate on. …………………………………………………………………………….

6. Describe ONE way in which you <u>sometimes</u> use the text and why.

7. What things can be done to make the text more readable/usable?

- Use a variety of sources
- Preview and review vocabulary (key terms)
- Rewrite it
- Highlight main ideas

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- Oral reading
- Use graphics, activities
- Use study guides

8. You may use this space to comment freely on the readability/usability of sociology texts. ………………………………………………………………………………………….

9.What things keep you from the most effective use of your textbook?

- Time constraints
- Student characteristics
- Requirements of the system
- Limitations of the materials themselves
- My limitations (e.g. lack of knowledge)

10. What do you like about your textbook(s)?

- Content
- Organization of ideas
- Visuals, graphics
- End of chapter questions/activities
- Readability
- Overall: everything

11. Explain why you tend to use the text in ways described above.

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