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Abstract	Teaching and learning in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States are very different phenomena, and yet, the differences and similarities highlight the important role of curriculum in the progress and development of schools throughout the world. The significance of place cannot be ignored in a study that examines the intersection of teacher leadership and curriculum making in three countries; the context adds another layer of richness to the narratives that emerge from these comparisons. Teaching, learning and leading in twenty-first-century schools in both the Caribbean and in the United States require the adoption of transformative practices that have the intent of redefining the parameters of educational leadership in contested public spheres to include a commitment to critical thought and social justice as key components of curriculum development. The possibilities and potentialities for a transformation of the teaching profession and a subsequent transformation of teaching and learning are unlimited. Curriculum is the foundation of these change efforts, and transformative teacher leadership is the mechanism for conceptualizing, implementing and sustaining meaningful change while simultaneously changing the very nature of teachers' work. It is only in this way that curriculum theory, policy and practice can interface with transformative teacher leadership to meet the needs of twenty-first-century schools, families and communities in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States where the development and dissemination of universal education is essential to their progress and success.	
Keywords (separated by " - ")	Curriculum - Cross-cultural education - Teacher leadership - Teachers - Teachers' work	

Transformative Teacher Leadership in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States: Potentiality and Possibility in Curriculum Making and School Reform Efforts

Eleanor Blair

Introduction

Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental… The freedom to learn… has been bought by bitter sacrifice. And whatever we may think of the curtailment of other civil rights, we should fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn, the right to have examined in our schools not only what we believe, but what we do not believe; not only what our leaders say, but what the leaders of other groups and nations, and the leaders of other centuries have said. We must insist upon this to give our children the fairness of a start which will equip them with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to

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> judge what the world is and what its greater minds have thought it might be. (Du Bois 1970, pp. 230–231)

I begin this chapter with a quote from W.E.B. Du Bois because nothing that I have to say is important without the acknowledgement that learning and access to knowledge is a fundamental right that belongs to all people; this is what curriculum is all about and this should be the moral and ethical underpinning of all curriculum theory, policy and practice. Regardless of whether you are Dominican, Jamaican or an American, the freedom to learn is at the root of all of our battles over schools, and ultimately, the control of the curriculum is both a political and social act that has far-reaching ramifications for struggles over power, status and authority. Although Du Bois wrote these words many years ago, his sentiments are just as applicable today. Cross-cultural studies of teaching and learning in different countries highlight the role of schools as public places where ideological choices are made regarding the process and product of knowledge workers and their clients. In its broadest sense, curriculum is about teaching and learning and preparing children to take their rightful places in global economies that no longer adhere to the strict borders that designate and separate one country from another. We live in a world where our shared futures are more important than our individual destinies. We live in a world where we must be interdependent; the problems of one become the problems of all. As such, teaching and learning are politicized acts that challenge us to not only own our values and beliefs, but fight for them if necessary. It is not sufficient to simply define learner outcomes in the staid language of the bureaucrats who attempt to pretend that knowledge and learning are not value-laden, but rather the outcomes of a positivistic guided vision of pedagogy. Reyes-Guerra and Bogotch (2011) describe this work in the following:

> Curriculum theory and inquiry is, in its essence a study of a nation's culture through the needs of its learners. It begins and continues as the practice of democratic values. As such, the legitimacy of educational leadership as a profession is not in raising test scores but rather in ministering to meet the needs of its citizenry. (p. 150)

It can be argued that ideology, passion and aesthetics have shaped the design of curricula and schools throughout history and that these forces have also impacted education and schooling in the countries that we are discussing. Each of these systems has been moulded and shaped by the

various forces of modernity, immigration, urbanization and industrialization, as well as the political, social and cultural forces that schools are continually responding to in their efforts to meet both the needs of society and government. And as such, schools naturally reflect current ideological orientations along with the various fads and trends that regularly circulate throughout the education literature. Curriculum work in each of the three countries addressed in this chapter is the foundation for the delivery of the most relevant knowledge, skills and experiences, but teachers are the most important actors in this drama. Charlotte Danielson (2006) refers to these individuals as teacher leaders who possess:

> That set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere. It entails mobilizing and energizing others with the goal of improving the school's performance of its critical responsibilities related to teaching and learning. (p. 12)

In this equation, the powerful impact of teachers rising to the surface as leaders with transformative visions regarding how, what and why we teach establishes a symbiotic connection between teacher leaders and school efficacy as an important component of curriculum narratives.

Teaching and learning in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States are very different phenomena, and yet, the differences and similarities highlight the important role of curriculum in the progress and development of schools throughout the world. The significance of place cannot be ignored in a study that examines the intersection of teacher leadership and curriculum making in three countries; the context adds another layer of richness to the narratives that emerge from these comparisons. Historically, American public schools have never been true to democratic ideals of equity and access; however, seemingly there was the steady progress of reforms that seemed to continually redefine the potential of public schools to respond to changing societal needs and demands. More recent critiques of the schools challenge these conclusions and document the lack of success seen in schools that serve poor and often diverse students from both urban and rural environments (Giroux 2012; Kozol 2012; McLaren 2015). Similarly, contemporary Jamaican and Dominican schools also function within a broader democratic ideology and yet, suffer from the limitations of large bureaucracies that often subjugate broader public needs and purposes to the political and economic agendas of a few.

Teaching, learning and leading in twenty-first-century schools in both the Caribbean and in the United States require the adoption of transformative practices that have the intent of redefining the parameters of educational leadership in contested public spheres to include a commitment to critical thought and social justice as key components of curriculum development.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Teachers' Work

At the core of any discussion of schools and curriculum is the essential role played by teachers. In this chapter, the thread that holds it all together is the link between curriculum and teachers acting as transformative leaders to guide our visions of what twenty-first-century school reform efforts should look like; a teacher-created vision that becomes a bottom-up rather than top-down restructuring of the organization of school hierarchies and the redesign of teaching and learning spaces. Regardless of the culture, teaching is hard work; it is even harder in schools that are under-resourced and over-crowded. And yet, dedicated and passionate people still choose teaching as a profession despite the knowledge that their work will be full of challenges and few rewards. At the end of most days, there is only the reminder that they work in low-status jobs with little of the status and autonomy granted to other professionals. Today, in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States, we see increasing efforts to support and perpetuate the emergence of teachers who are highly qualified and well-educated, and yet, their participation in educational decision-making is extremely limited. The inherent contradictions between changes in the educational level of teachers and the lack of change in the professional status of teachers are seldom noted by those in decision-making positions; however, it is important to this discussion. Better educated and more highly qualified teachers will demand a different kind of profession; they will not be happy with the status quo. In each of these countries, there are public expressions of dissatisfaction with the process and product of public education, and yet, efforts to address aspects of the teaching profession that act as impediments to teacher efficacy are often seen as frivolous amendments to already beleaguered educational institutions. Things like higher pay, participation in curricular decision-making and mediated entry into the profession with subsequent opportunities for teacher leadership are not the focus of discussions regarding the reforming of public educational spaces. Better educated, highly qualified teachers are increasingly

frustrated by the antiquated hierarchical educational bureaucracies that continue to limit teachers to semi-professional roles. Teacher roles and responsibilities, like test scores, are viewed as potential tools of reform and not something worthy of dissection, critical analysis and reconceptualization. Teacher attrition in all three countries is high despite improvements in the profession (Evans 1993; Feistritzer 2011; Jennings 2001; Rodgers-Jenkinson and Chapman 1990). Teacher pay has steadily increased, but working conditions have remained stagnant. Typically, school reform efforts that focus on teachers' work identify three key variables that have the potential to improve the profession: first, increasing the educational requirements for entry into the profession; second, improved salaries and working conditions; and third, encouragement of collaboration and shared decision-making among major stakeholders, internal and external to the school community (Goldstein 2015; Green 2015). These attempts to recognize the various levels of skill, education and expertise of teachers are prerequisite to real changes in the work of teachers, but unfortunately, these changes seldom have as their goal the creation of opportunities for teachers to assume important leadership roles, both formal and informal, beyond the classroom. Typically, leadership roles for teachers involve the assumption of administrative duties. Roles that challenge traditional notions of school leadership and provide opportunities for teacher leaders to find meaningful and sustainable opportunities to participate in curriculum planning that connects theory to practice are limited or nonexistent. Ignoring opportunities to incorporate teachers working in traditional teacher roles into the leadership and decision-making activities of schools ignores an important resource that has the potential to positively impact schools without requiring the allocation of additional monetary resources. Again, the role of teachers acting as leaders is an essential one that is key to curriculum planning and school improvement across various cultural contexts.

Transformative Teacher Leaders

Henry Giroux (1988) first introduced the idea of the teacher as intellectual, but he expanded that notion to argue that the teacher must be a transformative intellectual "if students are to become active, critical individuals" (p. 127). He went on to suggest that "central to the category of transformative intellectual is the necessity of making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical" (p. 127). As such, it is

imperative that curriculum work engages teachers acting as transformative intellectuals in "the struggle to overcome economic, political and social injustices, and to further humanize themselves as part of the struggle" (Giroux 1988, p. 127). Within this framework, the notion of transformative teacher leadership imbued with an ideological commitment to social justice emerges as a key feature of the teacher leader acting as an intellectual in twenty-first-century schools.

Teacher leadership, an important element of most successful school improvement efforts, depends upon the idea that "teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice" (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2009, p. 6). Katzenmeyer and Moller go on to describe the power of teacher leadership as a "sleeping giant" with the potential to transform both the profession of teaching and the nature of school reform in schools. As such, discussions of curriculum and school reform demand that we consider the potential impact of transformative teacher leadership within a larger framework that encompasses curriculum theory and practice, a discussion that is almost nonexistent in the literature, although individuals like Anderson (2009), Freire (1968) and Giroux (2012) have laid the groundwork for these discussions within a critical ideological framework. A vision of transformative leaders must be conceptualized as a piece of a larger theoretical and ideological vision if it is to ultimately have the potential to transform the public schools and, subsequently, demonstrate the intersection of curriculum making and teachers acting in transformative leadership roles. This chapter provides a multicultural framework that envisions teacher leaders transcending previously narrow definitions of their work and participating in the creation of a dream—a dream for a profession that possesses the status, power and influence to lead us into the twenty-first century and create schools that are responsive to the needs of all constituencies. As previously noted, schools in the three countries under study aspire to these aims and purposes, but at this time, the outcomes are disappointing and there is much work to be done. In the United States, movements to privatize schools and disenfranchise the public agenda for education are thriving. Likewise, challenges to public education are also prevalent in the Caribbean schools of both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic where a legacy of failed school reform efforts has instilled a lack of confidence in the ability of both government agencies and teachers to promote lasting, sustainable change in schools and the students they

serve. Comparing Caribbean schools with those in the United States documents both the similarities and differences between countries struggling to overcome intransigent attitudes about change that begin at the curriculum planning level. Freire's (1968, 2000, 2013) ideas clarify the need to construct a leadership narrative that focuses on a view of transformative teacher leadership as "interventionist activism" that is imbued with hope and a commitment to advocacy that has the potential to change "front-line" curricular decision-making in public schools. Utilizing descriptive research and data from scholars working in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States, this chapter "paints" a comparative picture of contemporary schools in these countries and considers the challenges faced by transformative teacher leaders working in twenty-first-century schools where the curriculum lacks relevance and often reflects the needs of another time, another place. As a consequence of long traditions of oppressive practices that grant authority only to those in formal administrative roles, teachers' work typically consists of efforts to follow the rules and enforce the policies and practices that have been "handed down" to them. The outcomes of this process, according to Freire (1968), are teachers who are less likely to:

> Develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of the world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them. (p. 73)

The realization that teachers function in roles more similar to those of students than leaders highlights the difficulties that they encounter in their pursuit of full professional status and the obstacles they face in their attempts to successfully advocate on behalf of parents and students from families and communities where the public schools continue to fail to provide suitable environments for teaching and learning all children. As such, inherent to this discussion is a reconsideration of the roles of teachers with an emphasis upon understanding the kinds of questions that must guide the development of a critical consciousness that is prerequisite to new roles and responsibilities and, ultimately, the creation of schools that directly challenge the oppressive forces that create obstacles to the ethical and courageous pursuit of schools that address the needs of ALL students in meaningful, substantive ways.

What's Curriculum Got to Do with It?

This chapter examines the potential role of transformative teacher leadership in curriculum development in three countries. Curriculum planning and development as it is broadly defined is a fundamental part of efforts to create twenty-first-century schools in a new image that reflects a more global interconnected world where diversity and differences are the norm and accountability for academic excellence among all children is prerequisite for the successful social, political and economic growth and development of a nation. Examining schools in countries as different as the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States brings to the surface of the discussion the most salient (and often contested) facets of public educational spaces where access to knowledge is limited for those lacking political and economic power. It is important to begin this discussion by highlighting the depth and breadth of curricular issues and the role it plays in shaping specific learning outcomes.

William Pinar (2004) argues that curriculum theory and development is a "complicated conversation" (p. 185). Reyes-Guerra and Bogotch (2011) suggest that it is important for us to understand the difference between how "curriculum theorists conceptualize their field from how we in educational leadership write about our roles and our preparation programs" (p. 143). They want us to understand that "curriculum makes leadership stronger ....and educational leadership can potentially make curriculum theory stronger" (p. 143). Their arguments depend upon on an element of interdependency in these relationships and rely on ideas that are central to the notion that discussions about curriculum theory, policy and practice benefit from being considered within the framework of teacher leadership that is transformative.

According to Walker and Soltis (1997), curriculum "refers not only to the official list of courses offered by the school-we call that the 'official curriculum'-but also to the purposes, content, activities, and organization of the educational program actually created in schools by teachers, students, and administrators" (p. 1). Curriculum, broadly defined, includes everything we do in schools and impacts the lives of teachers and students. Ralph W. Tyler (1949) defined curriculum planning as needing to include a consideration of the following questions:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?

3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (p. x)

Unfortunately, most discussions of curriculum focus on what is being taught and tested. Too often, tested knowledge becomes the official programme of study and that is a clear example of "getting the cart in front of the horse." Tyler's questions are elegant in their simplicity, and yet, they highlight what curriculum planning should look like. The answers to these questions are less important than the kinds of discussions they produce; discussions that under ideal circumstances regularly occur among major stakeholders committed to creating school communities that promote and support social justice. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case. Larger, philosophical issues that are prerequisite to quality curriculum planning; issues related to questions regarding the relationship between what, why and how we teach are ignored; even bigger issues related to social justice, equity and advocacy; and issues that are, perhaps, more important to school outcomes are seldom included in these discussions. Regardless of whether we are talking about schools in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica or the United States, how we define the problem ultimately determines the solution. If we don't spend the requisite time understanding what we believe and value in teaching and learning and thinking deeply about defining and understanding the issues, we will never come up with solutions that are relevant and sustainable.

Curriculum planning and development are critically important to school reform efforts, and in less advantaged nations, the curriculum is too often managed by centralized bureaucracies that allow little room for the voices of diverse stakeholders with an interest in the decision-making and learning outcomes. Teachers stepping out of their traditional, semi-professional roles and participating in curriculum planning are essential to meaningful school reform in all schools. Cross-cultural comparisons of the schools and the nature of teachers' work in different countries provide a different perspective on how we unpack the curriculum and systematically begin to answer each of the questions posed by Ralph W. Tyler. Teacher leadership that is transformative has the potential to affect not only the curriculum but the lives and work of all teachers and students.

Teacher and Learning in Three Countries: "Begin with the End in Mind"

Examining the status of education in three very diverse countries is not an easy task. Both the Dominican Republic and Jamaica can be viewed as developing countries seeking to take their places in an increasingly interdependent global world where economic gains frequently follow widespread social reforms. Oddly enough, the United States, a country once seen as a leader in universal access to education, is now seen as a nation struggling to reconcile issues of equity and justice with the mediocre educational opportunities and outcomes among poor children from diverse backgrounds. Stephen Covey's (2013) idea of "beginning with the end in mind" is relevant when we talk about schools and attempt to visualize a future that would benefit all major stakeholders: children, families, communities, teachers and so on. We must articulate a vision of where we want to go prior to establishing the road that will get us there. The differences between the three countries being discussed in this essay are immense, and yet, each one, in its own way, acknowledges the importance of education and schooling to a viable participation in a twenty-first-century global economy. While entire essays…even books…could be written about education and schools and teachers in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States, this chapter is an attempt to focus on both the problems and the progress of schools in three disparate nations and then focus on the potentially momentous role that teachers could play in revamping these systems in ways that are transformative for both the teaching profession and the schools that are the recipients of these efforts. As long as large numbers of children in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States are ill-prepared to meet twenty-first-century demands in the areas of literacy, numeracy and technology, these countries will see their forward movement into the next century slowed by their educational failures. As the numbers of children challenging the success of these systems grows, economic and social stability will also be at risk. In the sections that follow, I attempt to provide short vignettes that describe the status of schools in the three countries under discussion.

Schooling in the Dominican Republic

The United States doesn't have a monopoly on notions regarding the importance of educational equality and access; education and schooling is equally valued, but often unattainable to the general population of the Dominican

Republic, and again, the problems are complex and the solutions not easily discerned. The Dominican Republic is a sovereign country that occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola; the western one-third of the island is occupied by the nation of Haiti. A Spanish-speaking nation, it currently has a population of approximately 10 million people. Schools are seen as important to the success of their nation, but the problems afflicting their system of public education are large, varied and, most times, seemingly insurmountable. Francisco Chapman's 1987 dissertation, *Illiteracy and Educational Development in the Dominican Republic: An Historical Approach*, examined the historical roots of the Dominican's ongoing crisis in education. Chapman explored the tensions between the cultural diversity that exists in the country and the steady migration of Dominicans to the United States as important dimensions of life in the Dominican. While schooling is compulsory in the Dominican Republic, compared to other Latin American and Caribbean nations, the word "worst" is most often used to describe the Dominican schools, both past and present.

Since 2008, the country has been attempting to implement its third Ten-Year Education Plan. "The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Forum, international organizations that assess the quality of education, released information in 2010 ranking the Dominican Republic's primary education as the worst of the Central American and Caribbean region" ("Education is the most critical issue facing the Dominican Republic," n.d., n.p.). In a piece titled, "Dominican Republic Revamps Failing Education System," Manning (2014) describes the schools in the Dominican Republic as some of the worst in the world:

> In the Caribbean nation of nearly 10 million people, the education system ranks among the worst in the world. Test scores in urban areas are as low as in rural areas. Poor students can't escape the failing public education system, making it difficult for them to break out of poverty.
>
> Like its neighbors, the Dominican Republic struggles with overcrowded classrooms in shoddy facilities. There's a high dropout rate, an outdated curriculum, overage students who fail classes and have to repeat grades, among other problems. But perhaps the most worrying issue is poorly trained teachers. (n.p.)

Other reports confirm the problems described in the previous passage:

> Many people understand that the public education system in the Dominican Republic leaves much to be desired, but comparing it to that of the United

> States helps one to understand the depth of the problem. The net enrollment rate for primary schooling in the Dominican Republic is 90%, which is only 4% lower than in the U.S. However, the dropout rate for students in primary education is 25.2%, which is more than triple the 6.9% dropout rate in the U.S. Another sobering statistic shows that the net enrollment rate for secondary education in the U.S. is 88%, whereas it is only 40% in the Dominican Republic.
>
> These unfavorable public education statistics are reflective of the poor quality of education that the children receive. Students in public schools in the Dominican Republic do not receive enough individual attention at school due to the high student-to-teacher ratio; 25 or more students to 1 classroom teacher in primary education. In United States primary education there are around 13 students to 1 classroom teacher. This discrepancy has devastating effects on a child's ability to learn as they are not able to receive extra support while learning difficult lessons and certainly contributes to students dropping out of school early or failing. ("Education in the Dominican Republic," n.d., n.p.)

To its credit, Manning (2014) notes that "the Dominican Republic is the first country in the Caribbean to undertake a major education overhaul. In 2012, voters convinced all presidential candidates to promise—if elected—to double the education budget. Now President Danilo Medina is staking his reputation on education reform. The country will spend 4 percent of its GDP—almost 2 billion euros in 2014" (n.p.). Will it work? Some are optimistic, others not so much.

> The quality of education has been and continues to be an unresolved problem in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic is ranked 140 out of 142 countries in Latin America, making the country close to the worst in education. Under a law created in 1997, the Dominican government must spend at least 4% of their GDP on education, but the DR has never even appropriated 2%. As a result, schools often do not have the proper funding to give adequate resources and time to their students. In fact, most students only have a half day of school. (Creed 2012, n.p.)

Acknowledgement of these problems has led political leaders in the Dominican Republic to initiate widespread reforms in several key areas: curriculum, funding for construction of schools, lower teacher-student ratios, increased teacher pay and longer school days. The articulation of these changes is a first step; however, the next step will be in the implementation and sustainability of these proposals. Deep cultural changes are

necessary if families are to embrace these initiatives and support attempts to change both the process and product of public education. Manning (2014) documents that "about 40 percent of boys and girls leave school before eighth grade. Even those who get through high school and complete 12 years of school start college at a sixth-grade reading level, according to a Dominican university study" (n.p.). As such, change is imperative for the future survival of schools in the Dominican Republic; however, the future of the country is also tightly wrapped up in these changes.

While there is little research that examines the roles of teachers in this country, it is apparent that teachers are ill-prepared to meet the needs of twenty-first-century students. Despite the changes that have been implemented, "maybe one of the striking issues in the Dominican Republic is that, despite the investment and advances in teacher training and certification, students had the lowest scores in the regional test SERCE, which examined reading and math skills in 3rd and 6th grades of primary education" (OREALC/UNESCO 2008, cited in Guzmán et al. 2013, p. 10).

> It has been noted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MESCyT) that there are five priorities related to initial teacher training: (a) strengthen programs though hiring full time teacher educators, promoting online teacher networks and implementing standards; (b) upgrade the profile of candidates who wish to enter teacher programs; (c) promote internationalization of teacher training; (d) implement accreditation of teacher training programs and (e) stimulate teachers' involvement in research within the classroom. (PREAL/CIEDHUMANO 2012; cited in Guzmán et al. 2013, p. 10)

Furthermore, Guzmán et al. (2013) have cited numerous statistics documenting that the Dominican Republic faces many complex and interrelated challenges in relation to teacher training (see PREAL/EDUCA 2010; PREAL/CIEDHUMANO 2012):

> (a)Data from 2010 indicate that only 1.2% of the 1,868 teacher educators hold a doctorate degree. (b) Although there might be a concern about requiring higher formal education to teachers (for example, a graduate degree), previous training and certification at the licenciatura level has not so far produced good results on student learning as it is shown in national tests14 (see PNUD 2008). In addition, this is reinforced by low scores of Dominican children in international tests (OREAL/UNESCO 2008). (c) There is a test (Prueba de Orientación y Medición Académica—POMA)

> to enter higher education; its results, however, aren't used for admission of applicants to education programs, including teacher training. (d) Pedagogical issues are emphasized in initial teacher training but content of the disciplines and teaching practice are rather weak. (e) Although in-service teacher training is scarcely evaluated, studies available show it has low impact on teacher performance and, hence, on student learning. (f) Although some teachers received training supported by ICT, this resource is not available for many schools. (g) Performance standards for teachers and principals were established in 2009 but a definition is needed about how those standards will be implemented and measured. At some point, it would be advisable to link standards to teacher pre- and in-service training. (p. 11)

Clearly needed in the Dominican Republic is an upgrading of the teaching profession and the creation of informal and formal opportunities for teachers that encourage collaborative leadership roles in the schools as an important aspect of emerging teacher leadership. While the status of teacher leadership in the Dominican Republic today is quite low, it is encouraging that there are official recommendations that recognize teachers as a primary part of school reform efforts. Increasingly, one sees calls for the involvement of highly qualified teachers in professional development efforts and the dissemination of research in classrooms noted in the literature on Dominican education.

Schooling in Jamaica

Jamaica is the largest English-speaking island in the Caribbean. It is the fourth largest island in the area with a population of 2.8 million people. A former British colony, Jamaica achieved full independence in 1962. Jamaicans are nothing, if not optimistic. Their perspective is captured by the motto, "Out of Many One People" or the popular notion of "One love, one heart, one Jamaica"; these sound bites echo across the island in music and advertisements for various all-inclusive resorts and tourist attractions. However, these messages often obscure a view of Jamaica as a complex country where race, economics and social justice issues regularly emerge in frequently contentious discussions regarding the progress and product of the island as an independent country, but more specifically, in the establishment of appropriate aims and purposes for public education.

Jamaica is an interesting case study for many reasons; however, the Jamaican identity is one place to begin a quest to understand Jamaica. Kirk Meighoo (1999) explores the complexity of Jamaican identity and compares it to the popular local cuisine epitomized by curry goat:

> Despite being Jamaica's second largest ethnic group, Indians have yet to be referred to as a meaningful or "real" Jamaican community in the same way that the Black, Brown, White, Chinese, or Syrian/Lebanese communities are. Indeed, Indo-Jamaicans largely exist in a situation where non-Indians? who greatly outnumber them? barely (and often only insultingly) recognize their existence. On the other hand, Indians do blend in quite naturally and inconspicuously in the Jamaican mélange…. "Jamaicanness" must move from an obscuring, assimilative and reluctant plurality to a plurality that is celebratory, open and revealing. I propose that the present-day place of curry goat in Jamaican identity symbolize the direction for this future transformation. As curry goat is quite easily and readily seen as both Jamaican and Indian, so too must Jamaican identity itself be seen. (p. 43)

Jamaican identity is important because the legacy of the years spent as a British colony (1655–1962) has led to an ongoing struggle to establish what is really Jamaican and what is simply the inheritance of the British occupation. Nowhere is this battle more clearly fought than in the attempts to build an educational system that is truly Jamaican and not simply a shoddy remaking of the system created for them by the British. Language is the site for many of the most obvious struggles over identity issues related to the chasm between British and Jamaican cultural norms. While most Jamaicans clearly speak a Jamaican Standard English (JSE) that reflects the British influence, in reality, a large percentage of Jamaican are bilingual, and in private circles and in the deep country, Patois is spoken. Patois is the preferred language of many Jamaicans; a creole blended English that until recently was treated as inferior to JSE. While controversy still swirls around discussions of Patois as a legitimate language, the school, as an instrument of political power and a purveyor of official knowledge, still prefers JSE as the language of instruction, and in many schools, punitive actions result for any student caught speaking Patois. This issue is just one of many that serves to separate Jamaicans and create a class-based system that separates and stigmatizes certain sectors of society.

In Jamaica, free, universal education is encouraged across the island in schools run by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. Nevertheless, all-age schools serving children in the lower grades are often over-crowded and under-resourced with dramatic differences occurring between schools in urban areas and those in the deep country. The low academic performance of students at primary and secondary levels is well-documented. An article in *The Daily Gleaner* (2011), Jamaica's leading newspaper, noted that "the stark fact of the matter is that most of the nation's schools are failing schools. If one takes the bare minimum

standard of 50 per cent of students meeting basic minimum performance requirements, many schools are failing. If one ups this to a far more reasonable 75 per cent, the vast majority of primary and secondary schools are failing" ("Education Performance and Failing Schools," 2011, n.p.). The essay concludes that "Jamaica has one of the worse performing education system in CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market), despite all the money thrown at it" (n.p.). In 2004, the Taskforce on Educational Reform Final Report, *Jamaica, A Transformed Education System*, described the situation in the following way: "The education system caters to approximately 800,000 students in public and private institutions at the early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Over 22,000 teachers are employed in 1,000 public institutions. Only 20% of teachers are trained university graduates" (p. 9). Unfortunately, they concluded that

> the system's performance is well below acceptable standards, manifested in low student performance. Data from the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture, reveal that in 2003, less than one-third of the children entering grade 1 were ready for the primary level, some 30% of primary school leavers were illiterate, and only about 20% of secondary graduates had the requisite qualification for meaningful employment and/or entry to most secondary programmes. (p. 47)

A more recent discussion of education in Jamaica described the status of education in the following essay, "Fix Our Broke and Broken Education System" (2016); they state unequivocally that "it is clear to us that Jamaica's education system fails to address the needs of our workforce" (n.p.). The essay argues that schools have been waylaid by a government focus on debt and crime and that the education system is misaligned to the needs of Jamaican students. They advocate for innovation that recognizes the uniqueness of each student and moves toward examining the best educational practices of other nations. In conclusion, they promote the following vision for Jamaican schools:

- Remodel existing, under utilised schools and infrastructure to create special regional institutes that cater to the interests and competences of individual students for example high schools for: the visual and performing arts, more specialised institutions for physical education and sports, development and technologies, and entrepreneurship,

agriculture, like the so far successful remodelling of Trench Town High School into a polytechnic college.

- Develop a streamlined process for the monitoring and assessment of overall progress of students through the development of personal learning plans (PLPs) and separate students based on areas of interest and regional location rather than the traditional versus non-traditional institutions that currently exist.
- Base classroom instructions on what was gathered in these PLPs and ensure there are various academic intervention programmes in these specialised schools.
- If the issue is that we cannot afford too much reform then we must recognise sustainability issues as an immediate priority. If we have limited capital spending and the rest of the budget is dedicated to paying overhead costs including electricity, then an immediate priority is to dedicate capital spending of one or two years to eliminate unnecessary costs and become as energy- and food-sufficient as possible. ("Fix Our Broke and Broken Education System," 2014, n.p.)

Following these recommendations are more recent articles in *The Daily Gleaner* advocating for teachers as the key to these reform measures. In the essay, "Target Teacher Training—Education Needs Top Quality for Transformation" (2016), they cite recent research noting the need "for a fresh, new template for training teachers" (n.p.). This work emerged "from a group of education thinkers who acknowledge that raising teacher quality is a key factor in student achievement" (n.p.). Furthermore, in this essay, they advocate for teachers and issue the following demands:

> Better-qualified and committed teachers, effective management and accountability, robust school boards and greater parental and community involvement in education…. Various reforms have been undertaken in the name of education over many years, including revamped curriculum, shift system and free education, but the conclusion of Fourth Floor participants was that they all fall short of the impact of having a good teacher in the classroom. ("Target Teacher Training—Education Needs Top Quality for Transformation," 2016, n.p.)

The system is as equally broken as schools in the Dominican Republic; however, the differences have to do with the conflicts that arise because of national identity issues. Jamaicans struggle with the intersection between

identity and cultural norms. To the outsider, it seems that they are still working their way towards complete independence from the British influence and that creates myriad issues that must be addressed in the reforming of an educational system that is unique to Jamaicans.

While there is widespread recognition and acceptance of the link between social mobility and education, the discrepancies that exist between the various social classes exacerbate the chasm between low- and high-performing schools. Add to that the low status of teachers and one has created a context for the steady decline in the numbers of those choosing to teach and attrition among those who became teachers. Hyacinth Evans (1993), a notable Jamaican scholar and writer, laments the reasons that teaching as a career has become less than desirable, "harsh conditions and at times the absence of equipment and resources, especially in the all-age and primary schools, have reduced the attractiveness and the status of teaching. Above all, however, teachers' salaries have not kept pace with the rapidly rising cost of living. All these factors have operated to make teaching a less automatic choice than it was twenty or thirty years ago" (p. 229). As such, the teaching profession in Jamaica is fraught with difficulties, and yet, there are committed teachers willing to pursue their work with commitment and passion. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information has continued to press forward with reforms that require all teachers to be licensed at the baccalaureate level, increase teacher salaries and address issues related to the elimination of shift schools and general funding of the public schools and, finally, curriculum review and revision at all levels. In the end, the Taskforce on Educational Reform Final Report, *Jamaica, A Transformed Education System* (2004), describes strategies of "achieving the vision through transformation…. If the nation continues to travel along the 'current path', it will not achieve the shared vision. What is required, is to get on the 'transformation path'. The difference between the 'current path' and the 'transformation path' is the transformation gap, which we must close" (p. 65). They affirm the *National Shared Vision for Education in Jamaica* that includes the following:

> Each learner will maximise his/her potential in an enriching, learner-centred education environment with maximum use of learning technologies supported by committed, qualified, competent, effective and professional educators and staff. The education system will be equitable and accessible with full attendance to Grade 11. Accountability, transparency and performance are the hallmarks of a system that is excellent, self-sustaining and resourced

> and welcomes full stakeholder participation. The system produces full literacy and numeracy, a globally competitive, quality workforce and a disciplined, culturally aware and ethical Jamaican citizenry. (p. 11)

In line with these recommendations, it seems that there is a place for a more in-depth examination of the roles that teacher leaders could play in this vision of transformation. While many of the reports on Jamaican education consider the role of administrative leaders, there is an absence of any discussion of the role of teacher leaders is school reform. It is interesting that a country can advocate for higher levels of teacher preparation and an upgrading of the professional status of teachers and yet ignore the potential power of these teachers in new roles, both informal and formal, that allow teachers to assume leadership in the schools and participate as major actors directing efforts to reform the schools. It can be argued that that one piece of the future Jamaican educational tapestry might be the most cost-effective mechanism for real and sustainable change. Perhaps, of all the recommendations for school reform that might be suggested, this one thing could be the most controversial. Teachers acting as leaders, in a profession dominated by women, would challenge the status quo and usurp preconceived notions regarding the work of teachers.

Schooling in the United States

Writing about education and schooling in the United States should be an easy task, but it's not. There are no easy summaries regarding the status of schools. Schools are expensive and controversial, and yet, a free, publicly funded education that is available to all students is a fundamental cornerstone of the most basic democratic ideals. And while there are many entirely reasonable debates regarding the veracity of the promises made under the guise of democratic ideals, public schools are still important. For many children and their families, public schools offer a promise of equal access and social justice that is not found in many countries. Public schools and the state-mandated curriculum are hotly debated topics throughout the country; however, the fierceness of these arguments only highlights the importance of the institution and the knowledge that it serves up to children on a daily basis. In contrast to the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, there is no centralized organization for schools, schools are controlled by the states and interventions from the federal government occur through

specialized programmes, constitutional issues, laws, grants and other initiatives through the US Department of Education.

Despite efforts to extend the privatization of schools through charter schools and school vouchers, public education in the United States currently serves approximately:

> 50.4 million public school students entering prekindergarten through grade 12 in fall 2016, White students will account for 24.6 million. The remaining 25.9 million will be composed of 7.8 million Black students, 13.3 million Hispanic students, 2.7 million Asian/Pacific Islander students, 0.5 million American Indian/Alaska Native students, and 1.5 million students of two or more races. The percentage of students enrolled in public schools who are White is projected to continue to decline through at least fall 2025, as the enrollments of Hispanic students and Asian/Pacific Islander students increase. (National Center for Educational Statistics 2016, n.p.)

In the United States, the public schools enrol 90% of all school age children leaving 10% to private or home-based education (Jennings 2013, n.p.). These statistics are powerful; the demographics of the public schools are changing, and yet, data consistently show that the schools are not successfully responding to the needs of twenty-first-century students.

Important to any discussion of public schools and twenty-first-century students in the United States is a consideration of two basic questions: First, how much do we spend on education, and second, what is the relationship between funding and educational outcomes. In response to these questions, Lips et al. (2008) make the following key points:

1. American spending on public K–12 education continues at an all-time high and is still rising, reaching $9,266 per pupil in 2004–2005. Total real spending per student (including all levels of government funding) has increased by 23.5 percent over the past decade and 49 percent over the past 20 years.
2. Federal spending on elementary and secondary education has also increased dramatically. Since 1985, real federal spending on K–12 education has increased by 138 percent.
3. Continuous spending increases have not corresponded with equal improvement in American educational performance. Long-term NAEP reading scale scores and high school graduation rates show that the performance of American students has not improved dramatically in recent decades even though education spending has soared.

4. Instead of simply increasing funding for public education, federal and state policymakers should implement education reforms, such as parental choice in education, designed to improve resource allocation and boost student performance. (n.p.)

Their conclusions from this data were that "taxpayers have invested considerable resources in the nation's public schools. However, ever-increasing funding of Education has not led to similarly improved student performance. Instead of simply increasing funding for public Education, federal and state policymakers should implement Education reforms designed to improve resource allocation and boost student performance" (Lips et al. 2008, n.p.) According to Hanushek (2004):

> One possibility is that the impact of resources is complicated—involving interactions with various inputs that are not observed or are not understood. The simplest notion is that teacher quality interacts with resources to determine outcomes. In the illustrative calculations, teacher quality essentially determines the efficiency with which resources are converted into student achievement. In this, we see that resource estimates are biased and also tend to be statistically insignificant. (p. 170)

Of course, these conclusions address some of the controversy that plagues schools in the United States; school reform that promotes school choice is often another moniker for the privatization of public schools. And while school choice among public schools could potentially yield more viable public institutions, choices that drain public schools of both resources and students are not satisfactory. Public schools require a constituency of major stakeholders who are diverse in educational and economic circumstance and who provide a rich context for "fixing" what is wrong with the schools invested with the job of serving all students. However, the focus of this chapter is on teachers, and once again, the potential of teacher leaders to change the schools is largely ignored in the general literature.

Teachers in the United States today are better educated than ever before:

> More than half of public school teachers hold at least a Master's degree. In the overall teaching force, there has been a slight shift in highest degree held. In 2005, a master's degree in education was the highest degree held by nearly half of the teaching force (47 percent); an additional 10 percent held a Master's degree in a field other than education. In 2011, the

> proportion of the teaching force holding masters' degrees in education as their highest degree was 43 percent; 12 percent held Master's degrees. (Feistritzer 2011, p. x)

As such, "More than two decades of research findings are unequivocal about the connection between teacher quality and student learning" (The Center for Public Education 2005, n.p.). Good teachers with both experience and education make a difference in the overall achievement of students in their classes and could potentially take that knowledge and experience and apply it through key leadership roles in school improvement efforts. Again, similar to the situation in Jamaica, teachers with increasingly higher levels of education quite naturally expect new roles in the schools and changes in the tasks and responsibilities associated with their work, they are better qualified and more expert; therefore, they should receive the accoutrements of increased professional status and responsibilities. However, that is not happening and the myriad reasons for that general resistance to change are complicated and mired in a tradition steeped in sexist views of teachers and static notions of power and authority. Touting the important role of teachers in school improvement efforts, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (1996), the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, identified three simple (and basic) premises in its blueprint for reforming the nation's schools. They are:

- What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn.
- Recruiting, preparing and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools.
- School reform cannot succeed unless it focuses on creating the conditions under which teachers can teach and teach well. (p. 10)

Hanushek's (2004) work is encouraging in that he focuses upon the relationship between teacher leaders and decisions regarding the use of resources. Throwing more money at the schools is not a solution for what ails schools, but using that money in constructive ways to promote thoughtful solutions is a powerful idea that can be fuelled by tapping into the vast resources represented by highly trained and experienced teacher leaders working on the front line of public schools.

Transformative Teacher Leadership and Curriculum Making

Ideas about teacher leadership took shape within the school improvement movement very quickly. Silva et al. (2000) discussed the evolution of teacher leadership in terms of three waves: (1) teachers as managers committed to increasing the efficacy of education organizations, (2)teachers as instructional specialists and (3) teachers as the primary directors of school culture. Now is the time for the emergence of a fourth wave. Teacher leadership for the twenty-first century must move beyond a consideration of teacher roles and relationships as subordinate to the work of other leaders within school organizations and consider the possibilities for a transformation of these relationships within the context of the teacher leadership movement, a transformation based on a different understanding of teachers' work that puts the needs and interests of teachers at the forefront of a revolution to transform schools and classrooms. Teachers must open themselves to questions concerning the meaning of their own individual existence and how answering the "call" to teach did not help them find sufficient meaning to their work as teachers. Placing this discussion within the context of Freire's (1968, 2000, 2013) work causes us to begin to look at teaching through a different lens that moves beyond a mere consideration of teaching and learning and instead focuses on key questions that seek to define the theoretical and ideological framework that governs how we think about models for understanding the roles and relationships of all leaders within educational organizations and has implications for how these leaders work together. Freire (1968) was unequivocal in his belief that leadership is defined by an ideological commitment to the principles of liberation and a disdain for actions and mandates that seek to control and oppress. Questioning and challenging the sources of oppression and creating spaces for negotiation and debate are the tasks of transformative leaders; to do anything less reflects a lack of courage and vision. Thus, the ideas in this chapter form the basis for an advocacy leadership situated within research that posits a theoretical and ideological framework for defining a fourth wave of teacher leadership that places this leadership within a framework of critical theory and examines the relationships between major stakeholders working in varying capacities within educational settings.

Teacher leadership has the potential to change not only how we think about the teaching profession generally but more specifically teacher

leadership, by necessity, should be the cornerstone of all school reform in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States. Each of these countries struggles with issues related to resource allocation and a reconceptualization of curriculum making that should address the unique social and economic problems that afflict the schools in these countries. Each of these countries is simultaneously confronting issues related to the transformative changes occurring in the education and training of teachers, shifts that demand changes in the ways that we view teachers' roles and responsibilities in schools and classrooms. Thinking about curriculum making and asking the kinds of questions suggested by Tyler's (1949) work require that we start curriculum planning as a group process that involves the participation of various stakeholders representing diverse interests. Lambert (2005) suggests that there is a constructivist element to learning and leading that encompasses four dimensions of collaborative action:

1. Evoking our beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions.
2. Inquiring into practice in order to discover new information and data.
3. Constructing meaning or making sense of the discrepancies or tensions between what we believe and think and the new information that we have discovered is essential.
4. Acting collectively in community comes as a result of learning and deciding about what will be planned, created, or done differently. (p. 96)

In this way, teacher leaders have the opportunity to explore the various dimensions of the curriculum within a context that addresses the interface between curriculum making and the dynamic and fluid issues that impact our conceptions of teaching and learning within larger frameworks that are both ideological and practical.

Adding a transformative dimension to discussions of teacher leadership is a natural consequence of thinking about teacher leadership as having a strong ideological component. Henry Giroux (1988) had a vision of teachers acting as transformative intellectuals in classrooms, schools and communities. He saw teachers as intellectuals as having the potential to visualize the schools we need for the students we serve. Well-educated, thoughtful teachers acting as intellectuals and activists have the capacity to exercise radical manoeuvres to implement school reforms that address the myriad problems affecting the schools where they work. As previously

stated, Giroux believed that "central to the category of transformative intellectual is the necessity of making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical" (p. 127). In a similar vein, Cochran-Smith (1991) conceptualized the notion of "teaching against the grain." She described this skill in the following way:

> Teaching against the grain stems from, but also generates, critical perspectives on the macro-level relationships of power, labor, and ideology-relationships that are perhaps best examined at the university, where sustained and systematic study is possible. But teaching against the grain is also deeply embedded in the culture and history of teaching at individual schools and in the biographies of particular teachers and their individual or collaborative efforts to alter curricula, raise questions about common practices, and resist inappropriate decisions. These relationships can only be explored in schools in the company of experienced teachers who are themselves engaged in complex situation-specific, and sometimes losing struggles to work against the grain. (p. 280)

Teacher leadership that is transformative requires a commitment to not only "teaching against the grain" but also "leading against the grain." Carolyn Shields (2011) argues that "transformative leadership emphasizes the need for education to focus both on academic excellence and on social transformation" (p. 2). Additionally, she describes transformative educators as leaders who will:

- Acknowledge power and privilege;
- Articulate both individual and collective purposes (public and private good);
- Deconstruct social-cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity and reconstruct them in more equitable ways;
- Balance critique and promise;
- Effect deep and equitable change;
- Work towards transformation—liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, and excellence;—and Demonstrate moral courage and activism. (p. 384)

Curriculum making that revises past narratives and addresses contemporary injustices requires transformative teacher leadership that reflects a commitment to "moral courage and activism" and fosters collaborative activism. Teachers in each of the countries discussed in this chapter have

compelling responsibilities to serve as advocates for children and families who lack the power and status to affect meaningful and sustainable changes for themselves. Viewing the curriculum and the tasks associated with curriculum making as part of this larger vision requires a "transformative vision" similar to the one described in the Jamaican *Task Force on Educational Reform Final Report* (2004) where we were asked to consider that "if a nation continues to travel along the 'current path', it will not achieve the shared vision. What is required, is to get on the 'transformation path.' The difference between the 'current path' and the 'transformation path' is the transformation gap, which we must close" (p. 65). Closing the "transformation gap" is a necessary mandate for teacher leaders in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States.

Conclusions

There is an idea that I refer to in my work quite often; Spindler and Spindler (1982) urged us to "make the familiar strange and the strange familiar" (p. 15) to understand what is happening in the schools of any culture. In this chapter, we have briefly looked at the problems and issues that affect the schools of three very different countries. Initially, I am certain that most people easily see the similarities between the Dominican Republic and Jamaica; both countries represent developing Caribbean countries facing similar challenges. However, I contend that there is also meaning to be gained from comparing and contrasting the schools of the United States with those of the other two countries. Despite tremendous wealth and access to many first-world resources, schools in the United States are still afflicted by social and economic problems associated with the great divide that exists between those with varying levels of social, cultural and economic capital. In order to "make the familiar strange and the strange familiar," I have presented countries that, at first glance, seem strange and different, and yet, the teachers in each of these countries play key roles in the closing the "transformation gap"; familiarizing one's self with these schools provides lessons for examining the ways in which transformative teacher leadership could function in a variety of scenarios for the betterment of schools as well as improvements in pedagogy and the teaching profession. The possibilities and potentialities for a transformation of the teaching profession and a subsequent transformation of teaching and learning in public spaces are unlimited. Curriculum is the foundation of these change efforts, and transformative teacher leadership

is the mechanism for conceptualizing, implementing and sustaining meaningful change while simultaneously changing the very nature of teachers' work. It is only in this way that curriculum theory, policy and practice can interface with transformative teacher leadership to meet the needs of twenty-first-century schools, families and communities in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the United States where the development and dissemination of universal education is essential to their progress and success.

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