Motherhood and Teaching in Jamaica: A Modified Life History Approach

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by

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i

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Abstract

      This study uses a modified life history approach to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of three teachers who became mothers while serving in Jamaica. This study was conceptualized as a result of my experiences as a teacher who became a mother. I was desirous of investigating if other teachers who became mothers in Jamaica experienced similar personal and professional transformation as a result of motherhood. The use of a life history approach necessitates an exploration of the wider historical, familial, socio-political, cultural, and economic factors influencing the lived experiences of participants and the meanings they give to their experiences.

      Dominant themes highlighted in the data include: the ideology that the overarching goal of education in Jamaica is for social mobility and an escape mechanism from poverty. Becoming a mother has resulted in participants taking greater levels of interest in the holistic development of students, rather than only emphasizing their academic development as they did prior to becoming mothers. Participants also developed more empathy for parents and closer collegial relationships when they became mothers. Participants' relationships with administration were two-fold; on one hand they lobbied for improvements to their working conditions which may have a positive impact on their family life; while on the other hand, they also cared more about self-preservation in order to adequately meet the needs of their families. Motherhood also provided opportunities for participants to become more involved in various social groups in their communities. Various socio-political and economic challenges in Jamaica resulted in participants migrating to Saskatoon with their families. However, living in a multi-cultural society where they are racial minorities has presented its own challenges. Participants are negotiating the notion of home and being outsiders.

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Most importantly, I owe to all to Jesus, my Savior and King; my God who performs miracles on my behalf daily and continues to prove since my childhood that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my late grandmother Eunice Forrest. Who was the best mother, teacher, and friend a grandchild could have. Her life was my most profound teacher. She taught me how to dream, work towards that dream, and to live that dream.

I love you mama.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The most basic of all human needs is to understand and be understood. The best way to
understand people is to listen to them.

Ralph Nicols

This study uses a modified life history approach to explore the experiences of
three black Jamaican teachers who are mothers and who are now residing in a prairie city in
Canada. Canada, in general, has seen an increase in the number of international students who are
members of the visible minority pursuing post secondary education at various institutions across
the country (Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE), 2013). The recent increase in
the number of immigrants in Canada has created new challenges and opportunities for these
participants in their host and as well as home communities. As a teacher who became a mother in
Jamaica and who is now residing in a prairie city as well, I am interested in developing deeper
levels of personal insights about my experiences of motherhood and teaching by engaging in the
construction of the life histories of participants as it relates to their experiences of motherhood
and teaching in Jamaica, and what better way to learn about their experiences than by listening to
their stories. My rationale for employing a modified life history approach was time constraints
and other logistical factors. I am currently pursuing a Master of Education degree with a time
limit of two years. The program requires students to take six courses in year one and complete a
thesis in year two. Based on the time allotted, I was not able to live alongside any of the
participants for extended periods of time. The methodological procedures of a life history
research were maintained, the modification occurred at the stage of data collection.

This research is born out of my personal experiences of motherhood and teaching in the
Jamaican context; therefore, all facets of the research are an expression of my need to understand
whether other Jamaican teachers experienced similar transformations, ambivalence, and need for
greater levels of self-expression as a result of motherhood as I did. When I became a mother
while teaching in Jamaica, I developed new insights into how the socio-political climate, history
of colonization, and other economic factors integrate to influence my career trajectory and the

meaning I made of my daily life events. Life history research challenges us, as educators, to become more discerning, politically adept, and more aware of how structural factors and the seemingly mundane nuisances work together to shape our lived experiences. The lived experiences of mothers and teachers in Jamaica are determined by numerous covert and overt factors. This study intends to make manifest what some of these factors are as they existed in the lives of three participants with a particular focus on how women who are both mothers and teachers come to understand the intersection of these two significant roles within their particular social context. My research topic came out of a discussion among a group of teachers who are mothers as we talked about our experiences, shared coping strategies, and offered encouragement and support to each other. The goals of this study were to provide a platform for teachers who are mothers to voice their experiences and garner moral and socio-emotional support as a result of sharing their stories.

Motherhood is a life-altering experience which has the potential to transform a teachers' philosophy of education and may lead to changes in their thoughts, feelings, relationships, and actions towards all stakeholders in the education system. The stories told by these teachers who are mothers were analyzed using the lens of Critical Feminism. The analysis of motherhood and teaching from a critical feminist standpoint allowed me to explore how factors such as class, race, sexuality, age, and ethnicity shape women's experiences of motherhood and teaching in their social context. One's position in society shapes what we come to know and those who are oppressed have a better understanding of how dominance works than those that benefit from unearned privilege (Harding, 2004). The voices of the oppressed can serve as a corrective to taken-for-granted notions of reality. For example, as a black Jamaican teacher from the working class, proposing to use a feminist standpoint perspective to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of Jamaican teachers who are mothers, I could claim epistemic privilege as I engage in this study because of my positionality as an insider, over the knowledge claims of a White middle-class male professor who grew up in North America. I intend to learn more about participants' experiences of motherhood and teaching by analyzing the similarities and differences of our experiences and the contextual factors shaping our experiences. A critical perspective provided the awareness and the lenses through which the stories of participants were analyzed. This study purports to better enable these mothers who are teachers to understand the influence of race, class, gender, and wider societal institutions on their lived experience. It is also

hoped that this study will represent the social world from the perspective of these participants who are members of the marginalized group.

I also became interested in researching motherhood and teaching in Jamaica from a life history approach because of the resonance between the tenets of life history research and my personal values, experiences as a school counsellor, my interest in social justice education and decolonization agenda. Life history research is based on principles such as relationality, mutuality, empathy, care, sensitivity, and respect (Cole & Knowles, 2001). These are principles that guided my interactions with research participants, as I aimed to conduct my research in professional, ethical, and morally sound ways. An element of life history research I am most appreciative of is its emphasis on the researcher forming genuine, caring relationships with research participants. The participants in this study are my friends. Ethical issues related to organizational insiderness will be explored in Chapter Three. As a group of teachers who became mothers in Jamaica and who are now residing in a prairie city, we shared our experiences of motherhood and teaching reflectively in a caring, morally supportive, and spiritually uplifting atmosphere.

Life history research allows researchers to reflect on and explain how formative experiences shaped their interest in their research topics (Cole & Knowles, 2001). I am particularly intrigued by the tenets of life history research because it allows researchers to share their conceptualization of their research in an authentic way, providing marginalized individuals and groups a platform to voice their realities. As a black female from the lower class in Jamaica who, based on societal power relations, would be considered a member of the marginalized group, life history research has given me an avenue to highlight my fears, challenges, insights, and hope to potential readers. Cole and Knowles (2001) suggested "we research who we are in the same way that everything else we do is an expression of who we are" (p.48). This study embodies my life history and my interest in understanding if my experiences are unique to me, or if other Jamaican teachers experienced the metamorphosis I experiences when I became a mother. Some of these experiences were positive, others were fraught with apprehension and ambiguities, but based on my optimistic worldview, they all created opportunities for personal and professional growth and development. This research contains elements of auto-ethnography as I related my personal history to develop a greater level of self-understanding in relation to the wider socio-political, familial, and historical context in Jamaica.

3

My interest is grounded in the personal but extends to a consideration of the wider issues that shape both motherhood and teaching in an effort to further develop scholarly literature specific to teacher education in Jamaica. As a student teacher in Jamaica, I was always very concerned that many of the texts we used in teachers' colleges and universities were based on the North American and British education systems; since then, I was motivated to contribute to scholarly literature on teacher education in Jamaica, in keeping with my decolonization agenda and critical feminist perspective. I intend to share a rich understanding of motherhood and teaching as seen through the eyes of these participants. In so doing I will take up scholarly literature in critical feminism, life history research, sociology of education, and sociology of the family; asking new questions and developing new insights. In keeping with a feminist standpoint, I am working from the assumption that the personal is political and my personal exploration will reveal the wider political landscape and the socio-political factors that shape both motherhood and teaching.

One may ask the question, what is the relevance of explicating the experiences of Jamaican teachers who are mothers? Gieve (1989) asserts that "the way in which each woman grapples with the ideals and asserts and discovers her own identity is important for other women and can help to provide a framework for understanding the difficulties we live with" (p.vii). It is personally, professionally, socially, and politically important for the stories of Jamaican mothers who are teachers to be elucidated, as it breaks the silence around the ambivalence and challenges teachers face in caring for their families and educating our nation. My hope is that these individual stories will inspire other teachers who are mothers by making them aware that they are not alone in their circumstances, as there are many mothers and teachers who are catering to the needs of their households, managing their classrooms and community groups, and are balancing all these responsibilities. To locate this research within its personal and cultural context I begin with my personal history account.

Personal History Account

Growing-up in Jamaica

I grew up in the 1990s, a period in Jamaica's family history when physical abuse of women and domestic violence in general was rampant and women were fighting relentlessly for

socio-political mobility and equality (Moser & Holland, 1997). I can recall as young as age five witnessing many women in the community being battered by men who felt that they had a right to treat women as disposable property. At that young age, I became aware of unequal power relations among the sexes and hoped that one day I would be able to advocate for women who, owing to mainly economic dependence, sometimes felt hopeless and unable to change their realities. My family background and early years growing up in Jamaica has shaped my view of the role of women as mothers, their roles in their homes, and wider society. My socialization in female-headed households has impacted my understanding of my roles as a mother and teacher and was where my critical feminist thoughts and actions were inaugurated.

I became aware that I was a member of the working class during primary school, when children from more enriched home environments were given special privileges by teachers and performed better academically and socially. In my immediate home environment and community I was lacking in positive academic role models, as no one in my family had completed post-secondary education and my relatives were all small business owners eking out an existence. I felt very embarrassed when school administrators called me out of class because my parents were not able to pay school fees, or purchase textbooks, and other educational supplies. Poverty is demoralizing and can inhibit or give impetus to humans to achieve their goals. In my case, I despised being financially challenged; I knew I had to excel academically in order to escape the challenges precipitated by poverty.

I was fortunate to have teachers who saw my academic potential and were able to provide career guidance and moral support. Based on the support and guidance I received from my teachers, I felt I had an obligation to my students to provide similar scaffolding and guidance. In an effort to give back to students what was offered to me, I ensured that my role as teacher and school counsellor was synonymous with my beliefs regarding emancipatory instruction, fostering the spiritual quest, and building authentic caring relationships with parents and students. I utilized learning strategies such as discussions, group presentations, journaling, and gave students practical scenarios to think about critically. I gave daily motivational talks to students and reminded them that despite the challenges they were experiencing they had the agency to achieve great things. I discussed themes such as poverty and oppression while encouraging students to think about how our present struggles as a people can be linked to historical factors. I employed artistic expressions such as music, drama, poetry, and storytelling to arouse

discussions about the marginalization of children from the lower socio-economic strata of the society and the ways in which they could rise above their current situation and bring about change in their lives, the lives of family members, community, and society as a whole. As I share my experiences in the Jamaican education system, I am situating the study in the social and economic context in which the participants worked and lived; a country with grave financial constraints and high indebtedness to multinational lending agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is also a country with people who are resilient and physically and psychologically hardy. Jamaicans, despite our limited land mass, economic resources, and numerous social challenges, continue to excel globally in academia, sports, and the arts. It is the same 'fire from within' that motivates me to explore how the socio-political context in Jamaica impacts three female Jamaican teachers' experiences of motherhood and teaching.

Motherhood-Is this too much for me?

With tears dripping down my cheeks I sat on an unpadded chair in a plain instruction room at the hospital with my one-day-old son in my arms. The nurses were instructing and demonstrating to a group of about 20 mothers how to care for neonates; covering topics such as cleaning of the navel, bathing, changing, breastfeeding, getting medical help, providing emotional support, and cognitive stimulation. I began to weep because I felt I took on a huge responsibility that I was not capable of meeting adequately. Throughout my pregnancy I read numerous books and online journals and blogs providing expert advice on what to expect throughout the gestation period, developmental milestones you should be aware of, and how to care for your baby. However, while I found the expert advice I received from empirical and anecdotal evidence helpful, it did very little to assuage the wave of emotions I experienced on my first day of mothering. My weeping signified the culmination of a long and sometimes treacherous gestation period, marked by morning sickness, mood swings, disfigurement of my physical body which affected my self-concept and the beginning of a lifelong commitment to "blissful" motherhood. These were also tears of joy, pain, pride, uncertainty, anxiety, triumph, relief, and accomplishment.

The experience of becoming a mother for me was somewhat similar to the process of earning my degree at university and working as a neophyte teacher. I experienced the same

feelings of apprehension on my first days of mothering as I did on the first days of employment as a teacher. Despite the years of training to become a teacher and despite my lengthy preparation for motherhood, the first days of both evoked unanticipated emotions. There is a unique relationship between becoming a mother and becoming a teacher that cannot be fully described. On my first few days of teaching, I was nervous and questioned my ability to impart knowledge, and provide for the myriad academic, psychological, and socio-emotional needs of students, parents, teachers, administration, and the wider community. Likewise I was petrified when I peered on my feeble baby weighing five pounds at birth. I asked myself, what in the world have I gotten myself into?

To ensure that my child had the best chance of survival during pregnancy, I drove for an hour in a taxi with usually four other persons, to visit one of the most experienced obstetricians in Jamaica, ate nutritious meals, took dietary supplements, exercised, avoided environments with infections and diseases, and read avidly on pregnancy and childcare. After delivery, I felt that I had 'passed' the test of pregnancy, but how will I now cope with the demands of a teaching career, a one-hour commute to work, continuing education, childcare, and other social responsibilities?

I often experienced mixed emotions such as pride, accomplishment, anxiety, and bewilderment. I have learnt how to accept those feelings and I now realize that despite the proliferation of medical and psychological research from various authorities in the field of parenting, parenting for me was on-the-job training. There were days when I felt highly competent and adequately met the needs of my students and biological children and on other days, I was certain that motherhood and teaching was just too much for me; I was encapsulated by guilt, boredom, and feelings of incompetence. I needed physical help, moral, and emotional support; however, occasionally none could be found, I simply had to take the test alone.

In my opinion, the first week of a new mother's life is the most challenging. For myself, I was still physically exhausted and sore from the stress of the delivery process; the emotional turmoil of fluctuating hormonal levels; the social pressure from spouse, experts, relatives, and society about the right and wrong way to care adequately for my child; and, since I choose to breastfeed, I felt excruciating pain caused by engorgement and sore nipples. Each breast-feeding session during the first week for me was maternal crucifixion, as I fed my son bloody milk, from bruised nipples. I bore the pain though, because research has proved that the colostrum provides

the baby with antibodies that helps to build the baby's immunity to illnesses caused by bacteria and viruses. The slogan "breast is best," seen at health clinics was something that I did not question at the time.

For many women in Jamaica, getting domestic support from partners is a sore issue. In the Jamaican society, many boys are socialized to believe that performing household tasks is effeminate and there is a colloquial term "maama man," that boys would not want as a label. A "maama man" is a male who assists in the domestic affairs of his home by cooking, grocery shopping, washing, and caring for children. It is interesting to note that although the Jamaican family structure does not necessarily replicate the 'standard' nuclear family structure, with husbands being breadwinner and wives being caregivers, many Jamaican males refuse to assist in caring for their children and other domestic activities. The lack of support from fathers has multiplied the responsibilities of women, who very often have no choice but to become the breadwinner, caregiver, and spiritual leader in their families. In some families, the roles of Jamaican men in the homes have become fleeting, because oftentimes their financial support is irregular and inadequate; yet they refuse to play a more integral role in the upbringing of their children. Overtime, the financial, emotional, and psychological stress experienced by Jamaican families oftentimes result in the severing of relational ties, domestic abuse, and an increase in single-parent families.

Due to the economic hardships being experienced by most Jamaicans, it is very rare that aman would take paternal leave from work to assist in caring for his partner and young child or children. It is the tradition in Jamaica for the responsibilities of caring for young children to be shared among female members of the family and community. However, the last two decades have seen many changes in communal childcare as day care centres become more prevalent, and grandparents are being employed outside of the home or are requesting a stipend to care for their grandchildren. The support I received with initial childcare came from older female members of the community and other relatives. Communal childcare provided physical and emotional support, and was a powerful mechanism in transmitting cultural practices in childrearing. It was always interesting to engage in a debate with an older mother about taking care of babies. There was a practice among Jamaican mothers called 'stretching,' where they would lift the baby by the hand and feet and stretch him/her in different directions. The general belief behind this practice is that stretching would strengthen the baby's skeletal muscles and prevent physical

disabilities. There was also another practice of leaving a bucket of water in the night dew outside to make it as cold as possible and then bathe the baby in the cold water at dawn. The belief is that this practice would build the baby's immunity against changes in temperature and influenza viruses. For me, those practices were archaic and cultural forms of child abuse, so I had to convince my older relatives not to engage in these cultural practices with my sons.

Back to School and Mothering

Returning to work after having my sons aroused mixed feelings. I loved my children and wanted to spend ample time with them, but I did not want to remain at home child-minding. Frankly, I have been teaching since I was 20 years old, so I was not prepared to remain at home, beyond the scheduled maternity leave. I knew that I had to work because I had many financial obligations that my partner alone could not meet, so my economic realities played a huge role in my decision to return to work. I was never socialized as a child to depend on my biological mother to meet all my physical and emotional needs, as she was a single mother who shared childrearing with my grandparents and other kinship networks, so I knew from the outset, that I had to work to assist in supporting my children. However, there were days when I felt guilty, because I may not have spent enough time with my child.

I hired a nanny, who remained in the home and took care of my children and other domestic tasks. I struggled financially to pay for domestic help, but I was aware of the challenges my female colleagues encountered trying to balance childcare, teaching, and other domestic responsibilities. My colleagues who had young children were often overwhelmed by having to get their children ready for nursery or school, dropping them off, driving for an hour or more sometimes for work, teaching for an entire day, taking home lesson plans to prepare and scripts to mark, in addition to domestic work, and meeting the emotional needs of their partners. To reduce some of the chaos in my life, I sacrificed to pay a nanny, but that too caused its own challenges.

One of the main challenges I experienced when I employed a "mature" caregiver who had raised other children, was her unwillingness to take instructions from me as a younger mother. Having a stranger invade my physical space at home was also a challenge. I had to learn how to assert myself, without causing negative feelings, because after all, I must have a positive

relationship with my children's caregiver and household helper as they are responsible for the care of my loved ones and have access to my most personal assets. It was also difficult to hire caregivers who possessed the basic academic requirements and who had good work ethics. I changed caregivers three times in one year, and was discontent with introducing new individuals in my young child's life. In Jamaica, many of the women who worked as domestic helpers are usually from the lower class, with limited education and economic prospects, who are often times juggling work, financial constraints, and caring for their own children. I worked an hour away from home, so I preferred to employ a caregiver who could live in my home. This meant that the caregiver had to leave her children unsupervised to care for my sons. The caregivers took the job because of dire financial constraints. They did not want to leave their children, but if they did not leave their children, they could not feed them. Many domestic helpers from rural communities in Jamaica leave their children in the care of relatives to work in the home of middle-class families. In retrospect, I may have been an accomplice to the oppression of poor Jamaican women because they had to leave their children in the care of others to take care of my children. The caregivers often experienced much anxiety and emotional stress due to financial constraints, being single parents, and having to leave their children sometimes with minimal supervision.

My reasons for returning to work were more than financial. Work met many of my social and emotional needs. Work provided a place for us as female teachers to share our experiences of motherhood and opportunities to learn coping mechanisms for balancing work, childcare, and relationships from each other. Work was also a place of escape from the boredom and social isolation I experienced when I was at home on maternity leave. Like it is for many women, work is where my closest friends are found and where my esteem and recognition needs are met (Hochschild, 1997). However, as teachers, our experiences are somewhat complex; because teaching and mothering are not only physically demanding but also involves emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). As teachers, escape from the mundane details of the job is often short lived and we are often caught in a rut. I may leave home, requiring a break from mothering but when I get to school, I need a break from teaching. The lives of teachers and mothers are a cycle of meeting the academic, physical, socio-emotional, and spiritual needs of others, but who caters to the needs of teachers who are mothers?

Racialized poverty among mothers in Jamaica

My school population was comprised of children from working-class families. Parents were local subsistence farmers, very small business owners, and a large percentage was unemployed. The constant encounters of poverty caused me to think critically about the role of the wider socio-political and historical factors in contributing to the reproduction of poverty in my community. I can recall conducting home assessments and leaving the homes of my students feeling depressed, traumatized, penitent, and in need of debriefing. In one instance, I visited the home of one of my students who was frequently absent from school. The house was precariously perched on the hill-side of a farming community overlooking lush rows of sugarcane. The main economic activity in the rural farming community is a sugar estate that has been in operation since the seventh century. As I made my way along the stony, narrow, and winding up-hill foot path, my student came to meet me and held my hand, as he feared that the treacherous path could lead to my demise. Little did he know that these are the types of paths I had been trotting daily since my childhood. When I entered the house, I met his mother who has been blind for twenty eight years, and three of his older siblings. The house they lived in consisted of one room with two beds, an outdoor makeshift kitchen and I cannot recall seeing an area resembling a bathroom. The mattresses were shaped like a "v" because the springs were disarranged by overuse. The house was made of mud, sticks, rusted zinc, and a blue tarpaulin. The floor in the bedroom was plain concrete and bare earth formed the flooring in the kitchen. His mother had nine children in total, three of whom were born after she became blind. She did not receive prenatal care at the local clinics and the children were delivered at home by her common-law husband. The babies were taken to the local clinic by an older child who at that time was in her early teens. The eldest daughter recalled going to the clinic with the babies for immunization and other medical needs and was scoffed at by older mothers who felt that she was a teenage mother. Despite their grim standard of living, the mother was singing and giving praise to God for sparing her life. Her level of peace despite her circumstances made me penitent, as I felt that at times I desired more and was not being truly grateful for the myriad of blessings and resources I had. Situations like these compelled me to assess our current social system, as very little help was offered to these families to alleviate poverty. Many teachers in Jamaica are from poor backgrounds. Their personal experiences of poverty may have influenced their decisions to

become teachers and how they relate to students and families who are living in poverty and the stories they shared with us about their experiences growing up in poverty.

One mind-boggling reality I am deeply concerned about is the reproduction of the cycle of oppression resulting in poverty that has been perpetuated throughout numerous generations in my local community and country. In Jamaica, eighty percent of all the wealth in the country is owned by twenty families throughout the centuries. Today they continue to own the majority of the land, resources, industries, and major corporations. In capitalist societies one's social class is determined by one's relationship to the means of production (Anyon, 1980).

The socio-economic inequities in Jamaica can be traced to colonialism (Brown, 1979). In communities like the one my student above resides in, the same social stratification, physical landscape, and economic inequities that existed during the sugar plantation era still exist. For instance, the great house overlooking the sugar plantation that was occupied by white planters is now occupied by his offspring and the executives in the company. These individuals are mainly Caucasians. The office personnel, book keepers, and other skilled workers are considered middle class; they hold supervisory and middle-management roles reminiscent of the roles of slave drivers and skilled artisans during colonialism. Today, they are able to purchase cars and receive mortgages to buy homes; hence they enjoy a more comfortable standard of living. The masses are labourers in the sugar fields toiling in the sun for minimum wage.

As a mother and teacher, when I visited the homes of my students and interacted with their families, I thought of ways in which I could use pedagogy to change their social and economic situation. I became more critically reflective of my practice as a school counsellor, my colleagues' interaction with students, the decisions and actions of the school's administration, the Jamaican education system, and wider socio-political system. I also became more committed to the teaching profession, more patient, developed a greater understanding of child development and took an even greater interest in the welfare of children individually. I am not suggesting a simplistic view that motherhood makes one a better teacher; however, becoming a mother is a life changing event which is capable of bringing into perspective your philosophy of education, personal values, and praxis. I was interested in developing a deeper understanding of my own and other women's experiences of teaching and motherhood through critical reflection, dialogue, and analysis of scholarly literature.

Lifelong Learning and Teacher Education

Pursuing studies in lifelong learning has sharpened my critical thinking capabilities. I now recognize that our education system in Jamaica is more product oriented rather than process oriented. The main objective of our secondary schools in Jamaica is to prepare students adequately for passes in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) external examinations. This has resulted in teachers often times feeling coerced into focusing on completing the syllabus, rather than fostering critical thinking, love of learning, and social justice. Teachers experience severe pressure from administration and policy makers if students do not memorize and regurgitate content to pass examinations. I can recall having butterflies in my stomach as I await the results of my students from external examinations. When the results of these examinations are reviewed by schools' administration annually teachers whose students do not fare favourably or maintain the "norm" of the schools' performance are interrogated and asked to justify the undesirable performance of students. I do not have an aversion for accountability, my concern is that our society and educational administrators oftentimes give the impression through various media that the academic development of students is the sole responsibility of teachers, without giving due consideration to the myriad of other contextual factors influencing the academic performance of students.

The competence of teachers in Jamaica is presumed to be linked to the success rates of students in standardized examinations. Teachers from non-traditional high schools, schools in volatile communities, and those who teach groups of students who may be experiencing learning, behavioural, socio-emotional, and economic challenges may be at even greater risk for professional burnout and feelings of low self-efficacy; because, despite their greatest efforts, their students will not attain the academic standards of students from more enriched learning environments and socio-economic groups. I opine that the improvement in the students' development overtime should be the benchmark of teacher effectiveness and not merely the success rates of students in standardized examinations, which is the case in Jamaican schools.

Based on the product-oriented culture of our education system, teachers are constrained to using teaching methods that will produce the 'results.' Therefore, the teaching techniques encouraged in Jamaican schools are similar to the banking concept of education critiqued by Paulo Freire (2000). According to Freire (2000),

in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education, and knowledge as processes of inquiry. (p. 72)

The deposit/depository relationship between teachers and students fosters dependence and impedes creative thinking and lifelong learning. It also discourages self-expression; thus many students may not have positive educational experiences.

My commitment to teaching for social change was not limited to my secondary level students. I also used forums such as parenting seminars and staff development workshops to share my views on social justice and encouraged critical evaluation of our education system and socio-economic realities. Teachers and parents were reminded of their agency to bring about seriously needed changes for our future generations. Some parents and teachers were motivated, while others were more pessimistic. I learned that based on the experiences of some individuals they had developed a sense of learned helplessness and despondence about the future of our country.

I also served as an adjunct faculty member at two teacher training institutions in Jamaica for five years. I taught courses in the Bachelor of Education programs. When I began teaching at these institutions, my older son was a year old and I was still employed full-time as a guidance counsellor; juggling two jobs, graduate school, family life, and social activities. Excellent organizational skills and family support were required to manage these responsibilities effectively. There were nights when I would pick up my son from my mom's house at 9 p.m. At times he would be sleeping and I had to cover his head with a blanket and place him in the car. Situations like these created tensions because ideally I wanted to be at home in the evenings making supper, doing homework, colouring, and spending quality time with my son; but the opportunity to teach adults had birthed a new passion for education that transformed my philosophy of education, career trajectory, relationship with my son, and evaluation of stakeholders in the education sector. As a mother and teacher I had two competing loyalties that required much effort and commitment- motherhood and teaching. This study seeks to highlight the tensions and constraints teachers who are mothers experience as they endeavor to become 'good mothers' and 'good teachers.'

Working as an adjunct faculty member gave me a new vision for education in Jamaica and changed my career trajectory. Initially, I was working as a school counsellor and contemplated pursuing graduate studies in either counselling or educational psychology. However, based on my experiences as a teacher candidate, school counsellor, and my life experiences as a child growing up in Jamaica, I felt if I modeled emancipatory teaching strategies and portrayed genuine care for the well-being of teacher candidates, a domino effect would occur and teachers-in-training may disseminate the principles of social justice education. My experiences in teacher education influenced my decision to enroll in a Master of Education in Lifelong Learning at Mount Saint Vincent University rather than pursuing graduate studies in psychology. As an adult learner myself, who was becoming more knowledgeable of the principles of andragogy, I applied these principles immediately in my classes with the teachers-in-training. In my capacity as a teacher educator my goal was to foster a passion for lifelong learning, social justice, and genuine care for the welfare of teachers and students. In doing so, concerted efforts were made for the course content, instructional methodologies and assessment tools to be relevant to our Jamaican cultural, socio-political, and economic context. The core adult learning principles proposed by Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2011) include "learners need to know why, what, and how the content they are learning relates to their lives. Adult learners need to take into consideration the self-concept and prior experience of the learner, their readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and their motivation to learn" (p.147). Applying these principles in my interaction with teachers created a cohesive learning environment where everyone's experiences were valued and learning was reciprocal, as the teachers-in-training gave me practical ideas about caring for and educating my toddler. As a young mother and educator, I had some theoretical knowledge, while the adult learners possessed the cornerstone of andragogy- real life experience, which was used as the basis of our learning. Knowles (1970) suggested that "one of the almost universal initial needs of adults is to learn how to take responsibility for their own learning through self-directed inquiry, how to learn collaboratively with the help of colleagues and how to learn by analyzing one's own experience" (p.62). Based on the product-oriented nature of our education system, the teachers-in-training were not accustomed to self-directed inquiry, so they were a bit apprehensive at first when we discussed our roles and responsibilities as learners and facilitator. These class sessions were based on

dialogue, self-reflection, and the development of critical consciousness as we linked our personal and professional experiences to wider socio-political, economic, and historical factors.

Intellectual Influences

One area of research in adult education that had the greatest impact on me personally and professionally was "Transformative Learning," as postulated by Jack Mezirow. The group of early childhood educators I worked with in Jamaica was similar in characteristics to the group of women who participated in Mezirow's study on transformative learning. Both groups were females who were returning to school after raising their children, and found their educational experiences empowering and life changing. According to Mezirow (2000) transformative learning is

> the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (p.7)

I also experienced intellectual, professional, and personal transformation when I returned to school to pursue studies in Lifelong Learning. Engaging in studies in Lifelong Learning changed my perspectives on my role as learner, educator, and citizen. As I read the work of Paulo Freire the term liberation took on a whole new meaning. I reflected on my educational experiences at all levels of the education system in Jamaica, and how we have been socialized into what Freire termed as the banking concept of education. Freire (2000) explained that

> the banking concept of education, which serves the interest of oppression, is also necrophilic; it is nourished by love of death, not life. Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power. (p.77)

I can recall learning concepts in school through rote learning/repetition, with the end result being to pass our external standardized examinations. My motivation for continuing education was to escape poverty and not true love of learning. The banking concept of education does inhibit humans' capacity to think critically and creatively, by preparing students to adhere to the

16

prescribed status-quo. As I reflect on and share my formative educational experiences, I become more eager to learn of the educational experiences of participants in Jamaica. I am desirous of learning how similar or different their experiences as students and teachers were to mine and how the historical, political, and socio-economic climate have impacted their experiences and the meanings they give to those experiences now that they are living in Canada.

The teaching methods that I was introduced to at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) were self-directed and modeled after Freire's concept of problem-posing education. In keeping with the liberatory goals of adult education, the instructors at MSVU designed the program with an emphasis on adult education in Jamaica; taking into account the cultural, historical, political and socio-economic climate of the country while utilized teaching strategies which were self-directed in nature. I had a difficulty at first understanding the teaching style because I was accustomed of being told what to study at my previous educational institutions. However, being able to study material that was personally and professionally relevant was an empowering process. I felt in charge of my education and this feeling of autonomy was transferred to other areas of my life. Freire (2000) suggested that

> students who are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obligated to respond to that challenge...Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed (p.81).

My decision to study motherhood and teaching stemmed from the socio-emotional and intellectual growth I experienced in graduate school and my recognition of the change that occurred in my personal and professional life as a result of becoming a mother. Studies in Lifelong Learning made me more self-aware, critical, culturally conscious, growth oriented, and change driven. With this critical consciousness, it became even more important to understand the forces shaping my experiences as a mother and teacher, and led me to desiring to understand whether or not other female teachers in the Jamaican context are having similar experiences.

Epistemological Assumption

I was introduced to literature on feminism in my first writing assignment in the Master of Education in Lifelong Learning program at MSVU. Tisdell (1993) defined feminist pedagogy as

> (1) how to teach women more effectively so that they gain a sense of their ability to effect change in their own lives, (2) an emphasis on connection and relationship (rather than separation) with both the knowledge learned and the facilitators and other learners, and (3) women's emerging sense of personal power. (p. 93)

Feminist writers throughout the decades have deconstructed what it means to be a mother and teacher in patriarchal societies. As a Jamaican female teacher who became a mother the opportunities I now enjoy were not ascribed to me at birth but were made possible through the unrelenting political actions and perpetual struggles of the feminist movement. The experiences of Jamaican teachers who are mothers will be viewed through the lenses of Feminist Standpoint theory. According to Anderson (2012)

> Feminist standpoint theory is a type of critical theory…Critical theories aim to empower the oppressed to improve their situation. They therefore incorporate pragmatic constraints on theories of the social world. To serve their critical aim, social theories must (a) represent the social world in relation to the interests of the oppressed-i.e., those who are the subjects of the study; (b) supply an account of that world which is accessible to the subjects of study, which enables them to understand their problems; and (c) supply an account of the world which is usable by the subjects to improve their condition. (p.10)

There is a close relationship between the goals of this study and the goals of feminist standpoint researchers. This study aims to elucidate the experiences of participants in clear accessible language that will enable teachers who are mothers to develop deeper insights into their experiences of motherhood and teaching with the hope of raising political awareness while advocating for improvements to the lives of teachers who are mothers.

The participants and I as researcher are from marginalized groups, based on our status as immigrants, being black, and female. Based on my positionality within a racist, sexist, and classist society, feminist standpoint theory provides epistemic privilege, as I create life histories that contribute to scholarship that speaks to our lived experience. Harding (2004) contended that "feminist standpoint theory helps to produce oppositional and shared consciousness in oppressed groups to create oppressed peoples as collective "subjects" of research rather than only as objects of other's observation, naming, and management" (p.3). This thesis is my personal and

professional contribution to scholarship and decolonization of teacher education in Jamaica, as I seek to problematize the meanings participants and I give to our experiences as teachers who are mothers. McHugh and Cosgrove (1998) mentioned that "feminist researchers are concerned with understanding social relationships and pointing out inequities and injustices" (p.23). We aim to challenge our taken-for-granted frames of reference and critically examine how socio-political and historical factors have shaped our lived experiences.

This study seeks to understand the experiences of a selected group of black female teachers as they reflect on their experiences of teaching and motherhood in Jamaica. As a female teacher myself, I became aware of myself as a gendered and marginalized individual based on my socio-economic status at different phases in my life. I felt my generation had a pivotal role to play in augmenting the economic, psychological, and social emancipation our society so desperately needs, and as a guidance counsellor, teacher educator and mother, I have the audience and agency. Freire (2000) reminded us "that man's ontological vocation is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (p. 32).

Sociology of Motherhood and Teaching

The identity of a woman is superseded with the identity of a mother when she has a child, and there are specific behaviours and expectations of teachers who are mothers in the Jamaican society. In what ways is the identity of mothers shaped by cultural forces? Marotta (2008) explained:

> The cultural forces come in part from "experts" who attempt to impose cultural scripts on mothers shaping the series of practices through which mothers are governed and come to govern themselves. These scripts are linked to the rules and regulations that aim at making mothers socially adapted and useful...the prescriptive texts say that women are fit mothers if they conform to the normative ideal, or they are unfit mothers if they do not conform. Yet even conforming does not always save them from guilt and shame (p.203-209).

As a mother of young children who has migrated to Canada to engage in continuing education and whose two young children are in the care of their maternal grandmother and other relatives, I

have experienced a significant amount of guilt and shame especially when I speak with white middle-class women who cannot even conceptualize leaving their children for more than a fourteen-day vacation. The ideology of a good mother is based on the prescriptive standards developed by and for white middle-class women (Kawask, 2011). Women the world over read these magazines and other forms of media and experience significant amount of inadequacy because of their perceived inferior cultural, class, and racial differences. Marotta concluded that "the century-old ideological message resounds: a 'good' mother is one who lives like the American middle-class mother lives or aspires to live, with the aspiration constructed by the experts" (p.210). The realities of teachers who are mothers from Jamaica may be quite different from those of the 'benchmark' American families. However, migration, information communication technology, and globalization have caused many Jamaican teachers who belong to the lower middle-class groups to aspire to the ideology of a "good mother" prescribed by the wider society. Transnational motherhood and the cultural context of Jamaican families and sociology of motherhood will be further discussed in chapter two.

Summary

My intention to learn more about the experiences of mothers who are teachers who have lived and worked in Jamaica using a modified life history approach stems from my personal experiences as a mother, teacher, and graduate student. The Jamaican context has shaped these experiences and the meanings attached to these experiences in peculiar ways. Whilst the goal of this study is to satisfy my personal inquiry and lead to greater levels of self-understanding, it is also intended to contribute to the pool of scholarly literature on teacher education in Jamaica, while serving a political and decolonization function of illuminating the lived experiences of these participants. It is hoped that the heightened level of awareness about the experiences of teachers who are mothers from Jamaica will spawn further intellectual debate and lead to political action. This study is my contribution to two areas of my life that is most meaningful to me, yet creates the greatest levels of tension, joy, fulfillment, and anxiety: motherhood and teaching.

Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions in relation to the three participants:

1. What are the contextual factors shaping the lived experiences of these teachers who are mothers from Jamaica?

2. In what ways did motherhood impact these teachers who are mothers' relationship with the following:

   - students
   - parents
   - colleagues
   - administration
   - wider community

3. Based on my context and the context of these three participants it became necessary that I address issues related to migration. Therefore I will be exploring whether or not motherhood played a significant role in the participants' decision to migrate to Canada and their experiences of motherhood in Canada in relation to motherhood and teaching in Jamaica. Questions related to migration are not included in the interview schedule but were addressed with each participant during interviews; as migration emerged as an important contextual factor shaping the lived experiences of participants.

The Way Forward

Chapter two of this study includes a comprehensive review of literature of the key concepts relating to motherhood and teaching in Jamaica. I will be providing a more detailed discussion on the sociology of motherhood, teaching, an overview of the Jamaican education system, socio-cultural setting, and feminist epistemology. Chapter three focuses on technical aspects of the study such as a discussion on using a modified life history approach, the research paradigm, inviting participation (sampling), methods of data collection, analysis, presentation of findings, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four entails the life history of each participant as a specific case as told in their own words. Chapter Five is where I discuss the findings of the study in light of the research questions and the goals of the study while making connections to

literature in the field, and in Chapter Six I draw conclusions regarding the data as well as methodological reflections and implications for further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In patriarchal societies the nurturance and education of young children have been two roles which are considered the responsibility of females (Kim & Reifel, 2010). There has been a proliferation of research on the experiences of mothers and the feminization of the teaching profession in developed jurisdictions such as North America and Europe (see Kinser, 2008; Nathanson & Tuley 2008; Stone, 1994; Grummet, 1988; Prentice, 2012 etc.). Much of the research studies in Jamaica and the Caribbean have focused predominantly on the roles of women, gender disparity or family life (Ellis,1986, 2003; Barrow, 1996; Massiah, 1983, Leo-Rhynie, Bailey & Barrow, 1997). This study seeks to fill a lacuna in scholarly literature as it relates experiences of these teachers who are mothers. Miller (2005) defined motherhood as "the context in which mothering takes place and is experienced. The institution of motherhood in the Western world is, then, historically, socially, culturally, politically and, importantly, morally, shaped" (p.3). Motherhood for women in Jamaica is defined by the amalgamation of complex social roles and expectations that may be attributed to cultural, socio-economic, racial, religious, and other institutional factors such as the welfare, medical, and educational systems. The literature I will be discussing and grappling with throughout this study falls under the following general themes: the institution of motherhood within the historical, socio-economic and cultural context in Jamaica, the Jamaican education system, motherhood and migration, and critical feminist theories.

The Institution of Motherhood in Jamaica: Exploration of the Historical, Socio-economic, and Political Context

The institution of motherhood in the Jamaican context has to be studied within the interaction of the island's unique family structure, history of colonization, cultural, and socio-economic context. One facet cannot be studied without the other, as they all work together to create the lived experience of Jamaican teachers who are mothers. The familial, cultural, political, and socio-economic factors shaping the experiences of these mothers and teachers from Jamaica can be traced to the colonization of the island by the Spanish in 1494 and later by the British in 1655. There are numerous explanations for the unique family formations or

'households' in Jamaica. The term 'household' is used by demographers to describe the Jamaican family structure, as many families include multiple generations, children, relatives, and even acquaintances (Barrow, 1996).

Let us now examine the historical roots of motherhood and family life, in general, in Jamaica. According to Henriques (1949) when Christopher Columbus arrived in the New World in 1492, the inhabitants of Jamaica were Tainos and Carib Indian Tribes. The indigenous groups were enslaved, and when the search for gold was futile, the Europeans began cultivation of tobacco and sugarcane. Owing to enslavement and the diseases brought to the island by the Europeans the indigenous people became extinct. To sustain their labour force, indentured labourers, who worked in conditions similar to slavery, were imported from Europe. The indentured labourers died of diseases and did not provide an adequate labour supply, so the European planters turned to Africa to replenish their labour force (Henriques, 1949). Slaves from the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Northern Nigeria to Congo, and from tribes such as Ibo, Yoruba, Fan, Ashanti and others were brought to the Americas and the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations (Henriques, 1949). The physical displacement of Africans also meant psychological, familial, and social dislocation (Henriques, 1949). Their customs, values and mores were mere memories that were passed down orally, but they were eventually forced to discontinue the use of their language and assimilate fully into West Indian life (Henriques, 1949).

The new life that slaves were inducted into on the sugar plantations was one of uncertainty, because any intimate relationship he/she entered into could easily be broken up as slaves were viewed as property; therefore he/she could be sold to another planter in Jamaica or the Americas (Henriques, 1949). Women were encouraged to 'breed' (they were literally viewed as animals) for as many men as possible, and were even awarded prizes for doing so, as the more children women had, the more slaves the masters had. The family arrangement on sugar plantations did not mirror that of the Europeans or Africans. Women were left with much of the responsibilities for child-rearing while men impregnated as many women as possible (Henriques, 1949). Female slaves contributed to the market economy on sugar estates in multiple ways. Beckles (1999) explained that during slavery:

> …the fertility of black women was propelled into the market economy as the key to an internal reproduction of labour, frequent references appeared in texts to the black woman as superordinate Amazons who could be called upon to labour all day, perform sex all

night, and be quite satisfied morally and culturally to exist outside the formal structures

of marriage and family…As property her worth was associated with productivity

measurements that were calculated in terms of material output and childbearing. (p.xx)

During the colonial era, black women in Jamaica were subjected to multiple layers of

exploitation; physical and sexual, in addition to being the sole provider and caregiver for their

children.

The more beautiful among the female slaves were taken as concubines for their masters

and produced children who were called the 'mullatoes,' the mixture of black and white genes

procreating 'brown' children, which primarily constitutes today's middle class (Henriques,

1949). According to Henriques (1949) "these practices were to have a profound effect not only

on the forms of the family but on the whole class-color hierarchy of the society. It can be said

that concubinage was the foundation of the present color-class grading system in the West

Indies" (p.31).

The earliest studies of family formations in Jamaica were conducted by anthropologists,

sociologists, and social workers from North America or Britain in the 1930-1940s (Barrow,

1996). The most noted among these social scientists were Melville Herskovits and E. Franklin

Frazier. Both Herskovits and Frazier concluded that the family formations among Blacks in the

New World consisted of high rates of illegitimate children (children born out of wedlock), were

female headed, and had multiple generations living together (Barrow, 1996). Herskovits

proposed that the rationale for the family formations among Blacks in the New World can be

attributed to the perpetuation of African cultural practices such as polygamy (Barrows, 1996).

Frazier disagreed with Herskovits' claim and argued that the "disruptive effects of slavery and

the plantation system were responsible" (Barrow, 1996 p.3). While Henriques (1949) described

the Jamaican family formation as *sui generis;* meaning Jamaican families are unique in their own

peculiar ways and are impacted by the conditions of slavery.

Based on the findings of these studies, there is strong evidence that Jamaica's history of

colonization has shaped the role of mothers and fathers in unique ways, placing greater

importance on mothers as nurturers and providers for their offspring. Cousins (1935) maintained

that "slavery was inherited in the female line. The child of a slave-woman was born in servitude,

irrespective of the status of the father…Paternity counted for little; the Negroes regarded the

children as belonging to the mother rather than to the father (as cited in Cohen, 2009, p.666). In

Jamaican families women play a key role in providing for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of their family. Henriques (1949) concluded that "although the freed Negro could remove himself from the plantation in a physical sense, he was unable to destroy the patterns of behavior that evolved under the system of plantation slavery. This is strictly seen in the contemporary family structure" (p.30). The mating patterns resulting from plantation life has been attributed to the unique family formations and marginalization of Jamaican males in the Jamaican society today (Miller, 1994).

The findings of these social scientists were questioned as the researchers held their own biases based on their own cultures. These social scientists held a Eurocentric ideology of the ideal family consisting of a married couple-male and female co-habiting and rearing their children, with wife as homemaker and husband as breadwinner. The term nuclear family was used to describe households consisting of a married male and female cohabiting and rearing their children and was the normative arrangement in the Western world in the mid-twentieth century. Hence the attempt of the social scientists to understand the Jamaican family formations especially for "Negroes" from the lower classes was measured against their ethnocentric ideals of the "standard" family life. As a result, Jamaican families were labeled as dysfunctional and immoral (Barrow, 1996). Smith (1970) stated:

> The family life of West Indian 'lower class' Negroes or folk presents a number of equally important academic and practical problems. In this region family life is highly unstable, marriage rates are low, especially during the earlier phases of adult life, and illegitimacy rates have always been high (as cited in Barrow, 1996).

The classification of the Jamaican family structure as unstable provides an incomplete and ideologically skewed definition of Jamaican families, a definition that disempowers and perpetuates the superiority of Eurocentric family formations. The labeling of many of the lower-class Jamaican families as dysfunctional may have far-reaching effects on the meanings participants' may give to their experiences growing up in their peculiar family formations, gender roles in their homes, and their interactions with students from various family backgrounds.

The social pathologizing of Jamaican family life during the 1940s has resulted in the family formations being identified as the source of the social ills in the society. The social welfare workers who were sent from Britain by the Colonial Development and Welfare Office to

investigate and make proposals to alleviate the social and economic problems being encountered by the populace viewed the Caribbean family formations from the perspective of social pathology (Barrow, 1996). Barrow (1996) explained that:

> The mandate of these colonial officials, as social workers, was not merely to identify the problems of family life among the poor in the Caribbean, but also to do something about the situation. Their central concern was how to persuade people to adopt the superior co-residential, nuclear family sanctioned by marriage and producing legitimate children. (p.10)

The labeling of the Jamaican family from the perspective of social pathology may impact the identity of children who are born out of wedlock, mothers' views of themselves as unwed, and how individuals from institutions such as schools, churches, and medical facilities relate to mothers based on their marital status.

According to the Jamaica 2001 National Census Report "the recognition that West Indian family formation cannot be studied with the traditional marital status types has long been noted in the censuses and demographic sample surveys conducted in the region."(p.38). The main features of Jamaican family life which continues to be of interest to social scientists in the latter half of the twentieth century and the new millennium are:

1. The dominant role of women in households, 45% of households are female headed.
2. The marginality and irresponsibility of men.
3. The high incidence of children born out of wedlock. (Leo-Rhynie, 1993, p.8)

The high percentage of female-headed households in Jamaica has been attributed to the slave regime, where the constant buying and selling of slaves did not create opportunities for the establishment of stable unions and legal marriages (Massiah, 1983). In Chapter 4 you will learn more about the experiences of the participants' family life growing up in Jamaica and how their narratives relate to the wider historical and socio-cultural context.

Massiah (1983) mentioned that another factor that has contributed to the high level of female-headed households is the migration of men to countries such as the United States, Britain, and Canada where the search for better employment opportunities were "producing marked imbalances between the sexes within the productive ages" (p. 11). Another reason for the high rates of female-headed households in the Caribbean is the improved independence of women and freedom of being in visiting relationships (Massiah, 1983).

There were various reasons proposed for the low marriage rates among Jamaicans from the lower class. The conclusion from Clarke's (1970) study revealed that the economic conditions had to be favourable before a marriage proposal could be made, the man wanted to be able to own his own house, as it was culturally unacceptable to be married and reside in a rented home, he had to be able to purchase a ring, and be able to afford the extravagance of a wedding and reception. In a marriage the husband was expected to improve the social status of the wife by making her a "lady" as "it is derogatory for a wife to go to work" (Clarke, 1970 as cited in Barrow,1996, p.16). A commonly held belief in the Jamaican society is "a man who cannot provide for his family is not a man" (Ellis, 2003, p. 151). Due to the inability to meet the expectations of marriage, common-law unions which involved a more egalitarian relationship where both partners worked to support their family became a more viable alternative (Barrow, 1996). A stable conjugal relationship was also a requisite for marriage (Barrow, 1996). The 2001 Jamaican Census data revealed that 90 percent of persons sixteen plus had never been married. The cohabitation of couples has resulted in changes in legislation regarding families. Common law unions that are stable, meaning that they last for more than five years are now recognized for inheritance and other benefits and children born out of wedlock can no longer be discriminated against for inheritance rights and financial support (Barrow, 1996).

In sum, the socio-economic and historical factors that have shaped the Jamaican family formations continue to be debated in various academic and social arenas. The family formations in Jamaica may be attributed to:

> … the premise of African origins and historical roots in slavery and/or the plantation system; failure of the church to promote legal marriage; pluralism; cultural ecological factors; the economic marginality of males; 'imbalance' in the sex ratio due to male migration; and a predicated 'culture of motherhood,' transmitted transgenerationally, that reinforces fertility behavior regardless of marital status. Social scientists have debated these issues that are a seemingly endless source of contentious fascination (Rubin, 1977 as cited in Roberts and Sinclair, 1978, p. xx).

These issues continue to be debated among academics, while ordinary Jamaicans continue their daily lives, trying in their own unique ways to understand how wider contextual factors impact their daily lives. This study seeks to do just that; to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of three Jamaican teachers who are mothers.

It has been long noted by sociologists that the family is the primary socializing agent. Based on the family formations in Jamaica, what are the ideologies, practices, and norms that are transmitted from mother to daughter and from other members of the family regarding motherhood and family life in Jamaica? Fulani (2011) contends that "…mothers are frequently and powerfully instrumental in molding the subjectivities of their daughters in conformity with inferiorizing communally sanctioned gender norms" (p.2). The stories of participants' family life will play a major role in helping us to understand their experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica. Miller (2005) concluded that "becoming a mother changes lives in all sorts of ways. It has major significance for individual biographies, yet expectations and experiences will be shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which women live their lives" (p.6). This inquiry highlights how participants' family formations and relationships with their mothers and women in their family and/or community may have had an impact on their decisions to become a mother, and their experiences of motherhood as shaped by wider contextual factors.

Another important cultural facet of Jamaican family life is communal childrearing; where mothering involves a collaborative effort with members of the extended family and wider community playing an active role in the rearing of children. In his autobiography on growing up in Jamaica, Hewitt (2012) mentioned that "although the family could be considered poor by economic standard, a network of community solidarity expressed through cooperative effort, ensured that help was provided to one another in their subsistent living" (p. 330). Communal childrearing is not simply inherent in the Jamaican social fibre, but has historical, economic and political roots. A study conducted by Clarke (1970) revealed that the lineage of most families in the villages in Jamaica could be traced to colonialism; as "family and kindred cling together, united in the struggle to find a means of livelihood" (Clarke, 1970 as cited in Barrow, 1996). The kinship network that has existed in Jamaica throughout the centuries has played an important role in the transmission of cultural practices regarding motherhood from one generation to another. I am also desirous of understanding how the migration of participants to Canada may impact kinship networks in their home and host countries and ways in which participants attempt to maintain these networks.

Summary

For many social scientists the study of family formations in the Jamaican context may be mind-boggling. It has become clear among demographers that the Jamaican family structure cannot be studied along the lines of the "benchmark" European nuclear families; thus the term "households" not families is used to connote the living arrangements of Jamaicans. The Jamaican family formations have been studied from the perspective of social pathology by earlier social scientists, who felt the fertility patterns of Jamaicans from the lower class were immoral and common-law relationships were unacceptable on religious grounds. Other social scientists argue that the Jamaican family formation can be attributed to the inability of slaves to establish formal unions. Hence, the responsibility of care-giving and being the breadwinner was laid at the feet of mothers. The Jamaican family formation from colonial days to present continues to be debated. The family structure of participants growing up in Jamaica may influence their understanding of their role as mothers and teachers in profound ways. Participants' experiences growing up and their experiences of motherhood may also impact their interactions with students, colleagues, parents, and members from the wider community from various family formations. Let us take a step further to explore the education system in which these teachers who are mothers were schooled and worked.

Overview of the Jamaican Education System

The Jamaican education system may influence the lived experiences of teachers who are mothers in multiple ways; for instance, the impact of the educational attainment of their parents and other members of their family on their academic development, their experiences as children participating in the education system, and their roles as teachers. I will be providing a brief history of the Jamaican education system highlighting areas such as the education of slaves, teacher education, education reform, and curricular reform.

Jamaica was once a colony of Britain; hence the Jamaican education system was modeled after the British education system and was designed to reinforce the elitism of the privileged class and subordination of the masses. Historian Frank Cundall (cited in Leo-Rhynie, Bailey & Barrow 1997) suggested that the education system in Jamaica was inaugurated in 1663;

eight years after the island became a British colony. The sum of five hundred Great British pounds was allocated annually to five church leaders and one head teacher serving the island. During slavery, education in Jamaica catered predominantly to the needs of poor whites, who came to the island as indentured labourers and skilled artisans on sugar estates, while the children of the planters received private tutoring or were repatriated to the mother country, Britain, to receive formal education. Due to the social hierarchy on sugar estates, the education of children of working-class whites was necessary for filling middle management and supervisory positions such as bookkeepers and skilled artisans, which afforded them more social prestige than slaves. The wholesale education of blacks was not deemed necessary, because the planters thought that such enlightenment would lead to civil unrest and insubordination (Beckles, 1989). Beckles (1989) explained that:

> the dominant and operative conception of European colonists in the West Indies was that Africans were savages who had no contribution to make to the region's economy beyond field labour. In addition, there was a general hostility to the use of blacks in occupations which involved any form of intellectual or creative assertion. This hostility was reinforced by a widespread fear that the slaves' intellect once mobilized would be employed in the politics of rebellion. (p.21)

Although the planters understood that the education of slaves would lead to insubordination, it was in their economic interest to provide basic literacy and numeracy to a privileged few who would then be able to provide skilled labour at no additional cost. Therefore, a few slaves were taught basic literacy and numeracy because these skills were needed to perform roles such as artisans and skilled labourers on sugar plantations. This group of slaves moved up the social strata and became a social group called "slave elites" (Beckles, 1989).

After the abolition of slavery in 1834, the education of slaves became an urgent matter and the Jamaican education system was used as one of the main mediums to further inculcate white supremacy and strengthen psychological enslavement. The Report of Sterling to the British Government, 11 May, 1835, stated:

> About 770,000 persons have been released from slavery by the Emancipation act, and are now in a state of rapid transition to entire freedom (the period of apprenticeship). The peace and prosperity of the Empire at large may be not remotely influenced by their moral condition... For although the negroes are now under a system of limited control,

which secures to a certain extent their orderly and industrious conduct, in the short space of five years from the first of August, their performance of the functions of a labouring class in a civilized community will depend entirely on the power over their minds of the same prudential and moral motives which govern more or less the mass of the people here (as cited in Gordon, 1963, p.20).

The education system in Jamaica was a key tool that was used by planters and executed by church missionaries to teach virtues such as loyalty, passivity, and acceptance of the status-quo.

The education system also emphasized specific gender roles. Boys were introduced to agriculture and other manual trades, while girls were taught the domestic sciences and sewing (Leo-Rhynie, Bailey & Barrow, 1997). The Lumb report of 1898 revealed that "domestic economy and household duties should be taught to girls from the three upper classes (of elementary schools)... women teachers should take part and receive instruction in cooking, laundry work, and domestic arrangement" (as cited in Leo-Rhynie, Bailey & Barrow, 1997). According to Leo-Rhynie, Bailey and Barrow (1997), "in the early years the opportunity for education discriminated in favour of the white elite population and boys. The few opportunities that existed for girls prepared them for domestic roles or for a limited range of gender-appropriate occupations" (p.130-131). The education of girls in domestic sciences had far reaching effects on their socio-economic status in society and their roles in their homes; as it prepared females for subordinate roles as domestic helpers serving the white planter class or housewives serving their male partners and children. Today, despite many attempts at educational reform, the Jamaican education system still prepares children for specific gender roles. Due to sex-segregation in the technical-vocational areas of the curriculum, girls continue to be clustered in the subject areas which prepare them for employment in the service sectors and sales, resulting in women ultimately being paid lower than men (Tang-Nain & Bailey, 2003).

Teacher education in Jamaica was funded by the Mico Charity in 1834 to build normal schools and train native teachers (Gordon, 1963). Throughout the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century there were trained teachers and teachers who were not trained serving in the primary schools. Before the inauguration of the University of the West Indies in 1944, there were no systems in place for training secondary school teachers and principals. The trained graduates and principals were expatriates from Britain and the teachers who were not trained were from Jamaica. In an effort to train its secondary school teachers and principals, educational initiatives

33

such as the implementation of the Diploma in Education at the University of the West Indies, the provision of scholarships for teacher education, and the mandatory service of teachers who benefitted from the scholarships were established. The new initiatives resulted in Jamaica producing adequate principals and teachers to meet their demands, so the need for expatriates declined. The decline in the need for expatriate teachers and principals resulted in the lowering of teachers' salaries, because the need no longer existed to keep teachers' salaries attractive and on par with that of teachers in Britain (Miller, n.d.).

The salary of teachers in Jamaica continues to be a sore topic of debate among representatives of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (teachers' trade union) and the government. The low salary received by teachers is one of the reasons given why the teaching profession at the early childhood to secondary levels of education is not attractive men. Teacher statistics in Jamaica revealed that there are 19,677 female teachers compared to 5,227 male teachers (Ministry of Education, 2013). However, there are more males than females at the level of principals in Jamaica. Clayton Hall (President of the Jamaica Teachers' Association), in addressing the under-representation of males in the lower levels of the teaching profession in Jamaica, remarked that "men are viewed as the providers, and one of the worst things that a responsible working male could be accused of is not being able to adequately support his family" (as cited in Virtue, 2013 para. 8). This statement reiterates patriarchal ideologies of males as breadwinners in their families, but this does not hold true for Jamaican households, where women play an integral role in providing for the financial needs of their families.

Another remnant of British colonialism evident in our education system is the curriculum. The curriculum that was inherited from Britain was criticized on the basis of not being relevant and culturally appropriate to the needs of Jamaican students as the curriculum content and textbooks developed students' imagination but were far from their lived experiences. According to Miller (n.d.) three main criticisms were made about the curriculum that was inherited from Britain:

- The curriculum content, and the books to support it, often did not reflect local conditions.
- The imperial culture was promoted at the expense of local and regional culture.
- Being a citizen in a sovereign country required substantially different socialization than being a subject in a colonial society. Emphasis had to be placed

on developing allegiance to the nation through promoting its symbols through the
education system as well as through teaching the responsibilities of citizenship in
a newly independent democratic nation. (p.15)

The curriculum that was used for decades in Jamaica favoured the upper and middle-classes which consisted of the offspring of British expatriates and slave elites and was used to maintain rigid class lines. Numerous attempts at educational reform have been made but an education system that is equitable to all has yet to be achieved.

During the pre and post-independence era (1950s-1970s) in Jamaica, debates regarding education reform were either in favour of maintaining the elitist, domination/subordination education model or providing equitable access for all. According to Woolcock,

The educational reforms of 1957 and 1962 were designed by the Jamaican state to
reproduce the social relations of production and the social division of labour of a
dependent capitalist economy changing from agriculture to manufacturing. This meant
selecting, socializing, stratifying and training human capital for industry, commerce, civil
service and the professions through the educational system… Although the stated
intentions of these reforms were to equalize educational opportunities and expand
educational access for the lower middle and subordinate classes, their impact on them
was insignificant relative to the upper and middle class. Contrary to government stated
intentions, secondary and higher education remained the privilege of a selected few
whose socio-economic circumstances were key differentiating characteristics. (p.51 as
cited in United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization,1984)

The education system a half century later still claims to provide equitable learning conditions and reduce the stratified class structure. This study highlighted the meaning participants make of their experiences as students, teachers, and mothers in the Jamaican education system and their understanding of social inequities as children, teachers, and mothers.

The education system in Jamaica today is operated under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, which has its head office in the capital city, Kingston, and six regional offices serving two to three parishes each. The church continues to play a crucial role in the running of traditional high schools, which were inaugurated after the abolition of slavery. The education system consists of four levels, namely, early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary. The early childhood level caters to the needs of children ages three to six years old, primary schools

caters to children from ages six to twelve years old, secondary schools caters to children from ages 12 to 17 years old and tertiary education caters to individuals who specialize in various fields after completing high school. The education system has been reformed several times since the inception of the Ministry of Education.

Another major determinant affecting the infrastructural and human resource development capacity of the education sector in Jamaica is the government's structural adjustment agreement with the International Monetary Fund. According to Johnston and Montecino (2011)

> As one of the most indebted countries in the world, with a gross public debt of 129 percent of GDP in fiscal year 2009/10, Jamaica has been burdened by heavy debt servicing costs due to both the size of its debt and very high interest rates. This exceeding large debt burden has effectively crowded out most other public expenditure, especially public investment in education and infrastructure, which have stagnated over the last 18 years. (p.3)

The economic instability has had a negative impact on the development of the education system in Jamaica (Bullock, 1986). The Jamaican education system since its inception has served various mandates, but who are the beneficiary of these initiatives, reforms, and capital investments? Bailey (2003) concluded that

> In spite of their overall higher levels of participation and performance at the secondary and tertiary levels of Caribbean education systems, the majority of the women in the region continue to be positioned in the lowest sectors of the capital market, earn lower wages than men, suffer higher rates of unemployment, experience greater levels of poverty, are under-represented in decision-making positions at the meso and macro-levels of social and political institutions and lack real personal autonomy. (p.136)

The use of a life history approach necessitates an exploration of how wider societal factors influences the lived experiences of teachers who are mothers in the Jamaican context. This study highlights the experiences of participants in the Jamaican education system and the impact of schooling on their career trajectory, social mobility, autonomy, and experiences of motherhood and teaching.

Migration

It was not my intention to address issues related to migration at the outset of this study. However, while conducting the study, issues relating to migration to Canada was a common

thread among participants, hence it became necessary that I address related to migration. The three participants in this study began their families while they were teaching in Jamaica; however, they have migrated with their families and are now residing in a prairie city in Canada. Structural adjustment policies imposed on Jamaica from interactions with the International Money Fund has weakened the economy significantly and the financial hardships have become unbearable for many, including professionals (Ho, 1993). Since the turn of the new millennium, Canada has made it easier for professionals to migrate with their families. However, the migration of black female teachers has resulted in numerous socio-economic issues to be navigated in both their host and home country. Crawford (2004) stated that "working-class African-Caribbean women had high hopes in providing a better future for themselves and their families but no one told them that the intersectionality of their race, gender, class, nationality and immigrant status would position them as outsiders" (p.99). Migration has added a layer of complexity to how teachers who are mothers make sense of their experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica and how both roles have influenced their decisions to migrate.

The migratory practices of mothers to countries such as United States, Canada, and Britain have redefined the concept of motherhood. According to Hondagneu and Avila (1997), "motherhood is not biologically predetermined in any fixed way but is historically and socially constructed" (p. 549). Motherhood for migrant mothers cannot be defined in the way thatmotherhood is defined for mothers from developed countries, nor can it be defined in the same way for mothers who have not migrated. Kawask (2011) contends that "to truly comprehend the complexities of such terms, we need to broaden our awareness and understanding of the diverse positions and meanings of motherhood" (p.960). This study unearthed the meanings participants made of motherhood in Canada. Much of the research that has been done on transnational mothering focused on immigrants to the United States and Canada who were unskilled and were employed in low-paid domestic jobs or assembly line positions (Daenzen, 1993; Crawford, 2003). This study sought to understand if the experiences of professionals such as these three teachers are similar to the experiences of unskilled women in navigating the sexism, classism, and racism experienced by other mothers from the Caribbean who may not be teachers or professionals.

In many Jamaican families, motherhood is viewed as transcending geographic boarders and as a collective effort among members of the extended family and wider community. These

cultural factors have mitigated the effects of transnational mothering in Jamaica. Crawford (2003) in discussing 'transnational motherhood' stated:

> Throughout time on both a regional and international level Caribbean women have utilized their extended family and kinship networks incorporating child-minding and child-shifting arrangements to buffer the effects of unemployment, poverty, racial oppression, and domestic disruption. Caribbean women, like other women in the African diaspora, view motherhood and mothering as a collective rather than a solitary or private act. (p.108)

For immigrant women who have experienced systemic oppression resulting in poverty and social malaise, being able to provide an improved standard of living and better social and financial prospects for themselves and their families is paramount.

Communal mothering is also important for the economic survival of Jamaican families, and has become a way for life for women who migrate in search of better financial prospects for their children, extended family, and wider community. Whether it is internal migration from rural to urban centres in the island or migration to more financially prosperous countries such as Britain, the United States, Canada, or other Caribbean islands, communal mothering provided by members of the extended family or community has made such migratory practices possible. Massiah's (1983) study on female headed households in the Caribbean revealed that:

> The past hundred years or so have witnessed a steady exodus from the region, the direction and volume of the movement changing as people's perceptions of available opportunities changed. It may now be said that an emigration ethic has become an integral aspect of the culture, in the sense that emigration is now accepted as a valid life option. (p.10)

The migration of Jamaica's labour force has had mixed repercussions on the socio-economic development of the country. A report by Thomas-Hope, Knight, and Noel for the International Organization for Migration [IOM] (2010) revealed that migration has deleterious effects on the human resource capacity of Jamaica, especially in professional groups such as nursing and education. On the other hand, remittances in the form of cash or kind to families and social agencies such as schools and health facilities play a major role in the economic development of the country (IOM, 2010).

IOM (2010) also reports that "the high migration of women is especially associated with the negative effects upon children and dependents left behind, despite the increased economic benefits of the remittances which typically are sent to support children and the family" (p.13). Although transnational mothering meets the financial and hence the physiological needs of family, I am not advocating transnational motherhood as the most ideal parenting pattern. It is a very difficult socio-emotional process. A study conducted by Dillon and Walsh (2012) on the effects of parental migration on Caribbean children's health and education revealed that "left-behind children of migrants are more likely to experience emotional distress and negative effects of the breakdown of family structures and relationships than those in non-migrant households, with evidence being mixed for the effects on education and health" (p.1). Children of parents who have migrated may be at greater risk for being exposed to physical and sexual abuse, academic challenges, and for those who eventually migrate, the reunification process may be complicated (Dillon & Walsh, 2012). Issues directly relating to migration are not the focus of this study; however, the migration of participants to Canada added an additional area of investigation.

Feminist Perspectives on Motherhood

Feminists have voiced different perspectives at different periods in history about motherhood. Critical feminists espoused that women's ability to reproduce has placed them in a subordinate position to men (Firestone, 1971). Ashcraft (1998) reiterated that "feminists believed that a woman's biology, that is, her reproductive abilities, forced women into the traditional roles of motherhood and forced them to behave in traditionally feminine ways" (p.7). Debate among feminists about freedom from the demands of motherhood has spawned advocacy for the use of reproductive technology, the right to abortion, contraception, and painless childbirth (Ashcraft, 1998).

The feminist movement has been instrumental in improving the lives of women and mothers for centuries. It is interesting to note that throughout each era the forms of oppression have been changing constantly, so feminists throughout each stage had to work to respond to the challenges of the era. Richardson (1993) mentioned that "what is meant by feminism has changed quite significantly in accordance with developments in thinking about how, and why

39

women are oppressed and, also how gender relates to other forms of oppression, in particular 'race,' class, sexuality, and age" (p. 110). I will proceed to provide an overview of the development of feminist thoughts regarding motherhood in mainly North American and the British context; these jurisdictions have influenced the Jamaican society in numerous ways due to colonization, migration, and globalization.

Nineteenth-century feminist writers were concerned about women's lack of involvement in the public sphere. They advocated for women to have equal access to employment, education, and the right to vote (Richardson, 1993). Many nineteenth-century feminists believed that there were innate differences in both sexes and expressed that women had a maternal instinct that was not present in men (Richardson, 1993). These feminists advocated for equality in difference and highlighted that although the sexes were different, women should not be in a subordinate role (Richardson, 1993). According to Richardson (1993) these feminists proposed "that women had special talents and virtues which they developed in their role as wives and mothers, such as sympathy, caring, and tenderness, and that it was desirable for women to extend these beyond the home" (p.111). She concluded that it was paradoxical that these feminists argued for greater involvement in the public sphere, for they believed that women were innately more adept at domestic responsibilities than men. This belief could have been used as a counter argument by anti-feminists that the place of the woman was in the home. Richardson stated that "it is important to recognize that feminists then, as now, did not speak with one voice" (p.111). Feminists such as Theresa Billington-Greig in this era viewed the family as the cause of women's oppression, advocating that the family should be completely rejected (Richardson, 1993).

At the turn of the twentieth century middle-class women in North America mobilized initiatives which took the form of social movements and lobbied for activities geared towards the methodical study of child development (Smith, 1990). In 1897 the National Congress of Mothers was convened in the United States with the goal of reforming motherhood. There were also mothers' clubs being organized throughout the United States during this era. The mothers' club did not only facilitate opportunities for women to meet and discuss their lived experiences but they also provided a political function and an avenue where women formed "pressure groups, promoted legislation and state policies supporting "educated motherhood" and pressing for special courses for women on child development in public schools and colleges" (Smith, 1990 p.

40

226-227). The call for systematic information on child development by middle-class mothers resulted in childrearing practices being governed by psychologists and sociologists (Smith, 1990).

Likewise, during the 1920's and 1930's the women's movement advocated for "voluntary motherhood" and the right to use birth control. Legal abortions were permitted on grounds where the pregnancy would jeopardize the health of mothers (Richardson, 1991). During the 1960's the women's liberation movement challenged the assumption that childcare was women's work and asserted that it was women's traditional role in the home that was responsible for their oppression (Richardson, 1993). Betty Friedan's (1963) book the *Feminine Mystique* highlighted the isolation and frustration of white middle class women in the United States who were fed up with the never ending cycle of childcare, cooking, cleaning, and meeting the needs of their spouses. Feminist analysis of the family enabled them to challenge society's notions of motherhood. They argued for childcare facilities, thus relieving women of some child-rearing responsibilities and enabling them to work outside the home.

In her book *Women's Estate*, Juliet Mitchell mentioned that reproduction was one of the dominant reasons for the subordination of women; the other reasons identified were women's marginalization from the means of production, men's control of her sexuality, and primary responsibility for the socialization of children (Mitchell, 1971). Firestone (1971) was even more radical in saying that only by freeing women from reproduction through artificial reproduction could women achieve social and economic equality with men. Critics of Firestone mentioned that artificial reproduction could lead to the perpetuation and further oppression of women by males, if females were not in control of how reproductive technologies were used. One major critique of Firestone's thesis was Adrienne Rich. Rich (1986) in her book *Of Woman Born* posits that a woman's ability to reproduce was a source of power and not oppression as Firestone mentioned. Rich made two distinctions of motherhood: (1) motherhood as the ability to have children and engage in child-rearing and (2) the institution of motherhood which encompasses the stipulations and the jurisdiction under which women carry out their roles as mothers. This analysis of motherhood as an institution by Rich has set the stage for further research in the lived realities of mothers in varying social milieu, as it is the institution of motherhood that feminists critique not the act of mothering (Richardson, 2003).

41

Motherhood Studies

Andrea O'Reilly has done extensive academic work on motherhood since the turn of the new millennium. In 2006, O'Reilly coined the term "Motherhood Studies," "to acknowledge and demarcate this new scholarship on motherhood as a legitimate and distinctive discipline, one grounded in the theoretical tradition of maternal theory developed by scholars such as Patricia Hill-Collins, Adrienne Rich, and Sara Ruddick" (O'Reilly, 2010, p.1). According to Ruddick (2009) "mothering may be performed by anyone who commits him or herself to the demands of maternal practice" (p.306). Ruddick asserts that fathers too could engage in mothering. Ruddick's work was expanded by Doucet (2010) who explored single fathers, homosexual fathers, stay-at-home-fathers, and fathers from ethnic minority groups' experience of mothering. The concept of maternal practice is historically and culturally determined. Maternal practice prescribed by the dominant culture in Canada created issues relating to cultural identity development among participants who are negotiating mothering and motherhood in a changing social context.

Motherhood Studies as a distinct area of inquiry investigates the paradoxical dimensions of motherhood, as a source of oppression and empowerment and the interplay between both (O'Reilly, 2010). Motherhood study is divided into three interrelated areas of inquiry:

1. Motherhood as institution-these scholars are concerned with challenging the ideologies, policies, and images of patriarchal motherhood;

2. Motherhood as experience-investigate the work women do as mothers based on Ruddick's concept of maternal practice,

3. Motherhood as identity or subjectivity-examines the effect of becoming a mother has on women's sense of self. (O'Reilly, 2010)

In her book *Twenty-first-Century Motherhood: Experience, Identity, Policy and Agency,* O'Reilly also added "agency" as one of the areas of inquiry of scholars in Motherhood Studies. Agency as used by O'Reilly highlights the potential of motherhood as a site of empowerment and political activism based on Adrienne Rich's work. According to O'Reilly (2010) maternal empowerment "is best understood as an oppositional stance that seeks to counter and correct the many ways that patriarchal motherhood causes mothering to be limiting or oppressive to women" (p. 369). Noted British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984) postulated that agency and social action takes place within social contexts and will be determined by the opportunities or

constraints generated by the social structures. Whilst this study seeks to give voice to the experiences of these participants, I am aware that the degree of agency afforded participants will be based to a great extent on their socio-political, historical, familial, and educational context in both Jamaica and Canada.

Intersection of Motherhood, Race, and Class

Critical feminists are even more concerned about how the interplay of power relations such as race, class, and gender interact to shape the experiences of women. Black feminist writers such as bell hooks (1981) have critiqued white middle-class mothers who viewed the family as a source of oppression. For black mothers, the family can be a source of support although black mothers often feel a need to protect their children from racism (Collins, 1986). Due to interlocking systems of oppression, black women have had to be creative in maneuvering multifaceted forms of oppression and assert themselves as full human beings (Collins, 1986). For black female immigrant teachers to Canada, the confluence of multiple forms of oppression may interact to determine the meanings participants give to their experience of mothering in the Canadian context. Hale (1980) mentioned that "effective Black mothers are sophisticated mediators between the competing offerings of an oppressive dominant culture and nurturing a Black value structure (as cited in Collins, 2004). For participants in the Jamaican diaspora, nurturing Black value structures may mean mothering their children in the Canadian society but making conscious efforts to maintain their Jamaican identity, values, and culture. Fulani (2011) argues that

> historically and contemporaneously, black women across the African Diaspora have lived, and continue to live, with a high degree of vulnerability generated by the multiple jeopardy of blackness, femaleness, and class position. Black women's struggle to fashion coherent selves is necessitated by the histories of slavery, plantation society, and colonization … (p.1).

The participants in this study are black, females from the lower socio-economic strata of the Jamaican society who have migrated to Canada, who may have to cope with an additional social status of being immigrants. Bangar and McDermott (1989), two black teachers working in Britain, explained that "racism identifies black people as a problem, this serves to legitimize tighter immigration controls (targeted against black people); police harassment of black communities; and the identification of black people as criminals, competitors for jobs or as a

social nuisance" (p.139). Speaking specifically to the Canadian context, Turner (2005) asserts "while the severity of prejudice and discrimination against Black people in Canada has varied over time and from place to place, no part of Canada can be said to have been free- or to be free today- of race-based barriers similar to those in the United States and Britain" (p.212). While the experiences of participants in the Canadian academic, social, and economic milieu is not the initial focus of the study, these factors played a role in shaping the meanings participants give to their experiences of motherhood and teaching.

Feminism and Teaching

Feminist educators challenge the taken-for-granted ideology that teaching is a rewarding career for women, where their efforts are recognized and duly rewarded (De Lyon & Migniuolo, 1989; Grumet, 1988; Acker, 1992). Are women naturally adept at teaching children because of their presumed innate nurturing abilities and experiences of motherhood? Teaching, like nursing, librarianship and social work are considered feminized professions (Kim & Reifel, 2010). Feminized professions face many obstacles in achieving full professional status (England & Folbe, 2005) and are often referred to as para-professions or semi-professions (Etziomi, 1969). Employees in these professions often receive substandard wages, inadequate benefits, and only occasional social recognition (Ackerman, 2006). Teaching is viewed as the norm for women, as it is seen as synonymous with mothering and is devalued as women's work (Nelson, 2001). Feminist educators challenge the naturalistic ideology that women "have an inborn ability to teach, based upon their more private roles of child-bearer and nurturer" (Stalker, 1998 p.221). This study seeks to analyze how the gendered educational experiences of participants in Jamaican schools may influence their career choice, career trajectory, and how motherhood may further impact participants' experiences at various junctures in their professional lives, such as student/teacher relationships, relationships with colleagues, parents, administration, curriculum, and with choices of instructional strategies.

There is a general lack of awareness in regards to issues of gender and the manner in which the education system perpetuates gender stereotypes among Jamaican teachers, and the teachers' college and universities have yet to address these concerns (Bailey, 2003). McCormick (1994) lamented that schools play a critical role in transmitting gender stereotypical values. Based on my experiences as a student and teacher in Jamaica, girls are over-represented in the social sciences, while the majority of males are enrolled in scientific and technical areas. The

post-secondary educational opportunities and the career choices available to students upon completion of secondary education are to a great extent determined by the gendered educational opportunities afforded to students throughout their formative years.

King and Morrisey (1999) examined twenty History, Geography, and Social Studies textbooks at the secondary level in the Caribbean and discovered that women were invisible in the majority of the texts and whenever they were mentioned, they were playing subsidiary or unskilled roles. Ayodike (1989) analyzed the portrayal of women in literature texts. It was found that women were projected in a negative light and very few attempts were made to challenge the stereotypical view of women. On the other hand, Pollard (1989) mentioned that books written by some authors portrayed Caribbean women as strong, wise, and courageous.

Education is political; therefore the portrayal of women in textbooks in the Caribbean is based on the gender role stereotypes and views of specific authors. For young impressionable children, the content of texts is usually beyond questioning; hence, gender stereotypical ideologies are uncritically accepted by them as the norm. It may be inferred that the educational opportunities afforded the research participants in this study may have played a crucial role in their decision to become mothers, their career choice, and the ways in which gender roles are mediated in their homes, classrooms, and wider community.

Summary

This study seeks to use a modified life history approach to analyze how Jamaica's history of colonization may influence the educational experience of three Jamaican teachers who are mothers. Using a critical feminist standpoint will enable me to highlight the social justice phenomena this study seeks to name and challenge: racism, classism, and sexism. Racism in Jamaica is ubiquitous and our education system has played a significant role in reproducing social inequities. The unique history of Jamaica as a country has influenced the trajectories of these mothers' and teachers' lives in compelling ways. I do not hold a deterministic or essentialist perspective; I do believe in human agency. However, an analysis of the Jamaican history provides plausible explanations to our present experiences. The institutions of motherhood and teaching continue to be debated as critical feminists work relentlessly to improve the conditions under which motherhood and teaching take place.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As a child, I was raised predominantly by my grandmother. I spent hours daily listening to her as she shared stories of her life. I was particularly interested in her accounts of significant life events such as the death of her mother, having her first child, her marriage, career, overcoming numerous obstacles, the death of her eldest son, and becoming a Christian. My grandmother's stories of resistance, intrinsic motivation, tenacity, determination, and strength empowered me and played a key role in my personal and professional development. As I grew, I was always intrigued while listening to the real life experiences of individuals and having served as a school counselor in Jamaica for ten years, listening to the stories of students, parents, teachers, and members of the wider community became my way of life. There are many important lessons we can learn about a person, place, and era by listening to the life stories of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. It is intentional that I chose a modified life history approach to gain insights into three female teachers' experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica. My life history was a major determinant in my decision to use a life history approach.

Based on the personal and wider political goals of this study, a life history approach is the most suitable methodology. This study seeks to lead me, as the researcher, to greater levels of personal insights about my experiences of motherhood and teaching, while providing an arena where the voices of teachers who are mothers from Jamaica will be heard. Voice constitutes individual accomplishments as well as, historical and socio-cultural dimensions (Sperling, Appleman, Gilyard & Freedman, 2011). Historically, the lives of ordinary, marginalized individuals, particularly women were not documented. Life history researchers make a concerted attempt to document the lives of individuals whose life stories are deliberately exempted, with the intention of making the personal political and raising social awareness. Giving voice to the stories of these participants in this study does not necessarily mean that their stories will be heard and that their stories will lead to political action. Sherene Razack (1993) spoke about the risk

members of the oppressed groups take when they share their stories and that the telling of their stories is not always empowering. Political action may not always eventuate as a result of participants telling their stories.

A life history approach was also chosen due to its emphasis on the research being conceptualized from my subjective experiences as the researcher and the importance it places on the meanings participants and researchers make of their experiences in their peculiar social context. Cole and Knowles (2001) suggest that:

> Life history acknowledges not only that personal, social, temporal, and contextual influences facilitate understanding of lives and phenomena being explored, but also that from conceptualization through to representation and eventual communication of new understanding to others, any research project is an expression of elements of a researcher's life history. (p.10)

Whilst life history research is personal, it is also political, as it encourages us to question our common sense knowledge and to 'wake up' and challenge the socio-political factors that impact our experiences. This study will allow the researcher and participants to critically analyze how our past experiences as children growing up in the Jamaican context and other societal factors influence our experiences of motherhood and teaching. This life history research is premised on the interpretations of the participants and researcher, as I made connections and critically assessed the data. It is a messy process of making sense of the convoluted events in our lives (Cole & Knowles, 2001), and in our case, motherhood and teaching. As a result of participating in this study participants had the opportunity to reflect on and enlarge their understanding of the socio-political forces shaping their context and lives in general. This study also contributed to teacher education literature in Jamaica, providing a critical understanding of the socio-political forces shaping the teaching profession. It also gave participants the opportunity to name the problem which is required before one can go on to identify solutions.

Life history research will further enable participants to reflect critically on how their roots influence their routes in life (Longman, 2008). An examination of our family background, educational experiences, and socio-economic status will provide participants with greater levels of self-awareness and may lead to insights about the trajectory of their lives as teachers who are mothers; highlighting specific turning points, challenges, and aspirations while plotting the graph of numerous milestones in our lives. One such route is our migration to Canada to engage in

graduate studies. What are the push factors in our families, careers, or the Jamaican society in general that propelled these Jamaican teachers who are mothers to migrate to Canada? In what ways did motherhood impact our decision to migrate? This study aims to assist the researcher and participants in deciphering how wider societal influences influence our routes as teachers who are mothers.

The following sections of this chapter will explain my epistemological and ontological assumptions, definition of life history research, my rationale for using a modified life history approach, and the fundamental design elements of a life history research study. Specifically, these fundamentals are: establishment of trust with participants, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, and strategies for trustworthiness of research data. I will also be exploring the ethical considerations that are relevant to this study.

Feminist Epistemology

Feminist epistemology investigates the different ways gender impacts our understanding of knowledge claims and the ways in which research is conducted and justified (Anderson, 2012). As a black female teacher who became a mother while residing in Jamaica proposing to use a life history approach to develop greater insights into the lived experiences of participants, my shared social position with participants provides an epistemic privilege, as I have had to a certain extent similar lived experiences of participants. As a group Jamaican teachers are recently becoming increasingly interested in educational research. To date much of the literature that is used in teacher education privileges the dominant groups such as North America and Britain. Jamaican female teachers have been greatly excluded from educational discourse both locally and internationally. Numerous proponents of feminist epistemologies contend that the conceptions, acquisition, practice, and justification of knowledge methodically disenfranchise women and other oppressed groups in the following ways:

1. Excluding them from inquiry
2. Denying them epistemic authority
3. Denigrating their "feminine" cognitive styles and modes of knowledge
4. Producing theories of women that represent them as inferior, deviant, or significant only in the ways they serve male interests

5. Producing theories of social phenomena that render women's activities and interests, or gendered power relations, invisible, and

6. Producing knowledge (science and technology) that is not useful for people in subordinate positions, or that reinforces gender and other social hierarchies (Anderson, 2012).

As a social group these teachers who are mothers from Jamaica and are now residing in Canada are marginalized based on their race, social class, gender, and now their immigrant status. A feminist perspective allows me to problematize how interlocking systems of oppression interplay to influence the lived experiences of participants. This study sought to contribute to scholarship on teacher education and social research in both Jamaica and Canada as it creates a platform for the stories of this underrepresented group to be voiced.

One of the main tenets of feminist epistemologies is that of being a situated knower. Therefore feminist philosophers contest the "ideal of the 'universal' human subject, or knower, who is fundamentally independent, constitutionally isolated from others, ideally unemotional, and driven by the maximization of his own interests" (Bailey & Cuomo, 2008, p. 2). The ways in which individuals understand social phenomena is based on their positionality and particular social identities such as race, class, religion, and ethnicity. Therefore, the knowledge generated often times is based on the social lenses through which the inquirer conceived, practiced, and acquired such knowledge. As a black Jamaican teacher who became a mother while living in Jamaica, I cannot take it for granted that because I may have similar familial background, social class, and religious beliefs of the participants, my experiences of motherhood and teaching will be similar to that of my participants. We may share some similarities, however, other idiosyncrasies such as age, marital status, geographic location, and school culture and values may result in totally different experiences. It is the differences, ambivalences, and shared experiences among the participants and I that this study sought to unearth, while contributing to the knowledge base of teacher education in Jamaica.

Feminist Ontology

Feminist researchers work to deconstruct and rethink the position of women in society and in academe in particular. As a black female teacher and mother from Jamaica engaging in educational research, my positionality as 'an insider,' working with participants who are also

black female teachers and mothers from Jamaica provides a sense of commonality, communalism, trust, and kinship as we recognize that similar events have shaped our lives; yet the meanings we made of our past and present experiences may be quite different. I am also an 'outsider' based on conventional claims of which 'bodies' are capable of making knowledge claims. Whose voices are privileged and whose voices are not heard? The ontological questions this thesis raises are tied to how my identity and understanding of 'self' and how the construction of self is shaped by the synthesis of personal, familial, socio-cultural, historical, religious, and academic factors. Kouritzin (2000) stated that "by understanding ourselves in narrative, as always living in the midst of a yet-to-be-completed story, we see ourselves both in the process of continuously becoming and in a state of being" (p.5). This study seeks to elucidate participants' understanding of their experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica, and how their sense of self continues to evolve in relation to these roles.

Definition of Life History Research

Life history research methods are used in various disciplines in the natural and social sciences and may be defined in more specific terms depending on the subject area being investigated (Cole and Knowles, 2001). According to Cole and Knowles (2001), "regardless of the discipline, researchers who pioneered life history research in their respective fields each recognized the individual as a window into broader social and societal conditions" (p. 12). In more general terms, "life" in life history research may be somewhat misleading as the study will not focus on a person's lifetime but on specific aspects of the participants' life as it relates to the research questions (Kouritzin, 2000; Labaree, 2006). The construct "history" in life history research refers to the technical and methodological ways in which life historians collect and document participants' perceptions of lived experiences (Labaree, 2006). Carr (1961) in his debate about what constitutes history argues that:

> No document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought-what he thought had happened, what he thought ought to happen or what would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought. This has no meaning until the historian has got to work on it and deciphered it. (p.16)

Life history research is a subjective meaning-making process where the researcher and participants collaborate to develop deeper insights into specific aspects or events in one's life. This study is the intermingling of the life histories of three Jamaican teachers who are mothers and my life history as researcher.

Life histories are also retold in light of an ever-changing present (Jarvinen, 2004). The life histories of participants were told in a reflective way, as participants reminisce on their experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica and how those experiences relate to their present circumstances as mothers in Canada. Kouritzin (2000) combines life and history and opined that "life history research focuses on individuals' understanding and recollection of events that have had a substantial impact on their development" (p.4). This study sought to elucidate the meaning participants make of two very significant facets of their lives-their experiences of motherhood and teaching. Cole and Knowles concluded that:

> Not only do life history researchers create histories of lives, but they also reference those lives in history. To uncover the historical forces on a life is to synthesize the influence of the health, socio-economic, religious, educational, and political conditions during that history. (p.80)

The life histories of participants reflected the socio-political context of the Jamaican society at that time in history.

A Modified Life History Approach

A life history research tradition emphasizes an in-depth analysis of the broader contextual factors influencing the lived experiences of participants, while engaging in caring authentic relationships. My research project used a modified life history approach due to time constraints. I am currently pursuing a thesis at the graduate level. The duration of the program is two years inclusive of the completion of six courses. Therefore, I was not be able to live alongside or expend more than 6-8 months engaging in in-depth interviews and guided conservations with participants. This research is also modified in the sense that I employed a critical perspective. This study is premised on assessing how systemic oppression influences the trajectory of our lives, while enabling us to recognize the impact of our context and social positioning on the meaning we make of our lived experiences, our complicities, and how we conceptualize

possibilities to improve our lives as teachers who are mothers. Life history research is built on tenets such as relationality, care, and authenticity (Cole & Knowles, 2001); therefore, the schedule of guided conservations was determined by the participants as they facilitated our discussions into their already busy lives. I used life history research methods in all facets of the research project from conceptualization through to the presentation of findings.

Rationale for Research Methodology

My rationale for selecting a life history approach was the convergence of the goals of the research project and the tenets of life history research. The goal of this research is to develop deeper insights into the contextual factors influencing the experiences of teachers who are mothers from Jamaica. According to Cole and Knowles (2001):

> Life history researchers have two intentions: to advance understanding about the complex interaction between individuals' lives and the institutional and societal contexts within which they are lived; and through consciousness raising and associated action, to contribute to the creation of more just and dignified explorations and renderings of the human condition that, in turn, lead to the enhancement of qualities and conditions under which lives are lived. (p.125-126)

The information gleaned from this study will contribute to the knowledge base of teacher education in Jamaica, as it provides insights into the lived experiences of teachers who are mothers and the impact of wider contextual factors on both roles. As a Jamaican teacher and mother, I have an intellectual and moral commitment to my country, profession, social class, and gender to engage in methodologically sound research that gives voice to disenfranchised groups. This study is also designed to lead me to greater levels of personal insights about motherhood and teaching and how historical and socio-political factors have influenced my lived experiences.

This research project also serves a political function and a social change agenda. It is designed to heighten awareness about the experiences of a group of black female teachers whose stories may not have been documented otherwise. This study is personally, academically, and professionally meaningful to me as the researcher, as it begins with my personal narrative and concludes with the meanings the participants and I make of our experiences as teachers who are mothers. Cole and Knowles (2001) suggest that "life history inquiry is about gaining insights into the broader human condition by coming to know and understand the experiences of other

humans" (p.11). By studying other teachers who are familiar with motherhood in the Jamaican context, I will be better able to understand my personal experiences.

I also chose a life history approach because it fosters collaboration between participants and researchers as co-creators of the life history (although the data analysis and presentation of findings were my sole responsibility). According to Germeten (2013), "my story of my life and your story of your life are recreated and intertwined into life histories" (p.613). This research project is a representation of my experiences of motherhood and teaching, the experiences of participants, and the understanding of readers, as I encourage readers' interpretation of the life histories through their subjective experiences. I documented the life histories of participants in an accessible manner that is easily read and understood by individuals from various social groups, especially disenfranchised groups such as racial minorities, females, and immigrants.

Kouritzin (2000) used life history research to document the experiences of immigrants who were learning English as a second language. Kouritzin (2000) concluded that:

…researchers and practitioners need to take responsibility for ensuring that Other histories are recorded, and that these histories inform policy and practice. Each generation of immigrants, each immigrant, comes to Canada for a different reason, leaving a changing social context and arriving in a changing social context…As immigrants come to Canada, they help to create a new culture, both in ethnic communities and in the wider social context. Even one life history could add depth of knowledge of our understanding of social change, yet generations of histories of immigrants are lost because there is no time, ability, or opportunity to record them. When these marginal histories are lost, the cultural connections and sense of personal place in history are denied to future generations. (p.11)

This life history research documented Jamaican teachers who are mothers' experiences of migration to Canada. Factors related to the socio-political context in Jamaica that have precipitated the need for participants to migrate as well as the pull factors in the Canadian society are explored. The meaning participants' make of their experiences as immigrants will provide greater insight into the social conditions in both their home and host country. This research intends to challenge the perceptions of racial minorities in the Canadian society, who are ever so often asked "why did you come here?"

This research will not only contribute to scholarship in teacher education and meet my personal goals of developing greater insights into my experiences of motherhood and teaching, but may also have direct benefits to the participants. Kouritzin (2000) maintains that life history research provides opportunities for the participants to be heard or listened to. The approach may also enable participants to work through their own decision-making processes and engage in further meaning-making about their lives. Having served as a school counsellor, I am aware of the therapeutic benefits of being listened to. Oftentimes participants who are from disenfranchised backgrounds may not be given an audience to share their concerns. Therefore, providing an avenue for participants to share their experiences and listening to their own stories of motherhood and teaching may result in personal empowerment.

Kouritzin (2000) explained that life history research enables participants to identify themes in their stories of "overcoming adversity" (p.20). Life history research is in itself a therapeutic process and is sometimes psychologically beneficial. Life history researchers provide participants with validation of their experiences and empathy. As participants relate their life stories, they may also be getting an emotional release or catharsis. Although the relationship between the life history researcher and participants is not one of a therapist and counselor, the nature of disclosure may unearth feelings, which researchers must be prepared to acknowledge and address. My training in guidance and counseling was useful as I validated participants' feelings and empathized with them. Now that I have explained my rationale for selecting a life history approach, I will proceed to outline the technical aspects of the research project.

Participants

Three Jamaican teachers who are mothers and are now living in Canada were chosen as participants for the study. These participants ranged in age from 32-44 years old and have experienced various changes in the socio-political landscape in Jamaica which influenced the meanings they made of their life experiences. You may be concerned that I am conducting a study on motherhood and teaching in Jamaica, yet participants are not currently residing in Jamaica. With life history research, participants are asked to relate and reflect on their experiences in a given geographic location in a specific era. These teachers are not presently living in Jamaica; however they had their children while they were residing and teaching in

Jamaica. The migration of participants to Canada has added an additional area of investigation, as participants are invited to share how their experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica may influence their decision to migrate and their experiences of childrearing in the Canadian society.

The participants in this study are known to me personally. We have created a kinship network to support each other in our transition to the Canadian society. Soliciting the support of friends to serve as research participants is one of the methods used to recruit participants in life history research. Cole and Knowles (2001) explained that:

> in our efforts to seek commitment from individuals it might mean inviting the participation of individuals who are well known to us, other times potential participants might be recommended to us by someone who understands the central elements of our project and perspective. In some cases we might happen upon individuals who, in the course of conversation, learn about and express an interest in our research and in other cases we might start from scratch to locate potential participants who are completely unknown to us. (p.65-66)

Each participant has been in Canada for over a period of 18 months. We all met at the university and developed a cordial relationship, where we oftentimes discussed our aspirations, challenges, and goals while offering encouragement to each other as we work to improve our educational and professional qualifications while mothering. We have developed mutual respect and trust for each other based on our interactions for more than a year. I spent time with participants in their homes and in other social settings obtaining information through guided conversations and in-depth interviews. My role as a researcher was to solicit detailed information from the participants about the topic from all vantage points. As a life history researcher I endeavoured to continue to build relationships with participants, not merely soliciting information from them.

Inviting Participation (Sampling)

According to Cole and Knowles (2001) the term 'inviting participation' is used in lieu of 'choosing a sample,' in life history research. Choosing research participants in life history research is more relational and informal than other forms of qualitative research. Cole and Knowles (2001) critiqued the sampling typologies postulated by Patton (1990) and Goetz and Lecompte (1984). Cole and Knowles argued that sampling procedures such as "purposeful

sampling" and "criterion-based sampling" are technical jargon that mirrors the positivist epistemological claims of objectivity, rationality, and using scientific methods to study the experiences of humans. Cole and Knowles (2001) posited that "we do not wish to perpetuate the scientization of research into the human condition. We urge the production of sound scholarship that is accessible above all else. Given the fact that language is such a powerful conveyor of tradition, it is important to make thoughtful choices of research language"(p. 66). The three Jamaican teachers who are mothers were invited to participate in this study based on their intimate knowledge of the areas of investigation-motherhood and teaching, and their willingness and accessibility.

Inviting participation in life history research, like all other areas of the research process, is based on the underlying tenets of care for participants. Cole and Knowles suggested that "as life history researchers guided by the principles of relationality, mutuality, empathy, care, sensitivity, respect, and authenticity, *how* we invite participation, *whom* we invite, and *how many*, will naturally reflect these principles" (p.65). These principles are in tandem with my educational philosophy, my epistemological assumption, and the goals of the study.

Three participants may seem like a small number; however, Cole and Knowles emphasized:

> when we make a decision to research from a life history perspective we opt for depth over breadth. Our inquiry places us with a small number of individuals for an intensive exploration, rather than with a large number for superficial engagement. Given the heavy investment of time and energy required for substantial life history work, it is generally not possible to involve tens or hundreds of people in information-gathering activities. We encourage involvement with fewer rather than more participants. (p.70)

My aim as a life history researcher was to gain the confidence and commitment of three participants who were committed to investing the time for the purpose of developing deeper insights by sharing their experiences of motherhood and teaching.

Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, the main methods of collecting data were in-depth interviews and guided discussions. Labaree (2006) advises that "interviews require careful preparation and planning by the researcher" (p.127). Based on the emergent nature of life history research, the

56

interview questions are adapted throughout the process to glean as much information as possible about the topic. Preparation for the interviews also included technical issues such as having access to a dependable tape recorder and engaging in interviews in locations that were physically conducive (Labaree, 2006). If the physical context that conversations are taking place in is not ideal, then one should change it (Cole & Knowles 2001).

Another aspect of planning that I employed was developing a tentative list of topics and ideas to be explored in the guided conversation and sharing them with the participants prior to the research conversation. Cole and Knowles (2001) argue that:

> This approach of identifying areas to explore through a few open-ended questions which are mutually agreed upon as appropriate for and relevant to the research focus also engenders a more informal and natural process, unlike that which is more likely to eventuate when a researcher begins a research conversation with a long list of highly structured questions and accompanying probes. This latter stance is also more likely to place control over the conversation with the researcher, a role that is antithetical to the principles we advocate. (p.74)

Interviewers are encouraged to ask fewer broader open-ended questions and allow the participant to speak freely about the topic, while the researcher engages in active listening. Active listening entails, not only hearing the spoken word but being in tune with the underlying meaning participants give to their experiences as they relate them (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) and provides a spring board for follow-up questions. Active listening also provided the foundation for subsequent and concurrent interpretive analysis of the data. I have included a list of questions in the Appendix that were used as a guide throughout the data collection process. I did not include questions relating to migration in this list, as it was during the interaction with participants that it became clear that migration was a significant aspect of their lives at this time.

Cole and Knowles (2001) reiterated that throughout the data collection process "we are respectful as we are with any friend... it is as much about creating an atmosphere of security, intentional meaning making, reflexivity, and genuine interaction around topics that are at once intensely personal yet vibrantly interesting to both parties" (p.75). Paying special attention to detail such as physical environment and tone of research questions demonstrated to participants my genuine care and respect. Bondi (2003) spoke about the importance of showing empathy to research participants during the interviewing process. The disclosure of participants about their

experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica was imbued with various emotions; therefore it was important that I demonstrated good listening skills and created a psychic space where our similarities and differences in experiences and meanings were shared in a respectful way. Reflective journaling was also done throughout the research process, to record my thoughts, feelings, reflections, and epiphanies.

Methods of Data Analysis

Planning and Organizing

The proper management and organization of research data is very important as it impacts the trustworthiness of data analysis, how the data is interpreted, and how findings are reported (Labaree, 2006). In life history research data collection and analysis are usually done simultaneously (Boyatzis, 1998). According to Labaree (2006), "the simultaneous gathering and analyzing of data also facilitates the exploration of possible new avenues of discovery with respondents" (p. 129). I transcribed each interview with participants before engaging in another interview. After transcribing each interview and replaying the tape, I listened attentively for recurring themes and these themes were documented in my journal which was used a point of reference during the interpretation and presentation of findings. The transcribed data was coded to identity themes which were further explored by my research supervisors, participants, and me. The themes identified were grouped and discussed in Chapters Five and Six to reflect the research questions, for example, "Growing up in Poverty." Labaree (2006) suggests that the "identification of conceptual categories helps the researcher determine where commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures of phenomena may exist" (p.130).

As with other qualitative research methodologies, life history research is based on an emergent design. Cole and Knowles (2001) suggested that:

> it is not possible to anticipate how the research process will unfold, because of the unpredictability and messiness of research into human condition. Therefore, it is not possible to know in advance the kind of theorizing that will eventuate or the bodies of literature that will inform that theorizing; that is, if the researcher embraces the indeterminate nature of the research journey. (p.64)

While the research is guided by the research questions, the emergent nature of life history research lends itself to serendipity. Real life includes uncertainty, hence personal and professional commitment is required to navigate the ebb and flow of life history research (Cole and Knowles, 2001).

Cole and Knowles (2001) asserted that the life history researcher is the principal instrument of data analysis. Since, this study was conceptualized as a result of my experiences of motherhood and teaching, I analyzed the data based on my personal narrative of motherhood and teaching in light of the new data. Cole and Knowles (2001) mentioned that

we express and represent elements of ourselves in every research situation. The questions we ask, the observations we make, the emotions we feel, the impressions we form, and the hunches we follow all reflect some part of who we are as person and researcher. (p.89)

The research process on the experiences of teachers who are mothers' was fraught with joy, pain, and ambivalence as I saw the connections among these life stories.

Like all other areas of life history research, data analysis is based on the guiding principles of relationality, reflexivity, care, mutuality, and moral, and ethical standards. Due to the emergent nature of life history research, like other forms of qualitative research, it is possible that I may gather data that may lead me to consider themes and contexts that are different from those outlined in the research purpose. Therefore, in analyzing this life history data it was critical that I revisited the purpose of the research to ensure consistency and cohesiveness. Cole and Knowles (2001) advised "it is, therefore, important at the outset of and throughout the analysis process to keep the purpose of the research clearly in mind and to set aside, for another time, thematic leads that are not related to this purpose" (p.94). Keeping the research purpose as the focal point as data was organized and analyzed was crucial as numerous themes and leads were deciphered from the collected data.

The process of organizing research data for analysis is crucial, as it provides structure and enables the researcher to make sense of the data collected. Cole and Knowles (2001) stated that the role of the life history researcher at this stage is synonymous with that of an "archivist." I am expected to "deposit information in a way that makes sense for future retrieval and rearrangement" (p.95). The material collected was organized by chronology/life phase such as childhood, young adulthood, being a neophyte teacher, becoming a mother, motherhood and

teaching, and migration. The data were categorized by themes such as relationships with students, parents, administration, commitment to teaching, gender, socio-economic status, and political context. Data on each participant was kept separate and organized on its own.

Due to the limited amount of time available to collect the data for this thesis, I was not able to collect the wealth of information that life history researchers who are collecting data for over a period of years would be privileged to collect. Life history researchers usually collect and organize data from participant generated documents such as diaries, microfiche, emails, personal writings, documents in libraries, churches, previous schools, and occupational generated materials such lesson plans, mark books, log books etc (Cole & Knowles, 2001). I was not able to collect data from many of these sources, as my participants are now residing in Canada, and did not have access to many of these memorabilia owing to migration. However, participants were able to share stories with me about specific life events from their Facebook accounts and photographs of their families and students.

The interview data from the guided conversations were segmented and I identified meaning units and themes in each segment. The lives of the Jamaican female teachers were told chronologically and organized into themes that my research supervisors, participants, and I considered significant. Participants were sent electronic copies of their life histories and were invited to share their views on themes they felt were important to the study. The study concluded with my reflections while referring to the research questions and theoretical concerns.

Data Analysis

There are no set tools, processes, templates, and procedures to follow in analyzing and writing life history research. Plumber (1983), cited in Cole and Knowles, illustrated the process of analyzing life history research as follows:

> In many ways this is the truly creative part of the work. It entails brooding and reflecting upon mounds of data for long period of time until it "makes sense" and "feels right," and key ideas and themes flow from it. It is also the hardest process to describe: the standard technique is to read and make notes, leave and ponder, reread without notes, make new notes, match notes up, ponder, reread, and so on. (p.99)

Analyzing life history research data requires mental and emotional strength, perseverance, patience and commitment to a sometimes confusing process. Like other forms of qualitative

research, the instrument in analyzing the data is the researcher and his or her theoretical lenses; therefore, we are required to trust our own insights, hunches, and revelations.

The data collected from guided conversations were analyzed while being transcribed, reflected on, read, and re-read. Documenting my thoughts and feelings about the data gathered was also important in analyzing the data. Cole and Knowles (2001) added that "it is really a matter of perspective, trying to look at the data from many different sides, trying to make meaning from it, trying to envision the lived life" (p.101). As life history researchers we oftentimes become enmeshed with the data we gathered. We look for ways to understand the data and present it in meaningful ways to answer the research questions. Analyzing life history research data entails looking at the participant's life as a whole, not as discrete units to be analyzed individually. Cole and Knowles (2001) concluded that "the analysis process is not one of dissection but one of immersion. We become surrounded and washed by the material; we bathe in it, live it, and breathe it" (p.101). Having spent considerable time with the participants, I was able to form relational ties with each participant which enabled me to listen actively to the meaning and importance each story conjured. I documented my subjective thoughts and emotions and shared them in the final writing of the study. Analyzing life history research was both logical and perceptive, i.e. based on our understanding of reality. Knowles and Cole (2001) stated that "we aim to reason the actions and empathize with their consequences. We surround ourselves with the lives of these individuals. We try to imagine their experiences. We try to walk in their shoes" (p.102). Based on the emotional investment of both the participants and researcher it was paramount that I adhered to the guiding principles of trust, mutuality and respect to guide the data analysis process. I was entrusted by participants to represent key areas of their lives; therefore my representation of their life histories was carried out with respect.

Forms of Representation

Cole and Knowles (2001) posited that "to craft a life is to engage in making art. The powers of imagination and metaphor are crucial ingredients for the process of sensitively crafting elements of a life and the crucial meanings of it for others to discover" (p.103). Life history research engenders creativity and for me it represents a spiritual journey and catharsis. One

metaphor I use to guide my role as a mother, teacher, and researcher is P.U.S.H. The diagram below explains the concept of PUSH:
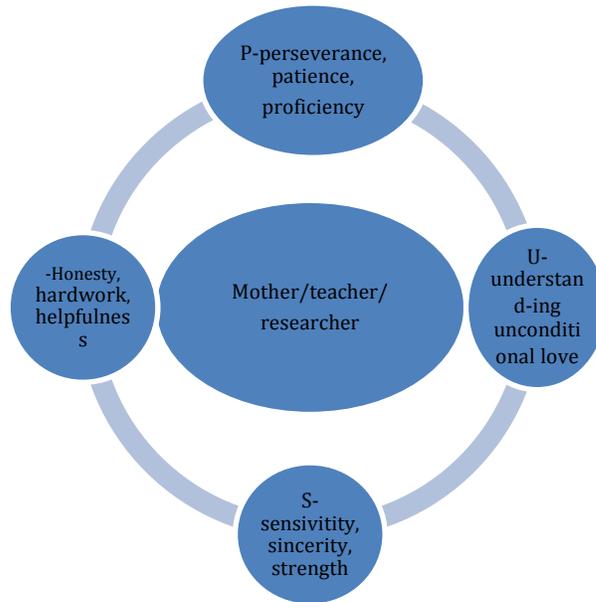
Figure 1. Shows the interconnected of the values guiding my role as mother, teacher, and researcher.

P.U.S.H. reminds me of the delivery process, where although you are enduring excruciating pain you persevere and push with all your vigour because you desire to have a healthy baby. As the child continues to grow you continue to P.U.S.H. to provide for the physical, emotional, social, academic, spiritual, and moral needs of the child. The qualities mentioned above were qualities that I developed to greater levels as a result of motherhood and this study was intended to understand if other teachers who are mothers in Jamaica experienced similar changes in their values and soft skill set as a result of motherhood. These qualities were carried over to my role as researcher. Conducting life history requires similar qualities, as I P.U.S.H. to make sense of the data and its connection to the research questions. Cole and Knowles (2000) mentioned that "since we are the 'instrument of understanding,' our interpretations and eventual representations of lives will reveal some of the 'essential truths' of a participant's life and some of the most impermeable elements of our own life"(p.103).

The principles in the diagram above are also synonymous with the tenets of the life history research process. The analysis of life history research data may sometimes be a messy process that requires patience and commitment. Likewise, motherhood and teaching requires

patience and commitment to the various tasks. In representing the lives of participants Cole and Knowles reminds us that there are certain points to consider, such as:

> the fundamental meanings of experience held by participants given the focus of our inquiry; the work's moral and political purposes; the audience to which the research-informed understandings are directed; our own technical skills and abilities with regard to developing representations, whether in conventional forms of scholarly text or any appropriate alternative; and our interest in stepping outside the box of conventional scholarship forms. (2001, p.104)

The intended audience of this study is teachers who are mothers, administrators or anyone who desires to learn about the experiences of female teachers in Jamaica. Owing to the fact that this study will be imbued with emotions and focuses on the personal and professional lives of teachers, the use of metaphors may be useful to help teachers to speak about challenges they have encountered throughout the process. However, the use of metaphors and abbreviations may not be viewed by those in conventional academe as academic language (Cole and Knowles, 2001).

Presentation of Findings

Labaree (2006) suggested that the findings from life history research may be presented in either of two ways:

> A study can present each life history as a specific case, followed by a summation of the critical issues that emerged from the analysis. This approach is helpful in highlighting the uniqueness of individual experiences. Another approach would be to present the findings thematically and supported by narrative excerpts drawn from interviews and other sources (p.130).

I utilized the former approach in presenting the findings of this study. I presented the stories of participants as a whole, highlighting commonalities between their stories and my story and linking our stories to wider contextual factors and scholarly literature to create the life history. I protected the identity of participants by using pseudonyms for the participants' names, names of schools or communities and any other information that may lead to the identity of participants being revealed.

Audience

This study is designed to inform stakeholders at all levels of the education system in Jamaica and globally about the experiences of teachers who are mothers. Cole and Knowles maintained that "many life history researchers are morally and ethically bound to make a difference in the communities and lives with whom they work" (2001, p.109). During my tenure as a teacher in Jamaica I often advocated for students and families from disenfranchised backgrounds. This research took my role as an advocate a bit further to bring to a crescendo the lived experiences of these participants. Labaree (2006) maintains that "life histories are an effective method for giving voice to those who may not otherwise be visible through other forms of inquiry" (p.131). The readers were invited into the interpretative process to draw their personal inferences from the stories of participants (Labaree, 2006). By documenting the stories of participants, I generated a thesis that contributed to the knowledge base of teacher education in Jamaica.

Strategies for Trustworthiness and Researcher Positionality within the Text

Lincoln and Guba (1985) maintained that the trustworthiness of research findings answers the following question "how can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p.290). Labaree also states that " validity and the author's place within the text are important to any life history study, whether it is being pursued for personal intellectual enrichment or it represents a study intended to evaluate policy or challenge assumptions about user behavior" (p.134). My positionality as mother, teacher, researcher, and narrator of the life histories of participants may impact the extent to which I reveal my personal construction of reality as well of that of participants. My subjective experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica may cause biases, owing to my role as the key instrument of data analysis. In keeping with a feminist epistemological assumption, the identification of biases creates opportunities for further introspection and dialogue. To reduce the potential of this bias, I made it clear that my aim is not to create objective generalized descriptions about the lived experiences of participants, but to highlight the meanings and interpretations they make of their realities. Although, researcher bias

64

is inherent in qualitative research studies, I took practical steps to increase the trustworthiness of findings. The trustworthiness of the research findings was strengthened by having participants read and critically engage with the transcripts, by comparing life history data with other biographical sources and scholarly literature in Jamaica and Canada and by ensuring that the participants have intimate knowledge of the topic under investigation (Plummer, 2001). Additional strategies that were also employed to ensure the credibility of the findings included:

1. prolonged engagement with participants for as long as their schedule permitted. As mentioned earlier, this study uses a modified life history approach owing to time constraints.

2. Triangulation- the use of multiple and different sources such as personal journal entries… (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 p.301-305). In addition to the transcribed data from participants, I found journaling particularly useful as I recorded my insights, hunches, further questions, and initial ideas about possible themes during and after conducting guided conversations and interviews, while transcribing the data, and during analysis of the data.

Another important issue related to trustworthiness is the role of the author in presenting the findings of the research study. Labaree (2006) maintained that:

> Life histories demand a higher degree of authorial representation in the text because, at a fundamental methodological level, it is a journey of discovery between two individuals, the researcher and the respondent. It cannot be my story or his or her story, but rather our story revealed as a way to challenge existing assumptions and to document the interactions between experienced lives and the institutional and societal contexts in which they are lived. (p. 135)

I have served as the narrator of this research since its conceptualization; however, during the presentation and discussions of findings phase, the focus was shifted from "my story or your story" to "our story." This life history included my story, the story of participants, and the interpretation readers make of the life histories.

Ethical Considerations

Life history research is guided by ethical and moral principles of relationality, mutuality, empathy, care, sensitivity, and respect (Cole and Knowles, 2001). The three teachers who are mothers from Jamaica with whom I collaborated for the purpose of the study are my colleagues, individuals with whom I had already built a friendship. A crucial ethical issue that has arisen is

organizational insiderness (Labaree, 2006). "Insiderness in qualitative research refers, in general, to the study of one's own culture or organization" (Labaree, 2006, p.132). As the researcher, I share a similar cultural background, occupation, and social settings with participants. My position as an insider had many benefits, but it also had disadvantages. Labaree (2006) explained four benefits of being an insider. These are:

1. the researcher is familiar with the organizational setting and its members.

2. the researcher and the informant will have likely shared common social and occupational experiences.

3. the researcher has a greater understanding of how to interpret cultural work habits and practices and obtain key information that is available only to organizational members.

4. insiderness facilitates reflexivity. Introspective analysis based on insider knowledge can lead to the discovery of greater clarity of purpose for the researcher and a deeper understanding of the evolving research process. (p. 132)

Whilst my positionality as an insider may reduce the investment of time that an outsider may need to establish trust with participants, my role as the researcher may impact the dynamics of the relationship I have established with participants previously; therefore, issues related to trust and cooperation will be addressed on an ongoing basis. Labaree (2006) advised that "the added responsibility of studying and interpreting one's own community is especially challenging because any false representation of a phenomena, either real or perceived, could lead to feelings of betrayal on the part of the participant" (p. 132). To mitigate this risk I provided participants with a copy of the transcripts for their perusal and obtained their consent before progressing to present the findings. Participants have highlighted areas in the transcripts that they felt uncomfortable disseminating; therefore we reviewed the material and presented it in a manner approved by the participant.

The philosophical ethical approach consistent with this study is relational ethics. Relational ethics proposes that moral decisions and actions are based on a caring attitude towards others. Feminist epistemological assumption and life history research methodology are consistent with my ethical stance. This study exemplified care, respect, nurturance, cooperation, and an egalitarian relationship between researcher and participants. Gates, Church and Crowe as cited Cole and Knowles (2001) maintained that

an ethical research relationship provides the foundation for structuring life histories that re-present the practical wisdom embedded in contextualized lives...The researcher needs to maintain fidelity in relationships with participants, self, and text...fidelity involves the development of a trusting researcher-participant relationship in which the partners co-create knowledge in an atmosphere of mutual respect. (p.153)

Consistent with my commitment to relationality, fidelity, and trust in life history research ethical considerations such as informed consent, deception, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, accuracy, and voluntary participation were addressed. Participants were given detailed information about the study's purpose and were treated as autonomous individuals, capable of choosing to and/or terminating participation in the research at any time. Approval was granted by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Research Ethics Board, prior to the commencement of data collection.

Summary

A life history research approach was selected based on the convergence of the goals of the research study, a feminist epistemological assumption, my personal values, and the guiding tenets of life history research proposed by Cole and Knowles (2001). The modifications that were made to the research method occurred at the stage of data collection due to time constraints and the analysis of research data from a critical perspective. Three Jamaican teachers who are mothers and are now living in Canada were chosen as participants for the study. According to Cole and Knowles (2001) the term 'inviting participation' is used in lieu of 'choosing a sample,' in life history research. Choosing research participants in life history research is more relational and informal than other forms of qualitative research. These participants were known to me personally prior to the start of study.

The main methods of collecting data were in-depth interviews and guided conversations. There are no set tools, processes, templates and procedures to follow in analyzing and writing life history research, it is an intuitive process that entailed becoming embroiled in the data until it makes sense to you as researcher as you answer the research questions. I used the metaphor P.U.S.H. to explain the personal values I gained as a mother and teacher, which are required to successfully complete this research endeavour. The life histories of participants were presented as a specific case, followed by a summation of the critical issues that emerged from the analysis.

67

This approach was helpful in highlighting the uniqueness of each participant's experiences. This study was designed to inform stakeholders at all levels of the education system in Jamaica and globally about the experiences of teachers who are mothers. The trustworthiness of the research findings was strengthened by having participants read and critically engage with the transcripts and comparing their life history data with other biographical sources and by ensuring that the participants have intimate knowledge of the topic under investigation. The ethical consideration applicable to this study was organizational insiderness, as a result of engaging in a research study with participants who share a similar culture and profession.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Research data was collected over a period of eight months, June 2014-February 2015. I met with each participant at least three times and spent an average of four hours with each participant conducting in-depth interviews and guided conversations. The life stories of these participants were told as three distinct accounts. Their stories are told in the first person, as it maintains the authenticity of each life story. Stories are presented in a chronological order depicting the life stages of participants such as growing up in Jamaica, becoming a teacher, becoming a mother, motherhood and teaching, and motherhood and migration. Readers are invited to draw their own inferences based on their personal experiences and context. Pseudonyms are used for the names of participants, schools and communities to protect the identity and maintain the anonymity of participants. I used the title Mrs. at the beginning of each teacher's names, because in the Jamaican culture teachers are addressed by those titles. Mrs. Brown was 32 years old and has one female 6 year old child. Mrs. Stewart was 44 years old and is the mother of two teenage boys and Mrs. Campbell was 37 years old and the mother of two young children ages 2 and 4 years old.

Mrs. Brown

Growing up in Jamaica

Growing up for me was very difficult. My mother has five children, two boys and three girls. My mother worked as a domestic helper and custodian in shopping malls and banks, cleaning bathrooms and cafeteria. My father worked in a factory. At a young age I can recall my dad had lost his job and in order to support us he worked casual jobs as a grass cutter using a machete because in those days lawn mowers were not very prevalent and even if they were available, people in our poor community could not afford to purchase one. We lived in a rented two-rooms house. The house consisted of two spaces. There was no adjoined kitchen, living room, or bathroom. The kitchen and bathroom were made of zinc and stood alone outside in the yard. There were five children and we were jammed into one room which consisted of two beds. My sisters and I slept on one of the beds and my brothers slept on the other. My parents shared

the even smaller space that they had as a room. All the furniture we had in the home was the beds and a barrel. The barrel was used to store clothing. We did not a have dresser, mirror or any other piece of furnishings. We grew up in a very poverty-stricken situation.

We lived in a volatile community in Jamaica and our parents were Christians, so we attended church every Sunday. We did not interact with the members of the community because even though we were poor it was part of my mother's Christian beliefs that we should stand out in terms of our Christianity. We did not stand out education wise, because my parents were not educated. We did not go to parties or other social activities; we just went to school. We would go to school barefooted and hungry. We were taught from the beginning that the only way to emancipate ourselves from poverty was by going to school so our parents ensured that we attended school regularly. Fortunately, for me, when I was ten years old my aunt who lived in rural Jamaica decided that she wanted me to come and live with her, so I got a chance to move out of that poverty but went into another kind of poverty. When I moved to live with my aunt, she was married and they had one child. Even though they were not poor financially, they were poor emotionally, in that they did not know how to relate to people, especially her husband. So, I was treated badly in terms of my emotions. However, I was given money to go to school, I had proper uniform, and I was eating better than I was when I was living with my mother. The community was not volatile, I had the opportunity to interact with members of the community and education was emphasized in the home.

Poverty for me was a reality because I was cursed at everyday by my aunt and her husband that my mother is poor, my father is poor, and we have nothing, therefore it was either that I would not amount to anything or that I should work hard to become something. That was the preaching in my household, living with my aunt. So I instinctively knew that the only way to escape all these challenges was through education. I passed my Common Entrance Examination in Grade 5 in primary school. I went to Sinclair High School at a very young age and was one of the youngest persons in my class. I was placed in 7A1, at that school they have what is called streaming, where they put bright students in "bright class" and so-called dull students in "dull class." I was considered a bright student based on my common entrance passes, so I was placed in 7A1. While in 7A1, I was also schooled by the form teacher and teachers of 7A1 that the only way to remain in this grade was to maintain a certain average. For me failure was not an option because being demoted would not work well with my aunt or my mother, because for them that

would mean "she is not going to amount to anything." Studying became a habit of life because the only way I was going to be successful was to get those grades.

While attending school in Jamaica I learned, I suppose it is a part of the Jamaican culture, that excellence is our priority. I do not know that it is good or right either, but that is the way I was schooled that the only way to succeed is by doing well in school, so for me I did not even have a social life as a student. I just never had that opportunity because of my goal and because of my parents' goals. I do not know that it is right, but it certainly worked for me and I do not know that I would grow my child like that either. I had a fear of failure and poverty. School for me was the motivating force for everything in my life. My life began and ended with schooling.

Becoming a Teacher

I became a teacher because of other teachers who inspired me. Many of my friends did medicine, people went into the business world, and other places, but I wanted to become a teacher because of the teachers who inspired me on the way. The teachers who drew me aside and spoke to me about what my life would be if I did not continue to do well. The teachers who congratulated me, who came and praised me, and that for me was a motivating force. When I left university I applied to least 17 schools and only one school replied. That was King Valley High and I went there as a temporary teacher. I was very young, 21 years old, and happy-go-lucky, but I had a connection with my students because I used the same strategies that my teachers used, which were encouragement, praise, and motivation. I think it is a cyclical process and I encourage teachers to be careful how they treat students, because they actually will become like you. Teachers teach how they were taught, so it is important that we have good teaching. Teaching was also a stepping stone and it was also employment. For my mother, too, in those days teaching was the most valuable profession in her eyes, so if your child is a teacher, your child has done well. For my mother, it was a great feat and for her to tell her neighbours "my daughter is a teacher," would make her very proud. So those are the reasons why I became a teacher.

Becoming a Mother

I had my child when I was 27 years old and I went into the teaching profession when I was 21 years old. I was married and my husband and I bought a home, and even though we did not plan for the child, we were comfortably enjoying ourselves because we thought it would be fine if I became pregnant because we had our house, we had jobs, we had a little money in the bank, so we could enjoy ourselves. I ensured that I had financial and professional security before having a child because I did not want to repeat what happened with my family. I saw the poverty that I grew up in; nowhere to live, trying to find a place to rent, and moving to live with my aunt. If my parents had a home, I would not have to make that kind of move. My husband had the same struggles as a child, so we knew since we were dating in early adulthood that there was no way we were going to have a child outside of marriage, without owning a home, and without driving a car. Those were the pre-requisites for having a child: a house, a car, and jobs.

When I was pregnant with my daughter I was doing my Masters degree and I gave birth to my daughter on the Sunday, which was the 11th and on the other Monday morning which was the 18th I was back in class and she was there with me in class, I had her on my breast and was feeding her at the back of the class and my professor said to me "why are you here?" and I said to her, "if I do not come, I will fail this course." So my daughter grew up in books, in the middle of papers, she would tear them up, vomit on them, and she would mark them up. She grew up in an academic environment and when I was doing my Doctor of Philosophy degree, I had her here with me in Canada as well, and it was not an easy task. I had to be paying an exorbitant amount of money for her to attend daycare here. She experienced a lot of neglect. In the nights I could not read her a bedtime story, I had to be shoving her off because I had to get this piece of work done, so I would not want to do that again.

Motherhood and Teaching

As a mother, the main purpose of education should not be about alleviating poverty, or the fear of failure, education should be about empowering an individual to become who he/she wants to be. As a child growing up education was about development, but now it is more about the learning taking place. My child should be able to learn in whatever setting, culture, and under

whatever circumstance. Learning is what is important so whatever you are going through, you can learn from it. I am 33 years old and I have spent most of my days fearing and not really learning and I do not want that for my child.

Relationship with Students

Motherhood changed my relationships with students in many ways because I got to understand that there is "this one child." Prior to becoming a mother I saw students as a class of thirty. Perhaps the whole idea of differentiated instruction, even if I was doing it, I was not zooming in on it or reflecting on it to see how much I could make it better. My child is not the normal child; my child is super hyperactive and demanding of attention. When I had my child I realized that the same way my daughter is behaving at home demanding attention that is the same way she is behaving at school and if that teacher is ignoring her or looking at her as one of thirty students she will not reach her full potential. That made me look at my students differently; this is my little Peta-Gaye right here, I have to give her that undivided attention, a different piece of myself for her to become what I want her to accomplish; that is the goal of teaching and leadership.

There was a nice looking dark-skinned girl who used chemical creams to bleach or lighten her complexion while she was absent from school for about 3-4 weeks. I was the grade coordinator in charge of a senior grade and she was in that grade. Usually, if a child is absent it is my responsibility to find out why this child is absent so I called her home and she was not living with her parents, she was living on her own. Her mother was overseas and the father was nowhere to be found. She told me various stories about the reasons for her high level of absenteeism. At the rehearsal for graduation, she turned up and I did not recognize her in the group of students because I knew a dark-skinned student and she entered with a lighter complexion. With the lighter complexion were big red spots in her face. I supposed these are the things that happen to you when you bleach your skin. I went over to her and I said to her 'the rule book states that you cannot graduate if you bleach your skin; you can't and you know that." She started to tell me that she did not bleach her skin.

I have seen students bleach before and I know that if I were a teacher who was just existing, it would not matter to me what they wanted to do with themselves once I was teaching

them, but becoming a mother and seeing the importance of teaching a child the right way, I just could not leave it. I spent at least half a day with her, counseling her about that bleached skin. I said to her 'I love you and that is why you are not walking across that stage. You are not walking across that stage because I want you to be at home or in this audience and know that because I bleach my skin I was prevented from sharing in this celebration with my peers.' I said 'I am not going to let you walk across that stage because you are not going to learn. You are going to sit and suffer the feeling of neglect and abandonment and learn that bleaching my skin prevented me from graduating. If you do something wrong, there are going to be consequences.' She was very upset about my decision and was disrespectful to me. I made that decision not because I hated her, but because I am a mother and I realize the importance of teaching your child consequences. I have not heard from or seen that child since that day, I do not know where she is, but I know for sure, that someday, somewhere, she will remember, that she was prevented from graduating because she bleached her skin, and she is going to reflect and change. It is a guarantee.

Relationship with Colleagues

I have about a group of eight friends and I am the only married person with a child. Since having a child our relationships have changed in that I am no longer able to go out to social activities with them as much as I would want to. I leave school a little earlier than they would, and when it is time for planning I have to sit down and plan because I cannot carry home school work because I am going home to a man and a little child. My friends respect my journey, they are great friends, they give my child gifts, they encourage me with my child, and they are just positive people around me. The only negative way motherhood has affected our relationship is in terms of our time for social activities.

I had a birthday party for Peta-Gaye when she was 3 years old and many teachers from the school attended. They came to my house and they did the decorations, bought the cake, invited the guests, and they were all at my home celebrating my child with me. Since I had my child I encouraged my colleagues to start their own families. They are helping me to grow her and that is just an amazing experience.

Relationship with Parents

Honestly, prior to becoming a mother I did not like students' parents. Teachers and parents' meetings, I hated it, because you had these people who are coming to you expecting that you must be the panacea for their child's ills and I did not like that kind of thing. I always wanted to say to them "you are a steward of your child, you are responsible." However, having my own child now, I see them in a different light. I realize their deep concern and their emotions and I realize their passion. I am able to speak from their perspective, because I want to go to my daughter's school and I want the teacher to be telling me what my child is doing and I want to know that the teacher is doing something to make my child better. So when parents come to me now I talk to them differently; I am more responsive to their concerns, I listen more, and I take the time to use the phone at school and call them to say "your child is not performing in the way she used to or I have noticed a dramatic shift in your child's behavior what might be causing the problem?," just because I am a mother. Otherwise it is just that these children and their parents need help and I am not the one to provide it.

Relationship with Administration

I think we became closer knit as a result of motherhood. I am now better able to speak to administration from a platform of informed understanding. I can now go to my principal and say "how was your daughter Anita when she was 5 years old? Peta-Gaye is giving me hell!" So, we have this kind of relationship now, she can say "oh do not worry about that, when Anita was 5 years old, she was doing this, it was the same thing." We have a closer relationship; we can now speak from a kind of a shared platform because we are having the same experiences, because they too had children when they were younger teachers.

Relationships with Members of the Wider Community

I believe that when you become a mother, you are more respected by the wider community. I do not know if it is because of the awesome responsibility that parenting comes with but I find that the people in the community related to me better. They were more open to wanting my advice or parents' advice especially when we went to community meetings in my housing

scheme. They are more open to wanting people who are parents on the various groups and committees. I think that it does foster a deeper level of respect when you become a mother.

Impact of Socio-Political Factors on Teaching

The political system in Jamaica impacted my teaching career in a negative sense. I have not seen the Ministry of Education, especially the ministers that we have had respect teachers. Teaching is by far the most noble and the most difficult profession. We are not respected in terms of remuneration, we are not given positive recognition, and it has really impacted me negatively as a teacher. It causes me to question, is this where I want to be; in a place where I am not valued, where I am not respected? Honestly, my experience has put me in a position where I would not want my child to become a teacher. I think a lot of teachers are there; they do not want their children to become teachers, it is not necessarily because of the hard work, but because of the way we are treated as teachers.

As a mother there are certain social situations in Jamaica that influenced my life and the decisions that I have made. I do not want my child to know violence; I do not want her to understand it. My father was murdered when I was 11 years old. It totally took away from the person that I could have been today. I perhaps could have achieved a lot more, or perhaps even less. Growing up without a father was not a good thing, so I did not want her to experience violence. I do not want her to experience poverty, so I try not to make her in need, but I do not spoil her. However, the things I know that my child needs, I do not want to say to her I cannot. Everything I do is to improve or to enhance my child's development.

Support for Teachers Who Are Mothers

I think schools should consider having a daycare on campus. In the same way the teachers would have to pay for an external person to work in their homes or take their child to a daycare, they could pay the school at the same cost. There are classrooms, buildings or even a trailer could be used for this purpose. Teachers should be emotionally satisfied, if teachers are not emotionally satisfied, they cannot teach, and it is not fair because they have their children at home too. The more emotionally satisfied and happy teachers are, the better they will teach.

76

I can speak from what I have heard, not that I have experienced it because at our school we have an open door for mothers, so we can pick up our children from school and have them in the staff room, and other teachers are very tolerant of the children because most of us are female teachers and are mothers. We have occasions when other teachers are helping our children with their homework, while we are planning a lesson for the next day. We take our children to Sports' Day and other social activities at school and there is that support system. On the other hand, I know of other teachers who are at other schools where they are not given that same level of support so they feel neglected and abandoned.

Let me relate to you a challenge I had with balancing motherhood and teaching. My daughter attended a very good Christian kindergarten that was 25 minutes away from where I taught. The school began 7:30 a.m. and the school I taught began at 7:20 a.m. While I waited for 7:30 am each morning for a teacher to take my child, I was already 10 minutes late for work. To get to work after dropping her off took an additional 25 minutes, so I was coming to school at least 35 minutes late each morning. As a teacher leader in the school, I had to be at morning worship by 7:20 a.m. My students were looking at me as a fraud, as a fake, because I am the one preaching punctuality but I am arriving late for school every day. That affected me a lot. My principal came to my car door one morning and said, "if you continue to arrive at school late I am going to have to take the leadership position from you." My reply to her was "I understand." I had to remove my child in the middle of the month from the school she attended. I did it for two reasons: 1) to be authentic, to be able to say what I do and do what I say. For my students to see that I am authentic leader, I had to be at school early. 2) Just for my own self-satisfaction as a teacher, not just for show. Removing my child from the previous school and placing her at a school that was closer resulted in a JMD$10,000 ($150 CAN) increase in her tuition fees, but I did it.

Motherhood, Teaching, and Social Justice

As a child growing up in Jamaica and learning about slavery and colonization in Jamaica, I felt hurt by the injustices that were done to my predecessors by the colonizers. As I matured I got to understand the different ways of thinking between Whites and Blacks. My child has this experience of living in both a predominantly black society and living in a multicultural society, but frankly she does not see the difference among ethnic groups. When children are playing

together, they are all the same. They see differences when you start to point them out. When one child asked her about her hair, why is her hair sticking up, and not hanging down like theirs? She responded to the child that it is because her hair is like her mother's. So she does not even know that she has black, coarse, thick, natural or negroid hair. Little children do not even know and I do not know that they need to know racial differences. They just need to realize that people are different but the fundamental values are the same.

When I am teaching these days as a mother, I honestly teach with more power and more passion and I teach so that every single child will learn. I try to differentiate my teaching, I try to focus on each child's strength and I teach to their strengths. In the course I was teaching we covered topics such as homosexuality, poverty, and single parenting. My students are usually charged to discuss these issues. Many of my students based on their socialization and religious background they felt that homosexuality is a personal choice and it is not one's business to meddle. Others are vehemently opposed to it, but my classroom is a place of shared inquiry and collaborations so they knew that there is that space where they can express themselves as they want and not be penalized for it.

In terms of poverty students are open and vocal on the issues they face knowing that this is where they are in their lives, where they want to be, and are aware of what they have to do to get there in order to move away from poverty. Poverty is the reality of most Jamaicans. Most teachers were living in poverty before they became teachers. So it is an issue that is open and alive and they speak about it freely and because most teachers experienced poverty they are able to relate to poor students, not to embarrass them because they do not have certain resources, but to create that atmosphere and make provisions for those students. There are students, who I feed and nobody knows I am feeding them, because I know what it was like to be poor and for people to know that you have to be begging money.

Migration: The Journey

I did my Master of Philosophy in Jamaica and I always wanted to do a Doctor of Philosophy degree. I remember when I had my daughter and I was in the class the week after I gave birth and I said to the professor (at that time I was 28 years old), that I will have my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree by the time I am 32 years old. She looked on me and said "wow ok."

Her response was as if that is not going to happen. When I said it at the time I did not even know what I was saying, but I said it. I did get my PhD when I was 32 years old. While studying in Jamaica I was going to upgrade from the Master of Philosophy to a Doctor of Philosophy and then I decided that I was going to wait because I just had the child, so I waited.

A friend of mine mentioned that she got acceptance at a university in Canada to do a Master's degree, so I started to do my own research. I told my husband that we would save $100 USD every month to pay for my studies. I realized that saving $100 USD was not making it, I needed more, so we started to save every single cent, we just saved. I was applying for visas for me, my husband, and my child. When we submitted our application at the embassy, I was afraid that we were not going to get the visas because I only had $15,000 Canadian Dollars (CAN) and they required $10,000 CAN per person. We left the application at the embassy and about two weeks later a representative of the embassy called me and said "I do not think we are going to be able to give you this visa because the money that you have is not enough. Can you do the PhD in one year, because the money you have will only serve you for one year." I replied, "I don't know that I can do the PhD in one year. The acceptance letter said a minimum of 2 years, so one year would be impossible." She said this amount of money cannot suffice, "because your daughter based on her age would have to go to day care, how are you going to pay for day care?" I said to her I don't know and she hung up the phone. I was 100% sure that when we got the call to pick up the passports they would not have any visas in it. She told me that she cannot give it to me, so when we went and I opened the package, I opened mine first and I saw the visa, I said 'oh my God' and dropped the passport. I said to my husband that they must have only given it to me. To one of us, then I said it does not really matter because I am not going if my child is not going anyway. My husband is the one who looked in the others and saw that there were visas in all three. That was a moment of 'God this is a Your will' kind of a thing. We came to Canada with our $15,000 and rented a basement apartment. I was so blessed, I got scholarships, I got to do little jobs with my professors, and it was just a blessed journey financially. I am not going home with any money but I am going home with a PhD and I am going home to a job. I am going home better than I came.

Mrs. Stewart

Growing up in Jamaica

I grew up most of my childhood as the second to last child in my family, until eleven years later when my brother was born. When he was born I got the chance to be a big sister to him. I changed his diaper, fed him, and engaged in babysitting. We were a close knit family and my parents were from humble circumstances. My father has limited education, but my mom had more education because she pursued adult education courses in community health after she started her family. She worked in the clinics and in the community, visiting the elderly and people who were ill, giving nutrition advice and so forth. My father was a plumbing assistant; however he was made redundant when I was in high school. When my father was made redundant that was a difficult financial period for my family, because there was no substantial income to begin with so there was no savings. I owe so much to my mother because her efforts got us through that period. She looked for all the opportunities that she could to get an income. She went to Cayman, Curacao, and other Caribbean islands to purchase items and came back to Jamaica to sell. My father began farming and he provided for his family in terms of food. My father reminded me that there were days when there was no money to send me to school and I would cry and say that I want go still and he admired that about me.

I was the first person in my family to get a college education. My parents always wanted their children to get what they did not, because their education was interrupted because their parents did not have enough money, so they had to start working early. My mother worked as a live-in domestic helper when she was 16-17 years old, so she did not want us to have similar experiences. Since I was the first child to attend college there were a lot of expectations, I felt very special, and got the royal treatment. My parents would say 'oh my daughter is at Teachers' College' and they were very proud. I am really blessed for the family background I have, because a lot of what I do today is because of the sacrifices that they made. As I reflect, I can say that these are some of the same things I want for my own children.

I grew up in a small community where everybody knew each other and took care of each other. I grew up in an era in which all parents were parents for all children and you dare not go home and report to your parents that you were disciplined by another member of your community or you would be disciplined again. In that community education was valued and

teaching was a valued profession. Teachers have a particular status and so it was attractive to me to have that kind of status and respect from people with whom I grew up. The community was so small that whenever individuals pursued tertiary education they would migrate to the cities, so many teachers, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals were not living in that community. The community was made up of people living on subsistence incomes and jobs such as farmers, carpenters, masons, and people who were self-sufficient.

Experiences as a Child in Jamaican Schools

I can remember when I was in basic school our teacher was very strict and we used to be strapped as a form of discipline. Corporal punishment was very much a big part of schooling in my time. We got beatenfor not knowing the Bible verses for the week, we got beaten for not knowing our times tables, and for being late. We just took our scolding. My experiences with corporal punishment had a lasting impact on me, because I promised myself that I was not going to be treating any child like that. I was not going to scold my children like that and there was no way I was going to be treating any child that I would be teaching that way. It was just too painful emotionally.

When I was in grade 8, we were having a Clothing and Textiles examination and I studied really hard for the exam and during the lunch hour I felt ill and I had my note book on my desk and I placed my head down on my book and I fell asleep. When the time came for the examination to start I did not even realize what was happening, papers were handed out and then the teacher came to me and shook me and she took up the book and said I was cheating. She took the book and the test paper and she gave me a big fat zero. In spite of me doing well for so long that one incident made my grade so low. I was demotivated from then and I was never able to like the subject again. I always had a negative perception of that teacher and she did me this great harm. I was not even allowed to explain to her what had happened.

Based on that experience as a student, when I became a teacher I was able to always put myself in the students' shoes. Whenever, I am going to react to a situation I first put myself in the position of a student, because sometimes as teachers we tend to forget where we came from and we tend to forget that we were children. Oftentimes, we judge students based on where we are as adults. If that teacher had given me a chance or even thought it plausible and say "oh,

there was nothing on the paper yet so she could not have been cheating," I would have been given a chance. I do not know but it is just something that has lingered in the back of my mind ever since and it has taught me that sometimes we have to step back and think like the children and see why a child behaves the ways she does. A lot of it is not necessarily what you directly do or teach but how you behave, how you treat others; lots of lessons lie right there that children learn from you. So in my own teaching career I tried to teach the right lessons through my own actions.

Becoming a Teacher

I got into teaching because I admired my teachers and I always day dreamed about becoming a teacher based on the teachers I interacted with. I can recall when I was in high school I had a teacher of English Language and I was in such awe of this teacher. She was so good, she made an impact on my life and I always wanted to be like her. I wanted to be a teacher and I wanted to be an English teacher. I wanted to be like her, she was my hero, and my role model. When I went to Teachers' College, my major was English Language and after completing college I ended up being her co-worker. I learned so much from her and it was a lifelong relationship from a student/teacher, to colleague, and friend. When I was growing up I was so enamored with the teaching profession that whenever we were having playful situations with friends or siblings, I was the one who was the teacher. Mom always told me that since my childhood when anyone asked me what I wanted to become I would say a teacher.

I also became a teacher because of the value the members of my community placed on the teaching profession. Teachers were admired. As a teacher you were a good person, somebody that others wanted to emulate. My parents also saw the teaching profession as a profession that would ensure that I am taken care of in my life. It was not only about getting an education but also about making myself meaningful and making my life a more comfortable one than my parents had.

Views on Education

Education was always the way of improving my life, my parents taught me that in order to not end up struggling through life, you had to get a good education, as education is the key to getting a good job, and getting a good job is the key to having a better life. That was how I saw education when I was growing up and that is still how I see it. I tell my own children that you have to do well. I pass on the same values to my children that education is important and education is the solution to many problems. Whatever you may lose in your life, you are not going to lose your education, as it is something that you can always bank on. So that has never changed and so from my parents' generation to my generation to my children's generation that is how it has been passed on.

Becoming a Mother

I became a mother because I was married and it was just the time. I did not want to wait for 5 years after getting married to become a mother. I also wanted to experience the joys of motherhood. I also wanted to be a mother because I experienced my mother's love and I experienced the love of so many other mothers. I wanted to experience loving somebody as a mother, so it was just the time. I was married and very comfortable. There is a negative perception of people who are unmarried and are pregnant, especially in the community where I grew up. It was unfavourable to have an unwed pregnant teacher. I was a wed pregnant teacher, so I was confident and I got a lot of support from co-workers and students. When I had to take maternity leave I was distressed that it was such a short leave. I wanted more time off from work because I felt that 2 months was too early to leave my child.

Becoming a mother has strengthened my view that education is very important and it is what is going to get you into a better life. Being a mother, you even become more of a mother to your students. Throughout my career, I have had so many students who looked up to me as a mother. Even to this day I have students who I am in touch with who call me on the phone and who send me text messages or contact me on Facebook and I have taught them from years ago and they never forget me. There are two past students who actually call me mother. There is one

who listed me on Facebook as her mother. I had that motherly touch with my students and it may be because of my experience as a mother. There was this student who I was very close to and she was having issues with her own mother. She grew up with her aunt, while her mother was living in another community. She confided in me that the relationship with her mother was not very good and how her birth mother would treat her and that she thought of her aunt as more of her mother than her birth mother. She would come to me for advice and support, things that you would go to a mother for.

Having become a mother, I developed more patience for my students and my students looked up to me as a mother figure. I have always had students who shared personal information with me and I am able to relate to their experiences 1) because of being a mother 2) because I have been through similar experiences. I think that motherhood and being a teacher who is a mother helps you in both ways. Being a mother helps you in being a teacher and being a teacher helps you in being a mother. I think they are two interesting roles that are put together. As a teacher you want your own children to be good children, children who are eager to learn, and I found that being a teacher of English I wanted my own children to be good in English. When my first son was going to infant school, I always wanted him to speak Standard English, and I remember he was always using the Jamaican Creole and I would correct him. His response was, "I am going to stop talking because every time I talk I say the wrong thing." So out of that experience I realized I needed to step back a little bit and allow him to express himself however he wanted to. Now that I am in Canada I talk with them in Jamaican Creole and ironically my husband and I will raise eyebrows because they do not know their Jamaican heritage, they do not know the Creole so well. It is ironic that in our own country we wanted them to speak the Standard English and when we come to Canada we want to hold on to that Creole.

Relationship with Colleagues

As teachers who were mothers we shared our experiences. We spoke about little things like "oh this is what my child did today. My child said…" So we shared experiences and there were older teachers who were a part of our staff too who gave guidance, even before we became mothers. They would give little tips and I remember there is this teacher Mrs. Daley. I always told her that I admire her children; what do you do? She would give me ideas about how to discipline my children and so forth. It helps to have people who share your experiences. Before

becoming a mother when someone does not show up for work or a child is ill you may think that she may be abusing the system until you become a mother yourself and then you realize that children can become sick suddenly, so you were better able to understand the action of others.

Relationship with Parents

When we had parent/teacher consultation, parents would speak with me about problems they were having with their child and sometimes they were looking to you as a teacher for advice. As a mother you can share with parents based on your own experiences what you do with your child and how it works with your child.

Relationship with Administration

I cannot say that becoming a mother impacted my relationship with administrators at that time. Today it would have had much more of an impact now that I would have had more experience with mothering and seeing how my children behave at home and the kinds of complaints I get from school. I think now I am better able to say this is what will work for a child of this age. When I was teaching, my children were young, and I was teaching high school students, so there were not real similarities in experiences then. I think I would have a lot more to share at this stage.

Impact of Motherhood on Teaching Career

When I became a mother I was not able to spend as much time outside of school hours on school related activities because I had to go home to relieve the nanny who was staying with the children, so I became less involved in activities after school such as clubs and societies. I was still able to attend staff activities at resorts on Teachers' Day or end of the school year activities as long as they were just for the day. I had to dedicate more time to home and so after I started having children, I did not have as much time to do extracurricular activities.

On the other hand, a teacher's job is never done at the end of the school day. I had to take home the planning, the marking, and that has a way of eating into my family time. I always took home work and that impacted my family life, because I did not have enough time for my young children. I left the classroom in December 2007; it has been a long while since I have been teaching and I do not see myself teaching again; not because of any negative experience or loss

of love for the profession or for children. I miss being in the classroom, but I just feel that I do not have the kind of energy level that is required to deal with the children that are in the classrooms now. I think having my two boys, who are now students, is challenging enough. From interacting with my sons I get an idea of the challenges that the teachers now face. My sons share that if the regular subject teacher is not in the classroom, and they are given a substitute teacher, they take advantage of their teacher not being there and the substitute teacher is given a hard time. Since I have lived in Canada for the past four years, I notice that children here do not use common courtesies such as 'good morning' or 'excuse me' or I wonder if it is a different culture here. Students can leave class as they like. The teacher does not have that kind of control or management, where you are able to keep all the children in their space and you know where each child is at every point of the lesson. Students are given so much latitude where if they fall down on assignments they have multiple chances to get it done. They miss a deadline in January but the end of the reporting period is March, so as long as they do it before March, they are fine, the grade can always be adjusted. I do not know how well I would do in a setting like that because for me you are not only teaching students the content of the lesson, but you are teaching them proper work attitudes as well.

Lessons Learned from Motherhood

All the challenges, all the balancing acts, I think I have gone through all of that. There is nothing now to prevent me from doing anything, because while I have been a mother and teacher, I have also been a student. I was balancing all at once, and so I think that there is nothing about motherhood that is going to prevent me from achieving or accomplishing any goal that I have. When I was pursuing my Bachelor's degree in Jamaica, my second son was two years old and it was a challenge. It took a lot of guts to leave him as it was a residential program. There are some things that helped:

1) I had a nanny from Mondays to Fridays

2) I had a good husband. He took on a lot of responsibility in order to facilitate my going off to study. He came home in the evening and ensured that the children were fed, made sure that they did their homework and went off to bed on time. I have to give him a lot of commendation for that.

86

3) I went home every weekend. I went home every Friday and I went back either Sunday night or Monday morning. So I was with them every weekend.

4) I had support from my mother, my sister, and my younger brother.

Support for Teachers Who are Mothers

The government should implement day care clusters in school communities in Jamaica where teachers who have young children could take their child/ren. If your child is nearby at a daycare centre you are able to use your break time to go and have lunch with your child. Teachers would be pooling their resources, so it would not be so financially stressful to hire help for your home so the cost would be greatly reduced, especially because there is a wage freeze on teachers' salary.

Socio-political Factors Influencing the Lived Experiences of Teachers

Many children in our society do not have adequate parental care, so female teachers often play the role of mother. Socio-political factors are the reasons for my exit from the classroom. There is so much pressure and you are not valued and commended for your efforts. A colleague said "if a child does poorly it is the teachers' fault, if the child does exceptionally well the child is bright," so the teacher is hardly given recognition. If the child fails, it is teacher's fault and the blame is not equitably shared. The parents and other stakeholders are absolved of their responsibility for the child.

There is a class system in terms of how students are placed in schools in Jamaica. The wealthier students whose parents are able to pay for extra lessons and buy all the books and other resources are able to attend the elite high schools. These elite high schools get a lot of financial support from past students, wider community, and churches and so there is always this class system and it does not matter although they may change the titles of the schools, the children know that this school is 'up there' and this one is 'down there,' and who wants to go to the school that is down there? I think the Ministry of Education has failed schools because there are many ills in the system that require no funding to fix and they are not paying attention to it. Throughout the years there have been so many studies on education and you will see the same things recurring. I do not think our education system fosters a love for learning and a love for school. It fosters the end product, meaning, students gaining high passes in the external

87

standardized examinations. It is an examination oriented education system, the process is not as important.

Many schools now are being forced to operate like businesses. The principal is the CEO, and not only is he/she responsible for ensuring the teachers are delivering high quality education to students, but the principal now has to think about how the bills are going to be paid, we need a building etc. The principal is now an entrepreneur, who will have to generate funds from registration fees, summer school and extra lessons fees, graduation gowns, and other fundraising ventures. In order for many teachers to survive financially teachers have become small business owners in their classroom. It is not because teachers want to go through that hassle to be selling, but the reality is that the salary just cannot do. It is difficult especially now where their salaries are frozen and cost of living is increasing daily. Therefore, many teachers are seeking jobs outside of the profession in order to supplement their income or even to migrate. Since the year 2000 many of our good teachers have gone to America and England to serve.

Migration

The main factor that influenced our decision to migrate was safety. Jamaica has a high crime rate, and we were in business at that time, and business people were targeted and we felt we needed to migrate because we wanted to preserve our own lives, not just for our sake but for our children's sake and we wanted the best for our children. We wanted our children to get better educational opportunities and we felt that if we looked outside of our home country then we would find those opportunities that were lacking. We had no confidence in our political system, because each time we had a change of government the country was no better off than they were years before, so we just felt that we were not advancing at all. Any gains that were made from one administration were erased by the next, because each administration was trying to stamp their own brand of leadership on the country.

I chose Canada because I wanted to do a Master's degree in Education and when we did the research it was more affordable to study in Canada and there were opportunities for us to get scholarships. I applied to the University of Alberta as well as University of Saskatchewan. I got acceptance to both, but I decided to attend the University of Saskatchewan because I felt that I was getting a more personalized service. Staff there were always following up, emailing, calling,

are you coming, do you need any help; while once University of Alberta had sent the acceptance letter, that was it, it was up to you to motivate yourself to come, there was no interest. So we gravitated to the University of Saskatchewan because of the kind of service that we got and the small city feel.

Sometimes I had some experiences and I am not even sure how to label them, I do not know if I like labels, but sometimes I question whether these are instances of racism. For example, I went to the supermarket and I took up a bag of cherries, and I went to the cashier and she cashed everything and when she got to the cherries, she asked "these are $3.99 per pound, are you sure you want them?" I replied "yeah." When I reflect I wonder if this person was judging me based on my looks to say that I cannot afford these cherries for $3.99 cents per pound. Another time when I went to the meat section, and asked about some steak and the attendant said: "Oh if you are talking about that cut of steak, those are expensive and they are not on sale now." So again I wonder if someone is judging me based on how I look to see what I can afford, so I cannot afford to buy that cut of meat unless it is on sale. Then there are some persons who are always asking "why did you come here?" and I do not mean persons who are reasoning and saying "you are from Jamaica and it is so warm there and it is cold here, so why did you come here." I mean people with the expression on their faces like "why did you come here?" People are generally warm and friendly here but you get the feeling sometimes that people do not take too kindly to immigrants. When my younger son was in elementary school there was an Aboriginal student in his class and he told me that there were children who were unkind and I used it as a teachable moment for him. I was able to let him know that it is unkind, it is bullying, and that is not something you should do and you should let somebody know that this child is being bullied. Those negative experiences have not changed my perception of or how I relate to people in Saskatoon. I think people here are generally warm, helpful, and accommodating.

I find that here parent/child and teacher/student relationships are more liberal in Canada in comparison to Jamaica. In Jamaica we are more conservative and we guard our children more closely; there are strong authority lines, and children are expected to be obedient to authority figures like parents and teachers. When my children just came to Canada their teachers commented that they are so polite. I was taken a back because to me they were not abnormally polite, they were just being themselves and then I realized that children here are different. When my sons' friends visit our home they do not greet us as adults and that is not the norm in

Jamaica. I had to restrain myself from addressing the issue with their friends because I did not want to embarrass my son and I had to understand that it is a different culture, and I did not want to impose my values on these strangers.

Mrs. Campbell

Growing up in Jamaica

My family consisted of six children in the home and my parents were married. My father and my mother each had one child before the marriage and there were five of us in the wedlock. My mother's eldest child grew up in our family as well, so there were six children constantly in the home, because my dad's first child did not live in the home. My mother was a teacher and my father was a life insurance salesman and a politician. Our family was unique in our community because most families there did not have two professionals in the home. Another difference between us and other members of the community was being of a lighter complexion,the impact of which I did not understand as a child.

I grew up in a very small rural community consisting of subsistence farmers, manual laborers, girls who dropped out of high school due to pregnancy, masons, and other persons who were self-sufficient. As a child I was not very outgoing and being the fifth of six children, my interactions were shadowed by the interactions of my older siblings. My father was a politician so we were set apart and we spent most of our time in our home. We were one of the few families who had a television so children from the community would come to my house to watch television. My mother would travel to the United States in the summer to work and that was how she took care of us.

In my home my mother was the nurturer, confidante, peacemaker, pacifier, and our friend. My father was the disciplinarian. My father had deficiencies in contributing to our finances, but he was never absent. My father's deficiency in handling money resulted in my mother handing the money; however, my mother was never the ruler of our household. My father and my mother are from two separate backgrounds. My mother was from a solid Christian home. Her parents were foundation church members with deep spiritual roots and, in the Jamaican context, with spirituality come a certain level of upliftment and so my mother only observed peace in our home and upward mobility. My father had an abusive father who was an alcoholic and he was verbally abusive, but my father had a certain drive for success. He was very brilliant,

eloquent, and handsome. My parents were an unlikely match, so their marriage did not work out eventually and that affected us negatively as children. My father cheated on my mother and brought children into the home from his extra marital affairs. My mother finally left the home when I was 15 years old, after over 20 years of marriage. I witnessed my father coming home drunk and he would verbally and physically abuse my mother. Lots of negative events in my home impacted my childhood and that may have been one of the reasons why I was a mute child because of fear of letting out any secrets of the home. Mute in the sense that I just would not speak for any reason, unless you spoke to me. My parents' marriage failed as early as when I was five years old because at that age I knew that something was wrong in our home. I have no qualms in saying that we are from a dysfunctional family. My parents were not divorced until I was an adult. My haven from as early as 5 years old was always school, the place where I could just tune everything out and channel any issues that I had into academic pursuits.

I started school at the local basic school in my community at two years old but that did not last long because the other students poked and pinched me, maybe because my hair and skin colour was different, and I did not speak. I have one vivid memory about writing something and a teacher hitting me. That may be one of the reasons I was pulled from that school. I remained home until I was 4 years old and two of my siblings and I were placed in a private school 30 miles away from home. We were between the ages of 4 and 6 years old and we got up early every morning and rode the jalopy bus to school. We would leave home at 7 a.m. and we would return home at 4:30 p.m. each day. Members of the community would look out for us on the buses. If there were no seats on the bus somebody would always hold me in their laps and I would sleep the entire journey because I never woke up.

Our religious private school was a sheltered environment and it had relatively small class sizes, maximum 33 children to a classroom. There was no separation of students, for example, Class A versus Class B as it is the case in some of the public schools so every child learned everything and everyone was treated equally. There were some students who had a natural acumen for academics and those who did not were pushed. When I reached grade 4 my mother who worked in the United States during the summers to be able to afford to send us to private school did not return at the beginning of the school year so our father sent us to the public school in the community. Even though my father lived in the home and worked for a good salary he would not contribute much financially to our needs, so my father not knowing that our fees were

paid at the private school and not having the fees to pay, he took us out of our private school and sent us to the public school in the community, which was the worst experience of my entire life.

I was not used to the public education system, the overcrowding in the classroom, lack of discipline among students, and I just did not fit in. My education was impacted by the social issues in my community. At my private school I could be who I was, I was never singled out because all the students at that school were children of professionals, and were able to afford the finer things, so you were comfortable being you. In the public school where the majority of the students were from the poorer class their perception of me being rich was uncomfortable for me, not because I felt I was better than any of the other kids, I just did not fit in that environment. When my mother returned we went back to the private school and I enjoyed it very much. We were poorer than everyone else at that school because we would always owe our fees, but I was more comfortable in that school environment.

Becoming a Teacher

Education is something that ought to uplift an individual to make a difference in a community and to serve others. My views on education were formed from my Christian and denominational perspective. My upbringing was towards my mother's slant, so the philosophies that were espoused by my mother and my mother's mother are the philosophies that came into our home.

My mother was a teacher and as a child I helped other children with their work and so teaching was ingrained in me. While at the school in the community for a month I was ahead of the other students academically so the teacher allowed me to teach the remedial students. I enjoyed reading, writing, and imparting knowledge, so those early experiences influenced my decision to become a teacher. I am a trained in the medical technology, but I have never worked for long periods of time in that field. When I finished high school there was not enough money for me to move on to college at the time. It was my parents' plan for me to become a medical doctor. I had amassed a number of Caribbean Examination Council subjects which was impressive and at the school where my mother taught there was an opening for a laboratory technician for the sciences and I accepted the position. During that year a teacher went on leave and she taught English and Science and I filled that vacancy for the time. I had just turned seventeen years old at the time so some of the students were older than I or some were my age or

92

two years younger. When I was assessed I was told that I did well and I enjoyed it. So that may have been the beginning of a seed planted.

When I went to college to pursue medical technology, I really did not like it but due to our financial challenges, I was not able to switch to education or psychology which I really enjoyed. I attended a liberal arts college so I was exposed to a wide range of other courses outside of my main area of concentration, so when I did principles of psychology I felt drawn to the field and to some other courses in education. At that stage I was maturing and I felt I had the gift of public speaking because when we did presentations in class I was always the leader, the one organizing activities, and I felt that I could become a teacher. I had mentioned to one of my lecturers in jest that I am not going to work as a medical technologist I am going to teach when I am through with my studies. He remembered and when I graduated he invited me for an interview at the high school that is owned by the university and that was my second year of teaching and where my teaching career was launched.

I served for four years at the secondary level. My career started out great; but I do not think I was very successful at that level of teaching. I think being very strict and working at a private school with students who may have been expelled from other schools or were what we called 'barrel children' (children whose parents lived overseas), I do not think I was very successful in reaching them in retrospect. I am not a trained teacher so it became stressful because I am a strict disciplinarian so I was maintaining standards and order at all times. I may have come off as being unapproachable, but it was good in the sense there was always a motherly instinct and so students would talk to me. It was a church school so on Saturdays some of my students and I would go to church and after church we would have lunch. My supervisor said I had great class control; he could not understand how I could get them to sit for an hour and a half and actually get them to pay attention. I am not a psychologist or a psychiatrist but I think many of my students showed signs of learning disabilities. They did very well when they went to art and craft classes. They possessed some level of intelligence and critical thinking to produce the pieces that they did but there was a deficiency in their ability to learn the more theoretical and scientific concepts.

I discovered at the end of my tenure at the secondary level to introduce creative art forms such as music. It was a Christian school, so reggae and rapping were not readily accepted. It was a diverse group of students.They were from other islands in the Caribbean and the United States

93

and so their cultures were somewhat different from the typical Jamaican school culture so they would make their songs, and they would rap on the desk and they would learn. At some point I learned about the multiple intelligences, so I would try. It was a frustrating environment, so I did not stay very long after that. There was also the drive for a better future within me and I did not like where the school was going. I had bigger dreams than the school itself so I went on to pursue other things.

Becoming a mother

I served as a teacher for ten full years before becoming a mother. After getting married I felt the natural progression of life is to start a family even though I have never seen myself as a mother. I did not think that I possessed any maternal instinct or any softness to rear a child. I guess it spanned from what I call being socially inept or sort of an insular person. I thought that you survive better when it was just you in your world and you can maneuver it and come out successful without scaring anybody or being scared. When I found out that I was pregnant I was apprehensive. I wanted to get pregnant because my husband was pressuring me and I thought that it was the right time because I was married for almost three years. I was elated that I was going to have a young one, but I was scared that I did not know how to take care of a child or how to be a mother. During pregnancy I had gestational diabetes and that was a very traumatic experience. I felt lots of guilt because I was overweight and I felt that if anything happened to my child, my choices would have been to blame and so I had an overwhelming sense of guilt during the last phases of the pregnancy. I think motherhood is instinctive so when the baby was born, all my fears about being a bad mother dissipated and my husband tells me I am a good mother.

For at least 7 months after the birth of my first child I had butterflies in the pit of my stomach, it was overwhelming. That feeling went away when I got pregnant with my second child which was when the first child was 8 months. The day we found out that I was pregnant with my second child my husband and I were very apprehensive. My husband was unemployed and was exploring other career options, so we were shocked. We were not prepared for this, but after two minutes of crying we were very thankful that we were gifted with another life. A strong Christian background influences my life's journey. It was difficult but it was a good experience

because my spouse is very supportive emotionally, financially, and he does things around the house.

Motherhood and Teaching

Relations with Students

Initially, I was a strong disciplinarian and a stickler for standards and for just abiding by the rules and I felt that students should just do what I said because these are the rules and "I am in charge and I make the rules because they are best for you." My courses were run according to what I felt was best for students and because rules are important and rules create disciplined citizens who will create a disciplined society. However, motherhood helped me to see the softer side of things and to be a little more flexible because it taught me that things can happen. There are days that things may not be as predictable as you would have hoped so the stories of students that before I became a mother I would see as excuses on the part of students who are just lazy or trying to push through without even trying, motherhood shaped my perspectives and helped me to be a little more accommodating. I became more maternal to my students. While I always cared for their educational development becoming a mother made me care a little more about their person, about the personal aspects of their lives, how are they doing, how are they emotionally, how is life on a whole, not just how they are doing in my courses.

Relationship with Colleagues

I think my becoming pregnant and being a mother made our department more closely knit. We now had someone that we all now owned and motherhood created an opportunity for my colleagues to become involved in my personal life. The birth of a child and blessing of a baby caused colleagues to visit my house to see the baby and we had other things to celebrate. It was not necessarily a part of our professional life, but it helped the professional life. There was always an interest in the development of the children, so my baby was their baby. It was one big happy family in our department.

Relationship with Parents

I became more empathetic with other parents when I became a mother. My background helped me to understand the financial woes of parents, especially mothers because Jamaica is rife

with mothers who have to provide for their household whether the child knows his/her father or not. It could be your child, it could be my child, who is acting up or who is not performing well when their parents are scraping to send them to university which is a lot more expensive than secondary education. Prior to becoming a mother when a parent came to speak with me about the development of their young adult child my natural instinct would be "this is an adult, why are you here in my office?" But now that I am a mother, I know that motherhood never ends; so that sort of influence of motherhood came into play in my professional life.

Relationship with Administration

Motherhood impacted my relationship with administration in two ways. Firstly, I had a sort of no-care attitude in the sense that in some instances I would go the extra mile outside of my job description and if I met upon resistance in cases where I would have pushed when I was not a mother I stopped pushing, because I now need to preserve my energies for my children. I am not going to have a nervous breakdown or to die because of administration, because I now have children to live for. Secondly, in certain instances I pushed a little bit more for advancement in order to be better able to provide for the financial needs of my family. I remember advocating for a better health insurance program for members of staff, because the persons who advocated for the initial plan were older people who needed eye care and other geriatric needs, but were not thinking of the younger people who needed maternity and pediatric care.

Relationships with Wider Social Networks

I tend to be introverted; however, having children allowed for more stimulation and helped me to become more outgoing because we now had a common interest and I attended family fun days. These activities created relationships within the community especially with other mothers. I became more involved at church and made suggestions to improve the structure and facilities at Sabbath school. Advocating for improvements in resources for your child resulted in improvement in resources for members of the wider community.

Motherhood and Professional Development

Before I became a mother I was poised for growth professionally, but as a mother if you want to be there for your children you cannot put in as many hours as you would want. You have to have a time when you go home. The types of conferences and the types of research that I do, if

96

I want to be there for your children there are sacrifices that I had to make. I do not regret it, it is worth it and they will grow to a stage where they will not need me so much. I think that the best gift you can give your child is not the material possessions you get from your accomplishment, but your time, energy and your presence in their lives. Motherhood will not prevent me from reaching my goals; motherhood may delay them as it may take a longer time for me to achieve my goals.

I often say to my spouse "I cannot make any plans." It does not make sense for me to plan my time a certain way because it never gets done. You plan to spend some time doing some work but you get a call from the day care that you have to pick the kids up because of a cough. They can be frustrating if you do not have the support, then you can actually lose your mind. That is frustrating for me because that is how I manage by planning and staying ahead. But since having children I can never plan. I plan but I never stay ahead, so that is a mighty challenge. As woman who is driven by career and advancement in career I really have to console yourself that I have children and I cannot compare myself to the achievements of others because my achievements may not be the degree, my achievement may be my child. Having a child has led me to understand the saying in Jamaica "your child is your pension," because of the investment that you put into raising your children. You give of yourself; you sacrifice your pension, which would have been a higher salary, so your child ends up being your pension.

I have two sets of long term professional goals: 1) finish my doctoral degree and get a job to relax, spend time with my family and enjoy the finer things in life. That could translate into being a principal of a small college, a teacher at a small college where research is not lauded, so that I will get time for my children and 2) there are the driven goals of being a well published professor with lots of conferences, where you produce research and you become the authority in a particular subject matter. Let us see where motherhood takes me. I strongly believe no one can give my child what I want my child to get but me. I want to be there when that child is having challenges, complexities, or at a crossroads. Nobody knows the child like the parent and if I am busy pursuing a career I will not know the child and if I do not know my child I cannot meet the needs of my child so I would rather sacrifice the great career, fame, fortune and being the authority on a subject matter for being an authority in my household with my child.

This is where my views will go against the grains of feminism because I believe motherhood comes before career even though I believe in equality. I would rather be a mother

97

than a career woman because I believe the influence of mothers in the home is important in that it shapes the child's life. In Jamaica our boys are in trouble, I do not want to malign Jamaica, but indiscipline reigns because lots of homes do not have fathers. While I believe that women are great and strong, women do not necessarily possess the qualities to discipline children. It does not mean that we are less achievers as women; it means that we are greater mothers. We are greater women, because of how we are structured; we are more nurturing, it is not a weakness, it is a strength.

Support for Teachers who are Mothers

I think part of what stands in our way of accomplishing some of our goals is not having resident care for your children. Schools are filled with young women who are at childbearing age, so if every school or group of schools had daycare or after care facilities we would be better able to give of our best in terms of productivity when we know our children are well cared for. In some countries government implemented paid paternity leave so that fathers can support their partners and young child without losing income. I know that would be difficult for a country like Jamaica that suffers economically but with proper policies that is something that could be looked into. Parenting classes should be convened and individuals should be encouraged not to get into parenting without support.

I think there are many cases of undiagnosed post-partum depression in the Jamaican society, due to a number of factors owing to a lack of support and having to do everything by yourself. In the Jamaican context most mothers do not have enough financial resources because only a few in the top percentile of the population have enough to afford the best nutrition and medical care. To make matters worse, just when you are bonding with your child because of the financial ramifications of not having enough you have to leave your child to return to work. Many young teachers who are mothers are stressed out because of having to deal with undisciplined children. Having to take on the role of mother for students who are not being properly parented in addition to parenting their own children is quite difficult.

Impact of Socio-political Factors on Teachers who are Mothers

I believe most teachers enter the profession because they want to make a difference. I do not think we value teachers enough in Jamaica and on top of the rude comments made by parliamentarians about teachers they refuse to increase the salaries, while they live extravagant

lives. There is an underlying disrespect for females in our culture which is evident in Dancehall music and videos. Women are treated with disdain, as a man's sexual property, and those are deficiencies in our socio-political system that need to be fixed. How much mothering can one teacher who is also a mother do? You cannot do everything so somebody will be robbed; who will it be? Will it be the teacher's children or will it be the students that the teachers teach? The stratification of the society is evident in our schools and that presents many challenges that need to be overcome. We have a failing government and nobody cares about the welfare of students from the lower classes because we live in a classist society. It is a functional deficiency as a result of colonialism.

Based on the influence of my father, I grew up with an air of superiority. Not because I think anybody is less than but because I am not familiar with others' lived experience. So becoming a mother and recognizing these flaws in my upbringing I now understand how to be more inclusive especially in Canada now where we are not at the top of the social hierarchy. I now understand that if my child who is different is not included in something, it is not necessarily hate; it is the lack of knowledge of the unfamiliar. So the child is not understood, because this is a culturally different child. I have learned to embrace differences and equality among different people, having become a mother.

We tend to believe that because our Jamaican motto is "Out of many one People" racism does not exist in Jamaica but that is not so because I can speak as someone who has experienced racism positively and negatively in Jamaica. I am Black but not perceived as one of the masses because of my lighter shade of blackness. As a mother, I feel there needs to be more education of the public about love of who you are, not because of the colour of your skin or because of where you fall on the spectrum of having a little more than others and which community you live in.

When I was appointed chair of my department my former dean came to congratulate me and said to me "hey pretty girl congrats man, you will do well, you have presence." Do you think I felt valued? No, because to him, the reason I was promoted is because of my brown complexion. That was a huge injustice to my hard work and accomplishment and just the way I was addressed was condescending. As a female in a work environment there are lots of other injustices I suffered just because I am a female in the sciences, and science is a male-dominated field. At meetings I am introverted and I am properly trained so I wait my turn to speak. If I should wait my turn to speak, I will never get a voice, so I learned how to engage in intellectual

war because no matter how far we think time has gone, the woman, the mother, the female in any workplace in Jamaica is never seen for the value of her education and experience that she brings to the table. Those are the social issues that I think ought to be corrected as a mother with a daughter who is going to grow up to be successful as well.

Impact of Motherhood on Teaching

In any classroom in Jamaica we have students from different segments of society, and so as a teacher, there was no underdog in my class and if I saw issues where a child is being bullied, it would stop in my classroom. I think I was more attuned to the student who was an outcast. Where I would have cooperative learning groups everybody is included. You do not choose a group member because you think the group member is not good enough, we are all students who are here to learn and these are the methods and this is how we are going to accomplish our goal which is learning.

In Jamaica we have a society with an identity crisis. Students who bleach, I had a student who I had to talk to about bleaching his skin. He was of dark complexion, very dark and handsome. I saw that his complexion was changing; he was getting lighter and his hair was changing as well. I called him in my office and said, "young man, do you know that you are handsome?" He looked at me with disbelief and I got a mirror and said "look at yourself and I pointed out his features." I said "do you know that the complexion that you now have does not match and you are getting ugly? At the end of the conversation, I reminded him of how handsome he was and how well he was doing in school and told him in Jamaican Creole "stop the bleaching." I lived to see that young man walked across the stage at graduation, stopped bleaching, and took up a job. One day I went to visit students on internship at a site and saw that young man who was now the supervisor. That made my decade! When they formed their professional association he became the president. It made it all worth it. If students do not have somebody who cares, or to see them as they are, or to pick up on their little acts of self-hate, then they are doomed.

I taught at a Christian institution so service learning was a component of every class. Students were taught to be aware of the plight of others and how to come out of their comfort zone. There needs to be more to education than sitting in a classroom and regurgitation of knowledge from a book. The truth is the society is made up of people from homes and if the

100

homes are deficient then the society is deficient and in Jamaica too many homes are deficient. As a mother I am fully aware of cycles and the things that can be passed down to children and if proper guidance is lacking in the home teachers have a part to play to break the cycle. We can break a cycle in how we relate to students and in what we share with them and through valuing them. As teachers who are mothers we have to be more than somebody in a classroom imparting academic knowledge, we have to impart life. I solemnly believe that without teachers our Jamaican society would not be what is it today, it would be worse and it is in a bad state. The things that I have shared may paint a dismal picture of education in Jamaica, but the Jamaican education system is still one of the best in the world and our students who have gone on to other countries and other programs have done tremendously well and that is a tribute to our teachers.

Living in a Multicultural Society

The way I would discipline a child in Jamaica it would easily be seen as something wrong in Canada. There is more of a permissive sort of parenting style in Canada, not standing for anything, just let the child do and the child will be fine and that goes against how I was brought up and what I believe. I believe the child should listen to the parent. It disturbs me when a child is given a directive and the child does not follow and if I am being stern I am looked at by Canadians as doing something wrong and I do not think I am doing anything wrong. I believe discipline is protective and I do not know if I can learn to be different, I am a stern person. I often sense that I am being judged as doing something wrong.

Mothering in Canada in more difficult than it is in Jamaica. It is difficult financially, because you do not have anyone to leave the child with so you have to enroll the child in a formal day care system and that takes a lot of money. Back home you would not spend so much money for childcare. For me, there are some people who would volunteer to baby sit but I do not know them and I do not trust persons I do not know very well. They might be quite fine but based on the things that I have read and seen it is very difficult to trust people you do not know well so I just end up working my way around taking care of my children myself.

Final thoughts

I would not want to exchange motherhood for any career advancement. There is joy in having children and having them look at you and the things that they say and seeing you in them whether it is good or bad. I think motherhood brings out the best. Where there is support and where there is not so much stress motherhood does bring out the better side, the nurturing spirit, the empathy, and the love. Sometimes I get tired and distressed but it does not matter, all this is fleeting, nothing compares to seeing a child grow and take their place in society. If we are honest we will see that nothing tops being a mother, nothing, not even being a wife.

Summary

The stories of each participant present a compelling case of their unique yet overlapping experiences of growing up in Jamaica, motherhood and teaching, and their experiences of motherhood in the Canadian society. These stories will be analyzed in light of my experiences as a teacher who became a mother in Jamaica and current literature to answer the research questions in the upcoming discussion chapter. Readers are invited to draw their own inferences and engage in their own meaning-making experience as I strive to culminate my exploration of motherhood and teaching in the Jamaican context.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

As the research process comes to an end, I am experiencing feelings of ambivalence. I feel honored to have learned so many important life lessons as a result of working so closely with these phenomenal participants and excited about representing and making sense of the data; however, I will miss this growth promoting experience of reading, reflecting, and writing about two of the most important facets of my life- motherhood and teaching. In this chapter I will be using reflective reporting to engage critically with the data. Cole and Knowles (2001) mentioned that good life history research always returns to where it started. Therefore I will be discussing the experiences of these participants in light of the research questions and goals of the study while making connections with literature in the field and my own experiences. The goals of this study were to lead me as the researcher to greater levels of personal insights regarding my experiences of motherhood and teaching, while providing a platform for these teachers who are mothers to give voice to their experiences. I also sought to understand the contextual factors influencing the lived experiences of participants, the impact of motherhood on their practice as teachers, and their experiences as immigrant mothers in Canada.

In keeping with the moral, relational, and ethical tenets of life history research, a feminist epistemological standpoint, and the goals of this study I will be using direct quotations from the life histories of participants to continue the process of analyzing and making sense of the data. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) maintained that "direct quotes of remarks by the case study participants are particularly effective because they clarify the emic perspective, that is, the meaning of the phenomenon from the point of view of participants" (p.480). Key issues raised by participants will further contribute to the authenticity of the study as I work to make sense of the data. The page numbers of direct quotes of participants refers to the numbers in the transcripts for those individuals who will have access to it such as my supervisors, but the general readers will not.

With life history research the researcher is often considered an artist and numerous creative expressions have been used by life history researchers to represent their findings. I will also be using poetry to explain my thoughts and emotions on key themes and ideas. As readers you are invited into the interpretative process to form your personal questions, hunches, and insights about the data. Based on your reading and interpretation of this research so far, what

overlaps, differences, and dominant themes have you unearthed from the life histories of the participants and myself as they relate to the research questions and the goals of the research?

I will begin by sharing the themes that were identified throughout the life histories of the participants and me. There will be overlaps in the discussions of these themes as they all work together in overt and covert ways to shape the lives of these participants. The most common themes identified by participants were:

- Growing up in poverty
- Education as a means of emancipating oneself from poverty
- Strong Christian beliefs and principles
- Mentorship from their teachers
- Disregard for the teaching profession by government and civil society
- Transformation of practice as a result of motherhood
- Impact of migration on their roles as mothers in Canada

Growing up in Poverty and Education as Escape Mechanism from Poverty

The participants and I have made it clear that poverty is prevalent among many families in Jamaica. Mrs. Brown opined "poverty is the reality of most Jamaicans. Most teachers were living in poverty before they became teachers. So it is an issue that is open and alive and they speak about it freely and because most teachers experienced poverty they are more able to relate to poor students" (pp.12-13). Based on our experiences of growing up in poverty, we understood firsthand the challenges that students from similar backgrounds experienced and provided support to these students in various ways. I will be discussing how the participants' experiences of growing up in poverty is linked to wider socio-political factors and their views of education as a means of escaping poverty.

As I critically reflected on the contextual factors shaping the lived experiences of these participants, I became increasingly concerned about the reasons poverty is a reality for many Jamaicans and why educators often feel that they needed to teach students in a way to uplift them from poverty. In order to analyze the complexity of poverty and classism in Jamaica in relation to motherhood and teaching I would like to revisit our discussion on the historical and socio-political climate of education on the island and its far-reaching effect on the lives of these

participants. Brown (1979) argues that "the pattern of exclusivity in Jamaican schooling that persists to present day was established well before the emancipation of the slaves and owes its existence to the very institution of slavery" (p.81). The exclusivity in the education system that Brown spoke about almost a half century ago persists today and although in principle all children have a 'right' to an education which was not the case during slavery, the quality of education is largely determined by one's class and skin colour. As a result of growing up in poverty the participants and their families placed a high value on education. Mrs. Stewart explained that "education was always the way of improving my life; my parents taught me that in order not to end up struggling through life, you had to get a good education… I pass on the same values to my children that education is important and education is the solution to many problems" (p.18). The ideology that education is the escape mechanism from poverty is a national phenomenon. The following were taken from the Ministry of Education (MoE) Jamaica's website:

> **Mission Statement** MoE provides the avenue for enrichment and upward mobility of our people though education. To provide strategic leadership and policy direction for quality education for all Jamaicans to maximize their potential, contribute to national development, and compete effectively in the global economy.

> **Vision Statement** A customer-centred, performance-oriented education system producing globally competitive, socially conscious Jamaican citizens. (About, n.d.)

Two themes stand out in the mission and vision statements of the Ministry of Education that are reflected in the life histories of participants: 1) education as a means of upward social mobility and 2) education being an integral part of the market economy. The Ministry of Education is the policy- making body in Jamaica and is responsible for oversight of education at all levels. The Ministry of Education develops curriculum and sets the parameters within which participants are schooled and taught; therefore its policy decisions are a major determinant of the socio-economic and professional trajectories of these teachers' lives. It is apparent that the educational policy makers in Jamaica subscribe to the theory of human capital and neoliberalism. According to Baptiste (2001):

> Proponents of human capital theory assume that our world is an educational meritocracy in which a person's socio-economic status is limited, presumably, only by his or her educational investment: More educated people are always more productive than less

educated people, and this differential productivity is sufficient to explain all social inequalities. Human capital theorists construe social inequalities not as injustices, the result of exploitation and oppression, but rather as the natural and inevitable outcomes of a competitive, free market. (p.195)

The education system in Jamaica was designed to maintain social stratification in the society since its inception and as a neo-colonial society with high indebtedness to multi-lateral lending agencies (Johnston & Montecino, 2011) the social class lines are becoming even more tightly drawn.

With our education system being wedded to human capital theory, there are numerous implications on the teaching/learning process experienced and espoused by these participants. As children, they were schooled in a teacher-directed learning environment which emphasized strict discipline, corporal punishment, and a "teacher-knows-best" philosophy. In the Jamaican educational system administrators prescribe educational programs which oftentimes mirror the North American or British models. To elucidate the experiences of the participants in the Jamaican education system Mrs. Campbell, as outlined in her life history, explained:

> I am a stickler for standards and for just abiding by rules and I felt that students should just do what I say because these are the rules and I am in charge and I make the rules because they are best for you. My courses are run according to what I feel is best for students and because rules are important and rules create disciplined citizens who will create a disciplined society.

Educational scholar, Brown (1979) opined that "schooling never has a neutral effect on an individual" (p.86). The philosophy of education and personal values espoused by these participants are a reflection of the wider socio-political, economic, and cultural context in which they were socialized. Based on the experiences of Mrs. Campbell in the Jamaican education system what might we suppose her instructional strategies, classroom ethos, and students' learning experiences would be like? Paulo Friere (1970) talks about the banking concept of education where

> the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits... But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this misguided system. (p.72)

The participants were schooled in an education system that emphasizes strict discipline and a rigid hierarchical structure. Therefore, when they became teachers they either maintained similar values or chose not to teach and treat students and their children in the way they were taught and treated. Mrs. Campbell explained that her teaching style had the following effect on her students as outlined in her life history:

> I served for four years at the secondary level. My career started out great; but I do not think I was very successful at that level of teaching... I am not a trained teacher so it became stressful because I am a strict disciplinarian so I was maintaining standards and order at all times. My supervisor said I had great class control; he could not understand how I could get them to sit for an hour and a half and actually get them to pay attention. I am not a psychologist or a psychiatrist but I think many of my students showed signs of learning disabilities. They did very well when they went to art and craft classes. They possessed some level of intelligence and critical thinking to produce the pieces that they did but there was a deficiency in their ability to learn the more theoretical and scientific concepts.

Teacher-centred instruction is the norm in Jamaican schools and some participants adopted similar teaching styles without question while others sought to transform their instructional style to make it more student centred.

Education in Jamaica is not "so so so, something is into something" (a Jamaican saying which denotes a need for further investigation of a matter). If we examine the historical and socio-political basis of education in the island, we will develop a greater understanding of the purpose of education in Jamaica and how these policies impact the ideologies and lives of participants. Education is political; it was and is a tool that has been used to maintain rigid class and racial lines. Bowles and Gintis (1976) explained that:

> The structure of schooling can be understood in terms of the systemic needs of producing reserve armies of skilled labour, legitimating the technocratic-meritocratic perspective, reinforcing the fragmentation of groups of workers into stratified status groups, and accustoming youth to the social relationships of dominance and subordination in the economic system. (p.56)

The lived experiences of participants are greatly impacted by colonization. During slavery, the post-emancipation era, and since becoming a nation state, Jamaica's relationship with North

America and Britain has been one of exploitation of its human and non-human resources. In order for the ruling class to perpetuate the subjugation and inculcate its 'superior' worldview, the education system which is a microcosm of the wider society was designed to meet the socio-economic needs of the ruling class.

The participants made mention of being streamed in their grades and classes. As children we knew who were in the 'bright class' and who were in the 'dull class,' who attended top-notch schools (traditional) and who attended working class (non-traditional) high schools and the uniforms worn by the students were status symbols (Brown, 1979). The academic and professional development of these participants depended greatly on the status of the schools they attended. Having grown up in poverty these participants were more understanding of the lived experiences of children from similar backgrounds.

In practice, the disparities in the allocation of resources, instructional time, identity of students, and later vocational choice and related earnings gaps were closely tied to the schools they attended. Some students were never given an option to study Biology, Chemistry, History, or Geography because the policy makers felt that there was no way this child or group of students was capable of becoming a medical doctor, lawyer, or pilot. Which class of children might we think are not given the opportunities to realize their full potential? The children from the working class, because their parents were not elected representatives of the school boards, political figures, successful businesspersons, and noted professionals.

In the new millennium, as a political strategy to secure votes the government removed school fees at the secondary level of education, making it more accessible to persons from the lower class. Of course, to balance the budget the government decreased subsidy to institutions of higher education resulting in an increase in the cost of higher education, making higher education unattainable for the 'lucky few' from the lower class, even with a partial student loan. The increase in the cost of higher education is a manifestation of the fluidity of oppression, whereby increased access to secondary education has made opportunities for higher education more challenging for more students from the lower class. Brown (1979) spoke about the tokenism that took place in the post-emancipation era:

> It was the lucky few in the black population who were able to make the move from cane field to classroom. Formal schooling, as mediocre as it was, became identified with

108

upward social mobility and access to positions of privilege and status in the social conglomerate. (p.83)

Today, few students from the lower class are able to struggle financially in their quest for higher education. When a student from the lower class achieves this goal they become role models in their families and communities. Therefore for these participants the opportunity to access higher education has set them apart as the esteemed "lucky few" who were able to break the social barrier to move from the lower to the middle class. Mrs. Stewart explained that:

> Since I was the first child to attend college there were a lot of expectations, I felt very special, and got the royal treatment. My parents would say 'oh my daughter is at Teachers' College' and they were very proud. Teachers have a particular status and so it was attractive to me to have that kind of status and respect from people who you grew up with. (p.17)

So even within families and communities when a child from a lower class family became a teacher, she or he was glorified and often felt a great sense of accomplishment. I am very proud of these participants for having achieved their personal and professional goals, but I am deeply concerned about the social and economic welfare of other members of their family, community, and wider society who did not fare as favorably in the race towards upward social mobility.

In his article *Escaping the slums or changing the slums? Lifelong learning and social transformation,* Rogers (2006) argued that the purpose of lifelong learning in developed and developing countries is to create learning societies to meet the needs of the labour market. Based on the mission and vision of the education system in Jamaica where these participants were schooled, where do the social, political, aesthetic, cultural and other personal development aspects of education fit? The education system in Jamaica needs to pay closer attention to areas that will foster socio-cultural development such as educational decolonization, social justice, civic responsibility, and the development of a more positive cultural identity for its citizenry. Marcus Mosiah Garvey, famous Jamaican philosopher, stated "do not swallow wholly the education system of any other group... It is by education that we become prepared for our duties and responsibilities" (as cited in Martin, 1986, p.97-98). What duties and responsibilities are learners in the Jamaican educational institutions being prepared for? Brown (1979) maintained that "schooling for most members of the laboring class was a means of escaping the oppressive routine of manual labor, and not primarily a tool for achieving the capacity for transformation…"

109

(p.83) Participants explained that their parents encouraged academic excellence and aspired for their children to become professionals in an effort to escape poverty. In their practice as teachers and in their roles as mothers participants relayed similar values and philosophy regarding the purpose of education to their students and biological children.

Strong Christian Beliefs and Principles

These participants and their families have experienced numerous challenges, but like most Jamaicans from the lower class they were convinced that their strong Christian beliefs and commitment to academic excellence had set them apart from many of their contemporaries. In his autobiography of growing up in Jamaica, Hewitt (2012) had similar experiences. He expressed that "deep within his poor family's worldview was an undying belief that faith in God and a sacrificial commitment to educational empowerment would liberate the family out of the poverty trap" (p.334). The participants have asserted how their families inculcated in them the belief that a deep Christian faith and commitment to academic advancement was critical to emancipation from poverty.

Mentorship from Teachers

To emphasize the importance of having teachers and parents esteeming our youth, I wrote the poem below:

If only I had someone who believed

If only I had someone who believed in me.

Someone who saw me not only as I am today,

but as who I may become tomorrow.

My clothes may be torn.

I may be suffering from hunger.

But that does not define who I am,

I am in a state of becoming

with time I will prove who I am.

The participants have demonstrated that while there are numerous systemic factors impacting their personal and professional growth and development, the mentorship that they received from their teachers had a profound impact not only on their academic and socio-emotional development but also played a major in part their decision to become teachers. The participants and I came from humble circumstances in Jamaica. We went to school with limited resources and sometimes owing our school fees, but we all had teachers who believed in our capabilities and who provided the guidance and scaffolding that we needed to succeed academically. This has taught me an important life lesson as a teacher who became a mother. I have learned that while we continue to advocate for social equity and improvements in the standard of living for individuals from the lower class, what has proven effective for decades despite the socio-economic challenges is the academic, psychosocial, and moral support that students from the lower classes receive from teachers in Jamaican schools. The life history of participants, along with my own, suggest that having a teacher validate students, offer encouragement and other forms of social reinforcement fosters improvement in the students' level of self-efficacy, resilience, and tenacity.

Like the participants and I, many children in Jamaica are not from families who are professionals or wealthy; therefore teachers have played a critical role in fostering our personal and professional development. Teachers are sometimes one of the few professionals that students interact with on a regular basis. The participants expressed that one of the major factors that caused them to choose to become a teacher is the impact of their teachers on their overall development. According to Mrs. Brown "I became a teacher because of other teachers who inspired me"(p.4). I also became a teacher because of the support and guidance of my teachers and when I became a teacher one of my students said she became a teacher because of the positive influence I had on her. Mrs. Brown maintains that "I think it was a cyclical process and I encourage teachers to be careful how you treat students, because they actually become like you. Teachers teach how they were taught, so it is important that we have good teaching" (p.4). Teachers have a profound impact on the life course of students and oftentimes these relationships blossom into lifetime friendships.

Schools' administration have implemented numerous initiatives geared towards improving greater levels of accountability from teachers which has impacted greatly on the time teachers will have to meet the socio-emotional, cultural, and aesthetic needs of students.

111

Teachers are required to maintain additional logs, computerized databases, and give priority to the completion of syllabi. I can recall as a student the best lessons taught by my teachers were done during motivational talks, field trips, and extra-curricular activities. As these participants have mentioned motherhood has decreased the amount of time they have available for involvement in extra-curricular activities so paired with additional administrative duties, teachers' ability to meet the socio-emotional, aesthetic, and cultural needs of students will be increasingly minimized. Mrs. Stewart explained that "a teacher's job is never done at the end of the school day. I had to take home the planning, the marking, and that has a way of eating into my family time. I always took home work and that impacted my family life, because I did not have enough time for my young children"(p.21). These participants had to be skillful in meeting their professional demands and the needs of their families.

Disregard for the Teaching Profession by Government and Civil Society

The participants were concerned about the blatant disregard for the teaching profession from political figures and members of the wider community, manifested in disparaging comments, and teachers being used as a scapegoat for politicians. Mrs. Brown, in her life history, explained that:

> Politics impacted my teaching career in a negative sense. I have not seen where the Ministry of Education, especially the ministers that we have had respect teachers. Teaching is by far the most noble and the most difficult profession. We are not respected in terms of remuneration, we are not given positive recognition, and it has really impacted me negatively as a teacher. It causes me to question, is this where I want to be; in a place where I am not valued, where I am not respected? Honestly, it has put me in a position where I would not want my child to become a teacher (p.9-10).

Participants have expressed their disapproval with the conditions under which they served. They were called upon to give more daily, to be more accountable without much support, appreciation, and recognition for their efforts.

In a call for greater accountability among teachers, a concerned citizen in an editorial explained "Jamaica's Government spends more than J$70 billion a year on education, or nearly 15 per cent of its overall budget. That rises to nearly a quarter of all government spending when debt-servicing costs are eliminated. Few will seriously claim that we get value for money"

(Editorial, 2014, para. 4). Jamaican politicians have transparently informed the populace of their overall annual fiscal expenditure on education and when the responsibility for the performance of students on standardized examinations are called into question much of the blame is laid at the feet of teachers. In Jamaica the politicians usually speak about the total expenditure on education without giving a detailed analysis of how this money is allocated. They will announce the total salaries for paying teachers, but they will not publicize the millions expended to pay technocrats, consultants, investigating bodies, travel expenses, hotel accommodation, and airfare for consultants and their entourage.

Participants felt that there will not be a level playing field in the education system until the social inequalities in the society are alleviated. Students attending some schools which were inaugurated for children of the planter class will continue to excel, while other students at non-traditional schools are struggling to even attend school. Students are still attending schools with pit latrine, unhealthy sanitary conditions, and a host of other deficiencies in basic infrastructural amenities coupled with socio-emotional challenges in their homes and communities. Mrs. Stewart shared that "if a child does poorly it is the teachers' fault, if the child does exceptionally well the child is bright, so the teacher is hardly given recognition. If the child fails, it is teacher's fault and the blame is not equitably shared. The parents and other stakeholders are absolved of their responsibility for the child"(p.24). Based on the socio-political context in which these participants lived and worked, they were supportive of improvements in the teaching learning process and maintained that calls for accountability should be leveled at all stakeholders and in all sectors of governance. The conditions under which these participants worked has played a huge role in their decision to engage in continuing education in order to earn more so that they may give their children better educational opportunities.

Transformation of Practice

It was the consensus among participants that becoming a mother influenced their relationships with stakeholders in the education system in positive ways while at the same time presenting new challenges. I will be discussing each of these relationships individually.

Relationships with Students

Participants stated that motherhood and teaching had reciprocal benefits and challenges. Mrs. Stewart surmised that "being a mother helps you in being a teacher and being a teacher helps you in being a mother"(p.18). She explained that the skills and knowledge she developed as a teacher helped her in parenting her children and the virtues she developed from parenting gave her a better understanding of her students and added greater meaning to her career. Participants alluded to developing or were in the process of further developing qualities such as patience, being less judgmental, and inclusivity. Participants explained that motherhood resulted in them reflecting more on their practice as teachers and taking greater interest in the individual needs of students rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. Mrs. Brown explained that "when I am teaching these days as a mother, I honestly teach with more power and more passion and I teach so that every single child will learn. I try to differentiate my teaching, I try to focus on each child's strength and I teach to their strengths" (p.12). Mrs. Campbell had similar experiences and disclosed that

> I became more maternal to my students. While I always cared for their educational development becoming a mother made me care a little more about their person, about the personal aspects of their lives, how are they doing, how are they emotionally, how is life on a whole, not just how they are doing in my courses. (p.34-35)

Participants shared that they have taken up roles that were once carried out by parents and based on their experiences as mothers they felt that it was important to attend to the needs of these students. One such case was shared by Mrs. Brown when she did not allow the student who had bleached her skin to graduate because she felt that as a teacher who was a mother she had to teach the child the importance of consequences. The child Mrs. Brown disciplined is typical of many children whose mothers have migrated to more economically prosperous countries in search of better financial prospects and their fathers oftentimes play a minimal role in the academic development of their children.

The bleaching of the skin among males and females in Jamaica is done for numerous reasons. Some of these reasons include removing blemishes from the skin, to lighten one's complexion, to appear more attractive to the opposite sex, and to follow a fad (Charles, 2009). Research conducted in African countries on the rationale for skin bleaching among black women

has gleaned similar results (see Lewis, Robkin, Gaska, & Njoki, 2011; Fritsch, 2014). In addition to the physical reasons for bleaching one's skin, there are underlying psychological and socio-economic factors that may cause one to lighten their complexion. A study of six females and six males in Jamaica with a history of skin bleaching conducted by Robinson (2012) revealed that "there is a bias in Jamaica for light skin over dark skin and these values are taught in non-formal and informal ways from very early in life" (p.295). In the Jamaican society individuals equate a lighter complexion with social prestige and improved social acceptability, which is a legacy of colonialism. As a child growing up in Jamaica we learned through various socializing agencies that "anything too black was no good" and persons with a lighter complexion and longer hair were prettier and more likely to be successful. Robinson (2012) concluded that "...there is an elevation of Eurocentric values and a denigration of Afrocentric values in many facets of life, specifically in the promotion of light skin as an indicator of beauty and social status" (p.295). Skin bleaching is prevalent in Jamaican schools resulting in administrators taking numerous measures to prohibit students and even members of the various staffs to desist from the practice; hence it was a recurrent theme among participants. I will not be able to go into much detail about the psychosocial causes and effects of skin bleaching in Jamaica; however, it has become a serious area of concern among educational, medical, and other social institutions on the island and is related to internalized racism.

Relationships with Parents

Participants expressed that becoming mothers gave them firsthand experiences of the concerns of parents and helped them to develop an even greater understanding that parenting is a lifelong commitment. Mrs. Brown, in her life history, explained that

Honestly, prior to becoming a mother I did not like students' parents. Teachers and parents' meetings, I hated it, because you had these people who are coming to you expecting that you must be the panacea for their child's ills and I did not like that kind of thing. I always wanted to say to them "you are a steward of your child, you are responsible." However, having my own child now, I see them in a different light. I realize their deep concern and their emotions and I realize their passion. So when parents come to me now I talk to them differently; I am more responsive to their concerns, I listen more. (p.8)

Motherhood has caused a dramatic shift in Mrs. Brown's response to parents, from not liking parent/teacher interactions to deepened understanding and willingness to collaborate more with parents to meet the needs of their children. Mrs. Campbell experienced greater levels of empathy with other parents when she became a mother. She explained "my background helped me to understand the financial woes of parents, especially mothers because Jamaica is rife with mothers who have to provide for their household whether the child knows his/her father or not" (p.35). The experiences of participants growing up in households where their mothers were breadwinners enabled them to be particularly understanding of the experiences of mothers of students even at the post-secondary level.

Relationships with Administration

Participants' experiences with members of their administrative body were dependent on their position in the institution's hierarchy. For instance, Mrs. Campbell was a part of the middle management team of her institution so that gave her the opportunity to negotiate with administration for improved health benefits such as pediatric and obstetric health coverage. She explained that motherhood impacted her experiences with administration in a fluctuating manner. In her life history she mentioned that:

> I had a sort of no-care attitude in the sense that where I would go the extra mile outside of my job description in certain instances, if I met upon resistance in cases where I would have pushed when I was not a mother I stopped pushing, because I now need to preserve my energies for my children. In certain instances I pushed a little bit more for advancement in order to be better able to provide for the financial needs of my family. (p.36)

For Mrs. Campbell motherhood provided additional areas of concern and meaning to her life. She now understands where to 'draw the line' to maintain her physical and emotional well-being for the sake of her children. While participants were concerned about carrying out their professional duties they were also concerned about self-preservation and creating a balance in their personal and professional lives.

All participants felt that schools or school districts should consider providing day care facilities for teachers with young children as this would provide greater levels of convenience

and socio-emotional satisfaction to teachers and thus improvements in the teaching and learning process. Women have been advocating for adequate and accessible childcare for decades. Richardson (1993) maintained that "society defines motherhood and paid employment as incompatible…Unlike men women are expected to choose between parenthood and paid employment or, if they have to work, to choose work which conflicts least with being a mother (p.19). For these participants a teaching career allowed them to participate in the labour force but with numerous challenges. All participants were concerned about the two months of maternity leave that is given to women in Jamaica and the non-existence of paternity leave. They felt two months was inadequate and may result in women experiencing post-partum depression where there is not enough support.

A study conducted by the Alberta Teachers Association on the work life of teachers in the Calgary Public School system revealed that teachers work for an average of 50-55 hours per week, because in addition to regular instruction teachers engage in non-instructional tasks outside of school hours such as student evaluation, reporting, and instructional planning (ATA, 201). In societies like Jamaica there is a general belief that teaching is compatible with raising a family because of the shorter school days and the summer "off" and holiday schedules being similar to children gives the illusion that there is strong compatibility; however, the on-going demands related to instruction and assessment remain largely invisible.

Relationships with Colleagues

Participants felt that motherhood resulted in a closer relationship with their colleagues. Mrs. Chambers, in her life history, explained that "I think my becoming pregnant and being a mother made our department more closely knit. We now had someone that we all now owned and motherhood created an opportunity for my colleagues to become involved in my personal life"(p.35). Richardson (1993) highlighted that there is a belief that motherhood gives stability to our relationships. Participants also mentioned that they were able to communicate and share their experiences of parenting with more experienced colleagues, creating mutual understanding and communication within the institution. However, participants explained that the responsibilities of motherhood resulted in them having less time to socialize with their colleagues and to participate in extracurricular activities.

Relationships with the Wider Community

Participants mentioned that when they became mothers their 'eyes were now open' and they were better able to advocate for improvements in church programs for children which would not only be beneficial to their children, but also to members of the wider community. Based on the middle-class status of participants they were better able to inform policy at the school as well as the community level. The lobbying of participants for such improvements was beneficial to mothers from the lower class as well. In their communities becoming a mother created opportunities for participants to engage in family oriented activities; resulting in the widening of their social network and improved communication with other mothers.

Migration

For Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Stewart the occasional migration of their mothers had an impact on their livelihood and standard of living as children growing up in Jamaica. Mrs. Stewart spoke about her mother traveling to different islands in the Caribbean to purchase clothing items and returning to Jamaica to sell them which kept her family financially afloat after her father was made redundant. Mrs. Campbell spoke about her mother who was a teacher but also travelled to the United States during the summer months to work to be able to afford to send her children to a private school. Transnational mothering is a common practice among Caribbean women who are oftentimes the key provider in their households whether or not fathers are present in the homes.

Participants have indicated that motherhood, teaching, and numerous socio-political factors had influenced their decision to migrate to Canada. All participants had migrated to pursue graduate and post-graduate studies, aspiring for better professional and financial opportunities in Canada and elsewhere. Here I explore some of the reasons for migration stated by participants. Mrs. Stewart highlighted that "the main factor that influenced our decision to migrate was safety" (p.2). Per capita, Jamaica has one of the highest levels of crime in the world (United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013). Therefore, participants felt the need to migrate to protect their lives and the lives of their family members. Participants also felt that the disregard for the efforts of teachers also played a role in their decision to migrate. Mrs. Stewart explained that "socio-political factors are the reasons for my exit from the classroom. There is so much pressure and you are not valued and commended for your efforts" (p.24). For these participants their decisions to migrate were two-fold: the wider socio-political challenges and the challenges they were experiencing in the classroom.

Mrs. Brown took it a step further and shared that "as a mother there are certain social situations in Jamaica that influenced my life and the decisions that I have made. I do not want my child to know violence; I do not want her to understand it. My father was murdered when I was 11 years old" (p.10). Based on the experiences of these participants growing up in Jamaica and their experiences as teachers who became mothers, they saw migration as a means of escaping some of the harsh realities in Jamaica. Popular Reggae artiste Buju Banton (1995) mentioned that "who can afford to run will run but what about those who can't… they will have to stay" (para.6). These participants wanted better educational opportunities for themselves which will affect the standard of living of their families and they also wanted their children to get better educational and social opportunities in Canada while meeting their safety needs. However, although these participants have migrated to Canada, there lingering concerns about the welfare of their kinship networks and country on a whole.

In essence, the socio-economic challenges in Jamaica have gotten increasingly worse throughout the decades and these participants felt that migration was a viable option to meet their safety, financial, and social needs. Crawford (2004) stated that

> By the mid-1980s, Caribbean economies were collapsing under World Bank/International Monetary Fund implemented structural policies that brought on increased social malaise, poverty, inflation, and unemployment. Going abroad or foreign became even more pressing for working-class African-Caribbean women who sought economic opportunities elsewhere… (p. 97)

These participants are now members of the Jamaican diaspora. For these participants being a part of the diaspora presents new opportunities and social situations to navigate and make sense of.

As black Jamaican female immigrants, the participants are socio-cultural minorities in Canada and are caught between mothering their children based on Jamaican cultural values and mothering based on the standards established by white middle-class women. Further, they live in a prairie city without a long-standing history of visible-minority immigrants. Participants spoke about not being sure of whether they should label some of their experiences as racism and being fearful of being judged by Canadians for what are normative parenting practices in Jamaica. Participants have expressed their feelings of being the other, outsider, and a racial and social minority in Canada. The feeling of being in the minority disrupts participants' identity and understanding of social class. In Jamaica as teachers they are considered a part of the middle

class and esteemed members of their communities. Having migrated, their standard of living and social standing have been negatively affected, and they have had to negotiate power relations in Canada from a disadvantaged position. Their marginality has been further compounded by their gender, which has placed them at a disadvantage in both cultural and geographic contexts that they have lived, taught, and mothered in.

Participants have shared that their experiences of motherhood in Canada is somewhat different from Jamaica. They mentioned that parents and teachers in Canada are more liberal and permissive and they are more accustomed to stricter lines of authority and measures of disciplinein Jamaica. Therefore, they are negotiating how they interact with their children's peers and caregivers. Participants also felt that mothering in Canada is more demanding than in Jamaica because they did not have the support of their extended family and community. Mrs. Campbell explains "mothering in Canada is more difficult than in Jamaica. It is difficult financially, because you do not have anyone to leave the child with so you have to enroll the child in a formal day care system and that takes a lot of money. Back home you would not spend so much money for childcare" (p. 43).

Participants were also concerned about the loss of their Jamaican language and culture. Mrs. Stewart explained that she and her husband are saddened that their children do not know the Jamaican Creole very well and do not know much about their Jamaican culture. In her doctoral dissertation, Kouritzin (1997) used a multiple life history case study approach to examine first language loss or lack of first language development in minority first language children. Kouritzin reported numerous negative relational, academic, socio-emotional and psychological consequences resulting from first language loss such as "familial misunderstanding, loss of parental closeness and guidance, anger and frustration toward the family, the school system and community, poor scholastic performance in some subject areas, poor self-image, loss of employment opportunities and marketability, and loss of cultural identity" (abstract).

Throughout the guided conversations participants spoke about Jamaica in very emotionally charged ways and shared feelings of nostalgia and disappointment at our present socio-political reality. A question that always lingers in their mind is: where is home? Although they are residing in an economically developed country, there were numerous social, financial, and identity related challenges for participants to navigate in Canada. The poem below attempts to capture the thoughts and feelings of participants regarding the dialectic of home.

Where is my home?

I am in a strange land.

Beautiful, yet very cold land.

I have tried to think of it as home,

but I cannot shake the feeling that I do not belong.

I have all that I need but there is that inner voice calling me home.

Is it guilt?

Or a need to contribute to the development of my home?

Home is a warm place, a green place, a lush place all year round.

Yet home is a place with exorbitant levels of corruption, crime, poverty, and hardships.

Am I talking about the same place?

I feel severe pain and confusion at the paradox.

Home is a pineapple, hard, prickly, yet soft and sweet if you get the right taste

How can a place that generates such creativity, vibe, joy, and peace

Create such heartache, pain, suffering, and strife?

Where is my home?

Where will I be?

These participants like all Caribbean people are twice diasporized (Hall, 1995), as a result of colonization and slavery in the past and the effects of capitalism and globalization in the present. Crawford (2004) mentioned that

> Diasporic identities are produced and reproduced through the collective memory of a group of people. The pliability of memory allows for *home* to either be muted or be imagined in favourable or nostalgic ways in fostering national pride. This is usually a coping strategy used by immigrants to deal with feelings of un-belonging while integrating into a new society, especially when they are not a part of the racial, ethnic or cultural majority.(p. 2)

As the participants and I seek to synthesize a diasporic identity, we concluded that we were torn between meeting our family's basic needs of safety, improved financial security, educational and professional prospects, and esteem needs such as a sense of nationalism and cultural identity. As mothers whose actions are based on an ethic of care we are presently meeting the basic needs of families, while intellectualizing, rationalizing, and negotiating our cultural identity in a new society.

Summary

This chapter entailed a discussion of the common themes common in the life histories of participants. The dominant themes in the life histories included: growing up in poverty, education as a means of emancipating oneself from poverty, strong Christian beliefs and principles, mentorship from their teachers, political disregard for the teaching profession by government and civil society, transformation of practice as a result of motherhood and the impact of migration on their roles as mothers in Canada. Each of these themes was discussed in light of the research questions while drawing on literature in the field.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This research was conceptualized based on my experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica. I wanted to develop greater levels of personal insights regarding motherhood and teaching and to understand if other Jamaican teachers experienced similar transformations, ambivalence, and need for greater levels of self-expression as a result of motherhood as I did. Cole and Knowles (2001) explained that "life history inquiry is about gaining insights into the broader human condition by coming to know and understand the experiences of other humans"

(p.11). Examining the lived experiences of these participants using a life history approach has been a transformational and empowering experience for me. As the researcher, the process has fostered greater levels of personal insights and awareness of the contextual factors that shape my lived experience as a teacher and mother. Based on the life histories of these participants, becoming a mother transformed their relationships with stakeholders in the education system in various ways.

This research process was guided by the ethical and moral principles of life history research and sought to gain deeper insights into the contextual factors shaping the lived experiences of these three teachers who are mothers from Jamaica. I wanted to learn about the impact of motherhood on their experiences as teachers and how they have made sense of these experiences of motherhood in Canada. In this chapter I will be succinctly explaining my personal insights, answering the research questions, providing a methodological reflection, highlighting implications for further research and limitations of the study.

Personal Insights

Throughout this research journey, I have learned how to analyze my present challenges, opportunities, and ambitions in light of our history as Jamaicans, wider socio-political system, cultural influences, familial background, educational opportunities, and personal choices. As a child growing up in a working class family, I did not fully understand why my parents and grandparents emphasized academic excellence and would invest their very meager resources into giving me a good education. I now recognize that they wanted to provide me with the skills, knowledge, and competence that will enable me to break the cycle of poverty in the family for numerous reasons. Their investment in my education has positioned me in my family and community as a role model, as someone individuals speak with for advice, an advocate, and someone who should invest in the development of others in order the break the systemic oppression that has prevented us from reaching our fullest potential. My experiences are not unique to me; these participants have shared that having moved from the lower to the middle-class has positioned them as prominent members in their families and community. As a part of the "lucky few" who were able to attain university level education, I have a moral and professional obligation to advocate for changes to the socio-political system, through academic discourse and community-based programs.

An important lesson I have learned is my success or lack thereof will have far-reaching effects on the lives of my parents' generation, my generation, and my future generations. My parents were not wealthy land owners from whom I inherited property or ascribed status; they provided me with unconditional love and an opportunity to build on their educational investments. Having received their support in terms of communal child-rearing, emotional and moral support and prayers; the onus is on me to make the most of these opportunities. These participants have demonstrated that despite the economic hardships and myriad socio-political challenges they experienced, as a people Jamaicans are psychologically hardy, tenacious, and our history of struggle and resistance has equipped us with the requisite skills, values, and abilities to succeed in various fields.

Having spent several hours with each participant gave us a chance to reflect on where we are coming from and where we are going in terms of our professional and personal lives. The undying faith in God and strong spiritual roots passed down from generations has given these participants faith in God and faith in their abilities. For as long as I can remember my family prayed together, went to church, and exalted Jesus Christ is every area of our lives. Our spiritual beliefs played an integral role in how we interact with our biological children and students. In Jamaica we convene daily devotional exercises with students. Having strong spiritual beliefs is integral to the holistic development of individuals. I am not advocating that individuals should become Christians, but a place should be made in schools and families for spiritual development. Based on my life experiences, I have oftentimes faced challenges that only my belief in a God allowed me to maintain psychological, physical, and socio-emotional equilibrium.

For these participants and me becoming a mother had mixed repercussions on the teaching/learning process. These participants have shared that they developed qualities such as patience, inclusivity, and care to a greater degree when they became mothers. They became more empathetic towards students' parents, closer knit to their colleagues and pushed or failed to push with administration when they became mothers. Participants also became more involved in their communities when they became mothers. I experienced similar transformations in my practice as a school counsellor when I became a mother. I saw every child as my child and attempted to treat each child in the way I would want my child to be treated. I felt that each student would impact my child's development in direct or indirect ways so I wanted to give of my best to that child so that my child may benefit from the best. I might appear selfish and wanted to give to get;

124

however, when I became a mother, meeting the needs of my child became my utmost priority and since everyone impacted my child in one way or another I wanted to give of my best.

Contextual Factors Shaping the Lived Experiences of Participants

Motherhood and teaching in the Jamaican context is a conundrum of historical, social, political, and economic factors. The experiences of participants growing up in poverty have impacted their relationships with students and other stakeholders in the education system in unique ways. Firstly, these participants do not want their own children to experience poverty and sought to use higher education as a mechanism for breaking the cycle of poverty in their families. These teachers have shared that poverty is a reality for many Jamaicans and since they grew up in poverty, they were inclined to assist students who were experiencing financial challenges in practical ways such as providing school supplies, guidance, and mentorship.

Having been schooled in the Jamaican education system, these participants felt that one of the most important goals of education is upward social mobility. This goal was also reinforced by the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in the education system in Jamaica. I called into question the implications of the mission and vision statements of the Ministry of Education and discussed the far-reaching effects of the education system subscribing to human capital theory and meritocracy. The education system has played a crucial role in the reproduction of social inequalities and marginalization of individuals from the lower class in the Jamaican society. The ideology that education is an escape mechanism from poverty pervades and these participants were a part of the 'lucky few' who were esteemed in their families and communities for pursuing tertiary education. These participants, having broken the cycle of poverty in their families, are able to foster self-actualization in their children and students by encouraging love of learning and not merely learning for earning.

Transformation of Practice

Based on the life histories of participants, becoming mothers transformed their relationships with stakeholders in both positive and negative ways. Participants shared that their experiences as mothers helped them to become more concerned about the welfare of individual students. Motherhood has resulted in participants caring more about the social-emotional,

psychological, and spiritual development of students, rather than only emphasizing their academic performance. Participants mentioned that their experiences growing up in poverty and becoming mothers enabled them to take greater interest in students from families experiencing socio-economic challenges. As mothers, participants felt they had a responsibility to teach valuable life lessons to students and provide mentorship, guidance, and other responsibilities once carried out predominantly by the family.

Participants explained that becoming mothers allowed them to become more empathic and sympathetic to the needs of their students' parents. Participants shared that prior to becoming mothers they felt that parents where ultimately responsible for the development of their child. However, as mothers who were collaborating with the teachers of their children for the academic development of their child, they now understand the trust and responsibility that parents place in teachers to meet the needs of their child or children. This experience of 'the shoe being on the other foot' has given these participants further insight into the importance of their role and the expectations that parents have of them based on the expectations they have of their children's teachers. This realization has fostered a greater sense of commitment to the teaching and learning process. Motherhood has motivated me to give of my best to the teaching profession due to the faith that families and the society as a whole places on my pedagogical and leadership abilities; even though as teachers we are rarely recognized for our efforts.

Participants mentioned that motherhood was also beneficial to their professional lives. Having children gave participants and their colleagues special events to celebrate such as birthdays and christenings. The developmental milestones of their children also created topics for discussions among colleagues. Participants also received mentorship, encouragement, and guidance from more experienced colleagues, which helped to strengthen their relationships and improve the psychosocial environment in their respective schools.

Participants shared that their relationship with administration was two-tiered. On one hand, participants advocated for improved services and facilities for their students and colleagues and worked hard for professional advancement which would provide greater financial benefits for their families. On the other hand, when they experienced resistance in their advocacy they felt they had their children to live for so they would not allow administrative policies to sap their energies, hence their focus was on self-preservation for the benefit of their families.

In the Jamaican society, it is thought that it takes a village to raise a child, so participants shared that they became more involved at the community level as result of motherhood. They were able to lobby for improvements to children's programming at their church and felt that their ideas were more respected on various committees in their communities. Motherhood also created opportunities for participants to share their experiences and mothering practices with other mothers in the communities.

Motherhood and Migration

Numerous socio-political challenges and participants' experiences of motherhood and teaching have played a determining role in their decision to migrate to Canada. Participants shared that their experiences of mothering in the Canadian society are somewhat different and more challenging than mothering in Jamaica because there is less social support and childcare is more expensive. As a part of the social minority in Canada, participants have experienced various forms of prejudice and discrimination and are still trying to make sense of these experiences.

They, like many of the students they worked with, had experienced transnational mothering at certain phases in their lives or careers when their mothers were overseas working to provide for the financial needs of their children. The migration of mothers oftentimes results in students needing additional guidance and parental supervision from teachers. Teachers who are mothers often feel an even greater need to meet the needs of these students because of their experiences of motherhood. Overall, participants have become more resilient, patient, non-judgmental, inclusive, and caring as a result of their experiences of motherhood and teaching.

Methodological Reflections

Life history research is essentially the synthesis of the biography of participants and the autobiography of the researcher as they both work to understand issues that had a substantial impact on their lives (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Life history research begins with the life history of the researcher; it requires that researchers explicitly state their life experiences that precipitated his/her interest in a particular area of investigation. My interest in using a life history approach to develop deeper insights into the lived experiences of these participants stems from my experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica. Life history research proved to be an

effective method at all phases of the research process. The tenets of life history research postulated by Cole and Knowles (2001) such as relationality, mutuality, empathy, care, sensitivity, and respect were manifested throughout the research process. I spent time with participants prior to beginning the research process to build a collegial relationship with each participant. Building a trusting relationship with participants was very crucial as it helped participants to begin reflecting on their experiences of motherhood and teaching and the contextual factors influencing the meanings they give to their experiences.

At some stages during the data collection process we just talked and laughed about how our experiences have helped us to grow as individuals and influenced the trajectory of our lives. At other stages participants became emotional as they shared their stories, so I respected the seriousness of specific life events and its impact on their lives. Four months after the data collection process ended a participant expressed her gratitude to me for allowing her to share her story because she was never able to share with persons in her social group her experiences because of their expectations of her. Kouritzin (2000) speaks about the emotional benefits of life history research to participants. This participant received emotional release by being listened to and validated during data collection. Another participant shared that she cried when she read her life history and how motivating and empowering the experience was for her.

The data from the interviews were transcribed, re-read, and organized into chronological order. The life histories of participants were presented as a specific case. This allowed readers to engage with these stories as they would a biography. As I read through the life histories of these participants and tried to make sense of the data in light of the research questions I discovered many similarities in our familial and socio-political backgrounds and have gained a deeper understanding of the factors influencing our lived experiences.

Life history research lends itself to multiple forms of interpretation; hence additional themes may have been identified by readers. These themes were not developed because they did not relate specifically to the research questions. With life history research we are alert to not only what is said by the participant but may also draw inferences about what is not said or elaborated on. Participants may not have spoken as clearly about the impact of issues related to racism, classism, and gender on their lives. Their rationale for non-disclosure or failure to fully express their experiences of various forms of oppression may be linked to personal and institutional

128

factors. Even with much probing, these issues were apparently viewed by participants through different lenses, so were not seen as forms of oppression. Based on the guiding principles of life history research, the ethical considerations, and a feminist epistemological framework, in retrospect I felt that I should have pointed out to participants our complicity in the perpetuation or the reproduction of social inequities in their homes, schools, and communities. As a researcher, I think I could have helped participants to better frame their stories and in doing so better highlight the institutional forces impacting the meanings they make of their lived experiences. However, I respect the participants' framing of their stories and acknowledge that these frames serve them well at this point in their lives. At the same time, as a researcher, I am aware that power relations shape our experiences and the meanings we make of them and that we are complicit in the reproduction of social inequities in our home, schools, and communities.

Implications for Further Study

This research has achieved its goals of leading me as researcher to greater levels of personal insight about my experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica and giving further voice to these participants whose stories may not otherwise be told. While the goal of this research was not to make generalizations about the experiences of teachers who are mothers in Jamaica, it has provided important data about the lived experiences of teachers who are mothers. Several studies have been conducted in Jamaica addressing socio-political and historical factors influencing family life and gender (Leo-Rhynie, 1993; Barrow, 1996, Beckles, 1999 & Leo-Rhynie, Bailey & Barrow, 1997).

This research is my contribution to scholarship in teacher education in Jamaica and it is hoped that other researchers may engage in further exploration of teacher experiences in Jamaica. An interesting area of research may be "Fatherhood and teaching in Jamaica." Such a study may explore the rationale for the limited number of males at the early childhood, primary, and secondary levels of education in Jamaica and the implication of having male figures in the classroom on gender development in both male and female students who are both lacking in positive male role models (Miller, 1994).

Based on the life histories of participants another area of further exploration could include a study on the coping mechanisms of teachers who are mothers. Such a study could

inform policy relating the work/life balance, prevention of professional burnout, and improvement to the teaching learning process. It also would provide practical insights that may be employed by teachers who are mothers in Jamaica as they strive to facilitate the holistic development of their children and students.

Limitations of Study

The participants in this study all migrated to Canada at the time of the study; hence they were telling their stories retrospectively and have not taught in Jamaica for as many as seven years. The participants in this study were more affluent than many teachers in Jamaica; hence the difference in geographical, temporal, and social location of these participants would impact the meanings they give to their experiences. A study with participants who are currently mothering and teaching in Jamaican schools at various levels and in different geographic locations would provide further data on motherhood and teaching in Jamaica today.

Summary

This study used a modified life history approach to lead me, as the researcher, to deeper levels of personal insight regarding the experiences of teachers who are mothers in the Jamaican context. The three female participants in this research became mothers while serving as teachers in Jamaica but migrated to Canada to engage in graduate studies. This study elucidates the wider socio-political, historical, and familial factors influencing the meanings participants give to their experiences of motherhood and teaching in Jamaica, their career trajectory and other routes such as migration to Canada. I utilized a critical feminist research paradigm to become more alert to the impact of social justice phenomena such as classism, sexism, and racism on participants' experiences of motherhood and teaching. The goal of this study is to bring to a higher level of awareness the lived experiences of three Jamaican teachers who are mothers and to contribute to scholarship on motherhood and teaching in the Jamaican context. It is hoped that this study serves a political function that will spawn further inquiry.

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Letter of Invitation for Teachers

Coralee Thomas

1410 Hughes Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7L 7N2

Email: cmt667@mail.usask.ca

Date:…………………………

Dear ……………………………..   ,

     I am currently pursuing a Master of Educational Foundations, in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. I am conducting a research on the topic: Motherhood and teaching in Jamaican schools: A life history approach. Data for the study will be collected between June 2014 and February 2015. The purpose of this study is to highlight the experiences of teachers who become mothers during their career and how motherhood has changed impacted their career. It is also a mechanism to give voice to and ultimately to empower teachers.

     I would be very grateful if you could serve as one of my participants in the study. I will be using life history research methods, therefore we will be engaging in guided conversations over a two month period. **The total time commitment to the guided conversation is 18 hours over the two months period.** The specific dates and time for meetings will be set at a time that is convenient for both of us. The information that you share will be held in the strictest of confidence. Your anonymity will be ensured, as your name, the name of the school and school region will only be identified through the use of pseudonyms in all data collection and analysis documents.

     I have enclosed a copy of the guided conversation questions for your perusal. If you consent to participate in this study, please complete the consent form that I have also included in this communication. You may send me an email, a text message or telephone me to confirm your participation. Please be aware that your signing of the consent form does not mean that you are bound to participate in the study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time during the study and this will in no way be held against you.

If you need further clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

_____

Coralee Thomas

Consent Form

Principal Investigator: Prof. Dianne Miller

Head

Department of Educational Foundations

College of Education

28 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK, S7N 0V1

Email: dianne.miller@usask.ca, Tel: 306-966-7724

RESEARCHER: Coralee Thomas, Masters Candidate

Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education

University of Saskatchewan

28 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N

Tel : 3069667514

You are being invited to participate in a research study entitled Motherhood and Teaching in Jamaica Schools: A Life History Approach. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask questions you may have regarding your participation in the study.

Researcher: Coralee Thomas, M.Ed Student, Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N0X1.

Ph. 306-715-8645.

Purpose and Procedure: This study purports to use life history research to understand the experiences of teachers when they become mothers and how motherhood affect their roles and

relationships with students, parents, administration and wider community. The methods of data collection for the study are guided conversations and reviewing of artifacts over a two month period (December 2014 to January 2015). The venue for the guided conversations and specific dates for meeting will occur at a place and time that is convenient for you. The information collected will be reported in a summary and direct quotations from the guided conversations will also be included in the thesis. The findings from the guided conversations will inform my master's thesis, which is a prerequisite for the completion of my degree. Conference papers and journal articles may also be based on the findings of the study.

Potential Benefits: Your involvement in this study may lead you as a teacher and mother to greater levels of insight about the changes that have occurred in your personal and professional life as a result of becoming a mother. The overarching goal of the study is to give voice and to empower female teachers.

Estimate of Time Commitment: I intend to speak with you for a total of 18 hours over a period of two months.

Tape Recording of Guided Conversations: Guided conversations will be tape recorded. You may request that the tape recorder be turned off at any time during the conversation.

Potential Risks: There are no known emotional, physical or psychological risks, beyond those associated with everyday life, which could be associated with this study.

Storage of Data: In accordance with the University of Saskatchewan guidelines, all data (notes, tapes, records) will be securely stored in a locked cabinet in the office of Prof. Dianne Miller, College of Education, for a minimum of five years. After the five years period has elapsed, the data will be appropriately destroyed. No marks of personal identification will be on interview transcripts, hence facilitating anonymity and confidentiality.

Confidentiality: Each participant, school and school region will be given a pseudonym.

Limitations to confidentiality: If I hear or see something that gives cause for concern, such as disclosure of abuse or neglect, serious physical harm or mental health problems or support needs; I have a duty to act. However, I will speak with you first about what steps should be taken to assist you. In exceptional cases, it may be mandatory to breach confidentiality without first consulting with you.

Right to Withdraw: Your decision to participate in is this study is voluntary, and you may answer questions that you feel comfortable answering. There is no guarantee that you will benefit personally from being involved in the study. The information from the guided discussions will be held in strict confidence and will only be discussed with my university supervisor and committee members. You are free to withdraw from the research study **at the point until the transcript release forms are signed,** without any repercussions. If you withdraw from the research project up the data you contributed will be destroyed in the manner that you request.

Renewal of consent to participate: You will not be required to sign another consent form, but we will engage in verbal consent as the guided conversations progress.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning any aspect of the research study, please do not hesitate to ask at any point. I may be easily contacted at the numbers provided if you have any further questions. This research project has been approved, on ethical grounds, by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on May 29, 2014. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Follow-Up Debriefing: I will be available to speak with you about any issues you may have during and after the completion of data collection. You will also be offered an electronic copy of the final research project. I am also requesting your permission to send you an electronic copy of the transcribed data and completed thesis.

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the information on the research study provided; I was given an opportunity to ask questions, seek further clarification and I am satisfied with the answers I received to my questions. I give my consent to participate in the research study. I am also aware that may withdraw this consent at any time. A received a copy of this Consent Form for my personal records.

_____   _____

Name of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. Can you give me an overview of your family life growing up in Jamaica?
2. Tell me about the community you grew up in, your interactions with members of the wider community and how those interactions have impacted your career choice?
3. What were your experiences as a child attending school in Jamaica?
4. What were your views about the purpose of education before becoming a teacher?
5. What factors influenced your decision to enter the teaching profession?
6. How many years were you serving as a teacher before you became a mother?
7. What factors influenced your decision to become a mother?
8. What were your thoughts and emotions regarding your teaching career when you found out you were pregnant?
9. How did pregnancy impact your relationships with students, colleagues, parents and administration?
10. What were your thoughts and feelings about your career development when you had to take maternity leave from work?
11. What were the reactions of your principal when he had to hire a teacher to cover for you while you were on maternity leave?
12. Do you have any albums, photographs other artifacts of your students or children that we may view to discuss what was taking place at that time in your life?
13. What are your views about the purpose of education now that you are a mother?
14. In what ways did motherhood change your relationship with students, teachers, parents, administration and wider community?
15. Give practical examples or relate a scenario where becoming a mother has changed how you dealt with a situation at school.
16. Are there any negative implications of becoming a mother on your teaching career?
17. Are there any challenges you are facing as a mother and teacher?
18. What are your long term professional goals?
19. How do you foresee motherhood affecting your ability to reach these goals?

20. What support systems would you recommend that schools' administration implement to assist teachers with young children?

21. How does cultural, socio-political and economic climate in Jamaica impact the role of teachers who are mothers?

22. What are the personal values that motherhood has taught you?

23. How did you incorporate these values in your practice as a teacher?

24. In what ways did motherhood change your views on social justice issues such as racism, classism, sexism, and poverty?

25. What modifications did you make to your practice as a teacher to teach for social change?

26. What were the reactions when social justice issues were raised in the classroom with students, in staffrooms with colleagues, staff meetings with administration and meetings with parent?

27. How did you respond to those reactions?

APPENDIX D

Transcript Release Form

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my guided conversation in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to clarify and modify information from the transcript as I deem appropriate. I confirm that the transcript accurately represents what I disclosed in my personal interview with Coralee Thomas. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Coralee Thomas to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

_____   _____

Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher