

**USE OF THE MUSIC SYLLABUS FROM THE NATIONAL STANDARDS
CURRICULUM NSC,
AT THE LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL,
IN KINGSTON AND ST. ANDREW, JAMAICA**

By

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Liberty University

A MASTER'S THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN MUSIC EDUCATION

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To St. Vincent Strambi Catholic High School

This thesis is dedicated to St. Vincent Strambi Catholic High School in Bull Savannah St. Elizabeth, the institution that provided me with foundational studies in music and my first music teaching assignment. From this job, I have explored many pedagogical possibilities and have met some wonderful students along with my principal, Fr. Samuel Alloggia who have allowed me to demonstrate my musical capabilities, and gave me the desire to seek further studies in music education

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ABSTRACT

The Jamaican music education landscape has had a positive shift in the demand for music teachers who are educated to become classroom music teachers. Despite the growing need for trained music teachers to be placed in many high schools in Jamaica and the implementation of two curricula, there has been minimal study that assess how music teachers use the music syllabus from the National Standards Curriculum (NSC) in teaching and learning. The study joins a set of vibrant discussions on the development of music education in Jamaica and examines the use of the NSC at the lower secondary level (grades seven to nine) in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica.

The study discusses the attitude of music teachers at the lower secondary level in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica towards the NSC. Music teachers' views on the suitability of the NSC for the Jamaican classroom as well as challenges encountered by music teachers in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica while implementing some content and utilizing pedagogical approach is looked at in the study. From the findings, suggestions have been brought forward to assist teachers, the Ministry of Education Youth and Information (MoEYI), and tertiary institutions responsible for providing education for prospective and current music education students to better navigate the NSC in order to improve the teaching and learning of music in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica.

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Abbreviations

ABRSM	Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music.
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate.
IRB	Institutional Review Board.
JCDC	Jamaica Cultural Development Commission.
JTA	Jamaica Teachers' Association.
MoEYI	Ministry of Education Youth and Information.
NSC	National Standards Curriculum.
ROSE	Reform of Secondary Education.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Any new curriculum that has been compiled demands careful attention and a significant amount of teacher exposure to its nuances in order to ensure its successful implementation. Studies have shown that the implementation of new curriculum proves to be challenging. Gibson and Brooks reported that “lack of clarity, insufficient knowledge, content overload and not enough time”¹ are some factors that affect new curriculum implementation. Victor Ngwenya stated that, “The major barriers to effective curriculum implementation were human, physical, material and financial resources.”² Since Jamaica’s independence in 1962, the country has developed only two curricula for music education. The Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) curriculum, was reviewed by The Task Force on Educational Reform which concluded that, “The inequality of provision at the lower secondary level continued to be a major problem and equity at this level is still to be achieved.”³ Jamaica’s second post - independence curriculum for primary and secondary schools, The National Standards Curriculum (NSC), is cited by Deandra Scott as having challenges such as “inadequate training and resources and small, crowded classrooms.”⁴

¹ Susan E. Gibson and Charmaine Brooks, “Teachers’ perspectives on the effectiveness of a locally planned professional development program for implementing new curriculum, *Teacher Development*,” Vol 16, NO 1, (2012), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2012.667953>

² Victor Nwenya, “Curriculum Implementation Challenges Encountered by Primary School Teachers in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe” Vol. 17, No. 2, (2020), 158-176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2018.1549953> (*African Education Review*)

³ Task Force on Education Reform Jamaica; JAMAICA. *A Transformed Educational System, (2004), 100.* [Jis.gov.jm/estp/docs/Reports/JA Education Reform Task Force](https://www.jis.gov.jm/estp/docs/Reports/JA%20Education%20Reform%20Task%20Force)

⁴ Deandra Scott, “Teachers’ experiences implementing the National Standards Curriculum at the Riverbank High School” Vol 19, NO. 1, (December 2010), 1-34. <https://doi.org/10.46425/j119018157>

At the inception of the implementation of the NSC, the sitting president of the union representing teachers, The Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA), Howard Isaacs, raised concerns about the overall lack of adequate resources within the Jamaican education system to implement the "methodologies demanded by the new curriculum."⁵ Another concern expressed by the JTA president was that the trainers contracted to orientate teachers in the new curriculum were themselves "not fully prepared and equipped to pass on the necessary information to teachers."⁶

The implementation of music as outlined by the NSC is of particular concern since music education in the Jamaican education system does not have the status of other core subjects, it is not given as much attention or resources, and is not generally considered as equally important. Music education has been for some time used as a support subject to enhance core subjects rather than as a subject with its own intrinsic value and independent purpose. At the lower primary level, music is infused in the curriculum to help with the development of English language, mathematics, and other subjects. The *Jamaica Information Service* reported on a project supported by the government where music was used to aid literacy development. The author noted that, "An initiative aimed at improving the literacy levels of Grade Three students in six primary schools across the island, through the introduction of music as a part of their curriculum, was launched."⁷ The report also noted that the initiative "will see music being used as the driving force behind this literacy thrust."⁸

⁵ Andre Poyser, "Curriculum Issues - JTA president raises concerns about roll-out of NSC", (The Gleaner, November 13, 2016) <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20161116/curriculum-issues-jta-president-raises-concerns-about-roll-out-nsc>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chris Patterson, "Music In Curriculum To Improve Literacy" (Jamaica Information Service, September 28, 2011), <https://jis.gov.jm/music-in-curriculum-to-improve-literacy/>

⁸ Ibid.

Music education at the secondary level does not receive pride of place in the education scheme and usually is not always afforded the human and material resources necessary to allow the subject to function as the curriculum outlines. In most cases, a secondary school will employ a single music teacher to plan, manage and implement the entire music program across the entire school population, regardless of the size of the student population. According to Joan Tucker and Cylve Bowen, “There is also a belief that one music teacher per school is sufficient, despite student enrolment.”⁹ This teacher is expected to approach the delivery of its content with much the same professional and pedagogical rigor expected of the more adequately staffed core subjects. Whenever it is perceived that the music teacher is unable to manage the responsibilities, the value of music education in the Jamaican system becomes a moot point.

Statement of the Problem

A standardized curriculum is a central component of any education system, as it serves to inform all supervising educators, schools, and teachers of the uniformed national or regional expectations of the aims, objectives, methodologies, and outcomes for particular subjects at given grade levels. Improving teaching and learning outcomes is the ultimate aim of developing a standardized curriculum; therefore, curriculum developers seek to positively transform the teaching and learning process, with the goal of realizing improved student performance. When neither teacher performance nor learner outcomes are being attained, then the validity of the curriculum, the quality of teacher practices, and the efficacy of the teaching processes are subject to extensive scrutiny.

⁹ Joan Tucker and Cylve A. Bowen, *Music Education in Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean*, (Prepared for UNESCO, 2001), 6.

A lack of content implementation uniformity from one school to the next has been noted by teaching practicum supervisors and external examiners assessing music practicum students in operation in high schools in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica. In some cases, “some topics are taught while others are not. Some teachers ignore the curriculum all together. Some are interested in other things other than the curriculum.”¹⁰ One teaching practicum supervisor suggests that the employed music teachers, from whom practicum students receive instructions on content, may not know the new curriculum and opined that, “The practice teachers depend on the collaborating teachers for topics and the instructions that go along with it. There is also a gap in the creativity component. The focus is on the theoretical component.”¹¹

Additionally, music teachers operating at the same grade levels were utilizing comparatively different types and grade levels of assessment for students at the same grade levels. These anomalies indicated that NSC, which standardizes and normalizes the learning objectives and content for each grade level across the high school system, was being ignored by at least some music teachers tasked with the responsibility of implementing the curriculum.

Need for the Study

Research serves an important role in improving the teaching and learning processes of any education system, as their findings can uncover pertinent issues. For the Jamaican context, research has been conducted in the areas of music education development, the effect of music education in public schools, music performance, and the evaluation of music in schools. These studies are all historical in nature and do not focus on curriculum development or the use of any

¹⁰ O’Neal Mundle, Conversation with author, February 25, 2021.

¹¹ Lyssette Wilson, Conversation with author, March 3, 2021.

of the two curricula that have been implemented since Jamaica gained independence. The need for a research on the use of the NSC is very timely and would supplement existing historical data.

Findings from this study may help to establish future music education policies being pursued by the MoEYI. The findings may also have implications for teacher preparation in educational institutions offering music education degrees. In addition, the framers of the music syllabus from the NSC, may receive pertinent information in the further reframing of an internationally benchmarked curriculum or a curriculum suited for the Jamaican education system with ideas on how to engage teachers to interact with the material.

Research Questions

The following general questions were used to guide the research project.

1. What are the main attitudes of lower secondary school music teachers in Jamaica towards the music syllabus in the National Standards Curriculum?
2. How suitable is the music syllabus in the National Standards Curriculum for a Jamaican classroom?
3. What aspects of the music syllabus in National Standards Curriculum are music teachers able to interpret and implement?

Definition of Terms

1. Curriculum: “refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program.”¹²
2. Assessment: “refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.”¹³
3. Teaching: “The act or business of instructing; also, that which is taught; instruction.”¹⁴
4. Learning: “The knowledge or skill received by instruction or study.”¹⁵
5. Music Education: “Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music.”¹⁶
6. Music National Standards: “include singing, playing instruments, improvising, composing, reading/notating, listening/analyzing, evaluating, understanding music in relation to history and other disciplines, and understand music in relation to history and culture.”¹⁷

¹² The Glossary of Education Reform, “Assessment” Accessed February 11, 2021.
<https://www.edglossary.org/assessment/>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Definitions.net, STANDS4 LLC, 2021. "Music education" Accessed February 11, 2021.
<https://www.definitions.net/definition/Music+education>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Susan J. Byo, “Classroom Teachers' and Music Specialists' Perceived Ability to Implement the National Standards for Music Education”, *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47. No. 2 (July 1999): 111-23.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3345717>.

7. Music Teachers: “A Music Teacher is a professional who teaches music as a subject in the school curriculum. Music Teachers instruct students in practical methods and theory of general music, singing, as well as playing musical instruments.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Betterteam, “Music Teacher Job Description” Accessed February 11, 2021. <https://www.betterteam.com/music-t>

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Studies from the United States of America, Botswana, China and Singapore are significant to the current issues being explored for diverse reasons. The national standards of music in the United States of America are identical to the national standards for music education in Jamaica. Both systems of secondary education in Botswana and Jamaica run for five years. The junior secondary system in Botswana lasts for three years which includes forms one to three, and can be compared to the lower secondary level in Jamaica grades seven to nine, also lasting for three years. Both the syllabus of Botswana and that of Jamaica follow a spiral approach. Singapore and China have a diverse education system different from Jamaica, but have some similar aspects to their national standards for music education. Additionally, China's three years of secondary school in some regions can be compared to the lower secondary level in Jamaica where music education is taught, covering musical content in relation to culture.

The Development of Curriculum in Jamaica

The System of Music Education in Jamaica

Music teaching and learning in Jamaica has had a rich foundation in colonialism. As a result, instruction in music education before emancipation was based on an inherited colonial system. Millicent White stated, "Schools set up in Jamaica prior to emancipation were operated mainly by missionaries or teachers from England."¹⁹ During this time, music was not a subject; singing was included in the curriculum, but was not considered a core subject. Music was not

¹⁹ Millicent Whyte, *A Short History of Education in Jamaica: Caribbean Education Series*, 2nd ed (London: Hadder and Stoughton, 1983), 42.

considered a core subject until the end of the 19th century. At this point, much of what was taught was based on British practices. Joan Tucker and Clyve Bowen stated, “The subject was shaped by the British 19th century tradition and promoted the development of music literacy and vocal skills.”²⁰ With this, the emphasis was not necessarily on music instructions but was more performance-oriented. Singing in schools transcended into large choral ensembles similar to those in the churches.

Christianity was brought to the Caribbean from Europe. Therefore, the singing style was more reflective of those cultural nuances. The church’s response to set up learning institutions was also fueled by its desire to Christianize the population. One way of ensuring that the message was translated to the population was by means of singing the psalms. Millicent White posited that, “All normal schools offered Reading, Writing and Arithmetic and Psalmody.”²¹ This helped to fashion a culture of music education that ensured some level of familiarity.

Music education began to shift during the 1960s when the nation gained independence from England. This was not a giant step, but a gradual inclusion of traditional Jamaican folk material. The addition of this idiom made it possible for teachers and students to have a personal connection with the subject. This type of music formed the backbone of Jamaican cultural legacy, inherited through slavery, and passed down orally. The strong influence of African culture gave teachers an added approach to music instruction, thus strengthening the aural perception of students. Randy Tillmutt says “A significant amount of the material that forms

²⁰ Joan Tucker and Clyve A. Bowen, *Music Education in Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean*, (Prepared for UNESCO, 2001), 1.

²¹ Millicent Whyte, *A Short History of Education in Jamaica: Caribbean Education Series*, 2nd ed (London: Hadder and Stoughton, 1983), 43.

Jamaica's music is based on folk songs that have been passed down orally by ancestors over the years."²²

Following independence, Jamaica became part of the Caribbean Commonwealth and shared similarities with other countries concerning music education. While there was an absence of a structured music curriculum, other issues were also plaguing music instruction. Music teachers were highly skilled but not necessarily qualified classroom educators. As such, there was no professional standard for music education content and delivery. Because music was not seen as a primary subject, music instruction and other music related activities were carried out by one teacher per school, resulting in a failure of their primary responsibility of classroom teaching and learning. Joan Tucker and Clyve Bowen stated, "This is largely due to the shortage of secondary music specialists and to the absence of a shared understanding of the aims and content of secondary music. There is also the belief that one music teacher is sufficient"²³

Coupled with the lack of resources on an already burdened system, music instruction included music theory, singing, and performances for special events. According to O'Neal Mundle, "Most secondary schools have one music teacher, who often has to balance the demands of preparing and presenting music for school performances, special programs, contests, and graduations, with teaching students in the structured classroom setting."²⁴ As a result of the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission's (JCDC) music festival competition, performances

²² Randy Tillmuth, "The History of the System of Education in Jamaica: Emancipation in 1838 to the 21st Century," (PhD diss., University of Mississippi 2013), 38, <https://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/1459214745.html?fmt=ai>

²³ Joan Tucker and Clyve A. Bowen, *Music Education in Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean*, (Prepared for UNESCO, 2001), 6.

²⁴ O'Neal Mundle, "Characteristics of Music Education Programs in Public Schools of Jamaica" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2008), 15, <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/3958>

became the avenue through which music education was sustained. Randy Tillmutt described the role competitions play in the development of music education.

Festival has been instrumental in providing professional development for music teachers across the island by providing workshops and rehearsal techniques to teachers entering students in the competitions. This has helped to improve the quality of the music classroom in Jamaica and also has raised the standard in the quality of music played at the music competitions.²⁵

Curriculum Development in Jamaica

Eventually, the need for a more structured system was realized. Between 1995 and 1999 the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) was piloted and was fully implemented in 2000. Music education benefited from this, as there was a national curriculum to unify music education at the lower secondary level, in grades seven to nine. Joan Tucker and Clyve Bowen stated, “The music curriculum resulting from the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E) was the first national programme for secondary students.”²⁶ The primary purpose of the curriculum was to provide a transition from primary school to secondary school and to offer a pathway for further studies at the upper secondary level, in grades ten and eleven.

Central to the mandate of the ROSE is a philosophy which placed sound at the center of teaching and learning, and was carried out under three domains in which students could experience music “by performing, by listening and by composing.”²⁷ Through performing,

²⁵ Randy Tillmutt, “The History of the System of Education in Jamaica: Emancipation in 1838 to the 21st Century,” (PhD diss., University of Mississippi, 2013), 52, <https://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/1459214745.html?fmt=ai>

²⁶ Joan Tucker and Clyve A. Bowen, *Music Education in Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean*, (Prepared for UNESCO, 2001), 6.

²⁷ Government of Jamaica/World Bank Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E): *Teachers’ Guide Grades 7-9 Music*, (Kingston, JA: MOE&C, 2000), V.

students could experience music by singing or playing an instrument in small or large groups, and individually while gaining a basic understanding of music literacy. These activities were to be performed on instruments such as; the “recorder, small keyboards and pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments.”²⁸ This design was particularly established at the grade seven level in order to bridge the gap for the lack of musical experience in primary schools. Performance at grades eight and nine included the use of guitars and other unspecified instruments that were available for use by the teachers and students. In these two grades, the learning of folk material was also facilitated. Composing was to be done in all grades through the exploration of sounds, whether instrumental or environmental. Listening was explored in all grades at the lower secondary level, utilizing musical elements such as: timbre, duration, pace, pitch, structure, dynamics, texture and silence.

Four years after the implementation of the ROSE, the government of Jamaica through the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture established an education task force. The primary goal of the task force was the reformation of the entire education system in Jamaica placing the newly implemented curriculum under a microscope. As a response to the deficiencies in the education system identified by the education task force in 2004, the National Standards Curriculum (NSC) for music was piloted between 2014 and 2016. Implementation of the NSC took effect in 2016 on a phased basis, and was fully implemented by 2018.

The NSC operates with the same philosophy as the ROSE; music should be “a sound centered discipline.”²⁹ The NSC dictates eight strands that should guide teaching and learning.

²⁸ Ibid., 3.

²⁹ Ministry of Education Youth and Information, *National Standards Curriculum NSC, Grade 7-9: Units of work Core Curricular Units*, (Kingston, MOE, 2018), xvi.

These are: “Vocal and Instrumental Development, Solo & Group Performances, Signs Symbols and Notations, Musical Genres and Styles, Listening, Identifying and Distinguishing, Similarities & Contrast in Musical Genres/Styles, Exploring, Selecting, Organizing, Communicating and Recording Musical Compositions.”³⁰ These strands are to be taught through the “Attainment Targets: PERFORMING, LISTENING AND ARRANGING AND COMPOSING.”³¹ In the NSC, the subject is approached in a general way, and the topics are arranged in a spiral manner. Some topics are carried over from one grade to the next, but should be taught with a higher level of complexity as it moves up the grade levels. The layout is structured in a sequence with the idea of providing a pathway toward the development of a career choice in music. In a WhatsApp conversation, the music education officer for Jamaica views the NSC as a program that would help to develop students’ skills.

“The Music program at the lower secondary level should be a robust one in my view. Firstly, we garner and hone the talents of these students who are transitioning from the primary level, and may have been doing well in Music. There is an opportunity presented at the lower secondary level to reeducate, reiterate and rejuvenate that music education is one of the most important areas of excellence, and building character within the holistic development of the student.”³²

Pro/Cons of A National Standards Curriculum

The Task Force on Education Reform of Jamaica stated, “Curriculum is centrally designed and developed by the Ministry, with significant support from external funding

³⁰ Ibid., 3.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Matthew Silpot, WhatsApp Conversation with author, March 5, 2021.

agencies.”³³ Within the broader context of design, the ideology is that educational reformers create curriculum to elevate themselves and their positions. This argument is supported by Schimidt, who postulated that, “The administration is perceived to be addressing issues of importance in education, while at the same time strengthening its position to set the parameters of the discourse”³⁴

In defense of the idea of stakeholders being responsible for revising and substantiate curriculum, Lehman opposed Schimidt saying, “In order to discover what Americans thought students should know and be able to do in the arts, we solicited advice and suggestions from artists, educators, parents, and politicians, as well as from representatives of philanthropic organizations, foundations, businesses, and the public.”³⁵ Lehman’s position is supported by the Education Task Force of Jamaica in outlining the role of each entity or personnel in the education system. “Our education system experiences full participation of all stakeholders such as communities, parents, guardians, PTA’s, students, teachers, corporate bodies, community-based organisations and the state.”³⁶

The national standards for music in the United States of America are similar to that of Jamaica, though worded differently. In reference to national standards in the United States of America, Barclay asserted, “The National Standards for Music Education have had a great

³³ Task Force on Education Reform Jamaica; JAMAICA. *A Transformed Educational System*, (2004), 100. [Jis.gov.jm/estp/docs/Reports/JA Education Reform Task Force](http://jis.gov.jm/estp/docs/Reports/JA%20Education%20Reform%20Task%20Force)

³⁴ Catherine Schimidt, “Who Benefits? Music Education and the National Standards”, *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 4, no. 2 (1996), 73. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40495419>,

³⁵ Paul Lehman, “*Who Benefits from the National Standards: A Response to Catherine M. Schmidt's "Who Benefits? Music Education and the National Standards"*”, *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 5, no. 1 (1997), 55-57 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40495413>.

³⁶ Task Force on Education Reform Jamaica; JAMAICA. *A Transformed Educational System*, (2004), 100. [Jis.gov.jm/estp/docs/Reports/JA Education Reform Task Force](http://jis.gov.jm/estp/docs/Reports/JA%20Education%20Reform%20Task%20Force)

impact on all aspects of music education from what is being taught to how it is assessed. Many music teachers now use the national standards as guidelines for teaching and objectives for student learning.”³⁷

Music Teachers Perception on Implementing the National Standards

A study was conducted with several elementary teachers in Florida, some of whom were music specialists, while others were general classroom teachers who also taught music. The study sought to ascertain the teachers’ insight on the variables that influence the usage of the national standards. Results from the study revealed that a music specialist was perceived to have the least challenges while a teacher (generalist) who teaches all subjects including music, but is not necessarily trained to do so seemed to rely on the expertise of the music specialist for guidance in some aspects of the curriculum. Both groups seem to think that some aspects of the curriculum may be implemented by both generalists and specialists, but both music specialists and generalists believe that some content rests heavily with the subject specialists. Susan J, Byo asserted that, “Certain standards are more feasible for both music teachers and generalists to integrate, whereas others should be solely implemented by music teachers.”³⁸

Other factors such as insufficient time and availability of resources interfere with the implementation of national standards as noted by both subject specialist and generalist. These

³⁷ Maria Barkley, “*Assessment of The National Standards for Music Education: A Study of Elementary General Music Teacher Attitudes and Practices*” (Master’s Thesis, Wayne State University, 2006), 10. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.7852&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

³⁸ Susan J. Byo, “Classroom Teachers' and Music Specialists' Perceived Ability to Implement the National Standards for Music Education”, *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47. No. 2 (July 1999): 111-23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345717>.

points were borne out by Susan J. Byo who stated “Both groups expressed a concern about the lack of time and resources to effectively teach what is required by most standards.”³⁹

Another study was conducted in China to ascertain the response and perception of music teachers on the implementation of the new curriculum which presents standards similar to that of Jamaica. The study was done with over two thousand teachers with varied years of teaching experience and represented different socio-economic backgrounds. Four major concerns emanated from the study. According to Zhou Yu, “The results indicated that half (51%) of the schools could not provide music classes due to an insufficient number of music teachers, 27.5% were unable to operate as a result of the music class schedule being taken over by other subjects, 16.6 % suffered from a lack of teaching equipment and 7.8% reflected an absence of school support.”⁴⁰

Further investigations revealed that teachers felt the curriculum was age-appropriate, but word choice in the changes did not aid in the psychological development of the students. For example, the old version of the curriculum used the term ‘improvise’, while the new version uses the term ‘compose’ referring to the same activity. Younger teachers with only a few years of teaching experience believed that the curriculum was relevant and effective while more mature teachers with many years of teaching experience perceived the curriculum as outdated and ineffective. When asked to state their views on the curriculum and its impact on students, all

³⁹ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁰ Zhuo Yu, “Music teachers and their implementation of the new Music Curriculum Standards in China”, *International Journal of Music Education* 37, no. 2 (May 2019): 187-97 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418820647>

teachers felt that the curriculum affects students' "musicality, but does not necessarily enhance composition and performance training"⁴¹

In addition to the previously stated issues, both groups of teachers believed four main factors would adversely affect implementation of a new curriculum. According to Zhou Yu, these factors are: "student's ability and quality, school's facilities and equipment, the extent to which music was prioritized within the school, teacher's ability, and teaching philosophy."⁴²

Planning and Implementing National Standards in Music

Colleen Conway has been involved in curriculum development as a professor of music education at the University of Michigan. During her interaction with school districts, she has noted that there have been two varying degrees to the implementation of the standards. In the first instance, the national standards act as a guide to the implementation of the curriculum, even with an abundance of resources. "I have seen schools with abundant resources and well-developed music programs interpret the standards only as a guide for the offerings for a department."⁴³ In contrast, some schools have limited resources, and the focus is on documentation that serves to cripple the musical aspects of the curriculum. Colleen Conway stated that, "I have seen districts get so detailed in documenting work in all nine content areas that performance ensembles suffer and students drop out of the music program."⁴⁴ While she

⁴¹ Zhou Yu, "Music teachers and their implementation of the new Music Curriculum Standards in China", *International Journal of Music Education* 37, no. 2 (May 2019): 187-97 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418820647>

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Colleen Conway, "The Implementation of the National Standards in Music Education: Capturing the Spirit of the Standards." *Music Educators Journal* 94, no. 4 (2008): 34-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219684>

⁴⁴ Ibid.

noted that there should not necessarily be a broad-brush approach, she interpreted the attitudes of the teachers to be whatever methodology is geared toward getting students through the content.

Though teacher preparation is a crucial part of music instruction, the foundation of that knowledge rests heavily on previously acquired skill set. Music teachers have varying strengths that suit the multiplicity of roles they perform whether as music specialist or general music teachers. Even band or choir directors who usually have specific focus will normally need additional music skills to aid in the completion of their duties. Colleen Conway noted that in working with a particular group of teachers with certain strengths, they focus less on the fundamentals necessary to carry out other musical activities. She stated, “I often work with instrumental music teachers who were not prepared to sing with children, and when they try to teach kids to sing, they miss some of the basics of singing instruction.”⁴⁵

Some factors that affect the implementation of one standard against another include the background of the music teachers along with their fundamental beliefs. Heather Nelson Shouldice referenced two separate works focusing on beliefs on teaching. The first work is that of Paul Ernest, *The Impact of Beliefs on Teaching of Mathematics* and the second work is that of Linda Thompson, *Considering Beliefs in Learning to Teach Music*. Both views are summed up in one statement. “Teachers’ beliefs about teaching, learning, and their subject matter have an inevitable impact on what they choose to do in the classroom, which, in turn, has an impact on the learning experiences of their students.”⁴⁶ These belief systems are never intentionally laid out

⁴⁵ Colleen Conway, "The Implementation of the National Standards in Music Education: Capturing the Spirit of the Standards." *Music Educators Journal* 94, no. 4 (2008): 34-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219684>

⁴⁶ Paul Ernest, *Math Teaching: The State of The Art* (New York, NY: Falmer Press, 1989) and Linda Thompson, "Considering Beliefs in Learning to Teach Music" (*Music Educators Journal*, 2007), quoted in Heather Nelson Shouldice, "Everybody has something: One teacher's beliefs about musical ability and their connection to teaching

in a way of impacting music education negatively or positively. They become part of the human experiences that are entrenched in actions and attitudes. Heather Nelson Shouldice cited Ernest, 1989; Vartuli, 2005 in which they stated “they are implicit and unarticulated, guiding teachers’ actions in ways they may not even be aware.”⁴⁷

Most national standards are designed to capture both the theoretical aspects of music as well as the practical. These could include, but are not limited to, music theory, music history, listening, composing, and performing, which can be broken down into various sub-categories. Teachers can plan their lessons to reflect the criteria set of by the national standards. Traditional styles of teaching do not always draw students in if they were not already interested. Chadwick conducted a research with two music teachers in Botswana in which he assessed how the curriculum was interpreted. Findings from this research revealed that music teaching and learning were teacher-centered, making the students a mere repository of knowledge. According to Chadwick, “I observed what would best be described as technical, meaning that it is concerned with factual information delivered through teacher-centred pedagogy.”⁴⁸ The teachers felt that since the curriculum was developed mostly at the government level, their role was to teach without any creative input. Chadwick stated, “The teachers I interviewed said that they felt their role was to implement the syllabus document, which contains both general and specific

practice and classroom culture.” Research Studies in Music Education 41, no. 2 (July 2019): 189-205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X18773109>.

⁴⁷ Paul Ernest, *Math Teaching: The State of The Art* (New York, NY: Falmer Press, 1989) and S. Vartuli, *Beliefs: The Heart of Teaching Young Children* (2005) quoted in Heather Nelson Shouldice, “*Everybody has something: One teacher’s beliefs about musical ability and their connection to teaching practice and classroom culture.*” Research Studies in Music Education 41, no. 2 (July 2019): 189-205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X18773109>.

⁴⁸ Sheelagh Chadwick, “*Teachers as agents in Botswana’s music education: challenges and possibilities*”, Music Education Research 14, no. 4 (2012): 430-447. D0110.1080/14613808.2012.699955

objectives, as if it were the curriculum, without any interpretation or input from them and their own musical backgrounds.”⁴⁹

Creation and implementation of a curriculum is aided with provided resources. Providing teachers with the necessary resources and equipment can allow them to more easily execute their responsibilities. In an article written in the *Jamaica Observer*, the columnist outlined three fundamental issues that affected the teaching of music in primary schools.

Firstly, the schools lack basic resources such as musical instruments and other materials. Secondly, there is no proper music room. Thirdly, there are negative attitudes and perceptions of many co-workers and even administration on the importance of music in schools, and lastly, most of the teaching styles acquired cannot be utilised because students have no formal exposure to music.⁵⁰

In a WhatsApp conversation with the current music education officer in Jamaica, the question was asked about his observations in the area of content delivery. Several factors were highlighted that impact content delivery within high schools in Jamaica.

Firstly, not all high schools have a music program timetabled. Secondly, not all schools with programs have teachers who are trained to deliver the content for the students to be competent in music according to their grades. At most times, the music teacher would be the person who knows a little about music theory and may be an excellent vocalist or instrumentalist. Thirdly, not all teachers use the National Standards Curriculum (NSC) as the guide to planning their content. Because of the generalist nature, a lot of teachers ignore the standards and benchmark stated and try to use content from other sources that may not at all times be credible. Not a lot of collaboration is made with the teachers. If teachers may have issues with content, they are shy in reaching out for support from the Music Education Officer, or other teachers.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Sheelagh Chadwick, “*Teachers as agents in Botswana's music education: challenges and possibilities*”, Music Education Research 14, no. 4 (2012): 430-447. D0110.1080/14613808.2012.699955

⁵⁰ Lyssette Wilson, “*The Music Teacher’s Nightmare*” The Jamaica Observer (2013): http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/columns/The-music-teacher-s-nightmare_13775858

⁵¹ Matthew Silpot, WhatsApp conversation with author, March 5, 2021.

The music education officer also mentioned that “There are excellent teachers in the system, who do well within the content delivery of music.” Additionally, the MoEYI have put measures in place to ensure that these long-standing issues do not continue to affect music education in Jamaica. Further conversations with the music education officers revealed that, “The Ministry of Education Youth and Information has been working on a deficit over the last three years, by providing training and support for these schools, and also encouraging them to access a program so they can be fully prepared for the music classroom.”

Assessments in Music Education

Julie Contino postulated that “Standards should be the basis for developing curricula, selecting textbooks, setting instructional priorities, and developing assessments.”⁵² Assessment serves dual functions: to improve teaching and learning, and accountability. While teachers reflect on the process of teaching and learning through evaluation and assessment, parents and guardians also have a vested interest in their students’ development.

Music assessment is to be separated from assessment in general, and should not lean towards a set of pre-existing questions including multiple choice and other closed ended questions that does not provide any form of musical expressions. Phillips D. Payne, Frederick Burrack, Kelly A. Parks, and Brian Wesolowski provided a wider definition of music assessment and contextualized music assessment in conjunction with musical activities. They defined music assessment as “a process that includes a variety of measures, including a broader definition of

⁵² Julie Contino, "A Case Study of the Alignment between Curriculum and Assessment in the New York State Earth Science Standards-Based System." *Journal of Science Education and Technology* 22, no. 1 (February 2013): 62-72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23442275>

test. An assessment process includes tasks through which students demonstrate proficiencies and achievement of learning outcomes.”⁵³ They also stated, “Expectations are to be based on standards that define what students should know and be able to do reflecting the key concepts, processes, skills, and traditions in music.”⁵⁴

Assessments aligning with national standards can coordinate with students’ expectations of assessments already experienced in their music classes. When assessment is aligned to national standards, it removes fear and anxiety as the students would already be comfortable replicating in an assessment setting what they would have already done in class. Aligning assessments with classroom practices can add to the validity of the assessment. Students should not be taught musically and then be assessed otherwise. Similarly, students should not be taught verbatim and then expected to be tested using musical stimulus. Cheryl Lavender’s book, *The Ultimate Teaching Assessment Kit for General Music* was referenced in a study conducted by Maria Barclay in which it was stated “in the past, music grades often reflected non-musical criteria and did not always provide an accurate picture of a student’s musical development.”⁵⁵

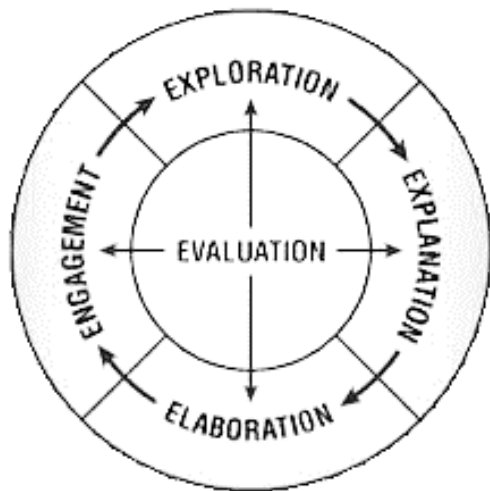
The NSC has a prescribed set of standards that outline the behaviors by which these standards should be attained, and guide the teaching and learning process. Additionally, there are

⁵³ Payne, Phillip D., Frederick Burrack, Kelly A. Parkes, and Brian Wesolowski. “An Emerging Process of Assessment in Music Education.” *Music Educators Journal* 105, no. 3 (March 2019): 36–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432118818880>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cheryl Lavender, *The Ultimate Music Assessment and evaluation Kit for General Music Teachers: Practical Strategies, Time-Saving Tips, Samples, Forms and More* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2000), quoted in Maria Barkley, “Assessment of The National Standards for Music Education: A Study of Elementary General Music Teacher Attitudes and Practices” (Master’s Thesis, Wayne State University, 2006): 10. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.7852&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

“key skills and “assessment criteria”⁵⁶ that are aligned to each activity without any rubric. According to Barclay, “Rubrics are especially valuable for evaluating performance-based activities such as singing, playing instruments or improvising.”⁵⁷ The NSC outlines the “5E Learning cycle; engage, explore, explain, extend, and evaluate”⁵⁸, a prescribed teaching and learning process based on a constructivist approach with two models. In model one, evaluation plays a vital role in teaching and learning. Evaluation is the source that connects the “learning experience.”⁵⁹ Model two presents a “cyclical”⁶⁰ process where evaluation is carried out at the end of the lesson.



⁵⁶ Ministry of Education Youth and Information, *National Standards Curriculum NSC, Grade 7-9: Units of work Core Curricular Units*, (Kingston, MOE, 2018),16.

⁵⁷ Maria Barkley, “Assessment of The National Standards for Music Education: A Study of Elementary General Music Teacher Attitudes and Practices” (Master’s Thesis, Wayne State University, 2006): 17.
<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.7852&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

⁵⁸ Ministry of Education Youth and Information, *National Standards Curriculum NSC, Grade 7-9: Units of work Core Curricular Units*, (Kingston, MOE, 2018),216.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Figure 2.1. Model One “5E Instructional Model.”⁶¹



Figure 2.2 Model Two “5E Instructional Model.”⁶²

With model one, there is an interconnectivity in all stages of teaching and learning. In model two, each process is disintegrated. With the two models, teachers have a choice in determining at what point of the lesson assessment is most suitable based on the teachers’ preference, perception or interpretation. Wei Shin Leong noted in a study with both primary and secondary music teachers in Singapore that perceptions of assessments differ. According to Leong, “The findings of the research have suggested that there were different conceptions of classroom assessment among this group of research participants of Singaporean Music teachers.

⁶¹ Ibid. 215,

⁶² Ministry of Education Youth and Information, *National Standards Curriculum NSC, Grade 7-9: Units of work Core Curricular Units*, (Kingston, MOE, 2018), 215.

This suggests that classroom assessment, like many aspects of classroom teaching and learning, is not a stable entity.”⁶³

Joshua A. Russel and James R. Austin conducted a study of Assessment Practices of Secondary Music Teachers. They postulated that, “Secondary music teachers create grades on a combination of achievement and non-achievement criteria, with non-achievement criteria (attendance, attitude, quantitative measures of practice) receiving greater emphasis or weight in determining music student grades.”⁶⁴ Another practice found in this study is equating the grading of music assessments with that of other subjects without providing music teachers with regular updates on how to navigate the rigors of standards-based assessments.

Secondary music educators reported that their school districts emphasized traditional letter grades and that music course grades were equally weighted with other course grades in calculating student grade point averages and generating credit toward graduation. Yet, music teachers seldom received administrative guidance in assessment or changed their assessment approach in response to standards-based curriculum adoption.⁶⁵

The practices outlined by Russel and Austin are similar to those practices in high schools in Jamaica. The music education officer in Jamaica described the various assessment practices observed in the Jamaican classroom.

⁶³ Wei Shin Leong, “Understanding classroom assessment in dilemmatic spaces: case studies of Singaporean music teachers' conceptions of classroom assessment” *Music Education Research* 16, no. 4 (2014) 454-470. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/14613808.2013.878325>

⁶⁴ Joshua A. Russell, and James R. Austin. "Assessment Practices of Secondary Music Teachers." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 58, no. 1 (2010): 37-54. Accessed March 15, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40666230>.

⁶⁵ Joshua A. Russell, and James R. Austin. "Assessment Practices of Secondary Music Teachers." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 58, no. 1 (2010): 37-54. Accessed March 15, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40666230>.

“Music being a practical area is not being assessed as such within the context of the classroom. For e.g. students are not assessed on technical competencies (playing technique, etc.) and other inclusion of elements of music. Writing of papers and multiple-choice selections seem to be the general thing to do, amidst pleas with administrations to make the accommodations to the teachers of music who need to assess performance within its practical sense. Students are not being assessed in Performance, Composition, and listening, which are pertinent if they are to pursue music as a career option, as these areas are what would need to treat with effectively within that path.”⁶⁶

Julie Continio stated, “In a standards-based system, it is important for all components of the system to align in order to achieve the intended goals.”⁶⁷ With standards of teaching and learning implemented, students can be assessed according to the activities they are performing. If the standards of music teaching and learning require students to sing, play, listen, compose, or arrange, they can be tested in this area.

Diane Lange is a professor of early childhood and elementary music education at the University of Texas. Her research and workshops in the area of pedagogy is extensive. She has taught elementary music for ten years and continues her private practice in this area. One of her published work focuses on practical assessments for elementary students through concrete examples with references for older students as well. Some ideas for assessments are: “rating scales, seating charts that can be used to focus on steady beats, multiple choice test, portfolios and unconventional grade books.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Matthew Silpot, WhatsApp Conversation with author, March 5, 2021.

⁶⁷ Julie Continio, "A Case Study of the Alignment between Curriculum and Assessment in the New York State Earth Science Standards-Based System." *Journal of Science Education and Technology* 22, no. 1 (February 2013): 62-72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23442275>

⁶⁸ Diane M. Lange, “Practical Ways to Assess Elementary Music Students.” *General Music Today* 13, no. 1 (Fall, 1999): 15. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?>

Further mention is made of written test from a listening and analysis approach. “you could prepare a listening test for kindergarten or first grade. Its purpose would be to help you determine whether students can discriminate between the different unpitched instruments. You prepare a sheet having pictures of the instruments (triangle, drum, etc.) To use the test, you hand a copy of the sheet to each student and then play a tape recording of performances using five different instruments. The students color the instrument they hear in each music selection.”⁶⁹ She also outlined how a multiple-choice test could work for older children. “The multiple-choice test can be used to determine students' ability to discriminate between meters. First, write four options for response on the chalkboard or on an overhead projector. Give each student an answer sheet numbered from one to five. Then play a series of short songs or chants. After hearing each one, tell the students to mark their answer sheets with the letter of the appropriate response.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This thesis used a quantitative approach and utilized a survey methodology. Given the topic, the Use of the Music Syllabus from National Standards Curriculum NSC, at the lower secondary level (grades 7-9), in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica, the use of a survey intended to quantify and adequately captured the “attitudes and behavior”⁷¹ of music teachers who engage students at this level. As such, the main purpose of the design was to access and not test any hypotheses. A survey is an economical way of reaching a wider-cross section of people in a shorter time frame.

The three research questions that were used to supplement the topic are:

1. What are the main attitudes of lower secondary school music teachers in Jamaica towards the music syllabus in National Standards Curriculum?
2. How suitable is the music syllabus in the National Standards Curriculum for a Jamaican classroom?
3. What aspects of the music syllabus in the National Standards Curriculum are music teachers able to interpret and implement?

⁷¹ John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, (2014). 263.

Data Collection Instrument

A Questionnaire was the only research tool that was used to gather data for the study. The questionnaire that was developed was specifically designed for this study and is a mix of open-ended and closed questions. Using a combination of questions allowed the respondents to answer the questions with both objective and subjective answers. The questionnaire consisted of a five-page document with thirty questions separated into three sections to avoid influencing the respondents and to facilitate structuring of responses. Each section provides its own set of instructions. Twenty-nine of the questions were closed ended while the last one required written response from the respondents.

The first thirteen questions are general questions which were intended to gather information on the background of the music teachers, the students they teach, and the institutions in which they are employed. Background information was necessary for the study to evaluate the level of competence and experience of the music teachers, the socio-economic status of their students, and the culture of their institutions. Questions one, two, and three were included to gather demographic data from the respondents. Questions four and five were included because the ability of the music teacher to play an instrument can affect the methodology and type of activities that are utilized in the music classroom. Question six gathered educational background and certification qualifications of those surveyed.

Questions seven, eight, nine, and ten determined the importance school administration places on music education. Additionally, the amount of teaching hours allotted to the teaching of music can also affect the attitude of the music teachers. Questions eleven, twelve, and thirteen play an important role in determining the difference in educational institutions, and the background of the students in each institution. These sets of questions were important to assess

differences in resources and outcome, and to provide information with which comparison can be made with data from questions seven, eight, and nine.

1. State your gender.

Male Female

2. How old are You?

20-29 30-39
 40-49 50 and over

3. How long have you been teaching music in schools?

1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years
 16-20 years Over 20 years

4. What is your primary instrument?

Piano Bass or Electric Guitar Woodwind
 Brass Voice Percussion

5. Apart from your primary instrument, do you play another instrument?

No Yes

6. What is your qualification?

Bachelor of Music in Performance Bachelor of Music Education
 Diploma in Music Education Diploma in Performance
 ABRSM Certification Trinity College Certification
 Certificate in Instrumental Teaching Others None

7. In the school at which you are employed, music is offered as a subject in:

Grades 7 only Grades 7 and 8 Grades 7 to 9

8. Your music classes consist of an average of:

20-25 students 26-30 students 31-35 students
 36-40 students Over 40 students

9. What is your total weekly contact time per class for the teaching of music?

30 minutes 45 minutes 1 hour
 1 hour 20 minutes Other

10. Each class does music for:

The entire school year One semester/ term Other

11. The school at which I am employed is:

All boys All Girls Co-educational

12. The socio-economic background of students in your school is mainly:

High income Middle income Low income Mixed

13. My school is categorized as:

Traditional High Non-Traditional High Other

Questions fourteen to twenty were designed to ascertain the attitudes of the respondents towards the use of the NSC. The respondents were given questions and statements for which they were guided on how to respond. These questions were formulated to provide respondents with

the same response option, and summarize the opinion on the overall awareness of the music teachers towards the NSC. All questions provide answers to music teacher preparation programs in Jamaica as well the MoEYL.

14. I am familiar with the content, strands and attainment targets of the music syllabus in the National Standards Curriculum.

SA A DA SD

15. I attended the required NSC training sessions offered by the Ministry of Education?

SA A DA SD

16. A copy of the NSC music syllabus is at my school for my use.

SA A DA SD

17. My own music education /tutelage prepared me to understand and appreciate the NSC.

SA A DA SD

18. I feel comfortable using the NSC as the main guide in planning my music Lessons.

SA A DA SD

19. In the last two and a half years, the main curriculum that I use to plan my lessons is the NSC?

SA A DA SD

20. I feel comfortable implementing all the standards in the NSC.

SA A DA SD

Questions twenty-one, twenty-four, and twenty-five can provide data on the feelings of the teachers and how it affects their implementation of the national standards. These questions are important to ascertain pertinent information that are fundamental to the data collection process. The degree to which the respondents agree or disagree with these questions assisted the data collection process in finding out if there is disparity in content delivery. The results from these questions can be used in discussion for planning and delivery, as resources play a key role in teaching and learning of music.

21. I believe the NSC is appropriately suited for the students I teach in the Jamaican classroom?

SA A DA SD

22. My school has the physical, monetary and human resources that are required to teach the standards in the curriculum.

SA A DA SD

23. The duration of each class is sufficient to cover the content stipulated for each grade.

SA A DA SD

24. The content stipulated in the NSC is appropriate for each grade level.

SA A DA SD

25. The Standards in the NSC are applicable to the Jamaican classroom.

SA A DA SD

Questions twenty-six to twenty-nine were designed to ascertain how well the music teachers are able to comprehend the NSC for effective implementation. The extent to which the teachers agreed or disagreed can indicate the music teachers' ability to implement the mandate of the NSC.

26. I am able to interpret the layout of the *NSC* without much difficulty.

SA A DA SD

27. I am able to interpret and implement the content of the *NSC* without much difficulty.

SA A DA SD

28. I can apply the nine strands in teaching the content because I am able to interpret them.

29. I ensure that for all my lessons I implement the three attainment targets, namely:

“performing,” “listening” and “composing.”

SA A DA SD

Question thirty is an open-ended question intended to allow the participants to give written responses to the prompt. The instruction required the participants to: List five recommendations that they would give that they considered would make the NSC more suitable for teaching music in their classes.

Procedure

Before the study commenced, approval for the survey to be conducted was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University. The IRB required that a recruitment email be sent to each participant in the study along with a consent form outlining the nature of

the study and the role of each participant. These documents were submitted to the IRB along with the survey questionnaire for vetting. An initial review of the documents was done and returned with suggestions on how to improve a few of the questions. Suggestions were also given to improve the quality of the consent form and the recruitment email. Corrections were made to all three documents and they were resent to the IRB for approval. Following the second submission, full approval was granted to conduct the study.

Information was then gathered from the MoEYI's website on the name and telephone numbers of all high schools within Kingston and St. Andrew. Following this, phone calls were made to the schools to inquire if music was taught as a subject and the grades in which it was taught. Schools that indicated there was a music program were asked to provide contact information for their music teachers. Some schools provided information for music teachers while others provided information for heads of department. Contact information for some of the music teachers was garnered through colleagues, and through personal interaction with some of the music teachers. All schools were not contacted within the same period, as some schools phone numbers were out of service. In this regard, these schools were visited to get more participants for the study.

Phone calls were made to the music teachers requesting their participation in the study using the information from the recruitment email as stipulated by the IRB. The music teachers were also asked to provide their email address. Following that, an email with a link to the survey questionnaire along with the consent form was sent to the participants. A few of the survey questionnaires along with the consent forms were hand-delivered. The consent form explained the process of the research, the role of the participants, their expectations, as well as information that was to safeguard against any unlawful use of data and to ensure confidentiality. The contact

information for the music teachers were not collected within the same time period, which resulted in surveys being sent at different intervals.

The music teachers were asked to complete the survey using the attached link in the email, sign, and return the consent forms. They were also notified that they could indicate a reluctance to continue with the survey if they so desired. All responses were returned within one month of issue.

Respondents' information was presented in a Google form by using a numbering system and percentage as a statistical tool. During the data collection process, the numbering system was also used to align data and identify emerging themes, especially from the written responses. Using a numbering system during the data collection process was also a way of safeguarding the participants and their institutions. After the data was collected, time was dedicated to interpret, analyze, and present the findings. Once all emerging themes were identified, the data was presented using tables and graphs. These tables and graphs were then interpreted and analyzed using inductive reasoning.

Participants

Participants for this study were selected using a “clustering sampling”⁷² technique. The sample comprised of music teachers from public high schools within Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica. These teachers have been teaching at the lower secondary level, grades seven to nine.

The region of Kingston and St. Andrew consists of forty public high schools. Together, these two parishes represent region one, the highest amount of secondary high schools in all six

⁷² John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, (2014). 204.

regions of Jamaica. Twenty-seven of the schools are located in Kingston. Out of this number, eleven of the schools are classified as secondary high while two are listed as technical high. The remaining twenty- seven schools are in St. Andrew. From this amount, twenty-six of the schools are classified as secondary high and one is listed as technical high. Twenty-four music teachers from twenty-two schools were sampled.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Of the forty public high schools in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica, thirty-five schools offered music as a subject. From the thirty-five schools, contact was made with twenty-six music teachers, and a survey questionnaire was sent out to all twenty-six music teachers. Twenty-four responses were obtained from teachers representing twenty-one of the thirty-five public high schools that had music as a curriculum subject. From the twenty-one schools, two schools had two music teachers whose responses were captured, resulting in the 24 responses.

Survey Results

Results from General Questions

Table 1 shows that 17, or 70.8% of the respondents were males, and seven, or 29.2% of the respondents were females. Ages of the respondents were distributed as follows: 29.2% were between 20-29 years, 29.2%, were between 30-39 years, 29.2% were between 40-49 years, and 12.5% were 50 years and over.

Table 1 also shows the length of time the respondents have been teaching. The teaching years of the respondents were distributed as follows: 25% have been teaching for one to five years, 25% have been teaching for six to ten years, 12.5% have been teaching for 11 to fifteen years, 12.5% have been teaching for 16 to 20 years, 25% have been teaching for over 20 years, and 50% have fewer than 11 years of teaching experience.

The respondents were asked to indicate their primary instrument. The principal instruments of the respondents were distributed as follows: 41.7% played the piano, 16.7% played electric bass or guitar, 33.3% said voice, 8.3% played a woodwind instrument, 8.3% played a percussion instrument, no one played brass, all respondents played another instrument

apart from their principal instrument, and one respondent indicated more than one principal instrument. These results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 also outlined the educational background of the respondents which are distributed as follows: 62.5% had a bachelor of music education degree, 0% had a bachelor of music in performance, 25% had a diploma in performance, 16.7% had Associates Board of Royal School of Music (ABRSM) certification, 8.3% had Trinity certification, 8.3% had instrumental teaching certification, and 20.8% had other certification.

Table 1. Music Teacher’s Personal Data

Personal Data	Number	Responses %
Gender		
Male	17	70.8
Female	7	29.2
Age		
20-29	7	29.2
30-39	7	29.2
40-49	7	29.2
50 and over	3	12.5
Year’s Teaching		
1-5 years	6	25.0
6-10 years	6	25.0
11-15 years	3	12.5
16-20 years	3	12.5
20 years and over	6	25.0

Table 1. continued

Table 1. Music Teacher's Personal Data

Personal Data	Number	Responses %
Primary Instrument		
Piano	10	41.7
Brass	0	0.0
Electric Bass/Guitar	4	16.7
Voice	8	33.3
Woodwind	2	8.3
Percussion	2	8.3
Plays Another Instrument		
Yes	24	100
No	0	0.0
Plays Another Instrument		
Yes	24	100
No	0	0.0
Qualification		
Bachelor of Music Education	15	62.5
Bachelor of Music in Performance	0	0.0
Diploma in Music Education	6	25.0
Diploma in Performance	2	8.3
ABRSM Certification	4	16.7
Trinity Certification	2	8.3
Certificate in Instrumental Teaching	2	8.3
Other	5	20.8
None	0	0.0

Table 2 consists of the data representing individual responses about the type of institution in which the teachers are employed. The responses are as follows: 12.5% taught in an all-boys institution, 12.5% taught in all-girls institution, and 70.8% taught in co-educational schools. Responses to the survey indicate that a greater amount of music teachers taught in a co-educational institution over an all-boys or all-girls.

The socio-economic background of the individual responses is also captured in Table 2. The responses are as follows: 25% taught in low-income schools, 12.5% taught in middle-income schools, 66.7% taught in mixed-income, and 0% taught in high-income schools. Responses to the survey indicate that a greater amount of music teachers taught in mixed-income schools over middle or low-income schools.

Table 2 also outlined the frequency of how the schools in which the music teachers are employed structure their music classes. The responses are as follows: 41.7% were structured around a yearly calendar, 50% had classes on a semester basis, and 8.3% had some other arrangements for how their classes were structured.

In Table 2, the weekly contact time of the respondents are displayed. One, or 4.16% of the respondents reported that the institution in which they are employed had music classes for thirty minutes per week, 29.2% had music classes for forty-five minutes per week, 45.8% had music classes one hour per week, 16.7% had music classes for one hour and twenty minutes per week, and 8.3% had class times that were different from thirty minutes, forty-five minutes, and one hour and thirty minutes per week.

Table 2 shows the responses qualifying the average size of music classes. The results are as follows: 37.5% of music classes had between 20 and 25 students, 12.5% of music classes had

between 26 and 30 students, 25% of music classes had between 31 and 35 students, 25% of music classes had between 26 and 40 students, and 4.16% of music classes had over 40 students.

Table 2 outlined the results for responses relating to the grades in which music is taught at the lower secondary level. The responses are as follows: 50% of teachers taught music in grades seven to nine, 20.8% taught music in grades seven and eight, 4.2% taught music in grades eight and nine, 12.5% taught music in grade seven only, and 12.5% taught music in grades seven and nine.

Table 2 also shows the category of the schools in which the music teachers were employed. The results are as follows: 37.5% of schools are traditional high, and 62.5% of schools are non-traditional. There were no other high schools captured in the data.

Table 2. Responses for Institutional Data

Institutional Data	Number	Responses %
Types of School		
All boys	3	12.5
All girls	4	16.7
Co-educational	17	70.8
Socio-economic Background		
Low Income	6	25.0
Middle Income	3	12.5
Mixed Income	16	66.7
High Income	0	0.0
Frequency of Classes		
Yearly	10	41.
One Semester/Term	12	50.0
Other	2.0	8.3
Weekly contact time		
30 Minutes	1	4.2
45 Minutes	7	29.2
1 hour	11	45.8
1 hour and 20 minutes	4	16.7
Other	2	8.3

Table 2. continued

Table 2. Responses for Institutional Data

Institutional Data	Number	Responses %
Average Class Size		
20-25 students	9	37.5
26-30 students	3	12.5
31-35 students	6	25.0
36-40 students	6	25.0
Over 40 students	1	4.2
Grades in which music is taught		
Grade 7 to 9	12	50.0
Grade 7 and 8	5	20.8
Grade 8 and 9	1	4.2
Grade 7 only	3	12.5
Grade 7 and 9	3	12.5
Category of School		
Traditional High	9	37.5
Non-Traditional	15	62.5
Other	0	0.0

Survey Results for Research Question One

Figure 4.1 shows the response data from the music teachers as to whether or not they attended the required NSC training sessions offered by the MoEYI. Thirteen, or 54.2% of the respondents, indicated that they attended the required training while 11, or 45.8% of the respondents, did not attend the required training conducted by the MoEYI.

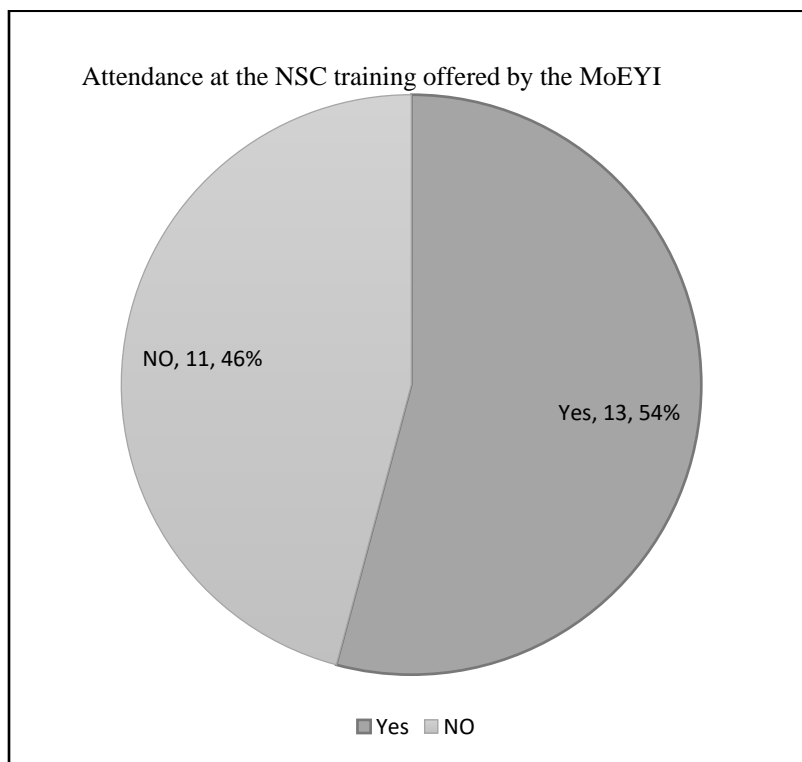


Figure 4.1. Attendance at NSC Training.

The music teachers were asked if they were familiar with the content, strands and attainment targets of the NSC. The results are as follows: 20.8% strongly agreed, 79.2% agreed, and 0% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The results of the responses are highlighted in figure 4.2.

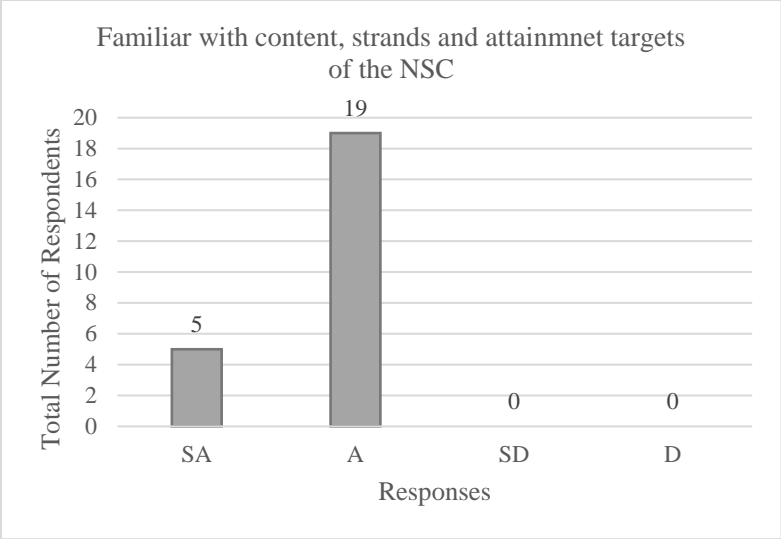


Figure 4.2. Familiar with content, strands and attainment target.

The respondents were asked to state whether there is a copy of the NSC at the institution in which they were employed for their use. The results are as follows: 58.3% strongly agreed, 33.3% agreed, 4.2% strongly disagreed, and 4.2% disagreed. The results are shown in figure 4.3.

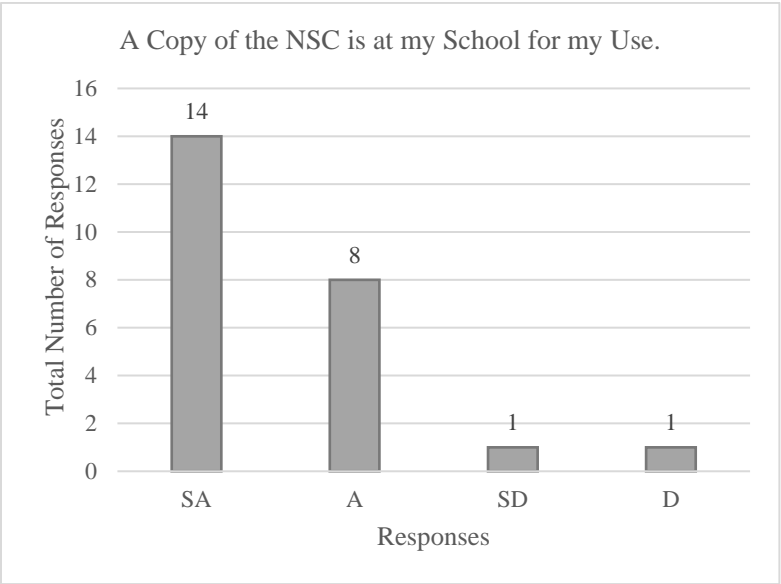


Figure 4.3. Copy of the NSC.

The respondents were asked to indicate if their own music education/tutelage prepared them to understand and appreciate the NSC. The results are as follows: 21.9% strongly agreed, 54.2% agreed, 0% strongly disagreed, and 16.7% disagreed. The details of the respondents are shown in figure 4.4.

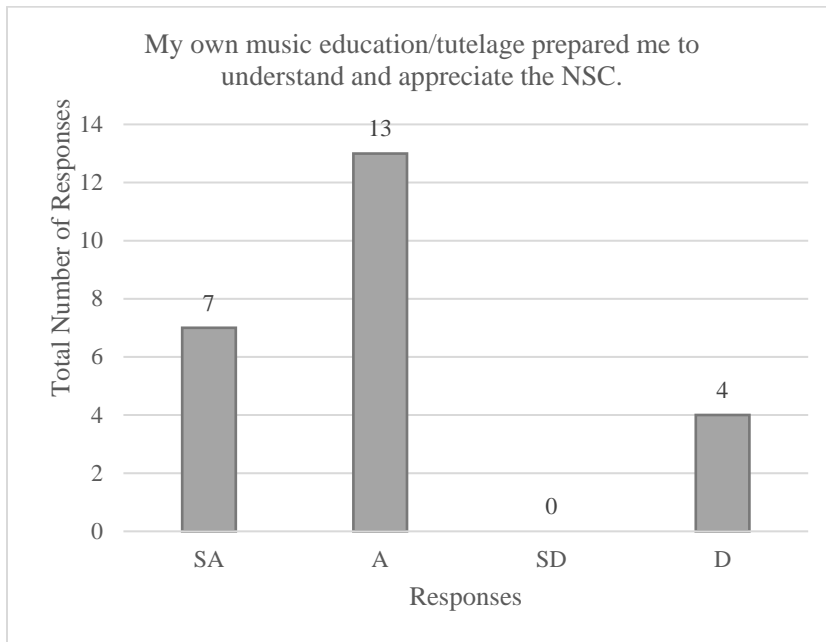


Figure 4.4. Education/tutelage preparation to understand and appreciate NSC.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they feel comfortable using the NSC as the main guide in planning their music lessons. The results are as follows: 8.3% strongly agreed, 54.2% agreed, 8.3% strongly disagreed, and 29.2% disagreed. The results are shown in figure 4.5.

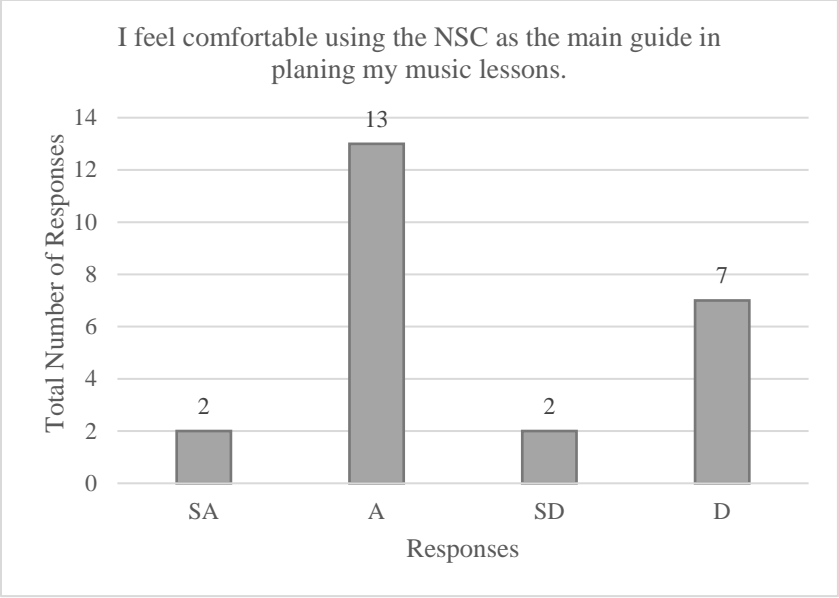


Figure 4.5. Comfortable using NSC as the main guide to plan.

Respondents were asked to indicate if the National Standards Curriculum were used in lesson planning within the previous two years. The results are as follows: 4.2% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 8.3% strongly disagreed, and 37.5% disagreed. The results are shown in figure 4.6.

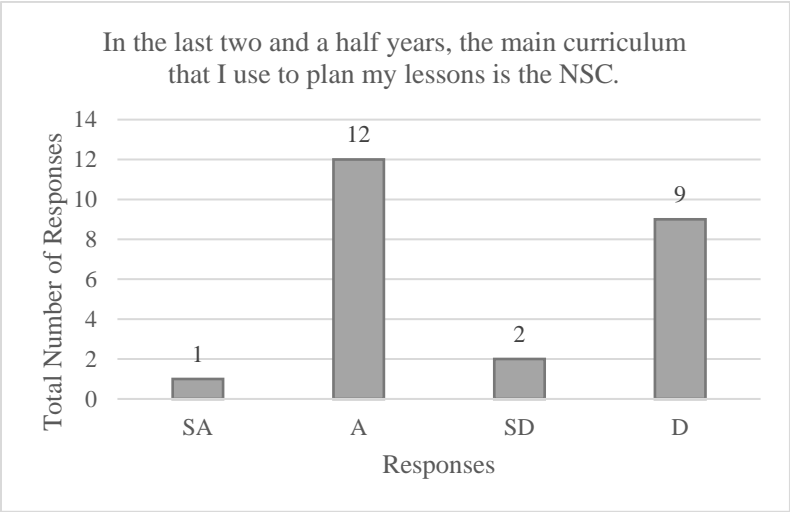


Figure 4.6. Main curriculum to plan lessons.

The respondents were asked to indicate if they feel comfortable implementing all the standards in the NSC. The responses are as follows: 4.2% strongly agreed, 58.3% agreed, 8.3% strongly disagreed, and 29.2% disagreed. The results are shown in figure 4.7.

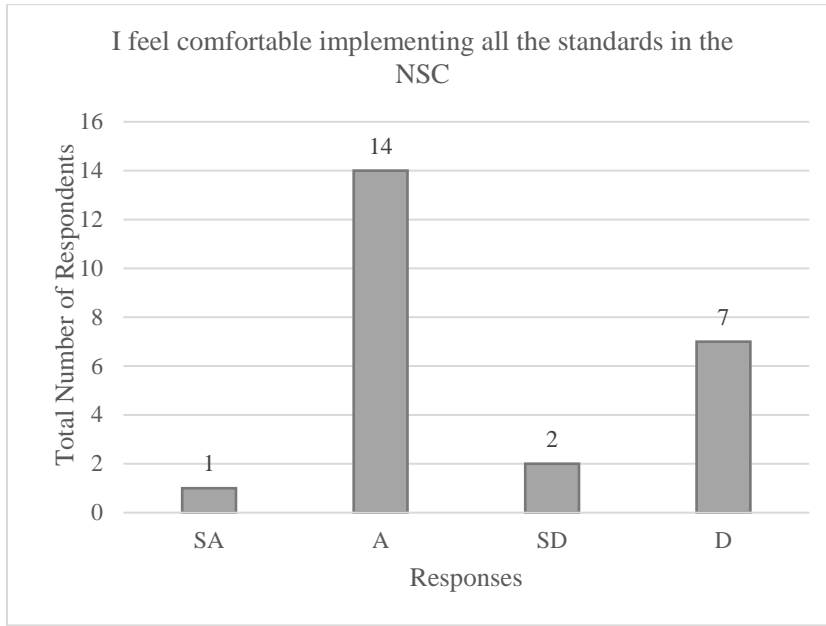


Figure 4.7. Comfort implementing all the standards in the NSC.

Results for Research Question Two

Figure 4.8 shows the responses for the respondents' belief about the suitability of the NSC for the Jamaican classroom. The results are as follows: 8.3% strongly agreed, 66.7% agreed, 8.3% strongly disagreed, and 17.7% disagreed.

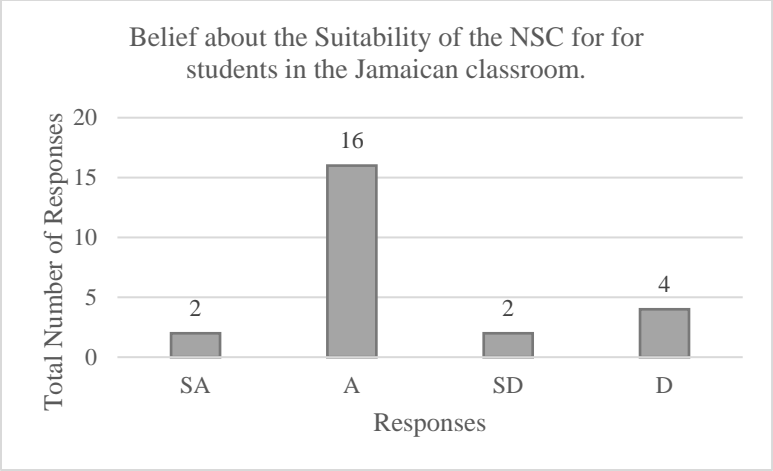


Figure 4.8. Belief about the NSC.

The respondents were asked to indicate if their schools have the required physical, monetary and human resources to teach the standards in the NSC. The results are as follows: 8.3% strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed, 17.7% strongly disagreed, and 37.5% disagreed. The results are shown in figure 4.9.

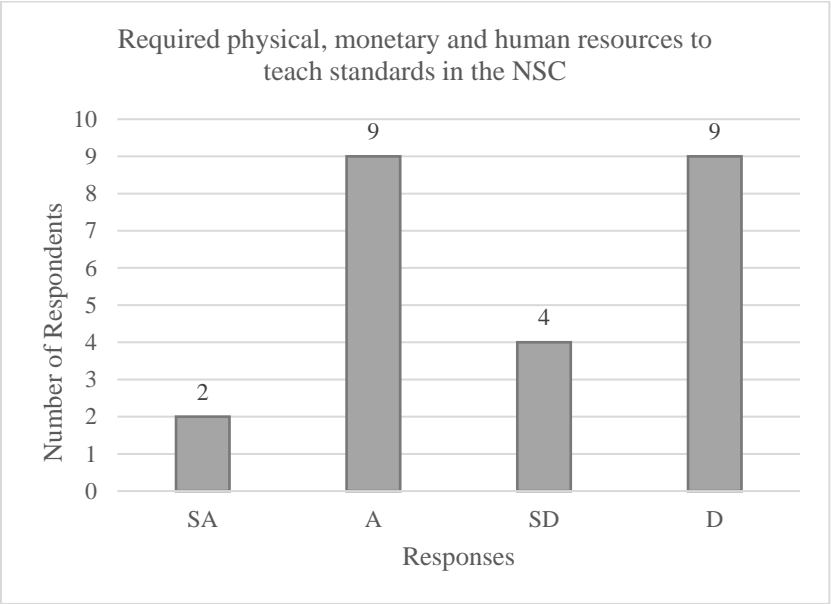


Figure 4.9. Physical, monetary and human resources.

Figure 4.10 shows the respondents' responses to whether or not the standards in NSC are relevant for the Jamaican classroom. The results are as follows: 8.3% strongly agreed, 79.2% agreed, 0% strongly disagreed, and 12.5% disagreed.

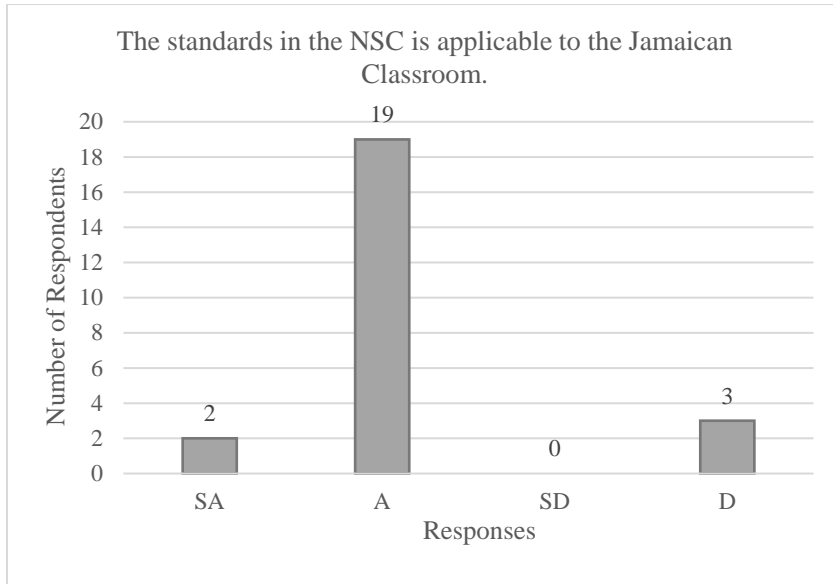


Figure 4.10 Applicability of the standards in the NSC for the Jamaican Classroom.

Figure 4.11 shows the results for the respondents' responses as to whether or not the duration of each class is sufficient to cover the content stipulated for each grade. The results are as follows: 17.7 % strongly agreed, 29.2% agreed, 20.8% strongly disagreed, 33.3% disagreed. Based on the data, the respondents are closely divided in their responses with a difference of 8.2% between those in agreement and those in disagreement with the duration of each class being sufficient to cover the stipulated content for each grade.

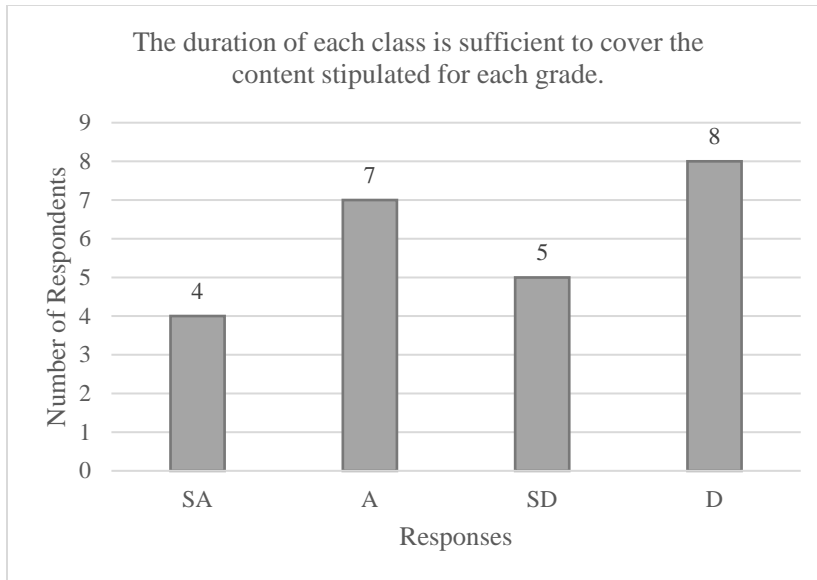


Figure 4.11. Duration of class sufficient for content.

Figure 4.12 shows the respondents' response to whether or not the content stipulated in the NSC is appropriate for each grade level. The results are as follows: 12.5% strongly agreed, 58.3% agreed, 8.3% strongly disagreed and 20.8% disagreed.

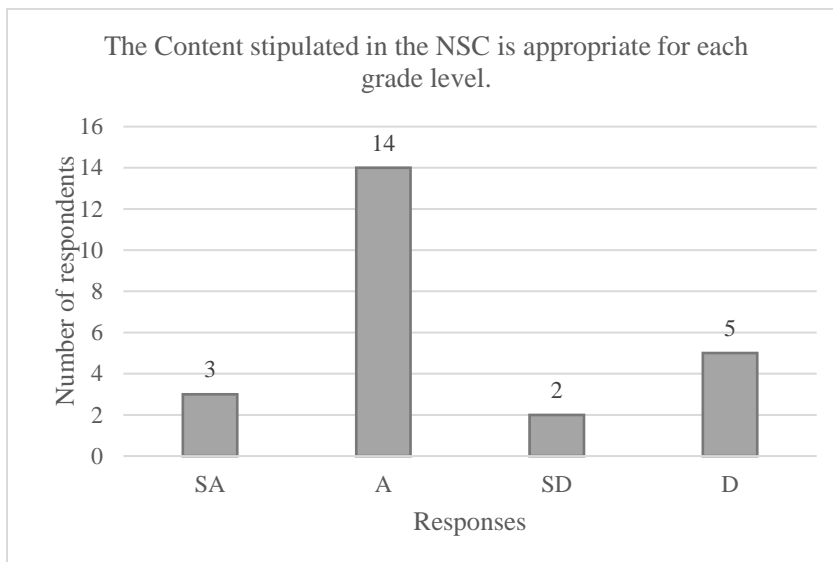


Figure 4.12 Content stipulated in the NSC is appropriate for each grade level.

Results for Research Question Three

Figure 4.13 shows the respondents' responses as to their ability to interpret the layout of the NSC without much difficulty. The results are as follows: 12.5% strongly agreed 58.3% agreed, 8.3% strongly disagreed and 29.2% disagreed. From a total of twenty-four respondents, twenty-six responses were given, with two respondents indicating more than one response for the same question that was intended to capture this data.

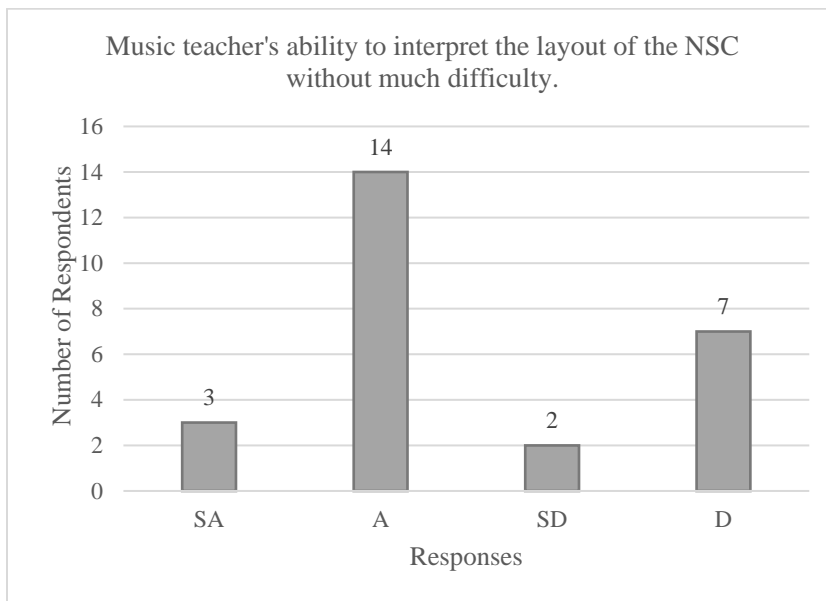


Figure 4.13. Music teachers' ability to interpret the layout of the NSC.

Figure 4.14 shows the respondents' responses as to their ability to interpret, and implement the content of the NSC without much difficulty. The results are as follows: 8.3% strongly agreed, 66.7% agreed, 4.2% strongly disagreed, and 20.8% disagreed. Compared to those respondents who indicated that they either strongly agreed or disagreed there were 75% more respondents, who either strongly agreed or agreed that they were able to interpret and implement the content of the NSC without much difficulty.

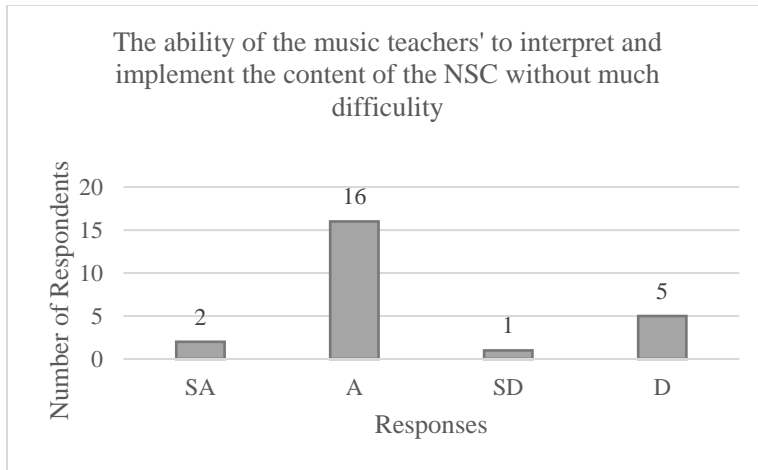


Figure 4.14 Music teachers' ability to interpret and implement the content of the NSC.

Figure 4.15 shows the results of the responses of the music teachers' ability to apply and interpret the different strands the National Standards Curriculum while teaching. The results are as follows. 16.7% strongly agreed, 54.2% agreed, 0% strongly disagreed, 29.2% of the disagreed. The percentage of the respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed that they had the ability to apply and interpret the different strands in the NSC while teaching is 70.9% higher than those respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed.

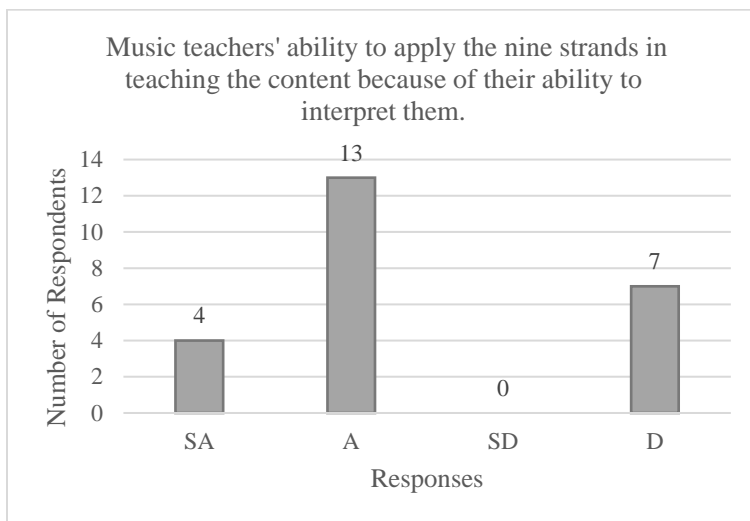


Figure 4.15. Teachers' ability to apply the nine strands in teaching content.

Figure 4.16 shows the respondents' responses for the implementation of the three attainment targets namely: performing, listening, and composing. The results are as follows: 25% strongly agreed, 58.3% agreed, 0% strongly disagreed, and 16.7% disagreed. The percentage of the respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed are 83.3% more than those respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed.

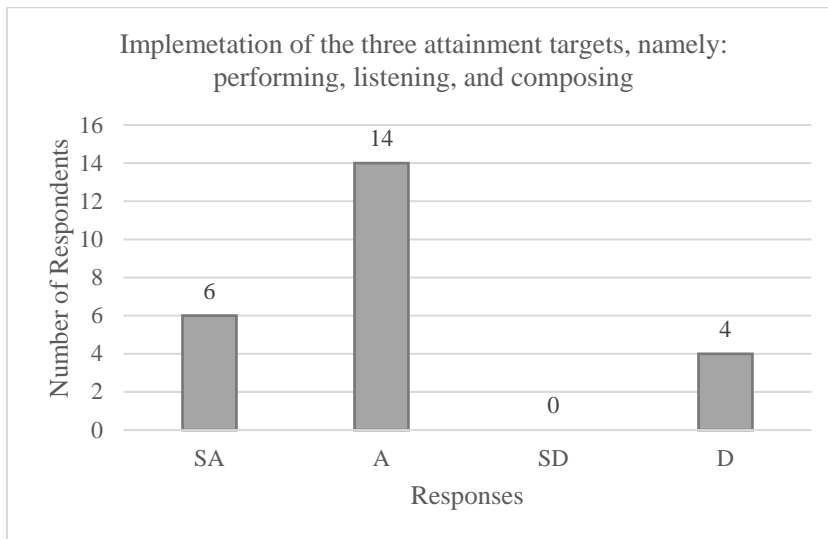


Figure 4.16 Implementation of the three attainment targets for all lessons.

Other Findings

Question 30 sought to get written responses from the respondents as to the recommendations they would consider to make the NSC more suitable for teaching their music classes. The respondents were limited to a maximum of five responses, but some did not provide up to that amount. The results are shown in figure 4.17 and are grouped into six themes: curriculum reformation, adequate resources, readiness of students, teacher preparation, teaching and learning environment, and arts integration.

Curriculum reformation was mentioned twenty-eight times as an area that needed attention which would make the curriculum more suitable for teaching music classes. The recommendations for this area include: sample lesson plans covering selected topics, sample class activities, updated repertoire, practical ways of approaching teaching some concepts, advancement in technology, all music classes being held for the same duration, an increase in class duration, the inclusion of more Jamaican folk and popular music, notation of folk material, a focus on aural training, clearer musical concepts, a list of topics for each grade level, and the use of terminologies that can be easily understood in the Jamaican culture. Respondent three mentioned regional and external exam preparation as a recommendation. According to respondent three, “Have somewhere in the entire system the possibility for students to be able to either choose CSEC, ABRSM or Trinity Exams.”

An area of concern for the respondents is adequate resources. Some of the recommendations include: provide assistance for teachers who have large practical classes, provide musical equipment, provide sufficient number of instruments for students, and make or provide better funding for classroom instruments and partnership with parents. The readiness of students to undertake studies using the NSC curriculum was another area of concern. Some of the recommendations include: implementing a similar curriculum at the prep and primary level which would address the prior knowledge requirements, and assigning trained music teachers at the early childhood level which would help to lay the foundation.

Another area of concern for the respondents was teacher preparation. Some of the recommendations are: the provision of workshops, limiting the daily non-essential music activities for teachers, provide more training sessions for music teachers, involving music teachers in the decision-making process, and allowing music teachers to provide feedback.

Teaching and learning environment is another area of concern. The recommendation is to make the teaching and learning environment more conducive with better infrastructure. Arts integration was mentioned only once and recommended the inclusion of other art forms in the curriculum.

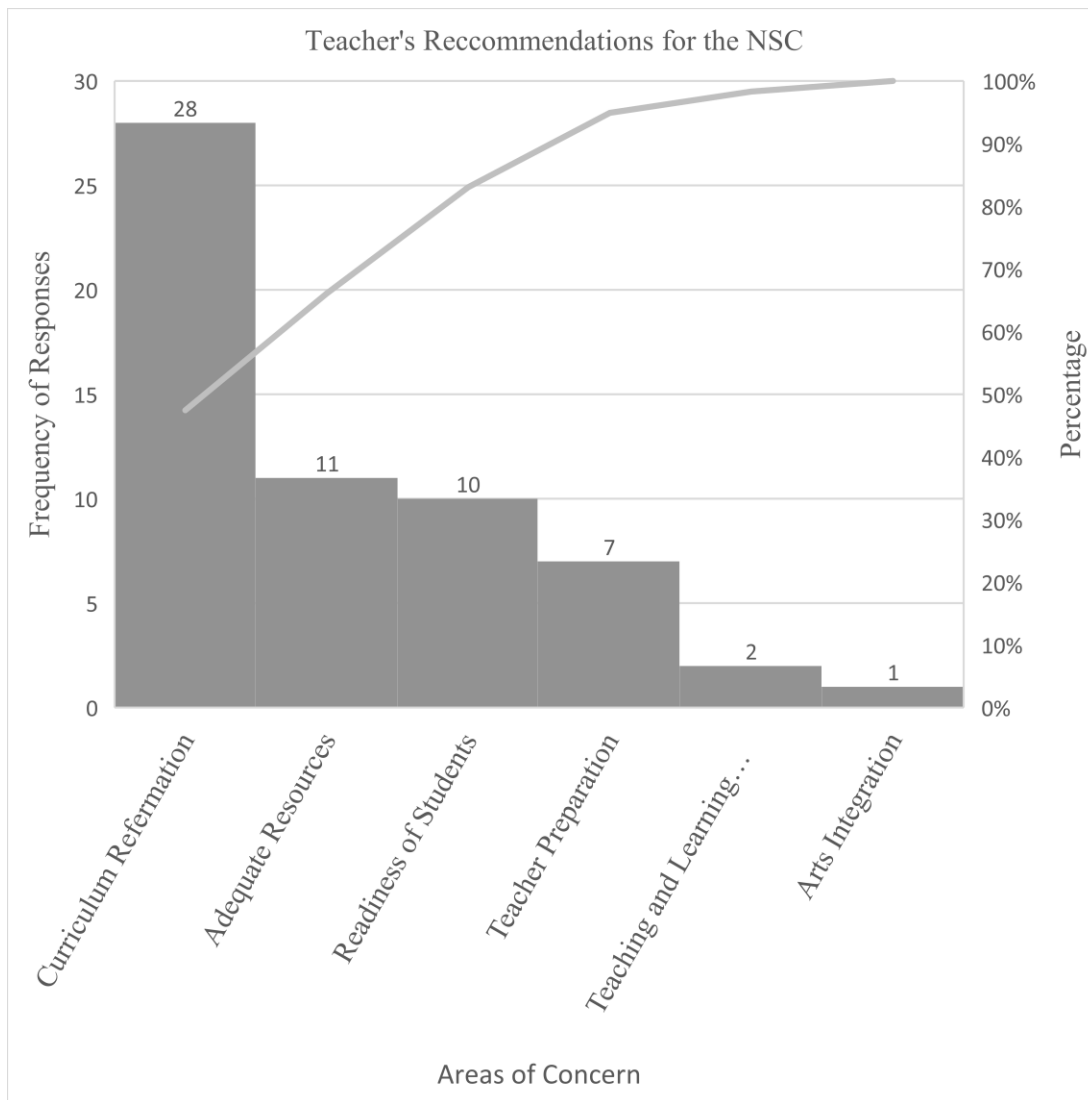


Figure 4.17. Music teacher’s recommendations

Summary of Results

The study utilized a survey methodology to gather and collate the data. From the data, more males than females took part in the survey. The standard deviation of males to females is 10 or 41.6%. The number of respondents who are between the ages of 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 are the same. Each of these groups constitutes seven or 29.2% of respondents. Persons 50 years and older are least represented in the survey. The primary instrument of choice for most of the respondents is piano followed by the voice. Woodwind and percussion are the two least represented instruments. Even with most of the respondents indicating that their primary instrument is the piano, all of the respondents indicated that apart from their primary instrument, they play another instrument.

Certification appears to play a role in the respondents' ability to use the NSC curriculum. From the results, more than half of the respondents who indicated that they are prepared to teach music possess a degree or diploma in music education. The other forms of certification indicated by 20.8% of the respondents could represent some higher degree or educational certification outside of music education. In addition, some of the respondents who indicated that they have Trinity or ABRSM certification could mean they possess more than one type of certification as the results showed more types of certification than respondents. The results showed a disparity in the grades in which music is offered at the lower secondary level. Despite the difference, there were more respondents who indicated that music is being taught in grades 7 to 9 while there were other variations.

A disparity exists between the responses with the average class size, the weekly contact time per class, and the structure of the music classes. There is a split in the responses between the persons who teach small to medium size classes and those who teach large classes. Despite this

imbalance, one respondent indicated that the institution in which they are employed has very large class sizes for music. One hour stood out as the allotted time that is most prevalent for classes as indicated by a little less than half of the respondents. More than half of the respondents indicated other duration less than one hour or a little over one hour of contact time for classes. The respondents indicated that most of the music classes are either structured around a yearly academic calendar or on a semester/term basis. Outside of the norm of a yearly or semester/term structure, two respondents indicated that there are some other structures that exist in their institution.

The survey revealed that there are more co-educational schools than all-boys or all-girls, and there are more schools with a mixed socio-economic background than middle or high income.

Music teachers' who teach at the lower secondary level attitudes towards the NSC varies. The percentage of teachers who indicated that they attended the NSC sessions offered by the Ministry of Education is 9.2% more than those who indicated that they did not attend the training sessions. Over 70% of the music teachers indicate a strong response in agreement rather than strongly agreeing with their familiarity with the content, strands and attainment targets of the NSC. Majority of the respondents indicated that there was a copy of the NSC at their school for their use. However, there were a few respondents who strongly disagree or disagree that there is an available copy of the NSC at their school.

The number of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed that their own music education/tutelage prepared them to understand and appreciate the NSC far outweighed those that either strongly disagreed or disagreed by 83.4%. No variation exists in the 8.3% of respondents who strongly agreed and those that strongly disagreed that they feel comfortable

using the NSC as the main guide in planning their lessons. However, a 25% difference exists between the respondents who agreed and those who disagreed that they feel comfortable using the NSC as the main guide in planning their lessons. Despite this difference, more respondents strongly agreed or agreed than those who strongly disagreed or disagreed that they feel comfortable using the NSC as the main guide in planning their lessons.

As it relates to using the NSC as the main curriculum in planning music lessons in the last two and half years, the disparity between the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to those respondents who strongly disagreed or agreed remains at 9.2%. There are 25% more of the respondents who strongly agreed or agreed than those who strongly disagree or disagree that they feel comfortable implementing all the standards in the NSC.

Research question one was intended to ascertain the main attitudes of lower secondary school's music teachers in Jamaica towards the music syllabus in the NSC. From the results, the teachers responded both favorable and unfavorable to the questions, resulting in both positive and negative attitudes. Nevertheless, more teachers responded favorable than those who responded unfavorable. One of the highlights, is the confidence with which the respondents indicate that their own music education formation has helped them to understand and appreciate the NSC.

The current study also sought to find out how suitable the NSC is for the Jamaican classroom. Based on the responses, the views were mixed. 75% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the NSC is suited for the students they teach. More than half of the respondents who indicated that the NSC is appropriately suited for the students they teach, gravitate more towards agreement. The remaining 25% either strongly disagreed or disagreed that NSC is suited for the students they teach. There is a stronger percentage of respondents who

disagreed than those who strongly disagreed that the NSC is appropriately suited for the students they teach. To make the NSC more suitable for the Jamaican classroom, the respondents spoke of the prior knowledge that the students are to have before they start to engage with the NSC, which was captured under curriculum reform. The respondents felt that a smooth transition of knowledge would take into consideration the implementation of a similar curriculum at the pre-primary, and prep/primary level.

Resources can play a critical role in the successful running of any music program. The results showed that the same number of respondents who agreed that their schools have the physical, monetary and human resources that are required to teach the students are the same number of respondents who disagreed. However, the number of respondents who strongly disagreed are greater than those who strongly agreed by 8.4%. Such difference would mean that there are more respondents who disagreed that their schools have the personnel, the money and the infrastructure to teach the required standards in the NSC than those who agreed. As a parallel to the disagreement, recommendations made by the respondents show that resources; whether physical, human or monetary, is a disturbing factor for some of the respondents. Resources came out as the second highest theme with eleven occurrences. Teachers who indicated that they teach in low-income schools may have a problem accessing resources.

Time allotted for content delivery determines the quality and the quantity of work to be covered by both teacher and student. There are 8.3% more respondents who either strongly disagreed or disagreed than those who strongly agreed or agreed that the duration of each class is sufficient to cover the stipulated content for each grade at the schools where they are employed. There is a strong correlation between the respondents who specified that their class time is less than one hour per week to those who disagreed that the time stipulated for each class is sufficient

to cover content for each grade level. Standardizing class duration for all schools was one of the recommendations made by some of the teachers that suggested curriculum reformation.

While there are 29.1% of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the content stipulated for the NSC is appropriate for each grade level, a little over 70% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the content stipulated in the NSC is appropriate for each grade level. Even though there is a greater percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the content stipulated in the NSC is appropriate for each grade level, the number of respondents who disagreed could impact content delivery.

The survey revealed that 87.5 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the standards in the NSC are applicable to the Jamaican classroom. The remaining 12.5% of the respondents only disagreed that the standards in the NSC are applicable to the Jamaican classroom. The standards represent the core of the curriculum as it specifies and frames the skills and the knowledge the students are to acquire.

Research question three sought to find out what aspects of the NSC music teachers are able to interpret and implement. While the difference in responses is mixed between those who agreed or strongly agreed and those who strongly disagreed and disagreed with interpreting the strands, content, layout, and attainment targets of the NSC, those who agreed with the aspects of the NSC far outweighed those respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Given that the combined percentage of agreement for all areas of interpretation and implementation is above 70%, there are more respondents who are comfortable with interpreting and implementing content, strands, layout, and apply attainment targets, compared to those respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Despite the high percentage of respondents who indicate their ability to interpret and implement the various aspects of the NSC,

there were some recommendations made towards improving the language used in the NSC, giving clearer outlines and clearer sample plans. These recommendations were themed under curriculum reform.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Given the nature of the NSC as a relatively new curriculum, all implementation and usage could benefit from music teachers' attendance at training sessions conducted by the MoEYI. There can be alternative arrangements and workshops made for those teachers who do not form a part of the initial training for the new curriculum that give access to further national standards training. Ongoing training would ensure that teachers who are new to the system could benefit from this approach.

Recommendations by the music teachers suggest that the students they instruct do not possess the prerequisite knowledge to embrace learning at the lower secondary level. Having a curriculum that provides for foundational knowledge and skills in music before the students attend high school, could help to bridge the gap between what the students are to know and what the teachers are to teach. Colleges and universities may consider introducing programs to educate potential music teachers who would be equipped to administer the curriculum in an effective manner to students at the pre-primary, preparatory, and primary levels. Additionally, the MoEYI could consider extending the NSC curriculum to the pre-primary and lower primary levels grades one to three, using a similar format. Having proficient teachers and a progressive curriculum at these levels could facilitate a sequential development in music that may help to sustain music education in Kingston and St. Andrew and in Jamaica as a whole.

Results from the survey indicate that music teachers agreed that teacher preparation programs are doing a good job at educating music teachers for the classroom. However, results from the survey also indicate that 16.7% of respondents were dissatisfied with how they were

prepared to teach. This could be influenced by a more specific look at the educational level of music teachers surveyed.

Seemingly, more music teachers are open to using the NSC as the main guide to plan their lessons than those who are reluctant. Even though the data shows that more music teachers are comfortable using the NSC as the main guide to plan their lessons, the data gives an indication to curriculum implementers that more work is needed to ensure greater usage of the new curriculum.

In analyzing both the data relating to music teachers comfort where 62.5% of the music teaches are comfortable using the NSC to plan their lessons, and the data where 54.2% of music teachers agreed to using the NSC as the main guide to plan their lessons within the last two and a half years, it may appear that not all music teachers are using the NSC. If teachers use other resources to form their lesson plans, they may omit topics or teach content outside of the NSC, and could cause inconsistencies in content delivery among music teachers at the lower secondary level, and affects student's ability to hone the same skills and language associated with music. Therefore, the MoEYI may consider measures to insist that teachers use the NSC on a consistent basis. Curriculum implementation team could also insist that the NSC is utilized regularly as this could increase teachers comfort in handling the curriculum. A strong relationship exists between the data relating to duration of each class being sufficient to cover stipulated content, and the data for appropriate content for each grade level.

Poor allocation of contact hours for the teaching of music may affect the quality of the activities designed for teaching and learning, and the development of students as the time is not uniform. Having the right content, but not enough time to teach, means being selective of the topics taught in the classroom. Given the information, some of the respondents could have a

challenge completing the content for each grade, which could mean carrying over content from previous week to other weeks, and ultimately not finishing the units for a grade level. Teachers and students who find themselves into this situation could consistently be battling to make up for lost time, thus affecting the quality of the teaching and learning situation. As a result, more emphasis may be placed on trying to complete the syllabus rather than making music.

The respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed that they feel comfortable implementing all the standards in the NSC are 62.5%. These sets of music teachers are facilitating students' musical experiences through various mediums and are fulfilling the mandate of the NSC. On the contrary, the 37.5% of music teachers who indicated that they either strongly disagreed or disagreed in implementing all the standards may not be complying with the mandate, and the standards of the NSC. Considering that all music teachers are not comfortable implementing all the standards, this could lead to inconsistencies with the musical experience of all students at the lower secondary level.

Most of the music teachers are confident in their ability to interpret and apply aspects of the NSC without much difficulty. Such confidence is good, and may give music teachers' more time to concentrate on delivery and assessment. However, when music teachers believe that they could benefit from more detailed lesson plan outlines, sample lesson plans, and language that takes into consideration the culture, their ability to interpret the NSC become counterproductive. As such, an addendum with sample lesson plans could be issued to schools so that music teachers can access them. Music teachers could also benefit from continuous workshops that might aid in this regard. The workshop could also be beneficial to the small percentage of music teachers who either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they are able to interpret the layout of the NSC without much difficulty.

From the data of 75% of respondents approving the suitability of the NSC as appropriate for their students in the Jamaican classroom, the NSC has some merit. However, it is questionable whether or not the curriculum is suitable within itself, or when compared to other curricula.

Considering that 87.5% of the respondents agreed that the standards in the NSC are applicable to the Jamaican classroom, they are agreeing that the NSC is properly designed for the Jamaican context. Although there is a large number of respondents who are in agreement that the standards are applicable to the Jamaican classroom, there remains 12.5% of respondents who are not in agreement that the standards of the NSC are applicable to the Jamaican classroom. The respondents who are not in agreement that the standards in the NSC are applicable to the Jamaican classroom, may not be fully knowledgeable of the nuances of the NSC. With the majority of the respondents agreeing that the standards in the NSC are applicable to the Jamaican classroom, it suggests that teachers are comfortable with the skills and the knowledge the students are to acquire.

The survey indicates that reform is needed in the music education system at the lower secondary level. There is the belief that the duration for music classes should be the same in all schools, and could be extended beyond one hour. The MoEYI could consider monitoring schools' program especially music classes to ensure that all music teachers are given the same allotted time in which music is to be taught, or they could mandate high school principals to allow all music classes to be held for the same duration. A mandate coming from the MoEYI could help to regulate the functioning of music classes.

Some of the music teachers who participated in the survey seem to be working in isolation of any regulating body. An organization that facilitates, encourages, and monitors the

use of the NSC could provide resources to teachers, explore avenues for them to adopt, and create ingenious ways to make the curriculum effective for the students. Creating an organization could also generate a database of resource personnel on whom music teachers could rely for assistance if needed. The teachers who stated that they teach in low-income schools could most benefit from such an organization to give access to the sharing of resources such as instruments that are needed to facilitate the implementation of the NSC. Forming the group may result in a professional association which could encourage and reenergize teachers through continuous developmental seminars.

Teaching music from a practical standpoint needs resources. Some of the music teachers felt that this is an area that requires attention in their particular institution. The NSC outlines the necessary use of instruments and without them, it makes using the NSC challenging to implement. Moreover, without the instruments, the students may not acquire the full experience of how music functions within society. These teachers would therefore have to adopt and create ingenious ways to make the curriculum effective for the students.

Music teachers are also open to explore concepts directly related to Jamaican indigenous music. Content, and specifically the inclusion of Jamaican pop and folk music, was one of the areas cited as a suggestion that would improve the NSC with curriculum reform. A review of the curriculum could be explored, and could involve more music teachers who are directly working at the lower secondary level.

The results show that the responses for questions related to research question three shows that a larger number of music teachers are more comfortable with interpretation and implementation. However, the strongly agreed responses outweighed the ones that agreed. A greater percentage of strongly agreed responses, would indicate a greater ability to apply and

interpret without much difficulty. Therefore, the music teachers who fall within the agreed category are just okay rather than very comfortable with interpretation and implementation.

In Conclusion, the results from research question one show that most of the music teachers at the lower secondary level in Kingston and St. Andrew are positively predisposed towards the use of the NSC. All of the questions that were designed to assess the attitudes of the music teachers showed more positive responses than negative. While a new-found expectation among the music teachers exists, not all music teachers agreed that they have access to the NSC. Any disagreement about accessing the NSC presents the perfect situation for informal practices to develop. These practices may include; teaching content that are unrelated to what is stipulated in the NSC, conducting assessments that are arbitrary, paying little attention to content, and not having a projection of how to take the students from one grade level to the next.

Research question two revealed mixed opinions from the music teachers about the suitability of the NSC. Out of five questions designed to assess the suitability of the NSC, the responses revealed that three questions had more music teachers agreeing than disagreeing while two questions had more music teachers disagreeing than agreeing to the statements or questions. These questions or statements that had more music teachers agreeing are the ones that dealt with the suitability of the NSC for the Jamaican students, the applicability of the standards for the Jamaica classroom and the appropriateness of the content for each grade level. Once music teachers are optimistic about the details and requirements of the content in the NSC, they can now prepare to meet the needs of the students. More time can be spent on planning and implementing the content. Where the music teachers disagreed, they believed that they could benefit from extended teaching hours. Furthermore, the music teachers believed that the required physical, monetary and human resources to teach their classes are insufficient. Given the split

results from the questions that were geared to answer research question two, it can be concluded that the NSC is suitable for the Jamaican classroom.

The results from research question three show a greater percentage of music teachers who are able to interpret and apply aspects of the NSC without much difficulty. Even though more of the music teachers indicated a greater ability to interpret and apply aspects of the NSC without much difficulty, it can be stated that results are not homogeneous for all the responses.

Additionally, there are mixed opinions about the suitability of the NSC for the classroom. Music teachers felt that the NSC would be better suited for the lower secondary level, providing that there are foundational studies in music before the students get to high school. The music education officer in Jamaica along with the curriculum implementation team, can put measures in place to allow all music teachers to be confident in their ability to interpret and implement aspects of the NSC without much difficulty. Any form of solution would allow those music teachers who have limited challenges with interpretation and implementation to have greater comfort levels, and those music teachers who are not at all comfortable to increase their comfort level, as the lack thereof affects meeting the needs of the students.

The NSC was developed to ensure music teaching and learning is delivered sequentially. Music teachers are educated specialists with the ability to employ pedagogical skills needed to craft lessons to accommodate students with varying needs and abilities. They should be able to implement the NSC utilizing experience and training. Any deviation from the designed content in the curriculum presents challenges for the education system in Kingston and St. Andrew.

Relationship of the Results to the Literature Review

Sixty-two percent of the respondents are comfortable using the NSC as the main guide to plan their lessons. Additionally, 54% of the respondents stated that within the last two and a half years, they used the NSC as the main guide in planning their lessons. The Barclay study conducted with a group of elementary music teachers on their attitudes and practices intended to evaluate the national standards, also found that numerous music educators currently utilize the national standards for instructing their students. The 46% of music teachers who did not agree that they only use the NSC as the main guide in planning their lessons within the last two and a half years, is supported by the current music education officer in Jamaica whose assessment found that some music teachers use other sources to plan their lessons because of the approach of the NSC.

The Byo study found that music teachers have a challenge implementing the national standards due to lack of resources and inadequate time. Similar to the Byo study, more than 50% of the music teachers in the current study either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their institution has the physical, monetary, and human resources required to teach the standards in the NSC. In addition to the lack of resources, more than 50% of music teachers reported that the time duration stipulated to teach the content for each class is insufficient. In addition to the Byo study, the Zhuo study, indicates a lack of teaching equipment and insufficient school support affected their capacities to implement the syllabi as expected.

The current study found that 75% of music teachers believe that the NSC is suited for the Jamaican classroom. Another 87.5% of music teachers believe that the standards are applicable, and 71% believe that the content is appropriate for each grade level. Information presented in the

current study is supported by the Zhuo study in which the music teachers felt that the curriculum was fitted for the age group, and developed in a manner to address psychological development.

In the current study, the music teachers believe that in order for the NSC to be effective in its fullest sense, students should acquire prior knowledge to be able to take on the rigors of the curriculum. An article in the Jamaica Observer supports this finding, where the writer noticed that teaching styles were affected at the primary level because students had no previous encounter with music.

Limitations

Contacting the participants for the study proved challenging. Some of the schools' telephone numbers were not working and even the ones that were functioning, there were no direct contact for some of the teachers, as they were working from home. Emails or telephone numbers were provided for some of the music teachers or their supervisors. However, none of the recruiters responded to the recruitment emails sent. Other attempts were made to contact more recruiters by visiting their place of employment. Emails and telephone numbers were also given for either the music teachers or their supervisors. Without a direct telephone call to the music teachers, there were no responses. The lack of access affected having a larger number of participants for the study. This lack of access did not prevent me from following through with the proposed method. Additional methods of data collection such as field observation, and/or personal interviews were considered, but the new dispensation under which the study was conducted required limited contact with people, and as such no other methods could be accommodated.

Signing the PDF consent form was an issue for some of the respondents. Some of the respondents had some difficulty manipulating a PDF document. There were others who did not have an electronic signature. There was technical incompetence with some of the respondents. In this regard, the form was resaved in Microsoft word, and redistributed to the recruiters. Another challenge experienced by the researcher was software compatibility with the survey. When the researcher sent out the first set of survey questionnaires using an interactive form in Microsoft word, the respondents were unable to manipulate the document, even having conducted a trial run prior to administering the final document. Given the situation, the survey was redone using google forms, and some were hand delivered at the request of the participants. This issue prevented the survey from being distributed in the planned time frame.

One of the biggest limitations to this study was collecting the data in a timely manner. Coordinating and working with people's time proves challenging. There were constant reminders to some of the participants via telephone calls, WhatsApp messages or emails to complete the survey. Some would complete the survey without signing the consent form. Other reminders with instructions on how to complete the consent forms were given to these participants either by telephone calls, WhatsApp messages, or emails. As a result of this, the data collection process was extended from two weeks to one month.

Given the scope of the methodology in that, there was only one instrument that was utilized in the data collection process, some respondents did not react as expected, and the quantity and quality of responses were restricted. Follow-up questions were needed to provide more indebt data and enhance the quality of the analysis especially as it relates to assessments practices.

Kingston and St. Andrew represent the biggest region in Jamaica and have the most secondary high schools. Despite this, the sample population did not necessarily reflect the general population of all high schools in Jamaica. Furthermore, findings may not be applicable to other regions outside of Jamaica as the context for investigation focused on a document that was explicitly intended for high schools in Jamaica. Another limiting factor to conducting this research was the lack of available literature to support the study especially from a Jamaican or Caribbean perspective. This resulted in not being able to provide a comprehensive literature review.

Considerations for Future Study

The current study utilizes a survey methodology which depended on the response of music teachers. To get a better understanding of the practices that exist with the use of the NSC, data could be drawn from field observations, especially as it relates to teaching and learning scenarios, methodologies and assessments. A cluster sample was used in collecting the data, focusing on the region of Kingston and St. Andrew. Even though the region of Kingston and St. Andrew is the largest of six regions in Jamaica, a similar survey could be conducted in regions two, three, four and five to facilitate a comparative analysis. Extending the research to these regions could also provide more in-depth data as to the use of the NSC in the entire Jamaica at the lower secondary level.

Consideration could be given to collecting the same data using different mediums. Multiple data collection modality would be better for teachers in Jamaica as some teachers are technically savvy and have no problem manipulating a digital form. Contrastingly, there are teachers who are technically challenged and would prefer a manual form. There could also be a

method that reads for visually impaired teachers. These various modalities of capturing the data could prove more efficient, and can increase the chance of getting more participants for a study. Additionally, consideration should be given to factoring ways in which respondents can affix their signatures to the consent form.

There may be scope for further research as to why one group is able to respond in one way or another. Additional research questions could be included in the current study to ascertain the factors that cause the music teachers to respond whether positively or negatively to the questions. Responses to these questions could give more clarity to the views expressed by the music teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A IRB Approval

IRB-FY20-21-842 - Initial: Initial - Exempt

To: Williams Hird, Ornisea <owilliams15@liberty.edu>; Kerr, Stephen Paul (Marching Band) <spkerr@liberty.edu>



May 7, 2021

Ornisea Williams Hird
Stephen Kerr

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-842 Use of the Music Syllabus from the National Standards Curriculum NSC, at the Lower Secondary Level, Grades Seven to Nine (Grades 7-9) in Kingston and St. Andrew Jamaica

Dear Ornisea Williams Hird, Stephen Kerr:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

Category 2. (iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through

identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by 46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

Appendix B Stamped Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: Use of the Music Syllabus from the National Standards Curriculum at the Lower Secondary Level Grades Seven to Nine (Grades 7-9) in Kingston and St. Andrew

Principal Investigator: Ornisea Williams Hird, MA Music Education, Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years old or older and teaching at the lower secondary level at a public high school in Kingston or St. Andrew, Jamaica. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to investigate the use of the music syllabus from the National Standards Curriculum NSC to improve the standard of music education in Jamaica and to bring public awareness.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to:

1. Complete a survey that will take 20 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include using the data as a point of reference to improve music education in Jamaica.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer in an unmarked file and may be used in future presentations.

Liberty University

IRB-FY20-21-842 Approved on N/A

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the intuitions in

which you are employed. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Ornisea Williams Hird. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor at Liberty University.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Liberty University
IRB-FY20-21-842 Approved on N/A

2/2

Appendix C Recruitment Letter

Dear Music Teachers:

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts Degree. The purpose of my research is to gather data on the use of the music syllabus from the *National Standards Curriculum (NSC)*, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be music teachers who engage students at the lower secondary level, grades seven to nine (grades 7-9) within Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take a survey. It should take approximately twenty minutes to complete the survey. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential. In order to participate, please complete the attached survey and return it by email.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it via email along with the survey questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Ornisea Williams Hird
MA, Music Education Student
Liberty University