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Benefits of Partnership Teaching

by

Sandy Petronella George

FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

SKIDMORE COLLEGE
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Readers: Joyce Rubin, Donna Brent

Introduction

The Inspiration

The idea for this research came out of an initiative undertaken between my advisor, Joyce Rubin and myself when we reflected, one afternoon, about the benefits of collaborative teaching, over the professional isolation experienced by teachers in Antigua/Barbuda. As educators responsible for staff development we wondered how collaboration between US Skidmore residential students and Skidmore distance learners in Antigua might impact local students' perceptions of learning and classroom life. We also were interested to see if any changes to teachers' delivery of curriculum and instruction would occur as a result of this collaboration.

Background

Seeing the need to improve classroom practices we explored the possibility, as other researchers have, that reducing teacher isolation will have a positive impact on the educational system as partners work together and support one another. Another dimension that influenced the decision to pair teachers together to see the results of the collaboration was that of cultural exchange. Skidmore residential students who have been assigned to schools with ample material and human resources expressed the desire to work in a more culturally diverse group with limited resources so the experience should also provide a useful background for teaching in American urban schools. For the Antiguan teacher, the experience will hopefully provide them with the refreshing insight of how to implement the theories they have learnt into practical and meaningful learning experiences that would inspire children to want to learn, and move away from the everyday mundane classroom environment. Moreover, the return visit will also enable them to extend and enrich their experiences in upstate schools in America. The students were expected to:

- Teach for two weeks in carefully selected classrooms alongside Skidmore trained Antiguan teachers and be observed by the supervisors on several visits;
- Attend 3 seminars where they will have the opportunity to make presentations, share strategies, exchange information and compare strengths of each system;
- Keep journals documenting their experiences and reflections;
- Document experience on website;
- Participate in radio and TV interviews;
- Participate in culminating presentations.

As a result of the field experience and participating in seminars etc, they will:

- ❖ Gain a broader understanding of multicultural education in the classroom;

- ❖ Expand their repertoire of instructional skills and strategies to better enable them to meet the different needs of their students and facilitate student learning with a limited availability of resources;
- ❖ Provide students with additional education content and strategies to further their development as teachers;
- ❖ Demonstrate professional growth by collaborating with other educators.

A probe into literature that investigate teacher isolation as a problem revealed that it may or may not be so and that whereas some teachers may welcome the presence of a student teacher, others may perceive it as an intrusion.

Karen Hamlin, an associate professor in the School of Education at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, investigated studies that show collaboration between university and school district in preparation of the teachers has the potential to provide reciprocal benefit. She looked at a study done by William Trenfield in 1971 that proposed that teachers might improve the teaching performance of their mentors in several ways. He projected that the student teachers will be a stimulating presence, a motivation for the supervising teachers to examine their own teaching strategies, a valuable source of ideas about instructional techniques and materials as well as a way to free up the classroom teacher and enable them to observe students from a different perspective, and have the time to consult with colleagues as well as accumulate materials.

Two studies that tested that hypothesis to see whether or not the teacher collaboration will bring about such benefits are as follows:

According to Hamlin (1997), a study done by Cheryl Duquette in 1994 revealed that there were indeed benefits that were derived, such as professional development that were provided by working with the student teacher. Other advantages included having time to work with individual students and plan programs, the opportunity to meet new people who were entering the profession, and professional satisfaction, were cited. The only negative in her study were that some teachers found heavy time commitment stressful and the skill development of a few of the student teachers disappointing (77,78).

The other study done by Marie E Kroener in 1992 found a similar collaboration of eight cooperating teachers in a significantly negative light. The class teachers cited interruption of instruction, displacement of the class teacher from the central position in the classroom, disruption of the classroom routine, breaking the isolation of the classroom teacher who would rather be isolated, and the shifting of the teacher's time and energy to instruction with the of the student teacher. Other complaints were that teachers were uncomfortable with student teachers taking a longer time to teach the curriculum and they altered classroom routines that were already established. Teachers also complained about the invasion of privacy and often competed for the attention and affection of the students (78).

Hamlin also claimed that other major issues were put forward by Pamela E Balch and Patrick E Balch (1987), who mentioned the possibility of legal problems associated with

supervising student teachers, disruption in classroom discipline procedures as well as problems dealing with weak student teachers or the potential for criticism of them as role models. Significantly, other unfavorable underlying factor of the research was that for some teachers, the expectation of professional growth was not the most important factor of the teachers' decisions to become a mentor. Whaley & Wolfe (1984) cited financial compensation being the highest rated motivating factor, Candace J. Stout (1982) claimed that his survey showed intrinsic professional obligation as teachers' reason for accepting teachers and Duquette (1994) reported that teachers only became involved in such a program because their principal requested it Hamlin (1990:78).

After exploring the value of student teachers and supervising teacher collaboration, Hamlin designed her own studies to see whether or not change occurred in the instructional practices and in the beliefs that underlie the practices of teachers who supervised students in the fifth year Master-of-arts-in-teaching programs. She conducted her studies at two research sites and her strategy was to establish a partnership between supervising teachers, student teachers and University supervisors at the beginning of the school year, which enabled trusting relationships to be formed before the actual team teaching began.

Another researcher, Linda Darling-Hammond in her journal, *Teacher Learning that Supports Student Learning*, emphasized that, "teachers learn best by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (1998). She continued that "this kind of learning cannot occur in college classrooms divorced from practice or in school classrooms divorced from knowledge about how to interpret practice...many of these programs have joined with local school districts to create Professional Development Schools ...beginning teachers get a more coherent learning experience when they are organized in teams with these faculty and with one another and senior teachers deepen their knowledge by serving as mentors, adjunct faculty, co-researcher and teacher leader" (Darling-Hammond 1994).

Moreover, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) illustrated that professional development strategies that succeed in improving teaching share the following features. They are:

- experiential, engaging teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, and observation that illuminate the processes of learning and development;
- grounded in participants questions, inquiry and experimentation as well as professionwide research;
- collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators;
- connected to and derived from teacher's work with their students as well as to examinations of subject matter and teaching methods;
- sustained and intensive, supported by modeling, coaching, and problem-solving around specific problems of practice; and
- connected to other aspects of school change.

After studying the fundamentals that make for a successful program, and armed with the knowledge of the various possibilities for success or failure, Professor Rubin and I carefully planned our every move and made sure all our bases were covered. For our Skidmore/Antigua collaboration of internship/teacher exchange project, we found that effective interpersonal communication skills were needed at every level between two persons or small groups in order to communicate ideas to a larger audience.

In the initial stages, Professor Rubin communicated with Dr. Brent and other professors, Susan Lehr and Ruth Andrea Levinson her idea of organizing an Internship/student exchange program while they were in NY. When Joyce came to Antigua in January 2005, she communicated that idea to Colin Greene, and me the then President of ABUT. With the favorable responses, she sought permission from her superiors to make this program a reality. Afterwards, meeting once more, face to face upon her return, in May with the ABUT executives and the ministry officials, she secured the program after presenting her rationale, instructional goals and a proposed schedule of events. Joyce and I sold the idea to the ABUT and the Ministry of Education through presentations of the rationale, proposed itinerary and our own enthusiasm and faith in the project spoke loud volumes. They were highly motivated by the knowledge that we had a wealth of experience. The principals and other teachers saw the benefits of the program in terms of gaining new ideas from student teachers and the experience the teachers will gain from their reciprocal visit will only enhance their teaching skills and the children will benefit significantly. Back in NY, she corresponded with a follow-up letter to the president of the ABUT, the Chief Education Officer and the Principal of the ASC and Head of the Department of Education, via me, the local project coordinator.

When communicating an important idea such as what was written in the letters Professor Rubin wrote to these key stakeholders, I realized how paramount it was to relay messages personally, and so I took the letters to each individual or asked Joan the very reliable secretary at ABUT to deliver them and had a follow-up meetings or telephone calls to confirm that they were onboard. I also found the face to face method of interpersonal communication effective when I invite Ministry officials, principals and other teachers to major events such as the opening ceremony, since it subsequently demonstrated sincerity and respect that enabled persons to be more receptive and it afforded immediate feedback.

In the next stage of carefully selecting six teachers, I had one on one interviews with prospective host teachers and explained the proposed program and their responsibilities. Then after they have consented, I proceeded to have regular meetings to bring them up to speed with the progress as Professor Rubin and I and later Franz Ladoo and Colin Greene(ABUT) and I have designed our next step. I made sure I got the groups' consensus as to which day is most convenient to meet, and called two days in advance of a schedule meeting day to give them time to make the necessary arrangements with their families. A schedule of events or itinerary was given to each person involved, and after each meeting, a revised version was prepared based on what was discussed and found

feasible. I communicated every change back to Professor Joyce Rubin. In Saratoga Springs NY, Joyce advertised the student teacher exchange program to her final year students who were at the top of their classes and had previous teaching practice experiences.

Research shows that persons involved in any organization will aspire to higher levels of achievement if there is equal opportunity for professional and career development. Supervisors must create conditions in which teacher recognizes their potential in fulfilling a task. However, there must be the assurance of the essentials such as health protection, environmental safety and substantial reward, also given as incentives.

Since the student teachers were already highly motivated, they were offered the challenge of coming up with creative ideas and work alongside teachers in a culture different from their own, outside of their country with limited resources. They were guaranteed safety and the reward of a free trip, not forgetting the once in lifetime experience of working in a multicultural, cross-cultural context with teachers and students and gain knowledge about the government's vision of changing education in Antigua, the current state of language and literacy and how changing family dynamics impact on early childhood and primary school programs. The host teachers were rewarded with finance for room and board and social events along with the assurance that their students will be provided with some much needed material resources along with the new and exhilarating teaching skills the teachers will bring to the classroom and at the same time they will teach them their own techniques in facilitating children's learning. Everyone will share a bond and lasting friendship that this collaboration brings not only in the classroom but in their homes. There will definitely be a cultural exchange.

After both host teacher and student teachers were selected, Professor Rubin obtained a profile of each student teacher. I arranged another meeting where host teachers were given the opportunity to make their choice based on whom they taught would best fit their personality or lifestyle after reading the student's profiles. They were encouraged to communicate with their partners so as to become acquainted and to share what their expectations were and also what concepts were to be taught during the two weeks that they would be interacting with the children in the classroom.

The Setting

The primary objective of working in a school organization is for everyone involved to perform at an optimal level and at the same time enjoy a high level of personal growth and satisfaction and well being and has the humanizing ingredient. It is empowering and supportive and people who work as professional with respect, trust and honesty, and using Sapier and King (1985) guidelines on how a school nurtures a strong culture through the 12 norms that he identified as:

- Collegiality
- Experimentation
- High expectation
- Trust and confidence
- Tangible support
- Reaching out to knowledge bases
- Appreciation and recognition
- Caring, celebration and humor
- Involvement in decision making
- Protective of what is important
- Honest, open communication
- Traditions

This optimal performance is only attainable is the work climate, which is essentially a psychosocial factor, is positive and meaningful.

Hence, for this project, I endeavored to select schools whose culture consisted of these elements. It is not always possible to find every ingredient in all schools, but most importantly, the classes where teachers were placed consisted of students who are generally respectful and the principals and teachers on staff were warm and welcoming and support the program. Hence the task of facilitating learning would not be a difficult one. A sense of community is emphasized as they work together in a multicultural, cross-cultural context.

The following excerpts will provide insight into the supportive work climate the students found themselves in. I was especially delighted to listen to the students and host teachers talk about the experience or read their blogs and marvel that all of them mentioned how warmly they were greeted by the principal and staff and students of their designated school.

Mia mentioned "... attending schools everyday as part of the JT Ambrose faculty where I was accepted as any other teacher... and thanked them for making me feel welcomed as one of your friends and colleagues...the students were much more disciplined, yet much more respectful....these amazing experiences to take with me and forever learn from"

Lisa saying, "The second I entered my second grade classroom at Villa [Jr] Secondary I felt right at home...the teachers all greeted me with warm smiles and best wishes...I'm

beaming after my day of teaching today... I also stayed at lunch and played with the students...I can't wait for another exciting week."

Nea, "It is refreshing to be teaching in a school where things feel so much more relaxed. It seems the teachers as well as the students are able to take the time to enjoy learning.... it's funny how an unfamiliar classroom filled with children you don't yet know can make you feel at home in a place you have never been before."

Lauren," Today was my first day at Potter Primary and it was a wonderful first day! ...This will be a wonderful opportunity and environment to begin my research...Chamarras has given me a lot of flexibility in the classroom...I'm having an amazing experience in my classroom and am so lucky to have such wonderful students...I love that even though I'm in a very different setting that what I'm used to...feels just the same as it always has."

Sara, "My first day in my Antiguan classroom today left me with no doubt that teaching is what I am meant to do...I was warmly welcomed by the principal and student body at the morning prayers. The students were eager to meet me...and coming up to me all day long introducing themselves and asking me questions...there is also profound respect for the adults as authority figures...I feel so comfortable and so at home in my classroom. It is somewhat unbelievable, when you think about it, that I would be able to walk into a classroom in an unfamiliar country with students whose culture has so many differences from mine and not feel fear and uncertainty."

Zach, "I'm loving it and feel so comfortable in this classroom...Mrs. Felix has given me so much responsibility and trusts me so much with her class... It is very flattering and these students are really responding nicely to my presence...all the student teachers and our cooperating teachers gathered at my school for lunch that was prepared by the staff of Pigotts Primary school...during recess I am either playing soccer, cricket or jumping rope... I feel like a superstar walking around school."

Everyone professed that it was a life changing experience.

Method

Hamlin's two-year research was conducted at two different sites. At one site 60 teacher candidates were divided equally between elementary, middle and high schools and at the other site, were 36 secondary and 16 Kindergarten to 12th grade specialty areas. After year one all supervising teachers were asked to write a response to the question, "Have you changed any aspect of your teaching as a result of having a student teacher and, if so what has changed? And after year two a survey was done on a special focus group of mentors.

My research was for two weeks with 12 teachers in primary schools, and I have used a personal journal as well as the journal entries of the cooperating teachers as my primary method of collecting, recording and reflecting on the data collected, observations made and meetings/workshops held, and following the OECS Generic Teacher Appraisal form, I looked at domains by which teachers can be evaluated, and asked teachers to compare their teaching strategies/practices before and after the collaborative experiences to see if any changes were perceived, and what they were.

Corwin (1998) also show that instructional leaders work to develop a culture of collaboration, equality, and the lifelong study of teaching and learning through talk, growth and reflection. He also emphasized that effective principals help to frame and support classroom teaching and student learning through the integrated use of action research, peer coaching, the study of teaching learning models and conscientious development of the group. In order to promote staff development, a series seminars and meetings with stakeholders in education were organized.

Professor Rubin, Dr. Brent and I made regular visits to the schools to observe teachers working together in the classrooms, using new approaches to teaching methods to make learning exciting. On one such visit we observed Lauren and Nea working together with their host teachers and students. In Chamarrah and Lauren's class Lauren was helping the children to put details into a portrait of themselves that they had made. I looked at previous work they had done with making a handprint and personalizing it with characteristics of themselves. I was very impressed with the description they gave of themselves. In Nea's and Eloise's classroom, the students were engaged in reading activities and it was heartening to see these remedial children eager to show us that they could read. Both teachers were working with different groups. On our first visit to Sara and Don-Marie's class, the two teachers were working together, by the next week they worked out a plan for Sara to take one group, giving Don-Marie the time to work with a special group that needed some extra help with individual attention they needed. I visited Mae and Mia at J T Ambrose and Paulette and Lisa at Villa. Mae was just finishing up a lesson while Mia was giving students who had completed their lessons a questionnaire which they had to essentially identify their learning style and special intelligences as a diagnosis for a lesson she had planned. I promised that I would come back to see it being

executed, and asked for a copy of the questionnaire. At Villa School, Paulette was grading some books while some students were completing their exercise. Lisa was making an anecdotal record of their reading experience. I smiled when they called her Teacher Lisa and told her what they thought she wanted to hear to impress her. Teacher Paulette had to admonish them to tell the truth. Zach just had a way with the children. In his classroom where he walks around to monitor student's progress, it was obvious that his being there opened a whole new world of learning for them they were working their sums with the murmurs of the little jingles of the rules he gave them, and they exuded self much self confidence. Their class teacher Sandra Felix is a brilliant teacher, but she expressed how much she was learning from Zach. The teachers seemed to have good chemistry with each other and the students were blooming.

At the first seminar which was held at the scenic and historic Fort James at a restaurant called Russels, host teachers and student teachers discussed ways in which they can develop trust in their students. Responses varied from letting children know that it is alright to make mistakes and that the teacher is always there to support them, to the need for teachers to fulfill promises and being consistent at all times. Everyone passionately shared their final projects with the whole group. These interesting topics include how the school environment affects teacher morale, how parental involvement influence literacy, how different intelligences are brought into better understanding math or comparing achievement levels of males versus females and also working with remedial or special needs children

The next seminar was conducted at the Infant Pedagogic Centre by Professor Rubin, Dr. Brent and I where, after I gave a tour of the facility, we describe how we can create an Effective and Responsive Classroom Environment. I explained the work at the Centre and my responsibilities as a Specialist Supervisor of Infant Education which included organizing different kinds of workshops that included curriculum planning to learn how to set up learning centers and interest corners in the classrooms and constructing interactive make and take teaching materials. I illustrated the different enrichment programs such as the Young Readers Book Club and Young Writers Express Club that I organize for students, 5- 11 years old. We also discussed how we can accommodate the range of student need and identified different forms of assessment we used. I showed the student teachers customized assessment forms that I had created based on our own OECS requirements and Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

The last seminar, entitled, New Approaches to Teaching/Learning was held at the Teachers' Place with principals and teachers. Teachers who were Skidmore students who have taken the course were especially invited to share with others how it has worked in their classrooms. Other topics of discussion were the inherent stresses of teaching and the unique challenges that limited resources presented. At the end of the seminar it was clearly established how teachers can build children's self image and self esteem by highlighting and celebrating their special talents as well as their small accomplishments in other areas they are not good at, and using the special ability in one area to succeed in other weaker areas until they are developed.

The meetings included conference with the Minister of Education and the Chief Education Officer, the President of the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers, the principal and staff and the second year students of the Department of Teacher Education at the Antigua State College and finally with the parents. At the parent/teachers meeting the matter of finding effective ways to attract delinquent parents was discussed. The more involved parents were very expressive with the idea of effective communication between home and school and made viable suggestions such as personalizing letters to parents to providing snacks rather than using threats of suspension of the child which is presently the only effective means of getting to see the parents, who, as one teacher expressed, may be fearful or intimidated because of being an underachiever as well, or is ashamed of the child's lack of achievement.

We also engaged in a culminating activity to showcase the accomplishments of the two weeks. The session started after 4:00pm with Sara and Don-Marie's class. One little girl got up to sing a song she wrote to Sara and after a few lines the tears started the flow. That touched everyone in the room. Lisa's class presented favorite books they have read and drawings they made in response to the literature, Lauren's class presented the detailed portraits of themselves and the descriptive handprints, Mia's students spoke about how she had catered to their special intelligent and they were able to understand math better and how much more enjoyable it was to learn the concepts, while Nea's children were shy, but with help they were able to show beautiful drawings and how they would describe them. Zach's students chanted all the little clues they had learnt to help them to understand a concept and read essays they had written about their experience with him. Sara's students finally made presentations of poems and songs they wrote to her demonstrating how well they used the skills she taught them in writing poetry. I had to hold back tears and had to wash my face a few times. Parents stood up in the middle and thanked the teachers for the wonderful work they were doing with their children and at the end Joyce and I expressed our gratitude for all the support and love.

We felt obligated to provide all the necessary avenues for developing partnership between all the stake holders found that sharing equally in the partnership does have a profound influence on a positive school life. This is validated by Cochran-smith and Lytle (1999) who espouses that 'From a broad perspective, knowledge is understood to be constructed by teachers, students, administrators, parents and academics in a collaborative fashion. It raises fundamental questions about the content of curriculum, teachers' roles, how schooling occurs and its outcomes. It is emancipating in nature and strives toward developing curriculum locally and restoring social relationship to a more equitable status....from a local perspective, knowledge of teaching, learning and schooling is generated by teachers working collaboratively in local inquiry communities. It strives to alter the boundaries of research and practice by conceptualizing practice as theory building. Here, change focuses on the classroom and school in the creation of rich learning opportunities through the altering of power relations between and among individuals, classrooms, schools and communities.'

Data Collection

In order to test my hypothesis and answer my original question I used information from my journal entries and those posted on the web by participating teachers, and following the OECS Generic Teacher Appraisal form, I looked at domains by which teachers can be evaluated based on their teaching strategies/practices before and after the collaborative experiences to see if any changes were perceived, and what they were. These include:

- ❖ Planning and Organization
- ❖ Instructional Process
- ❖ Classroom Management
- ❖ Assessment
- ❖ Interpersonal Relations
- ❖ Professionalism

In **Planning and Organization**, the teacher is evaluated on whether he/she

- Sets attainable standards for student performance at specified levels
- Plans activities that meet the needs of all students
- Plans activities that cater for different types of intelligences
- Prepares instruction with opportunities for individual work
- Prepares instructions with opportunities for group work
- Prepares materials and teaching aids that are adequate and usable in the setting
- Prepares for the instructional use of instructional time
- Is well organized for lesson presentation
- Prepares evaluation exercises/instruments for assessing student's learning

For **Instructional Process**, the teacher is evaluated on whether he/she

- States objectives clearly
- Uses appropriate and meaningful activities
- Demonstrates a good grasp of the subject matter
- Presents correct information
- Arouses and maintains students' interest
- Uses relevant instructional materials in the teaching/learning environment
- Uses appropriate questioning techniques
- Gives students opportunities to respond to questions
- Engages students in activities that encourage them to think
- Engage students in activities that encourage the development of multiple intelligences
- Ensures that all students participate in instructional activities
- Provide opportunities for students to work as groups
- Guides students to develop concepts
- Presents instruction in a logical and coherent manner
- Provides activities which meets individual and group needs
- Ends lesson appropriately
- Achieves instructional objectives

For **Classroom Management** the teacher is evaluated to see if he/she:

- Demonstrates awareness of what is happening in the classroom
- Provides an atmosphere that is conducive to learning for all students
- Maintains students' attention and interest throughout lessons
- Deals effectively with student's behavior
- Demonstrates fairness in dealing with all students
- Manages and utilizes learning resources
- Manages effectively classroom-related activities, assignments, projects etc.
- Ensures that students observe the rules for the classroom activities and student's behavior
- Demonstrates effective transition from one activity to another during instruction

For **Assessment** the teacher is evaluated on whether he/she:

- Communicates clear criteria/standard for assessment to students
- Uses appropriate tests and evaluation exercises to assess student performance
- Uses varying types of assessment that cater to different intelligences
- Designs tests/evaluation exercises at appropriate level (s) of difficulty
- Frequently monitors each student's progress
- Provides timely feedback to students on their performance
- Takes appropriate action based on results of assessment

For **Interpersonal Relations**, the teacher is observed to see if he/she:

- Encourages students to respect the worth and dignity of others
- Communicates effectively with principal, colleagues, students support staff, parents
- Accepts advice from others
- Offers advice
- Is cooperative and works well with others
- Demonstrates sensitivity to opinions, attitudes and feelings of others
- Maintains a good rapport with principals, colleagues, students. support staff and parents

In evaluating the **Professionalism** the teacher is observed to see if he/she:

- Expresses himself/herself clearly and is easily understood
- Arrives for work on time
- Reports for work regularly
- Ensures the safety of all students
- Demonstrates sound judgment in decision-making
- Is trustworthy
- seeks opportunities for his/her professional development
- Participates in professional development activities

- Demonstrates self control and maturity in dealing with students
- Demonstrates leadership skills in the performance of duties.

Data Analysis

While reading through Hamlin's analysis of her data, I was astounded by how similar her participants' responses were to those of the teachers I studied.

Using the information obtained from my observations and personal interviews and those that I have recorded in my journal or read from students' online journals, I have analyzed the Antiguan teachers' performances during and after the experience of working with the student teachers, and compare the performances on the teacher appraisal forms that the ministry of Education will use to evaluate them, and also to see how the local teacher felt about having the US teacher in their classroom and what impact they had.

In planning and organizing, all the six teachers claimed that they did not always prepare instruction for group work or catered for different types of intelligences even though they knew that they should, but did not always have the time to prepare or the lack of resources and inspiration to do so made them do the easiest thing which was to give them the one size fits all instruction. But afterwards they try as much as possible to plan with individual differences in mind and look for more creative ways, especially when sometimes the students always refer to something that the student teacher had done with them. They now used more resources and used the new knowledge about available materials found on the Internet etc.

In the instructional process, all but one teacher admitted that they seldom engaged students in activities that encourage the development of multiple intelligences. They claimed that while they were doing the course in *New Approaches to Teaching* they did try the lessons but afterwards, fell by the wayside. However, after watching how the student teachers use simple activities that appealed to each individual they were in awe. The students bloomed under their eyes and that gave them a wake-up call. They now used strategies such as little jingles or art work and poetry and others that they see the student teachers using, and they have found themselves thinking of more creative ways in which to engage the students. Teachers also complained that they have long being discouraged in making teaching aids because they often became victims of vandalism and theft and they were left with no desire to make any more. However, with a renewed sense of purpose and with some supplies coupled with the enthusiasm that the student teachers brought, they are motivated to try again. This was similar to Hamlin's research that reported that teachers claimed the collaboration "helped them to refine and review their knowledge of teaching methods they had discarded." The lack of resources was seen in another light and brought out the cultural difference when one student teacher in another school noted, 'It is certainly inspiring to watch both students and teachers as they make the most out of what little they have to create a positive and engaging learning experience.'

In providing guidance for the students to develop concepts and provide activities which meets the needs of individual and group needs, they said that most of their instructions were normally whole class and teacher-centered with discussions and demonstrations and

then students are set to work while they went to their desks to engage in other matters. But after seeing how the student teachers are always moving between the class and offering assistance, they realized how much being there helped the students to achieve more quality work. One teacher said group work not only gave the children more confidence, it made their work easier as students were able to take on responsibilities. They also allowed the students more flexibility and autonomy.

In classroom management, the student teachers found that unlike the students they taught in the US, these students were easier to control and were well-mannered. Two student teachers noted “how relaxed the school environment is...the teacher is able to leave the classroom unattended...and returned to find them in their seats, alive and unharmed. In the US...you can’t even be in the room with your back to the class without some sort of incident occurring.” The class teacher had no problem with the change in classroom routine, if any and allowed the student teacher free reign.

In Interpersonal relationship, teachers found it very comfortable to dialogue with all teachers and students at the schools. One student teacher commented “It is refreshing to be teaching in a school where things feel so much more relaxed. It seems like the teachers as well as the students are able to take the time to enjoy learning. There is less pressure and more an overall enjoyment of the learning process.” In less formal settings student teacher played with the students and quenched their curiosity about their skin color and hair texture, and “...some of the students braided my hair.” This was another cultural exchange. One student teacher also reported no playground equipment and the likes, but the children still found ways to entertain themselves with a game of cricket or play jump-rope, which he too had to play much to their delight.

In assessment, the teachers claim that they were guilty of not using varying types of assessment that cater to different intelligences and sometimes they did design exercises at different levels of difficulty but may not always be appropriate because the slower ones couldn’t always cope and with a large class size, individual attention is not always possible. One teacher who had a smaller class of already segregated remedial students said that she tried as much as possible to assess each child from the level that he was and how much he has accomplished. But claimed, with much enthusiasm, how having the student teacher who too had interested in remedial students, enabled the students to have the individual attention they desperately needed. This she said had enabled her to be “more conscious and determined in what she believed about teaching them now she has found a partner who validated what she was trying to do.” Two student teachers noted a cultural difference that while in the US they had class inclusions, for large class rolls students were divided in to the fast or slow group.

In presenting timely feedback, timely usually meant that they lined up at the table to have their books marked at the end of seatwork or the books were placed on the table until a convenient time to mark them. They have watched how student teachers provided little cues or asked a question that stimulated thinking and that created moments when students ‘got it’ and received instant feedback through this interpersonal communication method.

Teachers confessed that it really made them do some soul searching and conclude that they had to renew their methods and really try to make a difference as the student teachers have in just two weeks.

In one class I visited, the teacher expressed that she had risen to another level and there was no going back to that old way of instruction. The students are eager to learn and refuse take breaks or spend the full time at lunch. They were anxious to get back to the games and other activities that they had created together, and learning was at its optimal.

A visit to another class revealed that the children had gotten into the habit of writing short stories and poetry inspired by the student teacher. In yet another classroom, the students still use their jingles to remember rules and yet another, they use vivid description of their work, while in another, they remembered stories they have read and activities they did with their new teacher. Others said that sometimes when they are tempted to sit while the students did the seat work they would resist it and circulate the classroom and assist them and plan to cultivate the habit of monitoring children's work that way because she saw the difference it made. One teacher said it's still hard to find creative ways to teach all the subjects all the time to appeal to the different intelligences, but they are making the effort. Upon inquiring, on an example, she was surprised as to how many she actually covered in the lesson. She claimed that she may have ideas in her head but only when she articulates them that they take shape, and she needed that avenue to bounce ideas off someone or to absorb new ones.

Another teacher is so inspired that she has documented her experience in a book she is writing. On the note of being displaced with affection from her students, teachers did not mind at all. One even joked that she was so secured in the student's love for her until now the student teacher was there, she wasn't so sure again, especially after her students wrote such illustrious essays about the new teacher being their favorite teacher.

Other positive effects were that of the social development as well as the commitment to continue developing professionally. Attachments were formed and the promise of a long, fruitful relationships both personally and professionally. Student teachers journal entries revealed,

'Traveling to Antigua has made me even more exited about the career I am pursuing, and I learned a lot about teaching from this experience, but I think I learned more about myself. Teaching in Antigua solidified my knowledge that I want to teach and that I love to teach... I feel lucky to have found something that I am so passionate about.'

"So as we prepare to head home, I will return knowing several things. First, there is no doubt in my mind that I will not only enjoy teaching as a profession, but that I will find success in it. Second, I will have more confidence relating to students from different cultural backgrounds, and /or teaching in an area with limited resources."

Yet other inspiring words written in one journal entry were, "... to have had these amazing experiences to take with me and forever learn from."

Discussions

The evidences presented reveal that the teachers from both sides of the equation made an indelible mark on each other and on the lives of the students, not only those in the class in which they worked, but in the whole school.

When teachers were isolated in their classrooms, the daily routine was dull and bland and predictable. The teacher presented the lessons, a little discussion may take place, they might work a few sums together, and then the students were left to complete exercises in their books. As in Trenfield's study, it was found that the class teacher did find the student teacher a stimulating presence. One teacher's journal entry reads, "I really enjoy her company both in my home and in my classroom. My students love and appreciate her so much. She has been doing such a great job with them... I am confident that my students will benefit immensely from her time teaching them but that's not all, I have gained so many 'neat' at ideas from her." Another teacher wrote, "It was a rich and rewarding experience." Still another, " I must say that this opportunity has been truly beneficial for both myself and the students...I can truly write that at the end of this exchange, things will only continue to get better."

With the partnership between teachers and the day to day integration teachers learnt from one another. The US teachers respected the way that the classroom management was well under control and with limited resource materials teachers were able to get across the concepts they wanted to teach, and the children did learn. The Antiguan teachers on the other hand became fascinated by how these young teachers who were just beginning to climb the rung of the educational ladder use such creative and innovative ways, themed with what they have learnt, and applied them in such an appealing way to the students that it was not a matter of if they learnt and what they learnt is was how they learnt. Students expressed how much they now loved learning and describe how the teachers taught them in ways they could understand and let them do fun activities. The evidence confirms that the student teachers provided a valuable source of ideas about instructional techniques also described in Trenfield's study.

Seeking to learn about student's specific learning style, interest and special intelligences and tailoring instructions to suit their needs made a profound impact on their lives. All the teachers involved had completed the course in *New Approaches to Teaching* with Professor Rubin, but as indicated in the data analysis, without the intervention of the student teachers and discourse at the seminars and meetings, the Antiguan teachers would still have been practicing their old traditional way of teaching even though they have been exposed to the theory, and knew what was expected of them on their teacher appraisal forms. Again, teachers were able to examine their own teaching strategies. They found that they could embrace even better, the idea of curriculum integration and the need to enhance the multiple intelligences, now that new teachers show without a doubt, that it was the way forward.

This clearly points to the fact that teachers need, along with the material resources, human resources in the form of support groups, seminars, demonstrations, partnership teaching and similar professional development and constant interpersonal relationships, or they would be limited to their own thinking and never develop into the more conscientious and creative teachers they are once again striving to become. Most interestingly, was the admission by the class teachers that they became more enthusiastic and excited about teaching because the student teacher energy and enthusiasm was so contagious and the synergy was most compelling.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that reducing teacher isolation through collaboration did impact on student's perceptions of learning and classroom life and teacher's delivery of the curriculum. As an educational supervisor and administrator, I will seek to provide the support that teachers need by creating a support group where teachers can come to the Infant Pedagogic Centre to plan together, share their challenges and successes, make and take important teaching aids they need to execute their lessons effectively and provide other professional development in the areas of exposing them to contemporary theories of learning along with traditional theories of child development. I will also liaise with the other educational officers and the Chief Education Officer to create policies that can be put in place to provide teachers with the necessary support that they need at the national level.

“Growing evidences suggests that this kind of professional development not only makes teachers feel better about their practice, but it also reaps learning gains for students, especially in the kinds of more challenging learning that new standards demand” (Darling-Hammond 1997, NFIE 1996).

Our inaugural and historic Skidmore/Antigua teacher collaboration show indubitably, all the benefits that can be had when we seek to reduce teacher isolation, and the added bonus of the intercultural exchange, and it is hoped that it is only the beginning of a new kind of professional development.

Appendix i

My Journal

Sat. Jan 8, 2005

Today is the first day of the rest of my life. There is joy in my heart and I'm one happy, purpose-driven woman. Earlier today I went to Long Bay to see my friends from Skidmore. The Dean, Don Mc Cormack gave me the one of the greatest and most exhilarating news ever. He excitedly told me that after pleading my cause, Sara Lee was offering me a scholarship to pursue my Master's Degree. I cried tears of Joy. I vaguely heard him say that the money would not cover my full degree but it's a start and will take me a long way. All I could think of and tell him was how grateful I was and that this person did not even know me personally and was willing to invest in me and my own people have rejected me. I felt like I had grown back the wings they had broken and now had a new sense of well-being and that I'd surely have to write her to express my profound gratitude. Joyce immediately drew me into conversation to discuss my next step now that I got the funding I needed to continue what we had started since summer 2004 at the orientation seminar. She asked me to conduct a literature search on the supervisor as administrator and the nature of supervision. I readily agreed to and we lay on the lounge chairs and discussed a proposal she had brewing in her mind. It suddenly became very windy and we resorted to the lounge area where she continued to tell me how wonderful she thought it would be if she could get some of her students to visit Antigua and work alongside teachers and experience the cultural exchange that they often discussed. She continued that it would take some time to plan and it would be an exchange program with the first visit of student teachers from Skidmore coming to work alongside teacher in Antigua in January and the reciprocal visit around April when classes are in full session and it is no so cold. She planned to draft up a proposal and present to the President and the Board of trustees at Skidmore. I told her how elated I was and was already fantasizing.

Wed. Jan 12, 2005

Joyce and Donna visited the Infant Pedagogic Centre and donated over 50 books some from Carol Kurto. We afterwards visited schools in the southern part of the island. Joyce and Donna articulated their appreciation for the well-mannered students and enthusiastic teachers at these schools. We had a sumptuous meal at O J's Bar and Restaurant at Crabbe Hill.

Later in the afternoon we held a seminar on New Approaches to Teaching at the Multipurpose Centre at Perry Bay where Joyce, Donna and I had a round table discussion with students who had taken the course and were reporting on the successes they had implementing Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences in their classrooms.

Sat. Jan 15, 2005.

Skidmore officials left Antigua for New York. I felt sad to see them go. We just have a good chemistry. I started my literature search on the supervisor as administrator.

Sun. Apr 10, 2005

I had decided to try one more time to send an email to Sara Lee Schupf to express my profound gratitude for her generosity towards me in sponsoring my degree program. Deb had told me that I was missing an 'h' in her address so I tried again. I felt that, and I communicated that to her, that I desperately needed to let her know how meaningful she has helped to make my life and attachments of some of the work I was doing. Just a few hours later she emailed me back and I've been floating on cloud nine all day from the words I read. She wrote that she was glad that I took the initiative to send the attached documents and that she was even more pleased that she responded to Don Mc Cormack's request. But it was what I read next that touched me immensely. She said that she knew if Don asked her to help on my behalf, I must be someone very special, and how right he was. I felt like crying, and I silently thanked Don for reaching out and helping me. She asked that I just keep on doing what I am doing and that the strength of my convictions combined with my perseverance will pay off for me and those I reach out to.

With those inspiring words, I plod on, even though things get really tough to deal with at times. Especially these trying times.

Wed. May 4, 2005

While seated in yet another lounge at the V.C bird Int'l Airport waiting for our 19-seater plane to take us over to Barbuda where we were scheduled to make a presentation for Teacher's Professional Development Day, Joyce looked at me and beamed told me that the president and the Board of Trustees had approved her proposal for the internship/student exchange program. I was equally delighted to hear such great news! I thought, this lady was really serious. She mentioned that our next step was to sell the idea to the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers and the Ministry of Education. She gave me a copy of the rationale and proposed schedule of events and after perusing them, I assured her that the ABUT will definitely consent but I was not sure about the Ministry of Ed. She invited me to a meeting with ABUT executives following our return from Barbuda, but I had to decline due to motion sickness. The meeting had to be held that night so as to form a delegation to meet with the Ministry the following day to seek permission to have such a program in the schools.

Thu. May 5, 2005

Joyce, Donna Ken and Colin Greene, President of ABUT and other union executive met with ministry officials to discuss the proposal. I was anxious to know how it went.

Fri. May 6, 2005

Joyce and I met again to discuss my literature search first draft and the details of the meetings. She expressed her delight that the Ministry had approved and we were ready to roll. I was asked to choose the teachers and work with the Union to make this venture a successful one. So I set about with great enthusiasm to make this phenomenal event reality.

Mon. May 30 2005

I submitted document with first chapter of Supervision in Today's Schools via email.

Wed. Jun 1, 2005

Joyce responded to my first draft and humbly telling me that it was a really good start, although far too complimentary. She said that opening with a statement of personal belief is a good way to engage the reader. But before I get to the challenges that I needed to lay a foundation for supervision and administration and apply it to the role as defined by the ministry and that the challenges then become the disconnect between the theory and practice. She outlined guidelines in Chapter 1- The Nature of Supervision, Chapter 2- The Supervisor as administrator, Chapter 3- Leadership in Instructional Development, Chapter 4- How does the Education Specialist help teachers plan for and implement instruction and Chapter 5- Field problem in Educational Administration and Supervision, and asked that I keep a journal and that I must file the appropriate paperwork with the MALS office for this project to be considered. She forwarded a message received from Laurie Judge Stanley and admitted that I had not yet filed the paperwork because I was trying to figure out how to get my signature on the registration form online, forgetting that I could print and fax the document.

Fri. Jun 17. 2005

Emailed Deborah to touch base and to extend my joys about what I heard about the graduation ceremony. She immediately responded and asked if there was any word on finding how many host teachers were found for the program and that there was tremendous enthusiasm at Skidmore for the program and what fun it was to go to Barbuda as colleagues.

Wed. Jun 22, 2005

Emailed Joyce during my lunch hour to ask if she had received my document and I had sent it a few more times hoping that it went through with all the Internet traffic. I told her

that the times that I had spoken to Colin he said that the executive was to meet to discuss the matter in detail and that I had asked Ladoo and he said that the matter was not yet brought to the table, but they should do so at the next executive meeting. I also told her that I gave Franz a copy of the proposal since he had not seen one and had asked Joan the secretary to print me the names of the teachers who did the course in New Approaches to Teaching so that I can start the elimination. I told her that I hoped I wasn't jumping the gun since the union should have been handling the next phase. She emailed me back and assured me that she did get the document and will read it and get back to me and that I was not jumping the gun at all and that she was grateful that I was keeping on top of the project. Kirsty, she said had the names of all the persons who took the course and she would forward it to me.

July-Aug, 2005

I worked on revising my introduction and chapter 1 The Nature of Supervision, respectively. Joyce told, the success of the internship/student exchange project depended on whom I selected and so during this time I also informally interviewed persons I had thought of to be prospective host teachers either face to face or via phone calls. They were mainly my close friends in whom I had every confidence or they worked in a school where I loved the culture, but ultimately, they had to fit the criteria, which was that they:

- Have successfully completed the UWW online course 'New Approaches to Teaching with Pro. Joyce Rubin
- Are teaching in a Primary school
- Are willing and able to host a student teacher for two weeks
- Are able to engage in the reciprocal visit to Saratoga Springs, New York

Thu. Sept. 15, 2005

I received document from Joyce with corrections and suggestions as to how to improve on it. She complimented my effort and said that it was wonderful and needed very little editing and corrections and that it was really interesting reading. She also managed to boost my ego in telling me how proud she was of me and that she was so looking forward to seeing me and working alongside me in Antigua. I felt so honored and humbled by such a great lady. She said that she hoped my family was well, that she would be away from her desk until Monday and that she called my cell phone and left a message. Of course I reached for my cell and played the message for an umpteenth time wishing it could stay on the phone and not expire in the next three days. I had discussions with my staff at the centre and described the nature of the project. I also gave them copies of the itinerary and outlined the exciting adventure we would have.

Fri. Sept. 16, 2005

I worked tirelessly polishing up my paper and showed how I incorporated what I learnt in my practice as an educational specialist and told her she'd be even more pleased.

Sat. Sept 17, 2005

I resubmitted the document to Joyce and a copy to Deb as back-up... just to make sure.

Mon. Sept 26, 2005

I was thrilled when I got the great results of my hard work putting the introduction chapter 1 together. The subject on email was 'our project' and she explained how busy they were with finalizing plans for our project. I was so excited when she announced that they had their students; 4 females and 1 male who were so excited! She had showed them a picture of me that we had taken in her office and they couldn't wait to meet me.

She reiterated what I needed to do.

1. Choose 6 host teachers and call a meeting with them to share the itinerary. I became puzzled for a moment because she had indicated 5, and I already had 6 host teachers. (I later emailed with this concern and she assured me that there will be 6 student teachers).
2. Let them know that they will each be given \$400 for the two weeks to cover room and board for the students.
3. Inform them that they are invited to come on all afternoon and weekend day trips with us at no cost, including specified evening meals. The only exception was when we go to Shirley's Heights because getting receipts from everyone would be a problem.
4. Have two persons volunteer to have the bar-b-cue dinner at their homes for all of us on the 15th & 19th and that additional money would be made available to purchase food.

She also notified me of the plan to do on-site classroom observations on the following dates: Tuesday 1/10, Friday 1/18 and visit the infant Pedagogic centre on Monday 1/16, Wednesday 1/18 and Friday 1/20. She also mentioned that she was writing letters to the Chief Education Officer, Ms. Henry, the President of ABUT Mrs. Mack and Mrs. Spencer, teacher at ASC and that Phylise would send them to Joan to be printed on official Skidmore letterhead and I would get them to the appropriate people and follow up to confirm our appointments. She added that Phylise would be in touch with me about details of other matters she had asked her to handle, such as names of restaurants, transport for sightseeing tours etc.

I smiled when she again insisted that I keep the journal and records for reference as this project was part of my independent study, Supervised Internship, and expressed how really excited she was getting.

Wed. Sept 28, 2005

The Secretary of ABUT, Joan Parker called me to inform me of the letter sent and that she was going to print them on the Skidmore Letterhead. I asked the one to give the Chief but she assured me that she would personally deliver them to the appropriate persons. I thanked her knowing she is very reliable and efficient.

Fri. Sept 30, 2005

I went to teachers' Place to confirm with Joan that the letters were delivered.

Tue. Oct 4, 2005

I dialogued with Colin and Ladoo about setting up a meeting with the prospective host teachers I had selected. We arranged a convenient time of the week and agreed on Thursday 13th October at 4:00 pm at the Infant Pedagogic Centre.

Met up with Paula Spencer and she told me that she had spoken to the head of the Department of Teacher Education about the visit from Skidmore and said she had consented. She insisted that protocol demanded that an official letter be sent to the Principal of the College and the Head of the Department. She explained that the only concern she had was the after school visit to the college, and that we could see if I could arrange for a morning or midday visit due to her class schedule, and she would lie to observe and assess the student teachers. I told her we are accommodating and I agreed to email Joyce about her concerns and ask her to send a letter for the relevant authorities.

Tue. Oct 11, 2005

I went to Teacher's Place to remind Ladoo and Colin about the scheduled meeting. Later in the evening I called the six teachers to confirm the meeting for Thursday.

Thu. Oct 13, 2005

I conducted our first meeting at the Infant Pedagogic Centre at about 4:45 after we waited for others to arrive. I called Sandra who said she had forgotten and did not make the necessary arrangements for her family so I would have to fill her in. In attendance were Ladoo and Colin, Paulette and Mae. Each person was given an itinerary which we ran through. Colin agreed to host the barbecue and Ladoo said he would see if he could to get the VIP lounge at VC Bird Airport to have a welcoming ceremony and orientation seminar and then we could go to Sticky Wicket for dinner. We decided to have Dr. Austin Josiah onboard. There was so much excitement. I called Sandra and Eloise later in the evening to keep them up to speed with what the meeting was about. They regretted they missed the meeting but was overjoyed at the plans. I made arrangements for them to pick up a hard copy of the itinerary from Franz at the Teacher's Place and they could call me if they had any questions.

Fri Oct 14, 2005

I visited Mary E Pigott School and dialogued with the Principal, Stevenson Punter and to keep Don-Marie and Tracelyn posted on the meeting and to give them a copy of the itinerary that we went through for a few minutes. They were pleased with what they saw and expressed that it was so comprehensive and they will try to make most the after school activities, but I assured them that there was flexibility and they can opt out if anything posed any inconvenience. Tracelyn expressed her regret that she may not be able to be a host teacher after all since she might be going overseas to study or decide to accept another job offer with the radio station and that she was seriously considering and will get back to me on her final decision.

I told if she ever left the teaching position we would have lost one of the best, but I wish her all the best in following her next dream.

Sat. Oct 15, 2005

Emailed Joyce and Deborah with the great news of how well the meeting went and how everybody was so excited about the itinerary and the anticipation of a fabulous time. I assured Joyce that the letters were distributed to the relevant persons and told her of the concerns of Paula Spencer. I also mentioned plans to meet in the next few weeks with the principals.

Deborah emailed Joyce and me about how fantastic it was and that it made her tremendously happy about the project.

Mon. Oct 17, 2005

Joyce emailed me back expressing what a wonderful way to start her week by getting my email informing her of the meeting. I'm floating on cloud nine when I read how proud she was of me and that I was doing a terrific job and was destined to be an educational leader! Wow! She ended by assuring me that she would send another letter of to Mrs. Benn.

Wed. Oct 19, 2005

I called my son to wish him a happy birthday and was thrilled to tell him how everything was going so well. He said that he too was proud of my accomplishments. I silently hoped I don't sound swell-headed that I've been complimented, but it's a dream that finally came through and yes, I'm still humble.

Fri. Nov 4, 2005

Deborah emailed me once again to say how thrilled she was about the upcoming visit and the realization of the hope to bring Skidmore students to Antigua and that she trusted that the collaboration will be a very rich experience for the Skidmore students and the host teachers and all UWW graduates and present students as well. She let me know how much Joyce appreciated my work of coordinating the program in Antigua. She informed me that the chairperson of UWW Committee will be coming to Antigua to participate in the degree plan meeting and will be bringing her daughter, a high school student who was a very talented artist who wanted to conduct a brief art lesson with a group of small children and if I could arrange that for her. She also said something that made me so happy all over again... that at their last meeting with the Special Programs Committee of the Board of Trustees the Sara Schupf (my Sponsor/Fairy Godmother!) asked about the next phase of the Antigua exchange that will bring teachers to teach in classrooms and to interact with Skidmore students, and that they hope to realize that dream as well. I was delighted!

I called Ladoo and Colin to set up another meeting with the host teachers before we met with the principals. The date was set for 4:30 pm Nov. 9 at Teacher's Place.

Sat. Nov 5, 2005

I emailed Deborah and told her that I'd be happy to accommodate her and that we could even have more than one session.

Mon. Nov 7, 2005

I received email from Joyce stating that she and the students were starting to make plans for January and that she will send questions as they come up. She explained that one of her students, Mia Fedele has allergies to cats and dogs and if I can place her with someone who had no pets. Later in the evening I called the teachers to inform them of the meeting scheduled for Nov. 9.

Tue. Nov 8, 2005

I emailed Joyce again in the morning, telling her that it was amazing that she should mention that because I was thinking the previous night how nice it would be if I got a simple profile of each student so we could better match them to their counter parts. I told her that Tracelyn had just called to inform me that she would be going off to study overseas so she would have to drop out of the program and that I could replace her with Chamarrah if it were fine by her. I told her too that Sandra Felix also said that her stepson would be visiting for Christmas and would be unable to host her partner so I'll host him/her.

Joyce emailed me in the afternoon with the profiles and expressed how thrilled she was that everything was finally taking shape. She proudly stated that the students were all bright and at the top of their class as student teachers and were very highly motivated and committed to social equity. She said that once the partnerships are made I should email the email addresses so the students can begin a pen pal correspondence between then and when they arrive. That will save time in establishing relationships and make everyone feel a little more secure. I was so delighted to get such a prompt response and read the profiles with much interest. I learned that Mia Fidele describes her strengths as having a "conscientious attitude and genuine care for others, having a great love of learning; her weakness, being a perfectionist, and limited experience in working with diverse populations She is interested in speech pathology and early literacy intervention. She has done extensive traveling. She is allergic to dogs and cats and pine nuts in food. Lisa Groat's strength is that she is hard-working and persistent, motivated and compassionate. Her weakness is that she is sometimes stubborn with peers but very flexible in social situations and with students. She has worked with students in Albany inner city schools in a program designed to bring arts such as dance, music, theater and art lessons to children from low socio-economic environments. Lauren Henegan is empathetic, creative with a strong curiosity and she sees things from multiple perspectives, the latter, making it difficult to make decisions. Lauren has also conducted workshops in theater/pantomime with young gifted students and has outstanding potential. Nea Wadson described herself as being highly motivated and goal-oriented, compassionate, committed and enthusiastic, but has a habit of sticking to familiar and comfortable surroundings and don't always take advantage of opportunities when they arrive. I learned too that Nea's job opportunities will be in her hometown on the island of Bermuda with the multi-racial public school system. She has also had experience in the British educational system and brings insight into her placement. Sara Wilkinson described her strength as being confident in her leadership, organized, inquisitive and

outspoken. She also describes her weakness as not being able to come up with creative ideas quickly without having done the extensive research she normally does in preparation for her instruction. She has limited experience traveling, but looks forward to being motivated by motivating the students. She has worked with students of all ages. The only male, Zachary Rolf says he's approachable, organized, social, caring, considerate and responsible. His weakness, time management (just like his partner Sandra, I thought). I hope his case was not as severe as hers. He has received high grades from the special education teacher with whom he worked in an inclusion class for his genuine interest in caring about student with special needs. He is very patient and does cater to individual differences. He is easy going and solid. I thought, these students had the 'wow factor'. They have determined how high a standard we had to strive for and maintain.

Wed. Nov 9, 2005

Our group met and in attendance were Paulette, Eloise, Mae, Don-Marie, Ladoo, Greene, Nickeo and Me. I printed copies of the profile and gave on to each person. Mae immediately chose Mia. I informed her of the allergies to dogs and cats and she assured me that she had neither and from the profile, she would be a good match. Eloise, almost at the same time chose Nea, then Paulette chose Lisa and Don-Marie chose Sara. Nobody wanted who someone else picked. They were just satisfied with their choice. I was amazed! Since Chamarrah and Sandra were absent, I assigned Lauren to Chamarrah since she requested a female and Zach was chosen for Sandra. I promised to host him while he and Sandra plan and work together. The big question was how old were these student teachers since they read that they were senior level teachers I told them that the students I was sure were in their 20's since they usually leave high school for college and are trained before they go into the schools. They didn't seem convinced and would take anybody anyway, as long as Joyce chose them. I recorded their email addresses and told them that Joyce will arrange with their partners to begin getting to know each other. Mae said she was about to suggest that. We again went over the itinerary and made adjustments. Ladoo suggested we switched days 5 and 10 and make our courtesy call earlier in the visit the ministry and days 13 and 14 so we'll have the internship end on the day 13 and the culminating activities with the evening barbecue on day 14. The switch was to accommodate any in-school farewell activity that the principals and teachers would certainly want to have with the student teachers. We decided to use the sticky wicket for the welcoming ceremony and orientation and dinner since word on the VIP lounge explained that it was too small to accommodate a large contingent. Ladoo volunteered to type in the adjustments on the itinerary.

I called Sandra that night. She told me she went to the Teacher's Place the day before the meeting thinking she would surprise me that she made it earlier than me (she's a habitual latester). She had me laughing so much. I just loved how she expresses herself, always with a welcoming sense of humour. I told her she would get the male and read Zach's profile. She especially liked that he had special interest in children with special needs because she wanted to get some pointers to help a child in her class. She laughingly said she's take her little old man ('senior' being dominant in her mind). I also spoke to

Chamarrah who said she was alright with any girl. I asked her to meet me at the Teacher's Place to get a copy of the profiles.

Thu. Nov 10, 2005

I emailed Joyce to extend the joys and successes of the meeting and how the partners were paired like magic. I indicated the changes that we made. I received an email from Phylise. I was delighted that he would be designing our project website. She explained that she would like to get an early start on a Web presence for the project and that she would need to get photos of all the students and their paired host teachers.

Fri. Nov 11, 2005

Ladoo emailed me the revised document and I forwarded it to Joyce.

She responded professing how she was totally awed by the revised itinerary and thrilled with the enthusiasm and commitment from everyone involved. Her excitement permeated the pages as she told me to thank everyone for all of them and that this will indeed be an ALL-SKIDMORE LOVE FEST in addition to a transformative experience for everyone engaged in this cross-cultural initiative.

Sometime during the day Colin, Ladoo and I discussed scheduling a meeting with the Acting Chief Education Officer Ms. Henry to reconfirm her commitment to the program outlined in the letter from Joyce and to brief her on the progress being made so far.

Mon. Nov 14, 2005

I went to teacher's Place. Colin informed me of the meeting he scheduled with the Acting Chief on Tues. Oct 15 at 10:00am.

Tue. Oct 15, 2005

Colin and I met with the Acting Chief to discuss the internship/student exchange program. In attendance were the Curriculum Planning Officer Ms. Doristeen Ethinoff and education Officer of Zone 4, Ms. Sharon James. We discussed the rational, instructional goals and the itinerary. Everyone was pleased with the proposal and looked forward to the project becoming a reality. Ms. James agreed to enlighten the other education officers and principals in the zones.

Wed. Nov 16, 2005

Because Ms. Henry seemed unclear as to the whole coordination process and other aspects of the letter, I resubmitted a copy of the letter from Joyce.

Mon. Nov 21, 2005

It's my birthday, but my life is all consumed with the excitement of this project so I emailed Ladoo and asked him to forward the list of past and present students of the New Approaches to Teaching so that I could invite them to the seminar due on the January 19, 2006. We worked at formulating a letter and asked for permission to print them on the Skidmore letterhead.

Fri. Nov 26, 2005

Joyce considerably emailed me to let me know that she and her husband would be sailing on a cruise to celebrate their 45th anniversary and that she didn't want me to wonder why she wasn't responding to my emails. Unfortunately, the cruise will take them to islands in the Caribbean except Antigua, and she would have loved for me to meet him and I thought, I him. I would have loved to meet the man who got to share so many years with this incredible woman.

Mon. Nov 28, 2005

Personally went to schools to distribute letters with itinerary and rationale attached to principals of host teachers and invited them to a meeting at the Teachers' Place on the 30th. Called teachers later in the evening to inform them of meeting on

Wed Dec 30, 2005

Met at Teacher's Place to have conference with the principals, but only Mrs. Smith showed up and principals later explained that there was another function, a graduation that they had to attend, and not realizing the dates clashed had to commit to the first invitation.

Also present were Mae and Eloise. Eloise excitedly shared her very first email from Nea with us. We were overjoyed! Mrs. Smith suggested that the host teachers send an extent of the work they plan to cover during the two weeks so they have an idea of what to bring.

Thu. Dec 1, 2005

I felt the strong urge to email Don Mc Cormack to share the great news with him. He was instrumental in getting me this scholarship and I knew he would be excited about it. So I wrote him and attached a copy of the revised itinerary so that he could see what we planned.

Fri. Dec 2, 2005

Don Mc Cormack responded to my gesture and expressed how happy he and Judy were and I should be very proud of my accomplishments. But... I could not have done it without his help and I'm eternally grateful.

Mon Dec 12, 2005

I visited Dr, Austin Josiah at his office to enlighten him on our project and asked him to reserve the Sticky Wicket conference room for our welcoming ceremony, and to use his influence to get us a discount. He promised that we could get the Bowler's Club conference room for free but we had to pay for food. I thanked him and told him we would be accommodating 20-30 persons. He said he would make the necessary arrangements.

Tue. Dec, 13, 2005

Spoke to Franz Ladoo about setting up a final meeting with the host teachers and principals.

Thu. Dec 15, 2005

I called Dr. Josiah to confirm the conference room at Sticky Wicket. I organized with Colin to meet at Teachers Place next day to discuss the program outline with him and Ladoo.

Fri. Dec 16, 2005

I went to Teacher's Place to dialogue with Ladoo and Colin but they were held up in another meeting so I sat and chatted with Joan and Gwendolyn Ralph who expressed such enthusiasm about her Skidmore program. Later in the evening Chamarrah called and said she'd be off island and would like if she could contact her partner while in the US. I promised to get the email address.

Sat Dec 17, 2005

I emailed Joyce telling her that I hope she had a fantabulous time on her cruise and that I had everything under control. The only left to do is to decide on the welcoming party and to have a meeting with everyone to do last preparations for our big meeting day. It's just around the corner...can't believe! It's a little scary. Anyway, I requested the email addresses so that the host teachers could get in touch with their partners because the students' mails seemed to be lost somewhere in the Internet.

Mon. Dec 19, 2005

Joyce emailed me and I could feel her joyful anticipation when she said, she could hardly wait. She sent the addresses and said that several of them expressed that they were having difficulty in having their messages received, so maybe with the host teachers should try emailing instead and see. She anticipated that this was going to be an incredible adventure for us...my thoughts exactly.

Ladoo emailed me to fine tune certain details. He agreed that we should meet with the group on December 21. He had drafted up a letter to individuals inviting them to the Welcoming reception and asked me to look over it. He also thought we should confirm by letter with Mr. Josiah for the reception area and to clear with Mary at Skidmore if we had permission to print them on the Skidmore letterhead. He also that we meet to make up a tentative program for the reception and that we should have no more than five speakers who would have a maximum of three minutes. He attached the documents concerned. I called the teachers earlier this evening to set up meeting for December 21 at 4:00pm and brought Joyce up-to-date. I told her of our plan to write up the program for the opening reception and to let me know what she had planned. Tonight I fell sleep with my mind full and everything racing and racing. After dozing off I got up around 2 am with the inspiration for my speech for the opening ceremony. I began writing.

Tue. Dec 20, 2005

When I checked my messages I was happy to see an email from Phylise saying that we needed to get together on the phone and chat about things and when and where was best to call. I wrote back that she could call me tomorrow afternoon. Joyce emailed me to say that she would leave the program for the opening reception in my capable hands and she'd be happy to participate in any way I assigned her. Thanks for the confidence!

Wed. Dec 21, 2005

We had a meeting with the host teachers to finalize plans. Ladoo revised the itinerary to reflect what we discussed and prepared letters to be sent out to teachers and other dignitaries that would make up the welcoming party.

Phylise called and I was so ecstatic to hear her voice describing their meetings with the student and the ...in her voice when she said this is huge, scared me again. I suddenly felt so overwhelmed! This was certainly the biggest thing that ever happened to me. I was so awed and scared! I was also wowed by the website that she had created and had clicked on Joyce's picture and savored her words on how it all started, taking my mind back to that fateful day at the beach and how far we have come. I began to feel more relaxed knowing she was at the helm. I told the group about the website, and that we needed to get pictures and make blogs.

Thu. Dec 22, 2005

Ladoo emailed me the revised document with a checklist for Colin and me to confirm the boat ride, finger foods for the opening ceremony and to pick up the letters to be distributed. I distributed some letters to persons I could contact and drove back to Teacher's Place to get addresses and phone numbers of teachers who were invited to the welcoming ceremony since school was on vacation. I emailed revised itinerary to Joyce and to tell her how very honored I feel to be working alongside her. I added how she explored all possibilities and make them into realities and how really blessed I was to know her. She emailed me an attached integrated schedule and a few technical corrections, one being that I had bestowed Doctor on her name and she had no doctorate. I still think she has, better yet, should be Lady Joyce.

Ladoo said he'd handle the immigration and customs to get the Skidmore entourage cleared readily, and he'd look about the tour bus.

I emailed Phylise to compliment her on the awesome website and ask for directions as to how to get my picture and statement on. I also asked for a few items for the centre. She responded with the instructions and the assurance that I'd get the stuff.

Fri. Dec 23, 2006

I forwarded the integrated schedule to Ladoo. He asked me to give Colin a call because he had set up an appointment to see the new Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Pringle on

Wednesday at 9:30am. I went to lunch with my staff at the centre to celebrate Christmas with lunch, gift exchange, games and laughter.

Wed. Dec 28, 2005

Colin and I met with Mrs. Pringle the new acting chief to bring her up to speed on what we had discussed the former CEO and to ask her to sponsor the closing ceremony. We had her full support. She also said she had a response letter to my invitation to the opening ceremony and that she kindly accepted. Sandra came to the centre to check her email and I showed her the website where I had posted something earlier on the discussion board and encouraged her to do the same, which she did.

Thu. Dec 29, 2006

I called Russell's and O J's to reserve dinner and organize a menu.

Fri. Dec 30, 2005

I called Ladoo and Colin to set up a date to work on program for the Opening Reception. When I came home my sister, Bernadette came by to use my printer. I read her my speech. She told me it was good but I needed to establish the relation between the analogies to real experiences. So instead of just saying clear skies, I should have clear skies of what. That triggered thoughts in my mind and so I eagerly started to work at improving it.

Tue. Jan 3, 2006

I visited JT Ambrose, Potters, Pigotts, Villa and Mary E. Pigotts schools to personally give principals of host teachers letters of invitation to the opening reception and a final meeting. I placed letters inviting principals and teachers to the New Approaches seminar in the dip at the Ministry of Education and personally invited those I came in contact with

Ladoo and I went to Sticky Wicket to check out the bowler's Club conference room and the menu so that we could decide what we wanted. We also went to the immigration and customs office to see if we could get favors. Ladoo submitted a letter which they had requested through a phone call.

Wed. Jan 4, 2006

I asked my secretary to call the selected schools to remind the principals of the invitation to a meeting to discuss final plans on Thursday. I also returned application form to Sticky Wicket.

Thu. Jan 5, 2006

Ladoo and I went back to Sticky Wicket to make adjustments to the menu and confirm seating arrangements. We also met with Colin to plan the program. Colin asked Jonah to design the program sheet.

I emailed Joyce to let her know of the arrangements we made and to find out what format she would like the orientation and if she would need a flip chart etc....She emailed me back and said she wants to keep it informal so she would not need them and that she was going to pack to come home to Antigua. I couldn't wait to see her again. She validates all the efforts I'm making and when she's around I feel like empowered.

Fri. Jan 6, 2006

I tried as much to clear all the pressing matters I had to deal with my regular work. I went to Christian Union Academy as invited by the Kindergarten teacher to assist her with setting up her corners and give advice about activities she can have for students who have finished before the others, and keeping portfolios of their work. Paula Spencer came to the office to assist me with ordering laminating rolls and the mailbox companion. When I was expressing that I wrote an awesome speech but I need self confidence to deliver it and that I'm not good at making speeches, she cautioned me to stop prophesying such negative things and believe positive things in myself and that I should tell myself that I can do it because in thinking negative, I'll also project that to others and they will see me in that light. She told me that she knows I can do it. I thanked her so much for shaking me up and inspiring me at the same time.

Ladoo emailed the program sheet to Kirsty for her to make colored copies for Phylise to bring.

We met with Principals and host teachers to go through the schedule with a fine toothcomb. In attendance were Ms. Carr and Mae, Ms. Batchelor and Eloise and Chamarrah, Mr. Punter and Don-Marie and Tracelyn (who called and said she would like to host the teacher after all, so I decided to let her have Zach) Paulette came but her Principal was still overseas and absent were Mrs. Smith and Sandra who were both experiencing transportation problems. The meeting was successful, with everyone contributing something for the success of the program. I asked the principals and teachers to contact parents to invite them to the parent teachers' meeting so that we can get can have discussions and feedback about parental partnerships with the schools. After everyone left Ladoo and I went back to Sticky Wicket to make sure everything is in place and ready for our big day.

Earlier tonight, I called Bernadette and read my speech to her. She complimented my efforts and said it was a great improvement. I thanked her for the inspiration and proceed in front of the mirror to practice my speech for the umpteenth time, deciding where I should pause, let my voice show the enthusiasm I was feeling and when to make eye contact with my audience. I loved it, and my confidence was building by the second. I will deliver a powerful speech because I can. Still I can't wait for it to be over and behind me, but if I don't set the pace on this first day, it will spoil the rest of the week for me, for I'll be beating up on myself. So I had to make it spectacular.

Our Two weeks Odyssey

Sat. Jan 7, 2006

Today dawned beautifully. I thanked God it was a clear sunny day. I hated when it rained when I have to fly or when someone I know is. I carefully picked out my outfit for the occasion and went back to practice my speech. Afterwards I went to rest a while and perhaps try to get a beauty nap so that I don't look tired and anxious as I felt. I remembered that I did not see any floral arrangements on the head table so I called at Sticky Wicket and asked the person in charge if that would be arranged, and he assured me it would be, but that thing called the sixth sense wouldn't let me leave home without two vases and some freshly picked flowers from my garden. On my way to the airport and reception hall, I glanced in my rearview mirror and saw Colin on his way too. We met up with Ladoo at the airport. After a twenty minute delay was announced and I had gone over to the reception hall to see who was already there, it was heartening to watch Continental Airlines land with our guests. Colin was able to use his status to influence the immigration with pleas from Ladoo and me to get VIP treatment for the 19 Skidmore officials by getting them out of immigration and customs ahead of more than 800 passengers who had disembarked other airplanes.

We greeted each other warmly and were introduced. As they searched for their luggage I rushed over to the reception hall to again make sure that the welcoming party had arrived. I felt an adrenaline rush as I pushed the door and found them in eager anticipation. Unable to contain my emotions, I excitedly informed them that they were here and that we just got them out of immigration. Everyone cheered. Then suddenly feeling like I just came out of a hospital delivery room to make the announcement, (and this I voiced to them and got a response of laughter) I told them they should just see the. They were little babies and that I'm bringing the good news to the family saying, "It's a boy or it's a girl! And that we had five girls and a boy. I speed walked back over to the airport to see how they had progressed through custom when I saw Ladoo with a cart piled high with luggage going towards the customs officer. I scuttled back over to let them know, and to distribute the program sheets that I got from Phylise. I asked if no one saw Sandra. I knew she'd be late but not this late!

Minutes later the arriving party was greeted warmly by the welcoming party which comprised of the Chief Education Officer (ag) Mrs. Jacintha Pringle, the ABUT President and other executives, Skidmore alumni and present students, principals of the participating school, a zone officer and the media. We proceeded with a formal welcoming ceremony with approx. 50 persons. Still no sign of Sandra. I motioned to Eloise to call her to see what happened and Gwendolyn went outside to make the call. I wished I knew what the response was. Colin cheered the program. Chamarrah invoked God's presence with a powerful prayer, I did the introductions after which everyone complimented how creative it was, addresses were made by the Director of UWW, Mrs. Ken Klotz, the Chief Education Officer, and Joyce, the lady of the hour for inspiring such an undertaking. Afterwards a response was made by a student teacher representative, Lauren Henegan and the Vote of Thanks moved by host teacher, Paulette Henry. After the ceremony Joyce, Donna and I and the six host teachers and six student teachers along with Ladoo, Phylise and Colin had a sumptuous meal after which we participated in orientation activity. The evening ended with the host teachers taking home their partners with whom they have already bonded. Phylise, Donna and I engaged in a short conversation and then we said our goodnights.

When I reached home I called Sandra to let her know that I couldn't believe that she missed such an event. I could hear the disappointment in her voice and the huskiness from crying when she told me she was still in her dress that she put on to come to the ceremony and she still refused to take it off. She said that there was some miscommunication between her husband and herself and her stepson had had the cell phone in town and that was their only means of communication. She said she waited and waited until she simply refused to accept that she missed the program. I described Zach to her and told her how sweet he was but I was sure he was disappointed so she had to make it up to him, and she'd better not be late tomorrow. I told her what time we would be at Teachers' Place. She promised to be earlier than we would be. That's something I really want to see.

Sun. Jan 8, 2006

Today was another wonderful day. We planned a bus tour to introduce the students to the culture of Antigua. We assembled at Teacher's Place 2.00pm, and waited a few more minutes to see if Sandra would ever show up. I called her and she said she was on her way. She stayed so long after that when we finally decided to get on our way, I forgot she was supposed to be coming. With our tour guide, Ladoo on the PA system we traveled eastwards only having to stop for Sandra, who was late as usually, for her to catch up. We picked up others halfway to Devil's Bridge which we visited at first. Afterwards we went to Betty's Hope Estate which was closed for the week end but Colin gave a brief history of the plantation. We then traveled south east to Nelson's Dockyard stopping on the way to observe churches and sugar mill towers and picturesque views. I suggested that we just make a quick stop at the Dockyard because there wasn't much to see at the time we went. Luckily we found the museum opened and were able to look around, but I was anxious to get up to the top of Shirley's Heights where the steel pan was already playing and all the action was. Colin and Ladoo insisted that we look around some more so a few ladies and I waited at the entrance until they were satisfied they had enough. We ended up late at Shirley's Heights but still had a little time to enjoy the music of the steel pan and get view of the harbor in the evening, since we missed the spectacular view of the sunset. We had planned to visit the Interpretation Centre but we did not make it in time for the last show, so we decided to reschedule for another day. At Shirley's Heights we met Deborah and others from Skidmore. After a while we left Joyce and Donna who had made arrangements to be transported by Phylise and went for burgers. Afterwards, we congregated at Teacher's Place, picked up our vehicles and went home to prepare for the next day, the student's first day at school.

Mon. Jan 9, 2006

Today is a historic day. Skidmore students will begin internship with Skidmore trained Antiguan teachers and interact with our students and other teachers. After spending the weekend getting to know their host families, they now get to meet the principal, staff and students and to tour their assigned schools. Phylise asked me to meet them at Teacher's place so that I can point out the route to the schools to her. I suggested we all go in one vehicle and went with them to see how the students have settled in all the schools. We alerted them about the change in the schedule for tomorrow and that the Dean has invited all Skidmore students and alumni to a social evening and that they should go home from

school to prepare for later and not go to the Teachers' Place for the seminar with the president. We made arrangements for Joyce and I and Donna and Phylise to make visits in pairs so that we can all touch base at some time with all the students on future visits.

Back at the office I assisted teachers from Early Childhood Education Training Centre who wanted ideas for their teaching practice, and a new teacher from Old Road Primary. The students went home with their host teacher to have dinner and plan for the next day.

Tue. Jan 10, 2006

Student teachers once again accompany their host teachers to school. They afterwards went home to prepare for the social function at Pineapple Beach with the Dean of Special Programs, Paula Newburg. Joyce and I met and decided to fit the seminar with the union president that was scheduled that afternoon for Friday before the tour and to go to the Interpretation Centre on Thursday instead of the Hike. Ladoo set up an interview with Colin and Joyce on observer radio for Thursday.

I took Molly, the daughter of the chairperson Una Bray, who is an art student who had expressed the desire to work with small children to Newfield Primary to have an art lesson with the students in Kindergarten and Grade 1. She really brought out their creative side and afterwards donated supplies of construction paper, crayons, sidewalk chalk and beanie babies. The children were so delighted and delightful and so readily accepting. Molly was enchanted by their sweetness.

I called the Head of teacher training department to reconfirm Skidmore's visit to the institution. I also dialogued with the Curriculum Development Officer, Cynthia Crump about the program.

Later, in the evening, everyone culminated at the Pineapple Beach outhouse and became familiarized with the new Dean and to mix and mingle, eat and dance. I made sure I reached all the host teachers to finalize plans for tomorrow and alert them of the change of plans for Thursday and Friday. We had so much fun meeting with friends and former classmates. Although the island is small, our paths don't cross as much as we would like. I was a little apprehensive about tomorrow's plans, but quickly dispelled it. I have to stay focused and positive.

Wed. Jan 11, 2006

I went to my office to take care of my regular duties. I went to the teacher's Place thinking that Joyce and I would make our assessment of the students in the morning. A call to Phylise clarified that the visits will be made in the afternoon. I met Janice Whittaker at the centre and conversed with her for a while. I called the Interpretation centre to find out the time the last presentation will be made. I decided that there would not be enough time to get there after school. I called Phylise to relay the message to

Joyce that I will ask the principals for half day. I checked the website and read what the students had posted while Janice checked on her website she had built. I invited her back to the Centre and introduced her to my staff. I asked my secretary to call the schools and ask the principals kindly to release teachers at half-day so we can make it in-time for the presentation at the Interpretation Centre. We had lunch together then Janice and I went back to Teachers' Place to pick up Joyce and we went to visit Sara at Mary E. Pigott. We waited for Sara to come with us and went back to the Teachers' Place to meet the other students, Phylise, Donna and Colin and carpoled over to the Ministry of Education. Zach was missing so I tried to reach Sandra. We waited outside for him to come but decided we had better make the meeting since we were already late. I stayed in the lobby and waited for Zach. I felt my blood pressure rising, couldn't believe Sandra would take this lateness to this level. Zach eventually came and I found out that Tracelyn was the one who should have picked him up. I was never happier to see someone in my life!

After the discourse with the CEO and Minister of Education we again carpoled to Russels to have our first seminar and dinner. The ambience was just right with the spectacular view of the harbor and huge cruise ships cruising across on the water outside the big window as they left. It almost seemed surreal. We rearranged the furniture to suit our purpose with instructions from the Dean and afterwards placed our orders for dinner which was being prepared while we had our seminar. We had a hearty discussion although at first it was a little intense with Zach mentioning the lack of physical stimulation of charts and other resource materials in the classrooms and Chamarrah on the defense arguing that teachers are not provided with the necessary materials to work with. So we touched on the inherent stresses of teaching and did identify challenges presented and ways in which we can provide resources to meet these needs. The atmosphere became less intense as host teachers and student teachers discussed ways in which they can develop trust in their students. Responses varied from letting children know that it is alright to make mistakes and that the teacher is always there to support them, to the need for teachers to fulfill promises and being consistent at all times. Everyone passionately shared their final projects with the whole group. These interesting topics include how the school environment affects teacher morale, how parental involvement influence literacy, how different intelligences are brought into better understanding math or comparing achievement levels of males versus females and also working with remedial or special needs children.

A sumptuous dinner was served that we ate with satisfaction while being entertained with good music and fashion show. I took the microphone and made a few announcements before we left for home.

Thu. Jan 12, 2006

Internship continues. Teachers again collaborated, using new approaches to teaching methods to make learning exciting. I took Molly to Buckley's Primary where she had a similar experience with the Kindergartners and Grade one students. But the most exciting part of the day was when we were on our way to the school and I heard Joyce and Colin on the radio giving an overview of what the program is all about and Mia called in and it was just amazing how the timing was so right and the listeners were able

to get a feel the magnitude of such an exciting and meaningful undertaking. I couldn't contain my emotions and I exclaimed how awesome it is. Molly was onboard 100%. I was glad I was able to share the moment with her.

We convened at Pigott's Primary where Zach and Sandra's principal and staff thoughtfully invited us for lunch. After introductions, and fun playing in the yard with the students, we sat down to eat the delicious Pepperpot and Fungee, our National Dish. It's amazing how good food can bring people together. It was soul food. We joked at how much food they expect us to devour, but it was really great. After the meal we sent in our separate vehicles and drove up to Dow's Hill Interpretation Centre and was in time for the next presentation. It is a brief synopsis of the history of the island to present with visual and sound effects. Outside, the tour guide informed them of the history of the harbor and surrounding areas below. We took in the panoramic view and captured it with the camera. It's always one of my favorite places and hoped the students enjoyed it. Joyce mirrored my feelings.

Fri Jan 13, 2006

Internship continues. During the morning I whisked Deborah away to visit the Centre and to see Roberta's newly opened child development centre. She was really proud of how we had progressed as Skidmore students. We had another half-day from school. It was another packed afternoon and we had to have an early start. We assembled at the Teachers' place for lunch. Pizza! Yummy! Mrs. Mack the President of the ABUT had a very informative discourse with the students. We afterwards headed out on a bus tour to observe the range of educational facilities on the island. We stopped at ABIT which is a State of the Art institution for Information Technology and toured the facility. The tour guide was so proud of showing off while I got sicker by the moment thinking that all the money was spent at the top and what of the foundation, and how shabby the schools and even my office was compared to this penthouse. I could tell the others were thinking the same and Joyce and Phylise expressed as much.

We left and drove around to observe schools such as Cedar Grove Primary, Princess Margaret Secondary, Golden Grove, Jennings and Bolans Primary schools ending up at another favorite place of mine...and Joyce's. We just have the same taste in so many things. Yeah, lots in common. She's my soul mate, already! At O J's we had an out-of-this-world meal. A special grill, buffet style, was set up for us and we served ourselves. I had snapper hoping it tasted as succulent as it did the last time Joyce and I dined there. We were not disappointed at all. The students got a chance to relax on the sand and were cautioned not to go into the water, which totally amused Ladoo who thought we were being too over-protective. We assured them that they'll have all the beach in the world over the week-end. We took pictures and later were entertained by a live jazz band. I was so impressed with Ladoo, who asked for the opportunity to play the guitar. He was so cool! We had asked the bus driver to come back around 8pm, which he did and we went back with Colin entertaining a few sitting near to him with songs and poems he had written. Are these guys talented are what?

Well, this was surely an awesome, adventurous week, and I surely look forward another week such as this, and tomorrow should be another fun day, already! Life is great!

Sat. Jan 14, 2006

The host teachers dropped off their partners at the Teachers' Place so they can go sightseeing in St. John's while they returned home to catch up on house work and homework with the children. Paulette, her son Orié and I accompanied the six students through St. John's. We first went to the craft market, then the vegetable market. After that we went to Heritage Quay where they seemed fascinated by what they saw there. We met up with Joyce, Donna and Phylise, and after locating a bank where they could withdraw cash, Zach asked where and when we could meet them back. We set a time and place and I went to my office for a while to catch up on some work while Paulette and Orié went to get something to eat. Paulette accompanied them up to the teacher's Place where we met their partners who took them to Long Bay where we met for an afternoon fun time on the beach. It was a picture perfect day so they all soaked up the sun, sea and sand. I braided Donna's hair and she looked like sweet sixteen again. She even sent a picture off to her family. Everyone was fascinated! She's such a good sport. Her students here find it hard to believe the carefree person she is as a vast contrast to the tutor they know. It surprising thing of all, as soon as we decided to leave the beach, the rain poured down although there was no threat of rain for the whole day, for which we were thankful.

Sun. Jan 15, 2006

We had another beautiful day. The sky had cleared and we had to assemble at the Parham Dock at 10:00am instead of 2:00pm, much to the disappointment of others who had commitment in church they could not break. I asked if another trip could not be made to pick up the other at a later date. But, again, the men said it was imperative that we made an early start even though I insisted that the guests are mostly interested in the beach and that even 12:00 can be considered so as to accommodate the others, but again, only afterwards when they saw how the students lit up on the beach at Bird Island after cruising along the coastline that they acknowledged what I said, and the boatman did go back to the dock for some of his friends (and very well pick up the other host teachers) even though they insisted that another run would be impossible. Anyway, we had a fabulous time on the beach relaxing in a hammock, wading in the water, getting a tan, snorkeling, reading etc. The students were especially proud of their new tan.

We sailed back to the mainland and went to see my sister's guest how, Ellen Bay Cottages for Joyce and Phylise to consider for use in the future. They were impressed with the setting and seriously considered it. We then went for an evening barbecue at Colin's and Jonah's. The meal was super and the socialization great. I came home a little before the others to get an early sleep. I am exhausted!

Mon. Jan. 16, 2006

I took Joyce to Potters Primary to see Lauren and Nea working together with their host teachers and students. In Chamarrah and Lauren's class Lauren was helping the children to put details into a portrait of themselves that they had made. I looked at previous work they had done with making a handprint and personalizing it with characteristics of themselves. I was very impressed with the description. In Nea's and Eloise's classroom, the students were engaged in reading activities and it was heartening to see these remedial children eager to show us that they could read. Both teachers were working with different groups.

With a little time to spare, Joyce and I afterwards went into St. John's. I dropped her off and went to park. When I went back into the store my eyes gravitated towards an outfit that I swore I saw Joyce in already and told her I can see her in it and that she had to get it, not knowing she had already looked at it and decided that. Again...same taste. It's incredible. Phylise and Donna met up with us in the store and they bought items. I was so happy Joyce got that dress. I couldn't take it if she left the store without it. She said she would wear it to the closing ceremony.

We went to the Infant pedagogic Centre where some students and host teachers were already. I gave them a tour of the facility and informed them of the work being done by our team to make the Centre more resourceful and teacher friendly. I explained that as the Specialist Supervisor of Infant Education I had conducted a number of workshops that included curriculum planning to how to set up learning centers and interest corners in the classrooms and constructing interactive make-and-take teaching materials. I illustrated the different enrichment programs such as the Young Readers Book Club and Young Writers Express Club that I organize for students, 5- 11 years old. We also discussed how we can accommodate the range of student need and identified different forms of assessment we used. I showed the student teachers the customized assessment forms that I had created based on our own OECS requirements and Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. They inquired where I found the time to do all that work and I explained that I extended my week days to weekends. They expressed how delightful the centre is and how impressed with all the work I had put in it. I told them my staff is also very supportive and hardworking, and I felt so proud that my hard work was acknowledged. I love what I do. It's a huge part of who I am and I thank God everyday for giving me the opportunity although it came with the regular occupational hazards. They then left to have dinner with their families. Ladoo called me to tell me that I had an interview on Good morning Antigua, a morning programme on ABS Television and that I needed to arrange with a student teacher to accompany me. I sought counsel with Joyce and she selected Sara and we excitedly let her know that she was to do the show. Of course I became anxious.

Tue. Jan 17, 2006

Today I decided to visit Mae and Mia at J T Ambrose and Paulette and Lisa at Villa. Mae was just finishing up a lesson while Mia was giving students who had completed their lessons a questionnaire which they had to essentially identify their learning style and special intelligences as a diagnosis for a lesson she had planned. I promised that I would come back to see it being executed, and asked for a copy of the questionnaire. At villa,

Paulette was grading some books while some students were completing their exercise. Lisa was making an anecdotal record of their reading experience. I smiled when they called her Teacher Lisa and told her what they thought she wanted to hear to impress her. Teacher Paulette had to admonish them to tell the truth. I know how important it was for her to get a true record but I found it hilarious. Joyce, Phylise and Donna also made some visits to schools. We conducted an after-school Parent/Teachers meeting at the Teacher's Place. About a dozen parents came and they were encouraged to express their feelings about what is happening with their children and how to find effective ways to attract delinquent parents was discussed. The more involved parents were very expressive with the idea of effective communication between home and school and made viable suggestions such as personalizing letters to parents to providing snacks rather than using threats of suspension of the child which is presently the only effective means of getting to see the parents, who, as one teacher expressed, may be fearful or intimidated because of being an underachiever as well, or is ashamed of the child's lack of achievement. The meeting was successful as we were able to get feedback from parents and gain insight as to how we can better be able to form a better relationship with them. Families went home to have dinner together after we confirmed tomorrow's plans. I tried to get an early sleep but I had to prepare what I wanted to say on tomorrow's interview and I'm all nerves. I tried to psyche myself from now. How worse can it be? They'll only ask questions I want them to so I don't know what the big deal is. Only thing, I'm not a morning person. More positives please!

Wed. Jan 18, 2006

I got out of bed, couldn't eat any breakfast I know I should have to keep focused and made my way to the station. I met Sara there already and we had to wait for some Barbudan students to take their interviews before it was our turn. We had to wait over an hour before we went on. We essentially told them how the program came about, how selections were made and just barely made the public know what the schedule looked like. We didn't have the opportunity to make any acknowledgements. Sara was so relaxed while I was nervous. I know I said what I wanted to say, and I know I looked nervous saying it. But all in all I think it went well enough.

Another half day was scheduled into the plan so we visited the Antigua State College after lunch. Introductions were made and Mrs. Benn had discourse with the students, then Mrs. Spencer let them have dialogue with the second year students. It was lively. We afterwards went down to the cultural department where the students were promised a pan lesson I left the others and went to the office to take care of business, expecting that the man who had promised to accommodate them to do so, but after an hour of waiting the inconsiderate man still expected that they would be waiting for him to decide to let them. He continued his regular practice with a few school children. I was gravely disappointed, but happy to know that Joyce, being the person she was tried not to make a huge deal out of it and decided to let the students do some shopping after what I considered a horrid wait. We ended up having a wonderful meal at George's Restaurant where we were joined by Ladoo and Ophelia, Paulette, and later Eloise and her husband. I had hummus for the first time and liked it. I kept apologizing to Joyce, but she assured me that things like these happened and that it was out of my hands. We ended up having a great night,

getting to catch up with each other's lives. Zach gave me a book, "If you give a pig a party by Laura Numeroff which I will add to my collection. I expressed how thoughtful he was and asked him to autograph it. Ophelia and I ended up reading it together.

Thu. Jan 19, 2006

Internship continues. I ran around town looking for gifts to be presented at the closing ceremony. I felt exhausted so I went to lie down in my office for a while. After school, teachers assembled at the Teachers' Place for a seminar on New Approaches to Teaching. By the time I got to there the session had already begun but Joyce had everything under control. Topics of discussion were the inherent stresses of teaching and the unique challenges that limited resources presented, how teachers can use readily available materials to make aids and how to appeal to children's special needs and enhance their intelligences. At the end of the seminar it was clearly established how teachers can build children's self image and self esteem by highlighting and celebrating their special talents as well as their small accomplishments in other areas they are not good at, and using the special ability in one area to succeed in other weaker areas until they are developed.

About 2 minutes to 5 o'clock I remembered that I had to collect the bouquets and the flower shop closed at 5. I was in heavy traffic so I called and told the lady who answered that I was on my way. She said I was lucky that I met her because she was just closing the door when she turned back to answer the phone. I told her that I was held up in a meeting and that I was on my way. She said that she was late for a meeting and that she could not wait another minute. I asked if there was anywhere next door that she could leave them and she replied that the only place she could think of was a Chinese store around the corner and gave me the name. I told her to leave them there and thanked her profusely. At that moment I thanked my lucky stars and reconfirmed in my mind how truly blessed I am because I remembered just in the nick of time and if I did not get the flowers at that time, they would have been of no use another day. So I say, thank you Lord.

Later this evening was our official closing ceremony that's still so fresh in my mind. Colin made his remarks as usual and continued to cheer the program. The host teachers, Chamarrah and Sandra reflected on their two weeks and spoke eloquently about their personal and professional relationship with their partners, Lauren and Zach, how moved they were by the qualities in them, how much fun they had and have learnt so much from the interaction and they didn't know how the students and their own children were going to take the separation now that the two weeks were up. Then Lisa and Zach reflected on their time and how much it meant to them to have been given such a privilege and they were never more secured in their minds that touching the lives of children was what they were meant to do. We were on the verge of tears for such raw emotions they exhibited. Mrs. Mack and Mrs., Pringle spoke next. But it was Joyce moved all of us to tears when she proclaimed that if she never got to do anything else in her career, this was the defining moment for her and she hugged and kissed her students. I sobbed even harder when she looked at me and told me that she was proud to call me her partner and that she loved me. She thanked everybody for their support and enthusiasm and for making the program the success that it was. I spoke next, hardly knowing what I was saying. I

remember saying that I told them that I had promised them clear skies and green pastures and the likes. I presented gifts to them and bouquets for Joyce and Donna.

How could I forget? When Joyce walked into the room with the dress on, I thought it was a figment of my imagination. She looked exactly how I had pictured her. She posed and said she felt like an African Princess, and she did look like one. I loved her in that outfit. I think it was made for her. I don't think it would fit anyone as well as it did her. She's my queen!

Fri. Jan 20, 2006

Internship ends. Knowing the principals and staff, they would want to have programs of appreciation for their teachers. So I'm sure the morning was spent with a little concert and farewell. I don't want even want to think of how tearful the goodbyes are. Still I anticipated more tears to flow in the afternoon with our culminating projects, but not at that magnitude! The session started after 4:00pm with Sara and Don-Marie's class. One little girl got up to sing a song she wrote to Sara and after a few lines the tears started the flow. That touched everyone in the room. I could not stand it so I quickly relinquished the camera I was using to capture the moment and escaped to the office and cried. Realizing I should be in charge of making it flow, I went back out and asked another group to make their presentation. Lisa's class presented favorite books they have read and drawings they made in response to the literature, Lauren's class presented the detailed portraits of themselves and the descriptive handprints, Mia's students spoke about how she had catered to their special intelligent and they were able to understand math better and how much more enjoyable it was to learn the concepts, while Nea's children were shy, but with help they were able to show beautiful drawings and how they would describe them. Zach's students chanted all the little clues they had learnt to help them to understand a concept and read essays they had written about their experience with him. Sara's students finally made presentations of poems and songs they wrote to her demonstrating how well they used the skills she taught them in writing poetry. I had to hold back tears and had to wash my face a few times. Parents stood up in the middle and thanked the teachers for the wonderful work they were doing with their children and at the end Joyce and I expressed our gratitude for all the support and love. Then we served some food and made sure all the children were returned home safely. I promised the students that I'd see them in the morning on the beach and to see them off at the airport tomorrow, but it's pouring outside and I wonder if it was at all possible that they'd get to soak up any sun at all for their last day. Anyway, tomorrow will tell for itself.

Sat. Jan 21, 2006

Today is such an emotional day and I will dedicate this journal entry to my Skidmore friends and partners.

As I lay on my bed writing this letter and the tears blur the words as they stream down my face, I know I'll cry myself to sleep. Goodbyes are hard. I am heartbroken. I tell myself once I write I'll feel better, but I cry even harder to think I almost didn't get to say goodbye to you.

When I reached the airport today, my heart sank when Mae sadly looked at me and said, "They just went in. They waited and waited for you to come, and everyone said to tell Sandy goodbye." Her words hit me like a ton of bricks. She said, "They all had their bandanas on and were asking for you." I was crushed. I peered through the glass door hoping to catch a glimpse of anyone of you. Paulette looked devastated. Mae and her husband told me someone should be able to let me in.

After pleading with the security guard to let me through and she explained that she couldn't, I tried to console myself that maybe it's best that I missed you. So I told Mae that and that I'll just go upstairs to wave goodbye. When she replied, "Sandy it's not the same, they wanted to feel you and tell you goodbye." I fell to pieces. I had to get in that departure lounge so you can feel me and we can hug and say our goodbyes. I went back to the security guard at the door. She said the only thing I could do was to go to the airline counter and ask to page the person. I ran up to the Continental Airlines counter and asked the lady if she could page you but she said that it would be impossible for you to come back out with the heavy flow of departing passengers and I would have to ask for a security pass to go in. I rushed back down to go to the security office but the guard said it was too congested to go in.

Leah came with her baby that she wanted Joyce to see and around the same time Sandra came with disappointment in their eyes, and asked if you left. Leah explained that she had a package for Carol Kurto and she wanted Joyce to see her daughter and that they should be able to let us through because she did it already. I quickly asked her to follow me again to the counter where I again pleaded with the lady to let me through. Leah pleaded too. I told her just to page Phylise or Joyce. She said that you couldn't come back through security but she can let me go. I said I'll go as far as I'm allowed. She looked at her system and I told her to look for Joyce Rubin and ask her to meet Sandy at the door. She looked sympathetically at us and must have felt the desperation in our voices then she went to the PA system and paged Joyce. I took off, leaving Leah to catch up. Two security guards said only one person can go through and even after Leah tried to convince them they were adamant that only one could, and asked who was Sandy. I identified myself pushed my way through. I was ecstatic. I couldn't wait to be with you. I couldn't wait to **feel** you as Mae put it. The guard told me to wait so I could follow her. I took the gifts from Leah and soon made our way through security. I could see Joyce waving from a distance and I couldn't wait to reach you. I then spotted everyone else lined up beside her. I was elated! The guard told me to put my bags on the belt which I did clumsily as I looked over to your teary smiles and felt the love through your eyes. I couldn't reach to you fast enough. I ached to reach over. I needed to be closer. I retrieved my stuff and cried tears of joy as I held Joyce and she held me and we cried. I wished that we could hold on forever. As we separated, one by one I reached for my babies and we hugged and cried and muttered I love you's through our tears. We held on as if never to let go. I could feel the love I did not realize had grown so deep. Cupid had shot his arrow so fast we couldn't get out the way and we were infected, or was it the love potion that was served in the Skidmore/Antigua Collaboration Express student exchange carriage?

I remember someone saying, "I was getting real mad at you for letting us leave without saying goodbye." I cried harder to think I almost did miss you and I would have never forgiven myself, but I did not realize you would have gone through security already. I thank God I made it to you in time. You all expressed how deeply I had touched you, and I'll treasure that moment for the rest of my life. You all touched me in a profound way and can explain how. It would just take too many words right now. It's the chemistry I can't explain.

I remember Phylise giving me words of praise and encouragement, and I also remember commented that you had worn your bandanas and you managed to smile through the tears.

I had to hug my Joyce again and she told me how proud she was of me and how much she loved me and I told her how much I loved her too and that she was the best thing that ever happened to me.

I wondered for Donna Brent, only to realize that she, always the strong, reasonable one was filming our most vulnerable moment on her camcorder!!!! We hugged goodbye as the guard said I had to leave. So with tearful smiles we said goodbye. I promised to come up for your graduation, and it's a promise I will keep as long as I'm blessed with life and with health.

I went upstairs with Sandra, Paulette, Leah and the kids to wait for you to board the aircraft and we waved our final goodbyes. They wanted to wait to see the plane leave but I told them I couldn't bear it so I left and they followed shortly. I didn't want to eat or to listen to any music or to talk to anyone. I just wanted to savor the moments I spent with you. I know it sounds crazy and that I should not be posting on the website but think of it as a love story. Millions of people read them in books.

I had to get back to the center where I had left two teachers who had come for ideas and were making teaching aids for their lessons the following week. I pulled myself together, but I still couldn't get you out of my thoughts so I went on to the website and showed them the pictures of you and told them how much you have impacted on the lives of our children and even our teachers who expressed how refreshing it was to have you and to see how easily you could implement what you have learnt from the course with Joyce and how they will be better teachers because of you... and the children are better learners because of you. We surely miss you. You took a part of us when you left, but as someone once wisely said, don't cry because it's over, be glad that it happened. You made us all proud! We did it!!! You'll be a tough act to follow.

I love you...always and forever.

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Appendix A

Photos of the 2006 and 2008 Partnership Teaching Experience



Host families



Playing steel pan

eating pepperpot & fungee

braiding hair

dancing

Immersed in the local culture

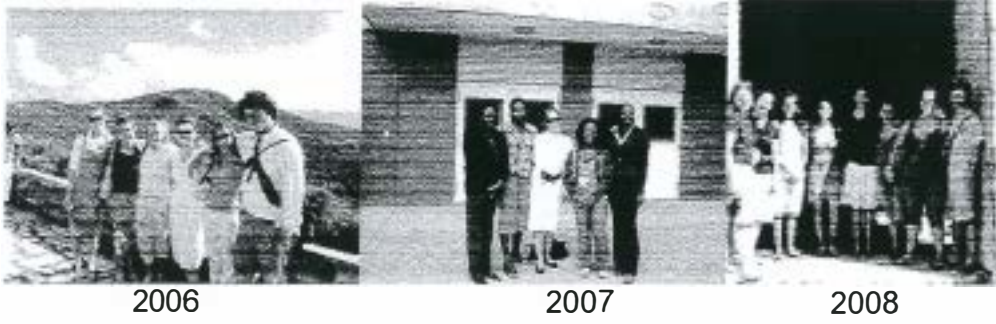


Working in partnership in the classroom





Seminars



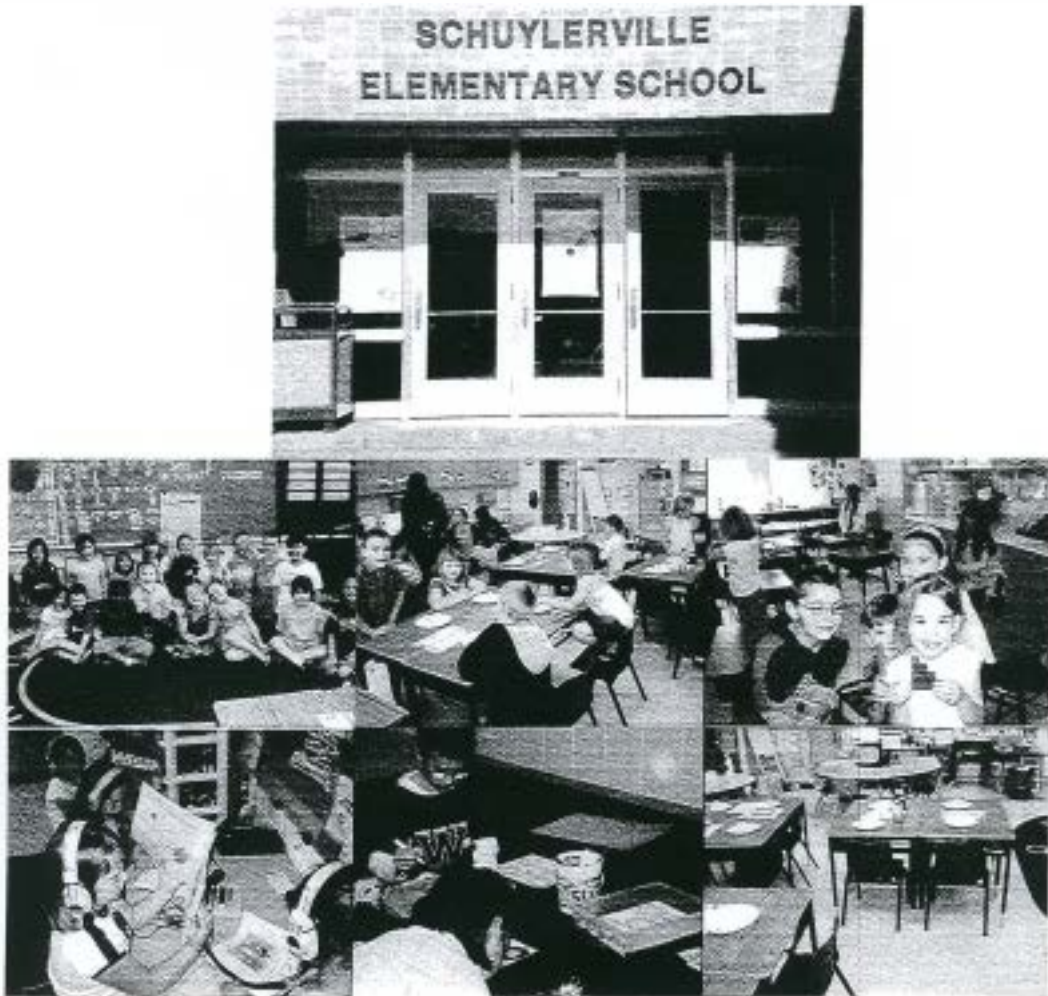
The visiting teachers



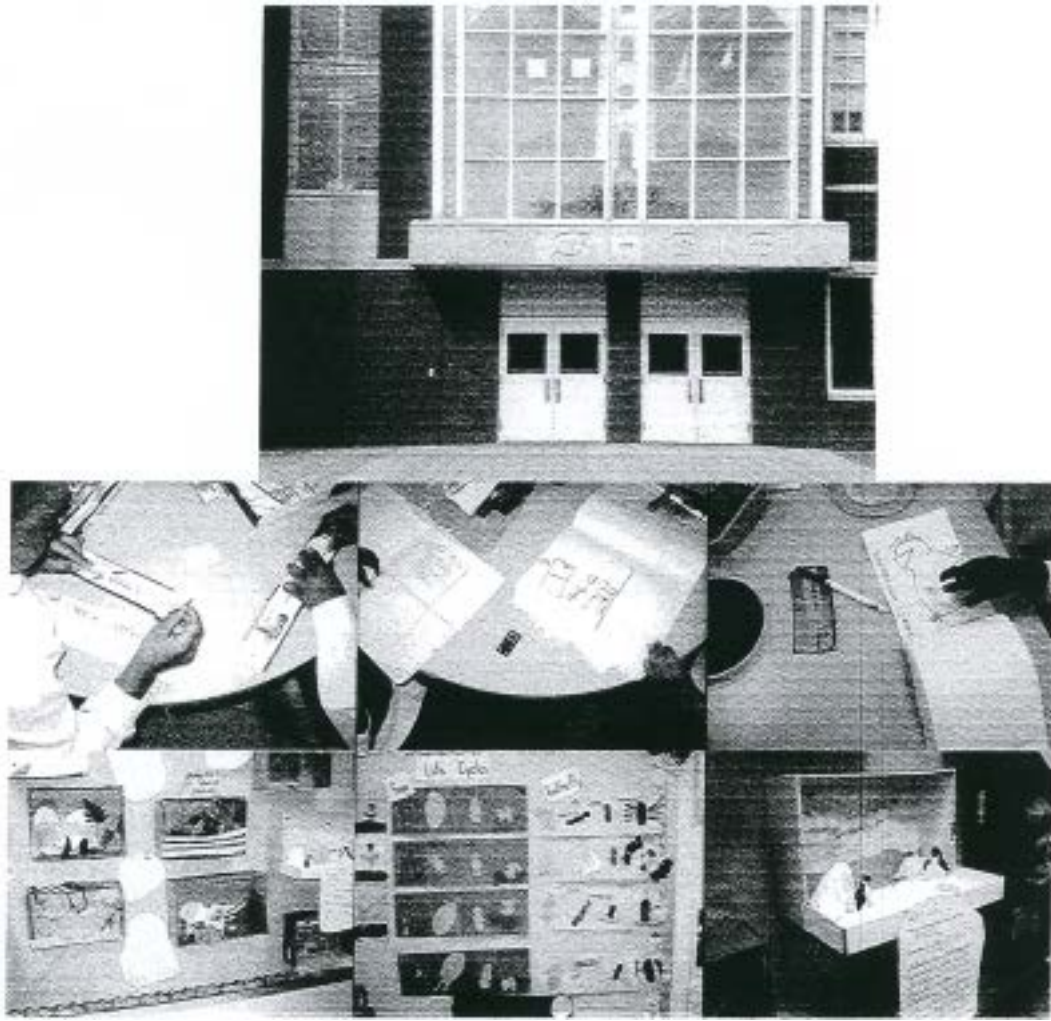
Our adorable students

Appendix B

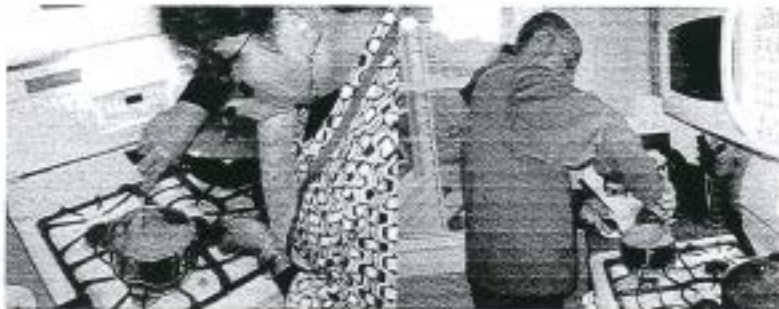
Photos of the 2007 Reciprocal Visit in New York



**Schuylerville Elementary School
Schuylerville, NY**



**PS - 66
Brooklyn, NY**



**Cultural exchange – learning to cook fungee
Saratoga Springs, NY**

Appendix C

Participating Schools and Teachers in Antigua

Skidmore/Antigua Collaboration 2006

School	Principal	Grade	Host Teacher	Student Teacher
Pigotts	Delora Smith	3	Sandra Felix	Zachary Rolfe
Potters	Grace Ellis	2	Eloise Hughers	Nea Wadson
Potters	Grace Ellis	5	Chamarah Joseph	Lauren Henegan
Villa	Delrose Francis	2	Paulette Henry	Lisa Groat
Mary E Pigott	Stevenson Punter	6	Don-Marie Simon	Sara Wilkins
J T Ambrose	Nolda Carr	6	Mae Hyplolite	Mia Fidele

Skidmore/Antigua Collaboration 2008

School	Principal	Grade	Host Teacher	Student Teacher
Pigotts	Delora Smith	6	Sandra Felix	Marissa Kane
Potters	Lois Drew	2	Eloise Hughes	Katarina Dominguez
New Winthorpes	Rosalin Murrain	6	Paulette Henry	Megan Baucher
Old Road	Verona Willock	1	Melinda Farquhar	Abigail McDonald
Old Road	Verona Willock	6	Julia Irish	Erin McAvoy
Five Islands	Hyacinth Barriero	1	Chennelle Dowdye	Erin Newell
Five Islands	Hyacinth Barriero	2	Karian Edwards	Katie Lasky
T N Kirnon	Rolston Nickeo	1	Mitchlyn Thomas	Christopher Kane



Partners for Life!

We did it!

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