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An Integral Analysis of Bahamian Adolescents' Reflections on Their Future Lives After They Complete High School

Kellock, M. Kathleen

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An Integral Analysis of Bahamian Adolescents' Reflections on Their Future Lives After
They Complete High School

by

M. Kathleen Kellock

A THESIS

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Abstract

Adolescents who are nearing the end of their experience in high school are faced with many opportunities and challenges, which may direct their future path towards higher education and career development. The future orientation among Bahamian adolescents was looked at from an integral lens, which guided this research. The beliefs and goals Bahamian adolescents had for their future were explored and included present actions and plans students proposed to realize these goals. Further, the expectations adolescents perceived others had for them and the perceptions they held for themselves also guided this research. Finally, outside influences and systems that impact adolescents' implementation and realization of their goals were identified. The use of integral methodological pluralism, supported by mixed methods research, gathered phenomenological, hermeneutical and empirical data from school and community members involved in a private high school in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Studies on future orientation with adolescents in other countries provided a comparison for and offered additional insight into the phenomenon of college and career readiness.

Key words: adolescents, future, integral, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and empiricism

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“There is *only* a perspective seeing,
only a perspective ‘knowing;’
and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing,
the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing,
the more complete will our ‘concept’ of this thing,
our ‘objectivity,’ be.”

Friedrich Nietzsche (1969)
On the genealogy of morals
(Walter Kaufmann translation)

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Upon the completion of high school, teenagers are faced with a barrage of opportunities. These adolescents must consider how their many options mesh with their own perceptions for the future. High school students often deliberate whether they have embarked on the steps needed to prepare for life after secondary school, regardless if they graduate from high school or not. Today, many students are faced with the harsh reality that getting into college or university, finding employment and achieving financial sustainability are not guarantees, nor certainties.

The images students have for their future and the perceptions they formulate about their role as citizens in the world, creates feelings of both optimism and trepidation. The hopes and fears that young people have for the future influence what they are prepared to do in the present and what they are prepared to work towards (Dunne & Edwards, 2010). Schools have traditionally conceived of educational policies, which place some students on an academic path, whereas others are directed towards a course, which is more applied and vocationally driven. In the past, control over the choices and opportunities for pupils originated from a standardized education paradigm, that directed and governed their choices in occupation or fate in pursuing higher education. Today, governments and school officials transmit the instrumental order of most schools through bureaucratic procedures. This, in turn, affects the curriculum, the transmission of knowledge and the quality of the relationships between pupils and teachers (Wylie, 2008).

Context of the Study

The education system in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas has been and is being influenced and impacted by former colonizing powers and the cultures of surrounding nations. The experience of colonization has had lasting effects on the formerly colonized. Kanu (2003)

suggested that when many former European colonies sought independence, as did The Bahamas in 1973, there was a “march of neocolonialism in the guise of modernization and development in the age of globalization and transnationalism” (p. 76). Today, the influences of multinational corporations, trade blocs and foreign educational initiatives have formed a new type of neocolonialism and imperialism, which continue to impact the decisions and practices in the former protectorate. Addressing these challenges requires hybrid/multinational curriculum thinking and acting consisting of overlays of multiple discourses, and plural assumptions and strategies (Kanu, 2003). Political, social and economic advances have been made in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas in order to propel the nation forward. Not only has this occurred in the past but includes the recent political and social climate as well. The national motto: “Forward, Upward, Onward, Together,” projects a futurist tone, which offers hope and possibilities for the people in this tropical archipelago.

The Bahamas is making attempts to assess how to best serve the needs of its people while exploring better ways to compete on the global stage. In doing so, the nation will need to consider identifying precisely what are the best practices required for educating the populace in order to elevate the social and economic standing of the country, along with maintaining and strengthening global relations. The nature of education is changing and the expectations placed on educational institutions by government agencies and consumers are becoming more complex and difficult to achieve. The direction of national education must prepare students for a world that has become interconnected (Wylie, 2008), where the outcome of globalization is ushering in a new era of required knowledge. “Curricula concentrated on consumer relations, problem solving, entrepreneurialism, and cross-cultural multiskilling are central to this economic transformation. Employers will recruit people with broad educations and complement this with

intensive on-the-job training” (Davies & Guppy, 1997, p. 439).

The American “No Child Left Behind” Act, which came into law in 2002, advocated that American high school students, upon graduation, have the opportunity, if they so chose to pursue a college degree. The directive was to aim students toward having options to access further learning after secondary school. American high schools were to “ready” students for this possibility of post-secondary education. Readiness also required that the student had the developmental maturity to succeed in the increasingly independent worlds of postsecondary education and careers, acquire the cultural knowledge to understand the expectations of the college environment and labor market, and possess the employer-desired skills to succeed in an innovation-based economy (Hooker & Brand, 2010).

Within the context of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, the past generations of citizens have adjusted to societal changes including the emancipation of slavery, the desegregation of schools and national independence. Today students are confronted with the harsh realities of urbanization, overpopulation, and extreme crime, as well as the need to travel to another country to pursue educational aspirations, and then find employment in a job market where there is a saturation of particular professions.

The mission statement of National Education Committee’s (NEC) Vision 2030: Shared Vision for Education (National Education Committee, 2015), a plan for Bahamian education directed to take the nation through the years until 2030, aims to provide quality education and produce multiple pathways to graduation. This plan will “foster academic excellence, social responsibility and equip students with multiple literacies that will enable them to make meaningful contributions as nation builders who are globally competitive” (National Education Committee, 2015 p. 8). For those adolescents, who are near to graduation and are about to

embark on a life post-high school, it is essential for them to explore their own plans and aspirations for the future, and chart the course which will take them there. Assuming a futuristic plan, The Bahamas' Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) has foreseen the need to keep abreast of international trade and commerce, and the future of the country—its young people will need to possess skills and qualifications required to make this plan a reality. Within this mandate young Bahamians will be offered training and skills, which will help increase the numbers of a qualified national workforce and further the economic and social development of the country. Schools and colleges are implored to develop general and technical education programmes, which “will result in thousands of students developing untapped potential, allowing them to adequately participate in various aspects of the economy” (Bahamas Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 34), and provide an individual with opportunities “to enhance or expand his skill set for use in the labour market or to acquire knowledge or skills to enhance his personal life” (National Education Committee, 2015, p. 14). Schools should teach new types of skills and knowledge so as to help their students keep abreast with the changes and advancements in the careers and jobs of today and tomorrow. In order to meet the demands of today's fast-paced, high-performance, technologically efficient world, graduates from high school and university need to be adept in multifunctional skills encompassing qualities in leadership and teamwork, problem solving and communication, time management, self-management, adaptability, analytical thinking, and global consciousness (Bassett, 2005). Curricula should adjust its focus from the tradition of grammar and logic to more creative and transferable skills and ideas including problem solving, entrepreneurialism, and appreciation toward higher education and training (Davies & Guppy, 1999).

Overview of the Study

This research provided insight into the present concern over “the flight of human capital” (Dames, 2014) and the nation’s brain drain. Many students from private high schools in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas will, upon graduation, further their education by attending college, university or other institutions of higher learning, as a continuation of their learning experience in preparation for their futures. I researched the students’ perspectives about this assumption, which included investigating the expectations and perceptions young people have for themselves, as well as their ideas and beliefs about the expectations and perceptions that they believe others have for them. The research questions were directed to address the phenomenon of college readiness through the perspectives of students, teachers, parents, and policy makers.

Adolescents from a private school in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas were interviewed to assess whether young people perceived themselves to be ready for the next phase or journey of their life that addressed their perceptions for their personal experiences, and the perceptions they have for the future of their nation.

The information gathered in this study can guide school administrators and education policy makers to consider the future direction of the national curriculum, identify any gaps that may exist in the current system, and recognize challenges students face everyday as they prepare for their futures after high school. The purpose of the study was to explore the beliefs and perceptions held by Bahamian adolescents, enrolled in a private school, about their future life after high school whether it was at college, university or in the workforce.

Significance of the Study

There has been little research addressing the personal reflections of Bahamian adolescents regarding their perceptions for their own future and the future of their nation. Much

of the current literature available on futures and adolescents focuses on college and career readiness, favouring heavily the American context. Other literature addresses the complexity of investigating futures, and reacting to the hopes and fears adolescents have for the future.

School policy makers, high school educators, and politicians, ought to re-examine the existing high school curriculum so that the purpose of education is not solely on the delivery of a national curriculum and standardized examinations, but is one that focuses on better preparation of students for life. This re-examination, situated in multiple interrelated contexts, lends itself well to the use of Ken Wilber's integral framework, in particular, the AQAL model, the acronym for "all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, and all types" (Wilber, 2006). When educators are able to draw on the five elements of the AQAL model it provides an effective guide for pedagogical design, classroom activities, evaluations, courses and curriculum (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2011). An integral framework provides a comprehensive means of integrating the four dimensions/perspectives/quadrants with the major methodological families of phenomenology, empiricism, structuralism, hermeneutics and systems theory (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2011). Integral theory is interested in the participatory relationship through which multiple ways of knowing the myriad dimensions of reality occurs through various methods of inquiry (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

What do Bahamian adolescents, in an established private school, believe about their readiness for life after high school? High school students are graduating soon and many will be enrolling in local colleges or technical and vocational institutes. Others will travel overseas to attend university, and some will go directly into the workforce. Students who attend private secondary schools in The Bahamas come from an array of socioeconomic backgrounds,

privilege, and opportunity. There is an unwritten assumption that when adolescents graduate from private high schools in The Bahamas they will, either attend college or university for two to four years or more, before beginning their career path, thus delaying their immediate entry into the workforce. Regardless of these factors, do these adolescents perceive themselves to possess the skills and knowledge to be ready for the next phase of their life? What students are taught, including the skills and expertise they acquire and learn while in high school will influence their understanding of their own experiences and their perceptions of personal readiness as they orient themselves for the future. On a broader scale, some adolescents are contemplating whether or not their future means coming home to work or living overseas. Unfortunately, for the nation, some Bahamian adolescents, who travel overseas for postsecondary education, do not return to the country because they believe there are few opportunities for them. This brain drain and reduction of human capital removes talented and educated young people from the shores of the nation, thus impacting the social and economic future of the country.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the beliefs and perceptions held by Bahamian adolescents, who are enrolled in an established private school, about their future life in college/university or in the workforce after they complete high school. The study investigated the forthcoming plans that adolescents have for when their days in high school come to a close. The research examined the views of teachers, parents and education policy makers as they offered insight regarding the college and career readiness of high school students from a private school in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The study uncovered the concerns adolescents have about the future of their nation and their role in it, especially when some young people plan to return from colleges and universities abroad to seek gainful employment at home.

Research Questions

1. What beliefs do adolescents have about their life at college/university or in the workforce after they complete high school?
2. What are adolescents doing to prepare themselves for their life at college/university or in the workforce after they complete high school?
3. (a) What expectations do others (i.e., teachers and parents) have for adolescents and their life at college/university or in the workforce after they complete high school?
(b) What personal expectations do adolescents have for themselves and their life at college/university or in the workforce after they complete high school?
4. What systems (i.e., school board, Ministry of Education) have an influence determining adolescents' readiness for their life at college/university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

Research Design

This research study endeavored to map the territory on the phenomena of college and career readiness and the perceived futures of Bahamian adolescents using mixed methods to address the research questions. For a researcher, using mixed methods research creates the opportunity to use a variety of research methods and techniques by combining quantitative and qualitative research approaches into a single study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Wherein mixed methods affords the researcher to take an eclectic approach to method selection (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and offers the benefits of bridging qualitative and quantitative research by being expansive and diverse, I used an extension of Ken Wilber's integral theory, that of integral methodological pluralism (Wilber, 2006). This approach provided

a framework that I found to be the most functional fit for this research study. It illuminated connections on the phenomenon of college and career readiness from the perceptions of the participants involved. The scaffolding of integral methodological pluralism afforded me with the opportunity to organize perspectives, and use a variety of methods and methodologies to address the research problem and provided the best means in which to answer the research questions.

This framework honours and addresses a more comprehensive and integral way to incorporate multiple perspectives and multiple methodologies. This in turn provided diverse and assorted research options, which offered more flexibility, depth and insight into a phenomenon. The use of integral methodological pluralism guided the research questions for this study, including the investigation and critical review of the literature, and the choice of multiple methodologies and research methods. Due to the scope and time limitations of this study not all elements of the AQAL model, the acronym used for “all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types” (Wilber 2006) were used in this research. The research questions have been nested in the four quadrants, and the viewpoints of individuals and the collective were assessed from the interior (inside) and the exterior (outside), addressing first-, second-, and third person perspectives. The research methodologies of empiricism, phenomenology, hermeneutics and systems theory were addressed in this research study, while the use of semi-structured interviews, demographic questionnaires, and document analysis were the research methods employed in this study.

Whether or not integral theory was integrated wholly, the partial implementation of ideas from integral theory can result in educational experiences that allow students and teachers to see and feel more of the reality in the classroom so as to ready students for the “real world.” Understanding how and where a student’s perception of readiness for the real world fits into

Wilber's AQAL integral framework can help to uncover their levels of consciousness, levels of moral development and perceptions of readiness for a world that may or may not be "ready" for them.

Limitations of the Study

In any research study there exist possible limitations related to the choice of methodology, the scope of the study and the site selection. As an individual researcher, using integral theory and multiple methods, I was required to delimit the present study to a scope manageable for a single researcher. The choice of methodology, as well as the delimitations resulted in the following limitations:

Public secondary school students and teachers were not interviewed in this study despite the fact that their input and observations would be pertinent to the study. The considerable number of public schools and teaching faculty to investigate and explore was daunting for a study at this time. However, it was important to recognize that the national curriculum including the B.G.C.S.E. national examination scores were based on the results of both the public and private school student populations. The key limitation with the study was that it was taking place in a singular high school. Although it offered the best example of a private high school, which had long-term experience with accelerating the national curriculum and its delivery of the American College Board examinations—longer than most schools—it was selected as the best fit for this study.

Many of the thirteen independent secondary schools on the island of New Providence also include the three sections of their school (early learning centre, primary school, and a high school), but did not have a large student population base and thus did not present a large teaching faculty needed for this study.

Interviewing a small sample of 22 students in grades 11 and 12, 14 teachers and eight parents from Taino Academy, the private high school where I am employed, was a logical choice for this research study. Gaining access to students from other schools, in terms of time and convenience presented a challenge. While many private high schools were in session for the same time frame, getting to them, and arranging after school transportation for students was seen to be a challenge. As there are no school buses, parents collect their children immediately after school unless the students were involved in extra-curricular activities. Given the complications of travel throughout the island, time, and access to other schools, when a 60-minute, open-ended interview method with over 20 students was planned, I had to concede that the timeframe of interviewing individual students in other schools would have been a logistical nightmare. Therefore, it was advantageous to carry out the interviews at Taino Academy. Being granted time from my school to carry out interviews at another institution was not looked upon favourably. This would pose teaching substitution constraints on Taino Academy's teaching faculty, including impositions of setting up interview space and time at another institution.

As a teacher working in the country on a work visa, I understood the trepidation that some teachers may feel in this situation. Therefore, the support from the school and the protection of participants' identities was vital. Teachers who were temporary residents and in the country on working visas, I perceived to be hesitant to participate in the study. I sensed that some teachers might be reluctant to talk to a foreign national, such as myself, to discuss topics about the national curriculum, which could place their employment and status in the country in jeopardy. However, this was not the case.

Definitions of Terms

Some of the following terms have been identified and defined to help explain the local

and international educational terms used in the educational system in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Advanced Placement (College Board).

The Advanced Placement (AP) is a program, created in 1955, by the American College Board that currently offers 34 courses and college-level examinations to high school students in the United States, Canada, and many international schools around the world. AP courses are administered in more than 180 countries and territories around the globe, and are recognized in the admissions process in more than 4,000 universities both in the United States and worldwide (The College Board International, 2015).

B.A.I.S.S.

The Bahamas Association of Independent Secondary Schools (B.A.I.S.S.) comprises 13 independent (private) secondary schools on the island of New Providence, The Bahamas. This organization began in the 1980s and was a precursor to the now defunct Headmasters Association, which formed in 1950. The B.A.I.S.S. focuses on Christian principles and the operational considerations of academics, sports and culture within the independent secondary schools on New Providence.

B.G.C.S.E.

The Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (B.G.C.S.E.) is a national standardized curriculum includes 25 to 27 external school examinations written annually during May and June that are developed in consultation with the Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate. The Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education is “based on the United Kingdom General Certificate of Secondary Education (G.C.S.E.) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (I.G.C.S.E.) models, but it has been tailored to meet

the specific needs of The Bahamas” (The Government of The Bahamas, 2011, para. 2). The B.G.C.S.E. examinations were introduced in 1993, twenty years after the nation’s independence from the United Kingdom, and are to be taken after three years of high school study culminating at Grade 12 (The Government of The Bahamas, 2011). Originally, this examination process was to replace all other secondary school examinations (Bethel, 1999).

College and career readiness.

The American College Test (ACT) defines college and career readiness as “the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing first-year courses at a postsecondary institution (such as a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school) without the need for remediation” (ACT, 2011, p. iii). It is the ability of a student to “qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses leading to a baccalaureate or certificate, or career pathway-oriented training programs without the need for remedial or developmental coursework” (Conley, 2011, p. 1; Conley 2014, p. 51).

International Baccalaureate Programme (IB).

The International Baccalaureate Programme (2013) is a non-profit educational foundation, which was founded in 1968, and operates in 146 countries. The first IB schools were predominately private international schools; today, over half of all IB World Schools are state schools. The International Baccalaureate programme is being offered in at least one independent secondary school on the island of New Providence.

Perceptions.

Perceptions are the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). “Perceptions are what people perceive as facts. They are rooted in long-held assumptions and one’s own view of the world or frame of reference” (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2012, p. 106).

Educational Implications

High schools can provide an environment to help adolescents plan and work through the process of preparing for tertiary education or the workforce. The intention of this study was to design it so that, in the future, it could be implemented in other high schools, public or private within the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. All high school students are required to write the national examinations, they will be finishing high school (graduation or otherwise) and have opinions and perceptions of their future, whether they plan to attend university, college or a trade school or enter immediately into the workforce. Students, teachers, parents, school administrators and educational policy makers need to be aware of what it means to be college and career ready, and promote a college and career going culture in high schools so that adolescents can engage in acquiring the knowledge and specific skills to provide them with a greater chance of success in the future, after their experiences in high school.

Private high schools in The Bahamas, including Taino Academy, have offered additional and supplemental courses to their curriculum. In some schools the implementation and offering of the International Baccalaureate and the American College Board courses (i.e., SAT and AP) have given some students a “leg up” in their preparation, awareness and readiness for college even before they apply and are accepted into a tertiary educational institution. More recently, some public high schools participated in a pilot study offering AP courses that commenced in September 2015.

In order for the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to keep a competitive edge and improve the nation’s level of development, it needs to revisit its national educational policy to ensure high adult literacy rates, and provide students at both public and private schools with opportunities,

which will give them access to courses to ably assist them in order to be college or university ready.

The implications for the collected data in this research study can provide educational policy makers an overview and insight into the student perspective surrounding the phenomenon of college and career readiness. The information and perspectives gleaned in this research study may offer awareness not yet considered that can affect the creation, direction and sustainability of educational initiatives implemented by the school and the nation as it applies to high school students in The Bahamas.

Summary

As students strive towards meeting the demands, expectations and requirements for the completion of high school, or identify a path for future study or employment, they face the challenge of knowing whether or not they are prepared or ready for a world that is becoming more globalized. The students will be challenged to become proficient in a plentitude of skills other than literacy, numeracy, empiricism and technology. It will require them to possess competencies in leadership within both academic venues and in the community at large. They will need to be equally skilled and “literate” in geography, ecology, cultures and history. “It means that students will need to accept multiple perspectives on world events and on the fragile interrelationship between the global economy and sustainable environments” (Bassett, 2005, p. 78). The struggle also exists for schools and educators to offer a curriculum that will help these students meet these needs. It entails changing the way the educational constructs of a school are organized. The curricula content must therefore be more relevant to global challenges and the events of everyday, where the student becomes engaged in their own learning.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation reports on the study of the perceptions of Bahamian adolescents about their future life after high school. Chapter 2 contains the review of significant literature on the concept of the future, characteristics of adolescents and the phenomenon of college and career readiness. Additionally, chapter 2 attends to two conceptual frameworks to situate this study, Ken Wilber's AQAL model (2006) and David Conley's Keys to College and Career Readiness (2014). Chapter 3 describes integral methodological pluralism and explains the methodologies and methods used for this study. Chapter 4 provides an account of the student and adult participants involved within the context of the study. Included in this chapter are the participants' Kosmic addresses and their perceptions of college readiness. Chapter 5 extracts the emerging themes of the study, which are identified and explained based on Wilber's (2006) "all quadrants, all levels" (AQAL model). The emerging themes are explained using the participants' personal accounts. Chapter 6 categorizes the emerging themes into four central themes. The final chapter explains the research questions, includes my personal reflections, and identifies the limitations and future educational considerations that transpired from this research.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

The aim of this literature review was to look at related contexts surrounding the choices and decisions that adolescents make, the beliefs and expectations held by adolescents about their future, and the role and influence others have on young people as they orient themselves toward the future. Within the literature review many themes have been addressed including:

1. The developmental identity of adolescence to adulthood;
2. The beliefs and aspirations that adolescents hold concerning their perception of personal readiness for the future, including their personal hopes, wishes and fears and self-efficacy;
3. The plans and actions surrounding the adolescents' future decisions and concerns;
and
4. The systems (i.e., school board, Ministry of Education), which influence and affect the choices that adolescents make pertaining to their future.

The future orientation of an adolescent can impact their personal, local and global perspectives of the world.

Imagining a Future

The anticipation of high school graduation creates a plethora of emotions for adolescents. For young people, the time leading up to this milestone causes much reflection, planning and consideration. Today, many adolescents have an array of opportunities available to them including pursuing higher education, beginning long term employment, starting a family, and continuing offering service to community and nation. Thinking about and planning for a future after high school is something young people consider, not only after graduation but also in the years leading up to this event. Some high school students have anticipated and dreamed about

their future for many years; others are still uncertain about the direction they should follow. Unfortunately, for many adolescents their high school experiences, dreams, aspirations and plans are met with the harsh reality that gaining acceptance to college or university, finding employment and achieving financial comfort and economic sustainability is not a guarantee, nor a certainty (Bangser, 2008; Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013).

The future as a proximal or distal concept is something many adolescents may or may not consider for themselves. For some adolescents, the future is solely about them, their continued education and employment, and beginning a family. For others, the future is broad and encompasses ideas and thoughts about their nation and the sustainability of the planet. The concept of the future for many adolescents comes with mixed emotions. The future for some young people is something to look forward to, and for others, it is looked upon with dread. During this developmental time, young people contemplate their future and their role as citizens in the world to be. The hopes and fears for the future influence what young people are prepared to do in the present and what they are prepared to work towards (Dunne & Edwards, 2010). For adolescents, the idea of the future can be an exciting prospect, a path and territory uncharted.

The future may also be a concept that may encompass near or distant events and goals. For adolescents, a future after high school opens doors for further education, career aspirations, and family. Schmid, Phelps, and Lerner (2011) recognized that “adolescence is a time when planning for the future increases, as youth are pressed to find roles and to develop identities and self-definitions that will propel them towards their future adult life” (p. 1127). It is during this time, and within the context of high school, that research with adolescents offers opportunities when “young people see themselves in regard to ‘the future’ and why ‘futures’ processes are so

valuable for them” (Gidley & Hampson, 2008, p. 274). Listening to and assessing the perceptions adolescents have for their future was essential for this research.

Conceptual Framework

Two conceptual models were considered to provide a scaffold for the research including Ken Wilber’s (2006) integral theory, or AQAL “all quadrants, all levels” and David Conley’s (2014) Keys to College and Career Readiness. These models provided structure and direction in which to explore the relationships and perspectives adolescents have toward their future.

Integral Theory.

Wilber’s (2006) integral theory, or AQAL, “all quadrants, all levels”, short for “all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types” outlined the framework for an inclusive or integral approach, especially as it allows individuals to approach educational concerns and issues more completely. Wilber suggests that AQAL is only a map, a cartogram, a diagram to be interpreted for and by the individual who or the organization, which chooses to use it (Wilber, 2006). Like any map, the cartographer, or mapmaker, outlines the essential elements and components for consideration, which are open for interpretation by the user of the map. The path or route the individual chooses to follow, along with the intervening obstacles and opportunities he or she meets along the way are integrated within the experience of the journey. Integral theory is interested in the participatory relationship through which multiple ways of knowing and the many dimensions of reality occur through various methods of inquiry and this can be done by drawing on the many elements of quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2011). Incorporating more elements of AQAL broadens our scope and strengthens our ability to understand people and see things more clearly from many perspectives (Wilber, Patten, Leonard, & Morelli, 2008).

For the purpose of this research, I looked at the perspectives adolescents had pertaining to their future from each of the four quadrants within Wilber’s (2006) integral theory, including the eight primordial perspectives encompassing integral methodological pluralism (see Figure 2.1). I also included David Conley’s (2014) Keys to College and Career Readiness as an additional conceptual framework.

The four research questions have been placed in the four quadrants of Wilber’s (2006) integral framework (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Research Questions in the four quadrants of the AQAL model

	INTERIOR	EXTERIOR
INDIVIDUAL	<p>UPPER LEFT (Experience)</p> <p>1. What beliefs do adolescents have about their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</p>	<p>UPPER RIGHT (Behavior)</p> <p>2. What are adolescents doing to prepare themselves for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</p>
COLLECTIVE	<p style="text-align: right;">I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WE</p> <p>3. (a) What expectations do others (i.e., teachers and parents) have for adolescents and their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</p> <p>(b) What personal expectations do adolescents have for themselves and their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</p> <p>LOWER LEFT (Culture)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">IT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ITS</p> <p>4. What systems (i.e., school board, Ministry of Education) have an influence determining adolescents’ readiness for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</p> <p>LOWER RIGHT (Systems)</p>

Figure 2.1. The placement of the research questions as seen from within the conceptual framework of the integral theory AQAL model, which encompasses perspectives from adolescents and their community.

The upper two quadrants, the upper left (UL) and the upper right (UR) address the

singular and personal experiences, feelings, and behaviors of the individual, whereas the lower two quadrants, the lower left (LL) and the lower right (LR) address elements of the individual within the collective. The upper right (UR) focuses on the exterior of the individual, in particular the behaviors and consciousness of an individual. In the upper left (UL), it is the interior of the individual that is addressed. This includes the intentional actions, the thoughts, feelings, and the sensations of the individual in any experience or phenomenon. The lower left (LL) addresses the cultural influences of an individual from the collective perspective. Within this quadrant, an individual becomes aware of the shared values and feelings, and worldviews of a particular group (Wilber, 2006). The lower right (LR) addresses the social components and educational systems that are a part of an individual's life. Wilber (2006) advised that to be as integral as possible, all four quadrants must be used to show the growth, development and evolution of an individual (p. 23).

It is the focus of the upper left quadrant, the behaviors and consciousness of the adolescent, which will offer a significant contribution to the study as it shows how “the self unfolds from egocentric to ethnocentric to worldcentric” (Wilber, 2006, p. 23). This transformation and growth of the individual to group awareness, in the upper left, permits the expansion of social systems to evolve into complex systems in the lower right (Wilber, 2006).

The four quadrants become the housing unit for all aspects and experiences of the individual. Within each quadrant of Wilber's (2006) integral framework, various aspects and elements of an individual can be placed. These elements identify and include the individual's stage and state of consciousness, including their character or personality type. The level of development of an individual is also mapped from an array of developmental theories and characteristics, including cognitive, interpersonal, emotional, self-identity and needs.

The research questions for this study were positioned in the four quadrants to address the future orientation of adolescents as they transition from personal perspectives to global perspectives. Within each quadrant, two perspectives—the inside and outside view of an event or holon (Wilber, 2006) are experienced (see Figure 2.2). Encompassing all quadrants is essential in an integral approach, but not all elements of the integral framework are required to make an impact.

The use of the eight primordial perspectives, proposed by Wilber, show the perceptions of adolescents looking at their own attitudes and actions from within, and identifies perspectives of others who are experiencing similar situations. On the outside, the agencies and systems in which adolescents interact can also influence the perceptions young people have about their future. By examining the perceptions and ideas adolescents' have for their future provided an outlook for and a connection between both the individual and society.

Figure 2.2. Integral Methodological Pluralism

	Interior	Exterior
Singular	<p style="text-align: center;">I INSIDE Adolescents' beliefs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OUTSIDE (Perceptions of others)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IT INSIDE Adolescents' actions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OUTSIDE (Parameters for the actions)</p>
Plural	<p style="text-align: center;">WE INSIDE Personal Expectations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OUTSIDE (Expectations of others)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ITS INSIDE Systems & Influences</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OUTSIDE (Springboards or Barriers?)</p>

Figure 2.2. Adapted from *Integral Spirituality*, p. 36, by K. Wilber, 2006, Boston, MA: Integral Books.

The transcendence and inclusion of multiple perspectives show how the four quadrants can explain adolescents' future orientation beginning in the upper left (UL) quadrant. This quadrant aimed to address the beliefs, hopes, fears and aspirations of adolescents regarding their future. Asking adolescents about their personal stance for the future and inviting them to reflect on their personal outlook for the future were both aptly situated in the lower left (LR) quadrant. Wilber (2006) showed that within the upper left quadrant, an adolescent engages in introspection where he or she investigates the felt experiences or thoughts, feelings, and sensations as seen from the "inside" of himself or herself. This introspection enables adolescents to be creative, optimistic and idealistic and self-reflective (Lapsley, 2014). The upper right (UR) quadrant addresses the actions adolescents have currently engaged in or plan to partake in to prepare

themselves for their future. Aspects of the future orientation process include the motivation, planning and evaluation of future goals and aspirations (Malmberg, Ehrman, & Lithen, 2005; Nurmi, 1991).

The lower left (LL) quadrant explained the involvement of others, which may influence the decisions made by adolescents towards their future. The expectations of other parties, including parents, peers, high school personnel and institutions in the community, may greatly influence the decisions or may only have a momentary impact. The influence these individuals have on the adolescent may be strong or fleeting, admired or discounted, and will be dependent on the relationships that exist between the parties and within the context of the situation. Adolescents are more likely to turn to their parents for support and guidance with the really big decisions, such as applying to college and university, and making career decisions (Kerpelman & Eryigit, 2008; Kim & Schneider, 2005; Lee, Rojewski, & Hill, 2013; Nurmi & Pulliainen, 1991; Strom, Strom, Whitten, & Kraska, 2014).

The lower right (LR) quadrant identified the systems and agencies that have an impact on the future orientation of the adolescent, such as political policies and practices addressing immigration policies for students who may be attending universities in foreign lands, including the administration of student visas, and government scholarships.

Within this framework, adolescents were able to look at their own beliefs, actions, expectations and influences. From the exterior quadrant, the “it”, an adolescent was able to look at the actions he or she is making towards their future. From the inside, the adolescent identified the personal plans and measures he or she needed to consider in order to ensure that his or her future plans come to fruition. From the outside, the adolescent becomes aware of the requirements for high school graduation. In the context of this study, the graduation requirements

of high school students were dependent on the mandates of the national school system, which may vary slightly between public and private schools in that very same national education system.

Within the interior quadrant, the “I”, an adolescent looked at the beliefs, fears, hopes and aspirations he or she possesses about their future. From the inside, adolescents acknowledged what is realistic for them and their future, based on their personal perceptions of self to incorporate and fulfill their hopes and dreams and minimize their fears for the future. On the outside, they envisioned how other adolescents, their classmates, experienced during this time of development and the events that they may be encountering leading up to the time post-high school. Oftentimes, the students assess their achievement next to that of their peers. The comparison and competition that adolescents’ place on themselves and others can spark and spurn great concern in the latter years of high school. On the outside, adolescents considered the aspirations and uncertainties they have for their nation and the planet, and thus made attempts to understand their role in this impending future.

Within the interior quadrant, the “we”, adolescents addressed the expectations that they had for themselves and acknowledged the expectations that others have for them regarding their future. From the inside, adolescents addressed that others—parents, teachers, school and community—had expectations for them and for their future. The role of parents figures prominently in their child’s future, especially in the expectations that young people have about attending and succeeding in college or university. High school students are more likely to consider enrolling in university when their parents have high education expectations for them (Kezar, 2001). Adolescents must be aware of the course offerings in high school that can help them gain admission into university, and be mindful of the compulsory expectations for

graduation, including but not limited to the required cumulative grade point average. From the outside, adolescents must be cognizant of the expectations of colleges and universities, and other postsecondary educational institutions, including knowledge of postsecondary options and admissions procedures. The educational system in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, in which the adolescents in this study were a part, was also looked at from the outside. The future orientation of adolescents, within the parameters and curriculum of the national educational system, was assessed to determine whether or not Bahamian young people possessed the skills and knowledge to be college ready in nations other than their own.

Within the exterior quadrant, the “its” quadrant, adolescents needed to be cognizant of the systems, organizations and other elements in society that influence or impact their orientation toward the future. From the outside, adolescents needed to be aware of the various systems that could springboard or curtail their future plans. These exteriors included political systems, legal and economic systems, and educational systems (Wilber et al., 2008). The systems may create barriers and set limitations to the direction and orientation adolescents may follow in pursuit of their future. This included the challenges of obtaining student study visas for those young people who will be studying abroad, and securing financial aid or national scholarships to help offset the growing cost of an international postsecondary education. Presently, the concern on the issue of brain drain and loss of human capital, where young people who have studied abroad and chosen not to return to The Bahamas, has troubled the nation. Young people have become disillusioned about the state of their country and see no hope, prospects or a safe existence in their own country (Dames, 2014). From the inside of this quadrant, adolescents needed to navigate through the various systems. Historically, young people in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas have had to work through the systems imposed by the nation in the years of slavery, segregation in society

and in schools, civil rights and national independence. The educational system in The Bahamas in the past imitated and reinforced class and racial division in the country. It was the purpose of schools and education in the years up to and after the emancipation of slavery to provide minimal literacy and sound moral training, along with the minimum basic skills and appropriate work ethic for factory labor rather than social mobility or even useful skills (Craton & Saunders, 1998). Schooling came to be defined not in terms of readiness for life, but of preparation for the job market (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2015). Before and after the time to nationalize, or “Bahamianize” the education system (Craton & Saunders, 1998; Smith, 2012), adolescents were exposed to curricula and education models from many countries (Craton & Saunders, 1998). The curriculum offered in the schools in the past was first set out by the churches and then by the Cambridge examination boards in the United Kingdom (Bethel, 1999). Presently, the country offers its own national curriculum, yet some schools have included additional course offerings from the American College Board and the International Baccalaureate programme. The perception adolescents have about these interior and exterior systems will undoubtedly have an impact on their acquisition and orientation into the future.

The inclusion and incorporation of the four quadrants helps to ensure that all components of an integral framework are met. This permitted both the views and perceptions of the individual and the collective to be addressed. AQAL, as an integral model, is unique to the experiences of the individual or agency that uses it. An individual’s engagement in the four quadrants of Wilber’s (2006) AQAL framework, “all quadrants, all levels”, can occur simultaneously and can create a seamless evolution for the individual as they progress along the path to their future.

Although we are not in the possession of a crystal ball and are unable to see into the immediate or distant future, adolescents often have to defer to the expertise of adults, parents, teachers, mentors, who have already been to college and are currently working in their chosen career for advice or recommendations.

Conley's College and Career Readiness.

The concept of readiness as it applies to college and career is not new. David Conley (2011), founder of the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) presented a definition of college readiness and provided a concentric circle model (see Figure 2.3 and 2.4) to project the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes required of adolescents as they prepare for a future after their experience in high school (Conley, 2008, 2011, 2014).

Conley (2011) proposed that the definition for college readiness could be used as a conceptual framework. Within this well-established framework, the skills and content adolescents are required to possess to prepare them for college and university are addressed and incorporated in the high school curriculum and other programs of instruction. Conley (2014) believed that a high school student is deemed *college ready* when all facets or keys of his framework are mastered and attained. Although some students may not successfully grasp all keys, it does not mean that they are incapable of gaining acceptance into a college or university. Although this framework may only be a predictor of college readiness, some adolescents may struggle a little more when they get into college (Conley, 2014). Within his earlier model, Conley (2008, 2011, 2014) depicted a model using four concentric circles (see Figure 2.3), which showcased the attributes an adolescent student should possess in order to have a successful transition from high school to university.

Figure 2.3. The Four Dimensions of College and Career Readiness

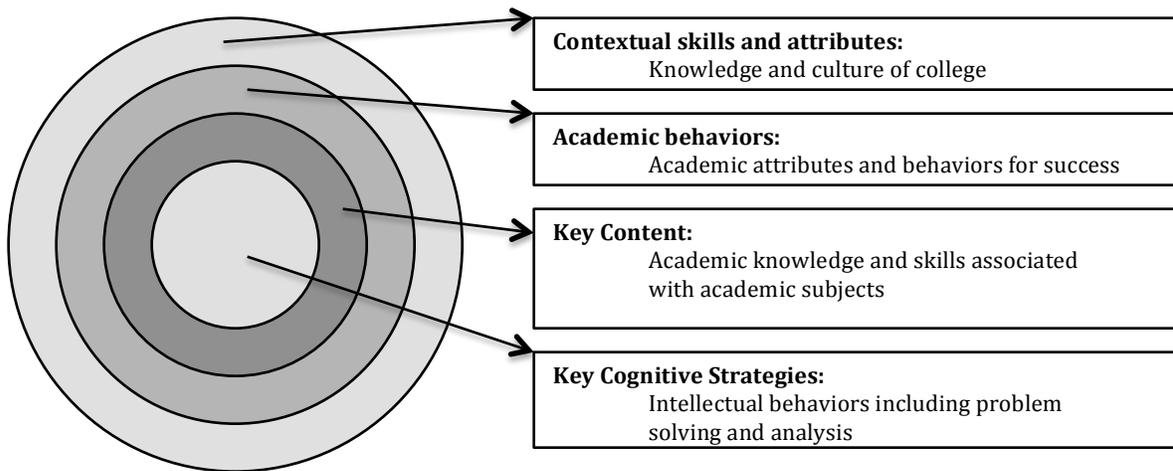


Figure 2.3. Adapted from Conley, D. T. (2011). *Redefining College Readiness*, Volume 5, Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. Used with permission.

The dimensions of college and career readiness (Conley, 2011) suggested a hierarchical approach wherein an adolescent is able to process from one facet/dimension/circle to the next once they master the previous one. In the inner circle *Key Cognitive Strategies* identify the intellectual behaviors that can be developed over a lifetime including intellectual openness, inquisitiveness, analysis and reasoning, interpretation, precision and accuracy, and problem solving (Conley, 2011). *Key Content* addresses the academic knowledge and skills associated with the main academic subjects offered in high schools including English, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and world languages (Conley, 2008). Skills and knowledge in technology are deemed equally important, as they are often associated with specific career aspirations that many adolescents possess. *Academic Behaviors* include the academic attributes and academic behaviors an adolescent will need to have in order to succeed in college or university. Conley (2011) identified that this range of behaviors reflect greater student self-awareness, self-monitoring, and self-control necessary for academic success, including time management, study skills and working in groups (p. 16). The outer circle, *Contextual Skills and*

Awareness, outlines the knowledge adolescents must be in possession of having in order for them to be fully prepared, ready and succeed in college or university, plus understanding how to apply to college and university and know how to adjust and interact while they are there (Conley, 2011). This includes understanding the culture of the college and university, and establishing and maintaining relationships with faculty and peers while in college (Conley, 2011; Martinez, 2014). A student who possesses all four components and has sufficient mastery of key cognitive strategies, key content knowledge, academic behaviors, and contextual knowledge will be defined as being college-ready (Conley, 2011).

Conley's (2014) concentric circle model has been revamped to show that the four keys of college and career readiness are co-equal in importance (see Figure 2.4). This modification has aligned closely with the Hewlett Foundation model to include: Key cognitive strategies (think); Key content knowledge (know); Key learning skills and techniques (act); and Key transition knowledge and skills (go) (p. 114). Conley indicates that, "a student lacking in any one of the four could conceivably fail college, ...and that one [facet from the former diagram] "was not more important than the others, which is what the concentric circles imply" (Personal communication, May 11, 2015).

Figure 2.4 Keys to College and Career Readiness

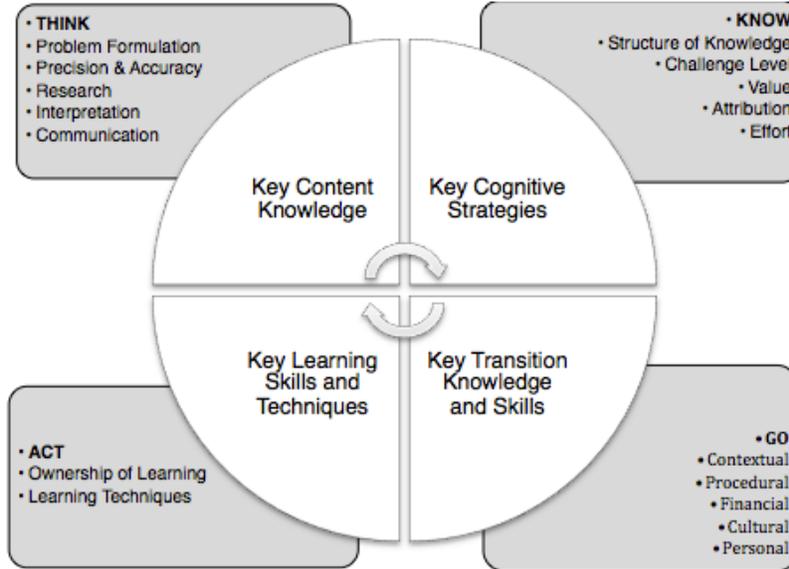


Figure 2.4. Reprinted from Conley, D. T. (2014). *Getting ready for college, careers, and the common core: What every educator needs to know*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Used with permission.

Summary.

Determining the readiness or degree of preparedness adolescents possess for college or university was aided by utilizing a combination of conceptual frameworks including Wilber’s (2006) integral framework, AQAL model, and David Conley’s (2014) Keys of College and Career Readiness. Adolescents frequently revisit their college and university plans and career aspirations while in high school, and these plans may cause high school students to explore additional and alternative postsecondary educational options, abandoning and going through a period of disengagement, only to start again. For other adolescents, the actions and behaviors they engage in while in high school may be abandoned so that they can realize their future goals. Today, many adolescents in the developed and industrialized world are delaying their entry into the domestic roles of spouse and parent until after their high education has been completed and their career has been established (Arnett, 1998).

Concept of the Future

The future is tentative and unpredictable. Mapping a route to the future requires understanding and awareness about possible futures. Unfortunately, many underestimate the complexity involved in this learning process (Rogers & Tough, 1996). Much of the research in the past regarding the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents looked at possible, probable and perceived futures. The hopes and fears of adolescents and their future has been investigated while looking at the influence of family, education, health, work and career (Lindfors, Solantaus, & Rimpelä, 2012; Numri, 1991; Seginer, 2008; Seginer, 2003; Seginer & Halabi-Kheir, 1998; Seginer & Lilach, 2004), and maladaptive situations involving global and social threats such as violence, unemployment, economic uncertainty and political unrest (Nikolayenko, 2011; Nurmi, 1991; Poole & Cooney, 1987; Seginer, 2008). Optimism and pessimism surrounding the idea of future have also been studied. The aspects of self-efficacy, self-concept and self-esteem (Seginer & Halabi-Kheir, 1998) have also been explored within and around this topic.

The future and future orientations.

The origin of the word, future, is derived from the Latin *futurus*, from a base meaning of “grow or become” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014) or “going to be” (Waite, 2012, p. 294). The origin of the words adolescence and adolescent, come from the Latin verb *adolescere* meaning “to grow up” (Kegan, 1994, p. 19; Oxford Dictionaries, 2014) or “to mature” (Waite, 2012, p. 9). The social and cognitive development of young people during the phase of adolescence causes them to ‘grow, mature and become’ a new self. This new self then continues to progress, grow, mature and become, in the years following high school. The similarity in the base meaning of the two words, future and adolescence, ‘to grow’, makes a poignant argument to address in this research as well as looking at the relationship between these two concepts.

There have been numerous international studies on future orientations with children and adolescents, which have extended as far back as the 1950s. The topics researched encompass themes surrounding adolescents' concerns and worries about the future, expected events, future family and career, future expectancies, hopes and fears, future outlooks, and goals and desires (Nurmi, 1991). These studies express how children and adolescents see their future, which encompasses the motivation, planning and evaluation surrounding the orientation to their future. Nurmi (1991) suggested that the planning for the future transcends any age. The perceptions held by adolescents, concerning their future, are often reflected in their personal hopes and fears. It is during this developmental period that many adolescents think about their future as adults. Young people consider their future prospects and undertake means to prepare for it. As a result, the numerous studies on future orientation have been particularly relevant to the developmental stage of adolescence, as there has been much research focused on this age group (Nurmi, 1991; Seginer & Lilach, 2004).

The future may also encompass near or distant events and goals for an individual. For adolescents, the prospects of a future after high school opens doors for further education, career aspirations, and starting a family. It is during this time "when planning for the future increases, as youth are pressed to find roles and to develop identities and self-definitions that will propel them towards their future adult life" (Schmid, Phelps & Lerner, 2011, p. 1127).

The orientation to the future is a complex and multistage process (Nurmi, 1991; Rogers, 1997; Rogers & Tough, 1996), which varies from person-to-person within numerous contexts, and reflects the individual's anticipation of events (Kerpelman & Eryigit, 2008). The considerations and visions for the future give cause for us to reflect on both the events of the past and the thoughts of the present. Lindfors et al. (2012) suggested that these pictures of our future

“act as a mirror of our times, reflecting the ideological and political values and ethos of society and its social and cultural norms” (p. 992), in which this thoughtful consideration may provide a roadmap and compass guiding us toward possible futures for self and society. What adolescents envision for their personal future includes the thoughts, dreams, expectations and beliefs about the future (Kerpelman & Eryigit, 2008). This is dependent and developed from “perceptions and knowledge built on experiences of the past and present as well as from their age-related normative demands and developmental tasks” (Lindfors et. al., 2012, p. 992).

Future orientation is often defined in terms of behavioral and motivational variables (Seginer & Noyman, 2005). Individuals, and adolescents in particular, form an idea and picture on what their future will be like. Future orientation is constructed by studying the transition of adolescents into adulthood in modern cultural settings, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity (Seginer & Lilach, 2004). Future orientation literature uncovers and explores common themes in the three main life domains of school enrolment, military service, higher education, work and career, marriage and family, as well as seeing how the individual depicts the future for themselves, others and the community (Seginer & Lilach, 2004; Seginer & Halabi-Kheir, 1998). In 1998, Seginer and Halabi-Kheir’s study with Israeli adolescents assessed the hopes and fears young people have for the future. This study showed that across age groups and gender, adolescents of different ethnic groups construct their future orientation slightly differently. Some adolescents placed a stronger emphasis on depicting a future on normative roles and expectations, such as attending school, getting a job, getting married and having a family. Other adolescents viewed their future from a broader perspective, which addressed the concerns, moods and emotions of the personal self, of others and the wider community. In an additional study, Seginer and Lilach (2004) examined the gender differences of eleventh grade Israeli

Jewish students and the effects of optimism and pessimism, self-evaluation and loneliness on future orientation in adolescents. The motivation of adolescents to use future orientation, especially outlining their hopes and fears may be significant as they explore and make commitments to pursue their options for the future.

The perceptions and realities that high school students possess may be obvious or evident to them, or they may only be imagined or assumed. The apparent perceptions are what the student thinks and feels the future should be, whereas an assumed perception is one that currently exists, because of the possibilities as seen by others. In theory, the others can comprise of any individual, with whom the student has contact. Different experiences, in the past and present of the student, can have different influences on their perceptions for the future. Erikson (1968) acknowledged that during adolescence, when young people plan and assess their future aspirations, they must see a link between “that which he perceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and expect of him” (p. 87). Each student has his or her own perception of their future, one of which is interpreted as is, and one that is perceived. Oftentimes, there exists a possible future that can be collectively or culturally agreed upon, which can be based on the influences of family, friends, community and social systems. The experiences they have had, lead many students to have a prior knowledge or a pre-understanding, which allows them to see a future, or believe in a future, which they consider to be plausible. This is a future in which they envision for themselves (Hut, 1999).

Proximal and distal future.

Future orientation, whether it is proximal or distal, possesses questions, concerns, anticipations, different beliefs and aspirations for an adolescent. Regardless of the two main paths adolescents may take after high school; enrolling and completing higher education or

entering the workforce, their future is often planned and anticipated but may not come to fruition. The work surrounding “futures in education” was primarily concerned with the probable views of the future held by young people. This transition has gone “beyond the idea of the probable futures to include consideration of the possible and the preferred futures” [emphasis in the original] (Gidley & Hampson, 2008, p. 281). Often the proximal future paths that adolescents take are not completely their aspirations, they become the hopes and dreams of others, and it takes time and maturity for them to find a better fit for themselves in years to come. It is therefore suggested that educators and policy makers pay greater attention to the perceptions adolescents currently have for the future, so that they are able to provide an education that best suits and prepares young people for the future (Hicks, 1996).

Young people are genuinely interested in their future prospects, and as adolescents grow and mature, their concern and attention for their personal interest also increases. Nurmi (1991) suggested that adolescents envision and orient their future based on three facets including motivation, planning and evaluation. It is the perceived and probable future, which sparks and motivates action among young people. Yet, for some adolescents their personal perception of what it takes to achieve their desired future is immature and unrealistic.

Summary.

The future is a moment yet to be. It is something yet unwritten, unexplored and unmapped. The milestone of high school graduation acts as a springboard for adolescents to drive themselves to chart their own course and create their own map for their future. Planning for the near or distant future can influence the path followed and the degree of success experienced by an adolescent. Looking at the many perspectives held by an individual or an organization allows for understanding situations in the world and relationships with others (Wilber et al.,

2008). Education in both secondary and postsecondary institutions will look very different in the future and will reflect the skills needed for the new careers and occupations of the economy and society (Conley, 2014). Educational institutions and systems should investigate the perspectives adolescents have toward the future in order to provide the best educational practices. Gathering the perspectives of adolescents toward the future can help educational institutions and systems create curriculum and educational practices that best serves young people and prepares them for an ever evolving and changing world.

Adolescence

Much research has been done on adolescents and their perception of the future, whether it is about their personal future or the futures on a global scale. Researching adolescents provides the opportunity to gather data on developmental, social and cognitive perspectives young people have about their future. Adolescents were good participants for this topic of research. It is during this developmental stage that young people begin the transition for child to adult. During adolescence, young people construct their images of the future by relating to different domains and contexts. The content of these domains may be personal or social, realistic or ideal, and reality-based or fantastic (Seginer & Lilach, 2004).

Developmental characteristics.

Adolescence is a period of development, a “no man’s land between childhood and maturity” (Erikson, 1963, p. 340), following the onset of puberty to the attainment of adulthood, which continues through the teenage years, and terminates legally at the age of majority usually 18 years of age (Colman, 2006). The time when adolescence ends is not only a biological change but a social change as well (Arnett, 2000). Arnett agrees with the demarcation of the age of 18 years as the end of adolescence for the following reasons:

...a good age marker for the end of adolescence and the beginning of emerging adulthood, is appropriate as it is the age at which most young people finish secondary school, leave their parents' home, and reach the legal age of adult status in a variety of respects.

(Arnett, 2000, p. 477)

The words adolescent and adolescence are used to identify a relationship, which exists between adolescence and adulthood, deriving from the Latin verb *adolescere* meaning “to grow up” (Kegan, 1994, p. 19). Kegan (1994) suggested that during the period of adolescence, a culture attempts to understand what its want young people to “grow up to” and to explore the expectations and requirements a society requires of its youth.

In the latter stage of adolescence, young people go through a transition period where they experience and try out roles leading them to adulthood. It is during Erikson’s (1963) fifth developmental stage, identity and role confusion that adolescents aim to find out who they are, and where they want to go in the future. It is during this time that they are confronted with new roles to take on as they move toward adulthood. Briones, Tabernero, and Arenas (2011) perceived that during the time of adolescence, teens continue to question and reflect on personal issues including the expectations and concerns about their academic success and their interaction and acceptance in society. During adolescence, young people explore multiple roles (Arnett, 2000), but make way for some roles to be abandoned or decline in importance (Super, 1980).

In different corners of the globe and in many cultures, especially in the economically developed and industrialized world, a period of change and significance exists for individuals in the time period between late teens to adulthood. Different cultures embrace this time period differently. In industrialized nations, adolescents are afforded a latency period or “psychosocial moratorium” (Erikson, 1968, p. 156), an extended time for identity explorations, when they are

“delaying entering traditional or normative roles soon after high school” (Arnett, 2000, p. 469). It is during this period of delay from adult commitments that adolescents “go to whatever ‘school’ his culture provides and to learn the technical and social rudiments of a work situation” (Erikson, 1968, p. 156). Within some Amish communities in the United States of America, young people engage in a rite of passage called *rumspringa*, a period of greater personal freedom before they make the decision to be baptized into the Amish church or leave the community. Although the Amish youth are not enrolled in mainstream high school education in the United States, *rumspringa*, the time “to run around” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014), is a way in which the young people and their community address this period of transition from adolescence to adulthood. Erikson (1968) recognized that each society and culture traditionally established a certain moratorium for its young adults, which often coincided with apprenticeships and adventures that were in line with the society’s values (p. 157).

It is during adolescence that young people are contemplating whether to continue their education, either through vocational training, a two-year college or a four-year university, or to enter immediately into the workforce. In the past, some high school graduates entered into marriage and began a family. Today, many high school students see the value of obtaining a college or university degree. Baum et al. (2013) suggested that education beyond high school is a prerequisite for a secure lifestyle and significantly improves the probabilities of employment and a stable career with a positive earnings trajectory. It also provides tools that help people to live healthier and more satisfying lives, to participate actively in society, and to create opportunities for their children (Baum et al., 2013).

Understanding the developmental characteristics of adolescents, aids in understanding how they perceive their orientation to the future, and why it is important to them. Common

developmental characteristics exist for adolescents, regardless of culture, industrialization or socio-economic development of a country.

Theoretical mindset.

Adolescence is a period of growth and maturity, yet some adults may not understand or accept the pace in which this growth and maturity takes place. The tension that exists during this time between the adolescent and his or her parents, teachers and members of society can create differing perceptions and expectations of the future for a young person.

The expectations that others have for young people may influence the choices and paths adolescents take, regarding their future. Kegan (1994) indicated that others put claims on young people by indicating “*how* we want them to know, the *way* we want them to make meaning of their experience” (p. 19). Some adolescents are unable to see or comprehend in detail what others expect from them, when they are often struggling with their own role identity and expectations of self. Social interaction with an adult or more advanced peer enables a child to progress to higher levels of cognitive development via Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development” (Allan, 2011). The interaction between a student and the numerous adults in his or her life will influence the skills, experiences and levels of consciousness the student holds.

Many researchers have addressed how factors such as high school academic achievement and goal setting strategies, which are utilized by adolescents, can affect and predict the actions, beliefs and motivations of young people (Bong, Cho, Ahn, & Kim, 2012). Lewin (1939) acknowledged that the time of adolescence to be a period of transition. It is during this time in which people of all ages address their expectations, hopes and fears for the future. This is essential when these elements of the future impact and influence the decisions, behaviors and actions that adolescents make every day. At some stage in the period of adolescence young

people are able to construct their own personal anticipations and expectations for the future within their own perspective of time. It is during this time that individuals separate their experience into past, present and temporal frames (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). It is through various social practices, events and activities supported by such theoretical perspectives as Vygotsky's cultural-historical perspective or Elder's life course perspective (Chen, Christmas-Best, Titzmann, & Weichold, 2012) that can determine human psychological development and the life courses experienced by individuals. These events, including high school graduation, attending university and entering the workforce, are embedded in the timeframe and context in which these occasions occur. Chen et al. (2012) suggested that how individuals adapt to new environments and changing circumstances affects the choices and actions adolescents make, and it is the degree of their consciousness and the manner in which individuals react to significant events in their history, which may alter their mindset and perception of self.

Individuals play a vital role in creating and controlling their future. People are able to exercise forethought to guide their beliefs, actions and intentions in anticipation of future events (Bandura, 2001; Nurmi, 1991). Fittingly, some beliefs cause people to think optimistically or pessimistically and in ways that are self-enhancing or self-hindering. When adolescents engage in the practice of setting goals for their future, they are often motivated by what pleases others or what brings them personal satisfaction (Bandura, 2001). Bong et al. (2012) suggested that using Bandura's social cognitive theory with adolescents "characterizes the relationship between perceived self-beliefs and personal behavior as reciprocal determinism because individuals' beliefs about themselves allow them to change their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and these in turn change their beliefs" (p. 336).

Levels of consciousness.

Adolescents acquire new knowledge as they learn about the future. This new knowledge can affect their overall perspectives or worldviews of self and the planet. Rogers (1997) suggested that there are three main patterns that aid in learning about the future, which include patterns of the mind, the heart and the soul.

An individual's level of consciousness, a unique worldview, offers a way of interpreting and making sense of things (Wilber et al., 2008). The worldview line, in an integral framework, gets at a person and his or her culture's most fundamental assumptions about the world (Wilber et al., 2008). Kegan's (1994) orders of consciousness help to identify developmental components of an individual's life experiences. Many students leave high school with a 3rd order of consciousness and may stay there for the remainder of their adult life. However, some students, after they have been away at university or have been out in the work force begin to form their own order of consciousness, different from their parents, colleagues and community. Esbjörn-Hargens (2011) confirmed that some students assume a 4th order of consciousness, and they become capable of constructing their own value systems as opposed to operating within the value systems given to them by their culture, family, or place of work (p. 12). The student's level of consciousness may stabilize or elevate depending on the orders of consciousness of the other individuals (teachers, professors, employers, colleagues, etc.) with whom he or she interacts and the experiences he or she has undergone. Rogers (1997) suggested that learning about the future often alters an adolescent's overall perspective or worldview, which requires the adolescent to consider using different emotional and cognitive skills. This is a temporal shift requiring the exploration of "alternative futures not just one desired future, a broadening of perspective which was described as being more 'holistic and inclusive'" (Rogers, 1997, p. 765).

Summary.

Adolescence is a time when young people grow and mature both socially and developmentally, and they are greatly influenced by others and society to make decisions about their future. It is a time when young people make plans, set goals, and assess their personal beliefs and aspirations for a future that is both hopeful and fearful. In order to aptly prepare students for the future, they must be given the opportunity to engage and interact with individuals who possess higher orders of consciousness.

College and Career Readiness

The perception of college and career readiness is dependent on the developmental maturity of individual and the expectations of others. Gewertz (2009) doubted that even if a definition of readiness were clear and universally adopted, how best to measure college readiness would remain an open question. The content knowledge, skills and expertise adolescents acquire within the context of high school will influence their understanding of their own experiences and their perceptions of personal readiness.

Being ready for college and possessing college knowledge.

What does it mean to be college ready and possess college knowledge? If a high school student takes college credit courses while in high school does that make them ready for college? Does graduating from high school make a student college or career ready? College readiness is both complex and contextual, and is a culmination of both educational and personal experiences (Conley, 2008). The complexity of possessing college knowledge and readiness for adolescents, while they are in high school, is essential for their future aspirations. It is in this context that young people are able to reflect on their future in more definite terms where they can contemplate, explore and investigate options and personal interests (Conley, 2014). For

adolescents to be college ready, it will take more than them taking the right academic courses (Edmunds, 2012). It will mean that schools will need to offer rigorous courses and programmes, such as the American College Board's SAT and Advanced Placement courses, or the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. It may also require educators to monitor the courses students are taking while in high school, as well as helping students develop academic behaviors and skills that are aligned with the college expectations (Edmunds, 2012).

Students who are ready for college and career can “qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses leading to a baccalaureate degree, a certificate, or career pathway-oriented training programs without the need for remedial or developmental course work” (Conley, 2014, p. 51). These students are equally able to enroll and succeed in a two- or four-year postsecondary institution without the need for remediation (ACT, 2011). To be college and career ready, including being “globally competent” or “culturally literate” (Bassett, 2005), a student will need to possess proficiencies required in their perceived real world. It is recommended that in order to better prepare students for college and the workplace, governments must first ensure that high school standards reflect the real-world skills and knowledge students need to be successful after they graduate (Chen, n.d.). The real world is a perception or notion held by students who are about to embark on a future life filled with adult responsibilities and expectations of earning one's own living. The perception of entering the real world occurs before, during and after the student completes his or her academic or vocational training. Urich and Mackenzie (1985) believed that the student who understands dialectical thinking and some of the important concepts of social science and who comprehends the meaning of social change is most likely to perform competently in the future (p. 92). Unfortunately, not all adolescents will have all the real-world skills when they graduate, but through personal growth, experience and

interaction with others they can develop the necessary skills to facilitate a greater degree of success for future aspirations (Davis & Murrell, 1993). In the period of adolescence, high school students begin to make choices and engage in a variety of activities that are influential on the rest of their lives.

When high school students know what they want their future to be, they can make a successful transition into adulthood (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006), and are better able to plan, make decisions and make preparations to help them realize these goals when they graduate from high school (Conley, 2014). In the past, obtaining a high school diploma was sufficient. Today many graduates do not have the skills or the credentials to qualify them for many of the emerging careers and occupations (Conley, 2014), which calls for the need to align high school curriculum with the expectations of college and vocational training schools. Students need better guidance about which options to pursue. With that guidance, for most individuals the choice with the best long-run outcomes will involve some form of postsecondary study (Baum et al., 2013, p. 9).

Germeijs and Verschueren (2007) hypothesized in their investigation of Belgian adolescents, that decision-making strategies made during the career investigation and exploration phase are significant when implementing a career decision. Within their research they recommend that “choice actualization, choice satisfaction, adjustment in the chosen option, performance in the chosen option, and choice stability” (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2007, p. 224), are helpful when selecting or pursuing a career. Hirschi, Niles, and Akos (2011) proposed that career planning is a fundamental task that young people should develop during adolescence.

In a Swiss study, Hirschi et al. (2011) explored the idea that during adolescence, preparing for the future, especially in vocational and career training is helpful as the preparatory skills they learn in this stage transcends through the rest of their lives. Individual differences

affect the level of readiness to a greater extent than the process of its development. Adolescents in the developed, industrialized world have more information available to them on a variety of possible career options. The availability of information about institutions of higher education and the training necessary to engage in these careers is more plentiful. Having access to the information can allow students to assess whether they possess the skills, attributes and knowledge needed to pursue a particular field of study and career. The access to information and the knowledge gained creates an increased perception of readiness, which is beneficial to students, as they will spend less time and money floundering in areas of schooling and employment that no longer are an interest to them (Vuolo, Mortimer, & Staff, 2013).

The career an individual considers and eventually chooses can be influenced by cultural factors. Lee et al. (2013) conducted a study with adolescents in South Korea that suggested that, adolescents often defer making decisions about a future career until they have gathered more information about the current and future labour markets. Lee et al. (2013) reported that as adolescents prepare for their future, career decision-making and planning favor highly in during their transition from high school to postsecondary education, work and adult life. The transition period and duration, from developmental points such as high school student to college student to employee, will be dependent on the personal and situational factors encountered by an individual (Super, 1980).

Compatibility of Wilber's AQAL Model and Conley's Facets of College Readiness.

David Conley's (2008, 2011, 2014) four keys of college and career readiness includes the skills, the knowledge and standards that adolescents are encouraged or are expected to possess at the end of high school in order to deem them college ready and have success in college or university. The college and career readiness model addresses and has the potential to adopt the

upper two quadrants of Wilber's (2006) integral model. In these two quadrants, aspects of the "self", the individual, and in this case, the adolescent was addressed. Conley's (2008, 2011, 2014) model addresses the adolescent's personal readiness, but revealed gaps in addressing and integrating the characteristics and components of cultural expectations and social systems housed in the lower two quadrants of Wilber's (2006) AQAL model.

Conley (2008, 2011, 2014) suggested that policy makers work together to align the curriculum in both high schools and institutions of higher learning to ensure a successful transition of adolescents to the next phase of their lives, that of postsecondary education. The placement in the lower left quadrant, addressed the influence and expectations that family, school and other communities can have on adolescents in their decision making process for future education and career opportunities.

Conley's Keys College and Career Readiness (2014) strongly emphasizes Wilber's upper two quadrants. While Conley does not use the terminology of Wilber, there are similarities and commonalities to consider. The upper left and the upper right of Wilber's AQAL model (2006) focuses on the individual, and Conley's model focuses on the individual's skills and knowledge, which are required for an adolescent to succeed in college, university or their career.

Conley's model, like Wilber's four quadrants in his integral theory AQAL model, describes a relationship in which the four facets/elements/keys interact with one another extensively (Conley, 2008). The two models afford opportunities for interaction and integration. While Wilber emphasizes the importance of assuming an integral approach, which includes the adolescent and other people in that adolescent's life, Conley's model focuses solely on the individual's quest to be college ready, as well as an institution's goal of helping students get to university. Conley's model was suitably nested in Wilber's upper quadrants, where the college

and career readiness model focused on the individual's plans, actions and perceptions of preparedness for postsecondary education. Even though high schools and faculty have expectations and requirements of young people to deem them ready for graduation and college or university, these expectations vary from context to context. Colleges and universities also have expectations and admission requirements of students entering their institutions. Some students are aptly prepared and ready for the social expectations and academic rigor required in colleges and university, other young people are not as prepared and thus are required to take remedial courses to get them to a desired standard. These expectations and concerns were identified and addressed the lower left quadrant.

In the lower right quadrant, the complexity of systems, which influence an adolescent's college and career readiness, also fluctuate and differ from varying contexts, cultures and countries. The policies established by local governing and political authorities, both domestic and foreign, can influence or assess whether an adolescent is ready for college, university or the workforce. When students undertake their postsecondary education in a foreign land, they want to believe that their local or national educational system has aligned itself so that they meet the requirements to enroll and commence study in that foreign university. The immigration policies of some governments, pertaining to student study visas and work placement, will be different as well. The international fees applied to students attending colleges and universities vary greatly between American states, Canadian provinces and other countries. Therefore, the success of an adolescent's experience in college or university is dependent on his or her degree of college knowledge as proposed by Conley (2008, 2011, 2014), and the awareness and integration of all four quadrants in Wilber's AQAL model (2006).

The conceptual models used in this research provided an opportunity to delve into the

perspectives adolescents have toward their perceived readiness for college or university. While Wilber's (2006) AQAL model contains five elements, not all the elements need to be included to make the process integral. However, the four quadrants as a basic organizing framework, must be incorporated and addressed to ensure that an integral approach is taken. Although the integration of more elements such as levels, lines, stages and types helps to create a bigger picture and a clearer map projection, some is better than none. Users of this model must ensure that they do not follow into the trap of quadrant absolutism—focusing on one particular quadrant and negating the others. Conley's (2008, 2011, 2014) framework for College and Career Readiness features heavily the individual's perception of readiness for two main milestones—college and career—after high school. Conley's (2014) Readiness Continuum (see Figure 2.5) requires the individual, the "I", and the culture, the "We", to help high school students navigate toward the inner circle from the outer elements to ensure that they are aptly prepared for a successful college experience and then career orientation after high school.

Figure 2.5 College Readiness Continuum

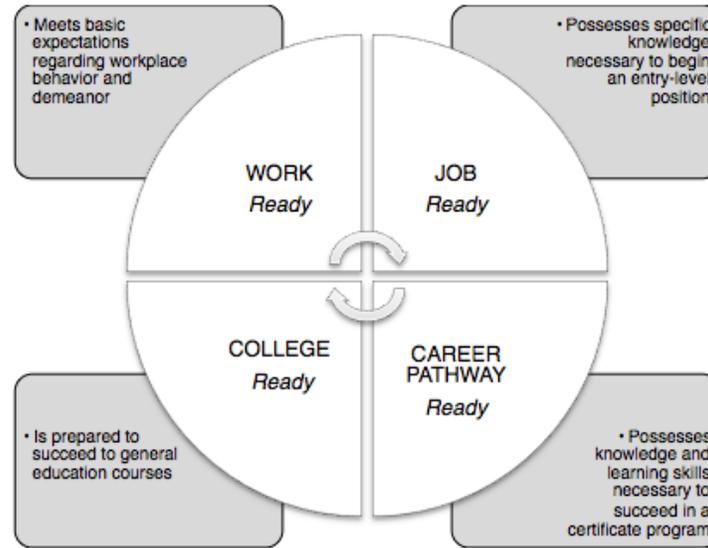


Figure 2.5. Adapted from Conley, D. T. (2014). *Getting ready for college, careers, and the common core: What every educator needs to know*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Adapted and used with permission.

Conley’s model is very “Americentric” as it helps to prepare American high school students to have a successful transition from secondary school to postsecondary education institutions. I investigated whether or not the application of Conley’s model could be applied to an international context, and I assessed whether it provided enough content and skills needed by international students when applying to colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom or the Caribbean.

I was interested in investigating how these two conceptual frameworks could be used to assess college and university readiness, including the perceptions of the future of Bahamian high school students, who were about to graduate from high school. The use of these conceptual frameworks addressed and drew out the beliefs and aspirations of adolescents; the actions and preparations adolescents made toward attending college or entering the workforce; and the expectations adolescents have about attending college and university, or entering the workforce,

including being aware that others have expectations of them as well. Finally, it was essential to identify the complex systems that impacted and influenced an adolescent's future orientation.

Beliefs and aspirations of adolescents.

From the time children are small, they are often asked what they want to be when they grow up. While the career aspirations of a child may change, it is during adolescence where young people often explore and consider many options to help them find the answer to the question of "What do you want to be when you grow up?" for themselves. For some adolescents, they are still uncertain what they want to be when they grow up, or what to do after they graduate from high school. Unfortunately, many young people are not fully aware of the skills, the knowledge required for and the process of fulfilling their desired or aspired career. The choice of a future career may change with the cognitive and social development of adolescents as the consideration of possibilities factor prominently with young people. Developing personal self-efficacy becomes of paramount importance in an adolescent's achievement as it guides him or her to select more desirable goals for his or her future (Cunnie, Martin Rogers, & Mortimer, 2009). For many, the future may only offer proximal considerations for the youth such as taking the steps to get into a college or university after high school. For others, the plans adolescents make for their future may involve more distal goals such as career aspirations and creating a family of their own. Additionally, some adolescents are mutually interested in their own personal futures as well as global and social futures. Arguably, the fundamental task of education today is not just to prepare students for the future, but equip them to create a future they want to live in (Eckersley, 1999).

The hopes and goals that adolescents identify about their future aspirations include future education, occupation, family (Nurmi, 1991), and other elements, which may impact or influence

their future lives, including leisure and human relationships (Nurmi, Salmelo-Aro, & Koivisto, 2002). Nurmi (1993) acknowledged that “adolescents’ knowledge or beliefs concerning anticipated life span development, institutional options, and successful age-appropriate behavior also plays an important role in the process of setting personal goals, planning their realisation, and evaluating goal attainment” (p. 179). Setting goals allows for adolescents to make significant personal connections to their perceived future.

Briones et al. (2011) deemed it “necessary to go deeper into the nature of wishes and fears, in order to obtain implications as to how adolescents can be helped to achieve their life objectives and overcome their fears” (p. 2). “Young people in all parts of the world may become more worried about their educational progress because success in school largely determines their professional outcomes” (Seiffge-Krenke, 2012, p. 108). In schools that are heavily dependent on standardized assessment, such as in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, the results students achieve can determine both the successes and limitations of their opportunities to future prospects, such as applying to college, applying for scholarships or applying for a job. If students cannot meet the academic requirements or other facets of college readiness, including college knowledge, realizing their future career aspirations may be hindered.

Understanding student interests is one of the key factors in determining what readiness means for each student. Profiles that connect student performance to student aspirations offer a strategy for thinking about how college ready and career ready individual students are today (Conley, 2014).

Actions, future preparations and concerns.

Dreaming and talking about personal futures are actions engaged in by adolescents while in high school. To assist adolescents make a smooth transition into the future, young people

engage in the strategies and processes of motivation, planning and evaluation of personal goals and aspirations (Malmberg et al., 2005; Nurmi, 1991). Formulating a career plan is an action that many adolescent students engage while in high school. As young people transition from adolescence to adulthood, their future orientation includes setting goals and enacting on these plans to provide a greater chance for success and adaptation in postsecondary schooling (Malmberg et al., 2005). Conley (2014) recommends that “all students need to be exploring the career options open to them in a dynamic global economy at the same time that they are developing an appreciation of how what they are learning helps them prepare for their future” (p. 46). When adolescents engage in career exploration programs, they become informed about “labor market projections and nature of work in many different occupations. The main purpose for school is to prepare for employment so planning, knowing marketable skills, and understanding realities about job success deserve attention” (Strom et al., 2014, p. 176).

When students make the decision to prepare for extended study, training or coaching after high school or enter the work force, “their prior learning experiences and their academic success affect their self-belief which in turn influences their motivation and willingness to engage in learning” (McDermott & Nygreen, 2013, p. 117). The degree of responsibility that students assume is vital to their further development and learning. Taking on more personal responsibility for the outcomes of their actions will allow them to facilitate and achieve their desired outcomes. It is not expected that students automatically will possess certain skills; most of the time these skills must be developed (Davis & Murrell, 1993). Therefore, it is in the period of adolescence, that high school students begin to make choices and engage in a variety of activities that are influential to the rest of their lives.

In the past, a high school diploma was touted for decades as the goal all students should pursue and became sufficient education for most students to prepare for a career as many full-time jobs could be found at earlier ages (Conley, 2014; Strom et al., 2014). Today, a four-year degree does not guarantee a high-earning job or employment, and future success will most likely require education and training beyond high school (Perry & Wallace, 2012). There are more career options and opportunities, and lifestyle choices afforded to adolescents today than previous generations (Strom et al., 2014). In Western societies, adolescents are “encouraged to attain higher levels of education and obtain more professional qualifications, even though these may not necessarily guarantee job security” (Seiffge-Krenke, 2012, p. 107), yet in the United States it is estimated, that “college graduates earn approximately \$1 million more over their lifetimes than those with only a high school diploma” (Hooker & Brand, 2010, p. 75). Individuals who extend their knowledge and training post-high school, especially with a college or university diploma greatly improves their earning potential and helps them to move up the socioeconomic ladder (Baum et al., 2013). Students who are without a diploma at the end of their high school years earn by far the least than with even a little college experience, whereas earning a bachelor’s degree provides more affordances for young people (Conley, 2014).

Consideration for the future provides the motivation for the attainment of goals in adolescents. Kerpelman and Eryigit (2008) believed a positive outlook and perception of the future allowed adolescents to imagine better possibilities in the future for themselves. This optimism toward the future may motivate behaviours that enable adolescents to achieve their goals by solving problems, tolerating frustrations, or maintaining flexibility (Neblett & Corina, 2006).

For adolescents to be college and career ready they need to be in the possession of a

diverse set of skills, abilities and dispositions well beyond the context of high school (Hooker & Brand, 2010; Davis & Murrell, 1993). For young people to have *college knowledge*, they must also understand the cultural differences between high school and college or university. This includes comprehending the complex college admission and selection processes, the options available to help finance postsecondary education, and the academic requirements and rigor for college-level work (Conley, 2008, 2011, 2014; Hooker & Brand, 2010). Hooker and Brand (2010) suggested that adolescents, while they are enrolled in high school, be afforded opportunities to complete college-level work, either in high school or through summer courses and institutes. These opportunities help them to understand how the structures, opportunities, and demands of higher education differ from those of high school. Such innovations are often offered at secondary school campuses by means of enrolling in Advanced Placement courses, preparing student academic portfolios, attending college fairs, and having representatives of colleges and universities visit high schools (The College Board, 2014b). Other initiatives include talking with teachers, and school college and career counselors about college and university, offering a parent's college night (Martinez, 2014), and even partaking in trips to visit school campuses, which are organized by schools or parents.

Nurmi (1991) suggested that the family, and in particular the influence of parents attributes to the future orientation of adolescents. It is this causal relationship that has the greatest influence on adolescents pertaining to future-oriented goals and plans. It is in the family unit where adolescents seek their parents' advice and opinions for the important and difficult decisions (Nurmi, 1991).

Expectations for adolescents: Their future trajectory.

After high school graduation many adolescents will attend college and university, others

will transition directly into the workforce. The admissions requirements and expectations of postsecondary education institutions vary between each context. Many colleges and universities expect that young people will come to their institution with the skills and content knowledge ready to meet the rigor of higher education. Rojewski and Kim (2003) have suggested that the increased academic rigor in high school curricula and rising college entrance requirements, have polarized some college-bound and work-bound students. Unfortunately, some students do not meet these standards and thus require remedial courses when they get there. Conley's (2011) standards for college readiness outlined the recommended expectations for adolescents to be successful in college regardless of courses offered in high school and the level and degree of assessment used. Haycock (2010) estimated that over the past decade, there has been an influx in college-level courses being offered within high school curricula. Rigorous course offerings from the American College Board, including SAT and Advanced Placement (AP), and the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme offer a wide set of skills to aid high school students in college-ready content knowledge. Although enrolling in an Advanced Placement course and taking the AP examination does not provide students the complete cultural experience of a college campus, it does help to develop the attitude and work habits that they need for college success (Conley, 2014). Therefore, it is the role of secondary schools to provide the skills and knowledge adolescents will need to continue their future learning throughout their lifetime (Urich & Mackenzie, 1985).

Some students and parents expect that the school and the educational system will provide the curriculum, courses and training for adolescents to be college ready upon high school graduation. Young people also expect that when they graduate from university they will have the

knowledge and training to enter into the workforce. Unfortunately, finding work in their desired field or in their home community may not be possible.

For many adolescents, the uncertainty about their personal future, be it getting into college or university and paying for it, as well as getting a job after obtaining a degree, often leads to elevated levels of stress in high school students. The application process to attend college and university can be daunting, complex and contextually specific for any student, but more so if the adolescent is the first in his or her family to apply (Conley, 2014). The tuition costs of attending college and university are increasing annually and many adolescents and families have not considered how they will pay for it. Many are equally unaware of the cost difference between various postsecondary programs (Conley, 2014) in the American states, Canadian provinces and other countries. Many are unaware of the scholarships and financial aid available to many students.

Today, a high school diploma is no longer adequate to meet the needs and demands for the careers of the future. Many of these new careers are greatly influenced, supported and evolve in a technology-based economy (Bangser, 2008). The high schools of today must ensure that adolescents are afforded with the opportunity to explore a wide variety of career options, if they are to compete and be competent in a future world that is fast becoming more and more digitally enhanced and advanced (Bassett, 2005). The demands of a fast-paced world, the changing trends in commerce and technology will require adolescents to possess skills vastly different than the previous generation. The expectations for credentials, skills and knowledge to meet these demands will need to be addressed if young people wish to be a part of it.

Systems of influence adolescents need for futures orientations.

There are many systems that exist and operate in society today. The family, a high school, a place of worship, and the community are examples of systems, which are a part of an adolescent's life. Regardless of an awareness of systems and the complexity of these arrangements, people are shaped by them and in turn, influence them as well. In order for individuals to make better decisions about their daily lives and future, they need to be aware of the systems that influence our lives, including "a deeper understanding of systems, grounded in mindfulness and caring, today's students will go through their lives better prepared to make decisions that are good for them, beneficial to others, and helpful to the planet" (Goleman & Senge, 2014, p. 41).

The systems that have a great influence on adolescents while they are in high school include the school, the educational system, the community and the admission policies of colleges and universities. Educational policymakers and stakeholders should encourage the collaboration and alignment of standards in both high school and post-secondary educational institutions to help young people elevate their academic skills and develop greater college knowledge and readiness (Hooker & Brand, 2010). The schools in a particular educational system provide courses and set requirements for high school graduation, but not all schools in an educational system may provide the same academic offerings. This difference is particularly evident in public and private schools in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas where the course offerings are often different. Other differences are observed in course and syllabi between countries. High school academic standards and course requirements in many countries are striving to resemble the requirements of college and work (Haycock, 2010). This is particularly important for students to be aware of especially if they are seeking admission into colleges and universities out

of their country. In order for international students to be college ready and meet the requirements of foreign postsecondary educational institutions, the curriculum standards must be addressed and aligned so that international students have the skills, knowledge and credentials to apply to schools in other countries. Thus, a regular re-examination by school policy makers, high school educators, and politicians, of the existing high school curriculum is required, to ensure that the purpose of education is not solely the delivery of a national curriculum and standardized examinations, but is one that focuses on better preparation of students for life.

Summary.

The four research questions were investigated within Wilber's (2006) AQAL model, which granted adolescents an opportunity to look at their perceptions for the future more integrally. Acknowledging the personal beliefs, actions, plans and concerns young people have for their future, and the future of their nation and the world, were important for them to make good decisions later in life. As young people transition from adolescence to adulthood there will be many people and agencies, of equal importance, that will have expectations for the younger generation and influence the decisions they make. The path and direction young people follow, and the challenges they encounter as they orient their futures will help educational systems and nations better prepare youth for life.

Conclusion

Comprehending the complexity and uncertainty of the futures anticipated by adolescents, be they proximal or distal, optimistic or pessimistic, personal or global impact, influence the lives of young people as they prepare for a life past high school.

Using adolescents as participants in a research study was particularly good for investigating futures as they are at the crossroads of a developmental period transitioning them to

adulthood. During this time period, young people are looking forward to the next phase of their life and anticipate exploring more adult roles and responsibilities.

The perceptions, beliefs and aspirations adolescents have about their future can be addressed through an integral framework such as Ken Wilber's (2006) AQAL model, and through the college ready skills and behaviors proposed by David Conley (2008, 2011, 2014). Combining these two conceptual frameworks provided a greater opportunity to help young people visualize the facets and components of self, others, and systems that work together to help them realize their goals and plans for the future.

There are many unknowns surrounding the future of education and student preparedness. Education and readiness for the future will look very different than it does now in both the secondary and postsecondary arenas as it is likely to be much more data driven (Conley, 2014). In the future, schools will likely gather more information on a wider range of student attributes, including behaviors, aspirations, challenges, and interests. This information will help students and colleges make better decisions about how prepared students are generally and for specific majors or programs. This information will eventually tell students how ready they are for particular types of colleges and for specific programs of study at those types of colleges and universities (Conley, 2014).

Conley (2011) argued that the portrayal of the facets in his model were not mutually exclusive nor perfectly nested and required a more comprehensive look at what it meant to be college or university ready. Conley's (2014) recent perspective reflects an interconnectedness of the four keys of college readiness along with the procedures to strengthen the process and experience of achieving success in college and eventually graduating. This perspective provided the opportunity to integrate Wilber's (2006) AQAL model with a college-readiness model in

order to create an integral experience for adolescents as they transition from youth to adulthood. Conley's model has been prepared to address the skills and concepts that American adolescents need to possess in order to make a successful transition from high school to college or university. I evaluated whether adolescents from a private high school in The Bahamas were in possession of the same skills and concepts, or had gaps in their knowledge, which made applying for and gaining acceptance into college or university challenging.

The use of phenomenological methods gathered the perceptions of high school students as they prepared for their future of further study or employment. "Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions" (Lester, 1999, p. 1). These life experiences create a conscious awareness that aids in building one's knowledge of reality. Recording the human experience as lived, the hermeneutic phenomenology, comprises giving accounts of a person's history or background, includes what a culture gives a person from birth and is handed down, presenting ways of understanding the world (Laverty, 2003).

As a teacher and an expatriate working in a Bahamian high school, I had often wondered whether or not the students I teach possess the skills and knowledge to be successful in a local, or foreign college or university. I also worried about the type of citizen they would be in the global community when they graduated from high school. As an educator, I was particularly interested in investigating the perceptions adolescents have toward their personal future, as well as the perceptions they have for the future of their nation and the world. In the present tumultuous social climate of The Bahamas, there must be an evolution in educational practices and curriculum that not only addresses the hopes, fears, and aspirations of adolescents, it will

also need to advance to meet with the needs of an evolving global system that is becoming vastly interconnected, digital and diverse. Helping young people find strategies for a successful transition into the future, that included understanding and working through the uncertainty that the future possesses was promising. The Bahamian youths' hopes and fears for their future academic and career plans, as well as for the future of their nation and the world, were recorded and analyzed.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter outlines integral methodological pluralism and the justification in choosing multiple methodologies and a mixture of methods within the integral theory framework. An extension of Wilber's "map" metaphor was used to explain the importance of considering multiple methodologies in order to create a more accurate and a more representative perspective of an experience was offered. The key principles of five of the eight methodological families: phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnography, empiricism and systems theory guided the research from the first-person, second person, and third person perspectives. These methodologies and perspectives directed the research uncovering the perception young people have about college/university and workforce readiness and their perceived future post-high school. Furthermore, I describe my personal experience as a high school teacher and the readiness process of preparing high school students for the next phase of their life, in particular university, college or the workforce.

Overall Description of the Research

Young people are often told that they are "the future generation of the nation." The future that young Bahamians face after high school is filled with a mixture of emotions, which spans from hope and anticipation, to dread and uncertainty. Nurmi (1991) acknowledged that planning for the future extends across all age groups and identified themes surrounding the concerns and worries adolescents have about the future, expected events, future family and career, future expectancies, hopes and fears, future outlooks, and goals and desires. Kerpelman and Eryigit (2008) ascertained that adolescents think and dream, and have beliefs and perceptions about their future. Germeijs and Verschueren (2007) indicated that career investigation and decision making processes were significant in the lives of Belgian adolescents. Hirschi et al. (2011) remarked that

Swiss adolescents who prepare for the future, especially in the area of vocational and career training, was vital for the remainder of their lives. In a South Korean study, the decisions adolescents make surrounding their future career was dependent on the trends in current and future career markets (Lee et al., 2013). The concern for and anticipation about university and career futures is a common problem facing adolescents around the globe. As a former British colony, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, which sought independence in 1973, has faced many hopes and challenges that come along with independence. Amongst public school students in The Bahamas there is a low rate of participation in postsecondary education (Davis, 2009). Although Bahamian adolescents have faced barriers to participation in postsecondary education, there has been little additional research conducted in The Bahamas (Davis, 2009), and none on the perceptions of private high school students, their teachers, their parents and education policy makers regarding the concept of college and career readiness.

When many adolescents in The Bahamas conclude their high school experience they make plans and consider paths that will influence their future life. Some young people consider their continued educational path, be it a two-year, four-year, or extended learning path of tertiary education. Some have a clearer picture of their perceived career path and the type of employment in which they will engage. Some make plans for marriage and family, travel, or will occupy other plans yet undecided.

Researcher's Experience with College Readiness

As a high school teacher, I am often requested to write letters of reference for my students who are applying to colleges and universities outside The Bahamas. This process requires me to assess the students on forms evaluating the degree to which a student is ready and prepared, or possesses the skills and attributes to be successful in college or university. This

process has caused me to question how I, my colleagues, the school or the curriculum can best prepare students, or provide students with the skills needed for them to have a successful and positive experience in university after they graduate from high school. I often question whether or not the practices of high schools are truly and ably preparing students for an optimal university experience. Is the school curriculum, or the work set for and prepared by the students of a university standard? Is it college-worthy or university-worthy?

Although my experience in applying to university in order to obtain a Bachelor's degree was in the distant past, my experience in applying for doctoral studies refreshed my sense with the application process and caused me to assess whether or not I possessed the attributes to be successful in a university setting. Although the benefit of having gone through the university experience separated me from the high school students, who are currently applying to university and college, I often contemplate whether or not my high school teachers and guidance counselor thought I was university ready. I recall my grade 12 homeroom and biology teacher stating quite regularly "wait 'til next year folks!" when we complained about the work, assignments and expectations that our high school teachers set for us. Did my experiences in high school ably prepare me for university? Whether or not university was a part of my long-term plan while I was in high school, I knew that it was an expectation, imposed upon by myself, to proceed with the next phase of my life. Although I grew up near a university town and had exposure to the "life" of a university student, it was hard for me to truly understand the experience until I was officially enrolled and began classes. Having a good knowledge base, a good independent work ethic, and awareness of self, I was ably prepared to transition into the life of a university student.

Contemporary Mapping Metaphor and a Kosmic Address

In my day-to-day work as a high school geography teacher, I make use of maps in the

teaching and learning process with all of my classes. In today's world, mapping is becoming more complex, yet more accessible. To keep current with the trends and technology available we must continue to evolve in our usage in order to create a more detailed and complete perspective or view of the world. In the past we navigated uncharted territory until we improved on our knowledge, ingenuity and technology. We evolved to use tools like an astrolabe, the quadrant, and sextant, to the use of a map and compass to help us navigate our world in order to better seek our destination with more accuracy. As cartographers gathered more data, the maps they created became more complex and more detailed. The maps of the past and the present have been designed by many different cartographers and have produced and reproduced projections based on many different perspectives. However, map projections can be used "to exaggerate, diminish, distort, and otherwise modify any representation of any part of the Earth's surface" (de Blij, 2012, p. 44).

Today, modern mapping has introduced more contemporary tools to fine tune and create more detailed maps showing immediate and up-to-date changes in today's ever-evolving world. Contemporary mapping tools like remote sensing, global positioning system (GPS), and geographic information systems (GIS) help cartographers and users of maps read, interpret and create data that reflects the changes and perceptions of the world in which we live. Today, the use of global positioning systems (GPS) assists our navigational needs when the GPS receiver makes contact with at least three satellites to calculate the absolute location of a place. When we have more satellites and more information available to triangulate and transmit the data, the more complete and accurate the data (Garmin, 2015). GPS is readily available in our vehicles, is included in our smartphones and even on our wristwatches. As mapping and navigational technology has evolved so has our learning, understanding and usage of these tools.

Additionally, as a platform, GIS layers data from a base map, which extends the conventions of basic two-dimensional maps from the past. These layers may be added to the base map or subtracted to reflect and include partial components of the mapped area or it may present all available data on one map. The use of GIS allows different users to create their own ‘mash-up’ maps, “the practice of overlaying data from one source on top of one of the mapping services” (Rubenstein, 2011, p. 12; Rubenstein, 2010, p. 11). The mash-up maps are based on the information they choose to select and present, which will allow the user to reflect their own reality.

The move from Mercator’s 1569 map projection to more contemporary mapping tools of the 21st century, like GPS, remote sensing and GIS, have altered and changed the details of the map to reflect the changes and improvements of earlier cartograms. As one uses Wilber’s integral theory framework and the AQAL model, an acronym for “all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states and all types” (Wilber, 2006), an individual’s or an organization’s projection of the world varies and changes depending on one’s perceptions and experiences. How one uses the integral map, as a guide, as a contemporary all-inclusive, integral tool, it, like GIS, can reflect the experiences and perspectives as unique as the individuals who use it. It is here that we can add and remove various layers to display the map we choose to follow for a particular incident.

Wilber’s integral theory helps us to navigate our experiences through a particular phenomenon, in particular, “college and career readiness.” The use of integral theory and the multiple perspectives available, which like GPS, are triangulated, can create a more accurate picture, location and altitude of a particular concept or theory. Wilber (2006) informs us that the integral framework is only a map, not the territory, “but it is the most complete and accurate map we have at this time” (p. 2). The use of this integral map affords the users of this tool “to

facilitate and dramatically accelerate cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary knowledge, thus creating the world's first truly integral learning community” (Wilber, 2006, p. 3).

Wilber's (2006) idea of a Kosmic address includes both the altitude (the degree and level of consciousness in an individual) and their perspective on a phenomenon. Thus, every individual will possess a different degree of consciousness, as well as presenting numerous assumptions, knowledge, experience or perspectives for the same phenomenon. Wilber (2006) suggested that all quadrants and levels, or perspectives and altitudes are needed for a complete Kosmic address. It is when more parameters of the AQAL model are used, “the more precise the address” (p. 264), and as a result the greater understanding of a phenomenon. My research study addressed both the documented information surrounding college and career readiness, as well as the voices of those who were directly impacted and influenced by this phenomenon, which was used to create a more comprehensive map of the territory of college and career readiness in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Therefore, to ensure a more exact Kosmic address of this particular phenomenon, it was looked at from the many perspectives within the four quadrants in Wilber's integral theory framework—AQAL model, which supported the additional components offered through integral methodological pluralism.

The Kosmic address of an experience, proposed by Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman (2009) suggested that the three aspects or realities of a phenomena are understood as a dynamic understanding between the who, the how, and the what, help to triangulate the aspects and perspectives of an experience to make it more precise, complete, and accurate. I proposed using Kosmic Positioning System (KPS), which requires the user to use as many perspectives, altitudes and worldviews to be as specific and accurate in the integral experience. The who was derived from the multiple perspectives offered in the research—the students, teachers, parents and policy

makers; the how considered the various methodologies and methods used to gather the data surrounding the phenomenon; and the what addressed the phenomenon in question, that of college and career readiness, perceptions of the future, and the school and national educational initiatives that were taken on to ensure that adolescents are ably prepared for their life after high school. The more of a reality we acknowledge and include, the more sustainable our solutions will become, precisely because the project will respond to the complexity of that reality (Esbjörn-Hargens & Zimmerman, 2009, p. 12).

Research Questions

The research questions were positioned within the four quadrants of an integral framework (see Figure 2.1), which addressed the perspectives of participants from the inside and outside, and from a first-, second-, and third person perspectives.

1. What beliefs do adolescents have about their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school? (Upper Left)
2. What are adolescents doing to prepare themselves for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school? (Upper Right)
3. (a) What expectations do others (i.e., teachers and parents) have for adolescents and their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school? (Lower Left)

(b) What personal expectations do adolescents have for themselves and their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school? (Lower Left)
4. What systems (i.e., school board, Ministry of Education) have an influence determining adolescents' readiness for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school? (Lower Right)

Research Methodologies

Mixed methods research.

Crotty (2012) suggested that being pragmatic is essential in selecting and adopting the appropriate methodologies and methods, and the multiple data collection and data analysis methods to be used in a research study. In a pragmatic worldview, researchers have a range of approaches for collecting and analyzing data, and procedures of research that include and encompass both qualitative and quantitative techniques. These methods work to provide the best understanding of a research problem (Creswell, 2009b), which offers a more multidimensional approach to inquiry (Miles et al., 2014). Patton (2002) noted that researchers who engage in pragmatism mean that they are judging the quality of a study by its intended purposes, taking note of the available resources and the procedures to be followed, all within a particular context and for a specific audience. Pragmatism opens the door to researchers to consider multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009b). It is paramount that researchers, who use mixed methods, offer their rationale explaining the reasons for mixing the qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2009b).

Although the camps for both quantitative and qualitative research are well founded, and offer supporting stances for each methodology, the integration and inclusion of mixed methods research is “both a methods and methodological orientation” (Creswell, 2011), which encompasses “the best of both worlds” and was advisable for this research. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) recommended that “research approaches should be mixed in ways that offer the best opportunities for answering important research questions” (p. 16), and that we

“choose the combination or mixture of methods and procedures that works best for answering your research questions” (p. 17), which will fully or completely help a researcher understand a research problem (Crotty, 2012), and direct the path of the research project (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Mixed methods research is “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Regardless of the name given to the use of combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods, be it mixed methods research, integrative research or mixed research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), in order to help answer the research questions, the choice of combining the methods “provides a flexible way of combining various methods as to provide a combination of quantitative and qualitative research techniques in such a way as to reduce the limits of each and maximize their strengths” (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006, p. 81).

While this approach can afford multiple benefits “qualitative and quantitative research used together produce more complete knowledge necessary to inform theory and practice” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 21). Opting to use mixed research as a way to answer the research questions was selected because “numbers and words are both needed if we are to understand the world” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 42), and the approach “is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

Integral Methodological Pluralism.

Addressing complex issues surrounding education (i.e., college and career readiness), organizations (i.e., operations of a school or corporation), and the environment (i.e., climate change or sustainable agriculture) can be daunting. Esbjörn-Hargens & Zimmerman (2009)

suggested that what is needed is a framework that is pragmatic in its approach, which can work through the complexities and honour the perspectives of the issues present in a phenomenon. The framework they advocate using is integral methodological pluralism, which is an extension of Ken Wilber's integral theory. They recommend that this content-neutral framework "coordinates, and mutually enriches knowledge generated from different major disciplines and approaches" (Esbjörn-Hargens & Zimmerman, 2009, p. 2).

Wilber's (2006) integral methodological pluralism includes eight fundamental perspectives and eight fundamental methodologies. Therefore, the phenomenon of college and career readiness was able to begin in any of the four quadrants in the AQAL model and then looked at from the inside and outside, the internal and external, of both individuals and collectives. Additionally, the complexity of the AQAL model and integral methodological pluralism also includes first-, second-, and third person perspectives from the eight different families of methodologies including phenomenology, structuralism, hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, autopoiesis, empiricism, social autopoiesis, and systems theory. Wilber (2006) acknowledged that using the AQAL model, or using integral methodological pluralism is only one way, but a more comprehensive and integral way in which to offer more depth and insight into a phenomenon.

Ken Wilber's integral theory provides a "big picture" (Martin, 2008, p. 155) for the research of a phenomenon and aids in "the creation of a map that extends the awareness of perspectives" (p. 160). It is within the framework of integral theory that "each zone/perspective/methodology houses, views or enacts specific phenomena (or holons), a specific lifeworld, that other zones/perspectives/methodologies do not, so comprehensive knowledge of reality requires the use of all zones—each of which is irreducible" (Marshall,

2012, p. 196).

Within integral theory three additional aspects must be considered: epistemological, methodological, and ontological (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2010). These three aspects further support the composition of the Kosmic address of a phenomenon. Esbjörn-Hargens (2010) introduced the idea that a greater enactment of integral theory was possible through integral enactment theory. This extension of integral theory addresses the enactment of a phenomenon from the diversity of ontology (the what), epistemology (the who), and methodology (the how) (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2010). In order to see a phenomenon from many perspectives through the use of many methodologies, integral methodological pluralism offers an approach in which this can be accomplished. While many people see the same phenomenon in different ways, and enact them differently in diverse situations, their realities may clash and interfere with one another, yet they are all necessary in which to give a more genuine picture of a phenomenon. The separate and unique realities of participants in my research were honoured and acknowledged in order to contribute to an integral perspective of the phenomenon of college and career readiness as it applies to the lives and futures of Bahamian adolescents.

The use of integral methodological pluralism gives the researcher an opportunity to use multiple methodologies that will be the best and most “functional fit” for the phenomenon being researched. Integral methodological pluralism opens opportunities to employ a variety of methods and methodologies for a research problem. Therefore, every research question can make use of different methods and methodologies, and the research methods chosen are often driven by the research questions being asked. It would be naïve to assume that the same method or even the same methodology would work for each research question. Figure 3.1 shows how integral methodological pluralism, with its many methodologies and methods of data collection can be

used within integral theory to capture the voices (the who) of those involved (the students, teachers, parents and policy makers) in the research to achieve college and career readiness (the what).

Figure 3.1 Integral Enactment as Applied to the Context of this Study.

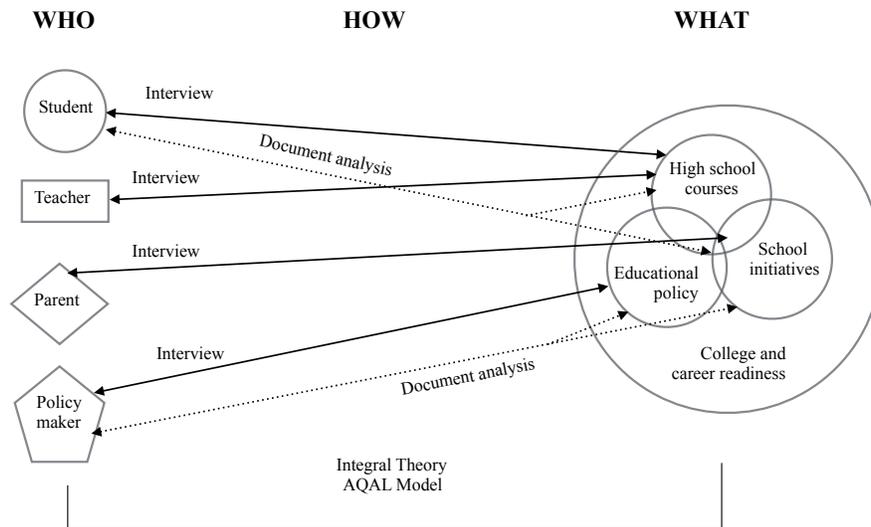


Figure 3.1. Integral enactment identifies who, the how, and the what of a phenomenon to ensure triangulation. Adapted from Esbjörn-Hargens, S. (2010). On ontology of climate change: Integral pluralism and the enactment of multiple objects, *Journal of Integral Theory and practice*, 5(1), 157. The model has been modified to respond to the context and participants of this study.

It is through an integral view that we can have “a better perspective or understanding of how any phenomenon can be understood” (Tasett, 2010, p. 98). It was through this integral lens, that I, as a researcher was able to better understand how students, teachers and myself, perceived a phenomenon such as college/university and workforce preparedness. The investigation of college and career readiness with adolescents in a Bahamian private high school was looked at using integral research. Integral research is an emerging form of mixed methods research, and “makes use of its post-metaphysical position” (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006, p. 89), which “integrates relevant aspects of integral theory, such as integral methodological pluralism and the critical eight zones and eight primordial perspectives it contains” (Martin, 2008, p. 158). Hedlund (2010)

supports Esbjörn-Hargens' model of integral research as a sophisticated, inclusive, and integral, yet rigorous research framework.

Integral methodological pluralism (IMP) positions a collection of methodologies within the four quadrants of the AQAL framework (“all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types”) and further divides these quadrants into a total of eight perspectives. This provides a researcher the opportunity to view a phenomenon from the “inside” and the “outside” perspectives of a quadrant.

The inside or outside of each quadrant is accessible only through a particular method of inquiry or a methodological family. Each methodology discloses an aspect of reality that other methods cannot....To leave out any of these perspectives (or methods of inquiry) is to fall short of a truly Integral understanding of any phenomena being investigated (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006, p. 87).

The eight suggested methodologies include phenomenology, structuralism, hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, autopoiesis, empiricism, social autopoiesis, and systems theory. These methodologies are positioned within eight zones of the AQAL framework and are placed to reflect and represent the “insides and the outsides of the interiors and exteriors of individuals and collectives” (Stein & Heikkinen, 2008, p. 108), whereas Bowman (2012) preferred to use the terms internal and external rather than inside and outside for the same aspects to characterize the individual and the collective. Integral methodological pluralism is “a collection of practices and injunctions guided by the intuition that ‘Everyone is right!’ and each practice or injunction enacts and therefore discloses as different reality” (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006, p. 86). Wilber (1995) explained that everybody is possession of “important pieces of the truth, and all of those pieces need to be honored, cherished and included” (p. 48).

Within these quadrants a phenomenon can be seen from the first-person, second-person, and third-person perspectives. These perspectives (see Figure 3.2) can be viewed from the inside of the interior of an individual (zone #1: phenomenology), the outside of the interior of an individual (zone #2: structuralism), the inside the exterior of an individual (zone #5: autopoiesis), the outside of the exterior of an individual (zone #6: empiricism), the inside of the interior of collectives (zone #3: hermeneutics), the outside of the interior of collectives (zone #4: ethnography), the inside of the exterior of collectives (zone #7: social autopoiesis), and the outside of the exterior of collectives (zone #8: systems theory) (Wilber, 2006). “The more perspectives we are able to include in developing our holistic picture of what it means to teach and learn, the more complete the picture is” (Davis, 2008, p. 1; Davis & Callihan, 2013, p. 508), ensuring “a more comprehensive and ‘integral’ understanding” (Marshall, 2012, p. 190). The combination of these eight perspectives provides a more detailed, more integrated and more integral perspective of a studied phenomenon. Looking at the phenomenon of college and career readiness from these eight perspectives provide teachers and educational policymakers insight into the beliefs and viewpoints held by high school students as they ready themselves for college, university and the workforce.

Figure 3.2 Integral methodological pluralism, methodologies and perspectives

OUTER		Structuralism (Researcher self reflection)	Empiricism (Demographic questionnaires)
		2 Phenomenology (Student interviews)	Autopoiesis 6
4		INNER 1	5
		3 Hermeneutics (Teacher & Parent interviews)	7 INNER Social Autopoiesis 8
INNER		Ethnomethodology (Cultural perspectives)	Systems theory (Document analysis)
OUTER			

Figure 3.2. Integral Methodological Pluralism identifying the methodological families and the eight perspectives. Adapted from Heikkinen, K. (2010). Integral Mind, Brain, and Education. In S. Esbjörn-Hargens, J. Reams, & O. Gunnlaugson (Eds.), *Integral Education: New directions for higher learning*, (p.279). Albany, NY: Suny Press. Adapted and used with permission.

The rationale behind the use of integral research favours heavily into the use of first-, second- and third-person methods, which extends beyond using both qualitative and quantitative data collection in the conventional comprehensive mixed methods approach (Tassett, 2010). I used two aspects of the integral model, the four quadrants of the AQAL model and the eight zones of integral methodological pluralism (IMP), to develop a deeper understanding regarding the perceptions that adolescents, teachers, parents and school policy makers have surrounding the phenomenon of college and career readiness. In order to accomplish this, first-, second- and third-person methodologies were examined. Esbjörn-Hargens (2006) identified that one of the strengths of using an integral theory framework is that it is “scaleable” whereas the researcher can select from “as few as three different methodologies or as many as eight” (p. 89). Given the possible scope, the timeframe for the research, and my limited experience as a researcher, I

focused on the first-, second- and third-person perspectives from five methodologies, which were nested in the four quadrants of the AQAL model.

First-person perspective: Phenomenology.

Phenomenology is a first-person perspective and addresses perception of an individual, which looks at the difference between reality and any concept we might have of it. Crotty (2012) suggested that researchers using phenomenology “talk of studying experience from the ‘point of view’ or ‘everyday’ experience, experience as people understand it in everyday terms” (p. 83). It is in this methodological approach that we “explore our own experience, not the experience of others, for no one can take that step ‘back to the things themselves’ on our behalf” (Crotty, 2012, p. 84). Phenomenology also looks at “the difference between reality and any concept we might have of it” (Merriam, 2002, p. 81). However, the emphasis on phenomenology remains “on common understandings and the meanings of common practices, so that phenomenological research of this kind emerges as an exploration, via personal experiences, of prevailing cultural understandings” (Crotty, p. 2012, p. 83).

From the first-person perspective, I drew on the experiences of high school students as they reflected on their beliefs, actions and perceptions of college and career readiness. This was accomplished through semi-structured interviews, the transcription of audiotapes and coding the information for themes on the phenomenon being researched. Phenomenological data for this study was nested in the upper left quadrant (zone 1) and was addressed in the first research question: What beliefs do adolescents have about their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

Second-person perspective: Hermeneutics.

Hermeneutic research involves a search for understanding of self and others, usually through the interpretation of written documents conveying the contextual, traditional and historical knowledge of a culture (Willis, Inman, & Valenti, 2010). Today, the use of hermeneutics has expanded to include unwritten sources, which attempt to bring an understanding on human practices, human events, and human situations (Crotty, 2012, p. 87). The use of language is also a key factor in hermeneutics (Crotty, 2012). The language that is specific to the context of the study and the language of the culture can express and present different realities. In my research, the language, and in particular, the dialect used by some of the subjects, was carefully transcribed and honoured after the interview process. Crotty (2012) purported that through language and the manner in which we speak can “shape what things we see and how we see them, and it is these things shaped for us by language that constitute reality for us” (p. 88).

From the second-person perspective, I conducted two additional sets of interviews, one with high school teachers, and the other with parents of high school students. The information gleaned from these interviews was transcribed and coded for themes, similar to the process with the student interviews. Collecting as many different perspectives as possible, added extra depth to the phenomenon surrounding the perceptions of adolescents’ college and career readiness. While the information gathered in this research study was not true ethnography, as a single researcher, I laid the groundwork and plotted the course, identifying the major features that could then be implemented, applied to, and could be researched later on. Willis et al. (2010) defined ethnography as the art and science of describing a group or culture, which “looks for ties to special interests and organizations, and writes the story for a concerned public and for

professional colleagues” (p. 199). They proposed that, as a researcher, we look at the daily lives of people and to keep an open mind about the group and culture they are studying (Willis et al., 2010).

I took the perspective in which ethnography approached the problem of college and career readiness, which explored the community and the cultural values of the school. Had this research included a team of researchers then it would have been considered full ethnography. However, as a single researcher, I undertook a comprehensive and coherent perspective of the school culture and community.

The viewpoints of teachers and parents was the focus the third research question, from the lower left quadrant (zone 3): What expectations do others (teachers and parents) have for adolescents for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

Additional information from the second-person perspective was gathered from communiqué with a policy maker (i.e., personnel with the Bahamian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology). The interview from this individual addressed zone #7 (social autopoiesis), whereas the information gathered explained the rationale and the decision-making processes taken on by educational policy makers. The personal viewpoints of school and government policy makers directed the fourth research question, from the lower right (zone 7): What systems (i.e., school board, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology) have an influence determining an adolescents’ readiness for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

Third-person perspective: Empiricism.

From the third-person perspective, the students, teachers and parents were given a questionnaire to complete that highlighted the demographics of the participants involved in the study. Additional information on the students' academics records (i.e., GPAs, PSAT and SAT scores) were gathered, assessed and paired with the students' perceptions, and the information published by the American College Board surrounding the issue of college and career readiness. The data collected through this methodology was positioned in the upper right quadrant (zone 6) and guided the second research question: What are adolescents doing to prepare themselves for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

Third-person perspective: Systems Theory.

From the third-person perspective, documents on school and national educational goals, policies, initiatives, and plans were examined. The indirect influences of the school system and the government educational policies were quite compelling in this quadrant and zone. The focus of this zone was not on the individual but on the systems and organizations that the adolescents were entrenched in. The influences and actions of the system and personnel in this zone ultimately affect the behaviour of adolescents as they prepare for their future life after high school. It is important for “leaders to understand some of the forces at play in this (lower right) quadrant if skillful action is to follow” (Ballard, Reason, & Coleman, 2010, p. 53). Without the school administrators and the educational policy makers, there would be no change in curriculum and the programme of study would become stagnant. However, the development of the social system within some high schools is orchestrated to make the students in the schools succeed. Some individuals in this zone are considered “gatekeepers” who may open the door to a dialogue for change, whereas others may block the possibilities of dialogue until another suitable time or

the desire for change intensifies. This perspective was additionally supported by the fourth research question, that was housed in the lower right quadrant (zone 8): What systems have an influence determining adolescents' readiness for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

Research Design

The student subjects were selected from grade 11 and 12 students at an established private high school in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. A list of names of grade 11 and 12 students, whom I did not teach or evaluate, was compiled. The students were approached via a notice in the homeroom register, a meeting with student participants and the dissemination of letters to individuals who would be available and interested in participating in the research. Two sets of letters were sent home with students, one addressed to students and the other for parents who may have been interested in participating in the study. Pseudonyms were given to all participants involved. As the researcher I was the only individual who knew the true identity of each participant.

The gleanings from the research hoped to extend the knowledge and understanding of the future of education and the Bahamian nation, and what it means to be college and career ready from the perspectives of adolescents, teachers, parents and policy makers within the context of a private high school in The Bahamas.

Methods of Data Collection

A mixture of methods was used in the study at Taino Academy, which included questionnaires, interviews and the analysis of school and educational policy documents. The use of triangulation, "convergent design," (Creswell, 2011, p. 278) or "concurrent design" (Creswell, 2009a, p. 103) was made possible by using these different methods, which strengthened the

study by combining a mixture of data collection methods. This was important to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Empirical data.

Borrowing from the camp of quantitative methodology, empirical data collection comprised demographic questionnaires that were administered to the participants prior to them engaging in the interviews. The data collected was then analyzed and the statistics presented to support and enhance the information gleaned from the interviews. The collection of student academic results, on the American College Board standardized tests (i.e., the PSAT and SAT), and their high school grade point averages (HSGPAs), to date, was obtained to support and explain the qualitative data gathered from the student interviews, as a means of validation for college and career readiness. In 2012, the American College Board set as its benchmark for the Standardized Achievement Test (SAT), a score of 1550. This score “indicates a 65 percent likelihood of achieving a B⁻ average or higher during the first year of study at a four-year college” (Montoya & Camara, 2012, p. 10). However, the College Board implores that “college readiness is dependent on many factors including non-academic characteristics that are outside the scope of the SAT” (Montoya & Camara, 2012, p. 10). Although Montoya and Camara (2012) acknowledged that:

the SAT Benchmark is an excellent aggregate measure of the college readiness of a group of students, the American College Board wants to be very clear that the SAT Benchmark should not be used to evaluate an individual student’s college readiness. (p. 10)

Although above average results on standardized tests like the SAT are good indicators of college and university success, there exists “a positive relationship between SAT scores and GPA in each year of college. Students who perform well on the SAT are also more likely to persist to a

second year and graduate in a timely manner” (The College Board, 2014a, p. 6). Comparing the students’ academic results on the American College Board standardized tests provided a layer of data, which supported many of the perceptions and perspectives surrounding college readiness.

Documents from many school and government sources were examined and analyzed. Some documents included a report on the history of the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (B.G.C.S.E.) examinations and the involvement of the Cambridge Examinations in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, as well as archived documents regarding education practice, laws and statistics in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Other documents included the Ministry of Education’s *Vision 2030: A shared vision for education in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas* (2015), a new educational initiative on the graduation requirements for the Bahamian *National High School Diploma*, papers on the planned implementation of the American College Board Advanced Placement examinations, and articles from the College Board on college and career readiness.

Phenomenological and hermeneutical data collection.

After the list of participants was amassed, I used semi-structured interviews to gather the data. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask participants specific questions, which were predetermined before the commencement of an interview, and then proceeded to explore other topics, which arose through the interview process (Merriam, 2009). The use of this interview method was more open and less structured, which produced interviews that were typically more productive (Willis et al., 2010).

The interviews addressed and supported the main research questions, which were nested in the four quadrants of the integral framework. Conducting semi-structured interviews with students and teachers enrolled and employed in an independent school, and with parents who had

registered their children in Taino Academy, assisted in this regard. This aspect of qualitative research gave the opportunity to study the meaning and understanding of a phenomenon as experienced by an individual and not the perceptions held by researchers who make meaning of the individuals' experiences (Merriam, 2009).

As a researcher, I was cognizant of the relationship and connection between my research questions and the interview questions put towards the participants in the study. Maxwell (2013) suggested that a researcher needs to anticipate how participants will understand the interview questions and how they are likely to respond (p. 101). While I have been working in The Bahamas for some years I was cognizant of the language and terminology I used so that the meaning of the interview questions were not misconstrued. As such, the participants interviewed represented cultures and backgrounds that were different than my own.

The interviews were up to one and one-half hour in duration and were recorded using a digital recording device. The comments and raw data were later transcribed, coded and analyzed. Due to the quality of discussion in the interviews and the number of questions asked for each participant group, the duration of the interviews were modified and varied between the students and the adults. Although the process was labour intensive, it created more complete transcripts for each interview (Willis et al., 2010).

The use of Nvivo, a software program designed to support qualitative and mixed methods research (QSR International, 2016), enabled me to systematically organize data collected from research participants. Nvivo was used to sort, code and align participant interview transcripts and demographic questionnaire responses into thematic nodes and ideas. Being able to categorize and classify data by themes (nodes) and then analyse them to show relationships and connections between participants was invaluable. Nvivo allowed me to visualize the frequency of responses

from participants based on selected themes. Although the many features provided by Nvivo proved beneficial, the basic set up of nodes and demographic attributes of participants was sufficient for this study. Additional exploration and use of Nvivo would improve my proficiency in the software that will be useful in additional research studies.

Research Sample

Purposeful sampling was used in this research as there were only 13 independent schools a part of the Bahamas Association of Independent Secondary Schools (B.A.I.S.S.) on the island of New Providence, in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Although the majority of private high schools offer some degree of the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (B.G.C.S.E.) curriculum and implore that students take the national examinations, the delivery of the national curriculum and the subjects offered varies from school to school. The island of New Providence boasts the majority of the nation's population and the largest selection of both public and private schools. The intent of purposeful sampling was to "select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2002, p. 46). This type of sampling, Merriam (2009) proposed, would require researchers to identify and to clarify the specific selection criteria with which to select a sample of participants. This entailed outlining and generating a list of particular attributes needed in the sample that best fit the purpose of the study. This included selecting student participants who were in college bound courses like the SAT and Advanced Placement courses, and selecting teachers who taught the senior high school students. Making use of purposeful selection afforded me the opportunity to accomplish many goals from the sample. Maxwell (2013) suggested that purposeful selection could achieve a representation which was typical of a setting or group of individuals, it could capture similarity within the population researched, allowed for the selection of individuals who are critical to test

theories surrounding the research, afforded comparisons between settings and individuals, and permitted the selection of participants who would best answer the proposed research questions. This situation was applicable to all participants—students, teachers, parents and policy makers.

The participants for the research included grade 11 and grade 12 students from Taino Academy, a private high school in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. These participants were students enrolled in accelerated classes, non-accelerated courses, Honours and Advanced Placement courses. The site for the research was selected because it has implemented the American College Board Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum since 2004, and has accelerated the national curriculum since 2002. The site for the research has had a long tradition with an accelerated curriculum and implementation of the Advanced Placement programme than other public and private schools in the nation. Ten grade 11 and twelve grade 12 students, 14 teachers, eight parents, including one educational consultant, were selected to participate in the study.

An accelerated educational program has allowed students to take the national examinations, the Bahamian General Certificate of Secondary Education (B.G.C.S.E.) examinations, a year earlier than expected by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. In 2002, Taino Academy embarked on an accelerated learning programme to create a shift in the way the Bahamian educational system was perceived, implemented and practised. Taino Academy realized that its students needed to go beyond the regular high school standard and curriculum if they were to excel at the tertiary level and compete globally. The accelerated learning programme was aimed to challenge students to attain their potential at an earlier stage in their high school career than usual, and so enable them to reach new academic heights before graduating.

Research Site

The site for the research took place at Taino Academy, an established private high school on the island of New Providence in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The research site investigated students who were involved in school programmes, that included non-acceleration and acceleration of the national curriculum, and incorporated the American College Board SAT courses and Advanced Placement courses. Because the school selected for the study was unique in composition, including the type of and delivery of a curriculum, which differed from other schools in the nation, it was an ideal site for this research.

The context of the research site.

The study took place at an established private high school on the island of New Providence, a small island in the northwest quadrant of the Bahamian archipelago. This island is essentially urban and is highly dependent on the service-based industries of tourism and finance. Currently, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas is experiencing many social and economic factors that may influence the future life of the participants of this research study. As a geographic neighbour to Cuba, The Bahamas may be adversely affected by the lift of the American embargo with Cuba, especially in the reduction of tourists and the economic gains made through this industry. The dependency on the tourism industry and the increasing crime rate in the capital of Nassau, on the island of New Providence, is also causing concern for the population of the country particularly when cruise ship companies warn their passengers about the dangers of embarking on the Bahamian shores (Gordon, 2014; Lowe, 2014; United States Department of State, 2015). Although the implementation of a value-added tax that began on January 1, 2015 would not have a direct impact on school tuition (Bahamas Ministry of Finance, 2014), it may have bearing on the choice of schooling and the money that families spend on

education. A former Minister of Education, Science and Technology in The Bahamas, voiced his concern about brain drain whereby some students, who study abroad and obtain a university degree, do not return to the country (Dames, 2014). He expressed that:

There appear to be more Bahamian young people who are trying to leave The Bahamas without an intention of returning, and increasingly those who are out of The Bahamas feel that the prospects for them are better and that the contribution they can make will be better appreciated outside of The Bahamas. (Dames, 2014, para. 14)

These factors were discussed in detail to explain the influence they had on the future of the participants of the research study.

The site for the research was an established private high school, which is structured from grade seven to grade 12. The school also adheres to particular Christian principles, and the student body and the teaching staff range from many Christian denominations, Hindu and non-denominational distinctions.

The demographic composition of the research site.

Taino Academy is a fee-paying institution with a student population over 930 in the high school. Students attending private independent schools can attend any private school of their family's choosing based on varying characteristics of religious affiliation, courses offered and cost of tuition. Students do not have to attend private schools that are located in and around their neighbourhood, unlike students who attend the public government schools. Teachers who work at these schools live in neighbourhoods throughout the island and may not reside in the vicinity of their place of employment.

A demographic questionnaire (see Appendices M, N, O and P) was given to teachers, students, and parents who agreed to participate in the research study. The teacher demographic

questionnaire revealed the nationality, duration of teaching and the area of teaching expertise of these individuals. The student demographic questionnaire ascertained the nationality, age, grade and years of enrolment at the school. The parent demographic questionnaire revealed the nationality, occupation and tertiary education experience of these individuals. The demographics collected from the questionnaires were set up in tables (see Appendix Q), which showed participant pseudonym, age, sex, nationality, as well as questions on education (grade/teaching/university degree and school), years of teaching (including their subject discipline), and occupation. This matrix was crafted to depict demographic findings for cross-case analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 105) in the study. Additionally, Nvivo was used to display the participants' demographic attributes. Many of the teacher participants were foreign nationals and others were permanent residents or on work permits in the country, and as such their anonymity was protected. It was beneficial interviewing teachers who has been teaching at the school for at least one year as they had insight into Taino Academy's student body, culture and curriculum.

The demographic composition of the study included high school students, teachers and parents from various ethnicities and nationalities. Students at Taino Academy come from many nations including The Bahamas, Jamaica, India, Cuba, Haiti, as well as mixed nationalities with parents from different nationalities.

Ethical Considerations

Participating students, teachers and parents, including the school were given pseudonyms and the identity of all remained confidential. Many of the teachers who were interviewed were foreign nationals and were in The Bahamas on work permits. I initially anticipated that some teachers may have been reluctant to talk to me because the discussion would most likely involve

talking about the education system, the national curriculum and working in The Bahamas, and such discourse might jeopardize their employment and work permit; however, this was not the case. After obtaining the permission and support of the school's administrative team any concern about participant involvement was alleviated. All participants volunteered and were keen to be involved as members of the study. It was encouraged that researchers who use phenomenology first explore their own experiences, to become aware of their own expectations, perspectives, and viewpoints (Merriam, 2002). Setting aside or bracketing of assumptions and personal perceptions permits a phenomenon to be explained in terms of its own intrinsic system of meaning (Merriam, 2002). Husserl used the term bracketing (epoché) to explain and suspend one's opinions about the relation between experience and the world (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993).

The implementation of the study was carefully planned and coordinated to identify the optimal time to begin interviewing students and teachers. The start of the school year presented organizational concerns with teachers who were preparing for a new academic year. In May and June, teachers were preparing for end-of-year internal examinations, as well as national examinations. Some teachers interviewed were also external markers for the national examinations and this also posed time constraints for these individuals. The study took place in February and March, an ideal time after ethics approval and before examination study leave beginning early May.

The delivery and demands of the national curriculum, and the timetabling of school and national events were substantial as such the scheduling of interviews was a logistical concern for me as the researcher. Many of the students who were in the accelerated stream were very busy during the first term when they were writing coursework and preparing for SAT examinations and Christmas examinations. In January, the writing and editing of coursework reports continued

until Easter break. In May and June, students were writing AP examinations as well as national examinations. Regardless of the time selected for the research, there were constraints on time for participants and the researcher.

Gaining permission to interview all parties was obtained. Permission from both parents and the school administration was also gathered in order for the study to take place. Permission letters and forms were distributed to and collected from willing participants. The scheduling of interviews with students, teachers and parents was taken into account and was met with mutual agreement with the participants and the researcher. The demographic questionnaires, and the interview tapes and transcriptions, were locked in a strong box at the researcher's residence. Participants were referred to by their pseudonyms, and interview transcriptions and other computer-generated data were password protected. The researcher was the only person who had access to the participants' informed consent forms, demographic questionnaires, interview recordings and transcriptions. The participants' informed consent forms, demographic questionnaires and interview transcripts will be destroyed three years after the study.

Summary

This chapter outlined my choices for using purposeful sampling for this research study, and the methods and approaches I used to gather data to answer my research questions. The perspectives of grade 11 and grade 12 students, teachers, parents from a private high school student in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, including the viewpoint from a national educational policy maker explained the phenomenon surrounding college and career readiness for young people in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

The theoretical framework of Ken Wilber's integral theory acted as map and compass for this study. Although more contemporary tools and techniques are used in cartography today, a

base map is still needed to provide a structure on which to build. Integral methodological pluralism is an extension on Wilber's integral theory—AQAL model and offers a more pragmatic and contemporary mixed research approach that looks at the first-, second-, and third person perspectives of a phenomenon. My rationale for using multiple methodologies and a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collection supported my intent to develop a more inclusive and more integral research study on college and career readiness.

Through phenomenological interviews, the beliefs and attitudes of grade 11 and grade 12 students were recorded, transcribed and coded. Interviews with teachers and parents provided hermeneutical data explaining the school, family and cultural perspectives. Additionally, the analyses of school documents and national educational communiqués provided further perspectives to build on our understanding and strategies in which to enfold and enact on the phenomenon of college and career readiness.

Chapter 4 Participant Findings

This chapter explains where the research took place and identifies and describes the student and adult participants who were involved in the research study. This chapter illuminates what it is we can learn from these participants on the phenomenon of college and career readiness, as it looked at the perceptions of Bahamian adolescents about their future life after high school.

Surveying the Landscape

The research took place at Taino Academy, an established private high school on the island of New Providence in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. A private or independent school is one that is registered by the Ministry of Education but has autonomy over the organization and discipline of the school; the appointment and dismissal of teachers; and the secular and religious instruction provided at the school (Education Act, 2001, §45). Public schools are institutions that are maintained by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education, by an Act of Parliament, aims to “contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by ensuring that efficient education throughout these stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population” and provide “opportunities to all pupils for education offering the variety of instruction and training desirable in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical, technical and vocational instruction and training appropriate to their respective needs” (Education Act, 2001, §12). Within the Bahamian school system, there are 267 schools (including pre-schools)—168 are fully maintained by government and 99 are independent schools. Of the 168 public, or government schools, one third

are situated on New Providence and two thirds are in the Family Islands (Bahamas Ministry of Education, 2015).

Taino Academy is a fee-paying and grant-aided private institution comprising three sections: a pre-school section, a primary school and a high school, with a student population in excess of 1500 ranging in age from three and a half years to seventeen years. The high school section of Taino Academy has a student population over 900 and a teaching faculty of about 70. Both the student body and high school faculty are diverse in the demographics of age, gender, nationality, languages and religion. Parents have a vested interest in their child's education at Taino Academy and they are generally supportive of the school and its teachers. Taino Academy has had an enduring legacy with a more comprehensive academic curriculum than any other private school in The Bahamas. The school's students are ranked annually among the top students in the country for their academic successes. The school offers 27 of the Ministry of Education's national examinations (ten of the 11 B.J.C. examinations and 17 of the 27 B.G.C.S.E. examinations) divided into academic, business and vocational subjects, has an extensive Advanced Placement (AP) programme with ten subjects, and also offers seven of the American College Board's SAT II subject courses. The accelerated and rigorous curriculum at Taino Academy aims to prepare high school students for matriculation into local colleges or universities abroad.

Topography and Altitude of the Participants

From my perspective as a researcher, the participants in this research study assumed the levels of development, or "altitude markers" (Wilber, 2006, p. 67) of amber, orange and green. Wilber (2016) refers to these levels as "the basic maps that human beings use to make sense of their world" (p. 16). A few students, teachers and parents held traditional mindsets or mythic and

egocentric, characteristics of the amber level (see Tables 1, 2 and 3). Wilber (2016) addressed this level to be the “conformist stage” (p. 37) wherein people are more content to fit in with the crowd, often a result of peer pressure in adolescence, and thus causing individuals to abide by the codes or rules of the group. Wilber (2016) suggested that, it is at this level that the 1st person perspective, egocentric, the “I” extends to the 2nd person perspective, ethnocentric, the “we” to reflect more shared group goals that move away from the initial self-interests of the individual. Therefore, participants in the research study may have found themselves relating more to the goals of the respective groups of students, teachers, and parents of Taino Academy, and less of the individual on their own and in isolation. At varying times throughout the school year, Taino Academy has positioned itself at the amber level, especially when faced with academic and athletic competitions from other schools on the island of New Providence and in the country as a whole.

Other participants had acquired a more rational, ethnocentric, pragmatic, worldcentric, and modern perspective characteristic of the orange level. Wilber (2016) noted that there is a “switch in identify from a local ethnocentric identity to a universal or global worldcentric identity” (p. 48). It is at this level we transition from a 2nd person perspective, “we” or “us” to a 3rd person perspective, “all of us” (Wilber, 2016, p. 48). Wilber (2016) suggested that it is at this altitude that individuals “compare the past with the present and an imagined future” (p. 50). This level also focuses on striving for excellence and as a result individuals and organizations undertake measures for success and recognition. It is in this level that many of the student participants wanted to see political and social change occur in their country in order to improve the quality of life for all Bahamians. Many student participants wanted to see The Bahamas expand its industries by diversifying its employment structure and exploring innovations in both

manufacturing and agriculture, and in renewable energy. As a teacher, Albert mentioned that, “in terms of the sciences, there’s a lot of scope and development. For example, in the area of energy we have really not exploited the energy resources.”

Casper, an eleventh grader perceived, “since we get a lot of sunlight, we can probably find a way to produce electricity, using solar panels. And just like, give that, (pause) sell that electricity out.” He also noted that, “I hope that the nation will be able to make it’s own industry instead of depending on tourism as it’s number one source of income.”

Thea, a twelfth grader remarked:

I feel as if our future is bright for those that want to make a difference in the future, for those that are actually willing to go the extra mile to see their country grow and to see us not only just be a third-world country that’s depending on the U.S., but we can start to do things where we can be, I guess independent and just grow with ourselves and then when we, desperately need assistance then we can just call upon favours and what not.

Zane stated that:

I haven’t really seen big developments going on. And, I think it all stems from bad management at the top, meaning like our political leaders, and, I feel (pause), I’m not sure um, the future’s uncertain at leading. It has to be I think, a revolution, in order for us to change the path.

And finally, a few participants had assumed a pluralistic, multicultural, and postmodern view indicative of the green level. It is the perspective of this altitude that all people are seen to be equal regardless of age, sex, nationality or religious affiliation. At green, the 4th person perspective has the power to reflect on and criticize 3rd person perspectives, while being cautious not to pass judgment (Wilber, 2016). In June 2016, the Bahamian government held a national

referendum vote that “aimed at ensuring gender equality in citizenship matters” (Bignall, 2016), thus granting more rights of citizenship to people regardless if they were born male or female. However, the rejection of this bill will continue to impact the future for many female children born in The Bahamas whose parents are of different nationalities and are not legally married.

Anna-Marie mentioned:

I’m not too sure with the way life’s going on, but I believe that, at a later point in time, they’re gonna realize that some things that they’re doing need to change, ...did they pass the bill with the women’s rights?...I know they’ve been debating about it for about two years, which is semi-ridiculous, in my point of view, maybe because I’m a feminist, but maybe just ‘cause it just doesn’t seem right that you’re fighting for somebody’s rights that should already be there.

Marcus declared that:

I know there are people my age, I know that there are people of my generation, that want to see a different Bahamas. And, I understand that they are ambitious, just like I am, just like my friends are, and they will change The Bahamas for the better. So, I believe The Bahamas is going in a positive direction.

Characteristics of the Participants

Participants from Taino Academy were interviewed during the months of February and March 2016. Twenty-two high school students; ten eleventh graders and 12 twelfth graders; 14 high school teachers, eight parents and one educational consultant were the participants in this phenomenological research study on Bahamian adolescents’ future life after high school.

Demographic data from the student and adult participants revealed that there was diversity among the participants in areas more than age grouping and gender.

Student participants.

All student participants ranged in ages of 15–18; one fifteen year old, an 11th grade male student; ten 16 year old students—eight females and two males. Eight of these students were 11th graders and two were 12th graders. There were eleven 17 year olds—six females and five males. Ten were 12th graders and one was an 11th grader.

Eight of the 11th graders were Bahamian nationals, and two held Bahamian/British citizenship. Eight of the 12th graders were Bahamian nationals, one was Jamaican, one was from Zimbabwe, one student held a Bahamian/American citizenship, and the final held a Jamaican/American citizenship. Two student participants (4%) were third-generation college-going students. Fifteen students (68%) were second-generation college-going students. Four students (18%) were the first in their immediate family to attend university. There was one male student who was not pursuing a college education upon graduation and neither of his parents attended college.

Students were asked to describe themselves based on their own personal perception and how they perceived others to see them. They were also asked to explain their aspirations for their life after high school. The majority of 12th grade students were clearer in their plans for the next few years, post-high school, with eleven of the students matriculating to college. Kevin affirmed that:

After I complete high school, it's the norm, you know, to go to college, my thing about that is, maybe that's what's been trained into our brains, we haven't had the option or the choice in the matter, to say whether we want to or not.

Only one student, Roger, aspired to go directly into the workforce after completing a couple of additional courses for his aviation license, which he acquired early in 2016. He

explained, “because I wasn’t really a fan of school so I think that I wouldn’t be good at college. Yeah, so I just decided to do flight school.” He added:

After I finish high school, I have to finish off about two more courses in order to get a decent job, so then after I finish those courses I’ll go into the domestic side of like flying to around the islands.

Although many of the ten 11th graders aspired to go directly into college upon their high school graduation in June 2017, some were still uncertain about the particular field of study or career path they would pursue and hoped to finalize their plans in the upcoming year. Casper noted that:

I plan to go to college. Probably, preferably in Canada and I’m not sure what I want to study yet, I just want (pause), ‘cause that’s like what you usually do, that’s just like the method, you go to high school and then you go to college.

The demographics and self-characterized personal perceptions of the students are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Demographics and self-characterization of student participants, with altitudes

Participant Chosen Pseudonym	Age	Grade	Gender	Generation College Going Student	Nationality	Participant description of self	College/career aspiration
Azaria 	16	11	Female	Second	Bahamian	Down-to-earth; caring	Mass communication
Azeliea 	16	11	Female	Second	Bahamian	Sassy	Brain scientist
Azerya 	17	11	Female	Second	Bahamian	Compassionate; mature for my age	Lawyer
Brittany 	16	11	Female	Second	Bahamian	Honest; friendly	Neonatologist
Casper 	16	11	Male	Second	Bahamian	Comical; determined	Anesthesiology
Gregory 	15	11	Male	Second	Bahamian	Honest	Computer programmer
Kenya 	16	11	Female	Second	Bahamian/British	Very busy; well-rounded	Undecided

Livingston O	16	11	Male	Second	Bahamian/British	Easy going; loving	Engineer
Paige O	16	11	Female	Second	Bahamian	Quiet; goal driven	Dermatologist
Samantha O	16	11	Female	Second	Bahamian	Happy; optimistic	Lawyer
Anna-Marie O	17	12	Female	Second	Jamaican	Funny; argumentative	Business
John G	17	12	Male	First	Zimbabwean	Laid back; funny guy	International relations
Kayleisha G	16	12	Female	Second	Bahamian	Funny; good girl	Actuary
Kenghise O	17	12	Female	Third	Jamaican/American	Spontaneous; “weird”	Biomedical engineer
Kevin G	17	12	Male	First	Bahamian	Nice guy; good kid	Chemistry
Kylie O	17	12	Female	First	Bahamian	Outgoing; friendly	Chartered accountant
Marcus G	17	12	Male	First	Bahamian/American	Easy going	Journalism
Resha G	16	12	Female	Second	Bahamian	Wise for her age	Medicine
Roger O	17	12	Male	No degree ^a	Bahamian	Well-mannered; outgoing	Pilot ^b
Susie O	17	12	Female	Third	Bahamian	Bubbly	Doctor
Thea G	17	12	Female	Second	Bahamian	Playful; family oriented	Psychologist
Zane G	17	12	Male	Second	Bahamian	Adventurous	International relations

Note. Altitudes are presented based on Wilber’s (2006) levels of consciousness. A = **amber**; O = **orange**; G = **green**

^a Roger has no plans to attend university and his parents do not hold a college degree; his eldest sister is currently in university. ^b Roger is a licensed pilot. He is currently completing his last two courses, which will permit him to fly commercial aircraft. He plans to enter directly into the workforce flying airplanes throughout The Bahamas.

Adult Participants.

Eight female parent participants were interviewed as a part of this study. Six of the parents were Bahamian nationals and were in the 41–49 year old demographic, whereas two who were British citizens, were in the 50 years and older age demographic, and had each lived in The Bahamas for over thirty years. The parent participants had children in either grade 11 or 12. A few parents had children in other grade levels as well or had children who had previously graduated from the school from years past. Seven of the parent participants (88%) were first generation tertiary education graduates. Three parent participants were graduates from teachers’ college or community/trade school, one parent participant was a high school graduate, one held a

Bachelor's degree, one a Master's degree and one a Doctorate degree in veterinary medicine. A summary of the demographics for the parent participants is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Demographics and characteristics of parent participants, with altitudes

Participant Chosen Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Nationality	Generation College Going Student	Educational Attainment	Years in Tertiary Education
Eloise o	41-49	Female	Bahamian	No degree ^o	High school diploma	0
Georgia g	41-49	Female	Bahamian	First	Doctorate	7+
Kelly g	41-49	Female	Bahamian	First	Master's	5
Marie g	50+	Female	British	First	Bachelor's	4
Marilyn o	41-49	Female	Bahamian	First	Trade School	1
Pamela o	41-49	Female	Bahamian	First	Master's	6
Shirley o	41-49	Female	Bahamian	First	Community College	2
Sweetie g	50+	Female	British	First	Teacher's College	2

Note. Altitudes are presented based on Wilber's (2006) levels of consciousness. A = amber; O = orange, G = green
^o Eloise does not hold a college degree; her eldest daughter is currently in university.

Fourteen teacher participants were interviewed as a part of the research study. Two of the teachers were males and 12 were females. Three teacher participants were 50 years of age and over, two were in the 41–49 year old demographic, seven were in the 31–40 year old demographic, and one was in the 21–30 year old demographic. Seven of the teacher participants held Bachelor's degrees, and seven teacher participants held Masters' degrees. The nationality of the teacher participants was very diverse and multicultural. Four teachers were Bahamian nationals, including one who held both a Bahamian/Canadian citizenship. Two teachers were British citizens, three teachers were from Jamaica, and one teacher from each of the following countries: Guyana, Martinique, Nepal, United States of America and Mauritius. Ten of the teachers (71%) were the first in their family to attend and graduate from college, whereas four teachers (29%) were second-generation college educated graduates.

One educational consultant with the Ministry of Education was interviewed. She was a Bahamian citizen in the 41–49 year old demographic, and was a first-generation college graduate

with a Master's degree. A summary of the demographics for the teacher participants and the educational consultant are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Demographics and characteristics of teacher and educational policy maker participants, with altitudes

Participant Chosen Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Nationality	Generation College Going Student	Educational Attainment	Years in Tertiary Education
Albert G	50+	Male	Guyanese	Second	Master's	5
Anastacia G	31-40	Female	American	Second	Master's	6
Ava O	21-30	Female	Bahamian/Canadian	Second	Bachelor's	4
Chloe G	31-40	Female	Martiniquan	First	Master's	6
Claudette O	41-49	Female	Jamaican	First	Master's	4
Ernest O	41-49	Male	Bahamian	First	Bachelor's	4
Iris G	31-40	Female	Jamaican	First	Master's	3
Jennifer O	31-40	Female	Bahamian	First	Master's	6
Julia G	31-40	Female	British	First	Bachelor's	6
Lois G	31-40	Female	Jamaican	First	Master's	6
Mabel G	50+	Female	British	First	Bachelor's	4
Madeleine G	50+	Female	Mauritian	Second	Bachelor's	7+
Missy O	31-40	Female	Nepalese	First	Bachelor's	2
Pauline O	50+	Female	Bahamian	First	Bachelor's	4
Edwina G	41-49	Female	Bahamian	First	Masters	7+

Note. Altitudes are presented based on Wilber's (2006) levels of consciousness. A = amber; O = orange; G = green

Participants' Perceptions of College Readiness

The parents' primary focus was to provide their children with the necessary tools, support and encouragement to enable them to achieve a quality high school education which they believed would inevitably lead to an acceptance into a university or college, either local or abroad, with the financial assistance provided by scholarships. The perspective of many of the parents was that they paid for a private school education, which they believed would give their child an advantage in various course offerings provided by curricula from both the national and international agencies. It was the hope that the students, through their exposure to a variety of skilled teachers, course offerings and extra tutorial, would be able to diversify their college

application forms in hopes to identify them as an ideal college applicant. The parents wanted the best for their children.

Kelly noted that:

What attracted me to this school was the fact that I like the various programs they have, and I like the fact that they ah, involved with the students' lives, and what colleges have to offer.... You see they have a lot of classes going on um, early in the morning, preparing them for these exams; after school, lunch time, the extra that they put in (pause), I think is very, very good, which I like, and also um, they're on top of their game. They'd see what's out there, what the children need to do, and make sure they get it done.

She continued to explain the difference between her high school experience and the one her daughter is experiencing:

For me growing up, being sheltered, I was never that involved. And I think society didn't demand that. But now we're livin' in a global world, things have changed. You have to be on top of your game, if you want to excel. So they must be well rounded. You just can't be academic students. You have to be well rounded.

The teachers provided a unique mosaic on the school's tapestry. As the teachers came from many areas of the globe, representing 13 different nationalities in the high school section, they brought with them their own college experience as well as their teaching experience from other parts of the world. Their exposure to different cultures, examinations and curriculum standards varied greatly from just that of the Bahamian national examinations.

The teachers' perspectives were more closely aligned with the government's perspective and mission with which:

To provide all persons in The Bahamas an opportunity to receive a quality education that will equip them with the necessary beliefs, attitudes and skills required for life, both in a democratic society guided by Christian values in an inter-dependent changing world.

(Bahamas Ministry of Education, 2015)

As a teacher, Jennifer implored:

If each of us could be accountable for each other, then that could also help, um, to assist with preparing students for college, preparing students also for the job market. And, um, also making sure that we have a better nation, and a better society.

Although many of the teachers are required to deliver the national curriculum to the students on a daily basis, and have prescribed to the recommended texts, the use of past papers that aided in the preparation of students for the annual national examinations, some branched off to pull in their own experience and interest that helped provide supplemental content to enrich the knowledge base, which provided depth to the high school experience. Other teachers who are delivering international curriculum in the classroom (i.e., Advanced Placement and SAT II courses) required more deviation from the nationally prescribed course of study to use resources more suited for those subjects and standardized examinations.

The students differed in their own experiences and exposure to the phenomenon of college and career readiness. The student participants were separated based on their grade level, despite there being similarities according to students' ages, course selection and future aspirations. Twenty-two student participants were interviewed and were asked if they perceived themselves to be ready for college or university. Twelve 12th grade students were to graduate in a few months time, whereas the 11th graders had more than a year before their high school graduation.

With only a few months before the commencement of university less than half of the 12th graders perceived themselves to be ready for college, yet three perceived themselves to be “somewhat” or “halfway” there.

In contrast, the 11th grade students have more time in high school to get ready and get used to the idea of transitioning into college upon their high school graduation. At this stage, with more than a year out, only one 11th grader perceived to be ready for the college experience at this point. Not surprising, four students perceived themselves not to be ready for college and one student was unsure or apprehensive about the event. Three students looked at “readiness” from the external perspective of their results on the national examinations at the end of grade 11 and other requirements (i.e., SAT examination results) to determine whether they were ready. These three students looked at tangible and numerical values to assess and determine their readiness. They relied on academic values to explain for them whether they were ready or not.

For many of the 12th graders, the perception of readiness was more reflective of a personal, emotional view, whereas some of the 11th graders perceived it to be more tangible and relied on extrinsic factors to determine their readiness for the next phase of their life.

The grade 12 students were either college bound or were prepared to enter directly into the workforce. These students proclaimed to have a plan in place and were either awaiting acceptance into a university or college abroad or had already heard. The grade 11 students had not yet begun that experience of applying to college and only a few had begun the process of investigating the admissions requirements for various universities. The majority of grade 11 student participants had an idea about a future career but a couple of students were undecided and could not say definitively what they wanted to do upon the completion of high school. Some

were completely unaware about the dynamics and logistics of applying for college or attending tertiary education abroad at this juncture.

The educational consultant, while very versed on the need and pursuit for tertiary education, in particular a college degree, found that getting other public and private schools in the archipelago and the Ministry of Education to see the value of higher education and a university degree would be a challenge. Edwina explained:

A change is never readily embraced. The challenges encountered over the past year have not deterred my efforts in advocating to create college-going cultures in the public school system. High school should be the launching pad for students to transition into their college and career. The creation of a culture in the public schools is essential for the sustainable growth and development of The Bahamas. In an effort to promote equity and access, it is imperative that our students be exposed to global educational standards and are able to compete academically on the global stage.

Overview of the Participants' Kosmic Addresses

Wilber (2006) informed us that “a more complete Kosmic address would include the full AQAL (‘all quadrants, all levels’) aspects of any occasion, but the point is that, at the very minimum, you need quadrants and levels, or perspectives and altitude” (p. 253). This study used only the quadrants and levels or altitudes to locate the phenomenon of college and career readiness using the integral model. The multiple perspectives of the participants in the research study and their altitudes consciousness (see Tables 1, 2 and 3) helped triangulate, or pinpoint and hone in on a more exact Kosmic address (Wilber, 2006) for the phenomenon of college and career readiness from the research site. Therefore, Wilber’s (2006, 2016) altitude markers,

perspectives, worldviews or levels of development, were used to identify the Kosmic addresses of the research participants and the research site (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Kosmic Addresses of Participants and Research Site

Participant	Kosmic Address
Student participants	Amber /Orange/Green + Upper Left/Upper Right
Parent participants	Amber /Orange/Green + Upper Left/Lower Left
Teacher participants	Amber /Orange/Green + Upper Right/Upper Left/Lower Left
Educational consultant participant	Orange /Green + Lower Left/Lower Right
Research Site	
Taino Academy	Amber/Orange + Lower Left

Table 4. The possible Kosmic addresses for student and adult participants and the research site, Taino Academy. The addresses showcase the possible altitude and quadrant for each participant group.

The research participants were coded to reflect their altitude (level of consciousness) based on the perceptions of the researcher and the responses provided during the interview questions. Based on the interviews with student and adult participants there were two students who displayed amber tendencies, 12 students with an orange altitude and seven students who exhibited characteristics of green. In the parent group, there were four parents who exhibited orange-like tendencies and four with green perspectives. There were six teachers who presented orange characteristics and eight who leaned towards green perspectives. The educational consultant showed a green worldview. The research site, Taino Academy, revealed amber/orange tendencies.

Although the designation of altitudes is not exact or constant, it does provide a glimpse into the perspectives offered by each student and adult participant. Many participants presented worldviews that were more global, whereas others were more traditional and had a strong emphasis on religious and spiritual values. Due to the degree of individualized and personal life experiences, exposure to local and global events and issues, or levels of educational attainment,

as a researcher, I was not able to assume that the adult participants were placed at a higher altitude than the students, nor was I able to assume that the grade 12 students were at a higher altitude than the grade 11 students by the very nature of their age. The levels of maturity displayed by student participants in this study did not correlate with all perspectives presented in this research. In other words, just because some of the students were a higher chronological age and grade and displayed higher degrees of social maturity, it did not mean that the participants were at a higher altitude or degree/level of consciousness.

The different research participants originated from different ages and cultural backgrounds, varying degrees of life and educational experiences thus attributing to many possible addresses, which make a strong argument for having a map with multiple projections or perspectives. If the world maps of today use various perspectives (i.e., Mercator, Mollweide, Robinson, Peters), are the major landforms, bodies of water, countries and continents then still not in their general location and hemispheres? The size of the maps and the projections may distort the shapes of the continents but their relative locations have remained intact. The diversity of map projections exists to meet the needs of the multitude of users and uses for such maps. Frequently, the projection, today and in the past, was to promote an advantage of one area, nation or empire over others, even if it was just in size. Oftentimes, the distortion was dependent on the political agenda of the party commissioning the map. What did the cartographer have to gain by using a particular perspective? Thus, the phenomenon of college and career readiness was perceived to be somewhat similar to the plethora of world map projections we have today. For many of the participants, there were slight variances in the degree and perception of college and career readiness based on demographics such as age and tertiary education experience. As

student participants grow and mature they will relocate and change their Kosmic address as their life experiences, and opportunities change.

Summary

Twenty-two students, 14 teachers, eight parents and one educational consultant were the participants in a research study at Taino Academy, an established private high school on the island of New Providence in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, on the phenomenon of college and career readiness as it addressed the perspectives of Bahamian adolescents about their future life after high school.

The landscape of college and career readiness was surveyed at Taino Academy and the parameters have been marked, clearly outlining the territory for those who wish to view the map. New maps for the same territory can be drawn to reflect the perspectives, routes and landmarks of new participants on this landscape.

Chapter 5 Analysis of Emerging Themes

Forty-five participant interviews were conducted and the comments were coded separately and ideas were extrapolated from each participant in each group. From these interviews, a myriad of ideas were reduced to form twenty-four emerging themes. The emergent themes showcase the evolving nature of education, society and culture in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The themes are supported by quotes, which illustrate the themes with the voices of the participants. The quotations also illustrate the types of issues and the nature of the conversation that arose at the time of the interview with each participant. Each theme has emerged to show the potential for development for young people in The Bahamas, its education system and the country as well. This chapter discusses the emerging themes, which established four central research themes, which are discussed in the following chapter. The four central themes created a map of the territory of the phenomenon of college and career readiness, and the perceptions of Bahamian adolescents for their future life after high school. This chapter will examine and analyse where these themes were located on an AQAL map specific to each participant group.

Emerging Themes Identified

Upon completion of the interview transcriptions and document analysis, the following twenty-four themes emerged: curriculum needs, standards and assessment, which included the skills and knowledge needed for success in the future, the demands and rigor of high school, the implementation of educational initiatives and activities, and the formation of new careers. Another theme included mechanisms for college, which included adolescents developing an aspiration for attending college, establishing an awareness for college, creating a mindset of the college experience and transitioning to another phase in their life, which included tertiary

education. Shared community concerns perceived to be experienced by research participants and citizens alike were noted and included. Themes such as literacy and education in the country; the perceived competition for jobs in the future of the country; family dynamics and poverty; youth, peer pressure and experience; crime; and environmental issues surfaced.

Singular themes emerged, which included: brain drain; stereotypes perceived by the young and the perception of barriers imposed by an older generation; the need for innovation to improve the state of education, including the benefits and pitfalls with the use of technology; the identification and impact of first generation college going students; financial barriers and opportunities; and the exposure and opportunities were mentioned. Additionally, the expectations of the school system and others, including teachers, parents and the community; the acknowledgement of a collective and community effort to raise and educate students; and the explanation of the terms college knowledge and college and career readiness were also cited.

Emerging Theme 1: College Knowledge and College Readiness

The phenomenon of college and career readiness was a major focus of this research study. High school students who are nearing graduation in the next few months or in the next year are often asked what their plans are after they complete high school. All student and adult participants were asked to explain, in their own words, what they perceived the words *college knowledge* or *college and career readiness* to mean. Additionally, they were asked if there were any particular skills or knowledge required for university, college or the workforce. It is here that I wish to begin the results and analysis of the data from the participants themselves. College knowledge and college readiness was positioned in the upper left (UL) quadrant of the AQAL framework and was assigned “orange” as its altitude (level 5; modern worldview). As this

question was asked in the interviews, all participants offered their own definition and explanation on the terms of college knowledge and college readiness.

Conley (2011, 2014) founder of the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) proposed that when adolescents possess and master the skills and content addressed in a high school curriculum they are deemed university or college ready. Conley (2011, 2014) suggested that students exhibit cognitive strategies including problem solving and critical thinking, content knowledge, which includes the knowledge and skills associated with the core and elective subjects offered in high school. Additionally, students are required to possess learning skills and techniques including organizational skills, time management and study skills. The final component of Conley's model advises that students develop knowledge and skills that assist adolescents transitioning into university or college. These skills implore students have an understanding of the culture of college including the finances, admissions process and the school's environment. Acquiring all or most of these skills or keys (Conley, 2014) an adolescent is more ready to transition to university or college with greater ease.

Edwina was well versed in the terms college readiness and college knowledge. As an educational consultant, she was very familiar with the work of David Conley and the American College Board. As such she was able to clearly articulate the concepts behind these terms, which matched those of Conley and the College Board. Edwina explained that for her the goal of college knowledge and college readiness is, "preparing students to transition from the world of high school to college without remediation and transition from high school into the workforce with the core competencies that are required, um ah, for the 21st century workforce."

Parents believed that it was important to ready students for the next phase of their life and this preparation came from guidance given at home and support and assistance from school.

Kelly advised that students prepared by, “getting knowledge on all basis of the college, not just academics, but safety reasons. The type of students they attract, and then how is that school rated among other schools, and is it the school for you.” She added that:

It is significant to prepare students for college while they are in high school because it will prepare them for what is ahead of them. It will allow them to see how costly it is and what majors or career path they can take. Students need to have this knowledge so that they would be successful as students in college.

As a 12th grade student, John believed that:

It’s maybe trying to know how well a college prepares you for employment—college and career readiness, and even maybe that it stresses the importance of how...college and employment together, and how they will be, maybe without going to college, maybe you’re less prepared to your future.

Kayleisha acknowledged that:

Having an idea of what it is that you want to do, because I think that on, or should I say having a goal other than to go to parties, to be for me, to be college ready because I know a lot of people go to college just to say they had a college experience, but they don’t really take a look at what they’re gonna be doing while they’re at college academically, and for the future. So, I think apart of college readiness is to have sort of an idea of where you want to go, but you don’t have to decide immediately what it is exactly what you want to do, but have like an idea of what it is that you want to study, so that when you do make your choice it will be easier for you to transfer into the appropriate classes you might have the pre-requisites for your potential job.

Marcus explained that:

Coming from The Bahamas and going to the States, you have to be sensitive to a lot of other people's cultures and beliefs and ideologies, and what not, and that is a very, I think that is one of the most important aspects of college knowledge. You have to be aware of your environment you have to be aware of the people around you.

Zane described college knowledge as, "the information that you need to know about college in order to make it worthwhile. And that information, that you know, before you get into college or the workplace, ...so that you don't like make bad decisions." He also advised that, "it's very important to know about the region that you're going to like um, the demographics, the racial demographics um, the student to faculty ratio, and like how far away your dorm is from your classes."

As a teacher, Ernest expressed:

When I initially had the mindset of college, and when I actually got there, I think then that it was a kinda culture shock, you know. In terms of my expectation and I think that was mainly from ah, television and word of mouth from other people....I think now then, ...in terms of understanding the dynamics of what college is, and the expectation and demands...which would place on the individual, you know, and um, as being as ready as possible to face those demands, you, I mean, in spite of the fact then that you wouldn't know exactly what they are.

Mabel explained:

As a teacher you turn out children who are ready to move onto the next stage of education, to tertiary level education. And as a teacher, that's what it means to me, but when I was a student, that's not what it meant to me, because our school did not prepare us at all, so I was not college ready or career ready when I was at school, or when I was

at college. College didn't prepare me either for a career, but now as a teacher when I see that phrase the first thing I think of is, are we preparing our children in our school for college or for a career? I think we're trying for a college, but I don't think we are for a career at all.

Conley (2014) suggested that students be provided with content and knowledge, thus offering courses that will enable adolescents to possess the qualifications and fulfill the academic requirements to apply and be accepted into university. As such it was important to address the school and national curriculum needs that emerged as a sub-theme during the research.

All participants explained in their own words their understanding of the terms *college knowledge* and *college readiness*. Their explanations, supported by the selected quotes above illustrate both the existing perceptions of these terms by the adolescents, and the past experience from the adult participants.

Emerging Theme 2: Curriculum Needs, Standards and Assessment

A school curriculum is a driving force for any educational institution and is essential for maintaining and improving the educational standards in any nation. Curriculum needs, standards and assessment was a large theme with many parts, and it was important to acknowledge that there were various curriculum programs, instructional strategies and assessments needed to prepare students for a college- or university-going experience. Whether a curriculum is local or international in focus it was important to identify whether or not it met the standards or credentials to assist students in applying and getting accepted into a local college or a university abroad.

Within the theme of curriculum, additional mini-themes were extracted to further identify and explain this topic. Curriculum was positioned in two quadrants, the lower right (LR) and in

the upper right (UR). As the creation of the national education curriculum is positioned in the lower right (LR), the delivery of the national curriculum becomes the responsibility of the teachers. The positioning in the lower right (LR) reflected the necessity for a national curriculum that catered to the needs of all Bahamian students. It was in this quadrant that the government system, the Ministry of Education, created and imposed a curriculum to be used by all high schools in The Bahamas that included mandatory courses, additional electives and alternative pathways. In the lower right, the national education system is the driving force behind all standardized educational initiatives in the country. This quadrant, the systems quadrant, explains the policies, requirements and standards expected of schools and teachers in order to ensure that students receive appropriate and specified academic benchmarks. The positioning of curriculum in the upper right (UR) acknowledged that the delivery of a standardized curriculum, be it national or specialized, for the school was essential. However, in private schools some deviation is permitted, thus an institution's choice to accelerate the national curriculum and introduce alternative curriculum from other parts of the world was possible. This was the case with Taino Academy and its implementation of the American College Board's SAT II subject courses and Advanced Placement courses. Although the school fulfills its requirements, as a grant-aided institution, and offers the national curriculum, it does offer alternatives and more advanced options for its students in the senior high classes, thus affording them with college-level courses while they are in high school.

The national curriculum, perceived by the parents in the upper right (UR), indicated more of an interest in their child taking the pre-requisite courses that were needed to get them to graduate and then enroll into university and eventually put them towards their career aspirations. Therefore, the parents were more drawn to the actions and the fact that specific courses were

offered at the school, rather than the specifics of how the courses came about. The student perspective of the curriculum in the lower right (LR) was reflected in the educational policies from the government, which was responsible to provide a curriculum that all students take in order to graduate from high school. The students placed this responsibility on the shoulders of the Ministry of Education and the school to offer them a diverse curriculum. The students in this study also believed that the addition of more trade-based courses or advanced courses in their school would fall on the responsibility of the institution, even if it differed from the country. Hence, Taino Academy's decision towards the acceleration of the national curriculum, which differs from the more traditional curriculum offered to the majority of students in the country.

Curriculum needs, standards and assessment and its mini-themes were assigned “amber/orange” altitude (level 4/5; traditional/modern worldview) to fit in with traditional-based subjects, with hints of “green” for some disciplines and topics that met the needs for 21st century skills as perceived by the institution and the government. Educational initiatives and activities was assigned an “orange/green” altitude (level 5/6; modern/post-modern worldview) to reflect not only “best practices”, but also “next practices” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), which offer additional courses and ventures for students in the 21st century. The maintenance of best practices, the existing effective practices, are widely used and agreed upon in many education circles, which create the opportunity for more innovative and inventive methods, the next practices, to exist. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) noted that the next practices tend to become “the best practices of the future” (p. 51). Topics and issues about curriculum skills and knowledge were mentioned 262 times by the majority of participants. The nature of this theme transcended across all groups as the high school curriculum is what is regulated by the Ministry

of Education, modified by the high school, delivered by the teachers, undertaken by the students and supported by the parents.

As a teacher Ernest worried about the future for his own children under the existing national curriculum. “I’m going to be putting my daughter into a system where I think then that is not gonna offer anything for the future, you know, ...the educational system here I think is archaic.” He professed that, “it’s the best in which we have to offer, you know, um, and it’s better than nothing. ...I think then that there is so much more than that we could still be doing...it could be more progressive.”

As a consultant Edwina noted that:

Whatever that curriculum looks like, whether it’s defined by local, and limited to local standards, or a combination of local and international, but I think it’s important for school systems to be exposed to best practices in college admissions to understand what colleges are looking for, in order to determine or...in order to ensure that not only ah, these students are successfully completing high school but also successfully completing high school to make that transition based on the rigor that is required on a college level. She acknowledged that the gaps in the national educational system were unfavorable to the public school students:

These students were missing ah, the admissions criteria, not just for colleges, but also for scholarships....The system was not one that was pushing, um, higher ed. They were not. Public schools were preparing students, as more emphasis was being placed on career. Additionally,

The more they [college representatives] tell you that grade point average, although it’s substantial, because there’s such a difference...in curriculum and GPAs all around the

world, standardized tests is the best way for them to measure where these students are at academically.

Geiser & Santelices (2007) found that a high school grade point average (HSGPA) and college-preparatory courses were better predictors for freshmen in college and their graduation outcomes, despite critics who viewed standardized tests to be more uniform and rigorous than the differences in grading scales in many high schools.

Sub-theme 2.1: Curriculum skills and knowledge.

Skills needed and knowledge required for college and university vary from organizational skills, work ethic, course offerings, and academic versus life skills. The presentation and delivery of national and international standardized examinations fulfill requirements for students, who plan to study or work locally, and offer admissions criteria for tertiary schools abroad. Some student participants felt that the existing high school course offerings were limited to traditional subjects and they expressed their interest in offering courses that reflect the interest, skills and new careers present in the 21st century to the research site. Curriculum skills and knowledge was referenced by 38 participants, 154 times, and was assigned an “orange” altitude (a level 5, modern worldview) due to the nature in delivering traditional-based subjects and content.

Many students advocated for more practical and life-based skills to be integrated in the school and national curriculum. Azeliea believed that, “the school’s mindset would need to change, first of all it’s too traditional, ...like they need to introduce, like electronics, ...they should just, make it more technology-friendly.” She noted that school, “doesn’t prepare you for like life situations. I can’t, like, apply certain things I’ve learned in school to my life.” She complained that, “they don’t offer a lot of like interesting classes, which are like offered in

college.” She added that the courses in schools, “it’s more business-like related and science related.”

Paige stated:

I think that they should teach more life skills in school instead of just um, learn out of the textbooks because a lot of times, um, we come out of school and we know how to do, um, some of the advanced stuff in education, you don’t really know how to take of yourself yet.

Kylie mentioned that:

I feel like we could have more courses...because not everybody is book smart. So I feel like, if you aren’t going towards the arts, or the sciences, or the business, you don’t really have an option in school. So I feel like we could have more technical classes to help children that are gifted in those areas.

As a parent Kelly noted that, “the math (pause) that I took in high school wasn’t sufficient, so I had to do some remedial math courses to bring myself up.” She also advised that schools “don’t totally put focus on academics,” and that educators:

...take note of things like this and not just focus on academics, or focus on those high flying students but look at all students because what you might excel in and another might’ in’ excel in, might just be good with my hands, so that’s good.

Sweetie believed that her daughter’s involvement in community-based activities has been rewarding and that, “experiences, I feel, have done her more good than academics, you know, like those real life experiences, and it would be nice if she could do more of that sort of thing.”

As a teacher Albert supposed that:

I have a feeling that what Piaget discovered is a lot that can be gained from what he has said in a sense that at a certain stage a child is able to do certain things and only if they're manipulating the environment, manipulating things, they're going to go on to the next stage. And if they don't go on to that next stage, no matter how much you try to teach them, they're not going to be able to do it, because these mental constructs have not been formed.

Claudette noted that, "most of the subjects that they are offering at this school are more traditional um, subjects that are going to get them into colleges, almost any colleges anywhere." She noted that, "the heavy emphasis is on getting them ready for the national exams, you might find certain job taking skills are not being emphasized." She advocated that schools look into other initiatives for students. She suggested that:

They could have what I call internships. Um, whether it's grade 10, 11 or 12, where if they think...they want to go to a particular college or to pursue a particular career, then they have programs where they have um, firms that would take in a certain number of children and they would work.

Iris mentioned that, "most of the courses that are offered here it would prepare them for college level. It doesn't matter, wherever college you go to, it would prepare them." She explained further that some students have not acquired the necessarily skills and knowledge while in high school and thus had to seek remedial assistance. "They're going back to complete whatever it is so that they can advance to hopefully get into a college."

Mabel advocated that students needed a diverse set of skills that extended past the basic academics. She explained that, "they need to do less in grade twelve. Ah, do fewer subjects and

have more concentrated, either the counselor time or homeroom time or something that actually specifically guides them.” She also noted that:

They have to realize there’s a great big world out there. There are many subjects in their school curriculum that try to help them do that, but unless they embrace that, I don’t think they’re going to make the progress they can make.

The skills and knowledge needed for a high school curriculum to help young people transition to higher education was considered as an important sub-theme measuring 84% of the participant responses, with students and teachers placing more emphasis on this theme than parents.

Sub-theme 2.2: Establishing new careers.

In the 21st century new careers and professions are being created that reflect the social climate of today’s globalized community. Students are pursuing careers that previous generations had not heard of nor fathomed, and as a result, they are not currently available in the country nor are there plans to facilitate these careers in the foreseeable future. Consequently, students seek employment and opportunity abroad, which has attributed to the growing rate of national brain drain. This theme addressed the need for the creation of new careers was referenced 11 times by seven participants, and was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5/modern worldview).

As a parent Shirley affirmed that students of today:

They’re branching off different from us. It was only the doctor, the nurses, the um, electrician and stuff like that. Now they’re technical. You’ve got the graphical designers, you got this, you’ve got that, and back in our day it wasn’t that so... But now, they’re branching into different areas, and those jobs are not here for them. We don’t offer it.

As a consultant Edwina noted that, “we’re not just talking about career assessment, but also career development as a part of, you know, creating this college and career ready culture.

Exposing students to the...um, the myriad of careers.” She added:

They can take that and marry that with something else.... Whether it’s a career connected to a national need, or one that, you know, the country has never even fathomed. The point is that they can transfer the skills that they would’ve acquired from high school, and make that smoother transition.

As a teacher Julia noted that:

Nowadays, these kids are studying for something, like jobs that we haven’t even heard about yet, you know, so I think that career readiness is about being able to problem solve, and interpret something, in your own way in order to solve a problem.

Pauline stated that:

I try to tell my students that whenever they’re doing their career choices, whenever they start, and they’re building and working towards their degree, continue but work towards a specialized area, something that is needed...you have to come back with something that is needed...not something that’s already here.

The sub-theme on the need to establish new careers was noted by 16% of the participants, which resonated more with teachers than other participant. The amber and orange worldviews for the majority in society are holding onto the traditional careers and professions many accept in the nation today. Many teachers are aware that young people are looking to diversify their career options and venture into professions that are not currently situated in The Bahamas but may be needed in the future. While many of the careers and professions of the past continue to be deemed essential, new occupations and career paths will continue to emerge as society evolves.

Sub-theme 2.3: Educational initiatives and activities.

Educational initiatives and activities were outlined as either school-based or nationally directed. Educational initiatives were mentioned by seven participants, 33 times, and were assigned an “orange/green” altitude (level 5/6; modern/post-modern worldviews) for the traditional, existing initiatives, but also to address the plans to create programs that are more diverse and inclusive. The standardized National High School Diploma (NHSD), an initiative created by the current government administration, along with a plan for a public, universal pre-school program, and the proposal to transition the College of The Bahamas to that of university status were three national directives to help improve the literacy and national educational standards of The Bahamas. School-based initiatives included providing scheduled guidance counseling time for students and offering international standardized examination courses (i.e., SATs and APs).

Referencing the standardized National High School Diploma, Pamela, a mother of an eleventh grader noted that:

They’re finding out more and more students are not reaching those academic standards, and so they um, instead of lettin’ those children fall through the cracks...if they can’t make it up in high school, well then, they definitely don’t have college on their mind. So those I think...that’s where the government tried to um, make up the curriculum to try to capture some of those students.

She added that, “the government is um, making the college now, is trying to make it into a university, so I guess that’ll bring more of an awareness to, that would bring more of an interest in the college.”

Edwina claimed that, “it is important that school systems provide college assessment, first to understand where these kids, as it relates to their understanding of this whole notion of college readiness and college preparedness.” Additionally, “beyond the training for the guidance counselors, we figured to better these kids make the rigor of their program um, to create more rigor in their program, we would introduce the APs.” She noted that:

It’s not that I believe that the Advanced Placement is the answer to reforming education in the country...they’re [students] unexposed, not aware of what’s going on around the world, and not understanding of the changes, the changing trends in education and higher education.

She advised that:

The need for a synergized and unified ah, position in our school system for the early sitting of B.G.C.S.E.s, to allow more college-bound students to take the Advanced Placement, a continuous and ongoing local and international AP training, ah, so that more schools could embrace it. The creation of an aggressive college readiness campaign in the schools and the Ministry, to educate parents, student and educators of the benefits of college admissions, the PSATs, the SAT, and the ACT, to introduce pre-AP training for junior high.

Teachers made suggestions about the education system at Taino Academy, which they believed would assist students with the transition to college or the workforce. The recommendation to implement internships, work placement and job shadowing appeared to be more common suggestions from teachers who drew on their own high school experiences or initiatives that were once implemented at Taino Academy in the past.

As a teacher Anastacia suggested the implementation of, “shadowing-mentoring programs, working schools together.” She also advocated that schools, “pool in the resources” to provide better educational opportunities for both students and teachers.

Pauline explained the success that students from the high school were having with the American College Board examinations since they were introduced to the school.

Students are doing college-level courses in grade 12, and are getting excellent results. So we are very pleased and that is what we’ve decided once we’ve indicated to students that they have the ability, and each graduating class, each grade 12 surprises us every year, right now there are over 70 plus kids that are doing APs, SAT subjects...that’s well over half of the students in the present grade 12.

This sub-theme was more significant for the adult participants (16%) ranking greater importance among the teachers. The development of new education reforms and initiatives are driven by the education system positioned in the lower right (LR) quadrant, as such has a greater influence on the teachers who are responsible to delivery of the curriculum to their students.

Sub-theme 2.4: Demands and rigor of school and the curriculum.

Demands and rigor reflected the perception that high school required a particular work ethic and expectation to prepare students for college, university or the workforce. The pressures of the workload perceived by students, teachers and parents acknowledged that it ably prepares students for the academic expectations of college but that often there was a stronger emphasis on breadth and limitations on depth. The demands and rigor of school was referenced 43 times by 20 participants, and was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview).

Some students felt that the workload in college or university would be easier than high school. Many eleventh grade students at Taino Academy write the national examinations a year

earlier than many of their counterparts in the country. The students are often writing as many as 12 national examinations, which also comes with the elements of coursework, research reports and assessed practical examinations. This is seen as a daunting task when, for most students who are enrolled in college, they will be taking a maximum of five subjects per term.

As a consultant Edwina believed that the national examinations were not rigorous enough to prepare high school students for college, thus she explained why the American College Board examinations were introduced in some private schools and why they were piloted in a few public high schools beginning in September 2015. She explained that:

The measuring stick today, perhaps is...the College Board....[and] David Conley...he's doing some amazing work in the field and so I use, based on what he has outlined as what does a college-going culture look like. How can we better prepare our students? ...And just to ensure that ah, whatever we're doing it's based on 21st century practices.

Grade 11 students commiserated about the demands of high school and the rigor in coursework. Samantha testified, "grade eleven has been hard, it's got easier now, but I feel as if I have no life. I don't do anything with my time. I just do schoolwork." She further noted, "because there's so much work, but I know that grade 12 will be easier, but it's been a lot of work."

Susie, a grade 12 student, giggled when she explained, "like the amount of work, like it made me realize that it really is no joke, like it is not a game." She continued:

Like there is no easy route around anything, like you just have to work hard, either you put in fifty or one hundred, and more than likely, especially in my school, fifty is not, ...has never been the workable thing. I'm in two advanced classes...especially AP

History, I have found that is hard, that's a lot of reading, that's a lot of time, that is a lot of work, now that right there is no joke!

Azeliea stated that:

Just meeting deadlines for coursework, the amount of coursework, it's just too overwhelming, and they're putting homework on top of that, plus studying for in-school tests, as well as the external exams, so it's just a lot of stress, and also the stress of like, being a teenager.

As a parent Eloise mentioned that in her family's situation, with a daughter in university and a son in grade 12, "in a lot of cases the courses in school are harder than what they do in college. You know, it demands, it requires more." She continued, "I think they get them ready, in the schoolwork, because [Taino Academy] puts a lot of work on them, and a lot of deadlines, which they'll have in um, in college."

Marilyn expressed mixed feelings about the demands placed on the students:

I often felt [Taino Academy] gave them too much work...from grade one, too much work. But when you see the outcome over the years, and you see the results, ...looking back, um, they shouldn't lower their standards they should keep them as they are. People should rise to them.

As a teacher Ernest noted that, "the stress of this environment on students, ah, ... helps to prepare them for the rigor in which they are going to meet in university, especially for those that are doing more than three courses in their first year." As an Advanced Placement teacher he explained:

It's a great exposure and it doesn't necessarily mean whether they pass or fail then that would be their pass or fail in college, but they understand exactly, okay um, if I want to

be successful, these are some of the things in which I am going to have to now do, and you know, so I think then it provides a nice little, kinda testing ground for them...or mental gymnastics in order to kind of navigate through the time and through the demands and the personal life and the life of the institution as well.

Based on the experiences of participants (44%), including students, teachers and parents, this sub-theme was derived from occurrences at Taino Academy. Students and teachers weighed this sub-theme on the workload, rigor and demands associated with curriculum delivery as an important or significant factor with their involvements in school and the education system.

Emerging Theme 3: Innovation and Technology

Innovation for development in the nation and for career opportunities, including the implementation and need for more technology use in the classroom was identified as an important theme. The concern that the nation has not been innovative with development policies and initiatives to propel the nation were identified. The role that technology played in the lives of young people, whether as a tool for more exposure and awareness of global issues, or as a distraction have been identified. While it is encouraged that schools implement and utilize technology in their curriculum delivery, it may not be used to its full potential. Teachers are encouraged to integrate into the curriculum information pertaining to college and career that is more experiential and technology-based (The College Board, 2011). Innovation in society and the use of technology was situated in the upper left (UL) quadrant, was referenced 27 times by 13 participants, and was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview).

As a consultant Edwina noted that:

If we really go back to wanting to diversity our economy, ...means that we are going to have to have 21st century skills. But, the skills that the policy makers have mapped out for

a high school graduates are not aligned with the world's best practice, and 21st century skills.

She affirmed what was additionally required:

Engross them with the skills to be proficient in science, technology, engineering and math. And then the world can be theirs. And, global citizenry, I mean, they can take on, they can take on jobs anywhere in the world. But the truth is, that's not where our focus is.

The use of technology was seen to be a tool for improvement and advancement in education, but to be a distraction as well. It was believed that technology and the Internet could open the world to many students. Marcus, a 12th grade student believed that, "because of things like the Internet, people are, have more access to more knowledge. People can discuss more. People can exchange information faster than we ever could before."

As a teacher Mabel cautioned that:

I think technology has hindered many children in our school rather than helped them. I think there's been so much, it happened so fast on this island. We...up until recently, we had no technology, and then suddenly we have it all at one time. And parents think that they can only help their child out academically by buying them everything....And, I think the technology is providing a block in some cases.

It was expected to find technology at the orange altitude, or modern worldview, however, how it was embraced and used at Taino Academy perceived by only 29% of the participants. Despite this low value, many students saw the need for more technology and innovation in classroom instruction, whereas some teachers saw that technology was hindering the performance of their students.

Emerging Theme 4: First Generation College Students

Many high school graduates today will be first generation college or university students. It is estimated that 19.5% of the Bahamian population has a college/university education with more females than males with tertiary degrees (Fielding, 2014). Conversely, Canada estimated 27% of its population with a university degree (The Conference Board of Canada, 2016). Having more people in a country with a college or university education can propel a nation's level of development. It is important to facilitate and encourage future generations to pursue a college or university education for not only personal development and growth, but for the nation. Twenty-two participants in the research study were first generation college/university students. Two student participants were third generation college/university students. Research participants acknowledged that the opportunity to pursue a college or university education is more possible today than past generations. This theme was referenced 11 times by eight participants, positioned in the upper right (UR) quadrant and was assigned an "orange" altitude (level 5; modern worldview) with the aspiration of "green" (level 6; post-modern worldview) wherein tertiary education should be available to all.

As a parent Sweetie acknowledged that the opportunity to pursue the value of tertiary education was not possible for her parents. She explained that, "my mum and dad were pretty smart people, but they...never got to that higher level education." She outlined that:

After the war [World War II]...there wasn't anything for them to go and do any higher education, you get to sixteen if you're lucky, sort of thing. And you know, my mum and dad, you know, they read and write so well, you think they would've been perfect to be, you know, having an education, a university education and stuff, but they were never given that opportunity, and it's sort of come down to our level, you know, their children

ended up doing that education...it's sort of the generations of experience do influence...what their children will do in the end.

As a consultant, Edwina, a first generation university graduate, described her parents' experience that, they "were disenfranchised because of the fact that they didn't have a college education, and so, they ensured that all five of their kids, not only got a college ed. (*sic*), but we all have at least a graduate degree."

As a teacher, Mabel, a first generation university graduate explained:

We seem to be in a transition period where our students could possibly be the first to go away to college in their families. As such, high school might be the only place where they can receive experienced, relevant, up-to-date, information to help them make the move to tertiary education. We are "the voices of experience" so to speak. In other words, if schools do not offer help to graduating students—who will?

Although there were only four student participants who were first generation college- or university-going students, it was perceived that the role of their parents figured prominently in their pursuit of tertiary education. Kylie explained her mother's support for her college aspirations:

I think she's really excited for me too, like she's kinda livin' it through me because she didn't get to experience it, so you know, parents want their child to do better than they did, so she's really pushing to make sure I get there.

Resha, a second generation university-going student acknowledged her parents' support:

I think that's why parents, they've always um, encouraged me to go to college because they realized that without college, you know, you really can't, you don't have anything to (pause) you don't have any credibility sort of if you don't go to college, you have to have

a degree in order to manage a job. So, I think that's why, you know, they always told me from young, that I was going to college.

There was only one student participant from a no-degree family, and only four student participants that were first generation college-/university-going students. Although a college or university degree does not ensure a good job, university graduates tend to earn more money over their lifetime and the unemployment rates for individuals with a college or university degree is much lower than those without. Bui (2016) stated that, "young college graduates, on average, have an unemployment rate that is 5.5 percentage points lower than those of nongraduates" (para.13), who have the potential to "make over a half a million dollars more than a nongraduate over a lifetime. Much of this has to do with differences in wage growth during the midcareer of a college graduate versus a nongraduate" (para. 14).

First generation students are more challenged during their first year in college or university than their peers who have had family previously attend and graduate from university. Zinshteyn (2016) purported that, "these students often are unaware of what's known as the 'hidden curriculum'—the mix of bureaucratic know-how and sound study skills that can make or break a student's first year in college" (para. 5).

The theme on first generation college students was not prominent in the discussion from 18% of the participants. However, it was significant across all participant groups particularly the parents, many who were the first in their own family to obtain higher education. The discussion of first generation college going students may cease to exist in the future, especially if more young people in The Bahamas seek further education past high school. The actions of adolescents today will have an impact on their prospects and that of their children in the years to come.

Emerging Theme 5: Financial Limitations and Opportunities

Among the barriers affecting the pursuit of a college or university degree is that of securing the finances to pay for tertiary education. The average cost of tuition and fees for the 2015–2016 school year was \$32,410 at private colleges, \$9,410 for in-state residents at public colleges, and \$23,890 for out-of-state residents attending public universities (The College Board, 2016). The trend expressed from the participants, teachers, parents and students, from Taino Academy was that high school students today seek scholarships to pay for their college or university education. There was only one parent participant who indicated that she actively engaged in preparing for her child’s university education shortly after she was born. Other parents indicated that while they paid for their child’s high school education, it was up to the student to do well in high school in order to secure a scholarship upon graduation that would then cover the expenses incurred by a college or university education. The discussion about financing the college or university experience does not seem to be a part of the college knowledge and college readiness dialogue. However, from the results of this study, the planning and preparing (i.e., saving) for a child’s future education was a small part of the discussion, in that it appeared to be the expectation that “someone else” or that a scholarship would be the only way many students would be afforded a college or university education. The theme of financial issues was mentioned forty times by 25 participants, and was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview).

Financial limitations and opportunities were positioned in the lower right (LR) quadrant where it explained the perception of parents who believed that if they paid for their child’s private high school education, as such it was suitable to defer the responsibility of financing higher education onto someone else. The mindset in society is that there are government

scholarships available for Bahamian students who wish to pursue further education, and that personal investment and savings for higher education was not the responsibility of the parents, but that of the government. However, many students believed that if they worked hard, did well in their academics and their extra-curricular activities, obtaining a scholarship would alleviate the financial burden from their parents. They understood this more of a helpful strategy versus a responsibility from other entities who they perceived were responsible to reward them for their high school performance. Receiving a scholarship from the Ministry of Education or any other charitable organization and foundation located in the country and abroad is cause for celebration. However, for the many who could benefit from the financial assistance that these scholarships afford, they do not possess the credentials requested.

As a parent Marilyn remarked that:

I think it's unfortunate and that's what's happening with the poor in this country. Um, that they really cannot pay for college, they really do need help. But should the government be obligated? No. But should they show intelligence and interest and willing to put back in the community? Yes.

She additionally mentioned that, "I think when children have to get loans to go and have to pay them back later it puts so much more burden on them. They can do it, but it makes it a little more difficult."

As a student Kayleisha testified:

What I've found is that when students apply for scholarships, they may have the need for it, but they may not have the other requirements, such as grades that are required to get these scholarships, and thus the people who are in need of scholarships more, aren't really getting those. And, because they don't have the opportunity to further their

education in order to advance their career into their future career, they're stuck in Nassau, doing something that isn't what they have a passion for, what is something that they can't really, they don't have any plans to make um, progress or improvements in.

She also maintained that, "it is your responsibility to find ways to pay for it, but it's not really the responsibility of others to pay for it," she added:

A lot of people make it everyone's responsibility to pay for post-secondary um, education. But, I think that it's your responsibility of your family to find ways to pay for it. You don't necessarily have to pay it out of...your personal funds, but you can find ways to um, enable you to pay for the scholarships.

Resha asserted that:

I think that um, anything that you can do to take the weight off of your parents from having to pay for full tuition is good. And then, in high school, you have to, I mean, I think you should get something for doing well. You can't just go through high school and go to college and your parents have to pay for you to go through high school and then pay for you through college, I think it's nice that there's an option for you to like, be able to help and to get money to assist you in college.

Thea declared that:

I know the biggest challenge particularly within our country would be finances. I know a lot of students are actually wanting to further their education, they don't have, or their parents at least don't have, the funds to send them off...but the area of study that they would've wanted to pursue, isn't necessarily offered here...so if they're not able to obtain scholarships, then they can't really study what is it that they want to study.

Azerya asserted that paying for a university education would be challenging:

We don't have the finances because our parents don't have it, so it's harder for us to get certain things like an education, like a better education, because in order to do the things we want we have to have an education, or at least some type of knowledge on life beyond The Bahamas, because in order to change something you have to know more.

As a teacher Iris expressed that, "for a lot of students within The Bahamas, their government has devised a system where, based on your qualifications, you're given scholarships to many of these different universities of your choice, so it's just those students to take advantage."

Over half of the participants (56%) acknowledged finances to be a deterrent for young people pursuing further education. The actions and regulations from the systems in the lower right (LR) that are available to people choosing tertiary education, either locally or abroad, can hinder or help in this pursuit. This theme was a convincing argument for students who plan to engage in additional training and education past high school.

Emerging Theme 6: Exposure and Opportunity

In a small nation like The Bahamas, it was expressed that students had minimal exposure to global events, and that there were limited opportunities afforded to students. Others indicated that opportunities were made available to students yet they did not avail themselves to use them. This theme was referenced 35 times by 16 participants, was assigned an "orange/green" altitude (level 5/6; modern/post-modern worldview), and was situated in the upper left (UL) quadrant. The desire for and provision of more and diverse opportunities for all students was hopeful in order to raise the altitude of this theme towards a green level.

As a parent Marie believed that:

...[the young] need exposure to different cultures. I think they need to, to know that there is a bigger, wider world out there. I think they need to know that not every country's rules are the same as ours, there are laws, and one small mistake can cost you your whole career, your whole college.

As an educational consultant Edwina affirmed that it was, "important for students to be exposed to college assessment as well as career assessment." She believed that, "just exposing them to what's out there. And letting them, helping them, to conceptualize and to dream, and see the importance why a college education is important."

As a teacher Mabel noted that the opportunities in the country were limited. She confirmed that, "[when] you live in such a small place, with so few things to do, there's nothing for young people to do in this country."

Although this theme emerged from the interviews but resonated with only 36% of the participants. The student participants did not see this to be a major issue at this time. However, the parents and teachers outlined that they perceived that the adolescents needed more and diverse opportunities in their lives to help broaden their scope for learning.

Emerging Theme 7: Expectations of Others

The expectations of others, be it parents, teachers, school, community, or other outside factors, often influences the choices and direction many young people pursue. The social norm exists that young people will go to college or university directly after high school. Some parent participants acknowledged that it wasn't whether their child would go on to higher education, it was what college or university they were going to attend. The high school itself posed expectations on its student population to do well academically, athletically and in the creative arts. The expectations that teachers, parents and students will work together so that students do

well on the national examinations, receive national recognition for top subject prizes and even perform favourably on the American College Board examinations, including the SATs and the APs. The expectations of the school were perceived to be more aggressive and competitive, which were done to provide the school with “bragging rights” over its academic performance. The theme of expectations of others was referenced 71 times by 31 participants, was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview), and was positioned in the lower left (LL) quadrant.

As a parent, Eloise thought that, “parents ought to be supportive when it comes to a child making a decision whether to join the workforce or to go to college.” She added that:

A lot of times, we as parents, fail in (pause), in that area, because if they [our children] don’t do what we want them to do, then we, you know, we’re not for the idea, and we try to steer them in the wrong, in the wrong area because it’s not where they wanna go.

Sweetie believed that, “I think kids these days here, tend to be quite sheltered. They’re quite...not smothered, but mollycoddled, looked after a lot, and they get so much done for them.” Additionally, “parents do so much for their kids. ...I’m sure it’s a shock when they go away, they’ve to do it all themselves, and I don’t think that, (pause) it doesn’t prepare them for that.” She added:

It’s a sort of generation thing, you know, if you’ve been away, and you’ve done that, you’re more like to encourage your child to be doing the same thing, you know, go away get some education, and then come back...generally, it’s the parents of, you know, the richer people that have the opportunities to be able to send their kids away and I think everybody, generally would like to be able to do that, but then a lot of parents just can’t.

As an eleventh grade student, Azeliea believed that the school itself had expectations for the students. She noted that:

You attract more people to go to your school to help fill in the school, and contribute to like um, the advancement of the school. It's more like not really for the students, but it's more just bragging rights for the teachers and the staff, and just more bragging rights, like it's not even anything to benefit the students, it's more bragging rights.

Zane noted that:

The expectations of the typical Bahamian, expectation, I believe, 'cause, many parents believe that the only sensible occupation is either a doctor, lawyer or engineer. And they don't understand that you can make a good living or be comfortable doing something else.

As a teacher Ava worried about the students and the stress they encounter while in school. She believed that:

They're pressured that they need to go to these [universities] to be successful. Um, community, they may be the only one from a family island that's here on scholarship and they need to be able to get that diploma and get a degree and stuff, so that they can go home and take care of, or at least take care of their family later on maybe by sending money.... We need to be the top. We need to be the top of everything. Um, so they're feeling pressure from, I guess, straight on from administration to the teachers now, because the teachers have to incentive this or else they may not have a job, and so they're pushing and pushing and they're pushing, and it's not only their subject, it's the ten other subjects that they're taking.

Mabel perceived that:

Students in our high school have been brought up to believe that if you don't go to college or university, you are a failure in some way. They're not encouraged to go straight into the workforce....But, our students will go to a college.

She added that, "in some cases they are corralled. I think they are pigeon holed early, frequently by parents." She added:

Parents want a doctor in the family, they want a lawyer in the family, and this child will be this and this child will be that. That's got to stop. When the child has fantastic ideas they want to bring back things to this country that the country doesn't have. The parents don't encourage that. They want safety, security. Not just for their child, but for themselves, because they've got to come back and pay the parent back.... "I put you through school, you've got to keep me in my old age."

Sixty-eight percent of the participants perceived that the expectations of others influenced the choices and decisions made by young people. The expectations were understood to come from other individuals and collectives in society. The student participants sensed that there were many entities putting requirements and demands on them now and for the future.

Emerging Theme 8: Collective Effort

Collective effort outlined the mindset that many people are required to be involved in the future life of young people. The acknowledgment of the African proverb that "it takes a village to raise a child" was instrumental to ensure that young people in The Bahamas, in particular Taino Academy, are given layers of support and need many individuals to help facilitate their admissions process and college going experience. Collective effort was positioned in the lower left (LL) quadrant, was mentioned 40 times by 20 participants, and was assigned a "green"

altitude (level 6; post-modern) in that many people were required to provide more support and assistance to all young people to help them pursue their future goals.

As a parent Shirley supported the partnership between school and home, “both parties want to achieve the same goal, the future of the child, wanting them to excel....So they work hand-in-hand to bring out the best in the student.” She added that, “we need to focus more on our kids and to help them in the right way. Um, the whole society as a whole, you know...if one parent can’t do it, then somebody else steps in and help (*sic*).” Additionally, “I think together we all need to help encourage children, whether they’re ours, whether they’re at school or whatever, to encourage them to do the best that they can.”

As a twelfth grader, John affirmed that, “parents play a huge role, and well teachers, they’re the ones that educate the children so, if education is key for the future, then I would also say that the teacher’s role is huge.”

As a teacher Chloe believed that, “each teacher has a different role to play in each kid....[We] help them and mold them, you know, to become better citizens of tomorrow.”

Similarly, Jennifer indicated:

If each of us could be accountable for each other, then that could also help um, to assist with preparing students for college, preparing students also for the job market. And um, also making sure that we have a better nation, and a better society.

Pauline stated that:

We also need parents’ input. We need the parents [to] realize that ah, what we’re doing here with their child, that they are pursuing um, these higher level courses, and so they too must be, how I should say, convinced that what we are doing in helping their child to

attain the level needed for the college, ...they have to also be convinced that their child can do it.

The education of young people was perceived to be a collective effort as indicated by 44% of the participants. The shift in levels from a more traditional or modern worldview to that of a post-modern (level 6) worldview acknowledged that a change in the mindset of society would also change how and where we educate young people. The teachers declared that a partnership with the parents is needed to provide schooling that is more complete. Many young people conferred that they need other individuals—parents, teachers and mentors—to help them in their educational pursuits.

Emerging Theme 9: Stereotypes and the Influence of Older Generations

It was perceived that stereotypes in the Bahamian society are deterrents for some people. The theme, stereotypes and the influence of older generations, was referenced 22 times by 13 participants, assigned an “amber” and “orange” altitudes (level 4/5; traditional/modern worldviews) and was situated in the upper left (UL) quadrant. The stereotypes revolved heavily around ageism. Many student participants believed that their ideas could not be conveyed or listened to because the older generation was set in their ways, were content and comfortable with the status quo, and were creating barriers for young people to get exposure and opportunity for employment. The issue of retirement also factored in this theme, as some participants felt that some older individuals were not retiring thus limiting the opportunities for the younger generation, but were also aware that the social system in the country (i.e., pension plans, retirement packages) were not firm, thus many continued working to ensure they had an income to support themselves in their golden years. The practice of stereotyping was an issue more for the student participants than other participant groups.

Students perceived that older members in society were deterring their future opportunities. Other students made observations about the differences and perceived stereotypes as a result of the two-tiered education system in The Bahamas.

Azerya believed that:

The older people; the way of the old life, the times of people wanting, don't want change...And, they're seeing that the youth wants to change things, they don't want to be comfortable, they want to push the barriers, and so I feel as if sometimes the older generation is the one holding us back, because they feel that things should be the same.

Anna-Marie believed that:

Older people, I say that not to be disrespectful, but simply because in a lot of ways older people say this generation is going down, but when you look at it, their generation taught our generation, and we're just looking at them for an example....They're stereotyping everyone in one little bubble, so they're saying all boys, in general, especially in The Bahamas, all boys are criminals, all boys are going to be criminals, and they're gonna be in jail (pause) the overpopulated jail.

Kayleisha explained her view on this issue:

One thing that I think comes in the way of young people is the older generation....I think it's a hierarchical-type system that we have here where it's like the older you are, the more superior that they are to you....A lot of the older generations don't like to change things. And when young people come in with new innovative ideas, and try to put new things forward, I think that um, they aren't able to put all they can for it, because a lot of people aren't willing to accept those changes and, that they aren't given the opportunity

to be in a position where they can make the changes and until they're as old as the people who were there before them to make those changes.

She added:

I think it's not just a Bahamian mentality, but a mentality a lot of people have so that doesn't add to progress, it doesn't make any progress in, within the society, so I think that's a reason why they do not (pause) aren't too taken with changes that come from the younger generation.

As a teacher Julia believed that, "the older people maybe, that they're just used to their older ways, you know, like just sort of happy with the way things are, you know, I think they might find that difficult."

Mabel noted that her college aspirations were also directed based on the gender stereotypes of society from the time. She recalled that, as a student she was advised that:

We shouldn't try and do any job that involved science, engineering, technical drawing, 'cause that was for boys, and I was at a girls' school. And we were told that most of us wouldn't be in a job past the age of 26, because we'd be married and looking after children anyway. So, we weren't expected to find particularly a career, and if we were, it had to be something that changed the world.

The stance on perceived stereotypes in the current Bahamian society spoke to more traditional or modern worldviews and was seen by 29% of the participants interviewed. The students vehemently acknowledged that a change in mindset or an emergence of a higher level is needed to change the beliefs and behaviours of their generation and older generations. The worldview for many young people is broader than their peers or elders and indeed more developed than the collective mindset.

Emerging Theme 10: Brain Drain

Brain drain acknowledges the existing practice that approximately two thirds of Bahamian educated students, who study abroad at tertiary education institutions, seek employment away and do not return home (Rodgers, 2014). While many believe that they have to leave their home in The Bahamas to be valued, other factors such as lack of employment opportunities and advancement, lower wages, crime, and competition for employment were cited as reasons for attributing to a national brain drain. “The measure of the country’s success will be seen when the best and the brightest opt not only to remain, but also choose to help build a better Bahamas” (The Government of The Bahamas, 2016, p. 79). Twenty-one research participants referenced this theme 33 times, and it was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview). Brain drain was situated in the upper right (UR) quadrant.

Brain drain existed due to the perception that there would be no employment opportunities available for young people once they completed a college or university degree whether it was obtained locally or abroad. The mindset of high school students, their parents and teachers from Taino Academy, who had each experienced their own personal challenges in finding employment, brain drain is a very real problem if The Bahamas is to grow and develop in the 21st century.

Parents weighed in on the issue and Kelly perceived that:

The only concern I have is there seems not to be a place for them to come back to um, they’re getting into all sorts of things, different type of things, and we don’t offer that, being a um, society that just offer tourism and banking. You know, there’s other things out there, so I’m a little afraid in that area.

Shirley concurred that, “it will be a bright future for them providing they want to come

back home after college life.” She added, “if they’re going off, they’re getting trained in these different areas, and we can’t facilitate them, they come home, a year or two, still can’t find anything to do, they’re gonna get discouraged, and they’re gonna go back.”

As an educational consultant, Edwina acknowledged:

I used to advocate for students to come home. The truth is though...what are they coming home to? There’re no jobs, and the jobs that are here, let’s look at what’s happening, the dynamics of what’s happening, no one’s going home [are not retiring].

She added:

In our culture, and in our country, oh, you have nothing to offer, or check us in another 15 years. Um, ...I don’t know if I can blame the student, what I need to blame is the country, the government. What are we doing? What are we doing as a people to encourage more students to come back home?

Many students proposed reasons why they believed people were not remaining or returning to The Bahamas upon completion of a college degree. Azaria explained that for her, “me going off to school and getting a scholarship and stuff, this is gonna be my ticket outta here. And I ain’t comin’ back.”

Azeliea mentioned that:

It’s gonna be a brain drain, because the people who go off to college and they study like these um, these professions that aren’t really heard of in The Bahamas, then The Bahamas won’t pay them what they feel like they should be getting paid. So it’s like, why should I live here and then you know, not be happy or get a good salary when I can go somewhere else and do so much better.

For some Bahamian students, who had dual citizenship, the opportunity to study and work abroad was perceived to be easier than those who did not. However, the mindset of many of the younger generation is that in this day and age, they should be able to work anywhere in the world, regardless of citizenship. For many the reality of immigration laws and policies will be a deterrent in pursuing their future career goals.

John was hopeful that:

These people, these bright minded people return, get educated maybe, because maybe tertiary education is not the best in The Bahamas, so they get educated there and they come back and hopefully if they do come back, I would say, maybe the future of The Bahamas is bright, but who knows.

Paige worried that, “The Bahamas has a problem because young people um, they go other places and don’t want to come back home to help with anything.” She added that, “I don’t like the idea, because it can never be better if everyone leaves.”

Gregory suspected that, “a lot of young people they go, like when they go off they don’t really come back, and [that’s] what is causing The Bahamas to lose a lot of able individuals.” He also noted that, “that’s why I believe we’re also not getting, not really moving forward that much, maybe because the people that are able to do things, they’re not coming back here in order to help us.”

As a teacher Mabel implored that:

I think those children, when they do get out, and they do, do much more, frequently don’t come back, because they can’t find the niche, they can’t find the place to do that. And I’ve said so many times to children, you need to come back.

Missy was hopeful for the young people. “I hope the young generation who goes abroad and study and come back, and if they can change some of the political issues,” she added that, “I would advise them to come back to The Bahamas, and...come back to your country and develop the country, it’s such a beautiful country.”

Nearly half of the participants (47%) outlined brain drain as a problem in Bahamian society. This has become a more recent challenge to be faced in the country and it will take an active move from the systems in the lower right (LR) to reduce the adverse effect this issue is having on the nation.

Emerging Theme 11: College Mechanisms

Promoting aspirations for higher education and the tools to achieve this dream is the shared role of school, family and the high school student. Adolescents must be introduced to the prospects of education past their years in high school whether it takes place at a vocational training institute, a two-year college or a four-year university. Students must become acquainted with the possibility of higher education and the measures involved to apply, attend and graduate without the need for remedial action. The mechanisms for college was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview), and was positioned in the in the upper right (UR) quadrant.

As a consultant, Edwina concurred that, “the entire school system should be one that is promoting the message of college readiness.” She noted that:

A change is never readily embraced. The challenges encountered over the past year have not deterred my efforts in advocating to create college-going cultures in the public school system....The creation of a culture in the public schools is essential for the sustainable growth and development of The Bahamas. In an effort to promote equity and access it is imperative that our students be exposed to global educational standards and are able to

compete academically on the global stage. The AP is a tried and tested model...that has a proven track record to work well within the Bahamian school system, alongside the B.G.C.S.E.s. Implementing the AP will improve the overall quality of our schools and students. It is refreshing that this initiative will allow students and teachers...to a rigorous curriculum that will broaden their intellectual horizons. Students will gain an edge in college preparation and leave high school, college ready, to embrace scholarships and post-secondary educational opportunities.

She added that:

Once the concerns have been addressed, and we've worked to reduce the challenges and implement and address the more viable recommendations, we will be...well on our way to promoting um, college readiness, and advancing, promoting college readiness and showing Advanced Placement in the schools.

As an eleventh grader, Casper believed that:

We need more input from people who are actually in college...to actually talk to us to see how it really is, 'cause...I'm sure some people are thinking the same thoughts that we're thinking now, and by getting people who are actually in college to talk to us about what it actually is, then we'd be able to be more prepared for what we're going to experience when we go there.

Sub-theme 11.1: College aspirations.

Conveying the message that college is for everyone raises a student's aspirations about higher education, and as such they are more likely to succeed (The College Board, 2011). All participants were asked to identify or reflect on their plans post-high school. This theme was referenced 76 times and was assigned an "orange/green" altitude (level 5/6; modern/post-modern

worldview). For the adult participants, there was only one parent who indicated that when she graduated from high school she did not want to pursue a college or university education but wanted to go directly into the workforce. A teacher participant also indicated that she too wanted to go directly into the workforce but the expectations of her parents directed her to pursue a college degree. A single twelfth grade student participant indicated that he would not be pursuing a university degree and that he would be entering into the workforce upon his high school graduation. While the young male student had been pursuing additional training and certification while in high school to be an airline pilot, he felt that university was not for him, thus pursuing an interest in going directly into the workforce. Remarkably, a few teacher participants indicated that while their plans after high school was to pursue a college or university degree, they did not have the desire or interest to pursue a degree in teaching (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

Twenty-two of the 23 adult participants pursued a tertiary education, whether it was a trade school, community college, a teacher's college, a two-year college or a four-year university degree, or an online college degree. Only one parent entered into the workforce directly from high school and remained there. Half of the parent participants worked to earn money before pursuing further studies, and 12 of the 14 teacher participants moved directly into college or university immediately after high school. Similarly, two teachers worked first before pursuing tertiary education. Twenty-one of the student participants plan to attend college upon their graduation from high school, however, one young man intended to go directly into the workforce (see Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3).

As an eleventh grader, Azaria explained her plans after graduation:

I will go right off to college. I plan to do C.O.B. [the College of The Bahamas] for a year, because I believe C.O.B. is a home base for some of us. I'm not the type that's gonna

waste my parents' money, going away 'practising,' while I have school here where I could do what I have to do, get situated, and then go off and you know, further my studies.

Livingston attested, "I don't think I'm ready for university or college. But I think in the years coming, maybe in 2018 I would be ready...financially, mentally, emotionally ready for college."

As a parent, Marilyn acknowledged that:

Thirty years ago, actually, um, I don't think we were focused on college then, because it wasn't even an option for some people. It was only certain people who had the means that their kids could go away. So it was not part of their curriculum, it was not talked about. It was not encouraged.

She added:

I think if you don't expose them to it, they will never know, nor will they ever imagine that they could, and I, they feel like there's nothing else, there's no other step forward. So, um, I feel the schools have changed.

Pamela explained that:

I always wanted more knowledge, and um, whereas high school prepared, gave me a certain amount of knowledge, I wanted to know what was beyond that, and I always wanted to have a degree. I wasn't just satisfied with an education, a high school education with B.J.C. or B.G.C.S.E., I always wanted a degree...a degree in the workplace give you more, a more sense of independence...you demand more respect on the job too when you're educated, college educated.

As a teacher, Ernest explained:

I didn't have any high plans to go to college, 'cause I just thought then that's gonna be something, which I just can't afford, so let's just forget that, you know. Um, but it was always there, always um, a part of that discussion in which we had, you know. Um, and I think for a lot of people too, it's still a discussion in which they'll have but if they don't see it as any kinda (*sic*) realistic goal to achieve.

Anastacia admitted that the nation needed to take notice concerning the aspirations young people were having for future college or career paths. She advised:

The last fifty years, looking at kids that have graduated from high school, what were they lacking in? Start there and then say, okay, we're committing ourselves to kids that are entering in pre-school now, this is the plan for them, this is what it is we're gonna do.... They're actually trying to start testing kids in primary.... You know, what are your aptitudes? What are you interested in? Do you like to work with your hands? Are you an analytical thinker? Do you want to go into, you know, ah, like the hospitality? And I think that's a good idea, starting pre-school, and first and second grade, because you're actually, not that you're preventing a child from doing something, but you're actually seeing what they're more inclined to do later in life. But you know, ...everything is changing, but you're actually able to start seeing okay, well, this child is...every child is moldable, every child is able to learn.

All participants reported on their personal aspirations for life after high school. Pursuing further education after high school, either at a trade school, a college or a university, continues to be a discussion among the youth of today, much like it was in the time of their parents and teachers. The demands that are placed on young people today and the expectations for credentials and qualifications, requires the pursuit for more education after high school.

Sub-theme 11.2: College awareness.

Having an awareness of the perceived expectations of students while in college or university and being mindful of what is needed to acquire a place in college were some points addressed in this theme. Many students stated that researching about a college along with the environment and demographics of a college community were important issues. Other individuals focused on the requirements they perceived they needed to seek placement in their college of choice. Other factors dealt with how high schools make students, teachers and parents more aware of the college experience, including the coordination of college fairs, seminars, and visits from college representatives as well as informing students about the opportunity for scholarship possibilities and applications. Having an awareness about college, including its environment, demographics and its admissions process was referenced by 44 participants, 228 times and was assigned an “orange/green” altitude (level 5/6; modern/post-modern worldview).

As a parent Georgia believed that schools, “put things in place in order to prepare the students to meet that demand, or to meet what was required out there, so...they’ll be able to compete on equal grounds.” She offered advice to other parents:

Make sure that your student choose their school wisely, you want to um, make sure you don’t want your child to go away for going away sake, you want to make sure that child is, will be able to um, to adjust and function effectively in that environment you’re gonna put them in.

Marie explained that, “comparing to my experience, applying to um, universities, and my children’s experiences, they’re not really given too much guidance.” She added:

I have two sons. I don't think either of them have really had anybody sit down with them and say, what do you want to do? Well, these are the choices, these are the courses I recommend that you apply for I think that's what's lacking.

She added, "I feel that they need more guidance. My children needed more guidance, and I was not able to fill in the gaps." She noted that:

I personally think high schools should have someone who can sit the children down individually and discuss with them what they want to do. What they really want to do in the future. Find out what their interests are, find out what the academics are, and help them. Steer them.

As a consultant Edwina observed that, "in our culture, we wait until eleventh and twelfth grade to begin the discussion of college." She added that:

The truth is if we don't have the data, we don't know how to address the problem, And so, I think a part of college readiness as well, is knowing...what is that high school graduation rate? And where are our students going?

She added, "it's very important um, to monitor graduation rates, and where these students are going." She commented that [Taino Academy], "has created a college going culture...they intricately track their students, and they have understood that the success of their students in the success of the institution."

As a student Azaria acknowledged that in her research:

Colleges just don't look at academics. They look for well-rounded students. You know...they have to look at to see if you got the brains and you got the talent. You can't have one and don't have none. I mean that's a good thing to have education but, you still gotta have, you know, the extra-curricular as well.

Kenya explained the need for having diversity on her college application. “I think sports is a good avenue to get you into college, because like a lot of colleges look at like how involved you are, so I try and stay involved.” She added, “I’ll just not do sports and just do academics, but then it doesn’t show how well-rounded you are. So that’s why I work as hard as I can in academics and in sports.” She noted that:

We do the APs in order to, you know, increase our education level so we can compete with people in the States and all over the world, so we can get like first preferences into the American colleges. And also, we do SAT II and SAT, to get into those colleges.

Brittany considered the requirements that she would need to get into university:

I would have to do well in high school, number one. Make sure I’m doing a lot of advanced courses—honours. Have a high GPA um, a high SAT score, and then also do well in tennis. By me doing well in tennis, I’ll be able to um, be selected by the scouts of those teams, from those colleges, and then through that they will want me due to my academics, so I’m well balanced.

Kayleisha suggested using technology to become more aware of college. She stated that:

I would say that I watch a lot of YouTube videos about um, other people’s college experiences and tips and advice that they would give about going to school and college, and...because I think that is best to be knowledgeable about all of the aspects of college and not just the academics in order for, to make it like an easier experience. So, I try to get the perspective of other people, like through the videos to try to help me figure out how I want to go about my college experience.

She added that:

It is significant that we be prepared for college because in today's society some form of college education is required for even the simplest of jobs. In addition, those who attend colleges and obtain college degrees are seen as more intelligent and more likely to be successful by society today. A college education is not required to become successful, however, we can agree that for the normal and those who are not extremely innovative, a college degree is certainly helpful.

Kylie added that she too used technology to broaden her college preparation. "I've really done a lot of research, and I use YouTube as a tool too, because many students blog and they show their college life so, it helps me to see what I'm getting into." She explained that this process has helped her and she noted that:

I get to see what they do in their daily life and sometimes they be really honest, they tell you how stressful college is, so I know it's not all good, I'm gonna have some challenges when I get there. I feel like that's a great way to show you what college life is all about.

She continued to explain that:

In today's world, local post-secondary education is not good enough for many people. A lot of students, including myself, aspire to study in a university abroad so it is crucial that we are prepared for university from an early stage because our parents will not be there to help us anymore.

As a teacher Claudette also noted that:

I think that they are more ready than we were ever prepared. I think the, the guidance counselors here they make an effort, they have to increase a student's knowledge as to possible college um, colleges that they could go to because of the career plans.

Ernest discussed his perceived awareness for college and explained the reality when he arrived at college as a young man. He noted:

The other culture shock was in that how behind I was, how um, unequipped I was at the time when I initially got there. Because... where most classes start ah, the way they started the discussion, I hadn't even picked up as yet, you know, so that there was a whole gap of information in which I spent my first year just trying to catch up on.

He acknowledged that, "there was a huge gap of education that I needed to kinda come to around the curb really quickly if I am going to be successful."

Pauline remarked that:

We know that in this society, in this world, the interest varies. So you will have a child that may not be on the same tract as what their parents may be, but totally different because their academic courses have led them to a different avenue. So whatever their tract may be, we, here in our department, in our guidance department, must ensure that resources are made available to students, so whatever career or major they are leading into that we give them all the necessary foundation information that is needed. So this is where the college and career readiness comes in. We provide various resources that will give them further information on what their tract may be. We may ensure that when it comes to them choosing their colleges, that we also know that the colleges they are choosing are going to provide all they need to fulfill their college degree.

She continued:

We met with the students, each of the grade levels are given a survey, ah, it can be in the form of either um, an optional career choice, what do I think I want to be, or whatever it may be. But we've given each of the grade levels a survey.

She added:

We track the students, we also look at their grades, so with each, in each of their folders we also have our reports so that we can let them know, that okay, this is what your grades were, this is what you need to do, this is what we want to do, this is where we want to go.

There is a greater awareness for further education in Bahamian society. The possibility to attend post-secondary education is greater today for many young people. Ninety-eight percent of the participants reported not only did they have an awareness that college was a possibility, but that young people would need an awareness of a college's environment, its demographics and its admissions requirements as well.

Sub-theme 11.3: College mindset.

Student participants were asked to describe what they thought college or university would be like. Their mindset about the college experience reflected both positive and negative outcomes. Some findings reflected that their perception was due to what the media projected about the college or university experience. Many students perceived that university would be harder than high school, whereas some students expected university to be easier than their high school experience. The perception of an easier experience was expressed as more freedom in timetabling, daily deadlines and expectations, and course options. A few students projected that they felt that college or university experience would be wild, lots of parties and a place of freedom. Identifying a mindset for college was acknowledged by 38 participants, 113 times and was assigned an "orange" altitude (level 5; modern worldview).

As a student Anna-Marie remarked that:

What people portray in like movies and sometimes in books, is basically the frat parties and just staying out at night, but college life is semi-party, but then you have to be, the

majority of it for the people that want to succeed in life, it's just in your room, or in the library, your head in a book.

Azeliea noted that:

I want a different experience and I don't want to be close to home, and I don't want to be around like um, a bunch of like people that I'm used to. I'd rather experience a new culture and yeah, I just want to be around somewhere new, be exposed to different climates.

As a grade 11 student, she supposed that:

I feel it's better than high school... basically like from hearing my mum talk about it and other people talk about it, and seeing stuff on YouTube, it's just more exciting, you get, you know, you get to live on a campus, so you're more like, by yourself so you have a sense of independence and maturity, as well as you get to meet other people, and you know, as I said before, like to experience different cultures, so it's like you're constantly learning new things, you're in a new environment, like you're exposed to new, like climates, so more like a learning process and, as well as there's a lot of um, activities on campus for you to do and a lot of things to do.

She noted that:

I've seen a lot of people more happier in college, like it's just easier like, you don't have to take, I think like right now, we're taking like nine or ten classes, it's not all those classes in one term.

Casper explained that:

The media depicts college as a big party, a never-ending party. And some people think that it's the time you finally break free from your parents. You get to just be on your own for the first time, and I think that...the media gives the impression that college is fun.

He recalled a family friend's experience at university. He noted that:

He's [my friend's] taking courses that are very tough and he said that he even compared it to being more challenging than high school. So I don't think that the media depicts college knowledge as being true.

Kayleisha mentioned that:

I don't think, doing extremely well in school determines if you are ready for college, because a lot of people have, I think it's a misconception, that if you don't have a three point something GPA and do a lot of APs that you can't possibly succeed in college, but I think that the system in school isn't catered towards what people are gonna do later in life.

She affirmed that:

I am pretty sure I will go to college. I want to go to college. But, in terms of readiness, for me, I don't think it's the academic aspects but the social and life aspects of that I'm kind of hesitant about.

Resha believed that:

I think by now, by the time we've gotten to grade 12, you know, or at least senior high, a lot of us know where we want to go in our career paths and stuff like that. And I think that, as long as we're focused, we could do really well. Um, I think it depends on, as I said, where you grow up, 'cause some people are not excited about college at all. Some people don't even want to go to college. So, I can't speak for everyone, because I've

always wanted to go to college, 'cause I know that what I have to do, I have to go to college.

Roger explained that although he was not going to university he believed that, "if I was to be put in the workforce, I think I'd be ready, 'cause that's just something I want to do. Yeah, it's a great passion of mine."

Zane noted that:

After watching T.V. and things of that nature, we all have this um, perception of college, it's gonna be this big party, and so on and so forth, but getting feedback from students who've just went there, it's kinda like that, but it's also um, like a wake-up call.

He added that, "I think it's gonna be a really great experience, and I'm gonna find myself having to grow up faster than I thought."

As a parent Georgia acknowledged that, "when I look at my children in...grade 12 and grade 11, they are much more advanced being prepared for college than I ever was."

Marilyn explained that, "I don't think that people focused so much on college and education, ...you just needed a high school diploma and then you'd go work in the family business." She added:

It didn't make sense for the women to go, and I don't know that it was an aggressive thing. I think it was sub-conscious. It wasn't a thought. Like if you had three girls and two boys, the parents would be considering what colleges the boys could go to.

She continued to note that:

I think education, I mean I don't want to sound like a feminist, because I'm absolutely not, I think women appreciate it more, and do more with it, in general. I think men have always had it, so they take it for granted.

She explained, “I find that the women that went away were empowered and followed through.”

As a consultant Edwina mentioned that, “we’re having this conversation now, where parents, teachers and schools are now understanding, that it starts so much earlier than secondary high school.” She added that, “knowing what I know about the current system, educational system, yes, every child needs to go to some institution beyond high school.”

As a teacher Albert believed that, “in The Bahamas, I don’t think that the high school students of today are really ready. Now I’m basing this more on the sciences and mathematics.”

Iris recalled her own mindset about preparing for college. She noted that:

I think when I actually entered university, that’s when my thinking, my whole demeanor changed. Right after high school, now, I was still in this um, “immature phase” um, the sky was the limit, um, partying, having fun. Um, just being a kid I guess, but once entering university, I guess the real world hit me that I have to be now focused and prepared in terms of what I want for the next stage of my life.

Pauline explained that it was important to get the students in high school thinking about college early. She noted that:

When we begin in grade seven, we look at their subject choices and we look at also ah, their dislikes, their interests. We build on those interests throughout grade eight, throughout grade nine. In our school system, when the students begin grade ten, it generally means that they are put on a tract, (pause), that tract can be either academic, science-minded, or general, okay. And once they’ve been placed on either of those tracts it then prepares them going through grade ten, grade eleven and twelve, and also it means, that when they have reached grade twelve, whether they’ve started academic tract, general tract, or science tract, because like I said from grade seven, they would’ve

decided, or had some idea what they want to do. So by the time they reach grade twelve, that interest now is fortified.

Having a mindset for pursuing further education was acknowledged by 84% of the participants, primarily the students, followed by teachers and parents. A greater awareness of the college experience has helped more young people understand what further education will be like. The adults who have gone through the experience and have encountered the systems that influence higher education, are able to share their personal experiences with the young people.

Sub-theme 11.4: Transitioning to college.

A smooth transition to college or university was desired from all participant groups. However, some student participants expressed concern about the fear of being able to integrate or the hope to assimilate. Participants perceived they would be challenged by many factors such as climate, laws and regulations of the land, cultural experience and exposure, being away from home and being able to keep up with the workload and expectations required in college or university. A few adult participants indicated that they felt that they had challenges transitioning into the academic aspects of university because the educational expectations and standards they were exposed to in The Bahamas was not up to par with that of the country and universities abroad, thus having to play catch up and had to engage in remedial work. Transitioning to college was acknowledged 55 times by 28 participants and was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview).

Some students were apprehensive about the college- or university-going experience, others were more aware that the experience would somehow change them as a person. Susie exclaimed that:

I think life will be exciting. I think it's going to be, I think it's going to change me. I don't think I'm going to come out the same person that I went there, like the same attitude. Um, it's going to be like a growing experience.

Resha noted that:

I think it's gonna take a transition, kind of because I grew up in a house where, you know, I'm kind of sheltered, so I don't really, you know, get out and do much all the time. But, I think, I'm book smart way more than I'm street smart. I think that's the part I'm worried about.

John explained that:

I think when you move to a new place that you settle, I think you realise who you actually are when you're by yourself, you just ah, have time to think, and you just absorb a new culture and at the same time, I mean, you just hope for assimilation.

Many teachers and parents believed that university would be a "culture shock" for some students and that they are not fully prepared for studying abroad. Marie recalled a personal experience and testified that:

My son's friends have gone off to Canada, some America, some England, some Scotland, and they have found that cultural shock really big. And trying to find your place, your niche is huge, 'cause different cultures, you have to respect the cultures you're in, but you're used to getting your own way and it's really hard.

Georgia expressed, "it's a rude awakening for them." She added that for her personal university-going experience, "the College of The Bahamas was really good in terms of the preparation aspect.... The adjustment between high school and college... that was a little cushioning right there."

Mabel conveyed that:

When they do get out into the big wide world, if they do, I think culture shock doesn't cover it. I don't think they know where to start. And it's such a shame because they have been spoon-fed and mollycoddled very, very much by very overprotected parents.

Ava shared her own encounter in university.

From high school to college, I found that the stuff that they taught me in science was good, but it wasn't up to par with what was taught to other kids in, from that country... I had to catch up to try and understand it, um, I guess it would have been better if I had been exposed more to um, a high curriculum, I guess um, then I was so that I would be prepared in, I guess better off in college.

Anastacia explained that:

Sometimes a lot of international students, they are behind, they're lacking on things because I know there's a discrepancy, at least a year lag time, or sometimes, especially within The Bahamas, between what's going on in the States and even Canada... Kids that are coming internationally, are not as prepared as the kids that are actually within the country, which is not necessarily true, it depends again on locale.

She continued, "some of the Caribbean schools um, schools outside the States, their science was not where it needed to have been."

As a consultant, Edwina concluded that, "we have a responsibility to help these kids transition. Whether it's transitioning from high school into the world of work for a short stint, because you must know, I'm an advocate for post-secondary education." She noted that, "the mere fact that there are more intentional efforts and initiatives in place now, helping kids to make a transition."

Sixty-two percent of the participants, primarily students and teachers, acknowledged that transitioning to further education and employment after high school would be challenging, especially if it took place abroad. External factors such as climate, culture, laws and language were recognized. Internal factors such as feelings about being far from home and having “street smarts” were identified. Although it appears that many young people defer their entry into the workforce until they have completed a tertiary degree or further training after high school, the transition for certain adolescents may be easier for some than others.

Emerging Theme 12: Shared Community Concerns

The citizens of The Bahamas are faced with challenges on a daily basis in this small island nation. Many of the research participants expressed personal and more direct impact with the more destructive societal matters. However, all individuals expressed concerns that were troublesome for the future of Bahamian adolescents and the nation as a whole. General shared community concerns were located in the upper left (UL) quadrant. These issues were expressed 203 times by the research participants and were assigned primarily an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview) with shades of “amber” (level 4; traditional worldview) attached to the poverty and family dynamics themes. Literacy and education, and environmental issues were also given shades of “green” (level 6; post-modern worldview) for the altitude of these themes. Many political themes emerged and included concerns regarding unreliable utilities, narcotics, unemployment, limited investment and innovation in the country, political corruption, the mismanagement of federal funds, and the lack of transparency in the government.

Parents were fearful for their children in the current social and political climate found in The Bahamas. Marie noted that:

The future is scary, but the children are our future, so we, they have to turn it around. We have to let them know that they're the future; they're the ones that have to turn it around. The Bahamas is a beautiful country, it has a lot of potential, but it's just guiding the youth to see the treasures that are here.

She added, "there are still young people who still want to come back, they love their island, they could make a difference."

Pamela remarked on the role of schooling for some children:

Going to school nowadays is not just about learning, but survivin' ...it's about survival every day, it's not about learnin'. So if your child has to go to school constantly, every day trying to think how they can survive this day...learning is going to be affected.

As an educational consultant, Edwina worried about the state education in the nation. She remarked that, "we have a country that is in the ICU, whose education system is dying." She noted that, "what we are seeing, in the deterioration of our educational system, is a result of the fact that we've dropped the ball." She added that, "there's a future I want to see and there's a future that really and truly um, ...will become evident if changes are not urgently addressed." She continued, "until we do something drastic and serious to transform education in this country what we're seeing (pause) will only be heightened." Additionally, "it's very hard to see where the future of education is in the country, because we keep going around in circles. And, when we're not going around in circles, we keep going back."

Students equally were concerned about the current state of their nation and the possible future. Casper believed that more was needed to improve the economics and development of the country. He noted, "I hope that the nation will be able to make it's own industry instead of depending on tourism as it's number one source of income." He added, "I hope that we can be

able to make something that is like, that we can manufacture ourselves instead of depending on other people for income.”

Kayleisha suggested that:

...[it's] the mentality of the people that needs to change in order for us to put ourselves in a position to have a better future, because a lot of people miss out on the bigger issues and tend to focus on the smaller issues.

She explained these issues and noted that:

A lot of people um, focus on...the illegal immigration problem that we have over here, like that they're so busy looking for illegal immigrants that they're not...questioning the government about it, ...that they're not giving them the questions, such as...what are you doing with my taxes? What are...you spending the money on? What is happening with our economy? Who are you turning to, to advise us on what to do to turn the economy around?

She continued, “another thing that I think is um, inhibiting our young people in The Bahamas today is that...here it's all about who you know, where you come from and who your family is.”

She added:

I think that, that aspect of our society, where if you know someone, you have an easier time is also what is inhibiting the young people because those who may have good ideas and don't...have any connections within the upper society, they won't be given as many opportunities to put themselves out there and put their ideas forward as people who don't...have as many or good ideas and has connections in higher society.

Kenghise suggested that the government should improve education throughout the archipelago. She advised, “They could go to other islands to help them grow and develop as

well.” She explained, “that’s probably why, the education system isn’t as good as here.” She worried about the future state of education in the country. She mentioned that, “it seems to me like the people who are uneducated are having more children, and those children are not being educated as well, so it’s like a big cycle.”

Zane noted that:

I haven’t really seen big developments going on. And, I think it all stems from bad management at the top, meaning like our political leaders, and I feel...I’m not sure um, the future’s uncertain at leading. It has to be I think, a revolution, in order for us to change the path.

He added, “I think the Bahamian people need to put their foot down and make it known that what the...what the government is doing is unacceptable, and we need better leaders.” He also believed that, “Bahamians, especially, are xenophobic. They’re afraid of foreigners. And, I feel if you learn another language you would understand a little bit more, and the world wouldn’t be so discriminatory.”

Teachers noted societal issues that not only impacted their employment but how these issues would impact the current students and the students of tomorrow. Ava added that:

I don’t think the government really cares as much as they say they do, because if you [the government] did then you’d be putting more emphasis into education instead of taking away resources. And I think that’s why a lot of people, when they do get a chance to go off to school and get a degree, they end up not coming back.

Lois believed that changes in the education system were positive and noted that:

The College of The Bahamas will be upgraded to university status, which I think is a very good effort, because there and then persons, more qualified persons, will be in The

Bahamas, instead of going out to probably the States or so to do their studies, they can study right here, because sometimes persons leave their country, study in another country and then they do not come back in the country. But, with a university, (pause) then I think there is a possibility that persons will study here and remain here and help to develop the country.

Mabel tied in education and economics to explain the challenges in education in the country. She believed that:

Here, it's based on your wealth, and nothing else. If you have the money, you can afford to get your child a really high standard education in this country. If you do not, in many cases, your child is pretty much doomed to the task that not many other people want to do. And I think that is terrible, and I don't know how, [or] what solution there is there, because a lot of um, this country it's values are around money and wealth. And I think it's always going to exist. If I could, I would eradicate the two-tier system [the public and private school system].

All participants shared their fears for the country's current social state and the problems it is encountering. These separate problems shared by individuals in the community are identified below.

Sub-theme 12.1: Literacy and education.

Identifying literacy as a theme initially began as the degree to which people displayed competency in reading and writing. However, it became more of a concern about the delivery of the national curriculum and its deficiencies perceived by the research participants. The concerns expressed that for the nation to grow and develop, the citizens of the nation needed higher levels of literacy in order to be more employable. Student participants also expressed concern that the

national examinations were not of a credible standard that would ably assist them in getting into college abroad, thus they felt the need to take other international examinations that were more recognized to improve their college admissions forms. While The Bahamas still boasts a high literacy rate over 95.6% (Index Mundi, 2015a), research participants expressed the need to raise educational standards, which would create a better nation.

The “talk on the streets” from students and parents is still about the low national academic average. While a true national average cannot be ascertained for the nation, which would include all 27 subjects at the senior high school level, and all 11 subjects at the junior high school level; national averages for each individual subject can be calculated and reported to reflect the average results of those students who wrote the nation’s standardized examinations. However, the mindset of the Bahamian people, based on the reflections of many of the participants involved in this study, is that the national examination results reflect an overall picture of the nation’s education system, which is reflected as depressing, troublesome and below standard.

Jerome Fitzgerald, the Bahamian Minister of Education explained that:

We would like to emphasise that we are focusing on subject performance and not a national average. Not all students take 11 subjects at the B.J.C., nor the 27 subjects at B.G.C.S.E. and so to create a national average based on this information is not scientifically correct and would be misleading. (Virgil, 2015, para. 9)

The Minister also noted that:

National examinations are designed to show what students know, understand and can do after having completed a prescribed course of study. Therefore, the grades awarded to

students are indicators of their achievement and potential and not the sum total of their worth. (Virgil, 2015, para. 7, 8)

Parents were concerned about the future of the nation if young people complete high school without the necessary competencies to deem them employable. Marilyn professed that, “education has let this country down.” She continued to allege that:

It changed when we became independent.... The focus on school and education went away. Um, at least when you have exposure from other countries, they raise your standards.... The standards drop... they didn't notice it until forty years later and now it's manifested, and now look what we have. Three generations of uneducated people.

Students were equally concerned about the impact that perceived low national literacy levels meant for the country. While they made note of a national average that does not truly exist, it did reflect a perception that the academic standards in the nation were less than pleasing. Azaria recounted that, “I think the national average in the government school sector is a D.” She also acknowledged that within the system there were people who were attempting to remedy the situation. She remarked that, “these people trying to help me out and I don't wanna do it but I gotta do it, because they trying to make sure I don't want to be a burden on the system.”

Resha worried that the delivery of the education system was not evenly dispersed throughout the Bahamian archipelago. She stated that, “I think that they need to go to the outer islands. ... Some students from the outer islands are not going to be ready for college.”

Teachers stated their concerns, not just for the research site but also for the nation's educational system. Ernest supported that sentiment, “what is lacking is the basic infrastructure at the lower levels.” He also noted that, “you have people moving forward in the system who

can't read, who can't write, who are unable to do basic math....And I think in years past, um, that would never happen." He added:

We have a lot of people with a lot of potential but their potential can't be used because of...the lack of that basic base in terms of basic vocabulary skills, basic reading skills, basic arithmetic, you know, it just isn't there.

Anastacia articulated that, "when you have kids graduating from high school that are not able to read properly, that's gonna cause an issue in the workforce, because they're gonna more likely not gonna be employable."

Twenty-five percent of the participants identified literacy as a theme. The provision of education improved the literacy for all Bahamians. Despite the challenges experienced by many individuals from previous generations, such as segregation, the country continues to maintain an impressive adult literacy rate. Although the problems surrounding literacy and education still exist today, the education system in the country aims to "equip students with multiple literacies that will enable them to make meaningful contributions as nation builders who are globally competitive" (Bahamas Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 8).

Sub-theme 12.2: Future employment and competition.

The global job market has become more diverse and extends further afield. Young Bahamians must not only compete with themselves for scholarships, placements in schools and for employment opportunities, they also have to expose themselves to the global competition that is affecting many in the world where national borders are opening and trade agreements welcome foreign investment including a skilled and diverse, yet foreign workforce. While this was not a larger theme in the research, it was important to note as it could alter the path that young people pursue regarding their future college and career plans. It is important that young Bahamians

possess the skills, talent, knowledge and experience to afford them opportunities in a very competitive and globalized economy.

As a parent, Georgia acknowledged that, “we’re not competing against students in The Bahamas only,” but that “the world has opened up, and there’s so much completion everywhere. So we need to have, make sure the kids have (pause) are able to compete in that global world.”

Marie affirmed that “[we] live in an extremely competitive world, we need skills, life skills, academic skills to join college/university.” She replied that for most basic jobs:

They’re asking for those paper qualifications....It’s so competitive, that they’re asking, “Well, what have you studied (pause), and what diploma, degree do you have?” Equally there are people who come back and they can’t find a job (pause) with what they’ve learned, with it being quite a small um, job market in The Bahamas.

Teachers also worried that the competition, in the local workplace, would be challenging for young people. Ava stated that, “the world is becoming more competitive and the students need to be prepared for this.”

Students were not worried about the potential competition in the future workforce in The Bahamas, perhaps because some do not plan to return once they complete their college education, but Paige believed that more direction in high school was needed to alleviate this future job competition in that, “implement skills inside the schools that could teach the young people other things that when they come out of school they don’t necessarily have to be in competition with so many people to pursue one career.”

Only a few participants (15%) voiced apprehensions surrounding future employment opportunities and the competition facing many college-educated Bahamians today. As these young people are not currently faced with these problems they did not rank high among their

other concerns for the future. University graduates expect long-term career benefits from their financial investment made and the time spent while pursuing higher education. A society's economic growth is supported and advanced when it has more college or university graduates.

Sub-theme 12.3: Family dynamics and poverty.

The family dynamic, be it a single parent family, often headed by a female or a family with multiple generations within one household, was perceived as a possibility why some young people were challenged in high school. The family dynamic was also expressed as an indicator for whether or not a child had aspirations for attending college, university or other tertiary education institutions after high school.

Some parent participants believed, that other parents in the nation needed to take their role and responsibility more seriously in the home. Georgia admonished that, "parents need to be parents in this country, ...a lot of children have been raising themselves they're not being taught."

A report from the Minister of Social Services indicated that:

If you have a dysfunctional or unhealthy family, your citizens are not socialized properly to be the kinds of citizens that you want and they will be at risk of becoming criminals.

We need to understand how some criminals become so violent and do all that we can as the gatekeepers to help them and help young families. (Jones Bahamas, 2012, para. 11)

Pamela concurred that, "some of the family situations are not the best they could be....Some children just don't have it at home. And so, that's a barrier for them being um, successful and for learning." She continued to explain that, "if the parents don't feel the importance of children comin' to Sunday school, where they gettin' this moral teachin'? Where they learnin' right and wrong?"

Casper, a grade 11 student fretted that:

Some people's parents don't teach them the right way to live, so that when they get older, they do what they want, and so this may lead them to challenges of like knowing what to do with their life, and being unhappy and then they keep on repeating the cycle of, don't know what to do, and then doing the wrong thing and having children who keep on doing the same cycle.

Teachers weighed in on the issue of family dynamics for some students. Jennifer expressed that:

Some of them come from different homes where they may not have seen their family members going to college, or they may not have gotten that encouragement to further their education. So, not having that encouragement to not having the opportunity to do so, that also plays a major role in um, in this (pause) in our students (pause), in our nation, not being able to find the jobs that they need, finding the education that they need.

Although poverty received only a small mention, it was assigned an "amber/orange" altitude (level 4/5; traditional/modern worldview). Perhaps the fact that the research participants attend, work at or enroll their children in an established private high school, it was a noted concern explaining why it is perceived to be a deterrent for current and further educational pursuits. Limited education has been attributed as the foremost cause of poverty, which "can also contribute to adverse socio-economic impacts such as increased criminal activity, higher pollution levels and the lowering of health outcomes" (The Government of The Bahamas, 2016, p. 30).

As a teacher Albert testified that:

The economic hurdles that students would have to face, but it seem to me, that right now, there are some that are almost condemned to stay where you are, kind of thing, because they can't lift themselves out of that economic pit.

Family dynamics and poverty was mentioned by only a small percent of the participants (22%) but this sub-theme raised an awareness that these problems do exist in The Bahamas but honest and extensive discussion on these topics does not currently exist.

Sub-theme 12.4: Youth, peer pressure and experience.

The youth, their limited experience and peer pressure were also outlined as community issues. This theme was referenced 54 times by 37 participants and was assigned an “orange” altitude (level 5; modern worldview). Peer pressure represented 45% of the total student participant group responses. Some participants indicated that the young people themselves create their own obstacles for future success, whereas others perceived that the inexperience of the youth prevented them from getting opportunities even for internships, scholarships and work placement upon completion of a college degree. Some believed that the hopes for the future of The Bahamas rest in the youth.

As a parent Eloise believed that:

The talk out there is, oh, the young people are lost and this (pause) I don't think so, because I think we have um, we have pumped enough into our young people in the public and private sector so that we can actually get (pause) a good community out of that.

Pamela supported those sentiments in that:

This generation is wiser and they have more information to them at their fingertips. I don't think right out of high school, they're ready for a career (pause) maybe a job, and then some of them not ready for a job.

She also added, “it’s a lot more maturing they have to do before I think they are ready for career.”

Many young people were looking towards their future, some with anticipation others were more uncertain. Kayleisha affirmed:

There is a lot of potential because The Bahamas is still a young country and there is a lot of room for improvement and for growth, and if those willing can do something to help then I think that is also important for our young people to be involved I guess.

She added:

The stigma that the young (pause) that young people don’t know anything and that, because they’re young and aren’t as “wise”...anything that they propose wouldn’t led to (pause) wouldn’t have good effects on whatever it is they plan to change. So, I think that a lot more people have to be willing to hear our new ideas.

Kenya believed that due to limited experiences of young people not seeing more of the world, it was having an adverse effect on the youth. She elaborated:

I feel like more people would be prepared for the workforce here. And also like they, I feel like they wouldn’t get as involved in crime, and so The Bahamas would be a better place if we worked on the youth and not like trying to beat the problem out when it’s already a problem, like start young and like nurture children.

Marcus claimed:

I know there are people, my age, I know that there are people of my generation that want to see a different Bahamas, and I understand that they are ambitious, just like I am, just like my friends are, and they will change The Bahamas for the better. So, I believe The Bahamas is going in a positive direction.

A few teachers commented on the experience of the youth and their future. Chloe perceived that:

Students of the 21st century, um, there's so many resources being offered for them to become "critical thinkers". They can actually make a difference. A lot of the things that we see now in society, they are the ones that can come and actually make that change. But, that change will not be possible unless they make use of what is being offered to them.

Jennifer noted:

A lot of our young people do not get that opportunity when they come back from receiving a college education, to go into those positions, because in some cases there are jobs where an older person, who needs to retire, and give a young person a chance um, they don't give it up...so I think that we need to have more options for our young people.

She supposed that:

When they go and actually interview for a job, in some cases they will ask how many years experience, where would they have gotten the experience if they're fresh out of high school? And so, I think that there has to be another option for them to be able to come into the workforce and apply for that position and receive it, even though they may not have had those years of experience.

She added:

We need the option available for our young people to be able to go into the workforce, straight out of (pause), straight out of them receiving their degree. Um, and then so looking at the future, it can be bright, once the economy turns around but, at this particular point, it's not looking as bright as it can be.

Other teachers had faith that the young people will make a positive change in the country. Julia believed, “I think a lot of these kids, they’re very, very driven with the fact that they want to make this a better place.” She added, “they’re proud of where they’re from, a lot of them, and they want to um, make this a better place to live.”

The need to “dumb” down one’s abilities in order to fit in, and the pressure to engage in activities such as drug and alcohol consumption, and underage sex were perceived to be stresses imposed on young people. The negative influences of a peer group were more prominent than any reported positive influences from the student participants. Parents also expressed concerns for their children being influenced by others, which could deter them from a more positive life.

Eloise worried that, “[young people] surround themselves with the wrong people, the wrong friends, and it could be a distraction especially if you’re heading in one direction and your friends are heading in another direction.”

Students also accounted for the influence peer pressure has on their school experience. Anna-Marie felt that, “you can’t really show that you’re smart, because you might be targeted.”

John explained:

Many people want to be accepted and will probably do things they wouldn’t naturally do, but just to fit in...they just care too much what other people think of them, and they probably don’t have a sense of maybe originality.

Kenya observed:

People can encourage you, like all your peers are going to college, and you’d want to go too, and get into something positive. But, then, at the same time if none of your friends are going to college, you’ll feel discouraged to go, and that’s a big problem that we face.

Eighty-two percent of the participants reported on the concerns for the youth regarding peer pressure and their limited experience. Not surprising, the student participants identified more issues and problems on this sub-theme than the adults.

Sub-theme 12.5: Crime.

Crime, in particular violent crime such as murder, was referenced 36 times from 24 participants and was given an “amber/orange” altitude (level 4/5; traditional/modern worldview). The high crime rate, and murder rate per capita is a real concern for the people living in The Bahamas, and in particular on the island of New Providence. The Royal Bahamas Police Force recorded that “149 murders” (The United States Department of State, 2016, para. 2), were committed in The Bahamas in 2015, a murder rate of 42 per 100,000 (Walker, 2015), has been disconcerting. Jamaica, a Caribbean nation seven times larger than The Bahamas recorded a murder rate of 45 per 100,000 (McFadden, 2016). By comparison, Canada’s homicide rate was 1.45 per 100,000 for 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2015). The issue of homicide had a direct impact on many participants from the research site a few months before the commencement of the research study. An annual report from the United States Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security reported that, “2015 was the most deadly year in Bahamian history, and that the crime rate was declared as ‘critical’” (The United States Department of State, 2016, para. 3).

Parents were concerned about the crime in the nation and how it is impacting their children and the children in the country. Marie remarked that:

I’m worried about The Bahamas, especially with the crime rate per capita. What I’m seeing at the moment is a lot of crime, and a lot of the crime is committed by young people, it doesn’t matter what social background...it’s affecting everybody.

Marilyn claimed that, “I think crime is scaring everybody away.” She added that for her children:

I want them gone because of the crime situation here. Not that my boys are in any way exposed to it, but you just have to look at the wrong person at the wrong time and you could be a victim of it.

Edwina, an educational consultant, reported that, “the problem of why the crime rate in this country is so high (pause) education.” She additionally added that, “with crime on the rise, organized crime, gangs, drugs; truanancies increase.”

A few teachers also were concerned about the criminality in the nation. Madeleine expressed her own worries, “as teachers we are placed in such a vulnerable career, because we don’t know what we’re teaching. Are we teaching criminals? Who knows? And that’s worrying because there are so many criminals here, we have to face the facts.”

Students also expressed their concern about the rate of crime in the country and how it has impacted their lives. Some students believed that the country could improve if the more serious criminal situations were resolved. Other students were still concerned about the future for their country. Zane testified that, “The Bahamas is hurting, 2015 was a terrible year for us. The murder rate was the highest it’s ever been.”

Azaria asserted that:

Right now, in The Bahamas, we are in, I don’t want to say, oh, a war zone, but we are heading in the direction that I am not too pleased about...Nassau, right now, it’s not a place that I want to be in, you know, ...like last year every day you turn around someone’s getting shot.

Other students tried to make sense of the high crime rate and believed that the nation could be improved and that the youth of the nation might be the ones to take a positive stance to help resolve the issue. Casper recalled that, “when I was smaller, if I can remember properly, like it wasn’t (pause) the crime rate wasn’t as high, and I think that we need to impact the young generation now.”

Susie expressed her belief that:

I think a lot of young people now are taking a stand in our country. Um, the crime rate is sky-high, but I feel like it’s gonna be fine, ‘cause like a lot of people are taking big steps into trying to do things to try and help each other.

Bowen and Bowen (1999) hypothesized that on the effects of crime and violence in society on the behaviours and performance of adolescents while in school the “exposure to and perceptions of danger in schools and neighborhoods are likely to threaten the ability of youth to fulfill their potential in the school setting” (p. 319). The experiences of adolescents with violence and crime in the Bahamian society and in the school systems on the relationships on the students’ attendance, behaviour while at school and their academic performance warrants further study.

Fifty-three percent of the participants outlined crime to be a problem in The Bahamas. Over half of the student participants expressed their personal fears living in the Bahamas, and expressed their concerns for other people living in the nation where crime and violence are daily occurrences.

Sub-theme 12.6: Environmental concerns.

Environmental concerns appeared to be an outlier after the initial reading of the transcripts, but for three grade 11 student participants, the concern over increased pollution, the discussion about the possibility of drilling for oil, climate change and rising sea levels that could

impact the tourism and fishing industries—two of the nations most profitable industries—was disconcerting. “Although The Bahamas prides itself on keeping the country clean, there is minimal enforcement of environmental standards, and recycling is not a common practice” (The United States Department of State, 2016, para. 31).

However, Livingston outlined his concern about the pollution in his country and expressed that, “[we need to] clean up Nassau and all the other islands, because we have too much garbage coming in, than um, we have going out.” He also expressed his concern for one of the country’s prominent industry and for his family, surrounding the talks and possibility of drilling for oil, and how it would impact his father’s livelihood as a fisherman. He testified that:

If they drill for oil and something happens, that’s all our (pause), that’s basically our major source of income gone, ‘cause our major source of income in um, tourism. And, it isn’t a major source, but it’s one of the sources is fishing.

Aspects of climate change may also impact The Bahamas and it’s tourism product and Casper feared that:

With like the climate change, like how The Bahamas is and how like the world is heating up and stuff...like the climate of The Bahamas completely changes and tourists just decide they don’t want to come here anymore, then that’s our biggest source of income hit out.

Global warming has adverse affects for a small island nation like The Bahamas in that, a rise in sea level over one meter “80 percent” of the country would vanish (The Government of The Bahamas, 2016, p. 57; Brown, 2015a, para. 3). Although The Bahamas, like many other island nations around the world are minimal contributors to increasing global temperatures, they are put at risk due to increasing ocean acidification and vulnerability to aquatic environments,

increased tropical storm activity, and rising sea levels (Van Der Lans & Kortenhort, 2015). The Paris Agreement formed at the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015, formulated a goal to limit global warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius to reduce the impacts of climate change (European Commission, 2016). The Bahamas is in a vulnerable state where climate change is concerned. The nation's small landmass, low-lying geography and the population residing primarily along the coast (The Government of The Bahamas, 2016), the effects of global warming on water and energy supply, food security, coastal protection will have adverse affects on the tourism and fishing industries.

Tourism is the main economic driver in the Caribbean. Primary and secondary climate change impacts on this sector must both be considered seriously. Climate change is affecting related sectors such as health, agriculture, biodiversity and water resources that in turn impact on tourism resources and revenue in ways that are comparable to direct impacts on tourism alone. (Simpson et al., 2012, p. 2)

Environmental problems were mentioned by only a small percent of the participants but they did warrant mention due to the physical geography of this small archipelagic nation and the presence of changes in global climate.

Summary

One hundred and sixty-nine student notes and comments, 33 comments from the educational consultant, 125 teacher notes, and 116 parent comments were extracted from the interviews with the 45 participants to create 24 themes. The creation of four bigger, more encompassing themes were identified to address the phenomenon of college and career readiness as it looked at the perspective of Bahamian adolescents and their future life after high school.

The comments from the students, teachers, parents and the educational consultant were kept separate and then brought together when similar themes emerged.

Chapter 6 Central Themes

This chapter discusses the four central themes that were extracted and synthesized from the 24 smaller themes that emerged from the collected data from the 45 participants in the four participant groupings.

Four Central Themes

To address the phenomenon of college and career readiness as it supports the future life of Bahamian adolescents, 24 smaller themes emerged from the participant interviews, which were reduced to form four overarching or central themes that addressed the research problem: What do Bahamian adolescents, in an established private school, believe about their readiness for life after high school? The four central themes are listed below and explained further in more detail:

1. *Promoting a college going culture*, which is essential for both Taino Academy and the nation;
2. Identifying and acknowledging *the importance and the value of education* as essential elements for the future life successes and employability. This theme was influential for research participants at Taino Academy, The Bahamas and other global institutions and entities. This theme reflected the goals and vision of Taino Academy and the country;
3. *Awareness of national issues and societal ills* that have impacted or have the potential to affect young people and adults living in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas today and in the future; and,
4. The *recognition of perceptions* of the research participants about college and career readiness, and adolescents' placement in society as they prepare for life after high

school. Apparent and assumed perceptions were identified, as well as the influence of life experiences on individuals' perceptions.

Central Theme 1: Promoting a college-going culture.

Promoting a college-going culture addressed the idea that the nation and high schools present the possibility and opportunity for young people to consider and aspire to pursuing a college or university education whether it is obtained locally or abroad. The work of David Conley (2008, 2011, 2014) and the American College Board advocate that high schools deliberately promote the culture of tertiary education, which is most often observed in schools when college representatives visit high schools recruiting students or providing information for potential students. Although it was recommended that high schools provide guidance counseling sessions for students to aid in the facilitation of college and career aspirations throughout the high school experience, this is not always the case in every high school. Taino Academy sought to embrace a college-going culture and has provided timetabled counseling sessions for students from grades seven through to 12. It is during this scheduled time that students are asked to outline their future path and plan whether it is for college or specifically for career. Students are surveyed and tracked throughout their years in high school (see Appendix U).

Promoting a college-going culture has impacted all four participant groups and as such was positioned in all four quadrants. This larger theme addresses the actions, planning and policy development of education systems and institutions, it creates expectations of students, parents, teachers and policy makers. It promotes a belief that all students in The Bahamas can have aspirations for tertiary education and causes all stakeholders to act with the aim to make this a reality in all high school in the Bahamian archipelago. Therefore, the planning, design and implementation of curriculum was nested in this larger theme with the understanding of the

terms “college knowledge” and “college readiness” perceived by the participants.

Comprehending that it required a collective effort on behalf of all stakeholders in the life of a student, their teachers, parents, school system, the community and educational policy makers was essential. The expectations that these individuals hold, supports the necessity to establish, develop and promote a culture that has aspirations and desires for adolescents to be college- or university-bound. In order to prepare students with 21st century skills to meet the requirements of evolving careers and diversity in the workforce, students will need advanced learning, which a university education will provide. Kirkland (2015) perceived, that “Higher education enrolments are projected to increase from 100 million at the turn of the century to around 260 million in 2025. Nearly all of the growth in the next decade will come from developing countries” (p. 90). Advocating for promoting a national college- or university-bound initiative may alter the generations of university graduates in the nation, which in turn will increase the country’s standard and quality of development, in the area of tertiary education. The current practice of pigeonholing students, into service-based careers, limits their possibilities and potential for something else. The initiative to transform the College of The Bahamas (C.O.B.) into a university is a start.

As an educational institution, Taino Academy positioned “promoting a college going culture” in the upper right (UR) quadrant, which was referenced 480 times by the participants and was assigned an “orange” altitude. The action of promoting college and university to high schools has aided students in meeting and exceeding the minimum requirements to be accepted into local, regional or international colleges and universities. The nation, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should thus advocate and promote a college- or university-going culture in all schools both public and private.

It was hypothesized that students who attend and graduate from private high schools, as the case of Taino Academy are more likely to attend tertiary institutions such as colleges and universities than students who attend public high schools. Although this research was limited to only one private high school on the island of New Providence in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, the likelihood is high that the majority students attending private institutions generally pursue further studies after high school.

Central Theme 2: The importance and value of education.

The second emergent theme was that of *the importance and value of education*. Pursuing higher education and placing value on the importance of a college education has been attributed to the success, growth and development of nations globally. The secondary school enrollment for the Commonwealth of The Bahamas was 90% for males and 95% for females, which was calculated by the number of students enrolled in secondary education divided by the secondary school age population (Population Reference Bureau, 2015). Investment in tertiary education, in particular the number of graduates with college and university degrees, raises a country's quality and standard of development as displayed on the Human Development Index (HDI). The Bahamas' HDI value for 2014 was 0.794, which placed the country in the high human development category, and positioned it second in the Caribbean region slightly below Barbados (Ruprah, Melgarejo, & Sierra, 2014), and 55 out of 188 countries and territories surveyed (United Nations Development Program, 2015). Incidentally, Canada ranked ninth with an HDI of 0.913 (United Nations Development Program, 2015). The value and importance of a high school education and that of pursuing tertiary education were noted across all four participant groups, positioned in all four quadrants and was assigned a "green" altitude and was mentioned 21 times by 22 participants.

According to The Bahamas Guide (2016) the government allocates approximately, “24 per cent of the national budget” (para. 9) to education, an investment of \$45 million for public education (Stronger Bahamas, 2015). Recently, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) received an increase of \$8.5 million during the 2014-2015 year’s national budget primarily as a result of \$4 million to reform the College of The Bahamas into a university (Review of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas’ 2014–15 National Budget, 2014). Conversely, Canada’s GDP (2010) expenditure on education was 6.4% (Statistics Canada, 2014), with an investment estimated over \$86 billion (US\$) for public education (Index Mundi, 2015b).

A poll conducted by the American College Board found that:

Those who advanced immediately to some form of postsecondary education—either to a two- or four-year college or to vocational training—were more than three times as likely to report ever having obtained a degree than those who moved from high school straight into the workforce. (Brownstein, 2014, para. 2)

Additionally, the position and mindset of parents had a direct influence over adolescents and their decision to attend college.

Those raised by parents with college degrees were vastly more likely than those raised by parents without degrees to say that their family encouraged them to attend college. Those from families with college experience were also much more likely to report that they themselves started college directly after finishing high school, and that they ultimately obtained a postsecondary degree. (Brownstein, 2014, para. 4)

While *the importance and value of education* was connected to the theme of *promoting a college-going culture*, it had implications not only in the familial setting but that of the institution and society. What a society values and aspires to is directly affected to its importance on

education for all citizens, from preschoolers to the elderly. The financial investment, the advocating and creation of educational initiatives that are aligned with 21st century skills, best practices and next practices, to provide an educated society and workforce will help to elevate not only an individual's placement in society but society itself.

Central Theme 3: State of the nation.

The third theme encompassed many smaller themes and encased the issues impacting and plaguing the nation. The *state of the nation* described the concerns and events within The Bahamas, which were based on the participants' experiences and perceptions during the time of the study held at Taino Academy. Larger national issues such as crime, family dynamics and poverty, and youth, peer pressure and experience were assigned an "orange" altitude; literacy and education, and environmental issues were assigned a "green" altitude. These issues were discussed separately in chapter 5. Many of these issues have given cause for young people planning not to return to the country upon completion of their tertiary education abroad, thus contributing to the brain drain the country has experienced and is perceived to occur in the upcoming years.

Student and adult participants were cognizant of many issues in the nation that not only impacted individuals but the impact on the education system. An education initiative such as the National High School Diploma imposes graduation and curriculum requirements on all students. Tracking and gathering data on students who successfully graduate from high school and then pursue higher education at a trade/vocational school or college/university will give a better picture of the nation's education system and future career aspirations and trends. Coincidentally, an increase in university degrees will elevate The Bahamas' adult literacy rate, diversify the

knowledge base in the workforce and propel an aspiration for future generations of adolescents to pursue a college education.

The *state of the nation* addressed the actions, beliefs, expectations and policy, laws and mandates that will evidently impact the future life of adolescents in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and as such was positioned in all four quadrants. Identifying and addressing the smaller themes may change the perceptions that young people have about their country, their place in it and their future life in the archipelago. Investment and innovation in the nation and its human capital may reduce the alarming trend of brain drain. The young people want change, they want a better “Bahamaland,” they want a future that is sustainable and filled with possibilities, and one that welcomes them and their ideas for change and progress.

Central Theme 4: Recognition of perceptions.

The *recognition of perceptions* emerged as the fourth theme. The perceptions presented, along with the different perspectives from the research participants puts additional pressure on the students in their preparation for life after high school. Many of the pressures were self-imposed, whereas others were shaped by the adults, which undoubtedly have an impact on the students regardless of the facts that were presented from others and the themes that emerged. Accordingly, the *recognition of perceptions* was positioned in all four quadrants and was assigned an “orange/green” altitude.

The perception of pursuing a college or university degree has been instilled as a social norm for the majority of high school students attending Taino Academy. The school curriculum is one that coordinates and offers college-level courses for students to take while in high school. The school also expects that the performance of their student population will achieve outstanding results on national and international examinations, as well as seek admissions into highly

regarded institutions of higher education. The parents, many who hold college and university degrees themselves, expect that their child will attend university also and obtain a degree that will further their child's prospects in obtaining a career in a respected and reputable profession. The students themselves administer expectations to achieve academically and athletically. They want to be credited and praised for their accomplishments, from their peer group, their family members, and recognition from the nation. The expectation to excel is imposed on the students on a regular basis when individual student results from the national examinations directly impacts that of the subject teachers' results, which in turn reflects on the academic performance of the school, both locally and nationally. There is a great deal of pressure and expectation imposed on and perceived by these adolescents.

The perception that many national issues are not just beliefs held by the participants but realities they are faced with on a regular basis. The media informs the Bahamian public daily about the criminality in the nation, and promotes or scorns the successes and shortcomings of education after the release of the annual national examination results. The perception that "certain people" in society will pursue professional careers and others will be steered towards more vocational trades has been instilled in the culture and traditions of the nation. This perception is perceived to be perpetuated for generations and as such has created a self-fulfilling prophecy for many young adults who seem destined by their economic and social position in society.

Reflection on the Significance of Perceptions

The perceptions that emerged from the participants, which are believed to exist in society, have directed the other larger themes. Without the thoughts and viewpoints of participants, be they assumed or apparent, they would not have guided the other themes. Without

the mindset of stakeholders the other central themes would not exist. The recognition of perceptions has directed the overarching theme of the importance and value of education, especially in The Bahamas. Here the original importance placed on education “was designed to provide minimal literacy and sound moral training rather than social mobility or even useful skills” (Craton & Saunders, 1998, p. 29). The general need and importance of education to create an educated workforce was sufficient in the past, by today the workforce and the skills required for the 21st century surpasses that of the past. The acquisition of a college or university degree is seen as essential for the aspirations of many young people today, in particular the student participants from Taino Academy. These assumed perceptions, held by adolescents are often initiated from that of adults; the parents, teachers, and community members, which instills a desire to pursue higher education. The mindset of their parents wanting more for their children is also well noted. The students’ perceptions that their high school, Taino Academy, expects them to do well in order to promote the culture and legacy of the school was also expressed.

The perceptions surrounding the state of the nation, held by the students and adult participants have emerged and directly impact the students positively and negatively. Many national issues affect the students only on the periphery when broadcasted in the news, whereas others have a more direct impact when they affect the student or adult more personally such as peer pressure and crime.

Summary

Four overarching themes emerged from the many themes identified by the participants. These four central themes nested themselves to some degree in all four quadrants of Wilber’s (2006) AQAL framework. The perceptions of participants have acted as the compass orienting the other larger themes in this study including promoting a college-going culture, the importance

and value of education, and acknowledging the present state of the nation. The four themes are interconnected and encompass the other 24 themes that emerged from the study, which in turn have impacted the lives of the participants involved to some degree. These four themes have stressed the significance of encompassing all four quadrants, Kosmic addresses and multiple perspectives in order to navigate a phenomenon.

Chapter 7 Conclusion, Implications and Future Research

The territory of a school that promotes a college-going culture was mapped to show the degree of readiness students, teachers and parents perceive adolescents have surrounding the phenomenon of college readiness. Forty-five participants were interviewed to describe their personal accounts of the phenomenon of college readiness and their perspective of the school and national education landscape. As with most maps, the cartographer creates a projection that best suits his or her needs or that of their patron. Mapping elements are added or removed to showcase the most significant components. Each person thus draws their own map to reflect what is most significant or important for them and draws on their personal experiences and encounters to help create the image of their landscape from their perspective. This chapter analyzes the study's four research questions based on the data gathered from the research site and the research participants. Finally, it explains how the data can be used for future practice, theory and research.

Overview of the Research

A phenomenological research study took place with participants from the Taino Academy, an established private high school on the island of New Providence in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The study addressed the perceptions held by grade 11 and 12 students, teachers and parents from Taino Academy, and an educational consultant with the Ministry of Education. Taino Academy is one of 13 private high schools, which is a part of B.A.I.S.S., and is unique in its diverse student and teacher demographics, as well as its curriculum offerings. Taino Academy offers a good selection of the Ministry of Education's academic courses, as well as curriculum offered by the American College Board's SAT II subject courses and the Advanced Placement courses. The school has had an established legacy

that has kept abreast of the trends and social climate of its day and additionally, has stayed ahead of the times. Although the academic content delivered to the students is sufficient enough for them to be accepted into college or university, it is the social and life skills that many adolescents and adults perceive that they appear to be lacking, thus acknowledging a state of “un-readiness” for what comes after high school.

Ken Wilber’s AQAL model and David Conley’s Keys to College and Career Readiness provided conceptual frameworks for this research study. Wilber’s AQAL model presented an ideal framework for this research study. It afforded the opportunity to gather multiple perspectives using a variety of methods. Even though only two components of the model were used, quadrants and levels, they were enough to provide a perspective and a picture of the landscape, thus adding more elements on the map of college and career readiness at Taino Academy from the perspectives of students, teachers, parents and a policy maker in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Conley’s Keys to College and Career Readiness provided an overview of the content, skills and knowledge high school students needed to aid in their transition to university, college or the workforce upon the completion of high school. Looking at the phenomenon and the perceptions held by research participants through an integral lens provided a greater understanding whether or not students at Taino Academy were deemed ready to undertake the next phase of their life and ready to embark on the future.

The AQAL model and integral theory provides an opportunity to investigate a phenomenon such as college and career readiness from many perspectives. The four quadrants in the model, along with levels, lines, states and types help to explain and uncover the complexity of a problem, challenge or phenomenon. The systems that exist in the lower right quadrant (the

Its) provide an interconnectedness and interdependency among individuals and collectives to raise awareness of the relationships that exist between entities for the future.

Research Questions Explained

Forty-five semi-structured interviews took place with student and adult participants to answer questions on the phenomenon of college and career readiness at Taino Academy in order to answer the four research questions. The answers to the research questions were obtained from information and reflections provided in participant interviews and data collected from school and education documents. The research questions, and a summation of participant responses and research findings are shown in Appendix V.

1. What are adolescents doing to prepare themselves for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

Students have armed themselves with more information and tools to prepare them for their future life especially as it applies to procedures for college and university admissions than students in the past. Students are aware that there are several requirements in place for high school graduation and that there are academic courses and standardized examinations provided that help in their advancement to become more university ready. Many students have taken advantage of the numerous opportunities available to them pertaining to learning about colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Although additional higher education institutions in the Caribbean and in the United Kingdom are possible options for students, these schools are not greatly promoted and students undertake to research these schools on their own. Students are aware that they are requiring additional qualifications to get into some schools in the United Kingdom and fail to meet the standards for some American and Canadian colleges. However, many of the students at Taino Academy meet and exceed the Bahamian national

graduation requirements. Thus, students are enrolling in advanced and honours courses that they perceive will strengthen their college application. Students are aware of the heightened competition to get into some universities abroad and as such they are entering competitions and engaging in a variety of extra curricular pursuits to help make their college application form stand out amongst others. The students are researching colleges and universities on their own to uncover the climate and culture of tertiary education institutions and are using technology to investigate students' perspectives of college life from current college students. Students are adhering to advice and expertise offered by parents, teachers, select members of the community and college representatives to help in the college admissions process, scholarship applications and general guidance for life outside The Bahamas.

2. What beliefs do adolescents have about their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

The students from Taino Academy had different beliefs about their future life after high school. Some were excited about the prospect of attending university in upcoming months, whereas others were apprehensive about being able to fit in and being away from home. Not surprisingly, some students, grade 11's in particular, were not yet ready nor had they begun investigating possible colleges. The majority of students were aware that the local college was insufficient to meet their college and career aspirations. The students worried that in the future there would not be career opportunities or openings for them in The Bahamas and they had to be prepared to stay abroad and seek employment elsewhere. They were also aware that the present state of the nation created cause for concern about their safety and financial security, and that they were anxious about the direction their country was going or would be in the future.

3. (a) What expectations do others have for adolescents and their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

The adult participants, teachers, parents and an educational consultant, were concerned that students were not ready for the demands and rigor expected of college and university. They were equally aware that, based on their perceptions, the adolescents did not possess the work ethic or skills to begin a career. The parents believed that their children needed to study abroad in order to get the credentials for their specific career aspirations because the local institutions of higher education were insufficient to meet those needs. They were also aware that the students were less likely to return upon completion of a university degree because of the limited employment opportunities in the country. Both the parents and teachers believed that because the students lived in an insular society they would be in for a rude awakening and culture shock when they were required to live abroad to study.

3. (b) What personal expectations do adolescents have for themselves and their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

For the 11th grade students who were taking the majority of their national examinations this year, they perceived that college would be easier and would offer them more time during the day to focus on their studies. The 12th graders, many who were taking college-level courses this year, were anticipating that college would be challenging. However, they perceived that because many of them live a sheltered life, being exposed to new cultures, interacting with new people, and the need to be more independent was more worrisome than the academic expectations required of college or university. The students also believed that if they worked hard in high school, obtained pleasing academic results, and engaged in various extra-curricular pursuits they would be in the running for one of many scholarships to help offset a college or university

education. As the researcher, I was surprised by the absence of personal financial planning and the expectation that outside agencies would bankroll a child's college education. The acquisition of a scholarship was perceived to be the only means for many young people to even contemplate pursuing tertiary education.

4. What systems have an influence determining adolescents' readiness for their life at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?

The government of The Bahamas, in particular the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology were the driving force for educational initiatives and curriculum design undertaken by high schools in the country. Ensuring that all students in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas are afforded the standard curriculum is essential. Providing alternatives for students to gain financial support through scholarships from government entities and private organizations helped provide assistance for students who most likely would not be able to afford tertiary education abroad. Establishing a relationship with the American College Board, or the International Baccalaureate for some schools, has provided the opportunity to offer an additional standardized curriculum in the high schools of The Bahamas, and as such offer college-level courses for students who attend schools that offer Advanced Placement subjects. Taino Academy has a depth of talent and experience in its teaching faculty, which can be used to relay the experience of college and university to the new batch of college-going students. Integrating the use of technology in both the classrooms and awareness of college and university is recommended to keep abreast of current changes in curriculum and admissions requirements. Students need to be exposed to 21st century skills, including practical applications in all subjects and need to deviate from more traditional delivery of a curriculum that appears to be dated and relies on local and hidden knowledge for some subjects. A hidden curriculum refers to "the unintended lessons,

values, and perspectives that students learn in school” (Abbott, 2014, para. 1), which extends to subject areas, and the behaviours of adults and other students.

Discussion on the Hidden Curriculum

The hidden curriculum of applying for college and scholarships needs to be unmasked for all students in order to broaden and increase the national percentage of students pursuing higher education locally or internationally. More dialogue with college representatives and admissions offices would help the students, teachers and the school have a greater understanding and appreciation of what is needed to strengthen college applications so that more students can get into the university of their choice. The hidden messages and practices of deliberately guiding public school children towards more vocational work options to fill in the gaps in a workforce that needs labourers and tradesmen needs to stop. All students in The Bahamas should be presented with the option and afforded the opportunity to pursue a college or university education if they so desire, regardless if they attend a public or private high school.

The stereotypes perceived by participants uncovered a hidden perception about the choice and quality of instruction offered at the local tertiary educational institutions. Additionally, the way that Taino Academy separates the students based on an accelerated and non-accelerated path for the national curriculum conveyed a message to students that was perceived to limit their academic potential and affected their self-worth. This also applied to the selection of students chosen to take Advanced Placement courses in grade 12.

The Ministry of Education and Taino Academy also revealed in their mission statements that adhere to Christian principles by teaching spiritual discipline and are guided by Christian values. The Bahamian majority is nestled in an amber worldview. The Bahamas’ Education Act has made religious education compulsory in all schools maintained by the Ministry of Education,

regardless of a student's faith or religious affiliation. The implementation of Christian education imposes the morals and practices of that branch of religion, which placates the amber majority and the fundamentalist views found in the country. The Education Act of 2001 stated that, "the school day in every maintained school shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance at the school," including "religious instruction shall be given in every maintained school" (§17). What then is the message to students and stakeholders in schools who are not Christian or profess any religious affiliation?

Maintaining or increasing the academic rigor and standards in the school, regardless if it is more than what is required for the national examinations is encouraged. Extending the knowledge past the basic expectations for the test will provide students with more skills and knowledge so that they do not have to seek remedial assistance when they get to college for some subjects (i.e., mathematics). In other words, teach more of the practicalities, the "real-world" examples, and for what comes next in the child's future instead of teaching for the test (i.e., national examination).

Personal Reflections

At the start of the research project, I was fearful that any negative opinions that could potentially surface about Taino Academy and The Bahamas, could potentially impact my employment at the school and in the country, even though the study was the participants from the Taino Academy community and not the school itself. My goal was to hear the voices of the participants through their lived experiences and to understand the perceptions they held about the future life of Bahamian adolescents.

Hearing the viewpoints of multiple individuals, students, teachers, parents and an educational consultant, who were all immersed in the phenomenon of college and career

readiness, provided a unique perspective on the future lives of Bahamian adolescents and the nation. Five student participants, who had previous educational experiences at other schools prior to coming to Taino Academy for high school, noted that their choice in moving was because of the academic programme offered at the school. Other student participants who currently have siblings in other private high schools on the island were able to make a comparison between their school initiatives and academic offerings and that of their siblings. Their viewpoints and insights were invaluable.

It appears that the “best practices” being used today in the current education system are wanting and we need to start looking at more innovative and “next practices” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) for a generation of young people who are currently dissatisfied with the status quo in the country. These young people are ambitious; they want and expect more for themselves, their fellow citizens and the country. These young people know that the country can do better. They are angry, frustrated and dissatisfied with the complacency of the present adult generation.

Limitations of the Study

Although the design of any research study aims to reduce its weakness there were limitations. The study employed purposive sampling by including only one private high school on the island of New Providence, and applied a small sample size, which decreased the generalization of the study’s findings. In using grade 11 and 12 students only, the contributions of students from additional grade levels was narrowed especially when it is recommended that in promoting a culture of college, it include students of multiple grade levels as well. Furthermore, hearing the perceptions of additional policy makers and current college-going students would also add another layer of data.

Restricting the study to one school eliminated the valuable information that could have been obtained from other private and public schools in the country. It would be worthwhile to expand this study to include participants from other high schools, trade/vocational institutions, and tertiary institutions in The Bahamas to help disclose additional perceptions held by other students in the nation. However, for the purpose of this study, student, parent and teacher participants were used from one private school on the island of New Providence, Bahamas.

The inclusion of more policy makers is recommended for another research study. The policy makers could include members of a school's administrative team or members of the Ministry of Education, or representatives of the American College Board, who could be interviewed to garner additional perspectives from the systems aspect of the phenomenon on college and career readiness. Gathering input from the school's decision makers and the policy planners would add an additional layer on the map and provide more depth to the study.

Implications of this Study

Recommendations for educational practice.

As an educator, at Taino Academy, I believe that the findings of this study should be disseminated to raise awareness about the perceptions held by participants. In teaching practice there needs to be a deliberate attempt to include and promote the benefits of a university education, displaying 21st century skills and practices, and considering more advanced and inventive "next practices" for a school and national curriculum in the future that needs to be unafraid of evolving. The information provided may help school administrators look at alternative approaches in how they promote and provide a college-going culture in their schools. The viewpoints of public school children should also be heard to provide additional insight and to extend an opportunity to gather their perceptions of their future life after high school. This

additional information, which I plan to investigate in future research will be beneficial so that high school administrators and national educational policy makers can make changes, alterations or additions to a national curriculum to help guide and aspire more students in the nation to pursue a university education. There is more to the story, more to the map, more of the territory and landscape to explore. I believe that more people need to tell their stories and lived experiences so that a more comprehensive, more insightful and more integral map can be provided.

Recommendations for educational research.

Creating a college-going culture and college aspirations, often cited in the American College Board literature and the work of David Conley, which are related to the phenomenon of college and career readiness were found in this study to explain the preparedness of adolescents and their awareness obtaining a university education. Although college and career readiness was only one aspect of the current study, it was a major issue factoring in the future life of Bahamian adolescents. The data gathered are relevant to teachers, school administration and education policy makers as multiple perceptions and perspectives were uncovered from the participants. This study provides considerations for school and national curricular considerations for the promotion of a college going culture in all high schools of The Bahamas.

Longitudinal studies that tract the student participants from this study, as they engage in their freshman year at university, would provide additional insight into this phenomenon. Acquiring additional student input would add more information to help high school administrators and teachers plan for and direct other students who are considering a future that involves enrollment in university. Ideally, tracking and re-interviewing the grade 12 student participants and other students from the graduating class of 2016 at Taino Academy would

provide greater understanding into the phenomenon of college and career readiness and the perspectives of Bahamian adolescents about their future life. Gathering more participants for the study will be helpful for those who may drop out of an additional study. Furthermore, re-interviewing the grade 11 participants may prove insightful especially if their college and career plans change and their perception of readiness alters. This data will help direct and create educational initiatives that will be beneficial and helpful to students and teachers at Taino Academy, as well as the prospects for assisting other high school students in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas as they transition from high school to college and then the workforce. Understanding why students return or do not return to work and live in The Bahamas would be valuable information for government officials and educational institutions. In keeping close contact with the students from the study and other graduates from Taino Academy, I believe that this study could be extended to provide further data on the phenomenon through the perceptions of additional participants. Tracking these students as they proceed through the next two- to four years of college or university may prove helpful when creating new national educational initiatives. A longitudinal study of this type has not yet been undertaken in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Obtaining additional empirical data such as Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT) to measure ego-development in high school students who are transitioning to college, or other assessments on moral development or Graves' values system would help provide more information on the developmental lines needed for the AQAL model. The addition of lines of development would help confirm a more precise altitude in Wilber's Kosmic address. The data from these assessment tools would add another layer to the map,

which would help us see more of the territory on the phenomenon of Bahamian adolescents and their perceptions of the future, especially on the topic of college and career readiness.

Using the Model to Solve Potential Problems and Scenarios

The integral model provides contextual information that can be used to describe existing education practices and problems, and can be used also to speculate about future action in education undertaken both in schools, in the national education system. It can also inform about the impact education has on the country at a given time. If we extend beyond the perspectives in the four quadrants of Wilber's model to encompass levels, lines, states and types, the model can help prepare what may go on in the future as it pertains to a particular phenomenon, event or organisation. However, it is the influence and driving force of systems in the lower right quadrant that is vital for change. These systems that also exist within systems, consist of and contain different parts of systems and contain individuals, each having different needs and interpretations about a phenomenon. How individuals act—independently or as members of a collective—may influence their personal actions and behaviours, beliefs and expectations about a phenomenon. It is important to know and understand the worldviews of these particular individuals and their positioning in collectives and systems.

In The Bahamas the shift from colonialism (amber/traditional) to post-colonialism (orange/modern), the country has held onto remnants of practices and attitudes from those historical times. Holding onto tradition, maintaining elements of class structure for some individuals amongst the quest for national independence, and more recently, the quest for greater regional and global competitiveness (green/post-modern) have created challenges and problems in the nation. The country has held onto elements of the past that have been deemed worthy or acceptable. In some instances, more complex elements of the past have been maintained because

solutions to change them have not yet been possible. The individuals and collectives that stand to benefit from maintaining the traditional status quo are in no hurry to make evolutionary changes that may alter their power position or representation, this includes their perceived collective worldview. The different treatment of immigrants based on their country of origin is one such example. Historically, the segregation of race in schools was an attitude that was maintained for a while but then later evolved to a more modern mindset. Education continues to be a key element for an individual to achieve status in society, yet economic success persists to be considered more valuable. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Bahamian society, “race and color still ultimately determined class structure” (Saunders, 2016, p. 53). However, the two-tiered system of education in The Bahamas today has prohibited the country from evolving into another level of consciousness. As societies continue to evolve the impact on its education and employment systems will also evolve. The pace at which this growth takes place will be dependent on a more coherent understanding of the many perspectives represented in the four quadrants of the AQAL model, and an awareness and comprehension of the worldviews of stakeholders in society and their collective worldview in order to make a forward change, an evolutionary step into the future.

For example, the information from this study could be used to speculate what happens to future education systems in The Bahamas and their particular entities. The integral framework allows us to use the plethora of maps gathered from individuals, collectives and systems to help identify and solve problems and challenges in places like our schools and country. The education system in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas is multi-dimensional and thus will require the multiple perspectives of individuals and collectives to identify and explain better the condition and culture of education at this time in history.

The following problems and scenarios that currently exist in The Bahamas can be addressed using AQAL and the integral framework. The model permits stakeholders to look at current and possible challenges that exist in an organisation, culture or environment. The model shows how issues and individuals, from multiple perspectives and levels of consciousness, drive and influence what happens to an event or problem. This can be explained using the following possible scenarios:

Brain drain and youth unemployment.

An emerging theme in the research identified the problem of brain drain in The Bahamas. What happens in the country if university-educated students do not return to the country after the completion of a tertiary degree? What challenges exist if they do return home and there is high unemployment? Mitchell (2016) indicated, “some Bahamian university students are opting out of returning to The Bahamas to build their careers and start their families because they claim the government has failed to deliver on promises that affect their future” (para.1). Additionally, “many students feel that what they are studying in university does not align with where the job market is heading in The Bahamas” (Mitchell, 2016, para. 46). The unemployment in The Bahamas stands at 14.8%, but “the unemployment among youths (15-24 years) in the country continued to be considerably higher than any other age group. The overall rate is 30%, which is higher than the rate recorded in May 2015” (Bahamas Local, 2015, para 5).

Brain drain and youth unemployment become the objective factors housed in the upper right quadrant. These two problems are perceived and acted upon each individual who is positioned in the upper left. The experiences and the reality that these issues may present upon the individual is important to them, but will be perceived differently dependent on their level of consciousness or altitude. If I am unable to return to my home community or country to seek

employment after pursuing higher education what will I feel about that? What will I do and how will act if I am unable to find employment in my field of study or compensates me for my qualifications and experience? An individual at the amber level will expect its government to find employment for them or to provide them with some form of social assistance until suitable employment can be found. Someone at orange may want to actively seek employment opportunities and make a personal contribution to the economic development of the nation, thus not becoming a burden on the system. At orange, an individual may pursue entrepreneurial ventures rather than expecting someone else to find them employment. An individual at the green altitude will expect equity in the job market regardless of their age, sex, race or religion. Someone at a green altitude will want the academic credentials and experiences they have garnered while in college or university to be compensated for fairly in the workforce. The decisions made by each individual are based on their worldview will vary within the context.

The statistics about brain drain and youth unemployment (upper right) are presented to society in the lower left. For some young people who have studied abroad, return to The Bahamas after obtaining a university degree return with academic qualifications that enable them to seek employment in many areas of the employment sector. However, for some young people, they are unable to find employment because their degree and qualifications cannot be matched or supported by any existing job or career. Many may leave the country frustrated when they cannot find employment after university, or cannot find employment that they perceive should ably compensate them for the qualifications that they now possess. This data may raise national awareness that there are many young, college-educated individuals who are unable to seek employment. As such, some opt not to return, or choose to leave the country to seek employment elsewhere.

For the young people who do not return to The Bahamas, they may find it challenging to find employment abroad due to immigration constraints in their host country. If they do not return, the potential skills, knowledge and experience these people now possess will not be able to be applied in The Bahamas, thus lowering the social and economic development level in the country.

In the lower right quadrant, a system of systems, within systems; includes the various government ministries and departments that address issues about labour and immigration. The employment and immigration regulations and policies guide and direct what possibilities are available for young people whether they stay in their country to seek employment, or whether they travel or stay abroad to seek career opportunities and advancement.

Change within a system.

In a national educational system, like the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, when the political structure and organisation of a nation changes, as it does with federal elections, it is altered by the dynamics of the existing sitting government. As a result, there may be a change or shift in power from one political party to the next, thus creating narrower or broader margins of political and electoral representation. The rearrangement and repositioning of elected members then adjusts and amends the previous ministerial portfolios (i.e., the Ministry of Education), which is altered and influenced by the altitudes or worldviews, of the upper left, the “I” position, displayed by these individuals who are now appointed to new portfolios and positions. These changes may, and quite often do, impact the education system, which is positioned in the lower right quadrant, where systems are housed. However, as this collection of new and different individuals emerge, an assemblage of I’s and We’s, who may intend to make their mark, and leave their legacy on society and its education system, the individual and the collective

worldviews of these individuals quite often overtake the initiatives and policies outlined by the systems housed in the lower right. Regardless of the new members appointed, elected or hired in government and educational organizations and institutions, the successful delivery of the national education curriculum, and creating and maintaining a society with high adult literacy is paramount. This may also include having a curriculum and education system that is on par with other developed nations, so that students who travel abroad to pursue tertiary education are not disadvantaged because of the nature of their secondary schooling.

What is to come of a system like national education when there is fluidity and movement of personnel and worldviews? Are national educational initiatives that are formed from one government in power, at risk in varying from one political term to the next, when and if a change of political power takes place? Whereas education policies, regulations and initiatives that have been formulated in lower right by the systems that create them, can be implemented, changed or become stagnated based on the personal drives and interests of the individuals who are now in charge of these systems. Although the national education system, found in the lower right quadrant, should be the driving force for policies that affect schools, teachers and students; the individuals in power are now in the driver's seat and are guiding and directing the journey. More recently, the Bahamian government has undertaken a bipartisan approach and shared vision for education, which outlines its goals and plans for national education culminating in 2030. The individuals and the collective within these two systems (i.e., Ministry of Education and other members and ministries of government) have come together to raise an awareness and outline it's vision and commitment for education, which will remain unaffected regardless if there is a change in power in national politics.

Educational initiatives: “Best and next practices”.

The challenges and problems associated with education in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas continue to evolve. In the country, the task of how to educate the masses regardless of colour, religious affiliation or sex, has been debated and pondered for decades. Unfortunately, the problem has morphed and evolved to include not only the provision of basic literacy and numeracy; it evolved to contain assessments, standards, equivalencies and other empirical measurements required of schools, education boards and government departments. The objective in having an educated society is admirable, but to what degree are we educating the young citizens in this country? What impact will these formal assessments and standards have on the adult citizens of tomorrow? What impact will there be if educational initiatives change and evolve regularly based on educational mandates required from the national government? Are there any unintended consequences to these educational initiatives?

Education in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas has and continues to change. The challenge exists when different generations put their mark and voice their concerns and interest for “their” vision of educating the next generation of Bahamian youth. However, some individuals, who modify initiatives and change education policies, risk offending those individuals who have gone before who aimed to leave a legacy, or their personal contribution, mark and influence on the national education landscape. This may result in little or delayed advancement in education schemes because we affront the advancements and innovations from the education pioneers of the past.

Independent and private schools that are able to differentiate themselves from the requirements and expectations of the Ministry of Education are able to deviate more easily from the amber mindset and set their own course towards other altitudes. However, they may be

content to stay at amber and promote and strengthen their fundamentalist views, as many church-based schools have done. Schools in the public system may not have the flexibility of evolutionary change at this time, but it would not be fair to assume that all schools maintained by the Ministry of Education or that any public school is at the same altitude or worldview.

While the system of education continues to be paramount, the method of instruction and the delivery of curriculum have changed throughout the years, the fundamental principles of basic literacy and numeracy continue to be essential. However, more and diverse courses are added now to the curriculum to reflect the changes in national and global standards, fields of study and careers.

The course offerings for schools maintained by the Ministry of Education and by independent or private entities may reflect the significance and values of altitudes or levels of consciousness in the lower left quadrant. Some schools may place a greater emphasis on the arts or sciences depending on their education mission and purpose. Some schools may be tied into an amber worldview, whereas other schools have evolved to more orange and green altitudes. It is safe to assume that not all schools in the Bahamas Association of Independent Secondary Schools (B.A.I.S.S.), or in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas are at the same level or altitude.

With more available and varied careers and more fields of study today, the system of education becomes more and more complex with each generation. There are more students in the nation who need to be educated, and as such there are more demands on society that is asking many of these young people to meet these employment demands. There are also many young people asking more of the existing education system—its schools, teachers and politicians—to create an education system for them that will meet the needs for today and tomorrow. In early education systems, the complexity and interdependences of curriculum, academic outcomes,

examinations and results, and educational standards and policies, were not as multifaceted as they are today.

Looking at education as a collection of systems, a network of entities, or systems nested in systems to prepare for some higher good, we look at it from the outside, the exterior, from an interobjective perspective. This system evolves. It has morphed through generations to reflect the culture and worldview of that particular time in history as represented by the collective majority. In the lower right, if the Ministry of Education in The Bahamas provided more opportunities for young Bahamians to obtain post-secondary education, what would the country look like?

Promoting higher education.

The Ministry of Education consents to the establishment, administration and management of institutions for tertiary education in The Bahamas. The Education Act of 2001 indicated that these institutions include “any university, college, school or other organised institution in or by which courses in further education are conducted” (§29), and that the courses offered are to be “of educational, cultural, economic or other benefit to The Bahamas” (§29).

Although there are higher education institutions in The Bahamas, is The Bahamas actively promoting post-secondary education (i.e., trade schools, colleges, universities) to all its students? While I am not suggesting that everyone pursue a college or university degree, what would it mean if the government actively encourages the promotion of this approach in both its public and private high schools in hopes of improving the education level of the populace? The Ministry of Education in The Bahamas has indicated that in its vision for adolescents completing secondary school that they “display skills and competencies that reflect career and college readiness” (Bahamas Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 9) but it does not outline how this is to take place. However, the Ministry has set as a target an increase in graduation rate from secondary

school to “85 percent by the year 2030” from its current rate of about 50 percent (Bahamas Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 8). The Ministry of Education (2015) has outlined ways in which to achieve this by developing multiple pathways to graduation and establishing minimum levels of scholastic achievement. Though there might be pressure for the national system of education and its stakeholders to do this, the reality is that not all schools that have the context to approach and undertake the kind of teaching and instruction to help all of its students to pursue post-secondary education.

College and career readiness found in the upper right quadrant (It), affects and influences all other quadrants, their levels, lines, states and types. It reflects how an individual feels and behaves towards the phenomenon whether an adolescent perceives to be “ready” for post-secondary education or direct entry into the workforce; whether their parents, teachers, other members of society deem and expect adolescents to be ready for higher education past high school. It reflects what a family, institution and society wants and expects for its young generation. It exposes the hopes and fears for the future in terms of societal development, adult literacy, and an educated workforce. It suggests what the government implements, considers and offers its populace including its young people, in an effort to extend and encourage education past high school.

In the upper left, the “I” quadrant, an individual’s belief of pursuing further education may be guided and influenced by they expectations and mindsets of other individuals in the lower left (the “We”) who affect them. The experiences of parents who may or who may not have pursued higher education can sway or deter their children to do the same. The influence of teachers may equally motivate an adolescent’s decision whether or not to seek post-secondary education. The launching of the American College Board Advanced Placement (AP) courses in

some public schools has started a discussion about the possibility of college for many more young Bahamians by introducing advanced, college-level courses to high school students. This has followed examples from private, independent high schools that have found success by introducing these courses. Students who have some exposure to college-level courses, while in high school are more likely to pursue tertiary education. However, the cost to take an Advanced Placement examination may be a deterrent for some students, the exposure to the content is invaluable. Unfortunately, the case for class and economics figures prominently in this scenario. Families that struggle financially are more likely to enroll their children in public schools where there is no tuition, but the costs and fees associated with uniforms, textbooks, supplies and examination charges, can be prohibitive for some.

Additionally, the provision and regulation of tertiary education institutions in The Bahamas by the Ministry of Education, represented in the lower right quadrant, has afforded the opportunity for young Bahamians to pursue further education past high school, however, they are not mandating that all citizens obtains qualifications, diplomas or degrees after high school completion.

The recommendation of promoting a college-going culture cannot be universally applied in every school or in every education system. While preparing for a future life after high school by creating a school and national philosophy that promotes and advocates pursuing tertiary education, either attending a trade school, college or university, may be a positive way to achieve this ethos of furthering one's education, station in life and earning potential. Taking into account the context of the situation and the lives in which many young Bahamians encounter, the promotion of a university culture in a high school with students who are economically disenfranchised may be ineffectual. The opportunity to pursue tertiary education should be made

available to all people, regardless of their stage in life, who choose to engage in further academic pursuits and training.

A New Map on Familiar Territory

Wilber (2006) identified a Kosmic address as a means of seeing more clearly a phenomenon. In its equation, “address = altitude + perspective,” (Wilber, 2006, p. 35) an individual positions themselves within a phenomenon, which is dependent on their personal perspective and their level of consciousness or altitude. By eliminating any of the perspectives found in the quadrants, these viewpoints only will provide us with “fragmented, partial, broken view of reality” (Watkins & Wilber, 2015, p. 275), which will continue to perpetuate and stifle the provision of education, developmental advancements, a skilled workforce and earning potential for individuals in the years to come. Currently, we only have partial truths. We have not yet embraced the perspectives of all quadrants, or embraced the levels and diverse lines that are associated with the moral, ethical and developmental aspects of education in The Bahamas.

This study looked at the altitudes of all participants and the perspectives of numerous themes that were positioned in the four quadrants of Wilber’s (2006) AQAL framework. The amber, orange and green altitudes of participants and the orange and green altitudes of themes constructed a map of the phenomenon of college and career readiness from the perceptions of Bahamian adolescents, their teachers and parents in order to answer the four research questions in this study. The multiple perspectives and altitudes helped to uncover and provide a more accurate positioning of the participants and Taino Academy on a new map and territory of the phenomenon itself.

The map is only a representation of what is out there, what is available, what is real for an individual. Maps show only partial elements, the perceived elements of the territory. In GIS

technology the use of layers places many maps on top of others to give a more comprehensive look at a “part” of the territory. To show the entire landscape we would need to have everyone’s map, for every experience, and at multiple times throughout their lives. Combining maps, experiences and viewpoints from others—and their many perspectives—can help to discover more truths, more reality and more elements of the territory. Thus, creating a gigantic atlas, or something similar to an evolving and interactive Google Earth and Google Oceans, which show the territory of planet Earth.

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Appendix A

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Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board
Research Services Office
3rd Floor MacKimmie Library Tower (MLT 300)
2500 University Drive, NW
Calgary AB T2N 1N4
Telephone: (403) 220-4283
cfreb@ucalgary.ca

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW

This is to certify that the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary has examined the following research proposal and found the proposed research involving human participants to be in accordance with University of Calgary Guidelines and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* 2010 (TCPS 2). This form and accompanying letter constitute the Certification of Institutional Ethics Review.

Ethics ID: REB15-2584
Principal Investigator: Veronika Elizabeth Bohac-Clarke
Co-Investigator(s): There are no items to display
Student Co-Investigator(s): M Kathleen Kellock
Study Title: An integral analysis of Bahamian adolescents' reflections on their future lives after they complete high school
Sponsor (if applicable):

Effective: December 21, 2015

Expires: December 21, 2016

Restrictions:

This Certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the project and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the authorized study must be submitted to the Chair, Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for approval.
3. An annual report must be submitted within 30 days prior to the expiry date of this Certification, and should provide the expected completion date for the study.
4. A final report must be sent to the Board when the project is complete or terminated.

Approved By:

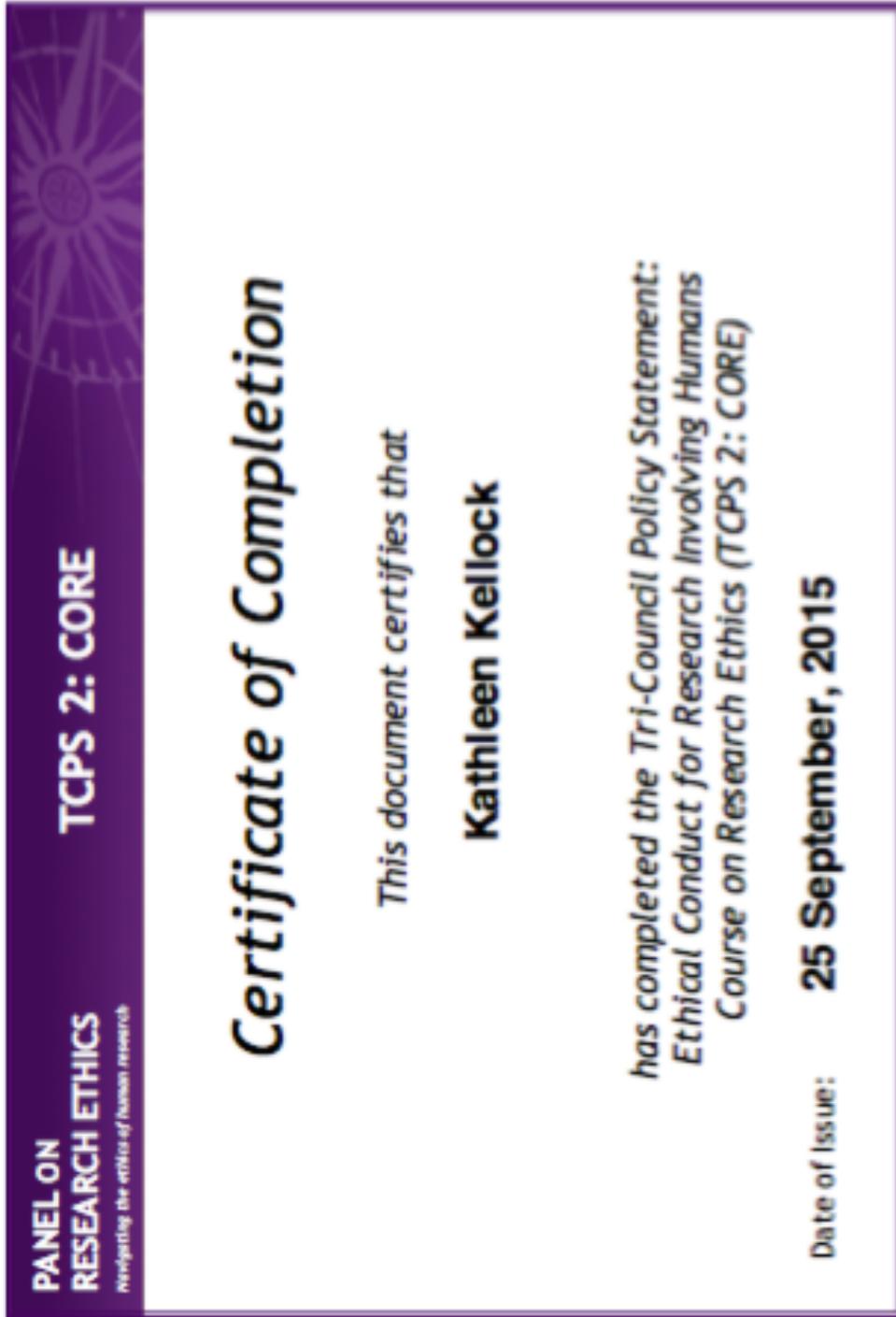
[Christopher R. Sears, PhD, Chair](#), CFREB

Date:

December 21, 2015

Appendix B

Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2: Core) Ethics Certificate



Appendix C

Letter of Initial Contact and Request



January 13, 2015

Dear School Principal,

I am requesting permission to interview a sample of 15–25, grade 11 and 12 students, and hold interviews with 6–12 teachers and parents from the school community, as a part of my dissertation studies in Curriculum and Learning with the University of Calgary. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study. The research study I am undertaking will explore the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents and their future plans for college/university and the workforce.

Being aware that the world in which our students are currently engaged in will be vastly different for them in the future, especially in the ways of careers and fields of study. In the future, students will need to possess and be proficient in different skills other than literacy, numeracy, empiricism and technology. Young people will need to possess competencies in leadership within both academic venues and in the community at large. As our students strive towards meeting the demands, expectations and requirements for the completion of high school, or identify a path for future study or employment, they face the challenges of knowing whether or not they are prepared or ready for a world that is becoming more globalized.

The findings of this research may cultivate a level of consciousness of what it means to be college and career ready. It is my hope that adolescents can engage in acquiring the knowledge and specific skills to provide them with a greater chance of success in the future, after their experiences in high school.

Participation in this study is voluntary in nature. A letter of request will be emailed or given to prospective student, teacher, parent, and policy maker participants inviting them to participate in the study. Signed consent and assent forms will be collected from all participants. The participants in the study will be asked to complete a questionnaire and participate in one, private 60–90 minute interview, scheduled at a time convenient for each participant. I am requesting permission to use and reference the GPAs, national examination results, and scores from the College Board including PSAT, SAT and AP scores, where appropriate, from student participants. The information obtained in this research study will be handled confidentially and pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants, which includes the students, teachers and parents, as well as the identity of the school.

I look forward to your reply on my request to collect data from students, teachers and parents in this research study.

Sincerely,

M. Kathleen Kellock

Appendix D

Letter of Invitation to Educational Policy Maker



January 29, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral candidate with the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. As part of my dissertation studies in Curriculum and Learning with the University of Calgary I am undertaking a research study that will explore the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents and their future plans for college/university and the workforce. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

I am requesting your participation in this research study, which will include a questionnaire and a 60–90 minute interview. The interview will be audiotaped and will take place after school on a day and a location that is convenient for you. Information you provide will be handled confidentially. The information you share with me about your beliefs and perceptions of adolescents and their future plans for college/university and the workforce will never be associated publically with your identity.

As our students strive towards meeting the demands, expectations and requirements for the completion of high school, or identify a path for future study or employment, they face the challenges of knowing whether or not they are prepared or ready for a world that is becoming more globalized. The findings of this research may cultivate a level of consciousness of what it means to be college and career ready. It is my hope that adolescents can engage in acquiring the knowledge and specific skills to provide them with a greater chance of success in the future, after their experiences in high school.

If you are willing to consider participating in this research study, please return the signed consent letter and form to me before February 5, 2016. I will then contact you to explain the study in greater detail and to secure your formal consent. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me (tel. XXX or email XXX) with any questions.

I look forward to your reply on my request seeking your participation in this research study.

Sincerely,

M. Kathleen Kellock

Appendix E

Educational Policy Maker Consent Form



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

M. Kathleen Kellock, doctoral student, University of Calgary, (tel. XXX, email XXX)

Supervisor:

Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Title of Project:

An integral analysis of Bahamian adolescents' reflections on their future lives after they complete high school.

Sponsor:

None

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

This study involves dissertation study research. The purpose of the study is to gather the viewpoints of high school students, parents, teachers and educational policy makers surrounding the topic of college and career readiness.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

No experimental procedures will be employed. An in-depth interview will explore your perceptions, as an educational policy maker participant, on the meaning of college and career readiness as it applies to high school students. As a participant, you will be asked to partake in one, private 60–90 minute interview, scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be audiotaped and will be conducted afterschool, in Room XXX, in the new block of the high school.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research study at anytime.

During the interview, you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will gather data on your age range, nationality, gender, and level of educational attainment. The interview will be audiotaped and the principle researcher, Miss M. Kathleen Kellock, will be the only individual who will have access to the recordings. The audio recordings will be for the purpose of gathering information for dissertation studies and not be shared with public.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose: Yes or No:

You may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

One of the primary risks of participating in an in-depth interview is the discomfort to participants, which may arise from sharing aspects of their personal lives. This risk level is minimal, but if such discomfort does occur, care will be taken to be alert to and withdraw from anything that is causing it. If you experience psychological distress as a result of your participation in this study, please contact M. Kathleen Kellock (tel. XXX, email XXX). Neither the researcher nor the University of Calgary has made special provision for services required to treat any psychological distress that you may suffer as a result of participating in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this study there may or may not be a direct benefit to you. The researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of student, teacher, parent, and educational policy makers viewpoints, experiences and perceptions on the topic of college and career readiness as it addresses the future lives of adolescents after they leave high school. The information we get from this study may help us to provide better teaching practices in the future for adolescents who are preparing themselves to enter university or the workforce after they complete high school.

There are no costs to you and there is no compensation (no money, gifts, or services) for your participation in this research project.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

A database of participant information will be established to facilitate scheduling and confirmation of participant interviews. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. Pseudonyms will be established prior to the beginning of interviews. The pseudonyms will be used throughout the study, and the researcher will maintain the pseudonym list in a separate secure location until completion of tape transcriptions and other potential identifiers have been removed from the transcripts. Thereafter, both the pseudonym and the interview recordings will be destroyed – the list by shredding and the audio tapings by erasing the digital recordings. Only transcripts with identifiers removed will remain. Data will be retained for a minimum of three years from the close of the study, and will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s residence. Additionally, backup electronic transcripts will be kept on a password-protected flash drive, which will be erased after study completion. The backup, password-protected flash drive containing the interview transcripts will be kept in a separate locked cabinet the researcher’s place of employment. If a person other than the researcher is employed to transcribe interviews, any identifying features will first be removed.

Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database up to the point of removing identifiers on data.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview recordings. There are no names on the questionnaire. The questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher. The anonymous data will be stored for a minimum of three years on a password protected flash drive at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant’s Name: (please print) _____

Participant’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s Name: (please print) _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Miss M. Kathleen Kellock,
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
(tel. XXX, email XXX)
and (Dr. Veronika Bohac–Clarke, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
(tel. XXX, email XXX)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix F

Letter of Invitation to Teachers and Parents



February 22, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral candidate with the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. As part of my dissertation studies in Curriculum and Learning with the University of Calgary I am undertaking a research study that will explore the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents and their future plans for college/university and the workforce. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

I am requesting your participation in this research study, which will include a questionnaire and a 60–90 minute interview. The interview will be audiotaped and will take place at school after classes on days that are convenient for you. Information you provide will be handled confidentially. The information you share with me about your beliefs and perceptions of adolescents and their future plans for college/university and the workforce will never be associated publically with your identity. Your participation or non-participation will have no effect on your relationship with the school.

As our students strive towards meeting the demands, expectations and requirements for the completion of high school, or identify a path for future study or employment, they face the challenges of knowing whether or not they are prepared or ready for a world that is becoming more globalized. The findings of this research may cultivate a level of consciousness of what it means to be college and career ready. It is my hope that adolescents can engage in acquiring the knowledge and specific skills to provide them with a greater chance of success in the future, after their experiences in high school.

If you are willing to consider participating in this research study, please return the signed consent letter and form to me before February 29, 2016. I will then contact you to explain the study in greater detail and to secure your formal consent. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me (tel. XXX, email XXX) with any questions.

I look forward to your reply on my request seeking your participation in this research study.

Sincerely,

M. Kathleen Kellock

Appendix G

Teacher Consent Form



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

M. Kathleen Kellock, doctoral student, University of Calgary, (tel. XXX, email XXX)

Supervisor:

Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Title of Project:

An integral analysis of Bahamian adolescents' reflections on their future lives after they complete high school.

Sponsor:

None

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

This study involves dissertation study research. The purpose of the study is to gather the viewpoints of high school students, parents, teachers and educational policy makers surrounding the topic of college and career readiness.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

No experimental procedures will be employed. An in-depth interview will explore your perceptions, as a teacher participant, on the meaning of college and career readiness as it applies to high school students. As a participant, you will be asked to partake in one, private 60–90 minute interview, scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be audiotaped and will be conducted afterschool, in Room XXX, in the new block of the high school.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research study at anytime. Participation or non-participation will have no effect on your relationship with the school.

During the interview, you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will gather data on your age range, nationality, gender, level of educational attainment, years teaching and current grades taught. The interview will be audiotaped and the principle researcher, Miss M. Kathleen Kellock, will be the only individual who will have access to the recordings. The audio recordings will be for the purpose of gathering information for dissertation studies and not be shared with public.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose: Yes or No:

You may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

One of the primary risks of participating in an in-depth interview is the discomfort to participants, which may arise from sharing aspects of their personal lives. This risk level is minimal, but if such discomfort does occur, care will be taken to be alert to and withdraw from anything that is causing it. If you experience psychological distress as a result of your participation in this study, please contact M. Kathleen Kellock (tel. XXX, email XXX). Neither the researcher nor the University of Calgary has made special provision for services required to treat any psychological distress that you may suffer as a result of participating in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this study there may or may not be a direct benefit to you. The researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of student, teacher, parent, and educational policy makers viewpoints, experiences and perceptions on the topic of college and career readiness as it addresses the future lives of adolescents after they leave high school. The information we get from this study may help us to provide better teaching practices in the future for adolescents who are preparing themselves to enter university or the workforce after they complete high school.

There are no costs to you and there is no compensation (no money, gifts, or services) for your participation in this research project.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

A database of participant information will be established to facilitate scheduling and confirmation of participant interviews. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. Pseudonyms will be established prior to the beginning of interviews. The pseudonyms will be used throughout the study, and the researcher will maintain the pseudonym list in a separate secure location until completion of tape transcriptions and other potential identifiers have been removed from the transcripts. Thereafter, both the pseudonym and the interview recordings will be destroyed – the list by shredding and the audio tapings by erasing the digital recordings. Only transcripts with identifiers removed will remain. Data will be retained for a minimum of three years from the close of the study, and will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s residence. Additionally, backup electronic transcripts will be kept on a password-protected flash drive, which will be erased after study completion. The backup, password-protected flash drive containing the interview transcripts will be kept in a separate locked cabinet the researcher’s place of employment. If a person other than the researcher is employed to transcribe interviews, any identifying features will first be removed.

Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database up to the point of removing identifiers on data.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview recordings. There are no names on the questionnaire. The questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher. The anonymous data will be stored for a minimum of three years on a password protected flash drive at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant’s Name: (please print) _____

Participant’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s Name: (please print) _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Miss M. Kathleen Kellock,
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
(tel. XXX, email XXX)
and (Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
(tel. XXX, email XXX)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix H

Parent Consent Form



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

M. Kathleen Kellock, doctoral student, University of Calgary, (tel. XXX, email XXX)

Supervisor:

Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Title of Project:

An integral analysis of Bahamian adolescents' reflections on their future lives after they complete high school.

Sponsor:

None

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

This study involves dissertation study research. The purpose of the study is to gather the viewpoints of high school students, parents, teachers and educational policy makers surrounding the topic of college and career readiness.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

No experimental procedures will be employed. An in-depth interview will explore your perceptions, as a parent participant, on the meaning of college and career readiness as it applies to high school students. As a participant, you will be asked to partake in one, private 60–90 minute interview, scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be audiotaped and will be conducted afterschool, in Room XXX, in the new block of the high school.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research study at anytime. Participation or non-participation will have no effect on

your relationship with the school.

During the interview, you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will gather data on your age range, nationality, gender, occupation and level of educational attainment. The interview will be audiotaped and the principle researcher, Miss M. Kathleen Kellock, will be the only individual who will have access to the recordings. The audio recordings will be for the purpose of gathering information for dissertation studies and not be shared with public.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose: Yes or No:

You may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

One of the primary risks of participating in an in-depth interview is the discomfort to participants, which may arise from sharing aspects of their personal lives. This risk level is minimal, but if such discomfort does occur, care will be taken to be alert to and withdraw from anything that is causing it. If you experience psychological distress as a result of your participation in this study, please contact M. Kathleen Kellock (tel. XXX, email XXX). Neither the researcher nor the University of Calgary has made special provision for services required to treat any psychological distress that you may suffer as a result of participating in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this study there may or may not be a direct benefit to you. The researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of student, teacher, parent, and educational policy makers viewpoints, experiences and perceptions on the topic of college and career readiness as it addresses the future lives of adolescents after they leave high school. The information we get from this study may help us to provide better teaching practices in the future for adolescents who are preparing themselves to enter university or the workforce after they complete high school.

There are no costs to you and there is no compensation (no money, gifts, or services) for your participation in this research project.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

A database of participant information will be established to facilitate scheduling and confirmation of participant interviews. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. Pseudonyms will be established prior to the beginning of interviews. The pseudonyms will be used throughout the study, and the researcher will maintain the pseudonym list in a separate secure location until completion of tape transcriptions and other potential identifiers have been removed from the transcripts. Thereafter, both the pseudonym and the interview recordings will be destroyed – the list by shredding and the audio recordings by erasing the digital recordings. Only transcripts with identifiers removed will remain. Data will be retained for a minimum of three years from the close of the study, and will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s residence. Additionally, backup electronic transcripts will be kept on a password-protected flash drive, which will be erased after study completion. The backup, password-protected flash drive containing the interview transcripts will be kept in a separate locked cabinet the researcher’s place of employment. If a person other than the researcher is employed to transcribe interviews, any identifying features will first be removed.

Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database up to the point of removing identifiers on data.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview recordings. There are no names on the questionnaire. The questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher. The anonymous data will be stored for a minimum of three years on a password protected flash drive at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant’s Name: (please print) _____

Participant’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s Name: (please print) _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Miss M. Kathleen Kellock,
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
(tel. XXX, email XXX)
and (Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
(tel. XXX, email XXX)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix I

Letter of Invitation to Minor Students



February 22, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral candidate with the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. As part of my dissertation studies in Curriculum and Learning with the University of Calgary I am undertaking a research study that will explore the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents and their future plans for college/university and the workforce. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

I am requesting permission to allow your child to participate in a research study, which will include a questionnaire and a 60–90 minute interview. The interview will be audiotaped and will take place at school after classes on days that are convenient for you and your child. Information gathered about your child will be handled confidentially. The information he/she shares with me about his/her beliefs and perceptions about their future plans for college/university and the workforce will never be associated publically with his/her identity. Participation or non-participation will have no effect on your relationship with the school.

As our students strive towards meeting the demands, expectations and requirements for the completion of high school, or identify a path for future study or employment, they face the challenges of knowing whether or not they are prepared or ready for a world that is becoming more globalized. The findings of this research may cultivate a level of consciousness of what it means to be college and career ready. It is my hope that adolescents can engage in acquiring the knowledge and specific skills to provide them with a greater chance of success in the future, after their experiences in high school.

If you are willing to consider allowing your child to participate in this research study, please sign and return the attached form to me before February 29, 2016. I will then contact you to explain the study in greater detail and to secure your formal consent. I will also give your child the opportunity to decide whether he/she wants to participate. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me (tel. XXX, email XXX) with any questions.

I look forward to your reply on my request to allow your child to participate in this research study.

Sincerely,

M. Kathleen Kellock

Appendix J

Parental Consent Form for Minor Students



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

M. Kathleen Kellock, doctoral student, University of Calgary, (tel. XXX, email XXX)

Supervisor:

Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Title of Project:

An integral analysis of Bahamian adolescents' reflections on their future lives after they complete high school.

Sponsor:

None

This parental consent form for parent/guardian permission of a minor student's participation in research, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

This study involves dissertation study research. The purpose of the study is to gather the viewpoints of high school students, parents, teachers and educational policy makers surrounding the topic of college and career readiness.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

No experimental procedures will be employed. The experiences and viewpoints on the topic of college and career readiness from the perspective of the participant will be explored through an in-depth interview. The interview will explore your child's goals and plans after they complete high school. Your child will be asked to participate in one, private 60–90 minute interview, scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be audiotaped and will be conducted afterschool, in Room XXX, in the new block of the high school.

If your child agrees to participate in this study, his/her participation in this study is voluntary. If your

child agrees now to participate and changes his/her mind later, he/she is free to leave the study. Participation or non-participation will have no effect on your child's relationship with the school.

During the interview, your child may skip any questions that he/she does not want to answer. Should your child decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your child's information will be deleted from the database.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should your child agree to participate, he/she will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will gather data on your child's age, nationality, gender, grade level and academic subjects, including GPA, College Board scores (PSAT, SAT and AP scores), national examination results. The interview will be audiotaped and the principle researcher, Miss M. Kathleen Kellock, will be the only individual who will have access to the recordings. The audio recordings will be for the purpose of gathering information for dissertation studies and not be shared with public.

There are several options for your child to consider if he/she decides to take part in this research. Your child can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose: Yes or No:

I grant permission to release my child's Grade Point Average (GPA) score and any other standardized examination scores (e.g., PSAT, SAT and AP scores), national examination results. These results will remain confidential and anonymous.

Yes: ___ No: ___

You may refer to my child by a pseudonym:

Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym my child has chosen for him/herself is: _____

You may quote my child and use his/her name:

Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

One of the primary risks of participating in an in-depth interview is the discomfort to participants, which may arise from sharing aspects of their personal lives. This risk level is minimal, but if such discomfort does occur, care will be taken to be alert to and withdraw from anything that is causing it. If your child experiences psychological distress as a result of his/her participation in this study, please contact M. Kathleen Kellock (tel. XXX, email XXX). Neither the researcher nor the University of Calgary has made special provision for services required to treat any psychological distress that your child may suffer as a result of participating in this research study.

If your child agrees to participate in this study there may or may not be a direct benefit to him/her. The researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of student, teacher, parent, and educational policy makers viewpoints, experiences and perceptions on the topic of college and career readiness as it addresses the future lives of adolescents after they leave high school. The information we get from this study may help us to provide better teaching practices in the future for adolescents who are preparing themselves to enter university or the workforce after they complete high school.

There are no costs to you and there is no compensation (no money, gifts, or services) for your child's participation in this research project.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

A database of participant information will be established to facilitate scheduling and confirmation of participant interviews. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. Pseudonyms will be established prior to the beginning of interviews. The pseudonyms will be used throughout the study, and the researcher will maintain the pseudonym list in a separate secure location until completion of tape transcriptions and other potential identifiers have been removed from the transcripts. Thereafter, both the pseudonym and the interview recordings will be destroyed – the list by shredding and the audio recordings by erasing the digital recordings. Only transcripts with identifiers removed will remain. Data will be retained for a minimum of three years from the close of the study, and will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher's residence. Additionally, backup electronic transcripts will be kept on a password-protected flash drive, which will be erased after study completion. The backup, password-protected flash drive containing the interview transcripts will be kept in a separate locked cabinet the researcher's place of employment. If a person other than the researcher is employed to transcribe interviews, any identifying features will first be removed.

Should your child decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your child's information will be deleted from the database up to the point of removing identifiers on data.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Your child is free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview recordings. There are no names on the questionnaires. The questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher. The anonymous data will be stored for a minimum of three years on a password protected flash drive at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your child's participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to allow your child to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. Your child is free to withdraw from this research project at any time. Your child should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout his/her participation.

Participant's (Child/Ward) Name: (please print)

Parent/Guardian's Name: (please print)

Parent/Guardian's Signature:

Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print)

Researcher's Signature:

Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If your child has any further questions or wants clarification regarding this research and/or his/her participation, please contact:

Miss M. Kathleen Kellock,
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
(tel. XXX, email XXX)
and (Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
(tel. XXX, email XXX)

If your child has any concerns about the way he/she has been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to your child to keep for his/her records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix K

Student Consent Form: Student 18 Years and Older



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

M. Kathleen Kellock, doctoral student, University of Calgary, (tel. XXX, email XXX)

Supervisor:

Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Title of Project:

An integral analysis of Bahamian adolescents' reflections on their future lives after they complete high school.

Sponsor:

University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

This study involves dissertation study research. The purpose of the study is to gather the viewpoints of high school students, parents, teachers and educational policy makers surrounding the topic of college and career readiness.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

No experimental procedures will be employed. The experiences and viewpoints on the topic of college and career readiness from the perspective of the participant will be explored through an in-depth interview. The interview will explore your goals and plans after you complete high school. You will be asked to participate in one, private 60–90 minute interview, scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be audiotaped and will be conducted afterschool, in Room XXX, in the new block of the high school.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree now to participate and change your mind later, you are free to leave the study. Further, in no way will a

student's participation or lack thereof affect that student's grade in the high school.

During the interview, you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will gather data on your age, nationality, gender, grade level and academic subjects, including GPA, College Board scores (PSAT, SAT and AP scores), national examination results. The interview will be audiotaped and the principle researcher, Miss M. Kathleen Kellock, will be the only individual who will have access to the recordings. The audio recordings will be for the purpose of gathering information for dissertation studies and not be shared with public.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose: Yes or No:

I grant permission to be audio taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission to release my Grade Point Average (GPA) score and any other standardized examination scores (e.g., PSAT, SAT and AP scores), national examination results. These results will remain confidential and anonymous.

Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

One of the primary risks of participating in an in-depth interview is the discomfort to participants, which may arise from sharing aspects of their personal lives. This risk level is minimal, but if such discomfort does occur, care will be taken to be alert to and withdraw from anything that is causing it. If your child experiences psychological distress as a result of his/her participation in this study, please contact M.

Kathleen Kellock (tel. XXX, email XXX). Neither the researcher nor the University of Calgary has made special provision for services required to treat any psychological distress that you may suffer as a result of participating in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this study there may or may not be a direct benefit to you. The researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of student, teacher, parent, and educational policy makers viewpoints, experiences and perceptions on the topic of college and career readiness as it addresses the future lives of adolescents after they leave high school. The information we get from this study may help us to provide better teaching practices in the future for adolescents who are preparing themselves to enter university or the workforce after they complete high school.

There are no costs to you and there is no compensation (no money, gifts, or services) for your participation in this research project.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

A database of participant information will be established to facilitate scheduling and confirmation of participant interviews. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. Pseudonyms will be established prior to the beginning of interviews. The pseudonyms will be used throughout the study, and the researcher will maintain the pseudonym list in a separate secure location until completion of tape transcriptions and other potential identifiers have been removed from the transcripts. Thereafter, both the pseudonym and the interview recordings will be destroyed – the list by shredding and the audio recordings by erasing the digital recordings. Only transcripts with identifiers removed will remain. Data will be retained for a minimum of three years from the close of the study, and will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher's residence. Additionally, backup electronic transcripts will be kept on a password-protected flash drive, which will be erased after study completion. The backup, password-protected flash drive containing the interview transcripts will be kept in a separate locked cabinet the researcher's place of employment. If a person other than the researcher is employed to transcribe interviews, any identifying features will first be removed.

Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database up to the point of removing identifiers on data.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview recordings. There are no names on the questionnaires. The questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher. The anonymous data will be stored for a minimum of three years on a password protected flash drive at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Miss M. Kathleen Kellock,
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
(tel. XXX, email XXX)
and (Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
(tel. XXX, email XXX)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix L

Student Assent Form



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

M. Kathleen Kellock, doctoral student, University of Calgary, (tel. XXX, email XXX)

Supervisor:

Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Title of Project:

An integral analysis of Bahamian adolescents' reflections on their future lives after they complete high school.

Sponsor:

University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

This study involves dissertation study research. The purpose of the study is to gather the viewpoints of high school students, parents, teachers and educational policy makers surrounding the topic of college and career readiness.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

No experimental procedures will be employed. The experiences and viewpoints on the topic of college and career readiness from the perspective of the participant will be explored through an in-depth interview. The interview will explore your goals and plans after you complete high school. You will be asked to participate in one, private 60–90 minute interview, scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be audiotaped and will be conducted afterschool, in Room XXX, in the new block of the high school.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree now to participate and change your mind later, you are free to leave the study. Participation or non-participation

will have no effect on your relationship with the school.

During the interview, you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will gather data on your age, nationality, gender, grade level and academic subjects, including GPA, College Board scores (PSAT, SAT and AP scores), national examination results. The interview will be audiotaped and the principle researcher, Miss M. Kathleen Kellock, will be the only individual who will have access to the recordings. The audio recordings will be for the purpose of gathering information for dissertation studies and not be shared with public.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose: Yes or No:

I grant permission to release my Grade Point Average (GPA) score and any other standardized examination scores (e.g., PSAT, SAT and AP scores), national examination results. These results will remain confidential and anonymous.

Yes: ___ No: ___

You may refer to me by a pseudonym:
The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

Yes: ___ No: ___

You may quote me and use my name:

Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

One of the primary risks of participating in an in-depth interview is the discomfort to participants, which may arise from sharing aspects of their personal lives. This risk level is minimal, but if such discomfort does occur, care will be taken to be alert to and withdraw from anything that is causing it. If you experience psychological distress as a result of your participation in this study, please contact M. Kathleen Kellock (tel. XXX, email XXX). Neither the researcher nor the University of Calgary has made special provision for services required to treat any psychological distress that you may suffer as a result of participating in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this study there may or may not be a direct benefit to you. The researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of student, teacher, parent, and educational policy makers viewpoints, experiences and perceptions on the topic of college and career readiness as it addresses the future lives of adolescents after they leave high school. The information we get from this study may help us to provide better teaching practices in the future for adolescents who are preparing themselves to enter university or the workforce after they complete high school.

There are no costs to you and there is no compensation (no money, gifts, or services) for your

participation in this research project.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

A database of participant information will be established to facilitate scheduling and confirmation of participant interviews. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. Pseudonyms will be established prior to the beginning of interviews. The pseudonyms will be used throughout the study, and the researcher will maintain the pseudonym list in a separate secure location until completion of tape transcriptions and other potential identifiers have been removed from the transcripts. Thereafter, both the pseudonym and the interview recordings will be destroyed – the list by shredding and the audio recordings by erasing the digital recordings. Only transcripts with identifiers removed will remain. Data will be retained for a minimum of three years from the close of the study, and will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s residence. Additionally, backup electronic transcripts will be kept on a password-protected flash drive, which will be erased after study completion. The backup, password-protected flash drive containing the interview transcripts will be kept in a separate locked cabinet the researcher’s place of employment. If a person other than the researcher is employed to transcribe interviews, any identifying features will first be removed.

Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the completion of the study, your information will be deleted from the database up to the point of removing identifiers on data.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview recordings. There are no names on the questionnaires. The questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher. The anonymous data will be stored for a minimum of three years on a password protected flash drive at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant’s Name: (please print) _____

Participant’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s Name: (please print) _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Miss M. Kathleen Kellock,
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
(tel. XXX, email XXX)
and (Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
(tel. XXX, email XXX)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix Q

Participant Demographic Matrices

The following is a template, fashioned after one in Bloomberg and Volpe's text: *Completing your qualitative dissertation a road map from beginning to end* (2012). This matrix will display the data collected from the Demographic Data Sheet, but the names of the teachers and the schools will be granted pseudonyms to give participating individuals and institutions anonymity.

Student Participants' Demographic Matrix

	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Grade	Nationality	Generation
1	Azaria	F	16	11	Bahamian	2
2	Kayleisha	F	16	12	Bahamian	2
3	Thea	F	17	12	Bahamian	2
4	Kenghise	F	17	12	Jamaican/American	3
5	Livingston	M	16	11	Bahamian/UK	2
6	Brittany	F	16	11	Bahamian	2
7	Anna-Marie	F	17	12	Jamaican	2
8	Samantha	F	16	11	Bahamian	2
9	Roger	M	17	12	Bahamian	X
10	Zane	M	17	12	Bahamian	2
11	Casper	M	16	11	Bahamian	2
12	Kevin	M	17	12	Bahamian	1
13	Kylie	F	17	12	Bahamian	1
14	John	M	17	12	Zimbabwean	1
15	Gregory	M	15	11	Bahamian	2
16	Azerya	F	17	11	Bahamian	2
17	Marcus	M	17	12	Bahamian/American	1
18	Azeliea	F	16	11	Bahamian	2
19	Susie	F	17	12	Bahamian	3
20	Resha	F	16	12	Bahamian	2
21	Kenya	F	16	11	Bahamian	2
22	Paige	F	16	11	Bahamian	2

Teacher/Educational Policy Maker Demographic Matrix

	Pseudonym	Educational Attainment	Age	Nationality	Generation
1	Albert	Masters	50+	Guyanese	2
2	Julia	Bach	31-40	British	1
3	Pauline	Bach	50+	Bahamian	1
4	Mabel	Bach	50+	British	1
5	Jennifer	Masters	31-40	Bahamian	1
6	Ernest	Bach	41-50	Bahamian	1
7	Chloe	Masters	31-40	Martiniquan	1
8	Missy	Bach	31-40	Nepalese	1
9	Ava	Bach	21-30	Bahamian/Canadian	2
10	Claudette	Masters	41-50	Jamaican	1
11	Lois	Masters	31-40	Jamaican	1
12	Iris	Masters	31-40	Jamaican	1
13	Anastacia	Masters	31-40	American	2
14	Madeleine	Bach	50+	Mauritian	2

	Pseudonym	Educational Attainment	Age	Nationality	Generation
1	Edwina	Masters	41-50	Bahamian	1

Parent Demographic Matrix

	Pseudonym	Educational Attainment	Age	Nationality	Generation
1	Marie	Bachelor's	50+	British	1
2	Sweetie	Community College	50+	British	1
3	Kelly	Masters	41-50	Bahamian	1
4	Shirley	Community College	41-50	Bahamian	1
5	Pamela	Masters	41-50	Bahamian	1
6	Marilyn	Trade School	41-50	Bahamian	1
7	Eloise	12 Diploma	41-50	Bahamian	X
8	Georgia	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine	41-50	Bahamian	1

Appendix R

Educational Policy Maker Interview Guide

1. What does “college and career readiness” mean to you? (Or, “college knowledge”?)
2. What initiatives has the school/government created and implemented to help get high school students “college and career ready”?
3. Describe the future of education in The Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Appendix S

Teacher/Parent Focus Groups Interview Guide

1. What does “college and career readiness” mean to you? (Or, “college knowledge”?)
2. After you completed high school, what were your plans?
3. How did high school prepare you for your plans?
4. Are the high school students of today ready for entry into college/university or the workforce?

Discuss.

5. (If not) What is being done (can be done) to get them more prepared for college/university or the workforce?
6. What does the future hold for young people in The Commonwealth of the Bahamas?

Appendix T

Student Interview Guide

1. Please tell me a little about yourself.
2. What are your goals and plans after you complete high school? How will you pursue these goals?
3. (If the student is attending college/university) What do you plan to study at college/university?
(If the student is entering the workforce: See question 2).
4. What plans have you made to prepare yourself for college/university or the workforce?
5. What do you think life will be like at college/university or in the workforce?
6. What does “college and career readiness” mean for you? (Or, “college knowledge”?)
7. How will you know if you are “college and career ready”?
8. What are your perceptions for the future of The Commonwealth of the Bahamas?

Appendix U

Tracking high school graduates from Taino Academy and choices for college locations.

YEAR	USA	Canada	C.O.B.	U.W.I.	OTHER
2010 (109)	26	1	66	0	16
2011 (105)	52	5	45	0	3
2012 (107)	23	7	52	1	24
2013 (102)	36	4	59	1	2
2014 (122)	47	4	58	4	9
2015 (124)	44	12	39	1	28
2016 (?)					

Note. Tracking high school students from Taino Academy (2010-2015). Other – May reference students who attended any of the United World Colleges, a trade/vocational school or other college in The Bahamas, or transitioned immediately into the workforce

C.O.B. – College of the Bahamas

U.W.I. – University of the West Indies (campuses in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica)

As seen from Appendix H, in the six years that reflect this tracking, 669 students from Taino Academy pursued higher education directly from high school or went into the workforce. The majority of high school graduates (48%) attended the College of The Bahamas on the island of New Providence. Thirty-four percent attended colleges and universities in the United States of America, although the statistics above do not indicate whether students attended a two or a four-year college. Four percent of high school graduates attended Canadian universities, one percent enrolled in the University of the West Indies (campus not indicated), and 12 percent pursued other options not specified. The data for 2016 has not yet been confirmed.

Appendix V

Research questions and summation of participant responses including research findings.

Upper Left The “I” Quadrant	Upper Right The “IT” Quadrant
INTERIOR-INDIVIDUAL (INTERSUBJECTIVE) BELIEFS/PERCEPTIONS	EXTERIOR-INDIVIDUAL (OBJECTIVE) BEHAVIORIAL/ACTIONS
<p>RESEARCH QUESTIONS & PARTICIPANT COMMENTS FOCUSED IN THE (UL) QUADRANT:</p> <p><i>What beliefs do adolescents have about their lives at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • college will be fun, exciting, wild, a party; a growing experience • college will be easier, “more chill” than high school (i.e., grade 11 has been tough; AP courses “no joke”) • college will be harder, more challenging • excited and apprehensive about being away from home; no parents • an exciting experience; a learning experience; “it’s going to change me. I don’t think I’m going to come out the same person that I went there.” • teachers, school and parents put a lot of demands on students (i.e., school work, extra classes, coursework, study for examinations) • local college doesn’t support many college aspirations or career fields • preparing/studying for new careers not yet heard of in this country 	<p>RESEARCH QUESTIONS & PARTICIPANT ACTIONS FOCUSED IN THE (UR) QUADRANT:</p> <p><i>What are adolescents doing to prepare themselves for their lives at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking required and recommended courses (B.G.C.S.E.s, SATs, APs) • taking additional courses (i.e., college courses, personal improvement or self-interest courses) • fulfilling high school graduation requirements for institution; for nation (i.e., obtaining required GPA, cumulative 2.0 grades 10-12; school attendance record; community service hours/service learning) • participation in extra curricular activities (i.e., well rounded individual; aids in admissions and scholarship applications) • talking to college representatives; teachers; guidance counselors; former students, friends, relatives in college • researching colleges (i.e., admissions offices, YouTube, blogs, Skype) • researching potential scholarships • academic recognition (i.e., school and national awards; bragging rights for individual and the school)
Lower Left The “WE” Quadrant	Lower Right The “ITS” Quadrant
INTERIOR-COLLECTIVE (INTERSUBJECTIVE) CULTURAL/INSTITUTION	EXTERIOR-COLLECTIVE (INTEROBJECTIVE) SOCIAL/ EDUCATION SYSTEMS/POLICIES
<p>RESEARCH QUESTIONS & PARTICIPANT COMMENTS FOCUSED IN THE (LL) QUADRANT:</p> <p><i>What expectations do others have for adolescents and their lives at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some students need remedial courses after high school • not ready; not mature enough • national academic standards may not be to par with colleges abroad (i.e., mathematics, sciences) • in for a culture shock; rude awakening • resources/measures in place; students must chose to use them • crime is scaring them away • no job opportunities (i.e., brain drain) <p><i>What personal expectations do adolescents have for themselves and their lives at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take fewer courses; set own timetable • need to be more independent (i.e., cook food, do laundry) • necessary step to prepare for further education; career • norm; expectation; after high school you matriculate to college 	<p>RESEARCH QUESTIONS & SYSTEMS FOCUSED IN THE (LR) QUADRANT:</p> <p><i>What systems have an influence determining adolescents’ readiness for their lives at college, university or in the workforce after they complete high school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas (i.e., Ministry of Education, Science and Technology—MOEST—National Diploma Programme) • local, regional and international post-secondary schools, colleges and universities (i.e., admissions requirements) • foreign governments (i.e., student visa applications) • scholarship committees, organizations and personnel (i.e., financing college)

