Contextual Considerations: Revision of the Wiliam and Thompson (2007) Formative Assessment Framework in the Jamaican Context

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Abstract

The research context should be carefully considered in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research as it influences the efficacy of the processes and outcomes. This paper describes how contextual factors in the teaching of English in Jamaican secondary schools led to changes in the Wiliam and Thompson (2007) formative assessment framework. Data collected through interviews and observations of 32 teachers of English in the qualitative phase of a mixed-methods study reinforced the conceptualization of formative assessment as a unified framework. However, they elucidated the manifestations of Jamaica's colonial past and the language context in Jamaican classrooms that necessitated changes to a widely accepted framework. Changes were made to the sequencing of the five aspects to ensure a more effective implementation of the framework in the Jamaican context.

Keywords

formative assessment; research context, English Language, mixed-methods, trustworthiness, self-assessment, peer-assessment

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The research context should be carefully considered in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research as it influences the efficacy of the processes and outcomes. This paper describes how contextual factors in the teaching of English in Jamaican secondary schools led to changes in the Wiliam and Thompson (2007) formative assessment framework. Data collected through interviews and observations of 32 teachers of English in the qualitative phase of a mixed-methods study reinforced the conceptualization of formative assessment as a unified framework. However, they elucidated the manifestations of Jamaica's colonial past and the language context in Jamaican classrooms that necessitated changes to a widely accepted framework. Changes were made to the sequencing of the five aspects to ensure a more effective implementation of the framework in the Jamaican context.

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Introduction

Miles and Huberman (1994) define context as the "immediately relevant aspects of a situation (where the person is physically, who else is involved, what the recent history of the contact is, etc.), as well as the relevant aspects of the social system in which the person appears (a classroom, a school, a family …)" (p. 102). The notion of context has been extended beyond the immediacy criterion and the physical location of the participants. It refers to the historical, geographical, political, cultural, theoretical and/or topical setting of the research. It also refers to the practical and ideological factors that cause the research participants and researcher to think and act or not to think or act in varying ways. The context of a research study is crucial in determining the appropriateness of the design, implementation, analysis and interpretation of data, conclusions, and recommendations coming out of a study. This is particularly true for qualitative research where the focus is on sharing the natural, real-life setting and the lived experiences of specific groups or individuals (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hammarberg et al., 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and where one of the guiding principles is that all interpretations are located in a particular context, setting, and moment – a tenet of the interpretivist paradigm that undergirds most qualitative research (Altheide & Johnson, 2011; Cohen & Crabtree, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). However, because of its focus on generalizability, the importance of context may be downplayed in quantitative research. Nevertheless, it must be considered, especially in quantitative studies that include interventions (Shadish et al., 2002; Williams-McBean, 2019). Context is also important in mixed methods research (MMR) especially since MMR invariably includes qualitative design, methods, procedures and/or interpretations. Consequently, when I engaged in multiphase mixed methods research to explore how formative assessment could be more effectively infused into the

teaching of English in Jamaican secondary schools, using a Formative Assessment in English Intervention, I thought it prudent to study the context of these classrooms to plan, design, implement, and assess the FAEI.

I also decided to focus on context because I attempted to implement the formative assessment framework developed by Wiliam and Thompson (2007). Though this framework has been frequently referenced in theoretical discussions on formative assessment, there is limited evidence of its practical application (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Vingsle, 2014). Researchers also need to investigate the impact of formative assessment to describe how formative assessment is conceptualised and implemented (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cizek, 2010; Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Vingsle, 2014). Therefore, my aim in this paper is to describe of how formative assessment was conceptualised and implemented in my study and because changes were made to the Wiliam and Thompson (2007) framework, to describe the contextual features of the Jamaican classroom that necessitated those changes – thereby contributing to the discussion on the applicability of the framework in real-life settings. One of the research questions that guided my focus on context in my study was: How applicable is the Wiliam and Thompson's (2007) formative assessment framework for integrating formative assessment into the teaching of English in Jamaican secondary schools? It is the findings to that question that is provided in this paper. Therefore, this paper is not intended to report the processes and results of the main research or all the contextual features. It focuses on the changes that were made to the Formative Assessment Framework proposed by Wiliam and Thompson (2007) and frequently cited as a framework for implementing formative assessment (e.g., Aldon et al., 2015; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hanover Research, 2014; Leahy & Wiliam, 2012; Mor et al., 2010; Sherrington, 2019) though it has been largely untested (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Vingsle, 2014).

Literature Review

Increased attention is being given to the role and impact of formative assessment in education as societies grapple to increase equity and achievement in education. And, although a few studies reported minimal, non-robust or no impact on students' learning because of the implementation of different formative assessment strategies (Furtak et al., 2008; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Thompson et al., 2004; Yin et al., 2008), most of the studies reviewed report that formative assessment improves students' achievement (e.g., Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black et al., 2004; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Kirton et al., 2007; Ozan & Kıncal, 2018). This has contributed to a growing acceptance that formative assessment improves student motivation, confidence, autonomy, and achievement. It has also contributed to a pervading view that the formative use of assessment is germane to effective teaching and learning. However, teachers' classroom assessment strategies have remained largely summative (Cizek, 2010; Harlen, 2003, Heritage, 2011; Sachs, 2012, 2015). Therefore, there is a need for empirical research on best practices related to the implementation of formative assessment to support increased use (Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Vingsle, 2014). There is also a need for empirical evidence supporting the conceptualisation and implementation of formative assessment, particularly as a unified framework rather than diverse strategies (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cizek, 2010; Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Vingsle, 2014).

Defining Formative Assessment

There is an evident lack of consensus on the definition of formative assessment with researchers defining it as a tool (Kahl, 2005); by the purpose for which it was constructed (Filsecker & Kerres, 2012); by its characteristics (Broadfoot et al., 1999); by the time at which

it occurs and the immediacy of the feedback given (Cowie & Bell, 1999; Looney, 2005; Shepard, 2007); or by its use (Black & William, 2009; Buhagiar, 2007; Popham, 2008; Shepard, 2005; Wiliam, 2007, 2014). However, defining formative assessment based on the use of the assessment data is a frequent practice, and it describes how formative assessment is defined in this paper. Formative assessment refers to the use of appropriate assessment tools and strategies by teachers, learners, and/or their peers to improve instruction and/or learning. It is often differentiated from summative assessment, which refers to the use of assessment for grading the extent to which students have learnt past content or developed expected skills (Harlen, 2005). The results of summative assessments are usually numerical and evaluative, and they do not provide specific feedback on students' strengths and weaknesses or make specific recommendations on how the students can improve (Herrera & Macías, 2015). In addition, the results are not used to inform future actions or improve students' learning. Therefore, it is the use of the assessment data to improve teaching and/or learning that makes the assessment formative rather than the prespecified purpose of the assessment instrument or the location of the assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Though an assessment may be designed for formative purposes, if the results are not used to inform teaching and learning; to move students from where they are to where they are supposed to be, then the assessment has not been used formatively. Conversely, even though an assessment or test may be designed for summative purposes, if teachers or students use the results to change their practice or study habits for improvement, it has been used formatively. In terms of location, classroom assessment should be formative rather than summative. Its primary function is to improve teaching and learning rather than evaluate or grade students (Mihram, n.d.). However, that is not necessarily so. In describing the relationship between classroom and formative assessment in Trinidad and Tobago, De Lisle (2010) reported:

> Teaching in the Anglophone Caribbean often minimizes the role of classroom assessment in student learning, with internal assessments often mimicking external assessment in intent and form. Teachers come to see the assessment purpose in the same way as the external agency, not to promote learning but rather to measure it and judge the worth of the student. Teachers function as measurers and even as judges but rarely as promoters of learning. This is true even in the secondary school despite the traditional presence of school-based assessment at the CSEC and CAPE levels. (p. 14)

This description is also characteristic of teaching in the Jamaican context. It also shows that the location of the assessment (i.e., in the classroom) does not automatically mean that it is used formatively (i.e., for improving teaching and learning).

Conceptualising Formative Assessment

Researchers investigating the impact of formative assessment need to describe how formative assessment is conceptualised and implemented (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cizek, 2010; Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Vingsle, 2014). This need resulted from the various conceptualisations of formative assessments in the existing literature. Some researchers have conceptualised it as diverse and individual assessment strategies that are used to improve teaching and learning, for example, peer-assessment and self-assessment, while others have conceptualised it as a unified or integrated process that includes these diverse strategies (Anderson & Palm, 2017). However, there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of the integrated conceptualisation (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cizek, 2010;

Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Vingsle, 2014). Still, it stands to reason that if the individual strategies improve teaching and learning, then integrating them may yield further gains.

Consequently, I initially conceptualised formative assessment as the unified framework proposed by Wiliam and Thompson (2007). Although there are more recent formative assessment frameworks (e.g., Chong, 2017; Earl, 2013), the Wiliam and Thompson (2007) framework is the most frequently cited (e.g., Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black & Wiliam. 2009; Hanover Research, 2014; Leahy & Wiliam, 2012; Mor et al., 2010; Sherrington, 2019). However, despite its frequent reference and seemingly general acceptance, there are limited empirical studies on its practical application. Therefore, before I engaged in a Formative Assessment in English Intervention (FAEI) using this integrated framework, I explored its applicability in the Jamaican context. Consequently, while this exploration provided contextual information that informed the planning and implementation of the FAEI, it also responds to the international need for research on best practices relating to the implementation of formative assessment and the application of the framework in real-life settings.

The Wiliam and Thompson (2007) Formative Assessment Framework

Using Ramaprasad's (1983) three key processes in learning and teaching (establishing where the learners are in their learning, establishing where they are going and establishing what needs to be done to get them there) and the three classroom agents (teacher, peer, and student) Wiliam and Thompson (2007) outlined the five aspects of formative assessment (see Table 1).

Table 1
Aspects of Formative Assessment

	Where the learner is going	**Where the learner is right now**	**How to get there**
Teacher	**1.** clarifying, understanding, and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	**2.** engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning	**3.** providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	**4.** activating students as learning resources for one another	
Student	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	**5.** activating students as owners of their own learning	

Note. Adopted from "Developing the Theory of Formative Assessment" by P. Black and D. Wiliam, 2012, in Assessment and Learning p. 209. Copyright 2012 by Sage Publications.

In Table 1, the numbering outlines the sequence of the different aspects: 1 precedes 2 and so on (Black et al., 2003). Therefore, formative assessment includes five key aspects: clarifying understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success, effective questioning and classroom activities, descriptive teacher feedback, peer-assessment, and self-assessment. Wiliam and Thompson (2007) further clarified that the five key aspects of formative assessment were in line with the formative assessment principles: curriculum philosophy, classroom discourse, interactive whole-class teaching, feedback, collaborative learning, reciprocal teaching, peer-assessment, metacognition, motivation, interest, attribution, self-assessment. Researchers have also purported that the framework can guide the advancement of the formative assessment theory and illustrate the connection between different formative

assessment strategies (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black & Wiliam, 2009, 2012). However, this proposition is mainly untested in diverse contexts. Particularly in Jamaica, this was the first reported study of its application.

Education, Language and Formative Assessment in the Jamaican Context

Jamaica's education system is inextricably linked to its colonial history. Formal schools, the system, the curricula, administration, the teachers, and examination were introduced and dictated by the British colonizers (Bailey, 1996; Rush 2011). The pedagogy in the early schools was described by Bristol (2010) as plantation pedagogy where teaching was an inherited practice of oppression and intellectual subversion which resulted from plantation society. Within this historical and pedagogical context, the predominantly Black students were seen and treated as empty vessels to be incrementally filled by the white teachers – the reservoirs of knowledge (Freire, 1993). The hegemony of the teachers – akin to the hegemony of the planters – was widely practiced and largely and inadvertently accepted. Education in Jamaica, and indeed most Caribbean countries, has evolved because of the country's quest for independence and nationalism (Gordon, 2019; Rush, 2011). This quest has led to the development of local Ministry of Education and Caribbean educational and examination institutions such as the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) and the University of the West Indies (UWI), with mandates to develop and further the dream of creating and maintaining high-quality education for the Caribbean, of the Caribbean and by the Caribbean (Gordon, 2019; Rush, 2011).

Despite this national and regional philosophy and drive, the hegemonic relationships largely persist. It is manifested in the top-down practice of developing and implementing educational changes where the policies are "developed" by the Ministry of Education and then passed down to the teachers to implement. It is also evident in the frequent and uncritical importation of international, and often culturally irrelevant, educational policies (particularly from England and the United States of America) into the indigenous educational arena of Caribbean countries, including Jamaica (Bristol, 2010). The power relationship between teacher and student is also still evident despite policies that describe teachers as facilitators and mandate student-centeredness, inclusive education, and active-learning. Arguably, the dominant examination culture which holds teachers accountable for student learning is counterproductive to creating collaborative classrooms where responsibility is shared, and the roles of teacher and student are fluid.

The Jamaican Language Context

Jamaica is a bilingual country with Standard Jamaican English (SJE) as the official language, and the Jamaican Creole (JC) or Patois as the language mastered by most Jamaicans but more acceptable in informal and personal communications. Historically, Creole languages in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries were not considered languages. They were considered "bad" talk or a bastardization of the English language. They were also "most usually linked with lack of education, lower socio-economic status, lack of social grace, earthiness and familiarity" (Carrington, 1988, p. 11). Consequently, JC speakers were often denigrated and ridiculed. As a child, my mother and teachers would often command me to 'speak properly' (i.e., speak in English) or chide me for speaking in JC even though most people with whom I interacted – including my mother – did not speak in English. On the other hand, SJE was seen as the language of the educated and was used to show higher social class and good breeding (Christie, 2003; Taylor, 2001). Consequently, learning to speak and write in English was considered an essential skill. Indeed, competence in English was, and remains, a requirement

for entry-level jobs and acceptance into tertiary institutions — thereby promoting upward social mobility.

Overtime, the status of JC has been elevated. It is a language on its own, and Jamaica's language context is now considered a continuum from JC to SJE. The attitude towards Jamaican Creole has improved to the extent where writers are advocating for its use in the teaching of English (Evans, 2001; Gurrey, 1961; Pollard, 2001; Rivers, 1987; Simmons-McDonald, 2001). The Language Education Policy of Jamaica has also accepted that Jamaicans have another language in addition to the SJE, which is the JC and advocates that language learners be bilingual (Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture, 2001). Still, the language hegemony persists. For example, while promoting the acceptance of students first language, the Language Education Policy maintains the SJE is the language of instruction. Additionally, from my fifteen-year experience teaching in secondary and tertiary institutions and observing the classrooms of preservice and inservice teachers, students were observed being ridiculed in classrooms where they made mistakes while speaking in English or were presumed to not know how to speak in English. Peers would chuckle of laugh, and the JC speakers would often shy away from whole-class discussions. In social interactions, children would often be commended for "speaking well" (i.e., in English), or often, they were disparagingly described as "chat bad," when they spoke in JC. Therefore, despite the gains, the social perception of language and the economic power and currency of English permeates the Jamaican society, including the education sector. This historical and language context had to be carefully considered to ensure the effective implementation of the FAEI.

Formative Assessment in the Jamaican Classroom

In contributing to the discussion on the historical evolution of education assessment, Shepard (2000) outlined paradigmatic shifts in education in the US. He explains that the shift from a traditional, behaviourist, teacher-centered paradigm to an emergent, constructivist, student-centered one accounted for the change in focus from external, public examinations to a greater focus on classroom assessment including formative assessment. This paradigm shift is also evident in the educational policies and curricula for secondary education in Jamaica (National Standards Curriculum [NSC] Draft Version 4 Grade 8 English Language Units, Terms 1-3, July 2016; Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009; The Ministry of Education & Culture, 1998, 2001). However, changes in policy have not resulted in the desired changes in teachers' assessment practices. This is evidenced in consistent reports from the National Education Inspectorate (NEI) in Jamaica that assessment, and specifically the formative use of assessment, is an area in need of improvement in both primary and secondary schools. The NEI observed that a characteristic feature of schools that were classified as unsatisfactory and in need of improvement was the absence or insufficient use of formative assessment (NEI, 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017). The later reports are not yet available. Additionally, Jamaican students continue to perform below the acceptable standard in the Caribbean Examination Council's (CXC) Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations in core subjects such as English A (English Language) and Mathematics (Munroe, 2013; NEI, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). The most recent NEI report published in 2017 shows that 43% of the students passed the English A examination. This percent excludes students who are prevented from sitting the exam because they are deemed as unlikely to pass by their teachers. It meant that possible gains could be made in students' achievement in English if the practice of formative assessment was systematically infused into Jamaican classrooms. However, there is a dearth of contextually relevant and practical research on if and how this infusion would be possible. Therefore, I conducted a multiphase mixed-methods study to explore how formative assessment could be more effectively infused in the teaching of English in Jamaican secondary

schools. Before the intervention, I engaged in a qualitative phase, to identify contextual issues that could enable or prohibit the success of the intervention. This paper is not intended to report the processes and results of the primary research or all the contextual features. It focuses on the changes that were made to the Formative Assessment Framework proposed by Wiliam and Thompson (2007) and frequently cited as a framework for implementing formative assessment (e.g., Aldon et al., 2015; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hanover Research, 2014; Leahy & Wiliam, 2012; Mor et al., 2010; Sherrington, 2019) but is largely empirically untested (Anderson & Palm, 2017).

Within this context, I have been both student and teacher of English, assessor and assessed, researcher and researched. I have spent over three decades in the education system in Jamaica as a student where facility in the SJE has always been a personal and educational benefit. Yet, I endeavour to speak in JC even in unconventional spaces because I value my African heritage. Additionally, understanding and experiencing the cultural capital of language and education, I am always researching, even informally, strategies that could help my students, especially low performing students, to maximise their learning generally, and specifically in English. Even while lecturing at the tertiary level, I have noticed how students' achievement was negatively impacted because they were not able to write well in English. These observations and experiences led to my interest in formative assessment generally and specifically how it could be integrated into the teaching of English in the Jamaican context. If the gains reported internationally could be realised in the local context, it meant improved learning and upward social mobility for scores of Jamaicans. However, I was sceptical of its impact primarily because my experiences with the NEI as a teacher at the secondary level made me reluctant to believe their findings. I was also mindful that what obtains in other contexts would not necessarily work in Jamaica. However, it was worth the investment of time it would take to plan, implement, and evaluate the Formative Assessment in English Intervention (FAEI). It was also worth it to provide information on a comprehensive and integrated approach to formative assessment that the international community could use to realise the transformative power of the right kind of education – one that is truly focused on improving students learning rather than grading it, among other things.

Research Design and Methods

Although at the time I was conducting this research there was no requirement for approval from an Institutional Review Board, I took many steps to ensure that the study was conducted ethically. Ethical issues associated with research include "issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of the data" (Punch, 1998, p. 168). There are also issues related to the protection of the subjects or participants, respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Marshall and Rossman (2016) also stated that the minimum requirement to ensure that subjects or participants are fully informed of the purpose of the research, the level of confidentiality and anonymity that they can expect, voluntary participation, and the risks involved in participating in the study, is the use of an informed consent form. To that end, I informed both the principals and the participating teachers of the purpose and process of the study, assured them that the names of the school or the participants would be omitted and informed them that the participating schools and teachers would gain insights that could improve their teaching and learning experiences through the Informed Consent Form each was required to read and sign before participating in the research. I also reassured the participants that they could refuse to participate in the study at any point. However, given that ethical practice is a process and not simply signing a form, especially for qualitative researchers (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), I reminded each participant at various points during the interviews and observations.

Research Design

I engaged in qualitative research because it is useful for identifying contextual evidence that can improve the effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and humanity of intervention studies (Korstjens & Moser, 2017), and because it is recommended for investigating formative assessment in the classroom (Herman et al., 2006). A multiple-case instrumental case study design (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014) was used in this study. An instrumental case is one where the participants are used to unearth insights into a particular issue rather than the case itself (Creswell, 2014). The cases (teachers) were embedded within the context of the schools, and they were deliberately selected to unearth different perspectives about the issue of teachers' assessment practices and how formative assessment could be implemented. In this phase of the research, I was only interested in understanding and describing what existed without changing anything. Therefore, case study was appropriate (Yin, 2014). I also needed to get insights from the different types of secondary schools in Jamaica (technical, traditional, and upgraded) because there are grave disparities in the academic ability of the students and infrastructural support based on school type. Traditional high schools usually benefit from the placement of more academically capable students from the Ministry of Education and significant infrastructural support from alumni. These decrease in upgraded high schools and even more so in technical high schools. Since the research context was not based on one type of school, it was important to account for the contexts in varying schools to get a more comprehensive picture. Therefore, multiple sites were necessary.

The Participants

I first selected the schools that would participate in this phase through stratified purposive sampling (Patton, 1990). I stratified the schools from the quantitative phase by school type and ranked them based on achievement in CXC/CSEC English A. I selected two schools from three different school types: technical, traditional (coeducational), and upgraded. For each school type, I selected one school from the top rank (consistently high achievement in CXC/CSEC English A) and the other from the bottom rank (consistently low achievement in CXC/CSEC English A). After I received permission from the school principals to continue the study, I sought written informed consent from the teachers to continue to participate. From six of the selected schools, I selected five or six language teachers for interview and observation. The number of teachers selected from each school was determined by the number of teachers who had participated in the initial survey and were willing to continue into the qualitative phase. One teacher from a from the traditional – boys only requested to participate in this phase. In total, 32 teachers of English, two males and 30 females with varying years of experience were interviewed and observed (see Table 2). The gender disparity is reflective of the disparity in the wider population where there are significantly more female teachers of English.

Table 2

Demographic Details for the Qualitative Participants

Demographics		N	%
Gender	Male	2	6.3
	Female	30	93.7
Age	Young adult	6	18.8
	Middle-aged	26	81.2
Years of Experience	0 – 5 years	8	25
	6 – 10 years	11	34.4
	11 – 15 years	10	31.2
	16 – 20 years	2	6.3
	≥ 20 years	1	3.2
School Type & Rank	**Traditional High School (Coed.)**	**10**	**31.2**
	Above Average	5	15.6
	Below Average	5	15.6
	Traditional High School (Boys)	**1**	**3.2**
	Average	1	3.2
	Upgraded High School	**10**	**31.2**
	Above Average	5	15.6
	Below Average	5	15.6
	Technical High School	**11**	**34.4**
	Above Average	6	18.8
	Below Average	5	15.6

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that "case study … may entail multiple methods — interviews, observations, historical and document analysis, and even surveys" (p. 94). In line with the case study design and to collect rich data, I used interviews and observations to collect data. I first collected data through semi-structured, in-depth interviews using an interview schedule (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). I used the interviews to, among other things, identify to what extent if at all the selected teachers were effectively implementing the five aspects of formative assessment. The interviews lasted 20–90 minutes, with a mode of 45 minutes. It took two months to interview all the selected teachers. I transcribed each interview verbatim at the end of the day or week that it was conducted. Then I emailed the completed transcripts to each participant for verification before I began to analyse the data. After I conducted the interviews, I observed each teacher three times while they taught three classes, with class periods lasting from 45 minutes (single session) to 90 minutes (double session). However, I did not record the first observation for each teacher to reduce "reactivity" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Johnson & Turner, 2003). In the other two observations, I collected data using non-participant observation. Each classroom observation was tape-recorded and supplemented by field notes. I also observed other school functions, for example, prize giving ceremonies, devotions and student activity during recess, and school paraphernalia (notice boards and paintings on the walls) — to get a better understanding of the context. I extended the field notes immediately after the observations where possible, and at the end of the day in other cases, to reduce the possibility of details being forgotten. The data was transcribed, verified by the participants, and edited. During the verification process, the participants suggested minor corrections — mainly grammatical corrections. Observation made it possible to record behaviour as it happened (Merriam, 1998), provided a first-hand experience of teachers'

assessment practices. It also allowed me to validate the assessment practices the teachers provided in the interviews (Charmaz, 2006).

Data Analysis

I analysed the data analysis first on a case-by-case basis. The process for each teacher began with reading the interview transcript repeatedly to get a general sense of the whole (Creswell, 2014). According to Yin (2014), strategies needed for analyzing data in case studies "should follow some cycle (or repeated cycle) involving your research question, the data, your defensible handling and interpretation of the data, and your ability to state some findings and draw some conclusions" (p. 136). Therefore, beginning with my research question: How applicable is the Wiliam and Thompson's (2007) formative assessment framework for integrating formative assessment into the teaching of English in Jamaican secondary schools? I listed possible theory-generated codes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and categories that would be useful. These included the five aspects of formative assessment: sharing the learning targets and criteria for success, effective questioning and classroom activities, descriptive feedback, peer-assessment and self-assessment. I also noted the ordering of the aspects. Using QDAMiner, the data was coded, sentence by sentence, and in some instances, in chunks. The coding process proceeded through cycles, using grammatical methods (attribute coding, magnitude coding, subcoding), elemental methods (structural coding, NVivo coding, process coding) and affective methods (values coding and emotional coding) in the first cycle, and pattern coding and elaborative coding in the second cycle (Saldaña, 2016; see Table 3). According to Saldaña (2016), elaborative coding is "appropriate for qualitative studies that build on or corroborate previous research and investigations … [and] can support, strengthen, modify, or disconfirm the findings from previous study" (p. 256). Therefore, this type of coding was suitable to assess the applicability of the Wiliam and Thompson's (2007) formative assessment framework since it had not been tested in Jamaica and was only marginally applied internationally. This qualitative phase was used to modify, support and/or strengthen the framework, before implementing it in the ensuing experimentation phase of this research.

I further reduced the data through analytical memoing (Anderson & Aydin, 2005). Some of the codes were analytical, therefore the margin memos were used. The data was also reduced by using analytical essays, as synonyms were replaced, and some categories became sub-categories. In addition, analytical memos documented unusual insights and kept track of the journey on which the data was taking me. I also employed independent coding (Thomas, 2006) to validate my codes and coding.

Table 3
Examples of Codes used in the Two Cycles of the Qualitative Data Analysis Process

Cycles	Types of Codes	Description	Examples
First	Attribute Coding	Essential Information about the data and demographic characteristics of the participants	Data format: age: 30, YoE: 7 years, school type: UAA
	Magnitude Coding	Indicating intensity, frequency or presence	"Miss said."
	Subcoding	Details that enrich the code	Questioning Practice: handraising, identification of respondents before posing a question

Cycles	Types of Codes	Description	Examples
	Structural Coding	Content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry or a segment of the data that relates to a specific research question used from the interview (MacQueen et al., 2008, p. 124)	questioning practices, feedback practices
	In Vivo Coding	"The terms used by participants themselves" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33)	"Conscious," "3-2-1," "reflective paragraphs," "promoting grading"
	Process Coding	To connote action in the data	Students seeking teacher feedback, struggling with SAP and using rubrics for self-assessment
	Emotion Coding	Emotions recalled and/or experienced by the participants or inferred by the researcher about the participant	"Worried," "felt like a failure," frustrated, "enjoying teaching," accomplished.
	Values Coding	Reflects a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs	B: Teaching is a learning experience. A: Dislikes mandated pieces of assessment. V: students prefer teacher feedback
Second	Pattern Coding	Categories that represent similar or related codes	Questioning Practice, Content and Process of Peer-Assessment, Content and Process of Feedback
	Pattern Matching	"Compare an empirically based pattern — that is, one based on the findings from your case study — with a predicted one made before you collected your data (or with several alternative predictions)" (Yin, 2014, p. 143).	Prediction: Teachers largely engaged in ineffective questioning by asking literal level questions and requiring students to raise their hands to indicate their willingness to respond.
	Evaluative Coding	Process that allows for further development of existing theory	Confirmation: Teachers need training and support to effectively implement formative assessment Modification: The ordering of the aspects of formative assessment needed to be revised to increase effectiveness.

Trustworthiness of the Study and its Findings

Throughout the qualitative phase, I employed varying strategies to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings. To ensure the credibility of the findings, I examined the findings of previous research, adopted well-established qualitative and information science research methods, triangulated methods, context and participants, utilized peer scrutiny of the research project, member and expert (qualitative researcher and assessment specialists) checks and provided a description of myself and phenomenon under study (Shenton, 2004); I also used quasi statistics to assess the amount of evidence (Maxwell, 1996). Triangulation and detailed descriptions also contributed to the dependability, transferability, and confirmability of the results as well (Guba, 1981; Marshall

& Rossman, 2016; Shenton 2004). I also shared my beliefs and assumptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994); recognized the shortcomings of the study's methods and their potential effects (Shenton, 2004) to ensure the confirmability. For example, because I am aware that sometimes when researchers ask participants to answer questions in speaking or writing, they may construct fictional or preferred images of themselves (Charmaz, 2006), I used observations to validate participants' reports. I also prolonged my engagement in the classrooms to reduce reactivity in the observations. I also used audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Shenton, 2004); peer debriefing and providing examples of explicitly descriptive, nonevaluative note taking (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) to ensure confirmability.

How the Findings Will Be Presented

Using Yin's (2014) description of a suitable reporting format for multiple case studies, the qualitative data was presented in an overall cross-case analysis, but with separate sections devoted to different topics, for example, the aspects of formative assessment evident, the process of formative assessment (enablers, barriers, and process). Exemplars from the individual cases were interspersed throughout the different sections. Because my focus was also on context, I provided a comparative analysis of the schools that participated in this phase of the study.

Presentation of the Findings

Jamaican secondary schools are characterized by unequal levels of financial and infrastructural support and student academic achievement. As previously stated, traditional high schools usually have the best facilities and highest achieving students, while technical high schools often have the worst of both. Individual schools, even within the same school type, may differ from the norm because of support from alumni, parents, and corporate entities. Therefore, it was important to identify similarities and differences among the schools in this phase of the research. Examination of the contexts led to the identification of contextual features that led to the revision of the Wiliam and Thompson's framework. All the names of participants and schools used in this section are pseudonyms.

The Research Context

The schools were ranked by academic ability in English before they were selected for participation in the study, and the academic rankings coincided with the quality of the infrastructure in the schools, support from alumni and parents, the dominant language used by teachers and students, the general attitude of the students and qualification of the teachers. For example, while each classroom in Over the Horizon High School (the above average traditional high school), was outfitted with a projector, a whiteboard, speakers and USB or HDMI connections for technology integration, four working long fluorescent bulbs, ceiling fans, and noticeboards with motivational charts, class and examination timetables, and information on various school clubs and societies, gazebos, and manicured gardens, there were not enough rooms for all the classes scheduled at a particular time at Whispering Hope High School (the below average upgraded high school and the overall lowest ranking school in the study). At Whispering Hope, a considerable amount of teaching time was spent searching for unoccupied rooms – unoccupied because the assigned students were in the science lab, library, or practical physical education classes. Sometimes, classes are conducted on an upstairs balcony as there are no available rooms. The students sourced chairs and sat in a line against the wall of the building to stay out of the sun. There was no desk or chair for the teacher and nothing for

her/him to write on. The available classrooms were standard rectangular rooms with a door in one corner of one of the long sides. The rooms were well ventilated, but all the light fixtures were missing, and wires were hanging out from sockets. The students in these classes have individual desks and chairs, but these are insufficient, so students spend time outside of class, searching for desks and chairs. There were also numerous disputes over desks and chairs.

The support from alumni and parents was also highest in Over the Horizon High School and lowest in Whispering Hope. When I asked Ms Young from Over the Horizon what role the alumni played, she pointed at different buildings:

> This is alumni. That is alumni. This is alumni. Well, this was one alumnus, the courtyard … The lanterns … and the pavement out there. The labs are [a prominent financial company] labs, so you know who those alumni are. They play a big role in modernizing the school. (Interview with Ms. Young)

The financial input of the alumni saw them wielding considerable power. As Mrs. Peart explains, "parents and alumni have a major influence on the school because of their financial contributions to the school. A lot is done to ensure that they are satisfied with the running of the school, especially if they currently have children at the school" (Interview with Mrs. Peart). In comparison, Mrs. Carrington from Whispering Hope explained that alumni and parental support was "almost non-existent. Parents will only show up if they are called. They really do not play so much of an active role in the school." This lack of support was also evident in a meeting convened by the principal to address behavioural issues among the grade 11 students. There were approximately 100 students and only 20 parents (including one father) attended the meeting.

Additionally, the students and teachers at Over the Horizon spoke predominantly in Standard Jamaican English (SJE). The students were also generally polite, prepared, and engaged. I did not pass a student who did not say good morning or good afternoon. In literature classes, all the students had a copy of the text, and they eagerly participated in classroom discussions. Even when they became talkative, they quickly adjusted when their teachers commented on this. They responded immediately to the bells that indicated ending and beginning of sessions and walked briskly and orderly to classes. They spoke in hushed tones in and out of classes and had immense pride in and love for their school and teachers. In addition, all the teachers at the school were, at a minimum, trained graduate teachers. Some had master's degrees.

In contrast, most of the students in Whispering Hope were unsettled, uninterested in academics, disrespectful, violent, and disruptive and spoke predominantly to speak in Jamaican Creole (JC). Some smoked marijuana, and some were experiencing feelings of depression and hopelessness. Some committed violent acts against their peers. On a few occasions, parents accompanied their children to carry out acts of violence against other students. Also, on a few occasions, the threats extended to the teachers. While observing Mrs. Downer, two students had an altercation as one accused the other of putting gum in her hair. The accused loudly declared she liked no one in the class, "no bwai, no gyal, no battyman, no lesbian." Another student who was upset that Mrs. Downer confiscated her lollipop after repeatedly asking her to put it away, turned her back to the class and declared that Mrs. Downer will have to purchase a replacement candy, or she would take the money from Mrs Downer and purchase another candy on her own (Observation of Mrs. Downer). In addition, some teachers were not trained in the area they were teaching or at the secondary level of education. Three of the six teachers in the English Department only had experience in teaching at the primary level prior to coming to the school, and one was an early childhood trained teacher with teaching experience at that level. She confessed that English was her weakest subject in high school. Notwithstanding, the

teachers believed that their experience teaching at the lower levels was beneficial since many of their current students were "slow" and reading at the grade four level. Moreover, despite the threats of violence and limited support from parents and alumni, most of the teachers continued to work hard to make a difference in their students' lives. I asked them to share their most memorable moment as a teacher and all their memorable moments in teaching had to do with assisting a student or group of students to excel despite the odds.

The quality of the infrastructure in the schools, support from alumni and parents, the ability of the students to speak in SJE and their general attitude simultaneously and gradually decreased with the academic ranking of the school. Yet, in all these schools, the power relations and language hegemony were evident. In all the schools, students would highlight, snicker, laugh at students who struggled to speak or did not speak in SJE. At Over the Horizon, Ms Young shared an experience where a student from another parish that was considered "country" (a term that connotes rural, earthiness, lack of sophistication) spoke in class, students would laugh, albeit good-naturedly, because of her accent and some of the words she used. The laughter and snickering evident in other schools were meant to ridicule the speaker. The teachers' power and authority of the teacher was evident in the characteristic arrangement of the furniture in the classrooms: a desk and chair at the front of the room facing rows of desks and chairs for students. It was also evident in how the content and assessment methods used was dictated by the schools' administration, and implemented by the teachers, even when the teachers thought other methods were more beneficial to students. This is exemplified in the description provided by Ms Peart from Reaching High School (the low-ranking traditional high school) when I asked her to describe the assessments she used most frequently. She explained:

> Most of them are written pieces. We were instructed to use written pieces and to utilize the textbook, especially for lower school. Some of the textbooks dem really nuh mek nuh sense [they really don't make any sense] when you go through them; you cyaa [cannot] really find what you want, but most of the things are written and are from the text. (Interview)

All the teachers reported using pen-and-paper tests to assess students because the school mandated their use. Additionally, all the teachers reported that they did not allow students to set examination questions, and peer marking were reserved for selected-response items with only one correct answer (e.g., multiple choice items). The hegemony of the teacher was also evident in classroom discourse and assessment that were largely teacher-directed and controlled. More detailed description and discussion on the power relations evident in the discourse practices and classroom assessment appears later in this paper as they are aspects of the formative assessment framework.

Overall, the schools involved in this phase of the research were different in terms of academics, infrastructure, student and teacher characteristics and the level of support received from parents, alumni, and corporate entities. Despite the differences, the hegemony of the teachers and the SJE were evident.

Yes, … But … Evidence of the Five Aspects of Formative Assessment

In exploring the applicability of Wiliam and Thompson's (2007) formative assessment, I sought evidence of the aspects of formative assessment that were evident before the intervention. To do that, I ran a coding frequency on Wiliam and Thompson's (2007) five aspects of formative assessment:

1. Clarifying, understanding, and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success (teacher); understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success (peer); understanding learning intentions and criteria for success (student)
2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning (teacher)
3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward (teacher)
4. Activating students as learning resources for one another
5. Activating students as owners of their own learning

All the aspects were evident. The most frequently observed aspect was number 2 – engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning (teacher) observed and reported 95 times by 28 of the participants, followed by aspect 4 – activating students as learning resources for one another – observed and reported 65 times in 22 cases. Aspect 5 was reported and observed 58 times in 18 cases, and Aspect 3 was observed 30 times, and Aspect 1 was only observed twice in one case.

Although the five aspects were observed, they were not observed in the practice of any individual teachers. Only one teacher implemented four of the five aspects effectively but with some inconsistency, and four teachers implemented three aspects in the same way. I classified these teachers as developing competence in integrating formative assessment in the teaching of English. I classified the other participants as demonstrating emerging competence because they implemented at least one of the aspects, albeit ineffectively. For the five teachers in three different school who implemented three or four of the aspects at a developing competence level (i.e., effectively but inconsistently), the students performed better than students in the classes within each school where the teachers demonstrated emerging competence (i.e., ineffective implementation of the aspects). In fact, for the participant who implemented the four aspects of formative assessment, her class was ranked as the top streamed class in the grade. Though, I am not suggesting that her implementation of the four aspects of formative assessment caused the students in her class to perform better than other students in the grade, I thought it was an interesting observation that needed further investigation.

Furthermore, although the five aspects were reported and observed, some practices reduced the effectiveness of their implementation.

Clarifying, Understanding, and Sharing Learning Intentions and Criteria for Success

This aspect of formative assessment was only observed twice in Mrs. Moody's classroom, and though she shared the targets, many were learning activities, instead of learning outcomes. For example, "Give answers orally to questions based on the chapters during a mini "Class Challenge Quiz" and "Read chapters one and two — "The Questions" and "The Contests," respectively (Observation of Mrs. Moody). Additionally, she did not discuss the targets with the students. She wrote them on the board, and the students were only required to copy them in their notebooks.

Questioning Practices

Using pattern matching, I predicted that the questioning practices were dominated by practices that limited the effectiveness of questioning as a strategy that facilitates formative assessment: literal level questions, identifying respondents before asking a question, hand raising, and inadequate wait time. This prediction was based on the findings of previous research (e.g., Black et al., 2004; William, 2011). Therefore, I analysed questioning process

and the types of questions as reported and observed. The results showed that ineffective questioning practices dominated the participants' teaching practice (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Reported and Observed Questioning Practices of the Participants
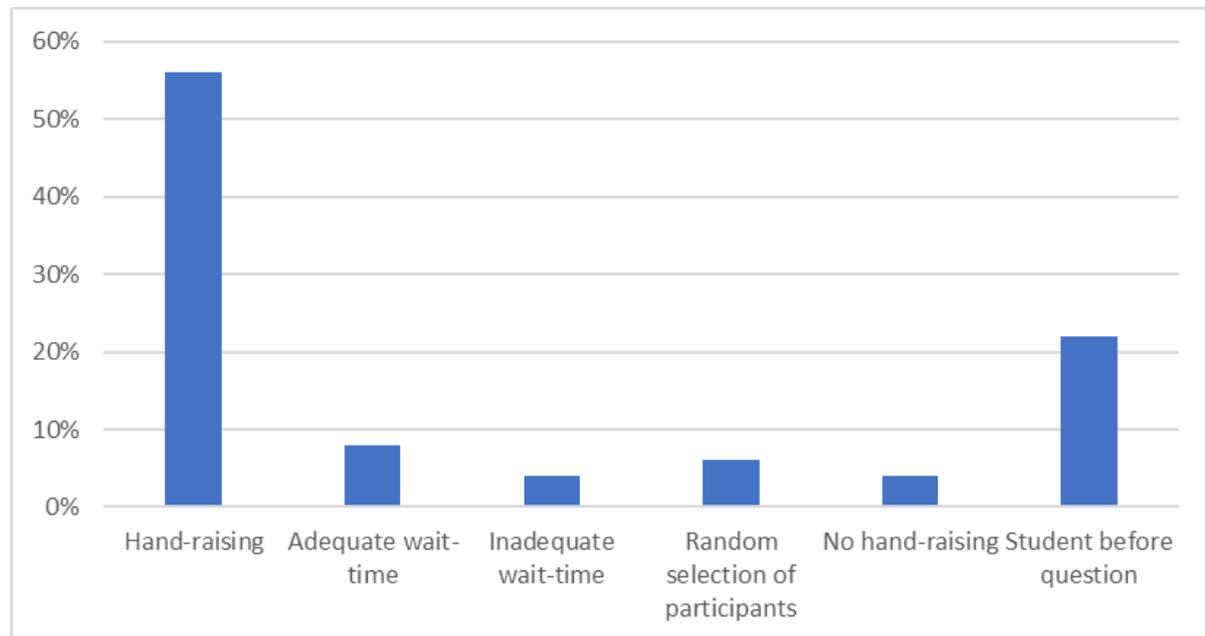
Hand raising (56%) was the most evident, having been reported and observed 98 times in 27 cases, and identifying the respondent before asking the question (22%) was evident in 38 instances in 12 cases. Inadequate wait-time was observed only 4% of the time, and I observed that practice on the occasions when the teacher asked inferential or evaluative questions. When I asked the participating teachers if the students were required to raise their hands before responding to a question, almost all of them responded matter-of-factly that they were. I also observed the teachers directing the students to raise their hands and reminding them repeatedly to do so during the questioning process. Ms Fox's description of the questioning process in her classroom aptly describes the questioning process most frequently observed and reported among all the participants, "clearly, it's hand-raising that regulates the conversation. Pretty much it's thrown it out, raise your hand, you respond" (Interview with Ms. Fox).

The participants used hand raising as a classroom control mechanism. As the they explain, hand-raising is used to maintain order in the classroom, "They are required eno 'cause yuh know dem pickney yah, dem very wild" (They are required to because these children are very wild; Interview with Mrs. Black). Another participant explains, "Yes, I do encourage them to raise their hands, so I don't have chaos" (Interview with Ms. Hunter). However, it was not very effective as a class control mechanism, as the students were observed responding in chorus 436 times in 26 cases. Many were "multiple choral responses" where students gave divergent answers and just talked over each other. The participants even reported the challenge of hand-raising:

> I ask them to raise their hand, but as you know, you'll always have some persons blurting out answers, some persons talking. So sometimes that's a little — You always have little challenges where that is concerned. I have to tell that one, "No. It's not your turn yet" or you allow this one to speak and it just keeps going and going. So that is ongoing for me. Sometimes that's what I always have to

be doing. It's your turn to answer. It's not your turn to answer. (Interview with Mrs. Turner)

Other participants reported that it was the students' eagerness to respond that caused hand-raising as a classroom control mechanism to fail.

Despite the reason behind its use, hand-raising, and the other practices that retard student learning such as: identifying the respondent before posing a question and inadequate wait time, dominated the questioning process of the participants across school type. Exceptionalities were evident in individual teachers. For example, Mrs. Ready used random selection of participants most often (Reported and observed 6 of 11 times) and allowed for adequate wait time most often (6 of the 10 times it was observed). Ms. Young implemented no hand-raising most often (3 of 10 times).

Another ineffective questioning practice observed was the proliferation of literal level questions. Literal level questions were asked 510 times in 25 cases. This is over twice the number of evaluative questions (218 instances in 25 cases) and over seven times as much as inferential questions (65 instances in 23 cases). It was for this reason that chorus answers dominated, and inadequate wait-time was not more frequently observed. When the teachers asked higher-level questions, the students were not as eager to respond, and it was in those instances where the teachers would ask non-volunteers to proffer an answer or provide the answers themselves. The other instances where non-volunteers were asked to respond were when students were inattentive or when one set of students was dominating the discussion, and the teachers wanted to get others involved. The data suggested that though questioning was frequently used, the level of the questions and the questioning practices most frequently observed were ineffective in enabling learning.

Feedback – from Teachers, Peers, and Self

In many of the lessons, I observed that, after the teacher gave feedback and then required the students to give feedback, many students merely regurgitated what the teacher had pointed out. In most instances, students did not independently or critically assess their own or peers' work or seek to add or refute the teacher's assessment. They also used the teachers' feedback as the justification for their comments saying, for example, "Miss said that you need to pay closer attention to subject-verb-agreement" or "Yuh nuh hear Miss seh yuh mus' put een supportin' evidence?" (Did you not hear when Miss said you should have included supporting evidence?). The students were also less interested in self- and peer-assessment after they had received feedback from their teachers. When Mr. Newby instructed the students to exchange their books with their assigned peer for assessment, Marsha yelled, "Sir, yuh si my book a'ready, suh mi nuh affi give har!" (Sir, you have already seen my book, so I do not need to exchange with her!) However, the students more readily self- and peer-assessed when they knew that it was only after those processes had been completed that the teacher would provide feedback. The goal was to get the teacher's feedback, and once that was received, critical and independent self- and peer-assessment were less likely.

In addition, many students were reluctant to show their errors to their peers for fear of being ridiculed and therefore resisted peer-assessment. For example, when Ms. Young instructed students to share their work with their peers for feedback, Johnathan asked to show her his work first. In another instance, Sheila complained that she did not like to share her work with her group members because "dem love lauf afta people" (they liked to laugh at others). This suggested that the association of incomplete skill in speaking and writing in English with ignorance and shame persisted. However, if the teacher had previously assessed their work as exemplary, the students shared their work willingly. This sharing was more to exhibit high-

quality work than to receive formative feedback. Consequently, teacher feedback simultaneously encouraged students to share their work, when the work was exemplary, and prohibited effective self- and peer-assessment.

On the other hand, when teachers provided checklists and rubrics and required that students use those to assess their work or that of their peers before submission, self- and peer-assessment were more independent and effective. The students used the rubric or checklists to make their assessments rather than the teacher. However, in the absence of a rubric and previous feedback, the students would assess the work as "good" or "okay", or say they do not know what to say was wrong with it. Therefore, the provision of rubrics or checklists allowed the students to readily identify a standard on which to make an assessment. This improved their ability to critically comment on their own work and that of their peers. This was exemplified in Miss Hall's class. Sheldon and Leon were best friends and were paired for assessment purposes. The students were required to stand as peers and give an assessment of each other's work.

> Sheldon: Miss, he's my friend and they (*he sweeps his hand across the class*) expect me not to say anything bad … but the rubric says he should have three persuasive devices and I only see one. (*He nudges Leon with his elbow and speaks to him.*) Nuh feel nuh way mi bredda. (Do not be upset with me, my brother.)

In this excerpt, Sheldon used SJE for formal communication to the whole class but switched to JC in his personal communication with his best friend. The excerpt also showed that despite his concern about hurting his best friend's feelings or the expectations of his classmates, the presence of a rubric led Sheldon to an objective review of the work.

While rubrics enabled peer-assessment, I rarely observed them in use. Some teachers expressed that they did not have the training or the requisite skills to prepare rubrics. For example, Ms. Young expressed that she used peer-assessment and wanted to do more of that but wished she "could prepare better rubrics for them" (Interview with Ms. Young). Another teacher expressed difficulty in creating and using rubrics:

> Sometimes you have to use a rubric and you have to understand the rubric in order to use it, and it … I don't think I really get it sometimes for some of the things 'cause when I had grade nine [class] and they were doing the E-learning tests, they were to give a speech. I had problems creating the rubric for it 'cause they [The Ministry of Education] didn't give us one … or they gave us one … I don't remember, but I had problem using it. So, I had problem with that. (Interview with Mrs. Watts)

Discussion and Implications

The findings showed that all the aspects of formative assessment outlined in the Wiliam and Thompson's (2007) framework were evident in the teaching of English in the classrooms that were observed. Additionally, although none of the teachers implemented all aspects of formative assessment, the teachers who implemented three or four of them effectively but inconsistently also taught students who outperformed students in their grade. This cooccurrence needs further investigation before any claims about causation can be made. However, it suggests that conceptualising and implementing formative assessment as a unified framework may be beneficial to students. This suggestion was investigated in the subsequent experimentation phase of the study.

The data also showed that the implementation of the aspects was largely ineffective as (1) the targets were minimally shared and when they were shared, they included learning activities instead of learning outcomes and were not discussed with the students or used to clarify their understanding; (2) in classroom discussions, there was a proliferation of literal level questions, hand raising, inadequate wait time and choral responses. Research show that literal level questions can limit creative thinking in students, condition them to focus on getting through the tasks rather than engaging in risky cognitive activities, and allows participation from only those students who can think quickly (Black et al., 2004; Chin, 2007; Tofade et al., 2013). Additionally, the practice of requiring students to raise their hand after a question is asked to indicate their willingness to answer has also been found to hinder learning and widen the achievement gap by allowing students who are eager to participate to increase their learning, while those who want to go unnoticed in the class and exert as little energy or effort as possible can do so (Wiliam, 2011). Thereforem some students will believe that they do not need to think because the teacher will select someone whose hand was raised. In sum, questioning practices that predominantly utilize questions that require memorization, that do not give students adequate time to provide thoughtful answers and require hand-raising can reduce learning and critical thinking, and these were the practices most evident.

In relation to teacher feedback, peer-assessment and self-assessment, there is evidence that students still view teachers as the reservoir of knowledge and the ultimate judge in the Jamaican context. Oftentimes, the assessment of the teacher was uncritically accepted, and anything contrary was outrightly rejected. Therefore, students were less receptive to peer-assessment after teacher feedback was given. Additionally, when the teacher gave feedback, students often passively accepted the teacher's judgment. However, when their peers gave feedback, the students would have discussions, sometimes heated, as they opposed comments made by their peers. Studies conducted on the contribution of peer-assessment to students' learning have found that it is advantageous because students take feedback from their peers more seriously and are more likely to interrupt each other to ask for further explanations (Black et al., 2004). It is also beneficial because students have discussions in a language peers understand while taking on the roles of teachers and examiners (Sadler, 1989). In the Jamaican context, while it was evident that students were more likely to interrupt each other and spoke in the language of peers, they privileged feedback from their teachers. Therefore, peer-assessment was more active if it was facilitated before teacher feedback.

Peer- and self-assessment was also enabled by the provisions of rubrics and checklists. Students used the rubrics and checklists to justify statements they had made about their peer's work, even identifying flaws in their friends' work – a practice they were less likely to engage in for fear of disappointing or embarrassing their friends without the rubric. The rubrics allowed for more critical reflection and defence of their own work as well. Where there were contradictory judgments among the peers, they would refer the matter to the teacher. Finally, fewer negative comments and less resistance to sharing work that the teacher did not previously validate were also observed when students could use checklists and rubrics to assess their work before passing it on to their peers. However, rubrics and checklists were rarely seen in the qualitative phase of the research, and teachers admitted needing training in developing and using them.

Implications

The findings of the qualitative phase about the applicability of the framework had implications for the design of the Formative Assessment in English Intervention I was planning on implementing. It also had implications for the international discussion on the conceptualisation and implementation of formative assessment.

In the first instance, it confirmed that the five aspects could be implemented, but teachers needed training to improve their effectiveness. Therefore, before the intervention phase, I trained teachers on writing, discussing, and using the learning targets for self and peer-assessment. I also provided training on facilitating effective questioning: planning and asking higher-order, open-ended questions, providing adequate wait-time, dissuading hand-raising, randomly selecting a respondent after questions had been posed to all students and they had been given adequate time to think, and creating a supportive classroom environment where students would be less afraid to give incorrect answers or display incomplete understanding or achievement. I also trained the teachers on how to locate or develop rubrics and checklists and use them to facilitate self-, peer- and teacher-assessment.

The findings also had implications for my conceptualisation and implementation of formative. The co-occurrence of effective use of more of the aspects of formative assessment with higher student achievement in three different schools bolstered my confidence in conceptualising formative assessment as a unified framework, though there is limited empirical evidence to support said implementation. However, the prevalence of observations of the negative impact of teacher feedback once it preceded self- and peer-assessment led to my revision of the sequence of the Wiliam and Thompson's (2007) formative assessment framework. I reordered the aspects to place the role of the student before the role of the peers in the first column because the students were more comfortable with sharing their work if they assessed their work before sharing it with their peers. The reordering was also necessary to increase students' autonomy and encourage them to assess their own work independently and critically. Consequently, self-assessment became the third step, peer-assessment the fourth, and teacher assessment the fifth aspect (see Table 4).

Table 4
Revised Aspects of Formative Assessment

Aspects of Formative Assessment & Strategies			
	Where is the learner going?	Where is the learner right now?	How to get there.
Teacher	1. Clarifying, understanding, and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning	5. Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Student	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success		
Peer	Understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	3. Activating students as owners of their own learning	
		4. Activating students as learning resources for one another	

Note. Adapted from "Developing the Theory of Formative Assessment" by P. Black and D. Wiliam, 2012, in *Assessment and Learning* p. 209. Copyright 2012 by Sage Publications.

In sum, I conceptualised formative assessment as including the five aspects that were enacted in the classroom in the revised order. The process first began with diagnostic assessment, where teachers assessed students on the topic to be covered, using a checklist.

Based on the results of the diagnostic assessment, the teacher would clarify, understand, and share the learning intentions and criteria for success with the students. The results (checklists with teacher's checks) would be shared with the students to help them to understand the intentions and success criteria for themselves and shared with their peers to aid their clarification and understanding. Thereafter, the teachers would engineer effective classroom discussions, tasks, and activities to facilitative the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the learning targets and elicit evidence of learning. Then, the teacher would facilitate self- then peer-assessment and students would be required and allowed to make the necessary revisions before submitting to the teacher. Self- and peer-assessment would be facilitated using rubrics and checklists. After the students have revised their work based on self- and peer-assessment, the teacher would provide descriptive feedback, as indicated by the checked and unchecked boxes on the checklist or their level of achievement as indicated by analytical rubrics. I considered the process cyclical with the results of self-, peer- and teacher-assessment used to clarify, share, and understand the learning targets and criteria for success in successive teaching episodes or classes. This conceptualisation was implemented in the subsequent experimentation. Though a more detailed description of its implementation and findings will be reported in a later paper, the results showed improvement in students' achievement in English based on the analysis of the results of internal pre- and post-tests and external standardised tests (Williams-McBean, 2019). Still, other studies should be conducted within and outside the Jamaican context in English and other subject areas to assess the efficacy of this conceptualisation and implementation.

The findings also have implications for using the frequently cited and seemingly generally accepted unified framework proposed by Wiliam and Thompson (2007). Internationally, there is a need for empirical evidence supporting the conceptualisation and implementation of formative assessment particularly as a unified framework rather than diverse strategies (Anderson & Palm, 2017; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cizek, 2010; Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Vingsle, 2014). This study offers insights that respond to that need. The results show that while it is practical to conceptualise formative assessment as a unified framework – a proposition strengthened by the positive results from the FAEI – in contexts where power and knowledge are presumed to reside with the teacher, providing teacher feedback before allowing for self- and peer-assessment reduces the effectiveness of this unified framework. Therefore, researchers interested in conceptualising and implementing formative assessment, whether as a unified framework or as individual aspects, need to consider their context, assess how power is distributed and examine students' attitudes to feedback received from peers and teachers to determine the most suitable ordering. Context should be identified and considered in determining the efficacy of any framework, design, or method.

The findings also offer empirically generated insights on best practices related to the implementation of formative assessment to support increased use – another needs area as identified by Dunn and Mulvenon (2009) and Vingsle (2014). In implementing self-, peer- and teacher assessment, the provisions of checklists and rubrics increased the critical appraisal and reduced the influence of personal relationships in discussing the quality of the work. Teachers also need to be trained to implement all the aspects of formative assessment to improve its effectiveness.

Conclusion

This research underscores the importance of context in research. A framework that has been successfully implemented in one research context may not be as successful in another. The Wiliam and Thompson (2007) formative assessment framework is widely accepted and cited and has been used to guide formative assessment research, albeit with limited application.

However, in the Jamaican context, while the findings support the conceptualisation of formative assessment as a unified framework, adjustments had to be made to the ordering of the aspects for more effective implementation. Understanding the feedback and language context in the Jamaican classroom led to the revision of the framework and to more effective implementation of the FAEI. In the subsequent experimentation phase, self- and peer-assessment were more frequently observed and the quality of these types of assessment improved with the provisions of checklists and rubrics. This experience also underscored the value of pilot testing and/or pre-intervention observations to highlight contextual issues that may prohibit effective implementations of interventions (Arain et al., 2010; Kim, 2010; Williams-McBean, 2019). Identifying these issues early allowed me to make the necessary adjustments and ensured a more successful intervention.

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