

# **Team EFL Haiti**

## **Needs Assessment Report**



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## ***Introduction & Rationale***

The story of our curriculum design project does not begin with the first spring semester class of 2015, but rather in October of 2013. At that time, neither of us were aware of St. Andre's school in Hinche, Haiti, but Lisa Donohoe did. Lisa is a curriculum design specialist in the Language and Professional Programs at MIIS. In October of 2013, she was sponsored by St. Dunstan's church of Carmel Valley to visit St. Andre's school. St. Dunstan's has provided St. Andre's school with materials, scholarships, and meals for their students for over 25 years.

By sponsoring Lisa's trip, they also ignited a development in language education, known as Teacher Alliance International, that will hopefully outlast the next 25 years to come. St. Dunstan's was interested in improving English courses for the students and Lisa's trip provided a chance for her to conduct a needs assessment at the school. When she returned, she was able to share the project with MATESOL students at MIIS as well. In the fall of 2013, Curriculum Design course students conducted another needs assessment and started to develop a curriculum for some of the students. In the spring of 2014, six students developed curriculum for teacher training. In the fall of 2014, another two students developed a 6th grade curriculum design. Periodically, students have been able to take sponsored trips to St. Andre's school in Hinche, Haiti to implement the curriculum and teach community English lessons.

We, like the MIIS students who came before us and hopefully those who will follow after us, are a part of the Teacher Alliance International objectives and main goal, which states that the purpose of the project is to "enhance the design and delivery of English language instruction to students in the Central Plateau region of Haiti through cooperation with St. Andre's School in order to advance teacher professional development and higher English language proficiency outcomes for students." In order to continue building toward this goal, our objective with the curriculum design is not only to build our own model, but to make sure it becomes a piece of a bigger puzzle that is already being put together. Since the National Curriculum of Haiti mandates English from grades 7-12, and the groups who have come before us have focused

their curriculum on teacher training and 6th grade, we have decided to develop a curriculum for 5th grade. It is our hope that this will be a part of a plan that will eventually trickle down to kindergarten and create a well rounded program for St. Andre's School. With funds being gathered to travel to Hinche this summer, we also hope to ultimately help teachers at St. Andre's school to implement the curriculum in their own classrooms.

### ***Procedures***

After we both decided to commit to the Team EFL Haiti curriculum project, we first met with Lisa. Lisa had introduced herself to us the day we were considering different projects and came back again to meet with us again after. She talked to us about the history of the program, the future goals, and the previous work that students had done. She also brought in a book that is sometimes used by the students and a laptop that they occasionally have access to. Other than Lisa, we determined that our stakeholders include St. Dunstan's Church, St. Andre's School, the Hinche community, 5th grade students, the 5th grade teacher and other local English teachers, the MIIS community, previous curriculum designers, and ourselves, the current curriculum designers.

The stakeholders who were easiest to contact next were Jaimee and Ruth, two students who had previously developed curriculum for Teacher Alliance International and who are planning to go on the trip to Hinche this summer. We met with them multiple times to hear about their experiences, struggles, and breakthroughs while working on the curriculum. They also gave us valuable insight on their own needs assessments and the most reliable people to contact in Haiti to help us with any of our own questions we might have had.

Based off of their recommendations and resources, we then contacted two Haitian English teachers in Hinche and who have connections to the school. These two teachers are named Marc and Shester. We suggested Skype with Marc and Shester, but ultimately decided email was the best mode because of possible time and technology issues. After reviewing the

website for Teacher Alliance International, having multiple meetings with Lisa, Jaimee, and Ruth, and looking at the curricula of previous groups, we developed a list of questions to send Marc and Shester. These questions will be discussed further in the following section.

### **Findings**

Because so much of the needs analysis for this project has already been done by previous teams, we chose to focus our questions on what is going on in the 5th grade classrooms right now. Lisa had indicated to us that Marc and Shester, the two community English teachers, would be our best bets in terms of getting the information we needed. We emailed these questions to both teachers, who then met with Linda (the primary school English teacher), and got responses back to us within 2 weeks. In Table 1, you can see the responses that we got from each one:

**Table 1**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Shester</b>	<b>Marc</b>
1) What materials/books do the 5th grade students use?	The students used different kind of materials that they buy in a library which is named "Henry des Champs" and the books that the Ministry of National Education asks them to use. I will mention them for you.	The 5th grade students use the materials of the national education ministry and the books of Henri Deschamps.
2) What subjects do 5th grade students study?	They study: Mathematics, French communication (I mean grammar, reading, speaking, listening, everything it contains in it), Creole communication (the same like French communication), Experimental Sciences (we see, flying birds, sea	They study many subjects as: history, natural sciences, social sciences, French, maths and so forth.

	animals, human beings), Social sciences (we see general history, or general knowledge, the globe of the Earth, the universe in general).	
3) How much time will the 5th grade students study English each week?	The students don't learn English in 5th grade. But they wish to get a such program! It would be great for them.	Unfortunately they don't have any time to study English.
4) Are there books in the 5th grade classroom? What are they?	The books that you see I mentioned, they bought and used them in the classroom. Mathematics, Social sciences, experimental sciences and so on..	Yes, there are books as: geography, experimental, science social, maths books.
5) How well can the 5th grade students write/read in Kreyol?	They don't have any problem to read and write Creole in 5th grade. But they start with the Creole program in 3th grade.	They can write and read in Creole very well.
6) Do 5th grade students use the computers?	They used laptop in 5th grade.	Yes, they use a very small computer with pictures to show the students some basic notions.
7) How many students are in each 5th grade class?	In each classroom they are about 35, 38, 40 students.	There's only one 5th grade, there are about 40 students.
8) How many teachers are in each 5th grade classroom?	There is one teacher for each classroom except first grade.	There is only one teacher.
9) Are the 6th grade students studying English right now?	The students don't learn English in 6th grade.	The 6th grade students are not studying English right now, but they would like a program to learn English for 5th and 6th grade students.

In addition to these findings, our meetings with the other members of Team Haiti led to not only candid and helpful discussions about the project, but also access to the collective documents of the groups so far. Not only has <http://sites.miis.edu/eflhaiti/> been a valuable resource, but we were also give access to the Google drive that Jaimee's team worked from last spring. Furthermore, Marc and Shester's reference to the Haitian National Ministry's materials led us to search for those materials, which we found online here: [http://www.rubiconef.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/HaitiCurriculum/Haiti5\\_All.pdf](http://www.rubiconef.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/HaitiCurriculum/Haiti5_All.pdf).

### ***Discussion of Findings***

Given that we will not have a chance to observe St. Andre's until we are there in June, this process conducting a needs assessment survey proved to be invaluable in terms of getting a realistic grasp on what we have to work with. Firstly, the information provided to us by Marc and Shester gave us a glimpse into what is happening in the 5th grade classrooms without an English curriculum--not only in terms of what subjects the students learn and what materials they have, but also in terms of how big the classes are and how many teachers there are. The fact that there is one teacher to nearly 40 5th grade students will be an important consideration as we move forward. We also learned that the students do have access to the XO laptops that Lisa showed us, meaning that while we don't like them, they are a resource we can use. Sadly, we learned that the 6th grade students are not learning English at this time. That information, coupled with Lisa's observation (from Ruth's NA Report) that the book that Jaimee's team designed their curriculum around was nowhere to be found during her visit, indicates that there is still much work to be done in terms of seeing our work put into practice.

Because we chose a project that has already been so thoroughly developed by previous groups, the meetings and conversations we had with Lisa, Jaimee, and Ruth were also just as important as the survey in terms of getting the overall picture of the situation at St. Andre's. Their insights have been incredibly helpful in not only orienting us to the project, but also in

helping us choose a direction as far as planning the actual curriculum. The collective experience of all of the team members is crucial. However, this can also be seen as a limitation, in that we are relying completely on the opinions and insights of others rather than our own observations. This problem was also present in the survey process, in that we were relying on information gathered by two teachers who know St. Andre's, but do not work there themselves. However, given the various constraints - geographic and otherwise - this is what we have to work with and an obvious challenge of this project will be in creating something worthwhile from that.

### ***Implications***

There are a few things that we will be considering in our curriculum design as a result of this needs assessment. Firstly, given that there are no English materials in place at this time, Ruth's plan of using a book from the International Children's Digital Library seems like a good model to follow. Hopefully using a resource that teachers have available on the ground will be helpful in encouraging them to develop their own lessons. Secondly, since we have access to the curriculum prepared by the Haitian National Ministry of Education, we hope to be able to develop lessons that can work in tandem with what they are learning in other subject areas. Ideally this will allow the students to make connections between multiple subjects, as well as allow opportunities to be communicative in English about things they are already thinking about.

Another implication of our findings is that much needs to be done in terms of training the teachers. The fact that English is not being taught in 6th grade, in spite of a year or work on that curriculum, suggests that work needs to be done on both ends to further the collaborative process in designing effective curriculum for St. Andre's. However, another thing that we learned is that there are few teachers overseeing many students, and even fewer that are trained in English education. Because of this, it seems probable that a new curriculum will need to be designed to completion and demonstrated to a teacher committed to implementing it before this process can really get rolling.

## ***Conclusion***

It is clear from our needs assessment that we are a part of special program with a special purpose and many invested stakeholders. Teacher Alliance International provides a clear vision that invites us to focus our objectives and goals on developing English language instruction for St. Andre's school in Hinche, Haiti. In order to do so, we realized the best way to contribute to the Alliance would be to develop a 5th grade curriculum that can continue to be built upon in the future. In order to continue building toward this goal, we met with Lisa Donohoe, Jaimee, and Ruth multiple times, and we also exchanged computer based contact with Marc and Shester, two local English teachers in Hinche.

From these initial findings we were able to form new questions. We learned that when it comes to English teaching resources, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade has little to work with. There is no access to the internet in the classroom and there are no English instructional books. There also currently is no time allocated for English language learning. Despite these limitations, it is also clear, however, that there is a strong desire and enthusiasm for English language lessons. We can assume that this enthusiasm will be fresh for 5<sup>th</sup> graders since they will be true beginners without any previous formal English instruction. We look forward to taking what we have learned from the needs assessment and using it as a foundation for a creative and effective curriculum design. Ultimately, we hope to share this design and have it prove to be useful to both the Teacher Alliance International and the teachers at St. Andre's school in Hinche.