Tracy-Ann Hall did not enjoy successful school years herself, due to undiagnosed dyslexia. She did not move on to higher education immediately but instead trained as an automotive technician and worked in a garage. This experience in training other learner mechanics gave her a lifelong love of teaching. With more qualifications, she entered the vocational teachers’ college in Jamaica and after three years graduated top of her class.

Her positive approach transformed her first teaching class from a group of students who had previously been written off as ‘poor’ into a great success. She motivated a class of 30 boys, setting up a class library, encouraging them to read and deliver a book review on completing each volume. They began to excel in grade ten and by grade 11 were so motivated that eight of them joined the school choir and one became Head Boy at the school. Hers was also the first automotive exam class to score a 95% pass in the history of the school. She also started and oversaw a programme for her class to feed street people, launch a junior automotive club and serve on the school magazine committee. Her students have gone on to a wide range of occupations – policemen, scuba divers, hotel managers, chefs, and, of course, automotive technicians – and she also encourages all her students to move into higher education.

Regarding her classroom as her workshop, Tracy-Ann plasters the walls with charts showcasing outstanding achievements of students and each of their goals for the year ahead. She encourages friendly competition between the students and gives rewards to those who achieve high grades and significant improvements.

Tracy-Ann has taught at various schools, all with the same success. She has convinced business leaders in the automotive sector to sponsor scholarships for exceptional students, ensuring they start with a firm foothold in the industry. With resources scarce, she has been ingenious in finding materials and components for her automotive classes, which are difficult to attract funding for, again forming partnerships with those in the automotive sector to use their facilities and spare parts. She has hosted summer schools for low-income families, bolstering her community. Her contribution has been recognized with a number of awards from the schools she has taught at.