

ABSTRACT

An assessment of needs for inservice education
in science as perceived by teachers in primary
schools of the North Eastern Educational Division
in Trinidad and Tobago

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According to research studies, one weakness of inservice programmes has been the failure to involve teachers in the process of identifying staff needs. This project was initiated to investigate the perceived needs of primary school teachers for inservice science education.

Instrumentation was by means of a questionnaire in which teachers indicated their perceived level of need for stated items. There was also an open-ended section. Twenty randomly-selected schools provided a cohort of 154 teachers for the sample. Their responses provided data for ranking the items listed in the questionnaire. The major hypotheses tested related to the variables of gender, level of science background, age, experience, professional training and previous attendance at inservice courses.

In prioritizing their needs, the teachers expressed greatest interest in areas related to physical tasks such as using audio-visual equipment, organizing and arranging a science room, producing materials for teaching science, using field trips to teach science and maintaining live animals and plants.

This concern for facilities was also apparent in the open-ended section in which the findings suggested that teachers consider materials and equipment for science to be an urgent need among primary schools.

by the following:

The teachers in the survey perceive themselves to have the least need for areas such as explaining reasons for teaching science, ensuring the safety of pupils, maintaining class discipline and pupil interest and overcoming the fear of teaching science. With respect to the hypotheses tested, there was a significant difference among the overall levels of need expressed by teachers with different levels of science background. All other null hypotheses were accepted on the basis of the data gathered.

The findings of the study should be instructive as planners determine the content and emphasis of inservice courses for these or for similar teachers.

Ms. Estelle Frederick, for her patience during the typing of the project report.

Her mother and other members of her family (especially Corina); her colleagues and friends for their support and encouragement during the entire exercise.