

ABSTRACT

The Status of Literature
in Secondary Schools
of
The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
(O.E.C.S.)

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This research was designed to determine the status of Literature in secondary schools of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (O.E.C.S.), concentrating on finding out:

- i. The policies, written and unwritten of the Ministries of Education with regard to the role and value of Literature;
- ii. The practices of the Ministries of Education with regard to the role and value of Literature in schools;
- iii. The value/merit attached to the subject by students, teachers and administrators;
- iv. The problems teachers encounter teaching Literature;
- v. Students' perceptions of poetry;
- vi. The extent to which the methodology used in Literature classes is in harmony with that suggested by CXC;
- vii. How the organizational arrangements and practices of the schools relate to the status of the subject.

Data were collected by means of questionnaires, interviews and observation of actual Literature lessons. The Curriculum Heads of six islands of the O.E.C.S. were interviewed. The researcher also analyzed policy documents (Education Development Plans) and the subject offerings of secondary schools in the sample. 600 third form students and 49 teachers of secondary schools answered questionnaires. 25 principals were also interviewed. 25 Literature lessons were also observed in four of the six O.E.C.S. countries. The data were summarized and analyzed.

The analysis of the data revealed the following:

- 1) There is no official government philosophy or policy with regard to the role and value of Literature.
- 2) Most students regard Literature as important to them. All teachers, principals and Curriculum Heads have a high value attached to Literature.
- 3) Teachers cited lack of administrative support, materials, students' attitudes and poor teaching methodology in lower forms as some of the problems encountered in teaching Literature.
- 4) Most students claim they love poetry and advance educational, aesthetic, personal and teaching methodology as reasons for their perception of the genre.
- 5) A large percentage of teachers employ the methodology suggested by CXC in their classes. Classes however, reveal a heavy bias for chalk and talk methods of teaching.
- 6) Administrative arrangements such as time-tabling and subject choices in Form Four do not suggest that Literature is enjoying a high status in secondary schools.

Keywords: Anthony Everard Felicien; status; Literature; Secondary Schools; Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.