ABSTRACT

An Investigation into the Attitudes to Teaching of Students of Valsayn Teachers College.

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The attitude factor is central to current debates about improving the quality of the teacher in today's schools. In Trinidad and Tobago this issue has been raised over the last thirty years, as concerns continue to be expressed about the state of our primary schools. This study contends that the process of recruitment, and subsequent training of the prospective teacher must seriously address this attitude criterion.

This research was of the survey type and sought to determine the attitudes of three student cohorts of Valsayn Teachers College both longitudinally and cross-sectionally. Attitude to teaching as a career and as a profession, attitude to children as learners, to students' own professional development and to the work environment during the first year after training were probed. Five hundred and thirty-six (536) student teachers and thirteen (13) members of the academic staff participated in the investigation.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed. It was found that student teachers generally were favourably predisposed toward teaching, but less so to it as a career. They were positive in their attitude toward children as learners but had negative attitudes toward their professional
development. To some extent, opinions of the lecturers were consistent with the views expressed by student teachers. During the first year in the classroom, attitudes generally remained positive.

Suggestions for recruiting a high quality cadre of future teachers were made.

the computer experts Brian, Ansel and David who assisted with the first draft of the thesis and Mr. John Antoine who handled the final draft;

good friends Jessie, Natasha, Rhonda and Avril who helped to collate the students' data, and Gillian whose typing skills in the preliminary stage of the investigation were invaluable.

Hayes Jones, friend and supporter who eased the burden of distribution and collection of questionnaires.

Dr. Kennedy who provided computer facilities at the preliminary stage;

the Principal of Valsayn Teachers College along with the staff and students who participated in this research, and;

all those other friends who contributed by way of love and support of every kind. To all of you I say thanks.

And to my Faithful God whose Spirit hovered over all of us, guiding and shaping this study to its final conclusion, to You I give the Glory.