

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

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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.

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