

## ABSTRACT

THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL:  
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICE

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This study examines the teaching of literature in public primary schools of Port of Spain and Environs with respect to teachers' views on how literature should be taught and actual practice up to the close of the school year 1989-1990.

The focus is on teachers' orientation to the student's literary development from level 1 to 2 in primary education represented by standards 1 and 3 in accord with the Primary School Syllabus 1988. Subjects are 70 teachers from 36 schools, a cross-section of the 69 public primary schools of Port of Spain and Environs. Analysis of data, gathered through a survey questionnaire and observation schedule designed for this project, draws on the laws of perceptual organization and adopts a reflective stance to interpretation.

Findings reveal little articulation between teachers' views on how literature should be taught and what obtained. Although teachers felt their teaching

should be based on a clear rationale, that was lacking. Their objectives were not supported by a network of adequate training, guidance, supervision and materials. Five of their objectives, including their most important one, to improve the student's skills in reading and writing, were not being satisfactorily attained. Teachers felt the teaching of literature should be central to the child's entire primary education but it seemed constrained to the periphery and appeared to be minimally taught.

The educational significance of the findings lies in their implications for continual assessment of curriculum development at the primary level towards attainment of national educational goals.