

ABSTRACT

Performance on the Science Processes "Inferring"
and "Controlling Variables" by
Selected Common Entrance Students in Trinidad and
Tobago.

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In this project, a multiple choice test entitled the Trinidad and Tobago Science Process Test (TTSPT) was developed, based on the primary science curriculum, of Trinidad and Tobago. It was used to measure performance in the process skills "controlling variables" and "inferring" in Common Entrance students.

The test consisted of 30 items, each with four options and had a KR-20 reliability coefficient of 0.86.

The test was administered to a sample of Common Entrance students ($N = 216$) which was drawn from six schools (two "above average" and four "below average") in Port of Spain and its environs. The sample

comprised 108 students (61 boys, 47 girls) from each type of school.

The results of the study indicated that:-

- (i) items testing "inferring" were less demanding for the sample than those testing "controlling variables".
- (ii) in the total sample, there was no significant difference, $p > .05$, between scores for boys and scores for girls on the process "controlling variables". The girls performed significantly better than the boys on "inferring".

When criteria for competence and satisfactory performance were applied, the following observations were made:-

- (i) Common Entrance students from Port of Spain and environs were generally not performing satisfactorily on the two processes.
- (ii) Students from "below average" schools showed an extremely low level of competence with no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

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- (iii) Girls from above average schools gave a satisfactory performance in both processes while the boys' performance was only satisfactory for "inferring". The girls' performance was significantly better than that of the boys.

Generally, there were many indications that students found the items on "inferring", less demanding, than the items on "controlling variables".

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