

Classroom Practices

The society was one that believed in force as a way of controlling the masses. Corporal Punishment was therefore used in schools. Students were beaten with whips, belts and even bamboo sticks. The main teaching method was repetition or rote learning where the students continuously repeat what the teacher says until the teacher is satisfied that the students have committed the information to memory. The teachers spoke in English. Except for the student teachers, the others could not be understood because of their thick accent. The children did not understand everything that was said.

The main subjects that were taught at the primary level were known as the Three R's, they are: Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. The same problems were experienced in reading classes. The words were strange to the students. When they went back home everyone around them spoke broken English or patois. They did not have any opportunity to practice.

Many of the schools were operated by various religious bodies such as the Baptists, Moravians, Anglicans and Catholics. They placed emphasis on Religious Education and indoctrination. The students were not allowed to talk out of turn. In most instances they did not ask questions. This helped to stifle learning.

The curriculum was of no relevance to their culture. Textbooks were imported from England and later from the United States. They contained material, phrases and images that were foreign to the average Caribbean child. For example, snow, reindeer, xylophone and Rumpelstiltskin.

Gender Discrimination - Boys were paid more attention than girls.