

Students' interests in the teaching and writing of composition in secondary schools

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The study that follows has tried to investigate the question of students' interests in composition writing in secondary schools in Tanzania mainland. The educational process demands the use of such interests in teaching as well as in learning. Many educational thinkers and psychologists, as far back as Socrates, and as late as Bruner, have contended that students' interests should form the basis of any curriculum. For the purpose of this study the work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter has first identified the problem which states that, to a large extent, the teaching and writing of composition in schools are divorced from the students' interests through such aspects as emphasis on controlled compositions, the teaching in general and writing of composition in schools are divorced from students interest through such aspects an emphasis on controlled compositions, the teaching in general and the way examinations are set. In connection with the problem a look has been made into the whole field of interest ranging from its nature and implication to teaching, to researches which have already been done by other people. The second chapter has outlined the methodology and procedure that has been used to determine the students' interests and the way composition is being conducted in schools. In this country, very little or no study at all has been made on students' writing interests, and for that reason ideas and approach from other people have 'con incorporated in the first two chapters as review on related literature and as methodology and procedures for the study. Chapter Three contains the actual findings from the study. These have been analyzed in order to test their significance. The first part of the findings is a collection of 1189 composition topics which live then been classified into ten interest areas. These have then been used to determine their differences and significance in such variables as forms, sex, locality and streaming. The second part comprises information on the position of Kiswahili in secondary schools with emphasis on composition. The results have shown that students can portray many interests if they are given the chance, and that these interests differ in degree with age, sex and locality. Furthermore the results of have shown that the teaching composition in schools does not particularly base on students' interests. On account of that, Chapter tour has discussed the findings and their implications in a classroom situation. Suggestions have been put forward on how best to utilize students' interests and on how all the practices concerned can apply them in composition teaching and writing. Effort has been made to discuss the ways students' interests can be utilized in the classroom through four basic principles of theory into practice, experience, interest and of freedom. Chapter Five has briefly summarized the findings and has tried to recommend what possible solutions can be taken by classroom teachers, the National Examination Council of Tanzania, and the Ministry of National Education in general. For example, teachers of composition have been presented with Specific stages in the development

of a composition lesson. Finally in the chapter, the study has indicated the significance of the findings to the teachers of composition, curriculum developers, the National Examination Council of Tanzania, and to the Ministry of National Education. While these findings are not the end by themselves, suggestion has been made for more research into the whole area of students' interests and their implication for composition teaching. The study ends up with two appendices. Appendix A shows the information and instruction to the students during the fieldwork, and Appendix B is a questionnaire from which some of the questions have been used as a source of data for the second part of the findings.