

The Attitude of Teachers towards Integrated Learning in Secondary Schools in Prakasam District

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Abstract-The present paper attempts to determine the Attitudes of Teachers towards Integrated Learning in Secondary Schools in the Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. Various Indian and foreign studies relevant to the research area have also been reviewed. The Descriptive Survey method has been used in this study. The sample consisted of 100 teachers from the Prakasam District, chosen with the help of a stratified random sampling method. The questionnaire was constructed for secondary school teachers to find out the opinions of school teachers on Integrated Learning in Secondary Schools in the Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. The data were analyzed using various statistical methods like mean, S.D., t-test and ANOVA by SPSS package. The scores obtained by different groups are compared across the variables like gender, school management, general qualification, professional qualification, designation, teaching experience and locality. The results indicated that there is a positive and high perception of Integrated Learning in Secondary Schools. The results are discussed in light of previous research done; Implications and Recommendations for further research are also suggested.

Keywords: Attitudes of Teachers, Integrated Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. Every child should have the opportunity to achieve his or her academic potential. Research studies prove that scholastic backwardness and poor school performance appear mostly in government schools. Poor school performance not only results in the child having low self-esteem but also causes significant stress to the parents. There are many reasons for children's lower levels of performance at school, such as medical problems, below-average intelligence, specific

learning disability, emotional problems, poor socio-economic status, psychiatric disorders and many more such problem situations.

Education is the backbone of all nations. Proper education alone can build the character of a nation and awaken the consciousness of nationality and freedom, the nation's ideals, the nation's morality and sense of duty and everything depends upon education. It is education that enables a man to be a real and perfect man. A man without education would still be living just like an animal. Education is like a diamond, which appears to be of a different colour when seen from different angles. It is as fundamental to civilization, to social service as reproduction and nutrition are essential to biological evolution.

In this 21st century, the term "technology" is an important issue in many fields, including education. This is because technology has become the knowledge transfer highway in most countries. Technology integration nowadays has gone through innovations and transformed our societies that has totally changed the way people think, work and live (Grabe, 2007). As part of this, schools and other educational institutions which are supposed to prepare students to live in "a knowledge society" need to consider ICT integration in their curriculum (Ghavifekr, Afshari & Amla Salleh, 2012). Integration of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) in education refers to the use of computer-based communication that is incorporated into the daily classroom instructional process. In conjunction with preparing students for the current digital era, teachers are seen as the key players in using ICT in their daily classrooms. This is due to the capability of ICT to provide a dynamic and proactive teaching-learning environment (Arnseth & Hatlevik, 2012). While the aim of ICT integration is to improve

and increase the quality, accessibility and cost-efficiency of the delivery of instruction to students, it also refers to the benefits of networking the learning communities to face the challenges of current globalization (Albirini, 2006, p.6). The process of adoption of ICT is not a single step, but it is an ongoing and continuous step that fully support teaching and learning and information resources (Young, 2003).

Integrated Learning:

Integrated learning, sometimes called interdisciplinary learning, brings together diverse disciplines in a comprehensive manner, enabling students to develop a meaningful understanding of the complex associations and influences within a topic. A happy by-product of this approach, which is often coupled with project-based learning, is that it makes school more interesting and productive for students and teachers.

“The Logic of Interdisciplinary Studies”, an exhaustive 1997 research report, found broad consensus among dozens of researchers as to what the report called the “positive educational outcomes” for students in an integrated- studies program:

- Increased understanding, retention, and application of general concepts.
- Better overall comprehension of global interdependencies, along with the development of multiple perspectives and points of view, as well as values.
- Increased ability to make decisions, think critically and creatively and synthesize knowledge beyond the disciplines.
- Enhanced ability to identify, assess, and transfer significant information needed for solving novel problems.
- Promotion of cooperative learning and a better attitude toward oneself as a learner and as a meaningful member of a community.
- Increased motivation.

Integrated learning systems feature programmed instruction for teachers and students. Their purpose is to direct and coach the student through the learning experience.

Need for Integrated Learning:

- Integrated learning makes addressing curriculum manageable by offering a means of addressing many subject expectations meaningfully.

- It contributes to a deeper understanding of topics, issues, and the interrelationships inherent in complex, real-world systems.
- It provides opportunities to differentiate instruction. The inclusion of multiple disciplines provides students with the opportunity to engage their particular interests or abilities.
- Integrated learning enables a more authentic assessment.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

HeriRetnawati et al. (2017) studied “Teachers’ Difficulties in Implementing Thematic Teaching and Learning in Elementary Schools”. This study aimed to identify teachers’ difficulties in implementing thematic learning in elementary schools. The study was phenomenology-type qualitative research. Data were collected through interviews followed by focus group discussion, which involved 15 elementary school teachers from eight provinces that had implemented Curriculum 2013. The data were analyzed by means of Creswell’s steps. The results of the study showed that teachers encountered obstacles in selecting appropriate problems and themes within thematic, scientific and problem-based learning and in managing time for project-based learning. The availability of learning facilities was still limited. The problems found at the assessment stage were the teachers’ capacity in selecting appropriate techniques, in creating good instruments and in formulating clear assessment criteria.

Dora Chostelidoua and Eleni Griva (2014) conducted a study on “Measuring the effect of implementing CLIL in higher education: An experimental research project”. The aim of the present paper is to provide insights into experimental research on a CLIL project for reading skills development in the context of Greek tertiary education. The research design involved conducting interviews and administering a CLIL test with a focus on reading skills and the content of the target discipline. The data provided support for the efficacy of implementing CLIL in higher education as the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of both reading skills and content knowledge and showed a considerably higher positive attitude towards the CLIL course than their peers in the control group.

Role of Teachers:

- Most subject areas provide interesting topics and teachable moments to address literacy and numeracy.
- Teamteaching allows colleagues to break down artificial subject barriers and give students a more authentic experience of building knowledge and solving problems.
- Better still, a thematic teaching approach can unite curriculum and colleagues around a single topic and, in doing so, help students gain a deeper understanding.
- Action projects launched from just about any subject or content area provide excellent opportunities to incorporate knowledge and skills from across the curriculum.
- Learning outcomes derived from field trips within the school neighbourhood or beyond can easily include those associated with journal writing, drawing and photography, observing recording, and hypothesis testing, to name a few.
- Children's literature can be an excellent vehicle for integrating subjects and curriculum.

Advantages of Integrated Learning:

Integrated studies allow students to gain knowledge in a truly interdisciplinary fashion. In today's dynamic global economy, centred on the development and exchange of knowledge and information, individuals who are fluent in several disciplines are comfortable moving among them. Creativity, adaptability, critical reasoning, and collaboration are highly valued skills. When it comes to fostering those skills in the classroom, integrated study is an extremely effective approach, helping students develop multifaceted expertise and grasp the important role interrelationships can play in the real world.

Integrated studies, sometimes called interdisciplinary studies, bring together diverse disciplines in a comprehensive manner, enabling students to develop a meaningful understanding of the complex associations and influences within a topic. A happy by-product of this approach, which is often coupled with project-based learning, is that it makes school more interesting and productive for students and teachers.

- Increased understanding, retention, and application of general concepts.

- Better overall comprehension of global interdependencies, along with the development of multiple perspectives and points of view, as well as values.
- Increased ability to make decisions, think critically and creatively and synthesize knowledge beyond the disciplines.
- Enhanced ability to identify, assess, and transfer significant information needed for solving novel problems.
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The commitment is to teach children in the best way possible. It is the integrated learning environment that is most conducive. There is an urgent need to look at holistic, interconnected and non-fragmented models that are integrated into real life. A concrete foundation for considering integrated learning as a sound platform for the transformation of our education. This is happening all over the world. Integration rather than fragmentation is the only way forward for a proper, all-round education. Most forms of integrated education promote learning and teaching in non-fragmented ways.

Integrated education embraces learning modes within real life, making real connections within known social and physical contexts. The whole learning experience is seen as one whole because a human being is a whole person.

Teachers are encouraged to create learning environments where children can feel at home rather than trapped in a strange school alien to their psyche. The key to an integrated learning experience is to build on the links by focusing on the distinctions that set them in individual compartments.

Some aspects of integrated learning are:

- 1) To maximize the learners' experience in real life rather than in an artificial academic setting.
- 2) Integration of academic knowledge or theoretical concepts in real life.
- 3) Integration is to ensure that learning is related to the particular gift of the learner.
- 4) Integration is the interrelation of one area of learning with another to break down the walls that are built in artificially segregated curricula. A

child would understand better if it connects what is learnt in one particular situation or discipline to another.

- 5) Integration must employ various modes of delivering education. It must be recognized that learning is too complex a process to be confined to a single environment. A variety of other environments for integrated learning need to be explored. All kinds of formal and informal, campus and off-campus, online and offline methods must be utilized to maximize the integrated learning process.

Integration is all about living and therefore, when learning is integrated with life we become alive to all the challenges of our multifaceted world.

CONCLUSION

This study provides an opportunity to look into Integrated Learning and its components for effective teaching in secondary schools. The concept, principles and basic inputs of integrated learning will provide a great opportunity for the teachers to make their interesting, effective, active, lively and highly enriching for the students. The components of Integrated learning need to be completely interwoven into the entire system of secondary education, where the student's life becomes learning, and all the experiences are highly motivating for further learning. This study is of great importance as, once again, the teachers are looking back into a system of learning where the learning takes a sharp turn from teacher-oriented to student-oriented and from academics to an integrated approach. The focus mainly incorporates the child's whole life in the age group of six to eleven years, taking the cues from the knowledge and experience of the child at home, in the society and with the child's peers. Every context of growth the child experiences over five years will be taken as a concrete base for imparting knowledge at the secondary level.

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