_____

THEMATIC BASED INSTRUCTION – A TRENDY APPROACH

G. Saraswathi[1] and Dr. S. Leo Stanly[2]
**[1]Ph.D. Scholar, (Full time) , Department of Education (DDE),
Alagappa University, Karaikudi.**
**[2]M.Sc.,M.Ed.,M.Phil.,Ph.D., Research Supervisor, Associate Professor,
Department of Education (DDE) , Alagappa University, Karaikudi,
Tamilnadu.**

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this article is to highlight Thematic Based Instruction's Practical applications and benefits of Thematic Based Instruction in the Teaching - Learning process. The research article also included, Improving Learner's perceived competency, thought provoking and making pleasant learning with comfort zone. According to children's perception, among Thematic Based Instruction .

Teacher and schools need to keep up with the recent developments in the field of education . Thematic Based Instruction has been used international and national practical level and implemented in Iceland,Hong-kong turkey and south Asia. Thematic Based Instruction has been acted as a "contextual glue" of Learners and society.

So , Thematic Based Instruction has considered as a trendy approach. This article also, covers characteristic of Thematic Based Instruction and briefly described ,about how to link with high-tech thematic digital courseware. Finally, conclude with influence of Thematic Based Instruction in education field and its necessity.

KEYWORDS: *Thematic Instruction, Digital courseware, Pleasant Learning, Learner's Perceived Competency, Learning Comfort Zone.*

INTRODUCTION:

Thematic based instruction (TBI) defends very well the principle of "integration". in terms of Richards and Rodgers (2001), theme or topics promote continuity and coherence across skill areas and focus on using language in connected discourse rather than isolated pieces of language In this sense ,"theme based courses bring together knowledge ,language and thinking skills .p.(208).

The topic of thematic-approaches is not universally applied and defined, and the level of application varies greatly from the macro-scale initiatives across campus to the micro-level use of a theme for one unit of study. Numerous subtle variations were found in the terminology used in the literature including the following: "integrative theme" (Barma & Bader, 2013), "thematic approach" (Lung, 1999; Handal & Bobis, 2004), "thematic program" (Lung, 1999), "thematic teaching" (Lipson, Wixson, & Peters, 1993), "thematic instruction" (Handal & Bobis, 2004), "themed courses" (Mangan, 2014), and "teaching [subject] thematically" (Handal & Bobis, 2004).

Handal (2001) defines a thematic-approach in mathematics as "an umbrella term for a wide range of educational experiences that relate mathematics to real life situations" (as seen in Handal and Bobis, 2004), which should "facilitate experiential and situated learning and bring personal meaning and direction to the learning process" (Handal & Bobis, 2004). Furthermore, Handal and Bobis (2004) distinguish thematic

_____

_____

instruction that is focused on "applications" of a subject connected to the overarching theme, from topical teaching where the emphasis is on subject "content."

There are many visions of thematic units and appropriate methods of instruction and assessment for thematic work. In most, teachers are urged to develop thematic units by identifying a topic, developing a visual representation (most often a web or concept map) of ideas and facts related to the topic, and then identifying materials and designing curriculum activities (Pigdon and Wooley, 1993). In addition, the literature reveals many questions about who can write themes (Altwerger and Flores, 1994), what content should be included, and how this content should be structured. Some authors, especially those who operate from a whole language perspective, advocate planning units almost exclusively at the classroom level and at least part of units with children (Altwerger and Flores, 1994, Harste, Short & Burke, 1988; Mills and Clyde, 1990). While we support the important ways that teachers are curriculum planners, we wonder if there are not also legitimate ways to draw upon the expertise of other teachers, scholars, and researchers in the development of thematic studies.

Lung (1999) reports that the goals of adopting a theme in the sciences include: increasing relevancy, focusing on processes, integrating units, fostering "higher order" thinking, and moving beyond the confines of one text.

THEMATIC BASED INSTRUCTION PROPOSALS

➢ **Subject matter core:-**
The fundamental organization of the curriculum should be derived from subject matter, rather than from forms, functions or situations.

➢ **Use of authentic texts:-**
The core materials (texts, video tapes, audio recordings, visual aided) should be selected primarily from those produced for native speakers of language .

➢ **Learning of new information :-**
Students should use the native language to learn new information and to evaluate that information ,based on knowledge of their own culture ,and their own emerging culture literacy in second culture .

➢ **Appropriate to the specific needs students:-**
The topics, content, materials, and learning activities should correspond to the students and should be appropriate to the proficiency level of the class.

-(leaves &stryker,1989)

CHARACTERISTIC OF THEMATIC INSTRUCTION :

➢ **Student-Centered Learning.** Thematic instruction treats the students as the center of learning, this is in a line with modern learning approaches that position students more as the subject of learning who take the main role in the learning processes and teachers work as facilitators of the processes.
➢ **Provide Direct Experiences (Hands-On Learning).** Thematic instruction can give students direct experiences. Through these experiences, students encounter something tangible (concrete) as a basis to understand more abstract things.
➢ **Subject Integration**. In thematic instruction, the separation among subjects is not apparent. The focus of learning is on themes that most closely connect with students' daily lives. 29
➢ **Whole Learning**. Thematic instruction presents concepts from various subjects in a single process. Thus, students will be able to understand these concepts as a whole. This is important to assist students in problem solving encountered in everyday life.

_____

_____

- ➤ **Flexibility** (Responsive). Thematic instruction is flexible in which teachers may connect teaching materials from one subject with other subjects, even connecting with students' life and the environmental surroundings schools and students.
- ➤ **Variety Of Assessment.** Students have an opportunity to optimize their potential according to their interests and needs.
- ➤ **Using The Principles Of Engaged Learning.** Learning is conducted in various ways such as role play, games, discussions, and the like. The aim of all instructions is that students enjoy their learning (MONE, 2009, p. 9).

A TRENDY APPROACH

- ➤ The quantitative and qualitative results combined yield insights into benefits of using theme-based approaches to teaching and learning that help address the gap of data noted in the literature (Handal and Bobis, 2004).
- ➤ One area in particular, the increase in perceived connection between subjects and themes, is a unique asset of theme-based learning.
- ➤ More beneficial significant results and positive shifts in qualitative responses were found in the two courses that had highly-integrated themes, a finding that underscores concerns in the literature about the need for a thoughtful adoption of themes (Lipson, et al., 1993).

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS :

- ➤ Theme-based teaching which was answered in the second research question, it was found that the children in this study were very positive towards theme-based teaching.
- ➤ The majority of them thought that teaching activities and tasks are more integrated and organized with the use of theme-based teaching.
- ➤ This aspect is in line with the rationale behind a thematic approach to learning that it makes teaching activities and materials more "structured, sequential, and well-organized" (Meinbach, Rothlein, & Fredericks, 1995, p. 5).
- ➤ With the adoption of theme-based teaching, many children found learning English became more meaningful and interesting, and more vocabulary items centering around a certain theme could be learned easily.
- ➤ These findings support Cameron's (2001) views that theme-based teaching provides learners with motivating and meaningful use of the language and that new vocabulary items can be learned easily, with the theme "providing support for understanding and recall" (p. 191).
- ➤ In fact, the theme-based teaching approach supports the retention of vocabulary as vocabulary items are presented in contexts and in associative ways, which is in agreement with how the human brain organizes and retains information because "words are organized semantically" in the human mental lexicon (McCarthy, 1990, p. 40).

PERCEIVED COMPETENCY AND COMFORT ZONE THEMATIC BASED INSTRUCTION

- ➤ All courses yielded a statistically significant gain in perceived connection(s) between the study subjects and the themes, and qualitative responses indicated that the use of a theme helped students learn about the subject via the ability to apply subjects to the theme and their lives/careers, by increasing motivation/interest/comfort and by promoting learning by adding new knowledge to existing theme-established scaffolding. (These results align with benefits of theme-based learning described by Handal and Bobis, 2004, and Lipson et al., 1993.)
- ➤ These areas of quantitative and qualitative results illustrate the unique advantage theme-based learning may present over traditional, single-subject approaches.

_____

_____

➢ That is, thematic approaches support higher-level critical thinking skills as noted by Lung (1999), because they facilitate students in forming connections between areas of study (ex. between beer and biology) or between areas of study and their lives.

THEMATIC BASED DIGITAL COURSEWARE WITH HIGH TECH

➢ Learner-Autonomy Digital Courseware Learners-autonomy courseware is instructional content that is scoped and sequenced to support delivery of an entire course through software built specifically for educational purposes.

➢ It includes assessment to inform personalization of instruction and is equipped for adoption across a range of institutional types and learning environments.

➢ A quality digital courseware implementation, with potential to support improved students outcomes can be achieved through any models depending on course or institutional needs and digital infrastructure.

➢ Technology supports thematic learning by providing tools for communication (.e-mail)¬ research(e.g., world wide web or CD-ROM-based resources), and presentation (e.g., word processors and multimedia authoring/ presentation tools such as Hyper studio). The ability of the web based learning to incorporate information ,image, animation, interactive, problems, quizzes provides variety to maintain students interest.

        (Leo Stanly .S)

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PRACTICAL CASES WITH THEMATIC BASED INSTRUCTION

➢ The international studies about TBI Were implemented in Iceland, Hong kong,turkey,and southeast Asia, whereas ,the national one was carried out in medllin.

➢ The international studies together with the national one shared a similar purpose.

➢ They were focused in investigating the effects of implementing TBI in schools.

➢ The objectives of thematic instruction such as activating the ability of "Learning by doing

➢ Improving language skill ,increasing communicative abilities and enhancing learner centered instruction on teaching ,assistances, rejecting traditional teaching model,

➢ Developing a wide range of knowledge human, social and cognitive skills, as well as increasing all students critical thinking creativity, motivation and responsibility were achieved.

BENEFITS OF THEMATIC INSTRUCTION

➢ Thematic instruction usually occurs within an entire grade level of students. Teachers of all the different subjects taught in that particular grade, work together as a team to design curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment around a pre selected theme (Perfetti & Goldman, 1975).

➢ It provides a clear focus for instruction while allowing for differentiation of experiences for learners according to individual interests, needs, and stages of development.

➢ Furthermore, it contributes to the development of problem-solving and decision-making abilities by its consistent emphasis on skills and processes of generating personal knowledge.

➢ However, ITI requires initial design work, plus a substantial restructuring of teacher relationships and class schedules.

➢ The model puts the teacher in the role of decision maker about what is to be included in the curriculum and how it is to be implemented.

➢ This approach relies on teachers who have a deep understanding of curriculum as a learning process and can see ways to connect learning with key concepts.

➢ A theme can be thought of as the pervasive existence of common ideas and movements across multiple historical contexts, for example, terrorism, colonization, revolution, or migration. Historians identify and use themes to establish relationships between events and to structure their inquiry

_____

_____

➢ Approach the selected theme by choosing a selection of contexts that illustrate its breadth and depth. How much breadth and depth depends on your knowledge base, your interests and those of your students, what resources you can access, and the priorities of the school and the wider community.

CONCLUSION

　　　The thematic instruction is more comfortable connecting new knowledge to something that they had already liked or understood. A few expressed that they could apply the subject in their lives, in turn affecting the depth of their thoughts and their degree of caring about the subject. The researchers thus encourage others to apply meaningful themes to their courses and to research the effectiveness of this teaching and learning strategy. Thematic Based Instruction can create positive change in the teaching learning process and which can shape the environment or even the future of the country.

REFERENCES

1.Altwerger, B. & Flores, B. (1994). "*Theme cycles: Creating communities of learner's*. Primary Voices K-6. 2 (1), 2-6.

2.Barma, S., & Bader, B. (2013*). "How one science teacher redefines a science teaching practice around a theme: a case study in the context of educational reform in Quebec"*. International Journal of Environmental & Science Education, 8(1), 131-161.

3.Catur Rismiati (MAY 2012) , "*Teachers' Concerns Regarding the Implementation of Integrated Thematic Instruction: A Study of Primary Grade Teachers in Kanisius Catholic Schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia"*. Loyola University Chicago. Dissertation

4.Chi Cheung Ruby Yang(2009,) "*Theme-based Teaching in an English Course for Primary ESL Students in Hong Kong   Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching 2009"*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 161–176 © Centre for Language Studies National University of Singapore

5.Czerniak, C.M., Lumpe, A.T., & Haney, J. J. (1999). *"Science teachers' beliefs and intentions to implement Thematic Units. Journal of Science Teacher Education*," 10(2), 123-145.

6.Handal, B., & Bobis, J. (2004*). "Teaching mathematics thematically: teacher's perspectives. Mathematics Education Research Journal"*, 16(1), 3-18.

7.Harste, J., Short, K. & Burke, C. (1988)."*Creating classrooms for authors. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann."*

8.Leaver ,B.L & Stryker,SB.(1989). Content based instruction for foreign language classroom .foreign language annals 22:3,269-225. Creating the integrated curriculum. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gorden Publishers, Inc.

Cameron, L. (2001). Teaching languages to young learners. Cambridge: Cambridge , University Press.

9.McCarthy, M. (1990). Vocabulary. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

10.Mone. (2009). Tematik [Thematic]. Center for Curriculum Development, MONE, Jakarta: Government document.

11.Meinbach, A.M., Rothlein, L., & Fredericks, A.D. (1995). The complete guide to thematic units:

12.Pigdon, K. & Wooley, M. (1993). The big picture: Integrating children's learning.

Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

13.Sukayati (2004, August). Pemeblajaran tematik di SD merupakan terapan dari pembelajaran

terpadu. Paper presented on training for instructor/developer of elementary school Mathematics advance level, 6-19 in Yogyakarta.

14.Saraswathi G and Leo stanly S (2018), " *Thematic Approach –A New Perspective In Teaching",* Review of Research volume - 7 (issue - 7)

15.Tessier, Lisa, Tessier, Jack, (2015), Theme-based courses foster student learning and promote comfort with learning new material Journal Issue: Journal for Learning through the Arts, 11(1), Suny Delhi.

16.Retrieved from fille:///C:/Users/acer/Download/Dialnet-The Whats Whys Hows And Whos of Contet BasedInstructionInS-919483.pdf on 17.10.2018

_____

_____

17 .Retrieved from. http://biblioteca.udenar.edu.co:8085/atenea/biblioteca/90737.pdf On 11.10.2018.

G. Saraswathi
Ph.D. Scholar, (Full time) , Department of Education (DDE), Alagappa University, Karaikudi.