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Exploring the potential for an alternative teacher education programme for pre-service teacher education in the Environmental Related Activities Curriculum in Sri Lanka through the Problem Based Learning approach used in one university in New Zealand

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree  
of  
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## Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any university; and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

.....

Signature

## **Abstract**

The researcher's aim was to explore the potential for an alternative teacher education programme for the Environment Related Activities Primary Pre-service Teacher Education curriculum on the basis of the Problem Based Learning approach as used in the Integrated Curriculum: Science and Technology course conducted by one University in New Zealand.

In this study, three methods of data collection were used in order to understand the main features of the Problem Based Learning approach used in the above course. Semi-structured interviews helped to capture the ideas from teacher educators involved in this particular course. To triangulate the data, a questionnaire was used to obtain the students' views on the Problem Based Learning approach and how it helped them in preparing to be quality teachers in the integrated primary school curriculum in New Zealand. Further, the researcher carried out a document analysis on several curriculum materials found in New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

From this study, the researcher found that the Problem Based Learning approach used in this particular primary teacher education course is a curriculum model based on the principles of constructive learning theories. The Problem Based Learning approach used problems as a context for students to acquire knowledge, and the students were actively engaged in learning which is authentic to the environment as all problem scenarios are from real life contexts.

The Environment Related Activities primary curriculum in Sri Lanka consists of major themes and learning activities focus on learning through the environment. All themes are related to the everyday life of the children. Similarly, in New Zealand, the primary school curriculum is based on an integrated approach. From this study, the researcher found that the Problem Based Learning approach used at one university in New Zealand, suits the integrated nature of the primary school curriculum in New Zealand. Therefore, the researcher highlights the main features of Problem Based Learning approach and explores the potential for an alternative teacher education programme for the Environmental Related Activities Primary Pre-Service teacher education curriculum in Sri Lanka.

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