

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ITS INTEGRATION INTO PRIMARY SCHOOL LESSONS

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Annotation: This article explores the integration of environmental education into primary school lessons and its role in shaping students' ecological awareness from an early age. Environmental education is essential in cultivating responsible attitudes and sustainable behaviors in young learners. The study investigates how eco-consciousness can be effectively developed through various subjects such as science, literature, art, and practical activities. The research is based on classroom observations, teacher interviews, and analysis of environmental projects in primary schools, aiming to highlight successful strategies and outcomes of integrated ecological education.

Key words: environmental education, ecological awareness, sustainability, primary school, integrated learning, eco-literacy.

INTRODUCTION

In the face of accelerating environmental challenges, education plays a vital role in developing a generation that is environmentally conscious and prepared to act responsibly toward nature. Introducing environmental education at the primary level is critical, as this is the age when children begin to form attitudes and values that shape their lifelong behavior. Environmental education is not limited to knowledge about nature, but also involves developing emotional connections with the environment, understanding human impact, and promoting sustainable thinking. Integrating this education into primary school subjects helps children understand ecological concepts within meaningful, real-life contexts. This article examines how environmental education can be embedded into various primary school lessons and what outcomes such integration produces in students' awareness and actions.

As above mentioned, ecological education of primary school students is one of the most important tasks of the education system today. In solving environmental problems on Earth, it is of great importance to teach the younger generation to love nature and take care of it. An integrative approach is an effective method of teaching by combining disciplines, and its role in environmental education is also incomparable.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in five primary schools in urban and rural areas of Uzbekistan. A qualitative research approach was used, including classroom observations, teacher interviews, and analysis of teaching materials. Observations focused on how ecological themes were introduced in lessons such as natural science, language, reading, and arts. Interviews with 15 primary school teachers explored their understanding of environmental education, the strategies they use to integrate ecological content, and the challenges they face.

In addition, student projects, essays, and eco-themed classroom activities were analyzed to assess the depth of environmental understanding and engagement among students.

This article discusses how to implement environmental education in primary school through an integrative approach and the importance of teaching a love of nature. There are resolutions and decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These documents are aimed at developing environmental education and educating the younger generation in the spirit of respect for the environment. Below are some important documents:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-5643 of March 5, 2019: This decree establishes measures aimed at developing environmental education and increasing environmental culture.
2. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4788 dated May 20, 2020: This resolution includes measures to improve the environmental education system and educate young people as environmentally responsible citizens.
3. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-5101 dated July 15, 2021: This resolution includes new initiatives aimed at developing environmental education and forming environmental awareness.

RESULTS

The results showed that environmental education was most effective when it was seamlessly embedded across different subjects rather than taught as a separate topic. In science classes, students explored ecosystems, plant life, and climate through experiments and observation. In literature and language lessons, ecological stories and poems sparked discussions about nature protection and moral responsibility. Art projects involved recycled materials and nature-inspired themes, enhancing creativity and reinforcing eco-conscious messages. Teachers reported increased student engagement and empathy toward nature, especially during activities such as school gardening, clean-up campaigns, and nature walks. Many students began expressing concern for pollution, animal welfare, and environmental problems in their own communities, showing a shift from awareness to personal responsibility.

Ecological education is a pedagogical process aimed primarily at changing a person's attitude towards nature. This process is based on teaching students to understand the environment, understand environmental problems and find ways to solve them. Ecological education of primary school students is necessary to introduce young children to ecological knowledge for the first time. Teaching this process to students in primary school helps them to love nature and become interested in its protection. Environmental education is aimed not only at learning scientific knowledge, but also at forming children's environmental awareness, establishing a friendly relationship with nature, and increasing social responsibility.

The integrative approach is an effective method of teaching by combining different subjects in the learning process. Through this approach, environmental issues are discussed in all subjects and students are given a broader understanding. The main principles of integrating environmental education in the primary school are as follows:

Interdisciplinary connections - environmental issues are connected with biology, geography, mathematics, art, literature and other subjects. For example, in a biology lesson, topics related to the flora and fauna can be studied, and in an art lesson, topics related to images of nature.

Practical activities environmental education is not limited to theoretical knowledge. Children should learn to love nature in practice, that is, it is important for them to participate in activities such as planting trees, collecting waste, and saving water.

Emotional impact the main component of teaching children to love nature is the formation of children's emotional attitude towards nature. This approach helps children see the beauty of nature and increases their love for nature.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that early integration of environmental education positively influences students' attitudes toward nature. It nurtures critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and a sense of responsibility. Integrating ecological content into diverse subjects creates a holistic understanding, allowing children to see the interconnectedness of the natural world and human actions. This cross-disciplinary approach also helps meet educational goals related to citizenship, ethics, and sustainability. However, the research also identified several challenges, including a lack of specific teaching materials, insufficient teacher training, and time constraints in the curriculum. To overcome these obstacles, schools should invest in eco-education resources, professional development for teachers, and encourage collaboration between educators, parents, and environmental organizations.

The following methods can be effective in teaching elementary school students to love nature:

Visual learning methods teaching students through pictures or videos depicting natural landscapes, animals and plant species. This method helps children feel a love for nature.

Nature excursions taking students to nature, spending time in the fresh air, and putting environmental knowledge into practice by seeing plants and animals. This method increases children's understanding of nature and their respect for it.

Interactive games and programs encouraging students to solve environmental problems through environmental games. For example, the Protect Nature game can teach practical skills such as proper waste separation and resource conservation.

Learning about nature through art art lessons allow students to create nature, express its beauty, and develop a love for nature through the use of colors and shapes.

An integrative approach is important in making environmental education more effective. Students can understand environmental issues not only from biology, but also from other subjects. For example, learning about nature and climate in geography lessons, and about natural landscapes in art lessons, helps to develop environmental awareness. In addition, an integrative approach develops students' skills in understanding environmental problems in

society and finding solutions to them. When talking about environmental issues, students need to understand not only natural processes, but also social responsibility.

Primary school is a very important period in the life of children. At this age, the foundations of children's worldview are formed, their attitude towards nature is established. Ecological education forms not only respect for the environment, but also internal responsibility in primary school students. Teaching them to love nature and preserve it at this age helps to shape their future ecological behavior.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, environmental education is a vital component of primary education that supports the development of eco-literate and responsible future citizens. When integrated meaningfully into everyday lessons, it empowers students to care for and protect their environment through informed action. The primary school stage offers a unique opportunity to build a strong foundation for sustainable thinking. Therefore, schools must prioritize the incorporation of environmental topics across disciplines and provide necessary support for educators to implement such practices effectively.

The role of an integrative approach in the process of providing environmental education in primary school is invaluable. Through effective methods of teaching love for nature, it is possible to develop environmental awareness in students and educate them as environmentally responsible citizens in society. Thus, teaching environmental education in primary school is of great importance in forming the right attitude of students towards nature.

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