

DESIGNING COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS USING EXISTING MATERIALS ON MAIN SUBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

The importance of interdisciplinary environmental education (EE) in elementary school is recognized worldwide, but a practical approach for such instruction has not been established. Especially in China, The interdisciplinary approach is difficult to implement because of the separation of subjects under the professional teaching system. The present study proposes an implicit EE program that does not require plenty of extra hours, materials, and teachers, as it will relate the environment-related articles appearing in the current textbooks of major subjects. The idea was tested by analyzing one set of textbooks used in an elementary school in China. Case studies on the scenario of “domestic wastes” and the composite scenario of “animals and food” are presented in this paper, and the feasibility of the concept is discussed. The analysis showed that exercises for calculation training in the form of story problems in Mathematics are useful in leading children to deepen their interest in and understanding of the environmental issues they learn in Social Studies and Science. Further, the stories in Language will have the same function of EE if environmental issues are given deeper consideration in the process of composing the textbooks.

KEYWORD: Environmental Education, Elementary School, Cross-Subject, Implicit Program

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