

Thematic Approach for Enhancing Pedagogic Competency of Student Teachers at Secondary Level

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Abstract: *Thematic learning is a newer concept in Pedagogy. It is proved to be a powerful instructional method for integrating various concepts in curriculum by daily life examples and experiences. This study attempted to test the effectiveness of Thematic Approach for enhancing pedagogic competency of student teachers at secondary level. It is also proved that there is no significant difference between teachers with T.T.C and teachers with B.Ed training. It can be concluded from the study that Thematic Approach can be adopted in pre-service and in-service training programmes of teachers for enhancing pedagogic competencies*

Keywords: Thematic Approach, Pedagogic Competency

1. Introduction

Thematic learning (often synonymous with **thematic instruction**) is an instructional method of teaching in which emphasis is given on choosing a specific theme for teaching one or many concepts. Thematic Approach takes place when different disciplines are all centered towards one definite concept. This is a creative and exciting form for learners, enabling them to notice the inter-relatedness of various subjects. It is based on integrating variety of information and using it to demonstrate the topic. Thematic learning is based on the idea that knowledge acquisition is efficient among students when they learn in the context of a coherent and holistic way and when they can associate whatever they learn to their surrounding and real life examples.

Thematic learning helps in promoting learning with understanding and discourages rote learning

- The method connects subjects, topics and themes naturally. Learning opportunity thus is extended beyond one class, to throughout a whole day or week.
- Learning becomes a continuing process, which is not limited to books or guidelines prescribed by the curriculum or time bound.
- The emphasis is not on the product, but the process of learning.
- The contribution of the learners becomes an essential part of the curriculum.
- The focus of the group activity is problem solving, critical and creative thinking.
- It marks the beginning of community of learners
- Differentiation into units makes assessment accurate and relevant.

Pedagogic skills

Pedagogy refers to the teaching skills teachers use and the activities. These skills generate to enable students to learn the knowledge and skills related to different subject areas

Pedagogical competence refers to educational and teaching qualifications. When assessing pedagogical competence, the quality of teaching should be the primary consideration.

Scope, breadth and depth are also important, as should the ability to plan, initiate, lead and develop education and teaching, as well as the ability to provide research-based teaching on the basis of research in the relevant subject, subject didactics and teaching and learning in higher education. The ability to interact on issues related to teaching and learning in higher education with individuals active both within and outside the university is also included in the concept of pedagogical competence.

Pedagogical competence is based on sound, broad and current knowledge within the subject area, as well as knowledge of student learning and subject-based teaching and learning issues. It also presupposes a reflective and critical approach to teaching, learning and pedagogical development over time, as it is tied to one's own professional role.

2. Need and Significance of Study

Thematic learning is a newer concept in pedagogy. It is proved to be a powerful instructional method for integrating various concepts in curriculum by daily life examples and experiences. Thematic learning is geared towards accommodation of interests of individual learners and abilities. Thematic learning techniques foster teamwork and support in the group since the group is a heterogeneous mixture being taught by a team of two facilitators. Thematic learning comprises teams with varied sizes, and work using problem solving techniques and project methods. The individual is made to progress at one's own pace, and thus develop decision making skill and responsibility. Thematic learning does not have a fixed upper limit.

In the case of secondary school teachers they need to handle different subject at a time. Special pedagogic competencies are needed in this context. But most of the teachers fail to

incorporate different subject in an effective way and always wondering that how can it be possible in a single class. For catering this crisis the investigator found that Thematic Approach is an effective technique for training the teachers in pedagogic competencies. A study of this type will be helpful for student teachers at secondary level for handling classes in an effective way.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To prepare training module based Thematic Approach for enhancing pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level
- 2) To test the effectiveness of Thematic Approach for enhancing pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level
- 3) To test whether there is any significant difference between English and Malayalam student teachers at secondary level

Hypotheses of the study

H₍₁₎ There will be significant difference between Pre and Post Test scores of student teachers at secondary level on training with Thematic Approach

H₍₂₎ There will be significant difference between English and Malayalam student teachers at secondary level when exposed to training based on Thematic Approach

Tools

- 1) Training module based on Thematic Approach for enhancing Pedagogic competencies
- 2) Assessment schedule on Pedagogic Competencies (prepared and refined by the investigators)

Same schedule was used for pre and post assessment

Sample selected for the study

35 primary school teachers from Alappuzha district were selected for the study. 16 were student teachers with specialization in English and 19 were student teachers with specialization in Malayalam.

3. Methodology

Experimental method was adopted for the study. With the help of assessment schedule base on pedagogic competency, the pre test scores were collected and recorded. The sample was exposed to training using the module based on Thematic Approach for enhancing pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level. After training post test was administered and scores were recorded.

Statistical treatment of Data

Means and standard deviations were calculated for pretest and post test. t-value also calculated using this data. The values obtained is given in the table below;

Table 1: Test of significance of difference between means of Pre and Post test scores of Experimental Group(thematic Instruction) for total sample

	N	M	SD	CR	S
Pretest	35	18.14	2.37	2.20	Significant 0.05 level
Post test	35	20.85	6.77		

Mean: Average, SD: Standard Deviation, CR Critical Ratio, S: Level of Significance

Statistical analysis of the data revealed that there is significant difference between the means of pretest and post test scores. The difference is in favour of post test mean score.

The t test between the means of pretest and post test scores revealed that these scores differ significantly. Hence the hypothesis formulated H₍₁₎ is accepted, that means the Thematic Approach is effective in enhancing pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level.

To determine whether the variable subject of study affect the post test scores of students, the differential effect of the above mentioned variable was studied. The means and standard deviations of sub sample on post test scores were calculated and the differences between the means were tested for significance. The details given in Table 2.

Table 2: Test of significance of difference between means of Post Assessment Scores based on sub sample: Subject of specialization

Variable	Category	M	S.D.	CR	S
Subject of specialization	English (18)	22.56	1.837	0.78	Not significant
	Malayalam (17)	21.53	1.846		

Mean: Average, SD: Standard Deviation, CR Critical Ratio, S: Level of Significance

It is evident from the Table 2 that critical ratio obtained for the variable qualification is not significant. This shows that the post test scores was not influenced by the variable, subject of study.

The statistical analysis also revealed that there is no significant difference between the post test scores for the variable subject of study. Hence the hypothesis formulated, H₂ is rejected

4. Findings of the study

Based on the aforesaid calculations the following important findings have been derived.

- 1) The Thematic Approach caused significant difference at 0.05 level in acquisition of pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level. Hence it can be concluded that Thematic Approach is effective for enhancing pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level
- 2) The subject of specialization didn't cause significant difference in respect of pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level when training is given using module based on Thematic Approach.

5. Conclusion

This study revealed that Thematic Approach is an effective strategy for developing pedagogic competencies of student teachers at secondary level. Educational experts and curriculum planners should include Thematic Approach in

the teacher education curriculum for the benefit of future generation.

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