

A micro-scale primary science intervention implemented in an in -formal community-based setting

Emphasis on primary science in the past years in Sri Lanka has increased and it is stressed that more innovative strategies on teaching science should be popularized to take science within the reach of all citizens.

Objective of this study was to launch a series of teaching experiments based on constructivist teaching in a community base informal setting to enable learning science more effectively and enjoyably using low cost strategies which would in return enrich science learning in school and to give an understanding of learning science to parents to change their perceptions on science learning.

A qualitative research study was designed to understand the changes in a group of subjects, namely primary school children of Year 4 and 5 who came from low-income families in a primary school in a sub urban area of Colombo and their parents. Science sessions were conducted by the researcher after school twice a week for twelve weeks within the school premises.

Data collection was done using participant observation, interviews and collection of student notes and diagrams. Analysis revealed that both children and parents welcomed the program. Student note keeping improved and attempted to construct spider charts and concept maps. Coping and rote learning was reduced. Observation skills developed. Problem solving strategies were developed.

Study is an example to show that primary science can be taught with low cost activities. Children enjoy "doing science" and it is possible to give them opportunities with simple creative activities. Constructivist teaching strategies are adaptable and rewarding to be used in the Sri Lankan context. Parent participation facilitated low teacher-investment in groups during pupil activities. This study is an example of a low cost intervention for popularization of science among disadvantaged community groups to reach the objectives of "Science for All" concept.