

USE OF CLASS ROOM BASED SCIENCE SOCIETY TO ENHANCE SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS

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Activity based learning facilitate the learner to actively engaged in a task to grasp the abstract concrete concepts on learning. Co-curricular activities provide a wide range of experiences preparing students for the future. Researchers in other countries have shown that co-curricular activities can be used to deliver certain concepts in science, mathematics and other subjects to students effectively. However, although the National Institute of Education of Sri Lanka has suggested using co-curricular activities, these activities have been used only by few schools in Sri Lanka. Thus, the objective of my study was to explore the probability of using science society activities in enhancing understanding of scientific concepts of junior secondary school students in parallel to promoting positive experiences such as teamwork, motivation and reaching goals. To fulfill these objectives three schools with no-functioning science societies in the Kandy district were selected. Student and teachers questioners were used to gather basic information about the functioning science societies in schools. Prior knowledge of students' was tested using a diagnostic test (diagnostic test 1). Next Science societies were introduced to these three schools. After four Science society activities a second diagnostic test (diagnostic test 2) was conducted to assess the student improvement. Quantitative and qualitative data analyses demonstrated that students who studied science through science society activities have exhibited a significantly higher understanding of scientific content of the lessons and preferred learning science through science society. Sample group students stated that they enjoyed participating in activities with their friends and science society helped them to better understand the abstract scientific concepts. Teachers involved in the science society activities were impressed and believed science society is a good tool for assessing students understanding. Study also showed that science society improved social interactions and self-esteem, that students enjoyed science society. It can be concluded that the use of science society activities enhanced students' scientific knowledge and understanding and personality development and social interactions. All the teachers and students reacted positively to science society activities.