

Effects of Integrated Lessons on Learning Urdu Language Skill of Students at Primary Level

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Abstract *The study explores the effectiveness of integrated and traditional instruction method in developing reading and writing skills in Urdu language at primary level. As an experimental study it used Pretest, post-test and control group design in finding these effects. The researcher developed integrated instruction model for Urdu language by combining contents of Urdu and Islamic Studies by adopting multidisciplinary approach. Lesson plans were prepared by the researcher according to the integrated instruction model to teach the primary level students. In order to measure the performance of the students, teacher made achievement test was prepared by the researcher. The validity of the developed instrument was checked through expert opinion and reliability was checked through pilot testing. This experimental work was carried out for sixteen weeks in a public sector primary level school in Islamabad. Population of experiment was grade IV students. Seventy-six students were selected from class IV for experiment through the draw method. Students were assigned to experimental and control group after their performance in Pre-Test. Experimental group was taught through integrated instruction method while control group was taught through traditional instruction method. After the completion of the experimental period post-test was administered. The data were collected through teacher made achievement test. Data were then analyzed applying independent t-test. The results of study revealed that integrated learning was more effective in developing basic skills of reading and writing of Urdu language in students at primary level as compared to the traditional instruction method.*

Key Words:

Integrated lesson,
Integrated Instruction
primary level,
students,
Effectiveness,
traditional instruction

Introduction

Fundamental changes occur in education. Students need to be self-directed, critical and creative thinker to face the problems arising in the society. School is

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responsible for producing the citizen capable of coping with the rapidly changing needs demands and requirements of technologically advanced society.

Webster (2000) defined integration as “combining”, “blending or mixing”, “bringing or adding two or more than two things”, “interacting or correlating” or showing reciprocal relation between two things. We are living in a complex age. Everything in our life is connected to one another. So living is an experience as whole so life can't be segmented in to compartments. Dettter et.al. (2002) wrote that the present is the age of specialization and individualization. It is not possible for an individual to acquire enough knowledge, skills and abilities to cope with every circumstance because multiculturalism and globalization need the cooperation among different branches of the education by dissolving the boundaries among them and presenting a broader picture of the world. As Dewey (1916) realized the pivotal position of the learner in the process of teaching learning process. In order to understand the problems of present complex society there should be flexibility in thinking for multidimensional solution of the problems.

In the school there is a tradition of subject fragmentation or isolation which has created a wall between school and real world. Due to this fragmentation of the knowledge in isolated subjects, teachers are specialized in one or two subjects while in a self-contained class a teacher is responsible for all the subjects and activities of a class which are interconnected. Hensen (2006) stated that in interdisciplinary class students have opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in a better way.

In 1890s there were three very important issues under discussion at that time: What should be taught out of the available vast knowledge? What should be taught so that the greater number of the students' involvement in the learning process? Jensen (1996) an advocate of constructivism wrote that true learning can only be acquired through social interaction.

It is important to mention that integration is an old idea as old as Dewey's days. In the view of Dewey (1900), all the school studies should be necessarily related to real life. Tanner & Tanner (1977) believed that the change in the concept of education depends on the change in the nature of knowledge, change in the nature of learner, changing demands of social life of the society, and change in the teaching-learning process. All these factors demand to link the school studies with real life situations.

The curriculum should be concept based rather than content or knowledge based in order to minimize the fragmentation. There is a difference between traditional curriculum and an idea and concept or a topic. Erickson (2007) described that teachers can reduce this difference and they can design a relevant curriculum collaboratively which is related to the real life of the students and this can be achieved by introducing project-based curricula where the students are active participant and critical thinker.

The traditional discipline-based method of education cannot serve the wants and needs of the students of lifelong learning. By 1930s educators were interested in three progressive approaches in the developing curriculum: the project method, the experienced method, and the activity movement. Vars, (1987), indicated that advocates of progressive approaches of teaching of 1930 often defined it “core curriculum”. This movement favored the integrative studies and refused the recitation and rote memorization of isolated facts and figures. They believed in the education based on meaningful concepts and links between the concepts. These approaches emphasized child-centered and activity based curriculum.

Researches about young children show that they see the world as a whole in connected way instead of dividing knowledge in fragments. Primary Programs Framework (2007) expressed that integration of curriculum is such a teaching learning approach in which connections are created purposefully and skillfully among knowledge, attitude, skills, and values across or within the subject areas to strength the key concepts.

Clark (2002), stated that integrated curriculum is not just the connection between the subjects it determines the status of the student in the society, in their community' in the history and ecosystem, it enables the students to think critically, purposefully, explore their talent and creativity and address their world with courage and imagination. He thought that students should not be the passive recipients of knowledge and consumer of textbook and information provided by media world.

Weilbacher (2001), after conducting an interview with teachers of elementary education, concluded that teaching through integrated curriculum provides the opportunity to the teachers and students to see meaningful links among traditional disciplines taught in the school. It helps in developing teacher-student relation as well as the spirit of team work among the students. Grant and Van Sledright (2001) said that connections among different subjects or their contents stimulate the learners to think about new ideas which motivate them to learn more.

Etim (2005) presented a different definition of integrated curriculum. According to him, integrated curriculum helps students to make connections between different subjects. It is a student-centered approach which focus on the themes related to real life issues and problems taken from different subject areas. Drake (2008) said link between different subjects and connection with real life situations makes the integrated curriculum more interesting than discipline-based curriculum which not only motivates the students to learn but also develop in them the skill of higher order thinking. The involvement of the students in course activities alleviates the behavior problems in the classroom is another interesting and positive aspect of integrated curriculum.

Teachers through their experiences explore the possibility that integrated curriculum is a way to fulfill the demand and requirements of 21st century. It

makes the class more manageable for teacher and makes learning more interesting and meaningful for students. Drake & Reid (2010) stated that students taught through integrated curriculum perform better than those students who taught through fragmented/subjected-based curriculum. He further explores that students are more engaged in learning in integrative study class and less involve in behavioral activities. It also reduces trend of absenteeism in students.

Efforts for Curriculum Integration in Pakistan

In Pakistan the concept of curriculum integration is under discussion date back to 1980 when a study was carried out about integrated curriculum at provisional level. Bureau of Curriculum Development (BCD) and Education Extension Services (EES) carried out this study (1980-1981) about curriculum integration first time in Pakistan.

The Federal Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan considered the prevailing scenario that heavy burden of books on small children will force them just to memorize the text without understanding. On the other hand, the parents will be unable to bear the heavy expenses of books for their children. So it was decided that Ministry of Education (curriculum wing) and Provincial Bureau of Curriculum would collaboratively prepare a curriculum by integrating the concepts of science Islamic Studies, and Social-Studies in the subject of language for class one and two.

This was the first step towards the curriculum integration in Pakistan. Then it was decided that before implementing the integrated curriculum on mass level it will be better to carry out a study on micro level. After the study the effectiveness of the curriculum will be assessed. The other related aspects such as use of A.V. Aids textbooks and teachers training programs will also be assessed. So National Bureau of Curriculum and Text Book with the collaboration of Provincial Bureau of Curriculum prepared a textbook of integrated curriculum based on the concepts of science, Islamiyat, and social-studies for class one. In order to carry out the micro study 200 schools in the province of NWFP (present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) including FATA (Federally Administrated Tribal Areas) and FANA (Federally Administrated Northern Areas) were selected. Selected teachers were given six months training to teach integrated curriculum through a comprehensive guide book. According to the program 100 schools were experimental and 100 were controlled. The integrated curriculum was taught for six months in experimental schools while control schools were kept under observation by teaching them through traditional curriculum.

Integrated Instruction Method for Primary Education

Primary education is bedrock of whole education system. It is like base of the huge building of education. An international seminar held at Weston-super-Mare,

Britain (1971), sponsored jointly by UNESCO, CEDO, and British council with the co-operation of United Kingdom discussed the possibilities and implications of implementing integrated curriculum in industrialized and developing countries in which representatives of 17 countries participated.

Teaching of Islamic Studies

Islam is the religion of Pakistan. Islam has given a great emphasizes to gain knowledge. It is the first duty of every male and female Muslim to acquire knowledge. Educational is essential for the development of the life of a man but the Islamic education is not for a good life but for a good character also which is needed for a good life hereafter. According to Abdullah (1992) as a Muslim our education would remain incomplete without the teaching of basic concepts and practices of Islam at primary level.

The subject of Islamic studies always remains a compulsory subject from class one to graduation level. It is a matter of great concern that even after the teaching of fourteen years the subject is not inculcating the real spirit of a Muslim in the heart and mind of the youth. It has now been just a formality to study this subject.

Teaching of Urdu

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan being spoken and understood throughout in all four provinces of Pakistan. But it is a matter of great concern that still it has not gain the desired status. The main purpose of teaching Urdu is to develop the ability of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the Children, because as national language it may be helpful in creating integrity and harmony in the people of country. Usually a balance is not kept among these four skills. Listening skill is usually ignored while speaking skill is given a little attention. Mostly importance is given to the reading and writing skills.

As considering an easy language due attention is not given to the training of teachers in teaching this language. Most of the teachers teaching Urdu to the primary classes are not properly qualified and trained in this language. They don't know the structure and rules of Urdu language. That's why students face difficulty in secondary classes. They cannot write a simple application or a letter even after passing their secondary school.

Basic Skills at Primary Level

At primary level basic skills include literacy, numeracy and manual skills. Glatthorn (1997) described that school should give prime importance to teach basic skills to the students at primary level. According to him integrated curriculum is suggested for primary education. All basic skills i.e. reading,

writing, listening, and speaking are related to one another. Any disability in one skill adversely affects the other skills. For instance, the reading disability affects spelling. At primary level basic skills are:

- Literacy skills include reading and writing
- Listening skills
- Speaking skills
- Numeracy skill
- Manual skills include physical writing, typing, key board skill to use computer

Development of Literacy Skills Through Integrated Instructions at Primary Level Literacy Skills

Primary education provides the base for literacy. According to Lee Grayson children learn literacy skills through teaching and practice of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (everydaylife.globalpost.com/literacy-primary-schools).

Reading Skill

At primary level the basic skills of reading include fluency in reading, comprehension, knowledge of vocabulary, understand the words, and their meanings. Reading skill is very critical in nature because other skills such as writing, speaking, and listening depend on this skill.

Writing Skill

Primary education provides the base for writing. It includes the ability to identify words, write letters and ability to convey message, writing vocabulary, and learn to use words in different context.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

There are three major approaches of integration: (1) Multidisciplinary, (2) trans disciplinary, and 3) interdisciplinary. In present study Multidisciplinary approach was adopted. In this method the content is derived from different disciplines but the content, methodology, and objectives of the individual subjects remain unchanged. The derivations of the content from different subjects/disciplines enhance the relevancy and practicability of the subject. The concept lie behind this approach is that which content is important and learning result is skills and methods.

Statement of the Problem

The present study aims to compare the effectiveness of integrated and traditional instruction method in developing basic literacy skills (reading & writing in Urdu language) in the students at primary level.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare differences in reading comprehension in Urdu learning of students taught through integrated instruction and traditional instruction method;
2. To compare differences in writing skills of students in Urdu language taught through integrated instruction and traditional instruction method;

Hypothesis of the Study

H₀ 1: There is no significant difference in reading skills of students taught through integrated instruction method and traditional instruction method.

H₀ 2: There is no significant difference in writing skills of students taught through integrated instruction method and traditional instruction method.

Population and Sample of the Study

The target population for this study was all the students (boys and girls) of class IV of public sector schools located in Islamabad city. 76 students of grade IV were taken through basket method for experiment. The experiment was conducted for a period of 12 weeks.

Procedure of the Experimental Study

It was a quantitative study for which experimental approach was used to collect data. 76 students of grade IV were drawn through basket method for conducting experiment. After conducting a pretest students were categorized in to A, B, and C grade. Then students of each category were divided into two equal halves and were placed in two groups assigned as experimental and control group. Each group was comprised 38 students. Experimental group was taught through integrated instruction method by using lesson plans developed by the researcher, while the control group was taught through the traditional instruction method. Duration of treatment was twelve weeks for both groups. Post-test was conducted after the completion of the treatment which comprised of same items as that of pretest, but the sequence of the item was reshuffled.

As experimental study had to be conducted in Federal Government (F.G) schools in the middle of the session, so it was decided after consulting with working teachers of Urdu to exclude that lessons which they have completed in first half time of the session.

Content of the Lesson Plans

The researcher developed the twenty lesson plans for teaching Urdu to class IV. These lesson plans were developed according to the set objectives of National Curriculum (NC 2006) for Urdu of class IV. The content of the lesson plans was taken from the textbooks of Urdu and Islamic studies of class IV.

Research Design

This was an experimental study in which pretest posttest control group design was adopted.

Analysis of Results of Experiment

Pre-Test of Experimental and Control Group

Table 1. Result of Pre-Test of Experimental and Control Group for Subject of Urdu (Reading & Writing)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	P
Experimental	38	48.89	27.23	0.241	37	0.811
Control	38	47.53	19.827			
Difference		1.36				

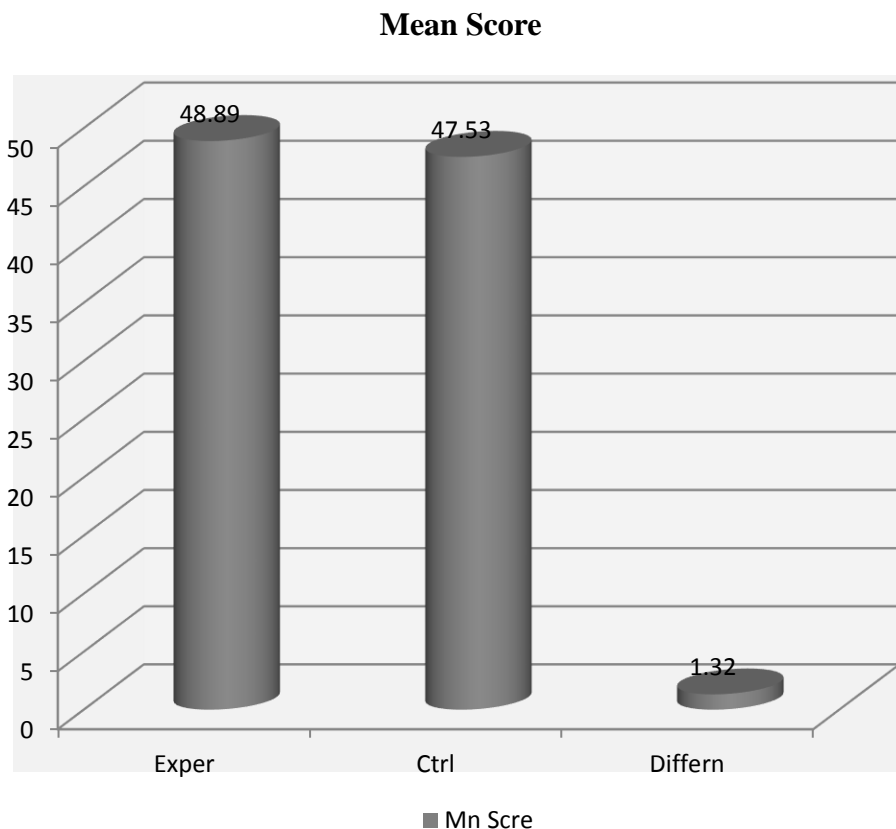


Fig 1: Mean Scores and Their Difference of Pre-Test of Experimental and Control Group

Table 1 shows the results of Pre-Tests of experimental and control group. Fig. 1 indicates the difference in their mean score. An independent sample t-test was applied to evaluate whether there was any significance difference between the mean score of experimental and control before the treatment. The result indicated that mean score of experimental group $M = 48.89$, $SD = 27.23$ was not significantly greater than the mean score of the control group $M = 47.53$ and $SD = 19.827$. The difference between the mean is 1.36, $t = 0.241$ where $p = 0.811$ which indicates that there is no significant difference in the result of Pre-Test of experimental and control group for reading comprehension in before treatment. It further indicates that both groups were identical in the beginning of the experiment.

Posttest of Experimental and Control Group

Table 2. Result of Post-Test of Experimental and Control Group for Reading Comprehension

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	P
Experimental	38	74.82	8.974	-4.647	37	0.000
Control	38	64.34	8.445			
Difference		10.48				

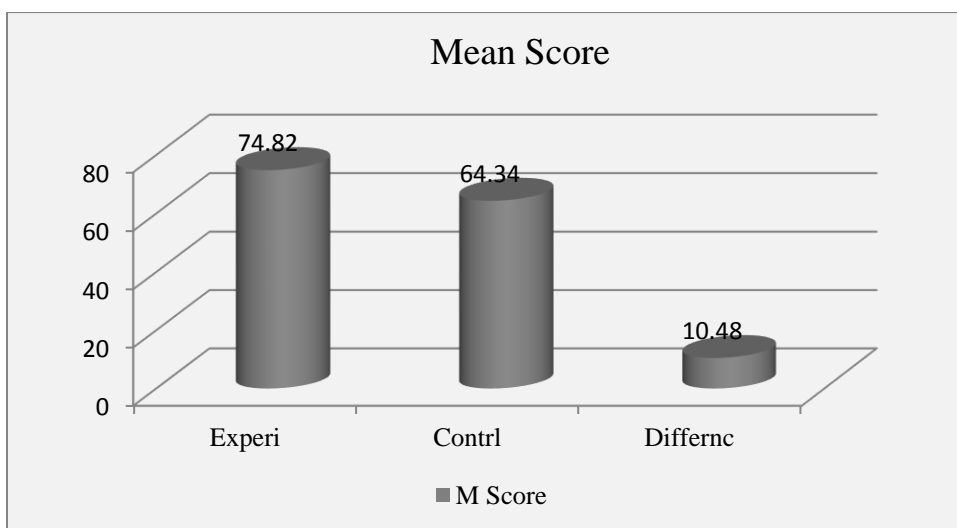


Figure 2: Mean scores and Their Difference of Post-Test of Experimental and Control Group for Reading Skill

Table 2 shows the results of Post-Tests of experimental and control group for reading comprehension. Fig 2 illustrates the difference in their mean score. An independent sample t-test was applied to evaluate whether there was any significance difference between the mean score of experimental and control before the treatment. The result indicated that mean score of experimental group $M = 74.82$, $SD = 8.974$ was significantly greater than the mean score of the control group $M = 64.34$ and $SD = 8.445$. The difference between the mean is 10.48, $t = -4.647$ where $p = 0.000$ which indicates that there is significant

difference in the result of Post-Test of experimental and control group for reading comprehension after treatment. Therefore, the hypothesis:

Ho1: "that integrated instruction method is not more effective in developing the basic skill of reading of the students as compared to fragmented method is rejected because the "p" value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05 which indicates the significant difference in the performance of experimental and control group before and after the treatment. The figure indicates the mean score of experimental and control group and their difference.

Table 3. Result of Post-Test of experimental and control group for writing skill in the subjects of Urdu

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	P
Experimental	38	47.34	11.173	-5.639	37	0.000
Control	38	28.45	13.846			
Difference		18.89				

Mean score

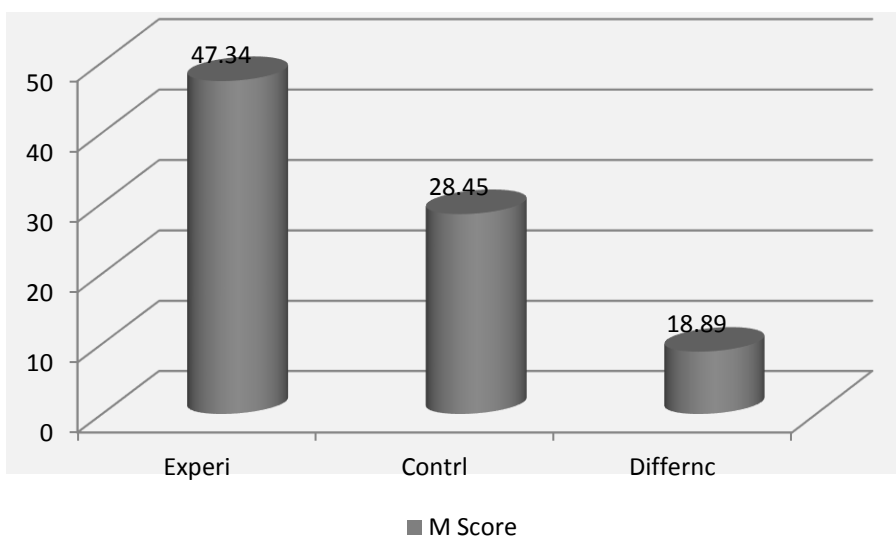


Figure 3: Mean Scores and Their Difference of Post-Test of Experimental and Control Group for Writing Skill

Table 3 shows the results of Post-Tests of experimental and control group for writing skill. Fig 3 demonstrates the difference in their mean score. An

independent sample t-test was applied to evaluate whether there was any significance difference between the mean score of experimental and control before and after the treatment. The result indicated that mean score of experimental group $M = 47.34$, $SD = 11.173$ was significantly greater than the mean score of the control group $M = 28.45$ and $SD = 13.846$. The difference between the mean is 18.89, $t = -5.639$ where $p = 0.000$ which indicates that there is no significant difference in the result of Post-Test of experimental and control group for writing skill before treatment. Therefore, the hypothesis that:

H_0 "that integrated instruction method is not more effective in developing the basic writing skill of the students as compared to fragmented curriculum is rejected because the "p" value is less than 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which indicates the significant difference in the performance of experimental and control group before and after the treatment.

Table 4. Result of Post-Test of Experimental and Control Group for Subject of Urdu (Reading & Writing)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	P
Experimental	38	122.16	17.016	-5.726	37	0.000
Control	38	92.79	20.576			
Difference		29.37				

Mean Score

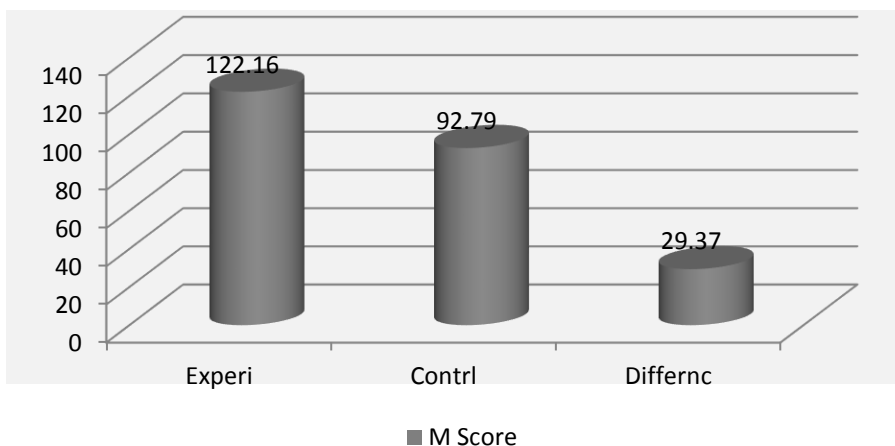


Figure 4: Mean Scores and Their Difference of Post-Test of Experimental and Control Group

Table 4 shows the results of Post-Tests of experimental and control group in the subject of Urdu. An independent sample t-test was applied to evaluate whether there was any significance difference between the mean score of experimental and control before the treatment. The result indicated that mean score of experimental group $M = 122.16$, $SD = 17.016$ was significantly greater than the mean score of the control group $M = 92.79$ and $SD = 20.576$. The difference between the mean is 29.37 , $t = -5.726$ where $p = 0.000$ which indicates that there is significant difference in the result of Post-Test of experimental and control group for the subject of Urdu before treatment. Fig 4 illustrates the difference in their mean score.

Discussion

Literacy is the foundation for life time learning. The primary education involves oral and written communication in all areas of a subject. The students of primary education learn literacy skills through instructions and practice of reading, writing, listening, speaking and manual skills. At primary level basic skills include literacy, numeracy and manual skills. Glatthorn (1997) emphasized on learning basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics at primary level in the school. So according to him integrated curriculum is suggested for primary education. All basic skills are interrelated and affect each other significantly.

Integrated instruction method is not a new concept in most of the countries but in Pakistan it is not very much familiar. Integrated instruction first time implemented in Pakistan to assess its impact on reading and writing skills at primary level education. In Pakistan, a very few researches had been conducted on integrated instruction. But none of these studies were conducted to study the impact of integrated curriculum on dependent variables like academic achievement and reading and writing skill of the students at primary level of education. This particular study is based on the integrated instruction method. Basically there are three approaches of integration interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary.

Multidisciplinary approach is based on the relationship of different disciplines. There are many ways to construct multidisciplinary instruction. Findings of my study are consistent with Aina (1979) who describes that this approach can be used within as well as across the disciplines/ subjects. This approach is strongly favored by the teachers, educators and authors. Through this approach several subjects focus on one topic or problem presenting different options for the solution of a single problem. Teachers usually feel comfortable to use this approach. Papai (2000), Johnson (1998) and Weilbacher (2001) stated that students found it beneficial if it is used properly. They said that it is very much inspiring for the students to see the connection that arouse new ideas which improve their understanding and enhance their desire to learn. Findings of my

study are also consistent with Wasta and Lott (2000) where he favours that integration of social studies introduces larger social issues to the students. Social studies can be used in improving reading and language art. Students will have enough time to learn social studies topic in depth and the teachers have enough time to teach them social studies topic in detail without any time constrain.

Bansford, Brown and Cockin (2002) stated that multidisciplinary approach is used in literacy activities which are helpful in learning and teaching language. Here my research also favoured their work. Of Bansford, Brown and Cockin (2002). For example, comprehension can improve whether taught in language class, social studies class or in art class because comprehension is comprehension and can be taught in any class. When students are engaged in learning they do well in apparently unconnected class because comprehension is comprehension which can be improve in any class. The integrated curriculum model for the subject of Urdu has been developed by combining Urdu and Islamiyat. Lesson plan were prepared by the researcher by combining the content of Urdu and Islamiyat language. Each unit of this course consists of a passage for comprehension and language structure. The combination of different subjects can be used effectively in teaching more content in lesser time.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings of the Study

1. There was no significant difference in the Pre-Test of experimental group and control group in reading skill in the subject of Urdu.
2. There was a significant difference in Post-Test of experimental and control in the subject of Urdu for reading skill. Therefore, it was concluded that integrated instruction method was more effective at primary level for developing reading skill in the students.
3. There was found a significant difference in the Post-Test of experimental and control in the subject of Urdu for writing skill. Therefore, it was concluded that integrated instruction method was more effective at primary level for developing writing skill in the students.

Recommendations

The concept of integrated curriculum is not new but since the mid of twentieth century it has gaining popularity due to its wholeness nature of socialization. After the fruitful results of the present research, I would like to suggest following recommendations for promotion of integrated curriculum at primary level:

1. The overlapping of content of the curriculum at primary level may be minimized by integrating concepts of major subjects in order to developing students' basic languages skills.
2. The curriculum model developed by the researcher can be used for this purpose. As an initiative, Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) Islamabad can implement integrated instruction method for primary level in Islamabad Model Schools and Colleges.
3. Primary school teachers can be provided training in developing integrated units of curriculum through capacity building programs because an extensive amount of professional skills are needed for the teachers in developing integrated units.
4. Teacher training institutes can use these integrated approaches to train their teachers in developing integrated units for developing skills of the future teachers. In this way there can be a shift from teacher centered and content loaded non-practical curriculum to learner centered, flexible activity-based teaching of integrated curriculum.
5. Education authorities like Federal Directorate of Education, Curriculum Wing, and Teacher Training and capacity building Institutes/universities can incorporate the conceptual frame work based on multidisciplinary integrated curriculum for further research purposes.

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