

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**TEACHERS' USE OF INTEGRATED APPROACH OF THE 2019
KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM IN KWAHU SOUTH
MUNICIPALITY**



2024

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**A thesis in the Department of Early Childhood Education,
Faculty of Applied Behavioural Sciences in Education, submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Early Childhood Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

JULY, 2024

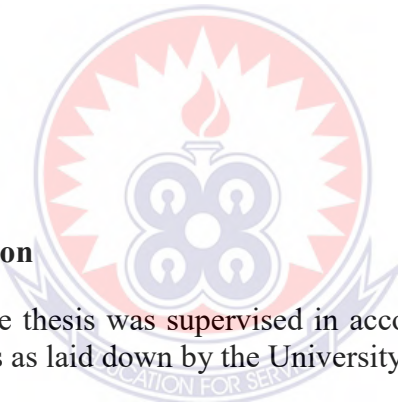
DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **Rebecca Ntim**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere”.

Signature:

Date:



Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name: Salome Praise Otami (PhD)

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Almighty God, my cherished parents, Mr. and Mrs. Osei Bonsu, my brothers, and my lovely children, Genevieve and Peter.



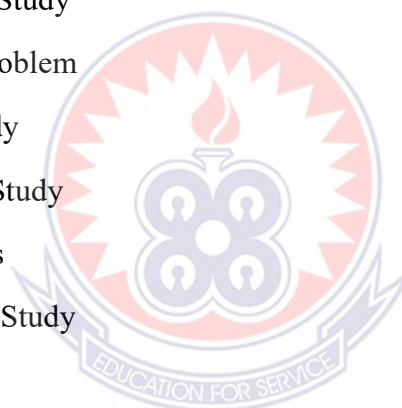
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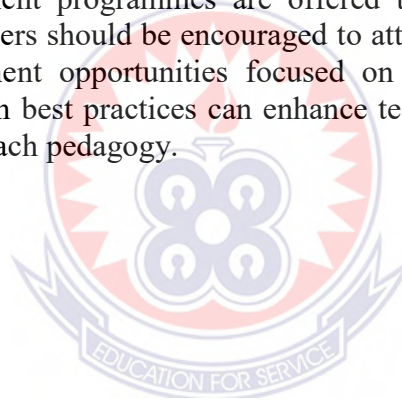
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' use of the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality. The study adopted a case study design. The sample for the study was 12 teachers. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sample. Observation guide and semi-structured interview guide were the instruments used for the data collection. The data from the study were analysed thematically whereas content analysis was used for the observation data. Findings from the study revealed that the teachers were proficient in using the integrated approach, yet they did not have deeper knowledge of the types of integrated approach pedagogy that they needed to use at different stages of their teaching and learning process. Inadequate classroom blocks, play grounds and equipment, teaching and learning resources were some of the challenges revealed. To improve the use of the integrated approach, adequate classroom blocks, child-friendly play grounds and equipment, teaching and learning resources must be provided to the schools by the Kwahu South Municipal Education Directorate to facilitate early childhood teachers use of the integrated approach in their classrooms. The study concluded that the use of the integrated approach could be successful if the teachers competently use the integrated approach when adequate professional development programmes are offered to the teachers. The research recommends that teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops, conferences, or professional development opportunities focused on integrated teaching strategies. Staying up-to-date with best practices can enhance teachers' effectiveness in the use of the integrated approach pedagogy.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.2 Background to the Study

The positive benefits of early childhood education in Ghana are many. Improvement in emotional development, cognitive development, self-regulation and academic achievement of children through the use of appropriate pedagogy are just but a few of the benefits (Rudd, O'Callaghan, & William, 2019). Early childhood education remains a very important stage of education since it serves as a foundation on which a person's education is built. Thus, governments all over the world attach great importance to early childhood education. Kadingdi (2006) has indicated that over the years, various reforms have been made to improve early childhood education in Ghana. The latest of these reforms requires the use of the integrated approach in teaching early childhood graders.

The integrated approach to teaching and learning is a process that enables children to acquire and use basic skills in all the content areas and to develop positive attitudes for continued successful learning throughout the elementary grades (Understanding 2022). It can then be explained that integrated curriculum allows children to pursue learning holistically, without the restrictions often imposed by subject boundaries but rather, developing learners holistically. For instance, a theme like "water" can be used to develop literacy concepts as learners mention sources of water, numeracy skills as they count sources of water, creative skills as they draw a source of water as well as physical development as they recite rhyme about water and perform actions with it.

Effective communication is key to the success of any integrated approach (Lin Moe, & Pathranarakul, 2006; Swarnakar, et al., 2020). Regular communication among stakeholders helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that the approach is proceeding as planned. Regular monitoring of progress is important to ensure that the integrated approach is on track to achieve the desired outcome. This involves regular reporting, data analysis, and feedback from stakeholders. The strategies may have the potency of improving the use of the 2019 kindergarten curriculum.

The strategies required a comprehensive perspective of individual and parental levels alongside the adoption of measures to engage the community and environment. It was seen that they were creative enough to use an integrated approach to health. Gürkan (2021) examines the positive and negative experiences of teachers through a model in the process of designing a trans-disciplinary integrated curriculum. It was observed that the model brought a systematic approach to teachers. The integrated curriculum design was realized through the cooperation of teachers from different branches, which proved to be efficient to cooperate with different disciplines.

A successful integrative curriculum involves input from teachers from all different disciplines, such as mathematics, science, or social studies (Zhbanova, Rule, Montgomery, & Nielsen, 2010). This makes an integrated approach a teamwork. According to Mezni, (2017), coordinating schedules and agreeing on ideas across a variety of teachers is often a difficult task. These are but a few challenges associated with the use of the integrated approach to teaching. Interestingly, extensive research studies abound in relation to the integrated approach at the upper primary, that is from the levels of fourth grade and up and this thus, requires a focus of attention at the early stages or formative years of children's education, (Mezni, 2017; Zhbanova,

Rule, Montgomery, & Nielsen, 2010). When teaching language and literacy, numeracy, our world our people, creative arts, and the sciences these learning areas are supposed to be treated under one theme as recommended in the new curriculum at kindergarten. The lack of comprehensive research on the integrated approach, primarily at the preschool and kindergarten levels, at the basic school sub-sector is the principal motivation for the researcher who seeks to assess teachers' use, of the integrated approach in teaching at the Kindergarten schools in the Kwahu South Municipality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A meticulous assessment of the Ghana National Standard-Based Kindergarten Curriculum introduced in the year 2019 reveals a whole new pedagogy. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA, 2019) recommends that teachers can use storytelling, differentiation and scaffolding pedagogies for lesson delivery. One notable pedagogy that teachers are required to employ in their teaching at the kindergarten level is the integrated approach pedagogy to benefit all learners including learners with special educational needs. The outcomes from the National Standardized Test (NST, 2022), organised by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), revealed that most of the Basic2 learners who had passed through the KG system found it difficult to identify some basic concepts in language and literacy as well as numeracy. The Basic2 NST measures a specific set of critical early-grade reading and mathematics skills, not necessarily all-important literacy and numeracy skills (Duback & Gove, 2015). Also, a study by Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) argued that pupils in lower primary, in a school located in the Tamale Metropolis revealed that learners had difficulty in basic literacy skills indicating that they could not read and understand the meaning of words. Similarly,

data available at Kwahu South Municipal Education Directorate, shows that from 2019-2022, learners were not able to develop basic skills in language and literacy concepts as teachers did not use the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum.

Table 1: Performance of learners

Learners	2019-2020	2021-2022
	Percentage (%)	Level of language development
	number & percentage of learners that had developed language and literacy concept	number & percentage of learners that had developed language and literacy concept
30	6(20%)	5 (15%)

From the Table in 2019-2020, 30 Learners were assessed in literacy and numeracy skills, and only 6, (20%) of learners who graduated from KG 2 were able to read and write accurately. Again, in 2021-2022, 30 learners, only 5, (15%) of the learners were able to read and write and understand basic literacy and numeracy concepts. This necessitated the need for research to be carried out to identify the implementation gap and other related factors that account for the low performance of learners. Data gathered from interactions with teachers as the Early Childhood Coordinator, in Kwahu East District, revealed that most of the teachers dwelled much on single subjects teaching pedagogy, which is not recommended in the new kindergarten curriculum. This prompted the researcher to look at other areas specifically Kwahu South Municipality, which resulted in an interaction with teachers about learners' performance, and the strategies they were using in lesson delivery. Some issues came to the fore: lack of comprehensive training for KG teachers on the 2019 Ghana

National Kindergarten Curriculum, and deficits in key resources in the areas of manpower and material. These impediments in the way of every good educational policy, will flop regardless of its potency and how well intent the policy may be. Effective teaching and learning can be guaranteed, only when all such shortfalls are identified, and backed by proper planning to nib in the bud all such issues militating against the successful implementation of the 2019 National Kindergarten Curriculum. The need for empirical data collection techniques and scientifically chosen research methods to determine how competent and effective teachers are, also focusing on reducing the barriers in the implementation of the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum has become ever more critical. The researcher, therefore, is looking at the implementation gap which seems to affect learner performance at the kindergarten level in Kwahu South Municipality.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' use of the integrated approach of the 2019 Ghana National Curriculum for kindergarten in Kwahu South Municipality.

1.4 Objectives for the Study

1. Assess the proficiency of teachers in the use of integrated approach in teaching at the kindergarten classrooms in the Kwahu South Municipality
2. Examine types of integrated approach pedagogies teachers use in teaching in the kindergarten classrooms Kwahu South Municipality
3. Ascertain factors inhibiting teachers' use of the integrated approach in teaching at kindergarten classrooms in the Kwahu South Municipality

4. Determine strategies that will address the challenges in the use of the integrated approach in teaching in kindergarten classrooms in the Kwahu South Municipality

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does teachers use integrated approach pedagogy in teaching at the kindergarten classrooms in the Kwahu South Municipality?
2. What types of integrated approach pedagogies are being used in teaching at the kindergarten classrooms in the Kwahu South Municipality?
3. What challenges affect teachers' use of integrated approach pedagogy in teaching at the kindergarten classrooms in the Kwahu South Municipality?
4. What strategies would improve the use of integrated approach in teaching at the kindergarten classrooms in the Kwahu South Municipality?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have the potential to inform the Ministry of Education (MOE) about the effectiveness and challenges of implementing the integrated approach in kindergarten education. By providing evidence-based insights into how this approach is being applied in the Kwahu South Municipality, the study can guide the development and refinement of policies that support comprehensive and holistic teaching strategies. Additionally, the research can highlight the need for adequate resources, continuous teacher training, and support systems to ensure successful curriculum implementation across diverse educational settings.

For educators and practitioners, this study offers valuable insights into the practical application of the integrated approach within the 2019 kindergarten curriculum. By examining how teachers implement this approach, the research can identify best practices, common challenges, and effective strategies for integrating different subject areas into cohesive learning experiences. These insights can assist teachers in enhancing their instructional methods, fostering a more engaging and supportive learning environment for young learners, and ultimately improving educational outcomes.

The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of integrated teaching approaches in early childhood education. By exploring the intersection of various pedagogical theories within the context of the 2019 kindergarten curriculum, the research can expand the theoretical framework surrounding integrated education. It provides an opportunity to examine how different educational theories and practices can be harmonized to support a well-rounded, child-centered learning experience. The findings may also inspire further research into innovative educational models and their application in diverse cultural and educational contexts.

1.7 Delimitation

The study is delimited to teachers' use of the integrated approach of the 2019 Ghana National kindergarten curriculum in Kwahu South municipality. The study covers how teachers use the integrated approach pedagogy in teaching at the kindergarten level, types of the integrated approach pedagogies used, and factors inhibiting teachers' use of the integrated approach in teaching at Kindergarten Classrooms and strategies that can be employed or designed in place to harness and improve teachers' use of the integrated approach in teaching at the Kindergarten Classrooms. The

method for this study is qualitative. The observational case study is chosen as a research design for this study. The observation checklist and interview guide were the instruments used for data collection. Geographically, the study was delimited to kindergarten teachers at public schools in the Kwahu South Municipality.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Study limitations are the constraints placed on the ability to generalise from the results, (Fobi, 2023). There were unanticipated challenges that surfaced in the course of the study. The researcher had a challenge with the data collection during the one-on-one oral interview with the classroom teachers.

The study relies on self-reported data (interviews), and the subjectivity of the participants might provide answers that they think are favorable rather than true reflections of their practices. The absence of comparison with other municipalities or regions may limit understanding of whether the challenges or successes observed are unique to Kwahu South or part of a broader pattern across Ghana. Gaining permission to conduct interviews in schools was challenging, especially since the school administrators felt that the research may expose gaps in curriculum implementation. Only a small number of teachers and schools were used due to time and resource constraints, the findings may lack generalizability. A small or unrepresentative sample could lead to skewed results.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

The following concept was operational in the study:

Integrated Approach: This is the development of skills and concepts in learners using themes.

Kindergarten: It is an early childhood educational setting that focuses on the development of young children, typically ages 4 to 6, before they enter formal schooling.

Kindergarten curriculum: The kindergarten curriculum is designed to provide a structured framework for early childhood education, focusing on the holistic development of young children

Themes: They are broad topics or concepts around which learning experiences and activities are organized

1.10 The Organisation of the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. Chapter one, which is the introduction, captured the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, delimitation, limitations, operational definition of terms, and organisation of the study. Chapter two dealt with a review of related literature: examining in-depth knowledge of both theoretical and empirical literature related to the study. Chapter three focused on the research methodology which includes the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures trustworthiness criteria, data analyses procedures, and ethical issues. Chapter four highlighted data analysis and discussion of result. Chapter Five dealt with the summary, conclusion, recommendations and suggestion for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter focused on the review of related literature on the specific objectives of the study. Literature was reviewed under the following sub-headings;

Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Integrated Approach

Types of Integrated Approach to Teaching

Benefits of Integrated Approach to Teaching

Challenges of Integrated Approach to Teaching

Empirical Review

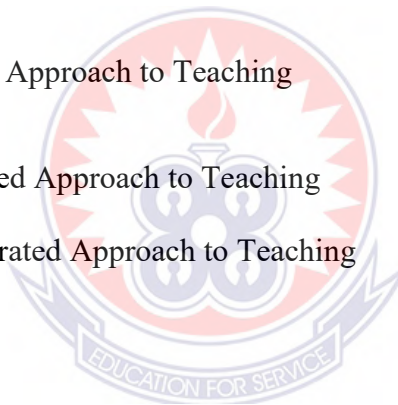
Benefits of Integrated Approach to Teaching

Types of Integrated Approach to Teaching

Challenges face by teachers in using in Integrated Approach in Teaching

Strategies to address the challenges face by teachers in using Integrated Approach in Teaching

Summary of the Related Literature



2.1 Theoretical Review

There are two theories underpinning this study and they are Constructivist and Multiple Intelligence theories.

Constructivist theory was propounded by Jean Piaget (1896-1980)

This theory suggests that learning is an active process where learners construct their knowledge through experiences and interactions with their environment (Nganji, 2018). Teachers who embrace an integrated approach may hold constructivist beliefs and see integrated learning as a way to facilitate meaningful and relevant learning experiences that help students connect knowledge across different domains.

Constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing their understanding and knowledge of the world (Ngani, 2018). The theory suggests that learners do not simply absorb knowledge passively, but rather actively construct it through a process of assimilating new information and experiences into their existing mental frameworks, or schemata (Wijayanti, 2013).

According to constructivism, learning occurs when learners are actively engaged in problem-solving, inquiry, and reflection, rather than simply being passive recipients of information. The theory emphasizes the importance of hands-on, experiential learning, and the role of social interaction in shaping the construction of knowledge (Padjono, 2016).

In examining teachers' use of the integrated approach of the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality, the constructivist learning theory emerges as a crucial framework for understanding the use and experiences. Constructivism posits that learners actively construct their own understanding and

knowledge of the world through experiences, reflection, and interaction with their environment (Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of this study, applying constructivist principles allows for a nuanced exploration of how teachers use and engage with the integrated approach pedagogies in the curriculum, shaping their instructional practices and pedagogical beliefs.

Application of Constructivist Learning Theory

Teacher Beliefs and Perspectives: Constructivist theory emphasizes the role of the learner's prior knowledge, experiences, and beliefs in shaping their understanding of new concepts (Piaget, 1973). In the study of teachers' use of the integrated teaching using the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum, understanding their beliefs about teaching and learning is essential. By exploring how teachers conceptualize the integrated approach pedagogies, researchers can uncover underlying beliefs about the value of interdisciplinary learning, the role of the teacher as a facilitator, and the importance of learner-centered instruction.

Pedagogical Practices: Constructivism highlights the importance of active engagement, inquiry-based learning, and problem-solving in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). In investigating teachers' use of the integrated teaching approach pedagogy in kindergarten curriculum, researchers can examine how constructivist principles manifest in the teachers of Kwahu South Municipal pedagogical practices. This includes exploring the extent to which teachers encourage learners' exploration, foster collaborative learning experiences, and integrate real-world contexts into their instruction.

Professional Development Needs: Constructivist theory emphasizes the significance of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). The study identifies teachers' professional development needs related to implementing an integrated 2019 Ghana National kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality. By understanding teachers' challenges, misconceptions, and areas of uncertainty, policymakers and educators can design targeted professional development initiatives that promote constructivist teaching approaches and support effective implementation of the 2019 Ghana National kindergarten curriculum.

In summary, the application of constructivist learning theory provides a comprehensive framework for exploring teachers' use of the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality. By considering the influence of teachers' beliefs, pedagogical practices, and professional development needs through a constructivist lens, researchers can gain valuable insights to inform policy, practice, and teacher training initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of early childhood education.

Multiple Intelligence Theory

Multiple Intelligence theory is a psychological theory proposed by Howard Gardner in the early 1980s.

This theory proposes that individuals possess different types of intelligence, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Teachers who embrace this theory may use an integrated approach pedagogy to teaching, to address the diverse intelligence of learners and create opportunities for learners to engage with content in a way that suits their strengths, interests and abilities.

The theory suggests that traditional notions of intelligence, such as those measured by IQ tests, are too limited and do not fully capture the range of abilities and skills that individuals possess. Gardner proposed that there are eight different types of intelligence, each representing a different way of processing information and problem-solving. According to Gardner (1999), all humans have multiple intelligences in varying degrees, and these intelligences are located in different areas of the brain and work either independently or collaboratively.

Gardner (1993) claims that intelligence encompasses many abilities and has a multifaceted nature that cannot be expressed in a single number. Gardner classified abilities found in varying degrees in each individual as intelligence areas or "modalities." According to the Multiple Intelligence Theory, human intelligence is not only measured by standardised IQ tests on verbal and mathematical ability. However, this theory assumed that human bits of intelligence consist of eight types of intelligence displayed by each individual.

The Multiple Intelligence Theory, proposed by Howard Gardner (1983), posits that intelligence is not a single, fixed attribute but rather a diverse set of abilities that individuals possess to varying degrees. This theory identifies several distinct intelligences, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences. In the context of studying teachers' use of the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Ghana Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality, the Multiple Intelligence Theory offers valuable insights into how educators recognize, appreciate, and leverage the diverse talents and strengths of their learners.

Application of Multiple Intelligence Theory

Curriculum Design and Differentiation: Multiple Intelligence Theory emphasizes the importance of designing instruction that caters to diverse learning preferences and strengths (Gardner, 1983). In exploring teachers' use of the integrated approach in teaching kindergarten curriculum, researchers can investigate how educators consider the various intelligences when designing learning activities and assessments. This includes examining whether teachers incorporate opportunities for linguistic, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and other forms of intelligence in their instruction to engage students with different strengths and preferences.

Assessment Practices: According to Multiple Intelligence Theory, traditional forms of assessment may not adequately capture the full range of students' abilities (Gardner, 1983). Researchers can explore teachers' use of assessment practices within the integrated curriculum context, including the types of assessments used and how they align with different intelligences. Understanding teachers' approaches to assessment can shed light on their recognition of student strengths and inform strategies for more comprehensive and authentic assessment.

Individualized Instruction and Support: Multiple Intelligence Theory underscores the importance of recognizing and supporting individual differences in learning (Gardner, 1983). Researchers can investigate teachers' use on individualized instruction and support within the integrated approach pedagogy to teaching curriculum framework. This includes examining whether teachers tailor their instruction to accommodate learners' diverse intelligences, provide opportunities for students to showcase their strengths, and offer appropriate support for areas of challenge.

In summary, the application of Multiple Intelligence Theory offers a valuable lens through which to explore teachers' use of the integrated approach of the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality. By considering how educators recognize and cater to the diverse intelligences of learners in instructional design, assessment practices, and individualized instruction, researchers can gain insights to inform the development of inclusive and effective teaching strategies within the integrated curriculum context.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

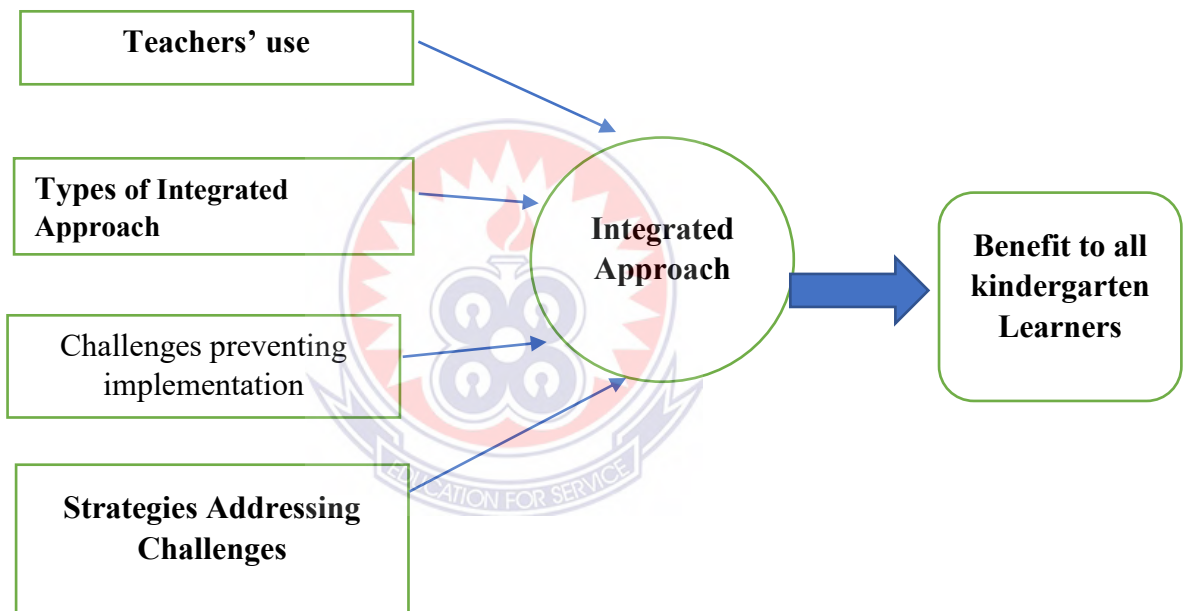


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Self-construct (2023).

The figure shows the interrelatedness of the constituents of the integrated approach that impacts the teacher's use in teaching at kindergarten classrooms. It seems that the ability to use the approach begins with in-depth knowledge of the approach and its effectiveness. To implement the integrated approach pedagogy well, there is a need to be a clear distinction between the types of integrated approach pedagogies. To get the chance to use the integrated approach, there's the need to find out the challenges that

prevent the smooth use of the integrated approach pedagogies. Learners after going through that stage of education executed by competent teachers should be able to read, write and understand basic literacy concepts if the challenges are addressed.

2.3 The Concept of Integrated Approach

An integrated approach refers to a method of problem-solving or decision-making that takes into account multiple factors and perspectives, rather than focusing on one isolated aspect of a problem (Belton & Stewart, 2012). Teaching, based on this approach, can be very stimulating for students. Interconnected content contributes to knowledge that is complete, valuable and usable". (Milanković et al., 2022).

Adeyemi (2010) posits that the integrated approach involves a combination of variety of methods, techniques, and technical devices. Here, Adeyemi highlights on employing different methods such as discovery, inquiry and others to arrive at touching almost all the subjects in one theme.

Yimwilai, (2015) asserts that integration, means using relevant knowledge from diverse disciplines. The implication of this is that the content areas such language and literacy, numeracy, creative activities as well as our world our people are developed concurrently in a single theme through the use of methods, strategies, and technical devices.

Integrated teaching focuses on the interweaving of child-directed play and learning, guided play and learning, and adult-led learning (Wood, 2013). Integrated teaching means that early childhood professionals build opportunities in early childhood programs for children to interact with their environment, both physical and social, in response to their hypotheses or curiosity about how their world works, and to interact

with other children and professionals to extend this learning (Jiang, 2022). Intentional teaching in this context requires responsive engagement with professionals who assess each child's existing abilities and knowledge and plan for learning experiences that build these competencies (Marbina, Church & Tayler, 2015). Children are moved from where they are in terms of understanding and built upon using real-world examples to make learning exciting and relevant. (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2001; Murdoch & Hornsby, 1997).

Effectively integrated methods of learning and teaching help the learner to have the chance to see how the many curriculum components are related to one another through integrated learning (Prideaux et al., 2013). An integrated program focuses on skill development around a topic that is relevant to the students rather than learning in specific curricular areas (Milanković et al., 2022). The Integrated approach does not only involve bringing together scattered knowledge from diverse fields but an interconnection of autonomous knowledge to form a knowledge that is in the first place complete, valuable, usable and can stimulate learners (Milanković et al., 2022).

Unlike the segregated approach where the teacher believes that each language skill should be taught separately, in isolation, the integrated approach encourages the learners to have a real-life experience. In the integrated approach, the classroom environment becomes less inhibited and less foreign to the learner (Fink, 2013; Drake & Burns, 2004). It challenges the learners to communicate meaningfully, creatively and intelligently (Simon, 2021). Through the integrated approach, the learners can synthesise knowledge and this goes a long way in helping them to solve problems with an ethical dimension. It could encourage their critical, creative, and unconventional thinking (Ivanitskaya, Clark, Montgomery, & Primeau, 2002;

Milanković et al., 2022). This approach recognizes that complex problems often require a holistic understanding of the underlying issues and their interrelationships.

Integrated learning provides students with the opportunity to see the interconnectedness and interrelationships between the different parts of the curriculum (Mohr & Welker, 2017). Away from focusing on learning in particular curriculum areas, an integrated program is based on skill development around a topic that is relevant to the students. Godemann (2006) outlines the path that knowledge needs to change to be applicable in an integrative approach. According to Godemann (2006), disciplinary knowledge is simplicity, singularity, and linearity and it can cause fragmentation in knowledge and boundary formation. On the other hand, integrative knowledge is characterized by heterogeneity, complexity, non-linearity, connection, collaboration, and consequence.

All school subjects and contents that are more complex and abstract have to use an appropriate teaching approach (Gagić et al, 2019). Children learn better when valid connections are laid out across the entire curriculum. Integrative teaching promotes meaningful learning, especially in the initial stages of education, but integration is possible in any of the stages of learning (primary, secondary, and tertiary) (Kaur, 2019). According to Acarli (2020), integrating parts of knowledge from different areas is very important for the critical and creative skills of students.

Integrative learning can be defined as the process of making connections between skills and knowledge from teaching sources and experiences (Leonard, 2012). It connects theory and practice and uses different perspectives to help students understand issues (Lewis, 2017; Huber et al., 2007). Integrative learning suggests that

students connect previous knowledge with the newly acquired and see connections in the curriculum (Brownlee & Schneider, 1991; Klein, 2005; Leonard, 2012).

Integrative learning represents a challenge for general education programs (Mahoney and Schamber, 2011). Jovanov, Ivkov-Dzigurski, Bibić and Petrović (2022) highlight integrative learning as one of the important teaching approaches in modern education. Therefore, students at colleges must acquire knowledge in the field of integrative learning. Huber and Hutchings, (2004) support that this could be achieved through a curriculum that encourages integrative learning, as well as through various trainings and seminars.

An integrated approach can be applied in various fields, including healthcare, education, environmental management, and business. For example, in healthcare, an integrated approach may involve considering the physical, psychological, and social factors that contribute to a patient's health, rather than simply treating their symptoms. In education, an integrated approach may involve incorporating multiple subjects or disciplines into a lesson or project, rather than teaching them in isolation. This helps students develop a more comprehensive understanding of a topic and encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills. An integrated approach to kindergarten curriculum involves incorporating various subject areas and learning experiences to promote a holistic understanding of the world. The goal is to provide young children with a developmentally appropriate, engaging, and meaningful education that prepares them for success in later years. In an integrated approach to kindergarten curriculum, the focus is not on isolated skills and knowledge, but rather on the connections between different areas of learning. For example, a lesson on plants can incorporate science, language arts, and math skills. Children might read

books about plants, explore the life cycle of plants, measure the height and growth of plants, and write about their observations.

An integrated approach to kindergarten curriculum might include the following subject areas and learning experiences:

1. Language and Literacy: This includes reading, writing, and oral language development. Children might engage in shared reading, storytelling, and journaling activities.
2. Numeracy: This includes counting, number sense, measurement, geometry, and patterns. Children might engage in activities that involve sorting, classifying, and counting objects, measuring and comparing lengths, and identifying shapes.
3. Science: This includes exploring the natural world through observation, inquiry, and investigation. Children might engage in activities that involve exploring the properties of matter, investigating living things, and experimenting with cause and effect.
4. Our World, Our People: This includes learning about people, places, and cultures. Children might engage in activities that involve learning about different cultures, exploring their community, and developing an understanding of citizenship.
5. Art, Music, and Movement: This includes creative expression through the arts, music, and movement. Children might engage in activities that involve singing, dancing, painting, and drawing. Kindergarten curriculum can provide children with a rich and meaningful learning experience that promotes cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

2.3.1 Types of Integrated Approach

As integration is a matter of degree and method, the Asian College of Teachers (2020) has proposed three categories for interdisciplinary work. Multidisciplinary integration, interdisciplinary integration, and trans-disciplinary integration are the three kinds. Multidisciplinary Integration refers to the process of combining knowledge and expertise from multiple disciplines to address complex problems or develop innovative solutions. Teachers that employ this strategy concentrate on the disciplines and the central subject. Each subject's criteria are chosen to support the topic. This can aid in the development of kindergarten learners so that they can become capable instructors in the future. The inter-disciplinary approach promotes standards from several subcategories within a single topic area. Inter-disciplinary would be a unit that engages in integrated reading, writing, and oral communication. This is critical for the growth of a youngster who wants to establish a name for himself in the field of nation-building and is now being exposed to many sources of information. The trans-disciplinary method organises knowledge around issues or real-world topics. Problem-based learning is a frequent form of trans-disciplinary education. Future educators will likely be involved with a variety of difficulties when they begin their careers in the field of education, and the instillation of this type of integration might be beneficial to the development of the learners of a complete teacher training course.

2.3.2 Multi-disciplinary Approach

A multi-disciplinary curriculum means studying the same topic from the viewpoint of multiple disciplines. It is also called cross-disciplinary which indicates the aim to cross boundaries between disciplines. This method encourages cross-disciplinary collaboration, helps students develop their critical thinking abilities, and offers many "real world" opportunities for growth. It involves appropriately drawing from a

variety of academic disciplines to redefine problems outside of usual bounds and arrive at appropriate solutions. Multi-disciplinary research is a coordinated effort that brings together experts from several fields to offer complementary insights in support of a single objective (Fiore & Salas 2007, Sivakumar, 2018). It offers the chance to cross disciplinary boundaries, allowing one to integrate many fields of study and seek various approaches to the same issue.

A multi-disciplinary approach in education is a way of learning which gives a major focus on diverse perspectives and different disciplines of learning to illustrate a theme, concept, or any issue. It is the one in which the same concept is learned through multiple viewpoints of more than one discipline. It helps the learners to gain perspectives and knowledge in different ways. The approach seems to be learner-centred as it aims at helping the learners to be able to connect knowledge from diverse fields, generalize and transfer knowledge to solve a variety of problems. The main program promotes desirable, valuable, and relevant learning experiences. If they are to engage kids, children's curiosity and passion must be used to shape experiences. It entails developing a plan that is motivated by the children's curiosity and selecting themes, subjects, projects, or areas of study based on the knowledge they already possess. (Adeyemi, 2010). The conceptualization of a multidisciplinary approach implies expertise knowledge and experience from the teacher. The teacher should have in-depth knowledge, enriched with skills and instructional experience to be able to teach learners to appreciate the knowledge presented and not lose focus of the central idea.

Multi-disciplinary integration involves bringing together individuals from different disciplines or fields, such as scientists, engineers, designers, social scientists, and policy-makers, among others. These individuals work together to share their knowledge and insights, identify common goals, and develop strategies that draw on the strengths of each discipline to address a particular challenge. Multi-disciplinary integration may be used to address complex issues like climate change, urbanization, or healthcare. A team of experts from different fields may work together to understand the scientific, social, economic, and political factors that contribute to these issues, and develop strategies that draw on the insights and approaches from each discipline.

2.3.3 Inter-disciplinary Integration

There are instances where teachers bring together knowledge from two disciplines and implement it in learners' learning. Such an approach to the integration of knowledge is termed as „inter-disciplinary“. It is an approach of synthesizing two disciplines based on the idea that problems cannot be solved by concentrating on only one discipline (Klein, 1990; Stefani, 2009). Unlike the multi-disciplinary approach, the inter-disciplinary allows learners to easily focus on the central idea being presented using the disciplines, easily comprehend the connections between the disciplines and make easy transfers and applications in real-life situations. The inter-disciplinary approach supports standards from different subcategories in one subject area. A unit that indulges in integrated reading, writing, and oral communication would be inter-disciplinary. This is important for the development of a future educator who is willing to make a mark in the sphere of education and is currently pursuing teacher training courses in Bangalore (Lipson et al., 1993; Denenme & Ada, 2012). It involves integrating knowledge, methods, and theories from different fields of study

to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a particular topic. Here are some key elements of inter-disciplinary integration:

1. Team-based approach: Inter-disciplinary integration involves a team-based approach where experts from different fields collaborate to create a unified approach to a specific problem or research question (Chou & Wong, 2015). The team should consist of individuals with different backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives.
2. Common language: Inter-disciplinary integration requires the development of a common language to facilitate communication among team members. This involves breaking down the jargon associated with each discipline and creating a shared vocabulary that can be understood by all members of the team.
3. Integration of knowledge: Inter-disciplinary integration involves integrating knowledge from different disciplines to create a more comprehensive understanding of a particular topic. This requires a willingness to learn and appreciate other fields of study and to work towards a common goal.
4. Creative problem-solving: Inter-disciplinary integration encourages creative problem-solving by bringing together experts with different perspectives and approaches to develop new ideas and solutions. This requires an open-minded approach and a willingness to challenge assumptions and traditional ways of thinking.
5. Mutual respect: Inter-disciplinary integration requires mutual respect for the contributions of all team members and their respective fields of study. Each

member of the team should be valued for their unique expertise and perspective, and their contributions should be acknowledged and appreciated.

2.3.4 Trans-Disciplinary Integration

The trans-disciplinary approach is another means of integrated teaching. With trans-disciplinary approach, the focus is not only on transferring knowledge on a common theme across disciplines but bringing this knowledge together to form a whole; the borders of the disciplines are cleared, and the disciplines cannot be distinguished as they are brought together to solve real-life problems(Choi & Pak 2006; Drake, 2007; Meeth, 1978; Rosenfield, 1992). Kindergarten curriculum refers to a collaborative approach where teachers from different disciplines work together to create a curriculum that integrates knowledge, skills, and attitudes from various subject areas.

Here are some key elements of trans-disciplinary integration in kindergarten:

1. A shared vision: Teachers from different disciplines should have a shared vision of what they want to achieve through trans-disciplinary integration. They should work together to identify learning goals and create a curriculum that addresses the needs of all children.
2. Collaborative planning: Teachers should collaborate on planning, instruction, and assessment, and share their expertise to create a cohesive and integrated curriculum. They should also work together to identify opportunities for cross-curricular connections and create activities that promote learning across different subject areas.
3. Inquiry-based learning: Trans-disciplinary integration in kindergarten involves an inquiry-based approach that encourages children to explore and investigate

concepts from multiple disciplines. Teachers should use open-ended questions and provide opportunities for children to ask their questions and explore answers through hands-on activities and investigations.

4. Integration of skills: Trans-disciplinary integration in kindergarten should integrate different skills, such as literacy, numeracy, science, our world, our people and art, to create a holistic learning experience for children. Teachers should create activities that promote the development of multiple skills, such as reading and writing in the context of scientific investigations or using numeracy skills to explore social studies concepts.
5. Assessment and reflection: Teachers should use ongoing assessment and reflection to evaluate the effectiveness of trans-disciplinary integration in kindergarten. They should use a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate children's learning across different subject areas and reflect on ways to improve their practices.

It is important to expose the fact that whichever integrated form is applied, there is the idea of teachers from diverse disciplines coming together to help one another as it may seem almost impossible for a teacher to have such a comprehensive set of knowledge across all disciplines as seem to be the demand of each integrated approach type (Denenme & Ada, 2012).

2.4 Challenges of Integrated Approach

While this approach can have many benefits, there are also some challenges associated with its use. Implementing an integrated approach to teaching can be time-consuming for teachers (Brauer, & Ferguson, 2015). This can be said of the approach

as it requires careful planning and coordination across different subject areas. This can be, especially, challenging for teachers who already have a heavy workload. Another challenge according to Hughe (2005), is that teachers may not have expertise in all of the subject areas that they are trying to integrate, which can make it difficult to teach the material effectively. They may also struggle to find resources and materials that are appropriate for all of the subjects they are covering. If teachers are not trained on how to teach at the early stages of children's education, they will suffer. Again, assessing student learning in an integrated curriculum can be challenging, as it may require the development of new assessment methods or the adaptation of existing ones. It can also be difficult to determine how much weight to give to each subject area in the assessment process.

Shernoff, Sinha, Bressler, and Ginsburg (2017) indicate that implementing an integrated approach to teaching may require additional resources, such as technology, materials, and training for teachers. This can be a challenge for schools or districts with limited resources. Some teachers, parents, and learners may be resistant to the idea of an integrated curriculum, especially if they are used to a more traditional approach to education (Drake, & Burns, 2004). It may take time and effort to convince stakeholders of the benefits of this approach and address any concerns they may have. The implementation of the 2019 curriculum will not be possible if the forces are effective in preventing its goals.

Quality Teaching

Quality teaching in kindergarten is essential for laying a strong foundation for a child's future academic success. Here are some key elements of quality teaching in kindergarten:

1. Age-appropriate curriculum: The kindergarten curriculum should be designed specifically for young children, with a focus on developing language, numeracy, social-emotional, and physical skills. Teachers should use hands-on, play-based learning activities that engage children and help them build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills.
2. Safe and supportive learning environment: The classroom should be a safe and supportive environment that promotes positive relationships among learners and between learners and their teachers. Teachers should create a warm and welcoming atmosphere that encourages learners to take risks, ask questions, and express their ideas.
3. Responsive teaching: Teachers should be responsive to children's individual needs and abilities, and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. This involves using ongoing assessments to monitor learners' progress and adapting instruction to meet the needs of all learners, including those with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
4. Strong teacher-learner relationships: Teachers should establish strong relationships with learners that are built on trust, respect, and positive interactions. They should be patient, caring, and attentive to learners' needs, and create opportunities for learners to build social skills and learn how to communicate effectively.
5. Parent and community involvement: Kindergarten teachers should collaborate with parents and the wider community to create a supportive learning environment for learners. This may involve regular communication with parents, involvement

in community activities, and partnerships with local organizations to provide additional resources and support for learners and families (Mahmood, 2013).

An integrated approach involves combining multiple strategies to achieve a common goal. To improve an integrated approach, the following strategies can be used (Scrase, & Sheate, 2002)

1. Clearly define the goal: The first step towards improving an integrated approach is to clearly define the goal. All stakeholders involved should have a clear understanding of the expected outcome.
2. Develop a comprehensive plan: Develop a comprehensive plan that outlines the various strategies that will be employed to achieve the goal. The plan should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).
3. Identify and involve all stakeholders: Identify all stakeholders who will be affected by the integrated approach and involve them in the planning process. This ensures that everyone has a say in the process and is committed to the goal.
4. Communicate effectively: Effective communication is key to the success of any integrated approach. Regular communication among stakeholders helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that the approach is proceeding as planned.
5. Monitor progress: Regular monitoring of progress is important to ensure that the integrated approach is on track to achieve the desired outcome. This can involve regular reporting, data analysis, and feedback from stakeholders.

6. Make necessary adjustments: Based on the feedback received, it may be necessary to make adjustments to the approach. This could involve revising the plan, modifying the strategies being employed, or addressing any issues that may arise.

By implementing these strategies, an integrated approach can be improved to ensure that the desired outcome is achieved efficiently and effectively.

2.5 Teachers' Use of Integrated Approach

Early childhood curricula should be authentic and child-centered; however, many teachers still rely on direct instruction lessons. To better define how an integrated curriculum meets the needs of learners, this study examined teacher thought and actions during instructional activities with first and second-graders under two conditions: (1) subject-integrated our world, our people lessons of an integrated curriculum unit (experimental condition); and (2) single subject-focused numeracy lessons of a traditional separate subject curriculum (control condition). The mixed-methods study sought to define and compare the characteristics of both curriculum approaches. Fourteen hours of observations were collected in each setting.

With UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2021) who found that in terms of how proficient the teachers they studied, have a medium skill in teaching with integrated approach since is a new way of going about teaching. Understanding (2022) also found that the teachers have low proficiency in the integrated approach pedagogy to teaching and learning. In the integrated curriculum setting, the teacher was a facilitator of teamwork, offering choices, and giving praise; students made choices, and decisions, and worked collaboratively. In the traditional setting, the teacher delivered direct instruction and controlled behaviour; learners followed directions, recalled knowledge, and worked individually. Less teacher energy was expended on behaviour

management in the integrated curriculum setting, indicating the intrinsic motivation of learners. Implementation of integrated curricula is recommended because of the learner-centred focus that results in greater motivation, ownership, and teamwork, along with deeper knowledge connections. Because many factors hinder implementation, teachers need support when first introduced to teaching with this integrated approach.

2.6 Strategies that Improve Teachers Use of Integrated Approach

Teachers seem to have a good perception of the integrated approach (Akmal, Masna, and Tria & Maulida 2020). However, to realise a positive result from using the integrated approach pedagogy means the approach itself should be effectively carried out. Teachers should learn to collaborate to plan lessons to make their presentations more effective (Bentely, 2016). No single teacher can know all the subject areas, teachers may be deficient in one way or the other in terms of knowledge, and it is when teachers work as a team that these knowledge gaps can be filled up for teachers to provide accurate knowledge as they draw knowledge from other fields which may not be necessarily their area of specialization (Bentely, 2016).

Effective integrative teaching calls for lesson plans and lessons that are detailed yet focused on the central idea. In planning the lesson, the teacher has to be conscious of the grade level and areas that can be combined. The teacher should focus on the central idea to be delivered and then creatively integrate knowledge across or within fields. The areas to integrate usually come from the content or the main idea to be delivered (Bentely, 2016). However, an aspect of integration is to promote learner-engaging, child-centred learning through collaborative learning in the classroom among learners of different abilities so that learners can share their diverse

experiences and examine information (Dickson & Ampofo, 2020). During lesson preparation, the teacher should also consider and be certain of the methods to be employed during lesson delivery (Akmal et al., 2020). Since the integrated approach leads to the learners' development, then the teaching or engagement time should be adequate. There should be adequate time for the teacher to actively engage with the learners (Oseno et al., 2014). Again, staff training and development should be considered as important for the effectiveness of the integrated approach.

Teachers should not only know how to effectively integrate a body of knowledge (Dusen & Worthen, 1992). Teachers should be taken through frequent workshops, seminars, refreshers and in-service courses in other that they become competent to sail through this approach. The integrated approach also implies the teacher and learners exploring varieties of tools and resources and facilities (Blickhan, 1992). The school and other stakeholders should ensure that the school environment is supportive in terms of resources and facilities to enhance the effective implementation of the integrated approach (Roy, 2022).

Through integrative teaching and learning, learners can develop a deeper understanding of content and improve their understanding of a complex problem (Leonard, 2012; Becker and Park, 2011). This approach can help learners in the synthesis and integration of knowledge. In that way, they could acquire the ability to solve problems with an ethical dimension. Also, it could encourage critical, creative, and unconventional thinking (Ivanitskaya et al., 2002).

The integrative teaching approach allows learners to train effectively by solving problems from different fields and to gain deeper and more systematic knowledge that can be applied to real life. This approach prepares learners for the process of lifelong

learning as it blurs the traditional boundaries between subjects (Lake, 1994). Integrative learning has proved to be one of the key strategies for learners' success. In particular, integrative learning prepares them to respond to complex problems based on interdisciplinary connections, experiential knowledge, and co-curricular learning (Rossing & Lavitt, 2016). According to Miller (2005), "Integrative learning refers to many different integrative capacities: the application of theory to practice, the ability to connect skills and knowledge from one course to solve and explore issues in another, and the capacity to reflect and identify connections made over time". As teachers of a Kindergarten, they must use their abilities and potential to help learners excel greatly.

2.7 Types of Integrated Approach in Teaching

Gürkan (2021) examine the positive and negative experiences of teachers through a model in the process of designing a trans-disciplinary integrated curriculum within the framework of IB-PYP. The design of the study included a holistic, multiple-case approach. The study was carried out with 50 teachers, among which 7 (14%) are male and 43 (86%) are female, in the IBEC teacher curriculum at university in Turkey in the 2018-2019 spring and 2019-2020 fall academic terms. IBEC was given in Istanbul, Ankara, and Gaziantep cities in Turkey. The data were collected with researcher diary, focus group interviews and reflective writings, and analysed through content analysis. In the study in which the trans-disciplinary integrated curriculum as designed using a model, it was observed that the model brought a systematic approach to teachers. The integrated curriculum design was realized through the cooperation of teachers from different branches, which proved to be efficient to cooperate with different disciplines. Emphasizing that they had difficulty in selecting practices for planning and evaluating the teaching process, the participant teachers also affirmed

that specifically these stages developed them professionally. In designing the program, teachers also developed coping skills. It is understood that the brainstorming technique relieved teachers' challenges. It was found that teachers' experiences were of significance in the effective design of the integrated programs. School-based program development, collaborative work, and the ability to meet the needs of different disciplines with a common mechanism became evident over time.

Edith Cowan University uses integrative learning techniques, such as Peet's „Hidden Moments“ activity to help learners recognise their learning, drawing their knowledge from their previous experiences and give learners opportunities to make connections between these experiences and the knowledge, skills and experiences that they have during their course (Fayed, & Cummings, 2021). A practical outcome of using integrative learning methodology throughout a course is to help improve employability outcomes for learners. Develop a comprehensive plan that outlines the various strategies that will be employed to achieve the goal. The plan should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

Effective communication is key to the success of any integrated approach (Lin Moe, & Pathranarakul, 2006; Swarnakar, Singh, Antony, Tiwari, Cudney, & Furterer, 2020). Regular communication among stakeholders helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that the approach is proceeding as planned. Regular monitoring of progress is important to ensure that the integrated approach is on track to achieve the desired outcome. This can involve regular reporting, data analysis, and feedback from stakeholders. The strategies above have the potency of improving the use of the 2019 kindergarten curriculum.

Zhbanova, Rule, Montgomery, and Nielsen (2010) in the USA recommend that early childhood curricula should be authentic and child-centred, however, many teachers still rely on direct instruction lessons. To better define how an integrated curriculum meets the needs of learners, their study examined teacher talk and actions during instructional activities with first and second-graders under two conditions: (1) subject-integrated Social Studies lessons of an integrated curriculum unit and (2) single subject-focused mathematics lessons of a traditional separate subject curriculum. It was found that the fewer teachers the more energy was expended on behaviour management in the integrated curriculum setting, indicating intrinsic motivation of learners. This means that through the integrated approach, teachers can control learners' behaviour.

Verduci, Profio, Fiore and Zuccotti (2022) used the integrated approach that is necessary to prevent childhood obesity. The strategies required a comprehensive perspective of individual and parental levels alongside the adoption of measures to engage the community and environment. It was seen that they were creative enough to use an integrated approach to health. Gürkan (2021) examines the positive and negative experiences of teachers through a model in the process of designing a trans-disciplinary integrated curriculum. It was observed that the model brought a systematic approach to teachers. The integrated curriculum design was realized through the cooperation of teachers from different branches, which proved to be efficient to cooperate with different disciplines.

Machynska and Boiko (2021) investigated the sequence of implementing integrated educational programs in the practice of higher education and the advantages and problems of using integrated educational programs in the vocational training of

preschool and primary school teachers are characterised. Mišćević-Kadijević, Mandić, and Bojanić (2019) also studied the integrated educational activity in a preschool context is a system whereby the components from various subject areas operate as a single unit. The results of the research on the impact of preschool teachers' professional experience on their assessment of the need for the integration of Environmental Education content with the contents of other subject areas at the preschool level. The sample consisted of 73 pre-service preschool teachers and 75 in-service preschool teachers. It was found that in-service preschool teachers have a more positive assessment of the need for this integration than pre-service preschool teachers. In addition, there was no correlation between the in-service teachers' duration of service and their assessment of this need. Possible reasons for such findings are given in the paper. Effectively integrated activities using the contents of two or more subject areas may be developed through systematic observations of the practical work of in-service preschool teachers and children in their groups. Suggestions for further research are included in the paper as well.

Milić, Jelena, Mladenović, and Spasić (2020) maintain that preschool teacher is the main initiator of the dynamics and efficiency of the educational process. The learners need to acquire more functional knowledge, which raises questions about the preschool teacher learners' competencies. They emphasize the necessity of raising awareness of preschool learners' teachers about the importance of their role in enriching learners' experiences and bringing scientific, musical and linguistic phenomena closer. This involves greater modernization of university education by promoting and increasing students' enthusiasm to use creative methods to work and the development of certain abilities and skills. The competency of preschool learners instructors in activity implementation is reflected not only in the development of

moral values and habits among learners but also in activating learners' potential and stimulating creativity. The study sought to investigate preschool learners teachers' perceptions regarding the abilities required for the implementation of an integrated strategy. The importance of extending specific professional competencies of preschool student-teacher, as well as the importance of the continuous development of pedagogical knowledge for supporting the holistic development of learners, through monitoring, listening and supporting various learners' expression (sound and voice, dance, movement, narration, etc).

Machynska and Boiko (2021) researched the use of the integrated approach in establishing educational programmes for the vocational training of specialists in primary and preschool education; alternative approaches to the interpretation of the term "integration" are examined. It should be mentioned that the usage of interdisciplinary connections was a requirement for the establishment of an integrated approach in education. The most successful methods of constructing integrated educational programmes are highlighted, as is the utility of utilising the expertise of training experts for preschool and primary education in the Republics of Poland and Romania.

2.8 Factors Inhibiting Teachers' use of the Integrated Approach

Shermoff, Sinha, Bressler, and Ginsburg (2017) performed research on the educational and professional development requirements for implementing integrated approach to STEM education. The study aimed to identify instructors' obstacles and requirements in adopting the integrated approach in STEM programmes. The survey included 22 STEM educators and four administrators. To collect data for the study, an open-ended questionnaire and an interview were employed. The study showed that

teachers were interested in implementing the integrated approach however, they faced challenges such as lack of teacher understanding, inadequate time for collaboration and planning, inadequate instructional time and resources and poor professional development. The most often mentioned difficulty was a lack of resources (7 of 22 participants or 32%), insufficient support for cooperation and preparation with other teachers (8 of 22 participants, 36%), and insufficient professional development (6 of 22 participants, 27 per cent). The study showed that instructors are not well equipped to undertake integrated teaching efficiently. Authorities should rethink and adapt pre-service courses and in-service seminars to better prepare teachers to adopt the integrated approach. The requirements of the instructors should also be recognised for the successful implementation of the integrated approach. The study's findings offered a foundation for a greater understanding of instructors' demands for integrated instruction.

Akmal, Masna, Tria, and Maulida (2020) investigated EFL instructors' perspectives on ways for adopting the integrated approach in Aceh's senior high schools. Purposive sampling was used to pick six English instructors from various senior high schools in Brands Aceh and Aceh Besar for the study. This study, like the one done by Shermoff et al (2017), found that instructors have a good attitude toward an integrated approach to teaching, although they confront significant hurdles. Teachers reported that it is tough for them to create instructional materials or activities. Teachers also saw an unsupportive learning atmosphere and inadequate school infrastructure as obstacles to integrated teaching. However, teachers make do with what they have to adopt the integrated method.

Oseno, Barassa, Omulando (2014) employed a mixed-method approach to engaging 14 teachers from 7 different senior high schools in Kenya on the challenges teachers face employing the integrated approach in teaching speaking skills. The study revealed that teachers from all seven schools faced similar challenges in employing the integrated approach. Most of the teachers (13 out of 14) claimed that the integrated approach is too demanding in time and preparation as teachers have to spend a great deal of time preparing for and developing effective teaching and learning aids for effective implementation. The survey also indicated that another significant problem encountered by instructors was having big class sizes while having very little time to educate. As a result, they are unable to integrate their pupils' learning efficiently. Again, 78 per cent, or 11 of the 14 instructors in the research, stated that they are having difficulty adopting the integrated approach because they are not well prepared to apply it in the classroom.

Dickson and Ampofo (2020) also studied the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the integrated approach among 30 social studies teachers from 30 basic schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana employing a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design. The results of the study seemed to be in line with that of the other studies reviewed on the issue of time and preparation. From the study, teachers had insufficient time allocations on the timetable to effectively employ the integrated approach. They were also clear with the fact that they were inadequately prepared to adopt this approach in their teaching; the schools where they teach were also not prepared in terms of infrastructure or physical resources for the integrated approach.

Abroampa and Gyeabour (2020) explored the attitudes and obstacles to adopting play activities as pedagogy in public kindergarten schools in the Greater Accra Region's Ablekuma South Metro. The study used a cross-sectional survey design. The study sampled 164 kindergarten instructors using the census sampling approach. The data for the study was gathered using a Likert-type scale questionnaire. Frequencies, percentages, and the independent samples T-test were used to analyse the data. The study discovered that instructors had a good attitude about adopting play activities. It was also discovered that a lack of suitable money, teaching-learning tools, and insufficiently qualified practitioners hampered the utilisation of play in kindergartens. Based on the difficulties experienced in the utilisation of play activities, there was a statistically significant difference between male and female kindergarten instructors. According to the report, the Ablekuma South-Metro should organise in-service training on the importance of play activities to the holistic development of early learners in partnership with the education directorate and schools. With the help of the Parent Teacher Association, the educational directorate and the sampled school should offer the fundamental teaching and learning resources needed for children to engage in meaningful and intellectual play.

Clapa (2020) studied integrated activities in kindergarten using integrative operational objectives." The author's didactic experience, systematic reflections on the didactics of integrated activities performed in kindergarten, theoretical information and data gathered from the teaching apprenticeship, as well as the implementation of pedagogical investigations, are all present. The study argues and suggests an innovative practical solution in support of the premise that establishing educational objectives is a complicated task that necessitates taking into account specific educational settings (educational needs, objective and subjective factors, educational

resources, etc.). Based on strictly theoretical analyses of the axiological problem and dimension of education, with a focus on the preschool education level, practical investigations were conducted using a questionnaire-based survey to study the perceptions and opinions of the teaching staff about integrated activities oriented toward integrative operational objectives (i.o.o). It is vital to progress beyond the simple application of strict taxonomies to the inclusion of the objectives in the design of the educational process when developing educational objectives.

Kimathi and Nilsen (2021) explored that early intervention and integration are highly valued ideals in kindergartens in Norway. Building on two research projects informed by institutional ethnography, the authors address how kindergarten teachers „do“ early intervention and integration in their everyday work. They argue that this work largely revolves around managing categories, whether making categories fit people or making people fit categories. In this work, the kindergarten teachers rely on social technology that is influenced by a „psy-discourse“. Despite good intentions, the social technology and the professionals“ use of it end up constructing the categories they are intended to help or „heal“.

Yeung, and Lam (2007) indicate that implementing curriculum integration initiatives is far from easy. For more than two decades, the change has been pushed in schools in Hong Kong. However, experience indicates that they were not applied properly. Teachers play a critical role in the effective implementation of such an endeavour. A previous study has revealed that instructors are impacted by their conception. This article describes an in-depth qualitative examination of seven primary school teachers“ perspectives on curricular integration. The findings show that teachers“ perceptions of curricular integration include five aspects and those Hong Kong

primary school teachers' perceptions are often muddled and conservative. Most participants continue to adhere to or accept a teacher-centred, discipline-based form of education and curriculum.

Soo-Hyun Kim et al. (2022) The purpose of this study is to suggest a desirable direction for integrated education in the first grade of elementary school. The study participants were first-grade teachers of public elementary schools working in Seoul, and semi-structured interviews were conducted from April 2021 to March 2022 to collect data. At the same time as collecting data, it was analyzed using the qualitative thematic analysis research method. To increase the validity of the study, triangular verification of data, member checks, sufficient review and consultation among researchers, and long-term interviews were conducted. Ben Hammou and Kesbi, (2021) indicate that first-year teachers knew the content of the curriculum when they first encountered the integrated subject but did not know the teaching method. Second, in the early stage of operation of the integrated curriculum, it was implemented only as a pre-planned curriculum rather than a prepared curriculum and even in the full-scale operation stage of the integrated curriculum, it was operated as the teacher arbitrarily understood and learned. However, in evaluation, the process-oriented evaluation was implemented by focusing on attitudes. Third, positive changes appeared in the operation of the integrated curriculum as we entered the second half of the second semester, but most of them were insufficient growth based on practical experience. Through the above results, it was found that the teachers lacked understanding of the integrated curriculum and that they were operating with difficulty, relying on „practical experience“ rather than „teacher training“. There is an urgent need to develop and operate a systematic teacher training program for teachers.

2.9s Summary of the Related Literature

The purpose this was to assess teachers' use of integrated approach of the 2019 curriculum for kindergarten in the Kwahu South Municipality. The literature review on the integrated approach of the 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum reveals its emphasis on holistic education by combining various learning areas to foster comprehensive child development. The theory that guided this study was the multiple intelligence theory and the constructivist theory as well as the relevance of the theory to the study topic. Literature was also reviewed on the concept of integrated approach to teaching and the challenges that comes with its implementation. The literature review also captured the types of integrated approach in teaching and also the factors inhibiting teachers' use of the integrated approach.

However, application of how to use the various theories in the use of integrated approach pedagogy to teaching were reviewed, several gaps are present in the literature. The study reviewed that policy makers do not adequately address the challenges teachers face in adapting in using the 2019 Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum or how professional development programs impact their instructional practices for effective teaching and learning, in Kwahu South Municipality early childhood education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures that were employed in the study. The chapter presents the research paradigm, research approach, research design, the population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, trustworthiness criteria, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The study adopted interpretivism paradigm, the research paradigm is considered the researcher's worldview. It is the set of shared beliefs that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Than and Then (2015) consider investigators who follow an interpretive paradigm as those who use the experience and perceptions of participants to construct and interpret understanding from the gathered data. It can also be termed as involving the understanding and interpretation of a subject's viewpoint. This simply means interpretivists try to get into the head of the subject. Therefore, it makes interpretivism subjective to researchers.

Interpretivists are more likely to choose qualitative designs because they are subjective and are interested in knowing the motive behind a particular behaviour. They, therefore, employ approaches that can provide them with information which will be able to answer the questions that give more information about the subject being studied. Even though interpretivism are not objective and analysing qualitative data takes more time, the positive benefits of being an interpretive outweigh the

demerits (Bliesemann de Guevara, Furnari, & Julian, 2020). For instance, since interpretivists employ qualitative data, they can get in-depth information on the subject being studied. The data provided can give information on why the subject being studied did what was done not just provide information on what the subject did. The information about what was done is not adequate for me as a researcher which is why this study seeks to find out why and how the social construct took place. Again, interpretivism believes an understanding of the context in which any form of research is conducted is critical to the interpretation of data gathered, more attention is paid to the reason behind the results and not just the results being discussed (Knotter, 2022).

It also allows for multiple perspectives and versions of truths. This makes the results of various research subjective based on the participant as well as the researcher. In the case of this study, Teachers' Use of Integrated Approach in 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum this paradigm is best because the study seeks to find out why the teachers use the various approaches in teaching. They use in teaching summary writing (Hussain, Elyas, & Nasseef, 2013). Therefore, the response from each participant is subjective as it differs from person to person. This paradigm is most appropriate for the study because it is much more inclusive and every response is accepted because the interpretive paradigm accepts multiple viewpoints of different individuals from different groups (Willi, 2007).

Research Approach

The research approach for this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is a naturalistic research process that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena in their natural context. (Fobi, 2023). Fobi explained that it focuses on the why of social phenomena rather than the what, and it is based on the direct

experiences of humans as meaning-making agents in their daily lives. This study is looking at how the teachers are using the integrated approach in teaching in kindergarten classrooms, focusing on their experiences in the natural settings. Qualitative research deals with people's expressions of their experiences, feelings and views of the social world. (Fobi, 2023). The qualitative research has the following characteristics stated by Fobi, they are; natural setting, the researcher as an essential tool and multiple methods. Fobi explained that with the natural setting; researchers often collect data in the field, at the location where participants encounter the issue or problem under study. This research looked at issues pertained to how teachers use the integrated approach pedagogy in teaching at the kindergarten classroom in Kwahu South Municipality. According to Fobi, the researcher as an essential tool act as observing the behaviour, analysing documents and interviewing participants. In this study, the researcher collected the data by herself using instrument developed by the researcher, and interacted with the teachers in their various classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality. Another characteristics of qualitative approach is multiple methods. Fobi, explained that researchers often use multiple means of collecting information for the study. Researchers collect many types of data such as interviews, observations and documents, and these data are used to draw meanings and categorising them into themes for analysis. Observation check list and interviewed guide were used for data collected for this study in Kwahu South Municipality. Qualitative research has advantages and disadvantages.

Qualitative research approach has the following advantages:

The strength of qualitative methods helps in obtaining information about behaviour, opinion and social contexts of a particular population. It enforces the ability to provide

textual and complex descriptions of why and how a particular people experience certain phenomena. This study looked at how teachers in Kwahu South Municipality use the integrated pedagogy in teaching base on their experience with the use of the 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum.

Some of the weakness of qualitative research include potential bias in data interpretation, time consuming in data collection and analysis and difficulty in generalizing findings to a larger population due few number of participants (<https://www.poppulo.com> retrieved 12 August 2024.) in the study at Kwahu South Municipality.

3.3 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was Case Study. These studies often focus on a classroom group, teacher and pupil often using a variety of observation and interview methods as the major research tools (Yayra, 2019).

This study, Teachers' use of integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum adopted the Case study design because the purpose of the study was to investigate and assess teachers' use of the integrated approach pedagogy in kindergarten classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality. A case study is an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group, organization, or event (Schoch, 2020). A case study provides researchers with an opportunity to examine a particular case in detail, with a focus on understanding the unique features, behaviour, experiences, or outcomes. The special case to be studied is the Teachers' Use of the Integrated Approach pedagogy of the 2019 Curriculum for kindergarten.

The primary goal of a case study is to provide a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the case under investigation (Marion, Friar, & Simpson, 2012). Researchers use case studies to gain insights into complex and multifaceted phenomena that are difficult to study using quantitative methods. Case studies allow researchers to explore real-world situations, phenomena, and experiences in their natural context, which can provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the subject of study. The case study is chosen because is a research design in qualitative research that can be both object of study and the product of investigation (Fobi, 2023). In this study, Teachers' Use of Integrated Approach of the 2019 kindergarten Curriculum. The Kindergarten Teachers were used as case to assess how they are using the integrated approach pedagogy through the use of the new curriculum.

The data collection methods used in case study can vary, depending on the research questions, the case under investigation, and the disciplinary tradition. Common methods include interviews, observation, document analysis, and surveys (Yin, 2012). The data collected in case study are often qualitative, although quantitative data may also be used to complement the qualitative data. Case study can be used for different purposes, including exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, and evaluative research. Exploratory case study is used to generate initial insights into a new or under-researched phenomenon or topic. Descriptive case study provides a detailed description of a particular case, while explanatory case study is used to test theories or hypotheses (Schoch, 2020). Evaluative case study is used to assess the effectiveness or impact of a particular intervention or program.

One of the strengths of case study is the ability to provide a rich and detailed understanding of a particular case, which can be used to inform policy, practice, and

theory (Cooper & Morgan, 2008). Case study can provide a unique perspective on complex and multifaceted phenomena, which can be difficult to capture using other research methods. However, Cooper and Morgan's (2008) indicate that case study also have limitations, including the potential for researcher bias, the difficulty of generalizing findings to other contexts, and the lack of statistical significance.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population for the study according to the Kwahu South Municipal Education Directorate, consisted of all 126 teachers in kindergarten Classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures

A purposive sampling technique was used to select 12 kindergarten teachers for the study. In purposive sampling, often a feature of qualitative research, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgements of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought (Subbey2019). Kindergarten Teachers were chosen for a specific purpose that is the Teachers' Use of Integrated Approach pedagogy of 2019 Ghana by National Kindergarten Curriculum among kindergarten teachers in Kwahu South Municipality. The purposive sampling was also employed in order to include experts and people who have in depth knowledge on the subject matter under investigation. The purposive sampling technique enabled the researcher to include smaller population whom otherwise would have been left out if a specific sampling method was used. This sampling method was employed because of its suitability for limited number of people that have expertise in the research area specifically how to use the 2019 New Standard Based Curriculum for Kindergarten Education in Ghana, in Kwahu South

Municipality. This technique was most appropriate or relevant for the study as it gave the researcher the opportunity to solicit first-hand information from kindergarten teachers who did pass through the curriculum training of the New standard Base Kindergarten Curriculum, with it component emphasising for the use of integrated approach pedagogy in Kwahu South Municipality. The process of purposive sampling in this study was involved the identification of the informants and arranging times for meeting them (Yayra, 2019). The purposive sampling technique was used to purposively select 12 participants which comprised Kindergarten One (1) and Two (2) teachers across the six schools selected from six circuits for the study. Purposive sampling offers several advantages in qualitative research, particularly when the focus is on gaining deep contextualized insights rather than generalizable data. In this case purposive sampling allows for the selection of participants who were the teachers at the kindergarten classrooms only, and most relevant to the research questions for the study Teachers' Use of the Integrated Approach of the 2019 Ghana Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality. It also ensures that the data collected is rich and directly pertinent to the study's objectives, and purpose that is assessing Teachers' use of the integrated pedagogy of the 2019 kindergarten curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality, leading to more meaningful and focused findings.

Again, since this method involves selecting participants with specific experiences or knowledge, it facilitates the collection of in-depth information. By focusing on specific individuals or groups, purposive sampling can be more time and resource-efficient compared to probability sampling methods. It also reduces the need for a large sample size while still providing rich valuable data. Purposive sampling has some disadvantages as well despite its benefits for qualitative research. The most significant drawback of purposive sampling is the limited ability to generalise

findings to the broader population. Then again, since samples are specifically selected based on certain criteria or characteristics, they may not adequately represent the diversity and variability present in the large population (Balkenhol, & Fortin, 2015)

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

The Semi-structured interview guide was used because, it allowed researchers to ask in-depth questions that helped to better understand the position of Kindergarten Teachers using the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 curriculum for kindergarten in Kwahu South Municipality. This was administered by the researcher having a face-to-face oral interview with audio recording of information from the teachers at the kindergarten classrooms using HP lap -top and Techno Spark 8p android smart phone. Interviews generally range from formal to less formal. Structured interview guides are more formal since the interviewer has structured questions to ask the respondents. The less formal consists of either the semi-structured or the unstructured guide. And they both consist of more open-ended questions especially the unstructured type (Biney, 2019). With the less formal types, respondents have the chance to openly voice their opinion regarding the topic. The semi structured- interview guide questions used in this study see (Appendix C). This is based on Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2013) who asserted that qualitative interviews are excellent tools to use in planning and evaluating programs since they use an open-ended, discovery-oriented method, which allows the interviewer to get the respondent's idea and deeper thoughts on the subject at hand.

The questions used in the interview were semi-structured which meant that it was open-ended, which gave respondents the liberty to share with their opinions. Though interviews are usually difficult to transcribe and analyse, and respondents may refuse

to be interviewed, they elicit a more detailed and deeper understanding of participants experiencing in ensuring that the integrated approach is effectively used in Kwahu South Municipality.

Another instrument used for the data collection was observation. Observation as a qualitative instrument for data collection, was employed overtly to have first-hand information by observing the participants in their classroom while they were teaching. Fobi (2023) explains that observation includes observing events, people, or physical qualities in their natural environment, and to collect data whether overtly or covertly. Structured and direct observation types were used to ensure formal and strictly organised procedure to study the subjects „How Kindergarten teachers are proficient in the use of the integrated approach pedagogy“, the researcher intended to study. Yayra (2019) indicates that structured observation employs a formal and strictly organised procedure with a set of well-defined observation categories. He further points out that direct observation studies the subject it intends to explain.

This study, Teachers’ Use of Integrated Approach of the 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum, employed observation where the participant know that they are being observed, the researcher is open about the purpose of the study which is assessing teachers’ use of the integrated pedagogy of the 2019 Ghana Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality to the participants (Yayra, 2019). Moreover, the researcher used Observational Check-list which was well structured with categories of items for the observation, the items were to identify whether the competences were present or not. Sample can be seen in appendix (D). The researcher was present in the classroom during the teaching process for the data collected.

3.7 Trustworthiness Criteria

Trustworthiness criteria were established for the semi-structured interview guide. One major aim of the research is to put the knowledge created into practice. As a result, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and the general public must understand and accept the findings as legitimate. Trustworthiness criteria are one way researchers can convince themselves and readers that their study findings are worthy of attention (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The criteria established were confirmability, dependability, transferability and credibility.

3.7.1 Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability is a crucial criterion for establishing the trustworthiness of the study. It refers to the degree to which the researcher's biases are minimized and the findings accurately reflect the participants' perspectives and experiences (Anney, 2014). Techniques such as member checking and maintaining an audit trail are commonly used to enhance confirmability (Creswell, 2013). The researcher guaranteed confirmability by preventing his knowledge, values, and conclusions from impacting the study's findings. Each phase of the data analysis was included in the study, including the conclusions that were derived as suggested by Charmaz in Kusi (2012)

3.7.2 Dependability

Dependability is a critical aspect of qualitative research, emphasizing the need for consistency and traceability in the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By maintaining an audit trail and providing clear documentation of research procedures, researchers enhance the dependability of their study (Creswell, 2013). To increase the dependability of the study findings, the researcher asked clear questions throughout the data collection, minimized bias, and controlled objectivity.

3.7.3 Transferability

Transferability is a key consideration in qualitative research, focusing on the applicability of the study's findings to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By providing rich and detailed descriptions of the research context and participants, researchers enhance the transferability of their findings, enabling readers to assess the relevance to their situations (Creswell, 2013).

3.7.4 Credibility

Credibility is a cornerstone of ensuring the trustworthiness of the study. It focuses on demonstrating the rigor of the research process and the soundness of the interpretations drawn from the data (Horsman, 2018). Techniques such as prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking contribute to enhancing the credibility of the study's findings (Creswell, 2013).

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

For the data collection procedures, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Head, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Education, Winneba. The introductory letter was sent to the Municipal Directorate of Education, a letter was hence given to seek permission from the head teachers of the schools involved. The researcher paid a visit to all the schools for familiarization with the respondents. This exercise enabled the researcher to explain the purpose of the study which is assessing teachers' use of integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 kindergarten curriculum to the respondents. The respondents were assured of their confidentiality. This exercise was important to put the respondents at ease so that they could provide honest and reliable responses. The data collection process was accomplished within three weeks with the researcher visiting the selected schools

every other week specifically, from (July 25th to August 8th 2023). Each of the lessons was observed for 30 minutes, and the interview section lasted for an hour on each person. (Appendix E)

Data from kindergarten teachers in Kwahu South was collected by using an observation checklist. Twelve classroom teachers out of 126 teachers were selected. Two circuits were selected from the rural setting, two from the semi-urban setting and two from the urban setting. The description for the settlements is based on the social amenities, infrastructures as well as accommodation and mobile network services available in all the settlement. The main criteria chosen for the selection was that there were Kindergarten schools and teachers available to provide the information needed for the study. Two schools were selected from each of the circuits making six schools, and two teachers each, were selected from each of the six schools totalling twelve teachers, for the data collection. First, a classroom observation was conducted to check whether the kindergarten teachers are using the integrated approach pedagogy in their lesson delivery. Ten out of the twelve teachers were observed, and two from different schools were absent for the day scheduled. But another day was scheduled to meet them. The face-to-face oral interview with audio recording took place after the classroom observation where any of the two teachers who were ready, for, to be interviewed. After six teachers were interviewed, there were point and notice of repeating of same response which brought about data saturation.

Data saturation refers to the point in qualitative research when no new information or themes are observed in the data gathered. It is often described as the point of redundancy where additional data collection does not contribute further insights or alter the understanding of the phenomenon under study (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson,

2006). In other words, saturation occurs when researchers have gathered enough data to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, ensuring that the findings are robust and representative of the studied population (Saunders et al., 2018).

Semi-structured interview questions were used to ascertain how teachers understand the efficient use of the integrated approach pedagogy in lesson delivery recommended in the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum. The nature of the semi-structured questions gave participants the liberty to answer in their own words and freely expressive based on the questions that were asked related to the indicators and classrooms competences used in the classrooms. Six out of the twelve teachers observed were selected, two each from the each of the circuit, and interviewed and recorded with audio recording device that is Lap top and mobile phone. The interviews were audio recorded and supplemented with field notes. The participants were assured that the audio recordings were for academic purposes. This helped respondents to gain confidence in the researcher.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected in this study using interviews was analysed thematically whereas content analysis was used to analyse the observation data. Thematic analysis is a flexible and comprehensive method that allows researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process involves several steps, including data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and defining themes, and finally, writing up the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse and report repeated patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a method for describing data as well as interpreting and selecting codes and constructing themes. This study being a description of the teachers' use of how the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Ghana National Curriculum for kindergarten was used in the Kwahu South Municipality, adopted the thematic analysis because it was designed to search for shared and common patterns. The various similar themes raised by the participant in integration were grouped and then analysed. In undertaking the thematic analysis for this study, Kiger et. al (2019) proposed the following steps:

Step one: "Familiarise yourself with the data by reading through the various responses from the teachers to have a fair idea of the responses given by the teachers".

Step two: "Generating initial codes is the second step after having a fair idea of the responses given by the teachers. In generating the codes, I made sure that the codes were sufficiently well defined and grouped such that they were not overlapping and they fit logically within frameworks". The first codes were used as templates to be applied to the entire data.

Step three: "Searching for themes is done after generating the initial codes". "As the name implies, this step involves the examination of the coded and collated data". These themes were constructed by analysing, combining and comparing how the codes relate to one another. The themes were closely linked to the original data.

Step four: “Reviewing themes, this step allowed the data extract to be resorted and themes modified to better reflect the coded data”. It was at this stage that relevant data was incorporated into the coding scheme and also to make sure that the data was coherent.

Step five: “The fifth step is defining and naming themes”. In this step, the names of the themes were reviewed to ensure that they were brief and adequately straightforward. Also, the themes were reviewed again to ensure that the scope of the theme is clearly defined and delimited.

Step six: „The final step is where the final analysis was described“. This step provided a clearer presentation to continue with the analysis which weaved a narrative that provided a clear account of how the data was interpreted.

On the analysis of the observational data, the researcher used content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic research method used for analyzing textual, visual, or audio data to identify patterns, themes, or meanings within the content. It is a widely used technique in qualitative research to interpret the content of various forms of communication (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis can be applied to a wide range of media, including interviews, open-ended survey responses, media articles, books, and other forms of recorded communication. The data is systematically coded according to the coding scheme. This involves categorizing sections of the text into predetermined codes or themes. This process can be manual or assisted by software tools. Once the data is coded, researchers analyze the frequencies and relationships between codes to identify patterns, themes, or trends. This step involves interpreting what the findings mean in relation to the research question and existing literature.

The researcher reports the findings often including illustrative examples or quotes from the data. Researchers provide a detailed account of how the analysis was conducted and what the results reveal about the research question. Content analysis is valued for its ability to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of communication patterns and for its flexibility in adapting to various types of data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

3.10 Ethical Issues

To abide by the ethical principles of the study, the study addressed some ethical concerns which include informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

Informed consent

Informed consent is a fundamental ethical principle in research, especially when involving human participants. It refers to the process through which researchers obtain voluntary and well-informed agreement from individuals before they participate in a research study (Seidman, 2016). In this study, the researcher ensured that participants understood the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their rights as participants in the participation in the study.

Anonymity

Anonymity in research refers to the practice of keeping the identities of participants completely hidden and untraceable. This is crucial to protect participants' privacy and encourage honest responses, particularly when discussing sensitive topics (James & Busher, 2007). This was ensured by the researcher by assigning codes T1, T2, T3 etc. to participants, in order to prevent any direct link between the data and the individuals providing it. Anonymity fosters a sense of security, enabling participants to share their experiences candidly. It also mitigates potential risks, ensuring that personal information remains confidential. Ethical research upholds anonymity as a

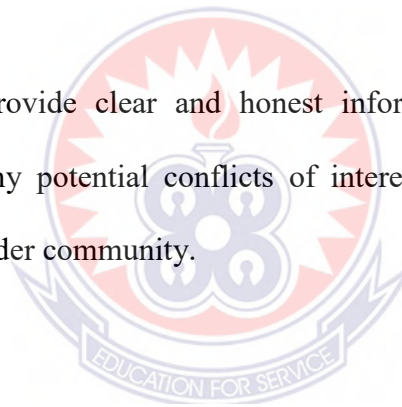
fundamental principle, maintaining trust, respecting autonomy, and facilitating a more open and accurate exploration of subjects' perspectives.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality in research pertains to safeguarding participants' personal information and ensuring that their identities and sensitive data are kept private. This ethical consideration was crucial for maintaining trust and protecting participants' rights. On the issue of confidentiality, an effort was made to maintain the privacy of the responses of the participants. Participants' responses were confidential under key and work access to the information provided and none of the respondents' names would be recorded in the study.

Transparency

Researchers should provide clear and honest information about their intentions, methodologies, and any potential conflicts of interest. This helps build trust with participants and the wider community.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter deals with the data analysis and the discussion of the results.

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

This segment of the chapter focuses on the demographics of the participants (teachers). Table 2 shows the kindergarten teachers' characteristics in the Kwahu South Municipality.

Table 2 Demographic Data of Teachers

Variables	Categories	No.	%
Sex	Male	0	0
	Female	12	100
Age	Below 30	2	20
	31-35	7	70
	35-and above	1	10
Level of education	Diploma	4	40
	Degree	5	50
	Masters	1	10
Years of teaching	1-5 Years	5	50
	6-10 years	4	40
	11 years and above	1	10

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 2 shows the sex distribution of the teachers for which none of the teachers was male while all 12 (100%) were females. Concerning the age bracket of the teachers, 2 (20%) of them were below 30. The majority 7(70%) were between 31-35 and 1(10%) was between 35 and above. Again, 4(40%) were found to have obtained a Diploma, the majority 5(50%) possess Degree and 1(10%) have acquired Masters. Last, it is seen that the majority of 5(50%) of the teachers have one to five years of teaching experience, 4 (40%) 6-10 years of teaching experience and 1(10%) 11 and above years of teaching experience. It implies they will be in a better position to provide accurate information for the study.

4.2 Data presentation and Analysis Discussion of Research Questions

4.3 Research Question One: How do teachers use the integrated approach in teaching at the Kindergarten Classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality?

This analysis sought to assess the extent to which teachers effectively integrate various subject areas, employ diverse instructional strategies, and nurture critical thinking and creativity among young learners. By examining how the teachers were implementing integrated approach pedagogies, insights can be gleaned into the effectiveness of current teaching practices and identify areas for potential improvement.

Through a thorough analysis of observed data, this study aimed to provide valuable insights into how effective teachers are using an integrated approach to teaching pedagogy. Such insights can inform targeted interventions, professional development initiatives, and curriculum enhancements to further enhance the quality of early childhood education in the Kwahu South Municipality. The results are presented under the following content themes:

Connection Across Learning Areas: The analysis revealed that most of the teachers enable learners to draw connections across learning areas, indicating a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary teaching. However, there is a subset of teachers who do not facilitate such connections, suggesting a potential area for improvement in integrating different subject areas within their instruction.

Enhancement of Critical Thinking: A significant portion of teachers were observed to utilize teaching approaches that enhance critical thinking skills in their learners. This reflects a proactive effort to foster higher-order thinking and problem-solving abilities. Conversely, some teachers were noted not to prioritize critical thinking enhancement in their instructional methods, highlighting a potential area for improvement.

Use of Diverse Strategies in Lesson Delivery: Many teachers were found to incorporate diverse strategies in lesson delivery, catering to different learning styles and preferences among learners. However, there is a subset of teachers who do not utilize such varied approaches, suggesting a potential limitation in instructional flexibility or creativity.

Developmentally Appropriate Strategies: All teachers were observed to employ developmentally appropriate strategies in lesson delivery. This indicates a strong alignment with the cognitive and emotional needs of their learners, contributing to a supportive and effective learning environment.

Facilitation of Creativity and Innovation: Very few of teachers were observed to use teaching methods that actively facilitate creativity and innovation in learners. This suggests a potential area for growth in fostering a more dynamic and inventive learning atmosphere among learners.

Encouragement of Exploration: The majority of teachers allow their learners to explore during learning activities, promoting curiosity and self-directed discovery. However, there are some teachers who do not encourage exploration, indicating a potential missed opportunity for enhancing learners' engagement and autonomy.

Appropriation of Assessment Tools: All teachers used appropriate assessment tools effectively for learners, ensuring accurate evaluation and feedback. This reflects a commitment to fair and comprehensive assessment practices aligned with learning objectives.

Encouragement of Collaborative Learning: A subset of teachers actively encourage collaborative learning among their learners, fostering teamwork and interpersonal skills. However, there are teachers who do not prioritize collaborative learning, indicating a potential area for promoting cooperative learning experiences among learners.

Overall, while many teachers demonstrated and incorporated in various aspects of indicators integrated in lesson delivery, there are areas identified for potential enhancement, such as fostering creativity, encouraging exploration, and promoting collaborative learning. Addressing these areas can further enrich the learning experiences of learners and strengthen the effectiveness of integrated teaching practices.

This finding corroborates with UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2021) which found that in terms of level of proficiency, the teachers they studied have a medium skill in teaching with integrated approach since is a new way of going about teaching. Understanding (2022) also found that the teachers have low proficiency in using the integrated approach pedagogy. Shermoff et al (2017) found that instructors have a

good attitude toward an integrated approach to teaching, although they confront significant hurdles. The theory of multiple intelligence encompasses many abilities and has a multifaceted nature that cannot be expressed in a single number. This finding, therefore, justifies the observed characters of the teachers as good as the teachers are capable and highly competent in using their skills to develop different types of intelligence, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

4.4 Research Question Two: What are the types of integrated approach used in teaching at the Kindergarten classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality?

This research question sought to determine the types of integrated approach pedagogies used in teaching at the kindergarten classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality. Data was gathered from six members through interviews to deliberate on the types of integrated approaches used in teaching at the Kindergarten Classrooms to answer this section. Here, teachers were given special sessions to respond to several questions regarding the types of integrated approaches used in teaching at Kindergarten Classrooms. The results obtained indicated that they all expressed their views freely without compelling anyone. A couple of the expressions of results are presented under themes with their respective responders. The results are presented under themes:

Theme 1: Lack of knowledge and understanding

On the types of integrated approaches used by teachers, respondents expressed their views which revealed that they don't have any idea or knowledge about. Here are some of the excerpts:

T1 indicated that

“Okay, I use sounds, writing, and identification of letters”

T4 also indicated that,

“I have heard it but I don’t know how it works”

T2 mentioned;

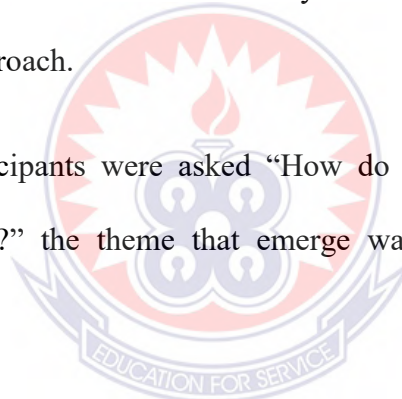
“I have no idea”

Again, T6 intimated that;

“I have no idea”

The majority of the teachers indicated that they do not have any knowledge about the types of integrated approach.

Moreover, when participants were asked “How do you integrate different subject areas in your lessons?” the theme that emerge was “Integrated Teaching across Subject Areas.



Theme 2: Integrated Teaching Across Subject Areas.

This theme was emerged from the data which contained this question; “How do you integrate different subject areas in your lessons?” The following are some excerpts;

T1 said that

“I work with the theme and through that I get to teach numeracy, literacy which entails the letter sounds and the blending, science and others”

T3 supported that:

“There are some of these subjects in our world our people (OWOP), for instance in the theme like (all around us), you can ask learners to count members of the family which is numeracy. Creative Arts, Poetry, Language and Literacy”

T6 also said:

“When it comes to our world and our people (OWOP), we have so many subjects integrated into it. You get Numeracy, Language and Literacy and creative art”

T2 further indicated that:

I integrate language and numeracy; at times I will include reading and other things which help the learner in their reading”

Another respondent T4 that:

“During community circle time I discuss the topic with them and I ask them to draw some of the activities to develop their creative abilities, I write the keywords on the board for them to read to develop their reading skills”

From the excerpts above, each respondent discussed how they incorporate multiple subjects, such as language and literacy, numeracy, and creative arts, into their lessons delivery. They emphasize the interconnectedness of these subjects and how they seamlessly integrate them into their lessons through thematic approaches, circle time activities, and explicit instruction. This theme underscores the holistic approach to education, where various disciplines are intertwined to enhance learning experiences and promote holistic development in learners.

More so, participants were asked “How do you assess the effectiveness of the type of integrated approach used and its benefit?” The theme that emerged was; Integration and Assessment in teaching across subjects.

Theme 3: Integration and Assessment in Teaching across Subjects

This theme was derived from the responses of the participants. Here are some of the responses;

“I don’t know the types but I know in every theme, you are to teach all subjects from it.” T1

T6 said;

“I don’t know the types of the integrated approach but I know teaching with the themes involves a combination of all subjects like numeracy, Literacy, creative arts, science, OWOP etc. So I assess every subject based on the subject I’m teaching at.”

To assess them, is through brainstorming, the learners will come out with their various ideas but I don’t know if that’s also a type of integrated approach or not. T5

Here, I checked whether all the areas have been integrated like I said, the other one that was using (the presence of air), I put in all the activities that made me realise that I was integrating the subject. Yes, I think is effective because it helps teacher teach across all areas but I don’t know if it’s a type of integration. T2

Responses from participants indicated that, the integration of the subject is worth it. This implies that teachers use integrated approach due to the nature of the standard based curriculum which is in themes.

This teacher had two major ways of determining the success of the integrated approach and they include using oral assessment example after teaching them and asking the learners to come to the board and write if the need arose for them to write. These tactics in their entirety have good standing to help learners excel. Considering the age bracket of learners in the kindergarten, the assessment techniques were good enough. This finding clarifies Mišćević-Kadijević, Mandić, and Bojanić (2019) who found that in-service preschool teachers have a more positive assessment of the need for this integration than pre-service preschool teachers. Effectively integrated activities using the contents of two or more subject areas may be developed through systematic observations of the practical work of in-service early childhood teachers and learners in their group

Concept development has been highlighted here as a majority benefit that is derived from the approach. It is through the operation of the approach; that concepts are mainly developed to assist the learners. It was added that through the use of the approach, transfer of learning becomes easy for the learners. Rudd, O'Callaghan, and William (2019) added that the approach brings about improvement in emotional development, cognitive development, self-regulation and academic achievement of children through the use of appropriate pedagogy are just but a few of the benefits. Gürkan (2021) examines the positive and negative experiences of teachers through a model in the process of designing a trans-disciplinary integrated curriculum. It was observed that the model brought a systematic approach to teachers. The integrated curriculum design was realized through the cooperation of teachers from different branches, which proved to be efficient to cooperate with different disciplines.

4.5 Research Question 3: What are the challenges affecting teachers' use of integrated approach in teaching at the Kindergarten Classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality?

This research question sought to determine the challenges associated with the use of an integrated approach pedagogies. A couple of the expressions of results are presented under themes that emanated from the study.

Theme 1: Inadequate Teaching and Learning Resources and Limited training workshops in Integrated Curriculum Implementation

The teachers were asked about their views of the challenges that come with using the integrated approach pedagogy. It was revealed that the challenges they face include difficulties in planning lessons for sounds and letters identification, not having curriculum, finances, and confusion in writing the notes and curriculum to plan lesson notes.

Oh, I can tell that in lesson planning, I find it difficult when planning lessons for the sounds and the identification of letters since there was not enough training for us on the use of the new curriculum. T2

The challenge for me is that because I don't have curriculum, I have to search for the lesson notes online and there's no training for us on this integrated approach of teaching. T5

There are no textbooks for us to teach from and not enough TLR's. I have not had any training on how to use the integrated approach and the KG curriculum. T3

I think since is integrated; it makes the teachers prepare a lot of teaching-learning resources (TLRs) for a particular indicator, because you need to get TLRs for all the areas and as you can see, there are limited TLR's in this school. So, it becomes a challenge. And at times, some of them require that you have to buy financially, the teachers feel that the school has to provide TLRs and Parents are not supporting us to buy some of the TLRs. T2

These responses encapsulates the difficulties experienced by educators due to the lack of textbooks, teaching and learning resources, curriculum guidance, and training in integrated teaching approaches, leading to obstacles in effective lesson planning and delivery.

Again, participants were asked “What are some of the challenges do you encounter in using the integrated approach in teaching numeracy and literacy at KG classrooms?” The theme that emerged was "Hurdles to Effective Integration of Numeracy and Literacy in Lesson Delivery".

Theme 2 Hurdles to Effective Integration of Numeracy and Literacy in Lesson Delivery.

The teachers were further asked of some of the challenges they encounter when using the integrated approach in teaching numeracy and literacy at KG classrooms?”

In lesson planning, some of the challenges that you may come across are that there will be no numeracy in some indicators, and you need to find ways to include numeracy, which makes it difficult. T8

Teachers are less equipped on the use of the integrated approach in lesson delivery. T7

I would say it's only the materials which is a challenge to me, they are not enough, sometimes, and we cannot get some audio-visual materials to teach them or any picture for learners to interact with them. T1

Sometimes, in a situation where you are teaching numeracy then we chip in with literacy at times, the learners somehow become confused. T4

The excerpts shows that educators face challenges in incorporating both numeracy and literacy skills seamlessly into their lesson plans and teaching methods within an integrated curriculum framework. It highlights issues such as the lack of numeracy in certain indicators, insufficient teacher preparation in using integrated approach pedagogies, limited access to teaching materials, and the potential confusion among learners when transitioning between numeracy and literacy instruction.

Furthermore, participants were asked “what challenges do you have implementing the integrated approach pedagogy in relation to time and classroom environment?” the theme that emerged was “Integrated approach is demanding”.

Theme 3: Integrated Approach is demanding

This theme escalated from the respondent views about their challenges in relation to time and classroom environment”.

The time that we use for the lesson delivery or the duration of the lesson for each learning area is not enough, at times learners use a lot of time in class when it comes to writing, some are not fast, so sometimes, and you have to give attention to those who cannot write fast. T3

It involves a lot of activities; you need a lot of time to plan a lesson and also, dissolving a subject and switching to another is also an issue because the class space is small with many learners which demands a lot like more materials, class control etc. T8

I have observed that the integrated approach is time-consuming for teachers, very time-consuming because they integrate content areas and you have to make sure that all areas are covered under a theme. And because of that it becomes very time-consuming. T9

As I said, the classes are large. So, there is space problem. Sometimes you go to an early childhood classroom and you look at the number of learners and look at the space you feel that the children are not even comfortable. So, we have a problem with the space that is available. T3

From the excerpts above, respondents see integrated approach of teaching as an approach that demands a lot and as time consuming. This at a long run had effect on teachers' lesson delivery

4.6 Research Question 4: What are the strategies that will be used to improve the integrated approach in teaching at the Kindergarten Classroom in Kwahu South Municipality?

This research question sought to determine the strategies that will be used to improve the integrated approach in teaching at the Kindergarten Classroom in Kwahu South Municipality. The theme that emerged was “

Theme 4: Thematic Teaching and Activity-Based Instruction in Curriculum Implementation"

This theme highlights the educators' reliance on thematic approaches to lesson planning, where they utilize curriculum indicators to develop activities tailored to different subjects and learning areas. It also emphasizes the importance of considering

learner levels and needs when designing activities, ultimately promoting effective and engaging instruction within the curriculum framework.

I take the theme and then create activities for it but the indicators in the curriculum guides me in creating these activities. T4

I have to use my phone to search for the KG curriculum on the GES portal to help me plan my lesson but, I use themes to break the various indicators into different subjects and form activities for it. T9

With the planning, I always consider the level of learners and give the integration accordingly, and consider the areas of learning so I use the indicators to break the themes into various subjects. T1

I consider some of the learners are very slow in picking up things so, I prepare the lessons to suit the level of the learners, create activities accordingly and overall do thematic teaching. T6

From the excerpts, participants shared their views on the strategies they use in integrated approach. Most of them expressed the use of thematic approach of teaching and the use of activity-based instruction as a teaching strategy.

In addition, participants were asked how you improve the integrated approach in teaching in relation to time?

The theme that emerged was “Enhancing Time Management for Effective Implementation”.

Theme 2: Enhancing Time Management for Effective Implementation

The teachers were further asked about ways to improve the integrated approach concerning the time when they were implementing the integrated approach. This theme highlights the various strategies and perspectives shared by participants on how they improve the integrated approach in teaching within the constraints of time.

Parents need to bring their wards to school early so that teachers will have enough time for lesson delivery. T2

I need to have access to the curriculum so that I can plan my lesson based on the timetable. T10

Planning and preparation, I always prepare well before going to class I also read to improve myself in order to be abreast with the integrated approach. T4

The time is okay because I do my activities one after the other to cover up for the day. T1

From the excerpts above, participants stated factors such as the importance of punctuality from parents, the need for access to 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum resources for effective planning, emphasis on planning and preparation, and individual approaches to managing time effectively during lesson delivery. Overall, the theme underscores the significance of efficient time management in optimizing the integrated teaching process.

Furthermore, participants were asked how you improve the integrated approach in teaching in relation to teaching and learning resources, the theme that emerges was “Innovation and Collaboration for material development”.

Theme 3: Innovation and Collaboration for materials development

The teachers were further asked about ways to improve the integrated approach pedagogy concerning teaching and learning resources when they are using the integrated approach pedagogy.

A participant said;

Sometimes, I make my own materials in terms of drawing. For example, I use drawing for the identification of letters and numbers. Some of the materials I look for before the day. T2

Some people are very good in drawing and bringing out some of these early childhood materials so, as we come together, those who are good are able to show others how they are able. We can also plead with NGOs. So that they can provide us with some of the materials that are needed. T7

I met the parents, discussed with them some of the challenges, then how best they could also help. Then sometimes I do write or talk to other people. For instance, just a few days ago, someone came in to help us with the whiteboard. T2

Sometimes, I use my own pocket money to buy most of the teaching materials that I use. E.g. textbooks and audio device used for phonics. T3

On the flip side, participants were asked “how do you improve on the integrated approach with the classroom environment when using the integrated approach” the theme that emerged was "Enhancing Learning through Active Engagement.

Theme 4: Enhancing Learning through Active Engagement.

On the ways to improve the integrated approach with the classroom environment when using the integrated approach, the teachers expressed their views. Here are some of the views of the respondents;

I try to take the learners out for outdoor activities on the school park. We sing rhymes, also, if the topic is about natures walk, we go out to the school compound. T9

I sometimes take out almost every chair from the room so we can get a spacious room for activities. T1

I make the classroom fun and engaging for all learners to participate in all activities. T3

From the excerpts, it is seen that teacher improve the integrated approach pedagogy in the classroom environment by ensuring their lesson is fun for all learners and also, ensuring the classroom is spacious enough to engage in all manner of activities.

Akmal, Masna, Tria & Maulida 2020) indicated that teachers should learn to collaborate to plan lessons to make their presentations more effective. (Bentely, 2016)

No single teacher can know all subject areas. An aspect of integration is to promote

learner-engaging, child-centred learning through collaborative learning in the classroom among learners of different abilities so that students can share their diverse experiences and examine information. (Dickson & Ampofo, 2020) During lesson preparation, the teacher should also consider and be certain of the methods to be employed during lesson delivery. (Akmal et al., 2020) There should be adequate time for the teacher to actively engage with the learners. (Oseno et al., 2014) Again, staff training and development should be considered as important for the effective implementation of the integrated approach pedagogy.

4.7 Discussion of Findings.

The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' use of the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Ghana National Curriculum for kindergarten in Kwahu South Municipality. There were eight indicators in the observation checklist, to investigate and study how teachers were using them effectively through lesson delivery. None of the twelve teachers observed, were found to be using all the eight indicators during lesson delivery. Inability of the teachers to use all the eight indicators, will not benefit the learners, because, teachers were lacking the full competency of using integrated approach pedagogy. It could be said that there is an implementation gap of how to use the integrated approach pedagogy in kindergarten classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality.

On the types of integrated approach pedagogies, the data shows that teachers do not have enough understanding on the different types of integrated approach used in their classroom. However, teachers have idea of thematic teaching. The teachers thought they were using integrated approach pedagogy of teaching but, as to the specific types of integration, when and how to use Multi-disciplinary, Trans-disciplinary and Inter-

disciplinary, they did not know. This also could be a contributing factor for learners not able to develop basic concepts in language and literacy and basic numeracy concepts after graduating from kindergarten. Data from Kwahu South Education Directorate (2019-2022). Regarding how different subject areas are integrated in a lesson, from the observed data, the majority of the teachers were teaching on subjects such as Numeracy, Creative Arts, and Language and Literacy and Our World Our People; using text books, instead of designing hands on activities, inquiry based learning and group activities to make lessons learner centred that could enhance learners' holistic development in kindergarten classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality.

On the theme of teaching and learning resources to support the integrated approach pedagogy, it was found that one needed real objects, pictures, audio and audio-visual devices, watching videos, creating songs for the lessons, cardboard with keywords written on it, flash cards, an Alphabet Chart, drawings in the textbooks and human resources, the teachers observed or interviewed were not using most of the materials mentioned above in their lesson delivery. The implication is that learners could not read, write and understand the simple numeracy concept due to inadequate use of resources. According to data from Kwahu South Education Directorate. Regarding the benefits that come with using the integrated approach, the teachers' responses were: remembering things by learners, knowing all learning areas using different learning strategies in promoting transfer of learning, broadening the idea of various subjects, reducing the burden of plenty of lesson notes, making their lesson lively, easy for learners to understand and develop concepts. It seems that the teachers' responses indicated that they knew the benefits of integrated approach pedagogy, nonetheless, they were still teaching, using single subjects and individual subjects text books.

These observations clearly defeat the vision of the New Ghana National 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum.

This research question sought to determine the challenges associated with the use of an integrated approach. With regard to the views of the challenges that come with using the integrated approach, the respondents enumerated the following challenges: inadequate TLRs, limited training workshops, hurdles to effective integration of Numeracy and Literacy in lesson delivery, and integrated approach being demanding. Several issues that were spoken about included difficulty in teaching other content areas, less equipped teachers to use the integrated approach, focusing on only a particular area, learners somehow becoming confused and using textbooks, making it difficult to present lessons. These factors stated above could account for the low performance of learners, data available in Kwahu South Education Directorate. Again, one person revealed that lesson preparation was the training she had and the majority of them had not had any 2019 curriculum training about how to use the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum which recommended the use of integrated approach pedagogy for kindergarten in Kwahu South Municipality.

On the challenges about time, the majority of the teachers agreed that they encountered challenges. Teachers talked about the integrated approach pedagogy being time consuming. With the challenges that come with using the TLRs, the respondents revealed that the challenges they faced included teaching materials not enough, using one's money to purchase the TLRs. With their views of the classroom management challenges that came when they were using the integrated approach pedagogy, it was revealed that the challenges they faced were not enough classroom space to accommodate group activities. Moreover, classroom environment challenged

prevented them from using the integrated approach pedagogy. Majority of the teachers responses were: lack of field for play activities, no conducive environment for outdoor activities, fields without outdoor play equipment in the kindergaten schools in Kwahu South Municipality.

The last research question sought to determine the strategies that could be used to improve the integrated approach in teaching at the Kindergarten Classroom. The result of the strategies to improve the use of the integrated approach pedagogy, the responses were: parents should bring their kids to school on time for teachers to ensure early commencements of activities for the day. It was found that thematic teaching and activity-based instruction to curriculum implementation plays a significant role for teachers to improve upon integrated approach pedagogy. On how to develop themselves as professionals with the use of the integrated approach, in-service training and workshops in conjunction with self-learning through reading textbooks were mentioned, these interventions, could improve the proficiency level of teachers.

Regarding the ways to improve the integrated approach concerning time, teachers indicated that enhancing time management is a key for effective management. Factors such as the importance of punctuality from parents, the need for access to 2019 curriculum resources for effective planning of instructional lessons, emphasis on effective planning and preparation before lesson delivery , and individual approaches to managing time effectively during lesson delivery. Some of the kindergarten teachers called on parents to ensure that their wards are brought to school on time to cover a lot of the timetable. Again, on the ways to improve the integrated approach concerning

teaching and learning resources revealed that “innovation and collaboration for material development, among teachers during Professional Learning Community time in their various circuits could also help.” Through this means, teachers can lease with other teachers to help in material development effective and efficient teaching and learning. Ways to improve the integrated approach about improving classroom setting when using the integrated approach, the teachers expressed enhancing learning through active engagement whereby teachers by ensured that their lessons are full of fun for all learners and also, ensured that the classroom is spacious enough to engage in all manner of activities and going for outdoor activities to improve learning and active participation among learners in Kwahu South Municipality.

The majority of them talked about the large space and suitable round tables and chairs. Concerning the ways to improve the integrated approach in the classroom environment. Principal issues that were spoken about included: creating more space for physical play activities during outdoor lessons, use of playing equipment, learning centres in schools would ensure the application and smooth implementation of the integrated approach pedagogy contained in 2019 in Kwahu South Municipality.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Early childhood education remains a very important stage of education since it serves as a foundation on which a person's education is built. The summary of the findings of the study revealed early childhood education, using integrated approach curriculum.

Again the findings revealed that types of integrated approach pedagogy used by teachers, was mostly on sounds, writings and identifications of letters. , writing, confirmation from interviewed respondents, indicated that teachers lack understanding of how to use the types of the integrated approach pedagogies to benefits all learners.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that kindergarten teachers were found to be not effectively using the integrated approach pedagogy, as recommended by the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum, in kindergarten Classrooms in Kwahu South Municipality. The study however showed that learners could receive different strategies to have better understanding and training in order to develop basic concepts in all the content areas for holistic development. These could be the factors which resulted to low performance of learners in having difficulties in basic literacy, and cannot read and understand the meaning of words and numeracy skills. Data from the Kwahu South Education Directorate.

It was also concluded that the teachers did not have much knowledge of the various types of integrated approach that they needed to use at different stages of the teaching and learning process. For instance, some of them mentioned sounds, writing, and identification of letters, as types of integrated approach while only two teachers were able to mention inter-disciplinary and then multi-disciplinary approach. This suggests that if learners in a school have difficulties in basic literacy and cannot read and understand the meaning of words, then the teachers can therefore be blamed for incompetence. Since, teachers may miss out and escape some salient aspects of the kindergarten curriculum that they need specific strategies using either multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary or circumstances when you need to apply all to teach.

Again, the study concluded that the challenges included difficulties in planning lessons for sounds and letter identification, not having a curriculum, financially, confusion in writing the notes and curriculum to plan lesson notes, less equipped teachers to use the integrated approach pedagogy, focusing on only a particular area, learners somehow become confused during lesson presentation, using textbooks makes it difficult to present lessons. This implies that the learners in the school had difficulties in basic literacy and developing concepts in other learning areas and could not read and understand the meaning of words and the problem identified above contributed to the learners' low performance.

In-service training and workshops in addition to self-learning were not provided to the teachers, and the limited spacious classrooms and inadequate tables and chairs. This can give justification that the teachers suffer when implementing the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum, which recommended integrated approach

pedagogy in their teaching. The use of the approach will be successful if the teachers competently use the approach after they have gotten all that they need to use to implement the 2019 Ghana National kindergarten curriculum, in Kwahu South Municipality.

5.3 Recommendations

1. From the findings and conclusions of the study, following recommendation were made that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Ghana Education Service in Kwahu South Education Directorate, should organise in-service training workshops for teachers to harness teachers' understanding of integrated approach pedagogy, and be able to link integrated lessons to real-world problems. This will help learners to see the practical applications of their knowledge; and encourages critical thinking and problem solving skills and develop the love for continuous learning.
2. It was also recommended that Ministry of education and Ghana Education Service should post more early childhood teachers to be enrolled, in order to support implementation of the integrated approach pedagogy. These could benefit teachers and learners to improve retention of information, enhanced critical thinking skills, and a more engaging learning experience for learners to improve performance in basic concepts in literacy and numeracy.
3. Also, the government of Ghana and non-governmental agencies should team up to provide materials that can help teachers to be proficient in their use of the integrated approach pedagogy, to help in nation building and development. This is imperative as it will prepare all the teachers to overcome the

challenges, they encounter concerning the use of the approach as recommended in the 2019 Ghana National curriculum for kindergarten.

4. Finally, teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops, conferences, or professional development opportunities focused on integrated teaching strategies and pay attention to types of integrated approach. Staying up-to-date with best practices can enhance teachers' effectiveness in the use of the integrated approach pedagogy, in Kwahu South Municipality.

5.4 Areas for Further Studies

The study involved only Kindergarten Classrooms; therefore, future studies may involve primary schools and find teachers' and learners' perspectives about the integrated approach of the Ghana 2019 New Standard Based Curriculum. Again, the study used observation and interview guides as the data collection instruments. It is suggested that future studies could make use of a questionnaire which allows researchers to solicit the views of respondents to pre-determined data that they need to express their agreement or disagreement as compared to using an interview and observation to that participants who are likely to provide answers that are not related to the study. This study can also be replicated in other regions and municipalities in the country to discover how best teachers teach learners with the integrated approach pedagogy in developing the human being as a whole. Lastly, another study needs to look at the influence of teachers' perspectives on the integrated approach pedagogy of the 2019 Ghana National Kindergarten Curriculum on the academic performance of learners after they have been taught using the approach.

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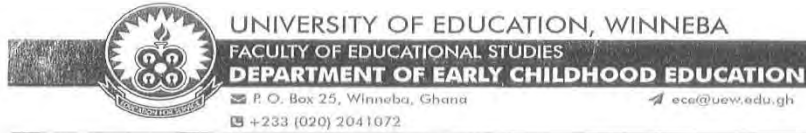
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APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



FES/DECE/I.1

27TH JUNE, 2023

The Director
Ghana Education Service
Kwahu South Municipality
P.O. Box 70
Mpraeso-Kwahu

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

I write to introduce to you **Ms. Rebecca Ntim** with index number: **220001588** who is a Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) student in the above department. She was admitted in 2021/2022 academic year. She is in her final year and has to embark on her thesis on the topic: **“Teacher’s Perspective about the use of Integrated approach of the 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality”**.

Ms. Ntim is to collect data for her thesis, and I would be most grateful if she could be given the needed assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Michael Subbey
Ag. Head of Department



www.uew.edu.gh

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION FOR DATA COLLECTION

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted.

Tel No:
Our Ref: **NO CES/ERMD/PT/6351**
Your Ref:
E-mail: kwahusouthges@yahoo.com

Digital Address: EI-0273-9072



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MUNICIPAL EDUCATION OFFICE
KWAHU SOUTH MUNICIPAL
P. O. BOX 70
MPRAESO


12TH JULY, 2023

ALL HEADS OF BASIC SCHOOL
KWAHU SOUTH MUNICIPAL
MPRAESO

INTRODUCTORY LETTER
NAME: REBECCA NTIM
INDEX NUMBER: 220001588

I write to introduce Ms. Rebecca Ntim a Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) student of University of Education, Winneba to your school to enable her collect data on the topic "Teacher's Perspective about the use of Integrated approach of the 2019 Kindergarten Curriculum in Kwahu South Municipality to help her embark on her thesis for the programme she is pursuing.

Kindly assist her to fulfil her request.
Thank you.


LOVELACE KORANTENG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCE
GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE
KWAHU - SOUTH
KWAHU SOUTH, MPRAESO
TDR: MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
KWAHU SOUTH, MPRAESO

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

TEACHERS' PROFICIENCY LEVEL ABOUT THE USE OF INTEGRATED APPROACH IN TEACHING AT THE KINDERGARTEN CLASROOMS

The main objectives of the study are to; assess teachers' proficiency level in the use of integrated approach of teaching, the types of the integrated approach used in the Kindergarten classrooms, factors inhibiting teachers' use of the integrated approach of teaching as well as strategies that will put in place to improve teachers use of the approach in teaching at the kindergarten centres.

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Gender:

Male

Female

2. Age bracket

Below 30

31-35

35-40

3. Level of Qualification

Diploma

Degree

Masters

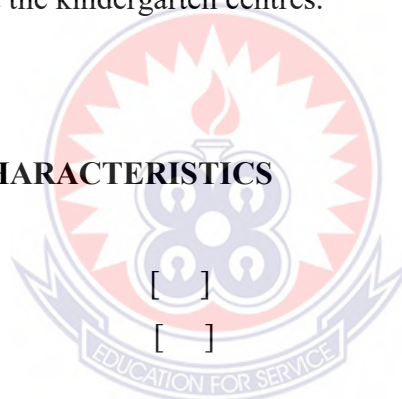
Others

4. Years of Teaching Experience

0-5years

6-10years

11 years and above

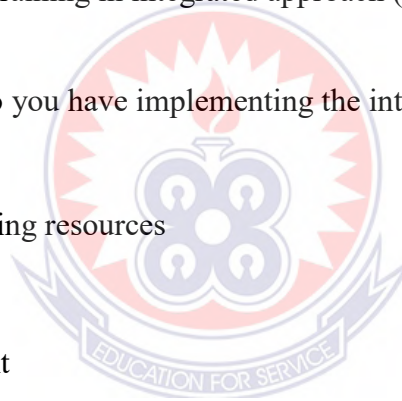


Research question two (2): types of the integrated approach used by teachers

5. Which type of integrated approach do you use in your lesson delivery?
6. How do you integrate different subject areas in your lesson?
7. How do you assess the effectiveness of the type of integrated approach used
8. What resources do you use to support your type of integrated approach
9. What are the benefits of using the approach in teaching?

Research question 3: challenges associated with the use of the integrated approach

10. What challenges do you face in planning your lesson using the integrated approach?
11. What are some of the challenges you have encountered in using the integrated approach in teaching numeracy and literacy in KG centres
12. Have you had any training in integrated approach (yes/no)
13. Justify
14. What challenges do you have implementing the integrated approach in relation to;
Time
Teaching and learning resources
Classroom
School environment



Research question 4: Strategies that will be put in place to improve teachers' use of the integrated approach in the kindergarten classrooms?

15. What are some of the strategies to improve the use of the integrated approach in lesson planning?
16. How do you develop yourself in the use of the integrated approach?
17. How to you improve the integrated approach in teaching in relation to;
Time
Teaching and learning resources
Classroom setting
School environment

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLISTS

No	Statement	Yes	No
	Teacher's proficiency about the use of the integrated approach		
18	Teachers enable learners to draw connections across learning areas		
19	Teachers' teaching approach enhances critical thinking in the learners		
20	Teachers use diverse strategies in lesson delivery		
21	Teachers use developmentally appropriate strategies in lesson delivery		
22	Teaching methods used by the teacher facilitate creativity and innovation in learners		
23	The teacher allows their learners to explore during learning activities		
24	Teachers are able to use appropriate assessment tools on learners		
25	Teachers encourage collaborative learning among learners		

Observational checklist on **'Teachers' use of the integrated approach of the standard-based kindergarten curriculum at the Kwahu South**

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF OBSERVATION DATA

Respondent/Class	Date / Time	Strand/ Sub-strand	Remarks
KG 2	25 /07 / 23 8: 00 am – 9:00am	All around us / things in the classroom	Indicators 1, 2, 5, 6. And 7 were not seen in lesson delivery due to the teachers being new at the KG
KG1	25 /07 / 23 10:00 am – 11:00am	Values and believes/ greetings	Indicators 3,5,6and 8 did not show in the lesson delivery due teacher did not have any training on how to used integrated pedagogy
KG 2	25 /07 / 23 12:00 – 1:00pm	All around us /types of plants	Indicators 5 was not integrated in the lesson
KG1	1:00 pm -2:00 pm	All around us /types of plants	Indicator 3 and 5 were not seen in the lesson delivery