The Effect of Project Based Learning Approach to the Students’ Achievements and Attitudes in Social Studies Teaching

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Summary

Introduction

The aim of this research is to determine whether the project based learning approach is effective on students’ academic achievements and attitudes towards the Social Studies lesson about the process in teaching “Our Country and the World” learning unit in Social Studies lesson. The sub-questions of the research determined as below;

1. Do the academic achievement test scores of the students in the experimental group in which project-based learning approach used, differ significantly from the control group students’ scores in terms of groups (experimental-control), measure (pretest-posttest) and their joint impact in social studies lessons’ “Our Country and the World” unit?

2. Do the attitude scale scores of the students in the experimental group in which project-based learning approach used, differ significantly from the control group students’ scores in terms of groups (experimental-control), measure (pretest-posttest) and their joint impact in social studies lessons’ “Our Country and the World” unit?

Methodology

The attendants of the research are the students of 6/B (experimental group) and 6/A (control group) classes in Demirlibahçe Primary School in Mamak district of Ankara province during the spring semester of 2010-2011 educational year. The study consisted of 2x2 pre-test post-test control group design. “Our Country and the World” learning unit was taught by conducting Project based learning approach in experimental group and the same learning unit was taught by using the approach which Social Studies curriculum requires. “Student Project Guide”, “Group Project Guide” and “Teacher Project Guide” was compiled from other similar researches in order to help students out during project works. The research was conducted at the time when “Our Country and the World” learning unit was planned according to “Social Studies Curriculum Annual Plan” and two-week time was spent to collect data by pre-test, post-test. “Personal Information Form” and “Grasha-Reichmann Learning Styles Scale” were used in the process of comprising project study groups. “Attitude Scale towards the Social Studies Course” was applied as pre-test and post-test. The data gathered was analyzed by using SPSS 18.0 statistical package program. Statistical significance level was determined as 0.05.

Findings: According to the data obtained from the research findings related to the first sub-problem, although academic achievement test scores were statistically and significantly different between pretest and posttest, there is no difference between the experimental and the control groups’ academic achievement test scores. This finding addresses that project based learning has no affect on learners’ academic achievement levels.

And data obtained from the research findings related to the second sub-problem, attitude scale scores were statistically and significantly different between pretest and posttest, and also between the experimental and the control group. This finding addresses that project based learning affects learners’ attitudes in a positive manner.

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Recommendations

Recommendations for the implementers to take into consideration about applying project based learning approach and to researchers for further research were given as below:

1. Project activities need to be planned very well from beginning to end. Therefore, teachers who run the project have important responsibilities.

2. Teacher should increase the usage of extra-curricular activities to monitor the students’ works. An e-mail group, which facilitates the participation of students, evaluation of each week, next week announces in detail, answering questions, solving problems encountered in resource and material needs, might be used.

3. Ministry of Education should facilitate applications of project based learning applications in schools of our country.

4. There should be further researches which direct other achievement tests to the students.