

Deasy, Claire, 2012, *The Teaching and Assessment of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education in West Cork Schools.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The *primary* school classroom has become a particularly busy place with teachers obliged to satisfy eleven curricular subjects in *a* short teaching week. Primary education and curricula has undergone huge changes in the last number of decades which has led to much debate as to whether the Revised Curriculum (1999) is in fact too broad and thus impeding its full implementation.

This dissertation will critically discuss and present an analysis of the literature on Teaching and Assessment Practices in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), in *a* selection of West Cork primary schools. The objectives in this study are to discover the amount of time actually spent teaching SESE, to determine the extent to which schools/teachers employ the recommended methodologies for teaching SESE, teachers perceptions of SESE and their views regarding the implementation of SESE, to assess the role and function played by assessment in informing teachers planning and to evaluate the use of formative assessment in the classroom.

Both the questionnaire and interview are used as research methods to elicit the views of principals and mainstream class teachers on the SESE curriculum. The use of this mixed triangulation approach provides deeper insight and strong validity results. Four primary schools in the south west of the country were surveyed.

The study reveals that teachers have an overwhelming amount of support for the SESE curriculum and its principles but are not using the prescribed amount of time teaching SESE. This is due mainly to class size, time constraints and teachers feeling not adequately trained to teach Science. The study highlights the need for *a* broader range of teaching methodologies and assessment techniques in honouring the dual role of assessment: assessment of learning and assessment for learning.