

**Reidy, CP, 2009, *Social, Environmental and Scientific Education in the Irish Primary School: Implementation, Challenges and Opportunities***

#### **DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

The emphasis in the Irish Primary school on providing a broad and balanced curriculum that seeks to nurture the whole-child is increasingly accompanied by insistence on greater effectiveness in curriculum implementation. There is much debate as to whether the Revised Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999) is, in fact, too broad and thus, impeding, in actual practice, its full implementation. This dissertation looks at the challenges and the possibilities that present for full implementation of the curricular area of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE).

Both the questionnaire and the interview are used as research methods to elicit the views of principals and mainstream teachers on the SESE curriculum and furthermore to identify its implementation challenges and the possibilities. The use of this mixed method approach will not only help to provide deeper research insight but, also, to strengthen the validity of the research results. Four primary schools in the south east of the country were surveyed. This study reveals an overwhelming degree of support by principals and teachers for the SESE curriculum. Whole-school planning is recommended for SESE and teachers are encouraged to work in a spirit of collaboration.

A number of pertinent militating factors to full implementation of the SESE curriculum are identified. The need for the employment of a broader range of teaching methodologies for SESE instruction arises. Finally, this study highlights the need for a broader range of assessment techniques in honouring the dual role of assessment: assessment of learning and assessment for learning.