Using essential learning competencies to provide basic and quality education for all children at primary level

The government of Sri Lanka implemented New Educational Reforms for Primary Education Circle in 1998 with the main objective of improving the quality of Primary Education.

A competency based curriculum had been introduced and activity based child-centered teaching and learning methodologies were adopted.

Educational Reforms in 1998

Essential Learning Competencies at Primary Level

- Implementation of Essential Learning Competencies at Primary Level is a revolutionary step in providing quality primary education for all children in primary grades.

- The main objective is: to ensure basic and essential education for all the children irrespective of their learning disparities.

Significance of achieving essential competencies in early stages.

- Inability to achieve basic and essential competencies in early stages will lead to low achievement and learning problems in later stages. For example, Students who are unable acquire pre-reading and writing skills will have problems in achieving language competencies in later stages.

- Those who experience difficulties in fulfilling basic and essential social needs in early stages will have personality problems in later stages.
Strong Focus

- Education reforms introduced in 1998 had a strong focus on the identification of basic and essential learning competencies and implementation of procedures to ensure that all children achieve those competencies.

Essential Learning Competencies

In this process:
- Forty learning competencies in Key stage one,
- Fifty two learning competencies in Key stage two, and
- Fifty five learning competencies in Key stage three have been identified.
- Model diagnostic tests and assessment activities have also been developed to assess student achievement in classrooms.
- Teachers are accountable to take all children to the expected levels in ELC - No child left behind.

At present

- This programme is functioning in all schools in Sri Lanka.
- The Provincial Departments of Education take necessary steps to help students in achieving the E.L. competencies.

Drawbacks

- A number of studies have shown:
  - There are problems in the achieving ELC among children
  - There are limitations in implementing this programme in schools
  - So it is important to take necessary action to overcome those limitations

- It will help in providing essential, quality Education for all children in primary grades.
It is planned to conduct the following study.

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**Objectives of the study**

- To Identify the Limitations in the present practice in classrooms in achieving Essential Learning Competency programme
- To Identify ways and means to improve existing practice in E.L.C effective to provide quality and essential education for all children in primary classrooms.
- To develop an action plan to conduct the Essential Learning Competencies Programme in an effective manner in primary schools.

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**Methodology.**

**Sample**
- A representative sample of all categories of primary schools in some selected provinces in Sri Lanka.
- **five province and 15 primary schools from each province.**

**Methodology**

**Data Collection Procedures**
- Classroom observations
- Focus group discussions with relevant Officers at the Provincial Departments, teachers in Primary Schools,
- Questionnaires for ISAs and teachers teaching in primary classrooms
- It is expected to get the help from in-service teacher advisers as research assistants
Data analysis and preparation of the report

- both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used for data analysis
- Prepare the report in narrative form

Time frame

- Phase one: Prepare the plan and Data collection Instrument conduct awareness program for assistant researchers
  - First quarter of year 2007
- Phase two: Data collection and analysis
  - Second quarter in 2007
- Phase three: Prepare the report and develop an action plan
  - Third quarter of the year 2007