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TEACHING, LEARNING, AND
CURRICULUM STUDIES

HOW A SCIENCE METHODS COURSE MAY INFLUENCE THE CURRICULUM
DECISIONS OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN THE BAHAMAS (429 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to examine how a science methods course in primary education might influence the curriculum decisions of preservice teachers in The Bahamas related to unit plan development on environmental science topics. Grounded in a social constructivist theoretical framework for teaching and learning science, this study explored the development of the confidence and competence of six preservice teachers to teach environmental science topics at the primary school level.

A qualitative case study using action research methodologies was conducted. The perspectives of preservice teachers about the relevancy of methods used in a science methods course were examined as I became more reflective about my practice. Using constant comparative analysis, data from student-written documents and interviews as well as my field notes from class observations and reflective journaling were analyzed for emerging patterns and themes.

Findings of the study indicated that while preservice teachers showed a slight increase in interest regarding learning and teaching environmental science, their primary focus during the course was learning effective teaching strategies in science on topics with which they already had familiarity. Simultaneously, I gained a deeper understanding of the usefulness of reflection in my practice.

As a contribution to the complexity of learning to teach science at the primary school level, this study suggests some issues for consideration as preservice teachers are supported to utilize more of the national primary science curriculum in The Bahamas.