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KEY WORD : PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY / RESEARCH BASED APPROACH

NUTTANID SAMAJIT : THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS TAUGHT BY RESEARCH BASED APPROACH.

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This experimental research used a pretest - posttest design to achieve the following objectives : 1) to compare the problem solving abilities of the early childhood students before and after being taught using a research based approach and 2) to study the students' opinions towards instruction with a research based approach. The sample consisted of 25 early childhood students studying in the first semester in the academic year 2008 of Watkonglad school, Dontoom district, Nakornpathom Education Service Area 1, Nakornpathom Province.

The research instruments used for gathering data were : 1) eight lesson plans taught with a research based approach and emphasizing on problem solving skills, 2) tests to evaluate problem solving abilities and 3) questionnaires on students' opinions toward research based approach. The data were analyzed by using percentage (%), mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviation (S.D.), and t – test dependent.

The research findings were :

1. The student's problem solving ability before and after being taught using a research approach were statistically significant level of difference 0.05. After being taught with a research based approach, early childhood students gained higher scores than before being taught with a research based approach. The students' problem solving abilities about themselves which were relevant to other persons were higher than those abilities about others.

2. Overall, The early childhood students' opinions towards the research based approach overall were at a high level of agreement. The students were able to think critically while learning. On the aspect of learning usefulness, the students learned to solve their own and others' problems. On the aspect of classroom atmosphere, the students had fun and enjoyed working in groups and they wished to learn with a research based approach again.

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Student's Signature .....

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