

# **Garden-Based Learning (GBL): Teachers' Use of an Innovative Pedagogy to Support Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools in Trinidad and Tobago**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated teachers' use of a Garden-based Learning (GBL) approach to curricula integration at the primary school level in Trinidad and Tobago. The study first established that the use of a GBL approach to curricula integration at the primary school level represented an educational innovation. Next, the perceived innovation attributes (relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability) that encouraged the diffusion of the GBL innovation were examined, and the major enabling and inhibiting factors that impacted primary school teachers' implementation of GBL were determined. Finally, the alignment of the GBL innovation to the national primary school curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago by teachers' use of best practices for GBL implementation was explored. The sampling comprised four primary schools in Trinidad and one in Tobago and involved 23 participants. The main findings indicated that the GBL innovation had both positive and negative innovation attributes for teachers, and these attributes influenced teacher adoption. The study also showed that relative advantage, compatibility, observability, trialability, and a perceived low degree of complexity were most critical to GBL adoption, while a perceived high degree of complexity resulted in resistance to the adoption process. The study also identified class, school, and community-based best practices that teachers adopted to implement the GBL innovation in urban and rural primary schools. Findings also suggested that the main factors that affected the implementation of the GBL innovation included: teacher training, administrative and curricula support, community and parental involvement, and the availability of infrastructure and garden spaces. This study showed that the diffusion of the GBL innovation in urban and rural primary schools by teachers is impacted by student, classroom, school, and community influences, and research on innovative pedagogies, such as a GBL approach to curriculum implementation, can be approached from this holistic perspective.

**Keywords:** case studies, school garden activities, garden-based learning, agricultural education, educational innovations, elementary education, best practices; innovative pedagogies, curriculum implementation, diffusion