Teaching Strategies Used In Government-Funded ECE Providers in Gaborone: Preliminary Pointers

Naledi B Mswela

University of Botswana, Department of Primary Education

ABSTRACT	Published Online: December 12, 2023
Appropriate teaching strategies are a vital aspect of any learning programme including Early Childhood Education (ECE). The Government of Botswana has invested greatly in the provision of ECE, and it thus becomes necessary to conduct a brief survey of the teaching strategies used by government funded ECE providers in Gaborone as a preliminary pointer of strategies that are utilized and their effectiveness, and those that are not used, and make recommendations for holistic development of the learners. Data collection and analysis used qualitative research method. The survey used questionnaires for data collection and interviews were conducted to triangulate data. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed into MS Word 15. The findings of the study revealed that out of the ten teaching strategies used in ECE provision, only three were used.	**KEYWORDS:** Early childhood education, teaching strategies, quality, education and training sector strategic plan, early childhood education policy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The National Policy on Education (2004) defines Early Childhood Education (ECE) as the education given to children prior to their primary school entry. Early Childhood Education provides education and care of young children from birth to eight years (Meier & Marais, 2012) in pre-schools, kindergartens, nurseries, or crèches. The early years which are characterised by rapid growth and development (Berk, 2017), are crucial in the development of an individual and are foundational to the success or failure of an education system. It is at this stage that children need quality care and nurturing.

According to UNESCO World Data on Education (2006-2007), the learning achievement of children in lower primary school is very low as most of them are illiterate and are not able to read and write. Further, repetition rates at this stage are very high. The report goes further to note that because access to basic education has increased drastically in the past decade due increase in the number of schools, there is an urgent need to ensure quality of provision (UNESCO World Data, 2006/7).

Corresponding Author: Naledi B Mswela

Cite this Article: Naledi B Mswela (2023). Teaching Strategies Used In Government-Funded ECE Providers in Gaborone: Preliminary Pointers. International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies, 3(12), 2373-2378

Quality is a highly subjective concept that is decided upon taking into consideration a number of factors including such as pupil-teacher ratio, materials and equipment, staff training and qualifications, parental involvement, staff retention, renumeration of staff and relationships, and school ethos. Teaching strategies also plays a significant role in the quality of an ECE (Gordon & Browne, 2013) because if teachers are not knowledgeable in effective, appropriate, interactive, culturally relevant and even individualised teaching strategies a holistic development of the child may be compromised.

2.0 TEACHING STRATEGIES (TS)

Teaching strategy or methods are the techniques used to deliver effective learning to realize good learning outcomes. Meir and Marais (2012) aver that teaching strategies or methods help students to master the content and learn how to apply it. Wegner Minnaert and Strehlke (2013) identify the following teaching strategies: cooperation strategies, elaboration strategies, motivational and emotional strategies, revision strategies, organizational strategies, and control strategies. Owajari and Akanmu (2021) state that teaching strategies refer to the structure, system, methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that a teacher uses during instruction. These may include the play way strategy, the modelling strategy, the class discussion strategy, the cooperative learning strategy, the integrated technology strategy, and many others. These authors believe that there is

no strategy that works well with all students and that teachers need to incorporate varied teaching strategies in their instruction. Some of the strategies are elaborated on in the subsections below.

2.1 Cooperation Strategies (CS)

In the 21st Century learning is seen as a cooperative and interactive process which includes social interaction and active engagement in the learning process. Istomina (1977) showed that when children work together and interact as a group they learn better and increase in knowledge. Cooperative learning means that students support each other to reach a common goal. This could happen in pair or group work. As a basic requirement for successful learning in such environments, certain conditions need to be satisfied: it important to have a pleasant learning environment (Gordon & Browne, 2017); the teaching area should be conducive to allow for cooperative learning and interaction (Huber, 2006). Task activities must fit for pairs or groups to enable the use of cooperative skills and facilitate decision-making, communication, and conflict management. A heterogeneous group composition is useful since strong pupils can support weak pupils.

2.2 Elaboration Strategies (ES)

One of the challenging aspects for learners in the knowledge-gaining processes is integrating new knowledge into known knowledge (Friedrich & Mandl, 2006). Elaborative techniques encourage both the understanding and remembering of new knowledge by create links between new information and already existing knowledge. They are generally used when students invent analogies and mnemonics for facts that must be learned, link new ideas to the previous knowledge or express new information in their own words (Schräder-Naef, 2002). Mnemonic devices help memorizing and remembering unstructured material, such as vocabulary or word lists as well as complex correlations, which is of special importance for gifted learners and underachievers. These are procedures such as brainstorming, finding analogies, utilizing notes which help to activate previous knowledge and then gradually move to new information, such as unknown features of processes or things that the students already know.

2.3 Motivational and Emotional Strategies (MES)

The learner's motivation is regarded as central for successful learning. Other factors such as intelligence and interest play an important role as well. Rheinberg (2000) describes motivation as an activating orientation to a target status which is regarded as positive. The strength of this orientation influences the duration and intensity of the action. This means that the extent of motivation affects whether a pupil learns at all and if so for how long (Rheinberg 2000). In

an ECE setting where some of the learners may be de-motivated or may have emotional issues, teachers would need to use strategies that boost their motivation.

There is a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Actions which are intrinsically motivated are interesting, exciting, and challenging for learners. In contrast, extrinsically motivated actions have a contributory function as they are used to reach positive consequences, for instance praise of the parents or good grades (Rheinberg 2000). The promotion of learners' individual and thematic interests has become an important matter in current research. Gifted learners or under-achievers as well as students with autism or borderline disorders profit from motivational and emotional learning strategies. The objective of school teaching should be to raise the students' interest for subject matter.

Teachers in ECE need to implement not only content into lessons but also need to make them appealing, varied, and as entertaining as possible. Teachers could also include rhymes, stories, play into lesson (Schiefele & Streblow, 2006). Children also need to feel competent, self-determined and have the confidence to mix with other learners. The goal of promoting intrinsic motivation and subject related interest is to create positive experience during learning and to increase the learners' personal significance Schiefele & Streblow, 2006). As proposed by Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, people are different and teachers need to be cognizant of this when they teach and assess students (Marenus, 2020).

2.4 Revision Strategies (RS)

Revision Strategies are important strategies for student because despite the fact that they are confronted with large amounts of information each day, only a small amount of the subject matter is anchored in the long-term memory. The more detailed the subject matter, the more important is the revision of what has been learned as a pre-condition for remembering (Konrad 1999). Active repetition and recitation help students to store facts in the long-term memory (Atkinson & Hilgard, 2016).

2.5 Organizational Strategies (OS)

These learning strategies aim at organizing new knowledge by making connections between the different knowledge elements (Friedrich & Mandl, 2006). By using organizational strategies important information is identified or depicted visually, details are combined and clustered and thus a deeper understanding of the new subject matter is achieved. As the human working memory's capacity is limited, complex information is easier to process when transformed into a structured form (Schräder-Naef, 2002). Utilizing organizational strategies is generally beneficial for

students of different personalities, skills, and needs. This strategy is important for every student as it helps in organizing large amounts of subject matter by dividing the learning content into suitable sequences.

2.6 Control Strategies (CS)

Effective learning needs strategies to be able to control one's own learning and thinking. Competent learners can plan, monitor, check and reflect the results of their leaning and thinking processes (Mandl, 2006). Setting educational goals as well as wording control questions must be included when planning a learning sequence. Control strategies help to check the learning progress, for instance whether a text was understood in detail. Regulation strategies are useful to adapt one's learning to the demands of the task, such as reading a difficult section of text once more. These learning strategies capacitate experienced learners with a distinctive ability to reflect. Younger and inexperienced learners must first be prepared for such techniques. This strategy needs students to take more responsibility for their own learning outcomes. By so doing children develop control strategies that fit them as individuals. Working in small groups also improves this process as the students learn from each other and take bits and pieces of others' strategies that seem interesting to them.

2.7 The Play Way Strategy (PWS)

Lev Vygotsky the pioneer of social constructivism asserted that children learn better through play (Madhawa, 2014). Several studies have also highlighted the positive effects of play in children's learning process. Studies show that when play is used as a learning strategy children's interest in learning content, their participation, empathy, and understanding all increase (Gordon & Browne, (2013). Marenus (2020) showed that play helps to resolve emotional and behavioural problems among preschool children.

2.7 Modelling Strategies (MS)

Modelling is an instructional strategy in which the teacher demonstrates a new concept or approach to learning and students learn by observing (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Modelling describes the process of learning or acquiring new information, skills, or behaviour through observation, rather than through direct experience or trial-and-error efforts.

Learning is viewed as a function of observation, rather than direct experience (Holland & Kobasigawa, 1980). Research has showed that modelling is an effective instructional strategy in that it allows students to observe the teacher's reasoning. Using this type of instruction, teachers engage students in imitation of behaviours that encourage learning. Learning would be exceedingly difficult, not to mention dangerous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. As it is, modelling is an important teaching strategy to use, especially in an ECE setup as children need to be shown how things are done. Modelling can be a valuable tool in showing children the best way to talk, read, can be used as a scaffolding technique, that is where a teacher models the task for students, and then students begin the assigned task and work through the task at their own pace (Ransom, 2014).

2.8 Class Discussion Strategies (CDS)

The discussion strategies are important as they allow open-ended, collaborative exchange of ideas among a teacher and students or being used by students for the purpose of their thinking, learning, problem solving, understanding, or for literary appreciation.The discussion strategies produces student learning outcomes including how to reconcile opposing arguments, how to think for one self, how to formulate cohesive arguments to reach a consensus, how to mitigate fear of sharing individual opinions by building relationship among classmates and how to allow students to learn better by motivating them to prepare more for class, how to enable students to remain engaged during and after class, how to embraces nuance, and how to integrate new ideas from disparate perspectives and disciplines (Ying, 2020).

2.9 Integrated Technology (ITS)

Integrated Technology is another important strategy that adds value and quality to the education we provide for ECE children. Currently, the use of technology in this digital era has influenced many factors including education. All stages of education including early childhood are now starting to implement digital based education (Nurdiantami & Meriyandah, 2020). Children who were born in the past two decades have grown in the technological era and have been exposed to such at an early stage. The technology has now become a part of their day-to-day life experiences. What is now needed is for the ECE setting to embrace such technology for the benefit of these children as they are coming to the ECE setup with the vast knowledge. Bose (2005) advocates for the use of computers in ECE classroom settings and believes that technology enhances the holistic development of children, covering all domains of development such as cognitive, social, linguistic, and emotional aspects.

3.0 METHOD

The current study employed qualitative designs approach and adopted a semi-structured questionnaire which sought information regarding demographics (sex, age, etc) standard/class level and school, teachers' school background and occupation, and teaching strategies used. Qualitative data was collected using sociological methods of interviews and questionnaires. The study solicited views of teachers

regarding teaching strategies used in their everyday teaching. Data was collected through questionnaires and through the interview, and covered a single locality, Gaborone. There were twelve questionnaires as well as six interviews conducted to triangulate the data. Qualitative data was collected through single interviews which were audiotaped and transcribed into MS Word 15. A total of eleven primary school pupils were used in the study, comprising two males and nine females.

4.0 FINDINGS

The participants' understanding of the teaching strategies was remarkably good. Ninety (90%) of the teachers had an excellent grasp of teaching strategies. When one participant was asked what she understands by teaching strategies she said, *"I think these are the methods used by teachers to teach young children."* Another said these are "*activities used to teach content to young children."*

When participants were asked to explain how they have used the teaching strategies outlined above in their teaching 70% gave examples that were appropriate. One participant said, "*I provide age- appropriate and culturally appropriate teaching strategies.*" The findings indicate participants had a wide knowledge of a wide range of the teaching strategies. When teachers wanted to find out what the learner understood or had retained of past content, one teacher remarked '*After children learn about a concept that they may find difficult, I ask them questions about it before I introduce another new concept'*

The findings also indicated that teachers in the study used cooperation strategies and elaboration strategies. These two strategies were frequently used, with 85 % of teachers using them in their daily routine. Teachers felt that in an ECE setup, children learn better when they talk about objects, events, family, and friends (Elaboration strategies*)*. Teachers also felt that children understand and enjoy learning when they are in a group (Cooperation strategies). In one interview one teacher said "*children enjoy show and tell time, because they will be in a group and telling others about an object they like or event they have been to."*

The third teaching strategy that was used by teachers was the revision strategy as 70% of the teachers used the strategy. When asked why the strategy was important to them, one teacher said "*it is important because as a teacher you can see if the pupils understood the content that was taught, there is no way except for you to revise with them."*

The study also revealed that there were teaching strategies that were not used by ECE teachers, these included control strategies and organizational strategies. According to

Borkowski, Pressley and O'Sullivan (1985), control strategies allow competent learners to plan, monitor, check and reflect the results of their leaning and thinking processes. One of the teachers said that one reason why most teachers do not to use the teaching strategy was that *"children in the early years are very young and would have a problem in planning and monitoring results of their own learning process."* According to Friedrich and Mandl (2006). organizational strategies is where important information is identified or depicted visually; details would be combined and clustered and a deeper understanding of the new subject matter is achieved. According to the participants in the study why this strategy is good, it is also very difficult for young children to use.

Teachers were also reluctant and uncomfortable to use the following teaching strategies; the play way strategy, modelling strategy, class discussion strategy, integrated technology strategies, motivational and emotional strategies, organizational strategies and control strategies. In their response to the seven strategies that they did not use, teachers felt children were too young, or the teaching strategies were unfamiliar or that they had no facilities to use the strategy.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching strategies are an important part of the educational and learning process of a child. They are tools that teachers should use in their day-to-day teaching. An in-appropriate teaching technique is a hinderance in the learning process of a child. On the other hand, an appropriate teaching strategy can make children understand and appreciate content. Therefore, it is vital that teachers know the strategies, when to use them and which ones to use and why. It is also important that teachers get trained in *Teaching Strategies* so that they provide children with the quality education they deserve.

The current Pre-Primary Curriculum Framework (2001) has appropriate ECE activities for professional practice and for young children to be developed holistically. ECE needs to encompass teaching and learning strategies that can be used to improve the teaching and learning of young children. This would assist teachers to deliver content appropriately for young children to understand and enjoy. Research is currently advocating for teaching children the *play way* as opposed to the *conventional way* in which children are asked to memorise difficult content and concepts at an early stage. ECE programmes need to teach the bulk of the ECE content using play as the main teaching strategy.

Technology is the buzz word in all educational programmes. ECE programmes in Botswana need to adjust

the education and learning of young children to fit the 21st century technological demand. ECE children are already advanced in the use of technology when they arrive in the ECE programmes for enrolment. As a result, there is need for ECE classrooms to have areas where young children can handle technology and learn from it as they have been doing at home. Technology needs to be a teaching strategy for teachers in ECE, as children enjoy and love using it.

REFERENCES

1. Atkinson, R, L. & Algard, R, L., (2014) *Introduction to Psychology*, Wadsworth. Washington DC
2. Bantulà, J., & Payà, A. (2020). *The Right of the Child to Play* in the National Reports Submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In International Journal of Play, 9(4), 400–413.
3. Berk, L.E., (2017). *Child Development*. Pearson. London
4. Bose, K. (2005) *Computers in Reception Schools—A Case of Gaborone, Botswana.* Early Childhood Education Journal 33(1):17-24
5. Bredekamp, S., (2014) *Effective Practices* National Association for the Education of Young Children. Washington DC
6. Brooker, L., & Woodhead, M. (2013). *The Right to Play.* Early Childhood in Focus (Vol. 9). Maidenhead: Open University
7. Canning, N. (2007). Children's Empowerment in Play. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 15(2), 227–236.*
8. Carr, M. (2000). *Assessment in early childhood settings.* London: Paul Chapman.
9. Cole. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
10. Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). (2013). *General Comment No. 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts* (art. 31). United Nations.
11. Engel, M. (2015). *The Importance of Free Play in the Early Childhood Classroom*: Perspectives from a Teacher. Childhood Education, 91(5), 323–324.
12. Friedrich, R. & Mandl, A., (2006). *Handbook of Technical and Vocational and Training Research,* Bremen. Germany.
13. Goldstein, J. (2012*). Play in Children's Development, Health and Well-Being. Toy* Industries of Europe (TIE).
14. Gordon, A.M. & Browne, K.W (2013) (10th Edition) *Beginnings & Beyond*: Thompson Delmar Learning. Australia.
15. http:www.geocities.com/seminarpra07/KertasPenu h/Teknik_Bercerita_ Emosi.pdf .Retrieved 5 April 2011.
16. Huber, L. P., Huidor, O., Malagon, M. C., Sanchez, G., & Solórzano, D. G. (2006). *Falling through the Cracks: Critical Transitions in the Latina/o Educational Pipeline. 2006 Latina/o Education Summit Report. CSRC Research Report. Number 7.* UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (NJ1).
17. Istomina, Z.M. (1977). *The Developmental of Voluntary Memory in preschool- age children.* In Soviet developmental psychology. Ed. M.
18. Madhawa Nair, S Yusof, N.M & Arumugam, L (2014). *The Effects of Using the Play Method to Enhance the Mastery of Vocabulary Among Pre-School Children*. Science Direct. School of Educational Studies. Malaysia.
19. Marenus, M., (2020). *Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Simply. psychology. /multiple - intelligencies.html.
20. Meier C. & Marais P., (2012). *Education Management in Early Childhood Development*, 2nd Edition, London, Open University Press.
21. Meier, C., & Marais, P. (2012). *Education management in early childhood education.*
22. Moss, P., & Pence, A. (1994). *Valuing Quality in the Early Childhood Services.* Gateshead
23. Moyles, J. (2010). *Thinking about Play*: Developing a Reflective Approach: Open University Press.
24. National Policy on Education (2004) derived from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/36214371 0_THE_NATIONAL_POLICY_ON_EDUCATIO N/link/62d8794daa3d1326c0cc415d/download
25. Nurdiantami, Y & Meriyandah Agil, H, (2020) *The Use of Technology in Early Childhood Education:* A Systematic Review. Conference: International Conference of Health Development. Covid-19 and the Role of Healthcare Workers in the Industrial Era (ICHD 2020).
26. Owojori, M.G., Gbenga-Akanmu, T.O. *Government commitments and teaching strategies for effective quality early childhood education in South Western Nigeria.* ICEP 15, 13 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-021-00090-w
27. Rheinberg, F., Vollmeyer, R., & Burns, B. D. (2000). *Motivation and self-regulated learning.* ADVANCES IN PSYCHOLOGY-AMSTERDAM-, 131, 81-108.
28. Rohizani Yaakub (2006). *Teknik Bercerita Dalam Perkembangan Emosi Kanak- Kanak Prasekolah.* Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Pendidikan,Universiti Sains Malaysia.
29. Salisu, A, Ransom, E (2014). *The Role of Modelling Towards Impacting Quality Educational International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* Online: 2014-06-24 ISSN: 2300-2697,

Vol. 32, pp 54-61 Published by Science Press Ltd, Switzerland.

30. Thirumalar a/p Karupanna (2006). *The Effect of Using Concept Map Techniques Towards Achievement and Interests of Students in History.*MED Practicum Report submitted in Partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education, School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

31. United Nations (2019) UNESCO *World Data on Education*. Inter- agency Network for Educational Emergencies. United States of America.

32. Wegner, C., Minnaert, L., & Strehlke, F. (2013). *The Kolumbus-Kids Project in Germany for Gifted Children.* Primary Science, 130, 16-19.

33. White, R. (2012). *The Power of Play*. A Research Summary on Play and Learning. Children's Museum.

34. Whitebread, D. (2012). *The Importance of Play*. A Report on the value of Children's Play with a Series of Policy Recommendations. Toy Industries of Europe (TIE).

35. Woolfork, A & Kapur, P (2019). *Educational Psychology.* Pearson. Great Britain.

36. Ying, J. (2020) *The Importance of the Discussion Method in the Undergraduate Business Classroom.* Published online 2020 Nov 5.: 10.1007/s41463-020-00099-2