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Teaching Methods and Strategies for Quality Childhood Education: A Guide for Pre-Primary and Primary Levels

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the pivotal role of teaching methods and strategies in achieving quality education within pre-primary (ages 0-5) and primary (ages 6-12) levels. It establishes that effective teaching is contingent upon the learner's ability to demonstrate understanding through desired outcomes, which is directly influenced by the teacher's choice of instructional approach. The paper delineates the concepts of teaching, method, technique, and strategy, clarifying their distinct roles in the educational process. It further examines the developmental characteristics of children at different stages, arguing that these traits are fundamental determinants in selecting appropriate pedagogical tools. A core thesis of this work is that there is no single "best" method; rather, effectiveness is achieved through a deliberate, eclectic blend of strategies tailored to the learners' age, the subject matter, the learning objectives, and the classroom environment. The guide recommends experiential, play-based, and inquiry-driven methods for pre-primary learners, while advocating for a more diverse toolkit including discussion, demonstration, and project-based learning for primary students. It concludes that the mindful selection and combination of methods are imperative for reducing teacher and learner stress, fostering joyful and meaningful learning, and ultimately fulfilling the overarching aims and objectives of childhood education.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching is the act of educating a person for a better understanding of a given body of knowledge. One can infer that teaching has taken place only when the person taught is able to produce the desired result or action depending on predetermined objectives: which may be said to be the expected outcome. In other words, it is not out of place to say that if there is understanding by the person taught, then the desired result or action will be gotten. However, if the person taught is unable to produce the desired result or outcome. The implication is that he/she has not understood what is taught. For example, a teacher is sure of his/her teaching if most of the pupils do well during test, exams or whatever means you want to assess them with. These can be achieved if only when the methods or strategies used by the teachers are appropriate to the attainment of the learner's understanding of either the topic to be taught, objectives of the topic, instructional materials to be used, activities the teacher wants the pupils to perform, and the environment in which teaching will take place and so on. That is whatever is the goals of educational objectives determines the methods or strategies to be used by the teacher. In most times, the age level of the learners (when considered) determines the methods to be used. This paper considers pupils in only pre-primary and primary education, their age level ranging from 0-12 years of age.

This paper will therefore explore the concepts of teaching, method, technique, and strategy; it will then identify and recommend the most effective pedagogical approaches for childhood education, analyze the key developmental characteristics of pre-primary and primary learners that determine method selection, and outline the essential criteria educators must consider to ensure these choices achieve meaningful and joyful learning outcomes.

Concept of Teaching, Method, Techniques and Strategy

In the words Ayeni (2011), teaching is a continuous process that involves bringing about desirable changes in learners through use of appropriate methods. Teaching is regarded as the range of professional duties performed by the teachers to promote learning for the learner resulting from intimate contact of learners and teachers (Morrison 2014 cited by Igbokwe and Igbokwe 2015). This aligns with Igbokwe and Igbokwe 2015 who posit that teaching is 'the sum total of all the processes and activities of the teacher in order to impact knowledge to the learner'. In teaching and learning, the teacher uses certain actions to drive home his/her teaching. These actions used by the teacher are method, technique and strategy, because they differ in meaning. Methods are ways the teacher decides what learners will learn. It is general approach and principles used for instruction. Some commonly used teaching methods by teachers' are lecture, recitation, discovery or problem-solving, demonstration, recitation, and memorization.

Techniques are the specific actions taken by the teacher to implement a method in teaching. That is an activity performed to achieve the teaching objectives. Teaching techniques can be defined as an integrated organization that includes a set of materials, devices, tools, and educational attitudes that the teacher uses to clarify an idea or to change a vague concept in order to contribute to a better state of the educational process. Thus technique encompasses the actual moment-to-moment practices and behaviours that operate in teaching a concept according to a particular method. In other words, technique is classroom activities that integrates into lesson and is used on as the basis for teaching and learning. Teaching techniques align with any trick/approach that teachers use so as to accomplish a set objective. E.g poem, Role planning.

Strategy is the sequencing or ordering of the techniques the teacher has chosen to teach the lesson e.g breaking them in groups. Teaching strategies are also known as instructional strategies which are ways used by teachers to deliver course material in ways that keep learners are engaged and practicing different skill sets. Sarode (2018: 58) stated teaching strategies refer to methods used to help learners'

learn the contents of the desired course and can develop goals that can be achieved in the future.

The teacher selects different teaching strategies depending on certain factors like unit topic, age, class, class size, and classroom resources. But in this book all the term would be used to mean ways of teaching in childhood education because they are geared toward achieving the educational aims and objectives.

Which are the best methods, techniques or strategies for teaching at the childhood level of education?

In truth, one cannot say that this is the best method for teaching at the childhood level of education. Childhood education according to Igbokwe and Igbokwe (2015) is education given to individuals legally classified as children in any country. The age and opportunity for childhood education differ among nations. Childhood education is divided into two; namely Early Childhood (Pre-Primary) and Primary education or three, namely Early Childhood, Middle Childhood and Late Childhood. The two division of childhood education will be used in this write up. Based on this, childhood comprises of children both in pre-primary and primary education, age ranging from 0 to 12 years. These children have their different peculiarities, nature and characteristics. These characteristics, natures or peculiarities are:

Nature of Early childhood/pre-primary children

1. Children in pre-primary are very imitative so should be provided with the right type of environment that will help to sharp their behaviour.
2. Children in pre-primary are flexible socially and it takes them time to agree to co-operate .when they agree to cooperate, they are willing to play with everyone. They begin to form favourite friends with the same sex, but many relationships exist between boys and girls. It is not unusual for a girl child gleefully announce that her best is a boy child or vice versa.
3. Children in pre-primary play a lot. Play is very significant at this level. They tend to play in small group that change rapidly.
4. Children in this stage tend to quarrel too often but make up as soon as the quarrel is over. It is not uncommon to find mothers squabbling over children's disagree, only for the children to have made up and playing within sight of squabbling parents.
5. Children in pre-primary, though are very egocentric, they love to share and do things with others.
6. Dramatic play is a feature of their social activities. They are quite inventive and base their plots on what they see the adults do, or what is seen on television.
7. Most children are aware of their sexes and have rudimentary gender role awareness. It is not uncommon however to find many who tend to be unaware of being male or female, like boys who play female role in dramatic play or prefer to play with toys.
8. Children also need rest. They play often and get tried easily. They also fast in regaining one they rested for a little while.
9. The likes to talk, recite or sing in front of a group and is quite skill full with language. But his use of language is egocentric.
10. Children are very imaginative and inventiveness. Children are able to imagine and invent stories and tell such a though it were fact.
11. Children are able to use symbols to stand for object hence he is also able to do manipulation.
12. Children find it difficult to take into account the fact that other people have different points of views.
13. Children learn primarily through action, visual and sensory experience. Children expect reward once they have completed a task.
14. Children love to play and favours to learn through play way activities.

Nature of primary school children

1. Children can play and stay on their own without adult supervision. This is because they have the rules that govern them.
2. Children continue to play in group, but are selective in which they choose to play with. In fact, children have best friends, semi best friends and enemies. Girls sometime go to the extent of not talking with the perceived enemy.
3. Children are adept at expressing themselves, and they use this skill for verbal aggression especially among girls toward age 7-8. Boys can occasionally engage in physical exchange of blows or wrestling to settle the many quarrels and feuds, which seem to erupt so often and can make this age range quite noisy.
4. Children have strong sense of team spirit and enjoy group games. Whatever they are engaged in they love to work as a group, have their set of guiding rules, and are highly intolerant of anyone who does not abide by rules of how they have deemed to govern themselves.
5. Children have advanced considerably in the different domains, they are proficient in many language skills and can act and reason sufficiently for adults to let them be on their own and explore the environment. They have the psychomotor skill to perform several skills and even make adults to depend on them to do some chores. This newly found sense of independence is express on children ''doing thing'' and ''achieving'' hence they compete and boast about their achievements which sometimes engenders jealousy, rivalry and unruly noisemaking.
6. Children of different sexes have different interest both in school work, at play and in the home. Girls tend to be engaged in play or discovery patterns that are socially approved for feminine gender like knitting, cooking among others.
7. Children seem to have a strong dislike of the other sex as a group during this stage. It is not uncommon for criticism to be hauled at each other by opposing group based on gender issues and concern.
8. Children peer group influence gradually grows
9. Children love to speak up and recite.
10. Children sexes affect their specific abilities. In overall academic abilities girls on the average are superior in verbal fluency, reading, spelling and mathematics. Boys are superior in tasks that involve insight. Studies report that among learners with similar levels of general math ability, girls were less likely than boys to identify missing information or irrelevant information within problems and boys tend to outscore in test of spatial relation skills (Agatha, 2002).
11. Children have higher degree of recall ability with greater accuracy. This is as a result of increase ability to memorise curiosity is the hallmark of 4this stage, and they love to collect objects around them. This is however the tendency to lose interest quickly in activities.
12. Children are able to exhibit abstract skills. Such children are able o use experience to solve new problems. They

tend to investigate and consider more options to find answer to problems and issues. This is because they have understanding that substance remain the same despite changes in their physical arrangement, understand part/whole relation and are able to see other people point of view.

13. Children may have unrealistic and high standards for themselves, and tend to believe they are perfect or should be hence they are susceptible to feelings of frustration. (Akuta and Iwuagwu 2018)

Given these distinct developmental characteristics, the following table summarizes the recommended teaching methods for each level and the rationale linking them to the nature of the child:

Educational Level	Developmental Characteristics	Recommended Methods & Strategies	Rationale for Method
Pre-Primary (Ages 0-5)	• Learn through sensory experience & action • Egocentric & imitative • Short attention span; need for play • Highly imaginative • Language use is developing	• Learning by Doing / Experiential Learning • Play-Based Learning • Learning through Stories & Songs • Guided Discovery & Exploration • Rhymes, Songs, and Anecdotes	Methods are hands-on, joyful, and concrete. They leverage children's natural curiosity and desire to imitate and explore their environment, transforming learning into an engaging activity rather than a passive task.
Primary (Ages 6-12)	• Developing logical reasoning • Strong sense of rules & team spirit • Peer influence grows • Can engage in abstract thought • Begins to understand others' perspectives • Interest in collecting and categorizing	• Discussion & Inquiry/Discovery Learning • Demonstration • Project-Based Learning • Simulation & Games • Group Work & Collaboration • Field Trips & Role-Playing	Methods build on growing cognitive abilities. They promote critical thinking, social collaboration, and the application of knowledge to real-world problems, satisfying the child's need for structure, belonging, and mastery.

Again, at that different level, they have different subjects with their different topics. For example, at the pre-primary levels, subjects are not spelt out. But some of the subjects include Mathematics, English, Poems, Rhymes, songs, Scribbling, Phonics, drawing but to mention a few which may be different from another school, while at the primary level, National Policy on Education (2014) captures thus: Curriculum for Primary Education shall include languages (language of the environment, English French, Arabic); Mathematics; Science; Physical and Health Education; Religious Knowledge; Agriculture/home Economics; Social Studies and Citizenship Education; Cultural & Creative Arts (Drawing, Handicraft, Music and Cultural Activities); and Computer Education. All this subjects will not allow the teacher to choose one methods to teach.

What are the points to consider in selecting methods, techniques and strategies at the childhood level of education?

One thing the teacher should have in mind is that the said what determines the method, technique or strategy to be used is the instructional objectives to be achieved. Whatever ways of teaching the teacher want to use must lead to the achievement of instructional objective. The points to consider in selecting ways of teaching include:

i **There is no best method in the selection of methods:** This is because there is no one method that can suit all occasions, all activities, and all categories of learners in the teaching of the school subjects. Also each method has its advantages and disadvantages. So in teaching and learning, the teacher must always use combination of methods to achieve his/her instruction objectives. The teacher's choice of method is therefore critical, as they play a primary role in shaping child development and behavior in the 21st century (Akuta, Iwuagwu, & Iwuagwu, 2018).

ii **The need to promote activities by learners:** in childhood education the recommended method is activity method. This is because it makes them to learn at ease, not feeling compelled or forced. In this method teachers' allow the learners to participate actively thereby reducing teachers' talk. In order words any method the teacher intends to use must make efforts to reduce passivity among learners.

Some of the tips that would help teachers to reduce passivity among learners include

a) Paying attention by learners by either making them to jotting down things, taking note
b) Listening attentively to what the teacher is saying
c) Answering and asking questions correctively
d) Engaging them in serious and conscious thinking
e) Engaging them in actual physical activities like drawing, tracing, jumping, dancing, moving things around etc
f) Encouraging them to self express themselves like expressing their views, opinion, answering and asking questions, arguing, exchange ideas with teachers and others etc

iii The principle of "knowing how" and "knowing why" at the expense of simply "knowing that'. This means that whatever method used by the must ensure that learners' not only memorize words and sentences, they get at the real meaning of the concept, see the relationship of one concept to another, relate new knowledge to old ones and apply the knowledge gained in practical situation.

iv. The objectives of the curriculum guide for a particular set of learners: what do you want to achieve? The teacher cannot choose a method without giving due consideration to the intended learning outcome.

v. The entire environment in which the intended leaning would take place: Effective teaching is influenced by several critical factors, including the school's situation, the adequacy and quality of instructional materials, teacher competence, and learner characteristics. A teacher must assess whether the available instructional materials are not only adequate but also suitable, relevant, and of high quality. The importance of these materials cannot be overstated. As Akuta, Chukwuemeka, & Iwuagwu (2025) note, their creative use is directly linked to

effective teaching outcomes at the primary level. While some instructional methods require specialized materials, others can be implemented with simple, improvised resources. This demands that teachers be imaginative and creative in identifying and adapting available materials to support learning. Furthermore, a teacher must have the confidence and autonomy to feel comfortable and free in their instructional decisions. In the 21st-century classroom, the learning environment is increasingly digital. The successful integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) presents both significant challenges and substantial opportunities for enhancing pedagogical practices (Akuta, Chukwuemeka, & Iwuagwu, 2025).

vi. **The nature of the content knowledge to be passed across to the learner:** Different concepts, topics, or subject matter inherently require different methods for effective teaching and learning. This is evidenced in practice, as the creative use of instructional resources and strategies varies significantly between subjects like Basic Science and Technology (Igbokwe, 2018) and English Language acquisition (Akintunde & Iwuagwu, 2024). The effective integration of technology (ICT) further demonstrates that the subject matter dictates the suitability of a digital tool or strategy (Akuta, Chukwuemeka, & Iwuagwu, 2025). Therefore, the teacher's selection must be a deliberate response to the unique demands of the content.

vii. **Time and Place context:** the time and place within which lessons are taught could considerably influence the effectiveness of the lesson since every lesson take place at a particular time of the day either morning or afternoon and at a specific place, which is in or out of the classroom.

viii. **Contemporary External Challenges:** Furthermore, contemporary challenges, such as the integration of technology and the impact of global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, have reshaped the learning environment and teachers' roles, adding layers of complexity to method selection (Chukwuemeka & Ohiare-Udebu, 2025; Iwuagwu, 2021; Iwuagwu, Akuta, & Iwuagwu, 2022; Iwuagwu et al., 2021).

Why Selecting the Appropriate Methods and Strategies at the Childhood Level Education?

The careful selection of teaching methods and strategies is not merely a matter of preference but a fundamental determinant of educational success. When methods are well-suited to the learners and the context, they yield significant benefits for the child, the teacher, and the broader learning environment. The imperative for this careful selection includes the following key reasons:

1. Enhanced Engagement and Intrinsic Motivation: Appropriate, child-centered methods transform learning from a passive reception of information into an active, joyful process. By tapping into children's natural curiosity and desire for play such as through games, storytelling, or hands-on experiments – teachers foster a genuine love for learning. This intrinsic motivation is far more powerful and sustainable than external rewards or coercion, leading to a more positive and enthusiastic classroom atmosphere.

2. Deeper and More Meaningful Understanding: Moving beyond rote memorization ("knowing that"), effective strategies promote "knowing how" and "knowing why." For instance, an inquiry-based project on plant growth leads to a deeper understanding of biology than simply memorizing parts of a plant. This approach ensures knowledge is internalized, critically evaluated, and can be applied creatively to solve new problems, forming a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

3. Reduction in Anxiety and Stress: A classroom that utilizes predictable, engaging, and developmentally appropriate activities creates a safe psychological environment for the child. When students understand the tasks and are equipped to succeed, their fear of failure diminishes. Similarly, teachers experience less stress from managing disengaged or frustrated students, as appropriate methods naturally improve classroom dynamics and cooperation.

4. Holistic Development: Quality education extends beyond academic achievement. The right methods simultaneously nurture the whole child. For example, group projects develop social skills and empathy; play-based learning supports emotional regulation; and hands-on experiments enhance fine motor skills. This ensures development across cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains. Furthermore, appropriate strategies like self-directed learning have been shown to significantly boost learners' self-confidence, a key component of holistic development (Iwuagwu, 2025).

5. Achievement of Instructional Objectives: Ultimately, the primary goal of any teaching activity is to achieve specific learning outcomes. The most clearly defined objectives will fail if the method of delivery is ineffective. Appropriate strategies act as the precise vehicle that delivers content in a way that ensures learners can successfully meet and demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum goals.

6. Fostering a Positive Societal Impact: When children experience education as enjoyable and successful, they develop a positive attitude towards school and learning. This lays the groundwork for an educated, skilled, and innovative citizenry. Happy, engaged learners become motivated adults, contributing to a cycle of positive national development and a more peaceful, progressive society.

It is essential to remember that a method considered highly appropriate for a pre-school child (e.g., unstructured imaginative play) may be entirely unsuitable for a primary school child, and vice versa. The teacher must therefore have a deep knowledge of the learners' age, level, and characteristics to make this critical selection. The ultimate reward for this diligence is a classroom where both teaching and learning are harmonious, effective, and joyful processes.

Recommended Appropriate Pre-Primary School Learning Styles

Usually at that level, it is not appropriate to use methods because of the learners' nature, characteristic and age. According to Akuta, Iwuagwu and Iwuagwu (2018) they emphasized that it is appropriate to use learning style.

a. **Learning by doing:** It may also be said to be traditional way of teaching. As the name implied learners' learn by imitating or reproducing the teacher's action. For example teacher dances, learner watches and dances along with the teacher. It is practical oriented. Teachers of that level do not sit and tell learners what to do, they do it with them. It was Aristotle who wrote that "for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them." Learning by doing is active, hands-on and engaging for learners. The goal of this teaching approach is for learners to construct mental models that allow for 'higher-order' performance such as applied problem solving and transfer of information and skills (Churchill, 2003). Learning by doing refers to a theory of education. This theory has been expounded by American philosopher John Dewey and Latinamerican pedagogue Paulo Freire. It's a hands-on approach to learning, meaning learners must interact with their environment in order to adapt and learn. Learning by doing is the simple idea that we are capable of learning more about something when we perform the action. Another way to think about this is by taking a more active approach to something as opposed to you passively learning about it. The reasoning is that active participation provides deeper understanding of learning and it is alright if you make mistakes as you learn from the participation as well.

This mentality brought forth a new concept for this technique called experiential learning. What Are Its Benefits?

1. It is more engaging and more memorable: This is because it requires action on the part of the learner. The learner follows the teacher in doing whatever the teacher is doing, so the learner is not weakening his /her performance because he is not coercive into the action. Whatever the learner, learners at this point cannot be easily forgotten by the learner. The learner finds it easier to remember those things meant for them to learn in the action since they are not forced into a situation where they have to do what they need to learn. Every action provides personalized learning experiences, and it is where motivation is built. That motivation connects to what is learned and felt. It teaches that learning is relevant and meaningful. Beyond that, this experience allows the opportunity for learners to go through the learning cycle that involves extended effort, mistakes, and reflection, followed by refinement of strategies.

2. It is more personal: Stemming from the reason that the learner is actively engaged in the performance, it offers him/her a personal experience. In the learner's active engagement, he makes mistake, reflects on his mistakes and refines his mistakes that is correction. This cycle is only possible through personal emotion that is the motivation and realization of knowledge of a particular topic tying into your values and ideals. This connection is powerful and thus, offers a richer experience than reading from a text book. That personal connection is more important as it encourages exploration and curiosity from learners.

3. It is community-connected: The community connected is the environment (classroom) where the action is being performed. Learning by doing involves the classroom, teachers, learners, and everything that can be leveraged on at large and not sitting alone in your room or a library stuck in a book. This leans more into the personal aspect that this technique encourages. You are part of a community, and this form of learning allows you to interact more and make a connection with it.

4. It is more integrated into people's lives: This form of learning is deeply integrated into our lives as well. Deep learning occurs best when learners can apply what they have learned in a classroom setting to answer questions around them that they care about. When it comes to learning, people are more interested if they know that what they are learning is vital to their very way of life in some fashion. It is forgettable if they are unable to connect knowledge in with personal aspects of their lives. Thus, experiential learning makes the application of knowledge simpler.

5. It builds success skills: The final benefit of learning by doing is that it builds up your skills for success. Learning by doing encourages you to step out of your comfort zone, discover something new, and try things out for the first time. You're bound to make a mistake or two, but this technique doesn't shame you for it. As a result, learning by doing can build your initiative for new things as well as persistence towards growth and development in a field. This could also lead to team management and collaboration skill growth. These are all vital things in personal growth as we move towards the future.

Learning by doing encourages active engagement with available materials and forces you to work harder to remember the material. It is an effective technique because it helps ingrain knowledge into your memory. After all, you have a deeper personal connection to that knowledge, and you will be more motivated to use it in the future.

b. **Curiosity and interest**: curiosity may be said to be a twin word since you cannot talk on one without making reference to the order. Curiosity is the urge to explore. It is a strong desire to know about something. Interest is the reward potential in learning. It wants to know more about something, a feeling one have that makes him or her to want to know more about something.

c. **Inquiry:** is an official process to find out the cause of something or to find out information about something. Inquiry-based learning begins with a question, problem or idea. It involves children in planning and carrying out investigations, proposing explanations and solutions, and communicating their understanding of concepts in a variety of ways. Inquiry-based learning is a learning process that engages pupils by making real-world connections through exploration and high-level questioning. It is an approach to learning that encourages learners to engage in problem-solving and experiential learning.

d. **Learning through stories:** Story is a description of an events or people that the write has invented in order to entertain people. Learning through story is unavoidable and is as old as make. When a child is born, the parents start educating the child by reading stories to the child. As the child grows, the child is taught more by stories. Stories help us understand others and ourselves. We feel empathy with the characters we encounter in stories. This ability to learn from stories is a skill that will help our learners throughout their lives. In addition to academic goals, stories enrich lives and provide guidance to living. Stories come in a variety of forms like poetry, song, movement, pictures, plays and dance. The creators of the stories use various mediums such as braille, sign language, movies, and demostration to share the stories with others. The efficacy of storytelling is particularly evident in language acquisition; for instance, short stories have been shown to be a highly effective tool for teaching vocabulary and grammar in primary school English classes (Akintunde & Iwuagwu, 2024).

e. **Play:** Teaching and Learning through play is used in education and psychology to describe how a child can learn to make sense of the world around them. Through play children can develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence required to engage in new experiences and environments. We say learning through play happens when the activity

(a) is experienced as joyful;

(b) helps children find meaning in what they are doing or learning;

(c) involves active, engaged, minds-on thinking;

(d) iterative thinking (experimentation, hypothesis testing, etc.); and

(e) social interaction.

Learning through play is important and can help young children be ready for school, encourage their imagination and help them with literacy and numeracy skills. Role play games can help your child make sense of the world, aid in their emotional and physical development. This is supported by Igbokwe and Igbokwe (2015), who explicitly define children's games as a fundamental 'instrument for childhood education.

f. **Experiment and discovery:** Experiment is a scientific test that is done in order to study what happens and to gain new knowledge while discovery is an art, process, of finding out, or learning about something that was not known about before.

g. **Rhymes, songs, questions and anecdotes:** Rhymes are words that have the same sound or ends with the same sound as another word. Songs are short pieces of music with words that we sing. A question is a sentence, phrase, or word that asks for information. An anecdote is a short, interesting or amusing story about a real person or event. It is a personal account of an event.

h. **Home fun:** The word home fun is comprised of two words that is home and fun. Home is a house, flat or an apartment where one lives in with his family. Fun is a thing that gives one an enjoyment or a pleasure and makes one feels

happy. Home fun is work given to pupils by the teachers to do at home.

Recommended teaching methods at the primary schools

The transition to primary school marks a significant shift in children's cognitive, social, and emotional capabilities. As outlined by Igbokwe and Igbokwe (2015), learners at this stage exhibit a growing capacity for logical reasoning, abstract thought, teamwork, and rule-based interaction. Consequently, the pedagogical approach must evolve from the predominantly play-based and sensory models of early childhood to incorporate more diverse and structured strategies that challenge their developing minds while capitalizing on their active and social nature. The following methods are recommended for effective knowledge delivery at the primary level, categorized for clarity:

1. Teacher-Directed Methods

- **Direct Instruction (Lecture Method):** This traditional method involves the comprehensive imparting of information by the instructor within a structured classroom setting (Igbokwe & Igbokwe, 2015). It is characterized as a "one-way traffic" model where the teacher is active and learners are predominantly passive recipients. While efficient for delivering factual information to large groups, its limitations are notable. As Teo & Wong (2000) argue, it is "least practical, more theoretical and memorizing" and often fails to apply activity-based learning to encourage problem-solving based on applied knowledge. Therefore, its use should be strategic and balanced with more interactive methods.

2. Interactive and Collaborative Methods

- **Discussion**: This method facilitates a two-way exchange of ideas between the teacher and students, and among students themselves. It promotes critical thinking, communication skills, and the ability to articulate and defend viewpoints.
- **Demonstration:** This technique involves the teacher showing students how to perform a specific skill or process, often followed by student practice. It is highly effective for teaching procedural knowledge in subjects like science, art, and physical education, as it provides a visual and concrete model for learners to emulate.
- **Dramatization/Role-Playing:** By acting out scenarios, historical events, or literary plots, students deepen their comprehension, build empathy, and make abstract concepts tangible and memorable. Methods that promote social interaction, such as group projects and role-playing, are not only academically beneficial but also serve as tools for acculturation, fostering religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence among pupils (Iwuagwu, Akuta, & Iwuagwu, 2022; Iwuagwu et al., 2021).

3. Experiential and Discovery-Based Methods

- **Inquiry/Discovery Learning**: This student-centered approach begins with a question, problem, or hypothesis. Students are guided to investigate, discover solutions, and construct their own understanding, mirroring the scientific process. This method directly builds critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Project-Based Learning (PBL):** Students engage in complex, real-world projects over an extended period. PBL necessitates research, collaboration, and the application of knowledge from multiple subjects to create a tangible product or presentation, fostering deep, integrated learning.
- **Field Trip/Excursion**: Learning is extended beyond the classroom walls into the community, museum, park, or historical site. This provides first-hand experiential learning that makes curriculum content vivid and relevant.

4. Activity-Oriented and Game-Based Methods

- **Simulation and Games**: Educational games and simulations create a dynamic, rule-based environment where students can experiment, compete, and learn from consequences in a risk-free setting. This is highly effective for motivating students and teaching complex systems.
- **Modelling:** Beyond the teacher's demonstration, this involves students creating models (conceptual, physical, or digital) to represent their understanding of a system or idea, such as building a volcano for a science class or a diorama for a history lesson.

5. Flexible and Constructivist Methods

- **Open Classroom:** This strategy emphasizes a less rigid physical and pedagogical structure, allowing for student choice, self-paced learning, and the integration of different subjects and activities within a single, often larger, learning space.
- **Assignment:** Purposeful homework or in-class assignments provide essential opportunities for independent practice, reinforcement of skills, and the development of student responsibility and time management.

Conclusion

This guide has established that the pursuit of quality education in childhood is fundamentally anchored in the deliberate and informed selection of teaching methods and strategies. The central conclusion is that there is no universal "best" method; effectiveness is instead derived from a teacher's ability to function as a skilled eclectic. The effective educator artfully blends a diverse repertoire of strategies—from experiential learning and play in early years to inquiry-based learning and discussions in primary school—based on a nuanced understanding of multiple factors. These include the predetermined instructional objectives, the distinct developmental nature and characteristics of the learner (aged 0-12), the specific content knowledge to be conveyed, and the entire learning environment, including available resources and contemporary challenges like ICT integration and global disruptions.

The ultimate measure of successful teaching is the learner's ability to demonstrate understanding and produce the desired outcome, moving beyond rote memorization ("knowing that") to achieving meaningful comprehension ("knowing how" and "knowing why"). When methods are appropriately selected and combined, they alleviate stress for both teacher and learner, transform the classroom into a joyful and engaging space, and ensure the holistic development of the child across cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains. This deliberate pedagogical flexibility is paramount to meeting the diverse needs of learners and fulfilling the overarching aims and objectives of childhood education, thereby contributing to a more knowledgeable and harmonious society.

Recommendations

To achieve these critical educational goals, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Adopt an Eclectic and Flexible Approach to Teaching: Teacher training programs and professional development should move away from promoting a single rigid methodology. Instead, they must empower educators to become adept at selecting and seamlessly combining multiple methods (e.g., blending direct instruction with

group work and role-play) tailored to the specific lesson objectives, subject matter, and learner needs.

2. Prioritize Continuous, Needs-Based Teacher Professional Development: Investment in ongoing teacher training is non-negotiable. This professional development must be practical and address specific gaps, including:
    - Content-Specific Pedagogy: Enhancing skills for teaching core subjects like Basic Science and Technology (Igbokwe, 2018).
    - Societal and Health Education: Equipping teachers to handle broader issues through the curriculum, such as comprehensive health education (Iwuagwu et al., 2021).
    - Modern Challenges: Providing training on integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) effectively (Akuta, Chukwuemeka, & Iwuagwu, 2025) and leveraging play-based and experiential learning strategies.
3. Invest in Research and Innovation in Educational Methodology: Policymakers and educational institutions should encourage and fund research into emerging pedagogical trends. Future exploration must focus on the potential of emerging technologies, such as the application of Artificial Intelligence for personalized language learning (Akuta, 2025), to develop evidence-based strategies for the modern classroom.
4. Ground Method Selection in Child Development Principles: Teachers and curriculum developers must consistently use the developmental characteristics of pre-primary and primary children (e.g., need for play, social nature, growing logical reasoning) as the primary filter for selecting appropriate methods. Strategies should leverage these traits, such as using acculturation approaches to foster tolerance and peaceful co-existence (Iwuagwu, Akuta, & Iwuagwu, 2022).
5. Ensure Resource Provision and Environmental Support: For methods to be successfully implemented, the necessary conditions must be met. Governments and school administrations must prioritize the provision of adequate, quality, and relevant instructional materials and create an enabling environment that supports both traditional and innovative teaching strategies.

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