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Methods And Techniques In Elementary Teaching

Khalil AlSaadat

Department of educational policies, college of education

King Saud University

Corresponding Author: Khalil AlSaadat. E-mail: alsaadat@gmail.com

Abstract: Methods and technigues in elementary teaching This study discusses Various teaching Mrthods and technigues available to teachers wanting to enlarg their teaching storage . Teachers should use different teaching Methods to Make the learning Pracess exciting and Meaningful. Students will grasp the Material better and boredom will not Find its way to students when teachers use various teaching technigues. This paper talks about those Methods and technigues and provides some teaching and learning theories to help teachers select the best approach. The dicussion in this paper is addresed to elementary teaching, but the Methods and technigues presented in this paper could be used with other levels of education. The study concludes the discussion with some benefits of using different Methods and technigues in elementary education.

Keywords: methods, elementary, techniques, teaching

Introduction

Teachers need to diversify their teaching methods in different classroom situations. When a teacher depends on one method of teaching, such as lecture or drill, a boredom in the classroom could be dictated wich will create some learning problems. Therfore , teachers should use variety of methods to avoid such problems. Students will be more motivated and the classroom will be better environment for teaching and learning. Good teachers are always looking for ways to enhance and improve their mission in the classroom. Each teacher has to determine which method he or she will use for specifice subject matters and situations.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to provide and discuss some teaching methods and techniques available to teavhers wanting to enlarge their storage of teaching tools . In this paper teaching and learning is defined and briefly discussed. Some learning and teaching theories is provided to introduce some philosophical basis to teachers. Some teaching methods are discussed and finally the conclusion includes some benefits of utilizing variety of teahing methods .

Teaching and learning

teaching is an activity with four phases: a curriculum planning phase, an instructing phase, a measuring phase and an evaluating phase (Hough & Duncan, 1970, p. 2). Teaching, characteristically is a moral enterprise. The teacher, whether he admits it or not, is out to make the world a better place and its inhabitants better people. He may not succeed, of course, but his intention, nonetheless, is to benefit others. Given the teacher's mpral stance and the social significance of his work, it is not surprising to find that educational researchers for years have focused chiefly on the improvement of teaching through attempting to identify the charactieristics of good teachers or good methods rather than on a description of the process as it commonly occurs in classrooms (Haskew & Mcledon, 1968, p. 397).

John Dewey said teaching may be compared to selling commodities. No one sells unless someone else buys. We should

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ridicule a merchant who said that he had sold a great many of goods although no one had bought any. But perhaps there are teachers who think that they have done a good day's teaching irrespective of what pupils have learned. There is the same exact equation between teaching and learning that there is between selling and buying (Jackson. 1986, p. 81). of all the activities of education, teaching may well be the most comprehensive and the one we most readily associate with education. It cannot be ignored in any philosophy of education (Green, 1971, p . 21). Learning is the act of acquiring kowledge or skill or knowledge or skills that are obtained by observation, study, or instruction (Bernard & Cleveland, p. 17, 1984). Gorman (1971, p. 12) provided the followin gthoughts about. • **Learning:**

- Learning may be defined as a change in behavior.
- Learning requires activity on the part of the learner. He should not be passive .
- Learning is enhanced when learners accept responsibility for their own learning .
- Learning is directly influeneced by physical and social envionment. .
- Learning occurs on successively deeper levels . .
- Learning is deepened when the learning situation provides opportunity for applying learnings in as realistic a situation as is feasible.

Learning Theories

People have been learning since the beginning of time . They leam from experience, sometimes called trial and error , but better described as trial and success. Children leam from their mothers, apprentices leam from their masters, and so forth. Scholars have been concerned with the nature of learning since ancient times and have formulated many learning theories. The earliest of these was the mental discipline theory. Its followers believed in training the mind through mental exercises just as one would exercise the arms and the legs to develop muscles. They maintained that there would be an automatic transfer from one field of learning to another. Plato believed that the best subjects for mental training were mathematics and philosophy and put littel stress upon obtaining useful knowledge or information. It was assured that if the independent powers were developed that one would be capable of making decisions in other fields. This theory was questioned by Thorndike and wood wrth and many ex- perimets were conducted which showed that there was little evidence of transfer. Rouseau believed in a theory of learning through the promoting of their own interests rather than have knowledge imposed on them by other people .

Apperception theory : was a process of associating new ideas with old. Aristotle developed the theory that recollection or recall of an item of knowledge was enhanced when aperson associated it with another item of learning. Locke advanced a theory that all learning happens through one's senses, and the senses function through stimuli and interaction. Before locke some people thought that there was an innate faculty common to all discipline to that of habit formation .

Stimulus response theory: This theoory suggsts that connections are developed within the mind for each stimulus and response, and that these connections are produced by some biological change in the nervous system through practice or repetition of selecting and coor- recting or trial and error. Thorndike believed in the S-R theory and came up with three laws of learning : (1) Law of Repetotion : when the stimuls-response is repeated the connection becme stronger, (2) Law of Effect: when a response is followed by pleasure the connection is stronger and vice versa , and (3) Law of Readiness: the nervous system has to be ready to establish a connection .

Gestalt theory : Individuals see the whole shape rather than the component parts, and that whole is sometimes more than the sum of its parts . The Gestalt theory rejects the idea of trial and error learning . •

Teaching Approaches

Behaviorism : instructor view: directs all learning ; structured; formal; instructor sets obgectives; instructor develops material; programmed authority; teacher is key to learning' teacher knows all, nonflexible, egotistical; disrespectful of students .

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Humanism : instructor view : recognize students have goals, student has prior knowledge ; student can asist in teaching; recognize student's needs; allow student input; allow interaction; teacher is facilitator; teacher is the resource person; recognize student's ability' recognize student indivduality ; recognize student concerns; democratic, flexible; open-minded; empathic with students .

The executive approach : views the teacher as an executor , a person charged with bringing aboout certain learning uusing the best skills and techniques available .

The liberationist approach : views the teacher as a liberator, a freer of the individual's mind and a developer of well rounded, autonomous, rational and moral human beings .

The therapist approach : views the teacher as empathetic person charged with helping individuals grow personally and reach a high level of self actualization, understanding and acceptance.

The purpose of this discussion was to provide some philosophical basis for the advancement of practical ways and means for accomploshing learning goals more effectively .

The Purpose of Elementary Education

1- Literacy ; Schols for young children have the responsibility to develop basic literacy in children. Reading is an important element of teh elementary school curriculum. At the early levels, more time is spent on the teaching of reding than on anything else . Some critics say that today elmentary schools are essentially reading schools. Tody there is no way that an el- mentary schol can receive a high rating without doing a respectable job of teaching children the fundamental skills of literacy .

2- Citizenship education : Citizenship education takes place through the formal study of such subjects as history, government (civics) and geography, and through introduction of such values as freedom, human dignity, responsiblity, independence, indivdualism, democracy, respect for others, love of country and so no.

3- Personal development: The personal growth of individual children, concern for the maximizing of each individual's potential for development and the broadening of'schbl goals /

to include emotional, social and physical growth as well as intellectual development are seen as major purposes of elementary education (Jarolimek & Foster, 1981, pp. 4 - 6) . The U.S. secretary of Eucation J.B. issued the 1986 Report First lessons : A Report on Elementary Education in America. It included the following :

- Every elementary schol can and must teach all its studeents to read .
- Children should learn that writing is more than filling in the blanks. Writing must be part of the whole curriculm. not just language arts .
- Mathematics should extend beyond simple computation and should emphasize problem solving .
- Chidren should gain basic grasp of the uses and limitations of computers (Cark & Cutler, 1990 , P. 170).

Teaching as Art and Science

Whenever teching is discussed, an inevitable question is whether teaching is an at or a science . Many people prefer to consider teaching to be an art because teachers must draw upon indivdual experiences, emcions, and valuues that seem to occur outside the province of scince. Others have focused on teaching as a scince in which the critical aspects of instruction are reduced to elements that can be studed by the scientific method. We belive teaching is both an art and a science . The complex, demanding profession of teaching requirs artistry and scientific knowledge . As an art, teaching surely engages the emotions, the value and , some would say, the souls of all who teach well. Many teachers are as deeply involved in their work, developing students, as painters, sculptors, and musicians and in producing their masterpieces . Good teachers are creative , thy solve problems by invinting teaching methods and materials . Education as a science draws upon sychology, sociology, anthropology , ethnology, biology,

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medicine, and mny other scientific disciplines to develop effective instruction . Teachers use may of the methods of science, such as hypothesizing, experimenting, ad observing outcomes.. Science and artistry- are inextricably inertwined in good teaching (Glover & Bruning, 1987, p. 3).

Methods in Teaching

Discussion

A dircted discussion incldues the acts of listening, questioning, sharing comments, and evaluating a topic by the students and teacher. Its main purpose is to help pupils clarify and retain more of wht they have read and learned (Zenger & Zenger, 1977 p. 6). Discussion could be implemented in many ways. The kinds of discussion ±e teacher could use include class discussion, debates, panels, buzz sessions, and forums. Each kind has its own traits, teachers should use the appropriate type or combine some of them together. Students learn through discussion effectively, they utilize the information in a meaningful manner and reach a higher level of comprehending .

Discusion provides the students with the opportunity to develop qustioning skills and responses. It offers an opportunity to develop organization and formuulation of answers .

- The proper use of discussion can aid the student in the development of positive self concept. The student is free to offer or not offer comment.

Discusion provides the teacher with information about the student which can aid in abetter understanding of students, individualy and collectiively (Jones , Bagford, & Wallen, 1979 , p. 48).

Lecture

A lecture is an oral presentation given to a class by the teacher and its main purpose is to present a large amount of information in a short period of time (Zenger & Zenger, 1977 p. 3) . The lecture is the traditional method of teaching. Students may not have the opportunity to ask questions or offer comments during the lecture. However, the lecture aids teacers in introducing new materials and knowledge that students need to prepare for another topic . The lecture allows a big number of students to get precise infonnation that will better their understanding for another topic. Lectures allow the teacher to control the class and save time. It also could be used with other teaching techniques such as demonstration and disucssion . The lecture gives the teacher a sense of security because there will not be surprising information to be given into the session .

Mastery Learning

D.J. Muellar formulated a model for mastery learning instruction . The model includes the following : .

• 1-Formal development of a comprehensive set of cognitive objectives.

2- Instruction using a variety of teaching methods.

3- Frequent evaluation, both formal and diagnostic .

4- Corrective and /or remedial instruuction.

- 5- Criterion-referenced summative evaluation “a review by testing over the entire process” (Jones, Bagford & Wallen, 1979, p. 96).

Block (1971, p.3) stated that ” mastery learning offers a powerful new approach to student learning which can provide almost all students with the successful and rewarding learning experiences . It makes student learning more efficient than conventional approaches. Students learn more material in less time. Mastery leamingg produces markedly greater student interest in and attitude toward the subject learned than usual classroom methods”. Some other benefits of mastery learning included:

- The strategy can be used in any subject area.

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- Objectives are clearly listed to beginning the lesson.
- The class works on the lesson as a group with the teacher noting individual needs for special help at a later time . .
- Specific needs of individuals are succinctly defined and treated without delay .
- The stratgy works equally well in corrective and remedial situations .
- It tends to build confidence in the learner with each unit mastered .
- Although the strategy is time consuming , the results are extremely satisfying when properly executed to a conclusion (Jones, Bagford & Wallen , 1979., p. 97), And finally master teaching techniques gives steachers the opportunity to make teaching performances consistent,positive and high quality experience (Bernard & Cleveland, 1984 , p. 18).

Drill

Drill is a repeated operation or exercise intended to develop a skill or an acquaintance with a procedure . Practice is the actual putting to use of what is taught in the drill. The main purpose of drill and practice is the actual doing and experiencing , which is one way learning takes place (zenger & zenger, p. 29, 177).

- Drill is useful in psychomotor learning.
- Some inforamtion cannot be understood by one-time explanation, therefore, requiring drill.
- Students can construct their own link of knowledge through drill.
- Drill creates motivation when used in students tutorial sessions.
- Productive learning can occur making a drill team of slow and fast achievers.

Problem Solving

The name problem solving is assigned to learning approaches based upon the scientific method inquiry, These apporaches built up on John Dewey;s five steps of general problem solving : (1) defining the problem, (2) formulating tentative hypotheses. (3) collecting, evaluating, organizing, and interpreting data, (4) reaching concluions, and (5) testing those conclusions. Problem solving moves the mind to some of its highest cognitive functions : analyzing, generalizing, and synthesizing . This alone justifies it as one of the most valuable of all strategies. Magnifying the value accomplished if the problem to be solved are relevant and interesting to the students . (Jones, Bagford & Wallen, 1979, pp. 103 - 107).

- In problem solving students comprehend and retain longer, because they have been involved in the problem .
- Students will be familiar with problem solving methods in the future .
- Problem solving magnifies motivation and interests.
- Students use materials besides the books .
- In reaching a solution students learn how to think solely .

-Students learan to take each other’s ideas .

Field Trip

. A field trip is an educational exursion beyond the boundaries of the regular classroom to give meaning, vitality, and interest to the regular classroom studiies (zenger & zenger, 1977, p . 27). Field trips are made to factories, public utilities, museums, libraries, art galleries, or government installations . Careful planning and pre-visitation to the site by the teacher is important if the experience

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is to be worthy and utilized . Field trips, if properly planned and carried out are an essential source of broadening learner'shorizon .

- Field trips give students attractive new experiences.
- Students learn more about the environment.
- School and community relationships are strengthened through field trips .
- Field trips could be used by teachers of any subject.
- Field trips provide students with a touch of reality.
- Field trips change the routine classroom activities . . .

Workshops

Workshop setting for the teaching of children is different from most classrooms of the past. Floor space tend to be organized into varies study centers, with bookcases , storage cabinets , and other kinds of dividers helping to define them . In each center are found related materials, facts, and equipment. Tables and work benches provide surfacs for work . Fewer chairs are in evidence and children usually do not have assigned seats. When they need to get together children may sit on the floor, perhaps in a carpeted comer or in a relatively open space elsewhere in the room. Workshop settings are designed so that children can pursue a variety of learning activities at the same time. Group instmetion, in which all children are busy on the same set of tasks , gives way for the most part to a kind of teaching that encourages individual learners to work on different problems or projects chosen by them from the full range of study possibilities presented in each center.

Frazier proposed the following guideline to be kept in mind in arranging a workshop setting for informal teaching :

1 - A good setting for learning enables children to engage in mostly active rather than mostly passive learning .

2 - A workshop setting provides the equipment, materials, and opportunities needed for truly active learning .

3 - Workshop-type classroms are usually organized into different centers among which children may circulate .

4 - The work centers are most often set up in study areas such as art, language arts, mathematics, music, reading, scie'nce, and social studies .

5 - The desing and location of centers includes attention to fixed facilities space needs, and relationships with oother centers.

6 - All the work centers are accessible at the same time, wich makes the most of special equipment and materials .

7 - Distribution of children among work centers is partly ensured by personal choice and partly by restrictions on how many may workin each center.

8 - Children may chose the order in which they circulate among centers but are expected to touch base with some regularity in the language arts, mathematics and reading centers.

9 - Teachers in the workshop setting leam quickly how to identify and help children who are having trouble settling down to work.

10 - A good workshop-type classrom provides a place where children may get together for whole group activities of the kinds valued by the teachers (1976 , p. 36).

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Trends and Issues in teaching Methods

Adapting Materials to student's Interest

Stuudent's interest is related to the topic of the match of material to students. Just as ab- lilty to perform and be challenged by assigned work is important, so is interest in the work. Interest in the learning task is more likely to be sustained if the task is related to student's interest. When possible give stuudents alternative ways of fulfilling classroom exeercises (Good & Brophy , 1973 , p. 298).

Remedial teaching

The teacher must recognize that problems exist, that learning is not as effective as it could be and that intervention is needed. Remedial teaching is something we see little of in schols. Students who enter the third grade without a good phonics background seidome leam phonics. More typically, they will start with the same reading materials that other students received, and then struggle the entire year with the first seventy pages while others finish the book . A basic aspect of remedial teaching is teacer commitment to the belief that every student can and will leam (Good & Brophy, 1973 , p.305).

The Match

The match between what the teacher asks the stuudents to do and what the students can do and what the students can do has to be equal. An important component of learning and deciding how well a student learns a specific lesson is its connection to what he or she knows. The teacher has to watch the classroom and closely supervise the work of many sttudents, otherwise it might be hard to decide if the match between students and assigned work is being accomplisshed in the classroom .

Teacher's Enthusiasm

Teacher enthusiasm affects students accomplishments . It's very difficult to designate the act and manners of an enthusiastic teacher with exactness, but some characteristics of enthusiastic teachers are : altertness. vigor, interest, movement, and voice infliction. Teachers move in the room and get close to the students, they are lively, they show astonishments, suspense, happeness, they make the subject interesting by connecting it to the students real life, and demonstrate that the subject is important to them and they are interested in it too.

Classroom Grouping ,

Grouping students according to their achievement level is not recommended. Students loose their individual identities when grouping them in own ability group. The teacher goes too fast for the low achiever and too slow for the high achiever, Therefore, ability grouping is a try to decrease the extent of student's ability so the teacher can teach effectively . When children are grouped at random there is more interaction . The result of random selection will be a greater extent in student ability and aptitude . Therefore the term heterogeneous is always applied. -

Child Attention

A useful focal point for teachers and observers is to identify the number of students who attend to their learning tasks. It is not reasonable to expect students to be attentive at all times, Teachers should be able to create learning enviromments in which most of the students are attending to the learning tasks at a given time (Good * Brophy, 1973 , p 298).

Students behavior problems often indicate their need for attention teachers should try to make each student feel accepted and that he or she is a valuable member of the classroom. The child who is involved and has a sense of responsibility for what goes on in the classroom will tend to be cooperative (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1983 , p. 21). Most classrooms have one or more students who show serious and continuing disturbances. Don't isolate the student or label him a unique case. Stress desired behavior, i.e., the teacher should regularly stress the behavior that he is trying to get student to Irearn and not the misbehavior he shows now. Focus on the student's school related behavior, i.e., the teacher should expect th students to behave acceptably no matter what personality disturbance he shows. Also build a close relationship with the student and use it to learn his point of view (Good & Brophy, 1973 , p. 215). .

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Home - School Relationship

Through the elementry schols the teacher has a key role in the establishment and improvement of home - school relations. The parents of the young child are keenly interested and coopertion is at a high level when the child enrolls in kindergarten or the primary grades .It's the kindergarten or first grade teacher who lays the ground work for parent-schol relations. It's the responsibility of th teacher to make every possible effort to interpret the school to the parents through maintaining a friendly attitude and informing them of educational opportunities for their children and the type of learning experiences the schol provides. The teacher must become competent in parent teacher communication. The pamts and the teacher should share what each knows about the child and they should be willing to cooperate for the child's best interest. The teacher should.have essential skills leadership, group participation, and parent education (Logan & Logan , 1961).

Lesson Planning

Careful planning is the foundation of all good teaching from the first day of student teaching to th last day of ±e month of the retirement year. The nature of the lesson-planning change as years go by, but planning should never stop (Kochhar, 1967 , p. 216).

Student's Questions

It was John Dewey who pointed out ±at thinking itsellf is questioning (Cooper, 1990 , p. 113). A child's question is an indicator of his need or of a doubt which has occurred in his reasoning . Everyone leams most thoroughly by having his curiosity satisfied (Shipley, Cann, Hildebrand, & Mitcell, 1968 p. 108) . much is lost when students are not instructed to cope with the subject matter, think, about it, play with it, and study it from different angles.

Computers

The inevitable presence of computers in classrooms compels teachers to broaden their technological training . Teachers will need to be computer literate . At best, they will maximize the computer's ability to assist the learner in reding, writing and problem solving development. Administratively . teachers will use computers for testing, rcordkeeping , and communicating with parents (Clark & Cutter, 1990).

Considerations

Students have a chance to further the intellectual and behavioral independence . A few ways this process can be manifested are as follows:

- Students can go to the restroom when they care to do so.
- Students are asked to explain ±eir thinking , even when their answers are correct.
- Students are asked to evelaute their own work or the work of other students occasionally .
- Students are allowed to make simple decisions, for example, " Do we do math first or would you prefer to read" .
- The teacher responds when stuudents ask questions relevant to the subject discusion at hand (Good & Brophy, 1973, p. 312).

Conclustion

The purpose of this paper was to discuss some teaching methods and techniques' available to be used by elementary school teachers. Teaching involves many rols other than instructing students. At times, the teacher will serve as surrogate parent, an entertainer, an authority figure, a recordkeeper, acounselor,. and so on. All of these duties are necessary aspect of .the teacher's role. However, important as they are , they must not be allowed to overshadow the teacher's basic instructional role. Thus the majority of teacher's time in th classroom should be spent on instructional activities (Berliner & Rosenshine , 1987 , p. 182).

Children deserve to find a setting in school that stimulates learning .Everywhere they turn something should invite their attention and excite their curiosity. The school environment ought to carry the promise of satisfing the interests and needs children bring with them . Also it may serve to arouse a sense of new possibilities to be explored, of fun familiar, possibly puzzling but potentially rewarding learning experiences. Immediate satisfaction as a goal is thus joined by the children's desire to figure out the unfamiliar, to make better sense out of what is happening around them and to them (Frazier, P. 1, 1976).

Children bring to school many interests and concerns that impel them toward learning. Children have a need to know . And school may be expected to be the best place to go for help . Experienced teachers have long understood the need to tie together what may be laud out as worth learning and what the child feels he must learn . Meeting his needs and satisfying his interests as he perceives them may lead to their working together, teacher and child , to shape purposes that extend beyond the point where the child would be able to move entirely on his own (Frazier, 1976 , p. 40).

Jones , Bagford, and wallen (1979, p. 129) offered five solid reasons for teachers being proficiently prepared in a wide assortment of strategies .

Different students learn best in different ways at different times .

1. Some subject matter is best served by use of a particular strategy or sub-strategy or combinaation thereof.
2. Divrse objectives call for diverse approaches to meet the objectives .
3. The innate abilities of the teacher may determine the effectiveness of some strategies or sub-strategies
4. Environmental factors (money, supplies, facilities, time, etc.) often dictate which strategies or sub-strategies will be most effective .

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