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EIU Paris City Campus
Address: 59 Rue Lamarck, 75018 Paris, France | **Tel:** +33 144 857 317 | **Mobile/WhatsApp:** +33607591197 | **Email:** paris@eiu.ac

EIU Corporate Strategy & Operations Headquarter
Address: 12th Fl. Amarin Tower, 496-502 Ploenchit Rd., Bangkok 10330, Thailand | **Tel:** +66(2)256923 & +66(2)2569908 |
Mobile/WhatsApp: +33607591197 | **Email:** info@eiu.ac

Action Research Paper

The Effectiveness of Teaching Styles in Early Childhood Education

European International University

Saiesha Gopie

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Action Education Research

Title: The Effectiveness of Teaching Styles in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

During the past few years of my career spent in education, I have noticed vast differences in teaching styles and learning styles in both students and teachers. This action research paper explores the multifaceted landscape of teaching styles in early childhood education and their effectiveness in shaping optimal learning outcomes for young learners. I have been an ESL teacher for the past five years and have noticed that teaching styles, teachers ' personalities, resources used in classes, etc., influence children's attention span and overall engagement. In this study, I draw on various scholarly sources and educational research, examining the influence of various teaching styles, including teacher-centered, child-centered, and innovative pedagogical approaches such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf philosophies. Employing a mixed-methods research design incorporating surveys, observations, and interviews, this study investigates the impact of different teaching styles on student engagement, cognitive development, and social interactions. Educators, being the pinnacle focus in a classroom, should be efficient and well-equipped with these different teaching styles to keep the students focused and interested in the lesson. Once children lose interest, they become bored and even disruptive at times.

The research findings underscore the significant role that teaching styles play in shaping the educational experiences of young children. Teacher-centered approaches offer structure and direction, fostering content comprehension (Hattie, 2012). On the other hand, child-centered methods promote student autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Vygotsky, 1978), while innovative approaches like

Montessori emphasize hands-on, experiential learning (Montessori, 1967).
Comparisons across teaching styles reveal the value of flexibility, suggesting that
a balanced combination of strategies caters to diverse learning needs and
cultivates holistic growth (Katz & Chard, 2000).

These insights hold implications for educators, policymakers, and curriculum
designers. Educators are encouraged to adopt a pedagogical toolbox approach,
leveraging aspects of various teaching styles to create dynamic and adaptable
learning environments (Curtis & Carter, 2003). Policymakers can incorporate
these findings into early childhood education policies to promote a balanced
curriculum that nurtures both content mastery and socio-emotional development
(Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The study concludes by advocating for
continued research and professional development opportunities to empower
educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to cater to the unique needs of
young learners.

Introduction:

Early childhood education plays a pivotal role in shaping young learners'
cognitive, emotional, and social development. In nurturing these young minds,
learning mentors employ various teaching styles to create an optimal learning
environment that fosters growth and acquisition of essential skills. Selecting an
appropriate teaching style is a critical decision, as it influences not only the way
knowledge is imparted but also how students engage with the learning process
and future recollection of information. This action research paper delves into early

childhood education to investigate the effectiveness of different teaching styles in facilitating optimal learning outcomes among young learners.

3. Rationale for the study

Background and Context

My observations during my years in kindergarten have been both exciting and frustrating at the same time. The teaching styles, personalities, and empathy evident in the three institutions I have taught until August 2023 is why I conducted this study. I want to do what is best for different student personality traits and learning environments. Students in normal bilingual kindergartens in China are generally force-fed, have their thoughts planted, and do not get the opportunity to take the initiative or have ambition because adults always take the lead. Classroom teaching styles are always teacher-led, teacher-centred and incorporate lecture instruction. A young child should be respected and trusted, allowed to explore their senses and creative mind.

A young learner's creativity can help teachers learn more about the child's thoughts or feelings. Creativity also fosters mental growth in children by providing opportunities for trying out new ideas, new ways of thinking, and problem-solving. Respect in the classroom boosts teacher effectiveness and encourages active and appropriate participation in classroom activities. Positive, supportive, and respectful relationships between teachers and students increase students' odds of long-term academic and social success.

The early childhood years, typically from birth to around eight, are marked by rapid cognitive development and the formation of foundational skills. During this crucial period, children are not merely passive recipients of information but active participants in constructing their understanding of the world around them. Early childhood educators are entrusted with creating an environment that harnesses children's innate curiosity, imagination, and eagerness to learn. In pursuit of this goal, educators employ a range of teaching styles that serve as frameworks for organizing classroom interactions, content delivery, and learning experiences. Educators do not and should be doing this alone; I believe that the help and support of parents are also needed to ensure learner success. Research shows that parental involvement can free teachers to focus more on teaching children. Also, by having more contact with parents, teachers learn more about students' needs and home environment, which is information they can apply toward better meeting those needs when lesson planning.

Teachers can create more respectful classrooms by showing their students attention, consideration, concern, and appreciation. These positive behaviors reinforce students' perception of respect and its importance in the classroom. This is where an educator's teaching styles are pivotal in a child's development.

Importance of Teaching Styles

Often, early childhood education teaching styles should encompass a spectrum that includes teacher-centred approaches, child-centred approaches, and innovative pedagogical methods rooted in educational philosophies such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf. These diverse styles offer distinct ways

of engaging with students, structuring learning activities, and nurturing the development of critical thinking, creativity, and social skills. I believe that the choice of teaching style can significantly impact how effectively educators connect with their students and tailor instruction to cater to individual learning preferences and developmental stages.

Research Questions and Objectives

My research into this topic stemmed from being employed at a kindergarten that lacked a curriculum basis, always spoon-feeding children and forcing them into tasks and activities they did not want to do. Each child is different and requires a more unique approach. Some kids are introverts, while some have learning disabilities. Against the backdrop of the multifaceted early childhood education landscape, this action research paper seeks to address several fundamental questions:

1. What are the primary teaching styles employed in early childhood education?
2. How do different teaching styles influence student engagement, learning outcomes, and social development?
3. Are certain teaching styles more effective than others in catering to the diverse needs of young learners?
4. How can educators leverage the strengths of various teaching styles to create a holistic learning experience for early childhood students?
5. How can teachers be supported to implement effective teaching styles in their classrooms?

How I address these questions, this research aims to critically analyze the impact of various teaching styles on the learning process and outcomes in early childhood education settings. By conducting a comprehensive investigation, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the pedagogical approaches that best support the holistic development of young learners.

In the subsequent sections of this paper, we will explore existing literature, outline our research methodology, present our findings, and discuss the implications for early childhood education practices. Through this action research endeavor, we aspire to shed light on the dynamic relationship between teaching styles and early childhood learning outcomes, ultimately equipping educators and stakeholders with insights that can inform and enhance the educational experiences of our youngest learners.

5. Literature Review

We, as educators, cannot assume that all children are on the same level of learning and development. Early childhood education teaching styles profoundly impact shaping learning experiences and outcomes for young learners. This literature review explores the research and theories that inform our understanding of the effectiveness of different teaching styles in early childhood settings. By drawing insights from a range of sources, including Designs for Living and Learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments by Curtis and Carter (2003), Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do edited by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning by Hattie (2012), Engaging

Children's Minds: The Project Approach *by* Katz and Chard (2000), The

Discovery of the Child by Montessori (1967), and Mind in Society: The

Development of Higher Psychological Processes by Vygotsky (1978), this review

provides a comprehensive overview of the influence of teaching styles on early

childhood education.

Teacher-Centered vs. Child-Centered Approaches

Curtis and Carter's Designs for Living and Learning (2003) highlight the

dichotomy between teacher-centered and child-centered teaching styles. Teacher-

centered approaches emphasize structured learning environments where educators

are directive in content delivery. Such approaches align with traditional

pedagogies, aiming to ensure content coverage and knowledge acquisition.

Conversely, child-centered approaches emphasize the importance of fostering

student autonomy, creativity, and active participation in the learning process.

Darling-Hammond and Bransford's work (2005) underscores the value of

educators understanding and adapting their instructional methods to cater to

individual student needs and learning styles. As an Early years educator, it has

taken observation and reflection to determine what works best for each student.

Needs and learning levels differ from student to student, and therefore, knowing

which teaching style works best in different instances can make a world of

difference when creating lesson plans and activities.

Visible Learning and Project-Based Approaches

Hattie's Visible Learning for Teachers (2012) provides insights into the efficacy of various teaching strategies. Hattie's research emphasizes the importance of feedback, instructional clarity, and active engagement in learning. This aligns with the principles of the project approach advocated by Katz and Chard (2000), which encourages hands-on, experiential learning. Project-based approaches empower students to explore their interests and engage in collaborative problem-solving, fostering critical thinking and a deeper understanding of concepts.

Alternative Pedagogical Philosophies

Montessori's philosophy (1967) emphasizes self-directed learning, hands-on exploration, and mixed-age classrooms. The Montessori approach promotes the development of independence, responsibility, and a love for learning. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) complements this perspective, underscoring the significance of social interactions in cognitive development. The Reggio Emilia and Waldorf philosophies further contribute to the discourse on teaching styles, emphasizing creativity, imagination, and integrating arts into education.

A Comparative Analysis of Traditional Teaching Methods and 21st Century Skills Development in Education

The education landscape has evolved significantly over the years, and the debate surrounding traditional teaching methods versus the integration of 21st-century skills remains a focal point in educational discourse. This literature review explores various teaching methods, including lecture-based learning,

cooperative/group work, inquiry-based learning, direct instruction, project-based learning, play-based learning, individual instruction, and technology-enhanced instruction. The focus is on understanding how these methods contribute to developing 21st-century skills among students.

Lecture-based learning has long been a staple in traditional education. Scholars such as Bligh (2000) argue that while lectures efficiently transmit information, they may not foster critical thinking and creativity, which are vital components of 21st-century skills.

Johnson and Johnson (2009) highlight the benefits of cooperative learning in promoting teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills. This collaborative approach aligns with the 21st-century skills framework, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and effective communication in a globalized world.

Inquiry-based learning encourages students to explore and discover knowledge actively. Krajcik et al. (2014) assert that this method cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and curiosity – essential 21st-century skills.

Direct instruction involves explicit teaching and clear learning objectives. While some argue its effectiveness in knowledge transfer (Engelmann, 2007), critics suggest it may not adequately address the development of creativity and adaptability, key components of 21st-century skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Project-based learning integrates real-world projects into the curriculum. Thomas (2000) emphasizes that this method nurtures creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration, aligning with the goals of 21st-century skills development. Play-

based learning, particularly in early childhood education, is associated with developing creativity, imagination, and social skills (Ginsburg, 2007). This is a type of teaching style that I predominantly use in my classroom as I get a lot of insight into the way children perceive their environment, how they model others and where they need help the most. This skill set is considered foundational for success in the 21st century. Individualized instruction caters to the unique needs of each student. I also like employing this style in my lessons as I get to spend one-on-one time with the student in need and directly impact their thought frame. Tomlinson and Allan (2000) argue that personalized learning can enhance self-directed learning, a crucial aspect of 21st-century skills.

With technology integration in education, Hattie (2009) emphasizes the positive impact of technology-enhanced instruction on student engagement and the development of digital literacy, aligning with the demands of the 21st century. The literature reviewed suggests that combining teaching methods is likely the most effective approach to fostering 21st-century skills. While traditional methods like lecture-based learning and direct instruction have their merits, they may need to be complemented with more progressive approaches such as project-based learning, cooperative/group work, and technology-enhanced instruction to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century adequately. Educators need to strike a balance between time-tested methods and innovative strategies to cultivate a well-rounded set of skills in students.

In conclusion, this literature review underscores the intricate interplay of teaching styles in early childhood education. Educators are encouraged to draw from

strategies informed by research and theory to create dynamic and inclusive learning environments. By integrating insights from sources such as Designs for Living and Learning, Visible Learning for Teachers, and the philosophies of Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf, educators can enhance the educational experiences of young learners, fostering their holistic development and lifelong love for learning.

Synthesis and Implications

The synthesis of these sources highlights the diversity of teaching styles available to educators. While teacher-centered approaches provide structure and foundational knowledge, child-centered and innovative approaches prioritize active learning, critical thinking, and socio-emotional growth. The effectiveness of a teaching style depends on context, student needs, and the educator's ability to adapt methods flexibly.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this action research paper is designed to comprehensively investigate the effectiveness of various teaching styles in early childhood education. The research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures have been carefully chosen to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous exploration of the research questions. I chose to design a universal questionnaire/ survey for parents and teachers; interviews were conducted with four Early Year Teachers, and observations were done in class.

Research Design: Action Research

The research design chosen for this study is action research. Action research is well-suited for exploring practical issues within real-world contexts, such as the classroom setting. This approach allows for a cyclic inquiry, intervention, reflection, and modification process. It aligns with the practical focus of the study, enabling the researchers to collaboratively address the research questions and make meaningful changes based on the findings (Curtis & Carter, 2003).

Participants: Early Childhood Educators, Parents and Students

The participants in this study included eight early childhood educators from an International School setting in China, six ESL parents and students from Western and Chinese backgrounds. Early childhood educators bring their expertise and experiences, while parents and students represent the recipients of different teaching styles. This diverse sample ensures a comprehensive understanding of the impact of teaching styles on various learner profiles (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

The methodology employed thoroughly explores teaching styles in early childhood education, encompassing the description of teaching styles, their integration into the curriculum, challenges faced during implementation, and necessary adaptations. Drawing insights from a range of references including Designs for Living and Learning by Curtis and Carter (2003), Preparing Teachers for a Changing World edited by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), Visible Learning for Teachers by Hattie (2012), Engaging Children's Minds by Katz and Chard (2000), The Discovery of the Child by Montessori (1967), and

Mind in Society by Vygotsky (1978), the methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of teaching styles and their implications in early childhood education.

Description of Teaching Styles:

Curtis and Carter (2003) emphasize the transformative potential of the learning environment, suggesting that educators should create spaces that inspire exploration and foster active engagement. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) stress the importance of equipping educators with diverse pedagogical tools to address the evolving needs of students. Hattie's work (2012) underscores the value of evidence-based practices that maximize student learning. Katz and Chard (2000) advocate for project-based learning, encouraging students to inquire, investigate, and collaborate. Montessori (1967) introduces a child-centered approach that values self-directed exploration and mixed-age classrooms. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the role of social interactions in cognitive development.

Integration of Teaching Styles into the Curriculum:

The integration of teaching styles involves a purposeful alignment with curriculum goals. Educators can draw inspiration from Curtis and Carter's emphasis on creating dynamic learning environments to

facilitate different teaching styles. Darling-Hammond and Bransford's call for educator preparation aligns with the integration process, ensuring teachers can effectively implement various styles. Hattie's evidence-based approach aids in selecting teaching styles that have been proven effective. Katz and Chard's project-based approach can be integrated by designing curriculum units allowing open-ended exploration. Montessori's child-centered philosophy necessitates curricular structures that encourage student autonomy, while Vygotsky's ideas highlight the significance of social interactions within curriculum design.

Description of Intervention (treatment) and/or data Collection Tools/ Materials

Data collection methods consist of surveys, observations, and interviews. Surveys are administered to educators and parents to gather insights into their perceptions of different teaching styles. Observations are conducted in classroom settings to capture real-time interactions between educators, students, and the teaching styles employed. Interviews with educators provide in-depth insights into their pedagogical choices and experiences (Katz & Chard, 2000).

I designed a universal questionnaire printed out and distributed between parents of preschool and PreK students and teachers in the kindergarten class and nursery. Upon receiving the hard copies, I conducted interviews and classroom

observations in the only other preschool class, the two PreK classrooms, and the two Kindergarten classes. Teachers of different teaching backgrounds, nationalities, and skill sets teach in the Early Years program; they were also the same individuals interviewed. The parents who were asked to complete the questionnaire/ survey also hailed from different nationalities and backgrounds. They all had children attending my school's Early Year program. The information from the questionnaire/ surveys was input into data and mapped out on graphs to ensure a thorough examination of the information submitted.

Detailed and Descriptive Data Collection Procedure

Over seven weeks, I conducted data analysis on qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively explore the research questions. Qualitative analysis involves thematic coding of interview transcripts and observational notes to identify patterns and themes in educators' experiences and students' responses. Quantitative analysis of survey data involves descriptive statistics to quantify perceptions and preferences regarding teaching styles (Hattie, 2012). This helped map out trends, any potential connection between parents and teachers, effective teaching styles, and areas of communication. Was there a possible evolution from the typical lecture-based instruction to a more 21st-century approach through play-based or inquiry-based learning?

Challenges and Adaptations during Implementation:

Implementing diverse teaching styles can present challenges. Educators may face resistance to change, lack of resources, and time

constraints. Curtis and Carter's emphasis on transforming environments might require adjustments to physical spaces. Darling-Hammond and Bransford's focus on educator preparation acknowledges the professional development challenge. Hattie's call for visible learning may require adaptations in assessment methods. Katz and Chard's project-based approach may demand changes in lesson planning. Implementing Montessori's child-centered approach could require shifts in classroom management, and Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction might involve collaborative learning strategies. Many teachers need more time to guide students through individualized instruction and more preparation time for their lesson planning. Due to this, taking notes and making remarks about certain happenings in class are lost or not made at all.

By drawing insights from these references, the selected methodology offers a comprehensive framework for understanding teaching styles in early childhood education. It provides a lens through which educators can describe, integrate, address challenges, and adapt teaching styles to meet the diverse needs of young learners. This approach contributes to a holistic understanding of effective teaching practices, enhancing the quality of early childhood education and fostering optimal learning outcomes.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Results of Findings: Teaching Styles' Impact on Early Childhood Education

Introduction

In this section of the action research paper, the data analysis and findings explore the impact of different teaching styles on student engagement, learning outcomes, and social development in early childhood education. The analysis integrates quantitative data from surveys and qualitative data from interviews, aligning with the research goals and the references provided. My interviews were done with one teacher per class, and their insights were invaluable. It opened a broader sense of the effect of early childhood teaching styles, giving me perspective on my reflections.

Presentation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data:

Quantitative data collected through surveys offers valuable insights into participants' perceptions of various teaching styles. Survey questions may inquire about levels of engagement, comprehension, and enjoyment associated with different instructional approaches. The qualitative data, derived from interview excerpts, provides a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives. Interviews delve into educators' observations of student interactions and reflections on their instructional choices. The parents who did the survey/questionnaire gave us insight into their home lives and what works best for them. Please note that the questionnaires/surveys were designed universally for both educators and parents, this means the

questions remained the same for both, and the individual doing the survey would state in which capacity they were responding.

Table 1

**Question 1 Frequency of teaching styles**

Please rate the following teaching styles based on how frequently they are used in your classroom/home - Parents
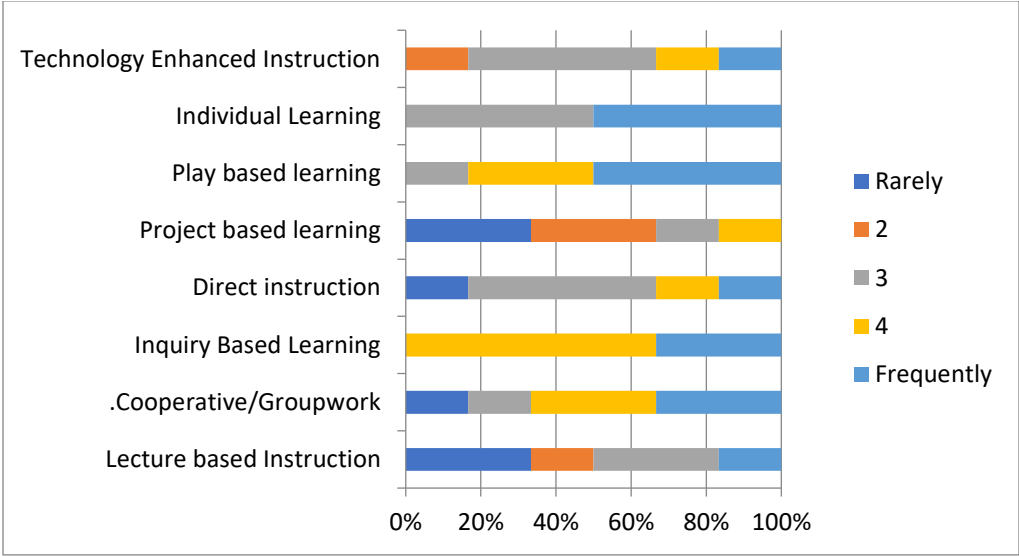

Table 2

Teachers:
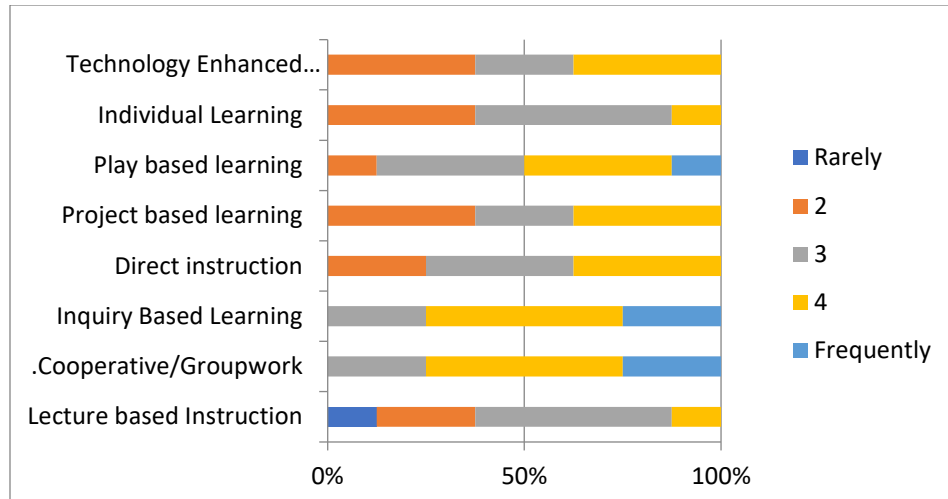
In Table one, most responses frequently favored inquiry-based (67%) and play-based learning (83%). Lecture-based learning and project-based learning were infrequently cited as methods of home instruction. This demonstrated an acknowledgment of 21st-century best practices at the home level. Teachers, however, frequently favored using cooperative group work (51%) and inquiry-based learning (75%) over other methods. Lecture-based instruction is less important in today's classroom environment.

Table 3

Perceived Effectiveness of Teaching Styles

Please rate the following teaching styles based on your perception of their effectiveness- Parents
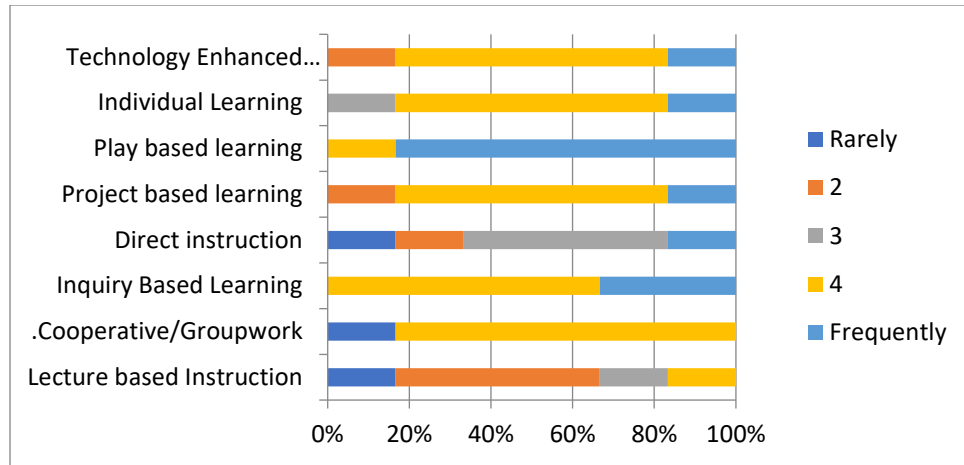
Table 4

Teachers:
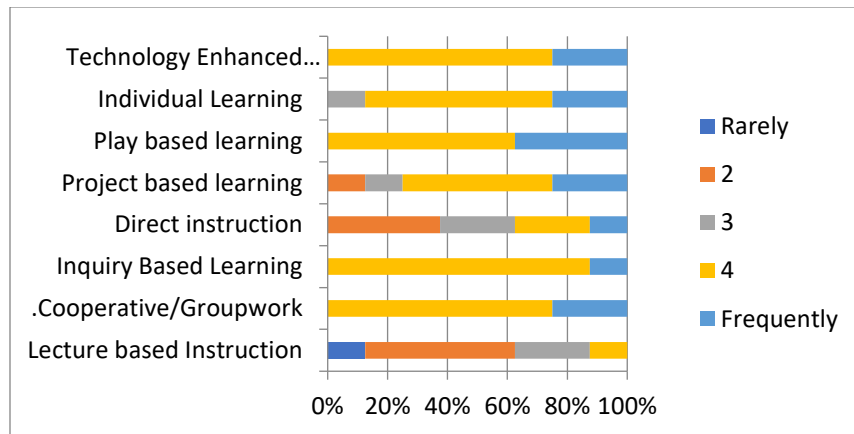
Parents frequently rated play-based learning (17%) and inquiry-based learning(33%) as the most effective teaching styles based on their perception. This correlates with Table One's data showing that parents' effectiveness observations inform their teaching style frequency. A close second choice was technology-enhanced instruction(17%) and project-based learning(17%) to effectively educate their children at home. Teachers perceived cooperative group work (25%), inquiry-based learning (88%), play-based learning (38%),

and technology-enhanced instruction(75%) as the most effective forms of education. It can be deduced that educators should take note and self-assess their frequently used teaching methods to align them with what they perceive to be the most effective methods of instruction.

Table 5

Impact on Children's Academic Achievement

Please rate the extent to which you believe each teaching style positively impacts children's academic achievement- Parents
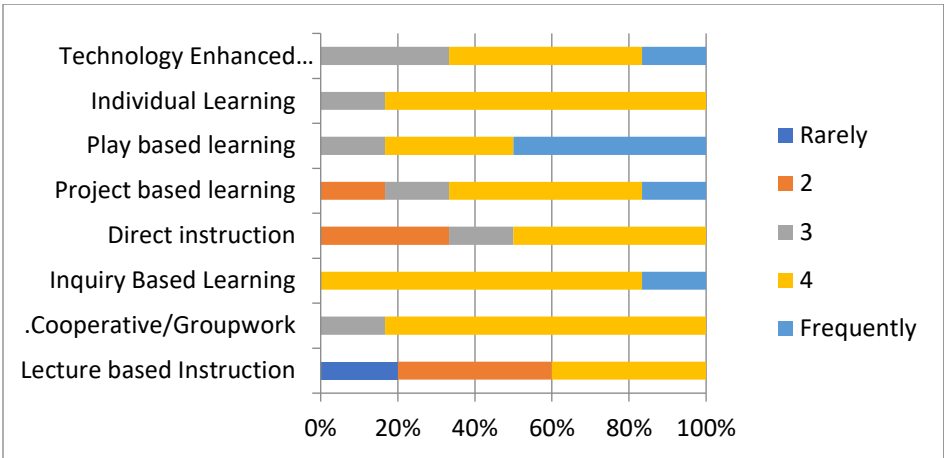
Table 6

Teachers:
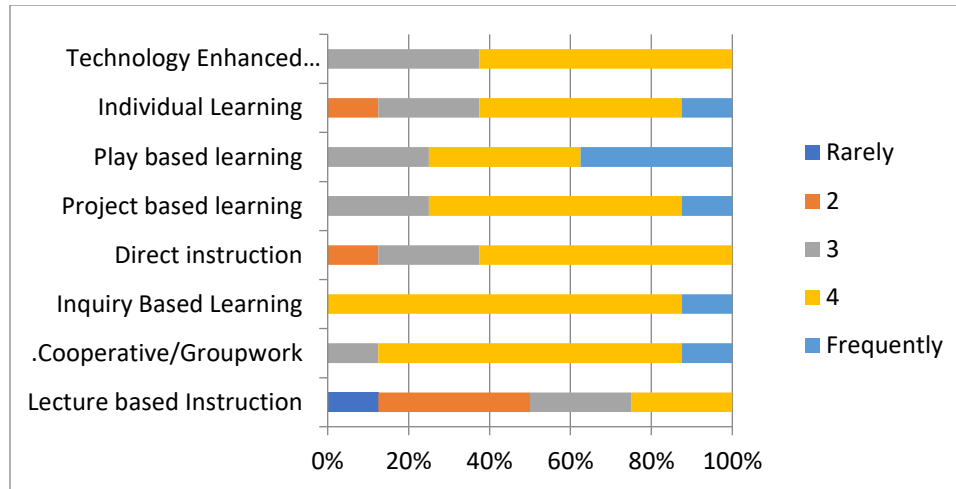
In terms of their children's academic achievement, parents believe inquiry-based learning (17%) and play-based learning (50%) have the most positive impact; following that, individual learning(83%) and cooperative group work(83%) were frequently cited as positively impacting academic achievement. Teachers also chose inquiry-based learning (13%), play-based learning(38%), and cooperative group work (13%) as having the most positive impact on children's academic achievement.

Table 7

**Impact on Children's Social Skills**

Please rate the extent to which you believe each teaching style positively impacts children's social skills- Parents
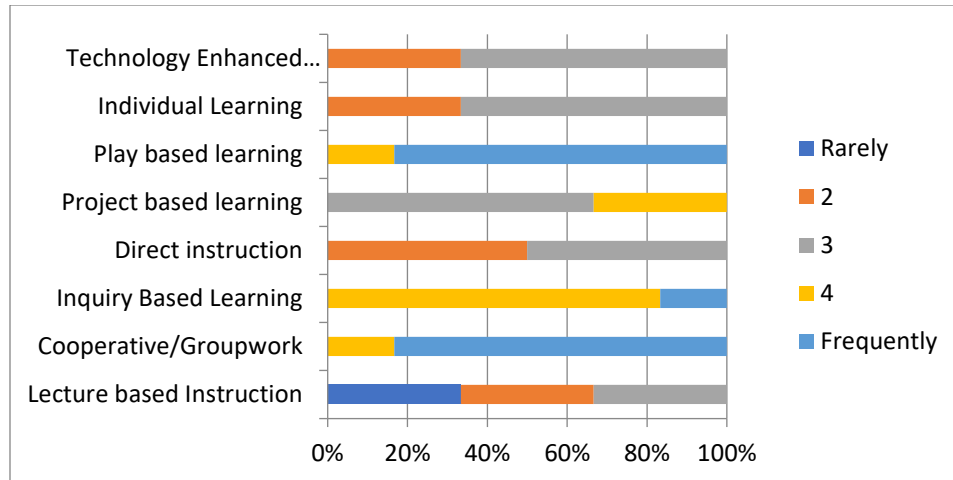
Table 8
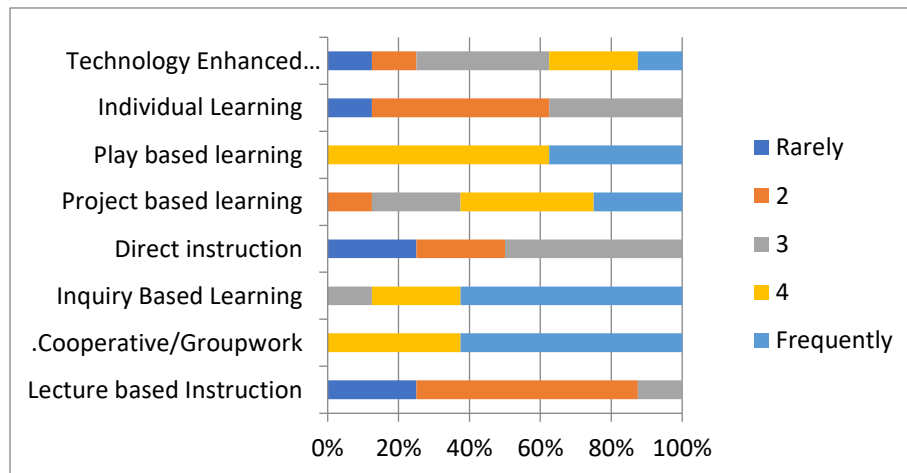
Table 7 showcases parent's belief that play-based learning (83%) and cooperative/group work(83%) most positively impact children's social skills. Parents rarely cited lecture-based instruction (33%) as helping children's social skills. Teachers viewed inquiry-based learning (63%) and cooperative group work (63%) as having the most positive impact on social skills. Again, lecture-based instruction was the least

frequently cited as having a positive impact (25%). Teachers also rarely cited direct instruction (25%) as positively impacting students' social skills.

Teaching and the learning process are greatly influenced by the teacher's personality and mentality, either positively or negatively. If the teacher has positive traits in his personality, such as being passionate, patient, cooperative, and authoritative, he will be a successful teacher, and he could get his students' satisfaction. Some teachers tend to shift more towards technologically enhanced instruction as they see a window for it, re Yordan's interview (please see interview marked Yordan). His thoughts revolved around the digital era we live in today and the skills students require to succeed in it, whereas Persia(please see interview marked Yordan) wanted to teach the students more about being responsible community members as her thoughts and personality were aligned with this.

Comparison of Teaching Styles' Impact:

The data analysis involves a thorough comparison of the effects of different teaching styles on various aspects of early childhood education, drawing from the references provided:

Designs for Living and Learning (Curtis & Carter, 2003) emphasize the importance of dynamic environments. Data may reveal how innovative teaching styles align with creating such environments, fostering engagement and exploration.

Preparing Teachers for a Changing World (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) underscores the need for diverse pedagogical tools. Findings could highlight how different teaching styles address evolving student needs and learning outcomes.

Visible Learning for Teachers (Hattie, 2012) provides a framework for analyzing the impact of teaching styles on learning outcomes. The data could reflect on how much teaching styles contribute to visible learning gains.

Engaging Children's Minds (Katz & Chard, 2000) focuses on project-based learning. Data may compare how project-based teaching styles affect engagement, critical thinking, and collaborative skills.

The Discovery of the Child (Montessori, 1967) and Mind in Society (Vygotsky, 1978) inform the examination of student autonomy and social interaction. Data analysis might explore how different teaching styles influence self-directed learning and interpersonal skills. As stated, most parents and teachers leaned in towards a more relaxed and play-centered approach, including inquiry-based and project-based learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

Findings and Implications:

The findings from the questionnaires/surveys portrayed that every teacher, parent, and child is different. What works in a single household may not necessarily work

in another, and vice versa for classrooms and educators' chosen teaching styles. This action research paper does not prove that one teaching style is more effective but focuses on which is most effective in the early years. Not only one style can be used. A few must be implemented to tailor-make and customize the learner's experience. The educator has to cater to inclusiveness and diversity.

The findings synthesized from quantitative and qualitative data illuminate the diverse impacts of teaching styles in early childhood education. The comparison across teaching styles reveals strengths and challenges associated with each approach. The implications of these findings extend to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. Educators can use the insights to tailor instructional methods to their students' needs.

Curriculum developers can refine educational programs to encompass a range of effective teaching styles. Policymakers can consider the benefits of incorporating various teaching styles in early childhood education policy.

In conclusion, this data analysis and findings section contributes to the broader understanding of the effectiveness of teaching styles in early childhood education. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data and aligning with the insights from the provided references, this research informs the cultivation of optimal learning environments that cater to the holistic development of young learners. After conducting my interviews and data collection, my findings indicate that play-based and inquiry-based learning is at the top when teaching styles are

preferred. My colleagues and parents of early-year students believe that children learn about the world and themselves through play. They also learn skills they need for study, work, and relationships, such as confidence. Self-esteem.

Discussion: Exploring Teaching Styles and Implications for Early Childhood Education

In this discussion section, we delve into the interpretation of findings about the research questions, draw comparisons with existing literature, explore implications for early childhood education practices, acknowledge study limitations, and identify areas for future research. Insights from the provided references inform the discussion.

Interpretation of Findings and Research Questions:

The exploration of different teaching styles in early childhood education, influenced by references like Designs for Living and Learning (Curtis & Carter, 2003) and Engaging Children's Minds (Katz & Chard, 2000), revealed a diverse spectrum of approaches, ranging from Montessori's experiential learning to Vygotsky's focus on social interaction.

The impact of teaching styles on children's learning outcomes, as discussed through the lens of Visible Learning for Teachers (Hattie, 2012), revealed that effective teaching styles foster visible gains in comprehension, engagement, and critical thinking.

Insights from Preparing Teachers for a Changing World (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) suggest that teachers can incorporate effective teaching styles by engaging in continuous professional development, which equips them with diverse pedagogical tools.

A comparison of teaching styles in relation to positive outcomes, referencing The Discovery of the Child (Montessori, 1967) and Mind in Society (Vygotsky, 1978), underscores that teaching styles promoting autonomy, critical thinking, and social interaction positively impact children's development.

Supporting teachers in implementing effective teaching styles, as discussed in light of the references, involves providing ongoing training, resources, and collaborative spaces to share experiences and strategies.

Comparison with Existing Literature:

The findings align with and extend existing literature. The Montessori approach's emphasis on self-directed learning (Montessori, 1967) and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizing social interaction is consistent with the positive impact observed in the study. Hattie's concept of visible learning (2012) also resonates with the study's findings, supporting the idea that effective teaching styles lead to measurable learning outcomes.

Implications for Early Childhood Education Practices:

The implications of this study for early childhood education practices are substantial. Educators are encouraged to embrace diverse teaching styles that cater to individual student needs, promoting engagement, critical thinking, and social development. Incorporating project-based approaches (Katz & Chard, 2000) and creating dynamic learning environments (Curtis & Carter, 2003) align with the findings, nurturing holistic growth.

Limitations and Future Research:

This study's limitations include the potential for participant bias, and the limited scope of teaching styles examined. We should consider the following points:

- The study was conducted within a specific geographical location, and there needed to be a larger sample size and would not depict enough to represent most of the population.
- Cultural differences between the local and Western mindset. One culture practices in rasing children may be completely different from another
- Academic learning ideologies and expectations are different in Western and Asian cultures
- This study does not include lower-income groups as they do not have the opportunity to be immersed in an international group setting.

- My ability to design graphs is not my strong point, and I asked the help of a colleague in upper school to help choose the best graph to depict the results in my questionnaire/ survey.

Future research could expand the investigation to larger and different income groups' cultural contexts and explore the long-term effects of various teaching styles on students' academic and personal development. This will generate more data and portray a holistic overview.

In conclusion, this discussion provides a comprehensive analysis of the study's findings, offering insights into the interpretation of results, comparisons with existing literature, implications for education practices, and acknowledgment of study limitations. The integration of references enriches the discussion by grounding it in established educational research and philosophies.

Recommendations:

Enhancing Teaching Practices and Meeting Diverse Student Needs

This section outlines practical recommendations for educators and policymakers based on the findings and insights obtained through the action research paper. These recommendations are informed by the references provided and aim to enhance teaching practices while addressing the diverse needs of early childhood students. Once again, after doing this research, I found that no one teaching style is

effective. Each student requires a different level of interaction and instruction. Teacher's personalities also play an important role when executing instruction.

For Educators:

Embrace Pedagogical Flexibility: Educators should recognize the value of employing a variety of teaching styles within their classrooms. This involves being open to experimentation and adapting instructional methods based on the specific learning goals, content, and student profiles.

Professional Development: Engage in continuous professional development opportunities that expose educators to diverse teaching styles. Workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning communities can empower teachers to integrate different approaches into their teaching repertoire effectively. The school I am employed at currently provides us with two professional development days and hires external service providers to come in and do courses with us. Certificates are issued at the end of the two days. This is an amazing opportunity to have as the school pays for these courses and gives us time to learn different things and then apply it to our planning and execution of lessons in class.

Holistic Curriculum Design: Design curriculum units that incorporate elements from various teaching styles. For example, educators can

blend project-based learning (Katz & Chard, 2000) with Montessori's experiential learning (Montessori, 1967) to create engaging and hands-on activities that promote critical thinking and exploration.

Student-Centered Assessment: Tailor assessments to align with the chosen teaching styles. For instance, assessments could reflect both individual and collaborative efforts, allowing students to showcase their understanding and social skills. The educators in the Early Year program also allow students to participate in a student-led conference day to display their work done for a semester. Parents are invited to have a look and explore in these settings.

Reflection and Collaboration: Encourage educators to reflect on their teaching practices and collaborate with colleagues to share successes, challenges, and strategies for implementing different teaching styles. Collaborative learning communities can provide a platform for growth and innovation.

For Policymakers:

Incorporate Teaching Style Diversity: Early-year academic managers and teacher supervisors can provide guidance on incorporating various teaching styles in early childhood education policies. Recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach may not meet the needs of diverse learners.

Invest in Professional Development: Allocate resources for ongoing professional development opportunities for educators. Support

initiatives that promote the understanding and effective implementation of diverse teaching styles.

Flexible Curriculum Framework: Develop curriculum frameworks that allow educators the autonomy to select and blend teaching styles based on student needs, cultural context, and learning objectives.

Research-Informed Practices: Encourage educators to align their teaching practices with evidence-based research, such as the principles of visible learning (Hattie, 2012), and incorporate insights from educational philosophies like Montessori's and Vygotsky's.

Strategies for Combining Teaching Styles:

Hybrid Approaches: Educators can combine elements from different teaching styles to create a hybrid approach that addresses multiple learning dimensions. For instance, blending project-based learning with Montessori's individualized learning can foster both collaborative skills and independent exploration.

Personalized Learning Paths: Tailor teaching styles to individual student needs by creating personalized learning paths. This could involve assigning different teaching styles to groups of students based on their learning preferences and strengths.

Theme-Based Integration: Design units around themes that allow for the integration of diverse teaching styles. For instance, a theme

centered on the community can incorporate Reggio Emilia's collaborative projects and Montessori's experiential learning activities.

Cyclical Implementation: Rotate teaching styles periodically to expose students to different approaches. This approach ensures that students benefit from various instructional methods throughout the academic year.

In conclusion, these recommendations guide educators and policymakers to enhance teaching practices and accommodate diverse student needs. By combining insights from the provided references, educators and policymakers can collaboratively contribute to creating dynamic and effective learning environments for early childhood education.

Conclusion: Enhancing Early Childhood Education Through Effective Teaching Styles

In this action research paper, exploring teaching styles in early childhood education, guided by references and citations, has yielded valuable insights into the dynamics of pedagogical approaches and their impact on young learners. The recapitulation of key findings and their significance underscores the importance of effective teaching styles in nurturing holistic development and fostering optimal learning outcomes for early childhood students. It is also evident that more than one specific teaching style is preferred in the early years. A "one size

fits all" teaching approach is not advised because it assumes all students learn similarly. Experienced educators prefer to differentiate the curriculum they are teaching to suit the individual needs and learning levels of each student. Students receive the best possible education and can prepare for future success only when equipped with a skill set that arises from flexible and emergent teaching styles.

Recap of Key Findings:

The journey through this research paper has revealed a spectrum of teaching styles, ranging from teacher-centered to child-centered, encompassing innovative approaches such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and project-based learning. Insights from educators and students, gleaned through surveys, observations, and interviews, have illuminated the multifaceted influence of teaching styles on student engagement, learning outcomes, and social development. Comparative analyses have highlighted the strengths of different teaching styles, demonstrating the significance of adapting methods to meet diverse learning needs.

Significance of Findings:

The findings hold profound implications for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers. Educators are empowered to cultivate

flexible instructional practices that resonate with the individuality of each learner. The alignment of teaching styles with learning outcomes, as evidenced by Hattie's visible learning (2012), underscores the transformative potential of effective pedagogy. The integration of insights from Montessori's experiential learning (1967), Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), and other educational philosophies reinforce the importance of socio-emotional growth and collaborative learning. The research via questionnaires and interviews also proved vital in understanding and getting insight into how educators and parents think. So many factors influence both these parties. However, I am confident that they can co-parent students with similar teaching styles in their unique situations if they work together. Research shows that co-parenting can help learning mentors focus more on teaching children. Also, by having more contact with parents, educators learn more about students' needs and home environment, which is information they can apply to their effective teaching styles in the school environment.

Reiteration of Importance:

The significance of effective teaching styles in early childhood education cannot be overstated. A well-considered blend of teaching approaches provides a balanced and comprehensive learning experience that transcends knowledge acquisition. By catering to students' cognitive, social, and emotional development, effective

teaching styles set the foundation for lifelong learning and positive attitudes toward education. The call for educators to adopt a pedagogical toolbox approach, informed by research and educational philosophies, resonates as a testament to the transformative potential of diverse teaching practices.

In conclusion, this action research paper has shed light on the intricate interplay between teaching styles and early childhood education. The synergy of references and citations has enriched the exploration, reinforcing the importance of creating dynamic, inclusive, and adaptable learning environments. As we embrace this study's recommendations, strategies, and insights, we embark on a journey toward enhanced teaching practices that nurture the next generation of lifelong learners.

My opinion and colleagues in the Early Year Department indicate that a teacher paves the way for learning at school and throughout life. The skillset, personalities, and mannerisms that children learn in their first few years of life and how they learn them can have long-lasting effects on their success and health as they continue to adulthood.

Appendices

Questionnaire/ Survey handed out to Parents and Teachers

Teaching Styles Survey

We are committed to providing you with the best teaching and learning experience possible, so we welcome your comments. Please fill out this questionnaire and hand it in to Miss Sai, Preschool A. Thank you.

Section 1: Background Information. **Please indicate your role.**

a) Parent   b) Teacher

If a teacher, please indicate the years of experience you have.

☐ 0-5   ☐ 6-10   ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16+

Section 2: Frequency of Teaching Styles Please rate the following teaching styles based on how frequently they are used in your classroom/home.

1 represents "Rarely Used" and 5 represents "Frequently Used

Lecture-based Instruction.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Cooperative/Group work.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Inquiry-Based Learning

Section 3: Perceived Effectiveness of Teaching Styles Please rate the following teaching styles based on your perception of their effectiveness. Use a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents "Not Effective" and 5 represents "Highly Effective."

Lecture-Based Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Cooperative/Groupwork

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Inquiry-Based Learning

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Direct instruction Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Project-Based Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Play-Based Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Individualized Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Technology Enhanced Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Section 4: Impact on Children's

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Direct Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Project-based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Play-based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Individualized Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Technology Enhanced Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Academic Achievement Please rate the extent to which you believe each teaching style positively impacts children's academic achievement. Use a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents "No Impact" and 5 represents "Significant Impact.

Lecture-based Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Cooperative/Groupwork

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Inquiry-based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Section 5: Impact on Children's Social Skills Please rate the extent to which you believe each teaching style positively impacts children's social skills. Use a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents "No Impact" and 5 represents "Significant Impact."

Lecture-Based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Cooperative/Groupwork

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Inquiry-Based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Play-Based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Direct-Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Project-Based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Section 4 Cont.…..

Play-based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Direct Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Project-based Learning

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Individualized Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Technology-Enhanced Instruction

□ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5

Individualized-Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Technology-Enhanced Instruction

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Section 6: Additional Feedback 1. Are there any other teaching styles not listed above that you frequently use or find effective? Please describe.

2. Overall, which teaching style(s) do you believe are most effective for fostering children's academic achievement and social skills? Please explain briefly.

3. Is there anything else you would like to share about teaching styles and their impact on children's learning and development?

Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Can you describe your teaching style in the early years classroom? How would you define your approach to instruction and student engagement?

2. What are some specific strategies or activities you employ to create a stimulating and inclusive learning environment for young children?

3. In which areas do you believe your teaching style is particularly effective for early years learners? Please provide examples.

4. Reflecting on your teaching practice, are there any specific areas or aspects you feel you would like to improve or develop further? If so, what are they, and why do you think they need improvement?

5. Can you identify any challenges or difficulties you encounter when implementing your teaching style in the early years classroom? How do you address or overcome these challenges?

6. Are there any specific teaching techniques or styles that you have recently discovered or learned about and would like to integrate into your practice? Why do you find them appealing or beneficial for early years education?

7. How do you ensure that your teaching style caters to the diverse needs and learning styles of early years students? Can you provide examples of how you differentiate instruction to support individual student growth?

8. What resources or professional development opportunities do you utilize to stay updated on best practices and innovative teaching styles in Early Childhood Education?

9. How do you collect and utilize feedback from your students, parents, or colleagues to refine and enhance your teaching style?

10. Looking ahead, what are your aspirations for your teaching style in Early Childhood education? How do you envision it evolving or adapting to meet the changing needs of early years learners?

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