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Role of Teaching-Learning Practices in Promoting Educational Development at the Primary Level

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Abstract

Teaching-learning practices play a significant role in promoting educational development at the primary level by influencing children's cognitive abilities, academic achievement, creativity, social adjustment, and overall personality development. Primary education provides the foundation for lifelong learning, making the adoption of effective pedagogical approaches essential for achieving quality educational outcomes. The present paper examines the role of teaching-learning practices in promoting educational development at the primary level through a descriptive and analytical review of existing literature. Particular attention is given to child-centred learning, activity-based instruction, experiential learning, collaborative learning, inclusive education, formative assessment, and technology-supported teaching. The paper also examines the relevance of the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework in strengthening primary education in India. The reviewed literature suggests that well-planned, participatory, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate teaching-learning practices can improve foundational literacy, numeracy, conceptual understanding, classroom participation, and social-emotional development. The paper concludes that effective educational development requires competent teachers, supportive learning environments, appropriate instructional resources, and continuous assessment practices that respond to children's individual learning needs.

Keywords:
Teaching-Learning Practices, Educational Development, Primary Education, Child-Centred Learning, Experiential Learning

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Introduction

Education is a fundamental instrument for individual development, social transformation, and national progress. It provides individuals with knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and competencies necessary for effective participation in society. Among the different stages of education, primary education occupies a particularly important position because it

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establishes the foundation for future academic learning, cognitive development, social interaction, and personality formation. The quality of educational experiences provided during the primary years considerably influences children's attitudes towards learning and their subsequent educational progress.

Teaching-learning practices constitute an essential component of the educational process. They encompass the methods, strategies, activities, instructional materials, classroom interactions, and assessment procedures employed by teachers to facilitate learning. Effective teaching-learning practices recognize that children are active participants in the construction of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information. Therefore, meaningful primary education requires pedagogical approaches that encourage curiosity, exploration, participation, questioning, cooperation, and independent thinking.

Traditionally, primary education in many contexts has relied heavily on textbook-based instruction, memorization, repetition, and teacher-dominated classroom activities. Although explicit explanation, demonstration, and guided practice remain valuable instructional methods, excessive dependence on rote learning may restrict opportunities for creativity, conceptual understanding, and practical application of knowledge. Contemporary educational approaches emphasize balancing systematic instruction with interactive and experiential learning experiences.

The National Education Policy 2020 recognizes foundational literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, creativity, and holistic development as important educational priorities. The National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022 further emphasizes play-based, activity-oriented, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

The World Bank (2018) also highlighted the distinction between school attendance and actual learning, emphasizing the need for educational systems to prioritize measurable learning outcomes. Consequently, improving teaching-learning practices has become central to educational quality and development.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Meaning of Teaching-Learning Practices

Teaching-learning practices refer to the planned and purposeful strategies through which teachers organize educational experiences, facilitate student participation, communicate knowledge, develop competencies, and evaluate learning outcomes. These practices include instructional planning, classroom communication, demonstration, questioning, storytelling, group activities, problem-solving, experiential learning, and assessment.

Rosenshine (2012) emphasized the importance of systematic instructional practices involving review, explanation, guided practice, questioning, checking for understanding, and independent application. These strategies suggest that effective teaching requires appropriate organization of learning activities and continuous attention to students' understanding.

Teaching-learning practices are not restricted to the transmission of subject knowledge. They also influence students' motivation, learning habits, confidence, interpersonal relationships, and willingness to participate in educational activities. Effective classroom practices therefore integrate cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural dimensions of learning.

2.2 Meaning of Educational Development

Educational development refers to the progressive improvement of learners' knowledge, understanding, competencies, attitudes, values, and abilities through organized educational experiences. At the primary level, educational development includes foundational literacy and numeracy, language proficiency, conceptual understanding, reasoning, creativity, communication, problem-solving, and social-emotional competencies.

Educational development is broader than examination performance. A child demonstrating educational development should progressively become capable of understanding ideas, applying knowledge in familiar situations, expressing thoughts, cooperating with others, and engaging in independent learning.

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2.3 Relationship Between Teaching-Learning Practices and Educational Development

Teaching-learning practices provide the processes through which curriculum objectives are translated into actual educational experiences. Their effectiveness depends on the interaction between instructional strategies, student characteristics, classroom environments, assessment practices, and available educational resources.

Child-centred and participatory practices may encourage engagement and conceptual understanding, while systematic instruction and regular feedback support foundational competencies. Consequently, educational development is most likely to be strengthened when instructional methods are aligned with children's developmental needs, prior knowledge, and learning objectives.

3. Need and Significance of the Study

The primary stage is characterized by rapid development in language, thinking, reasoning, communication, and social interaction. Educational experiences during these years influence children's readiness for more complex learning at higher educational levels. Therefore, the selection and implementation of appropriate teaching-learning practices are essential for promoting meaningful educational development.

Despite increasing school enrolment, challenges concerning foundational learning remain significant. The Annual Status of Education Report 2024 indicated that only 27.1% of rural children enrolled in Grade III could read a Grade II-level text, while 33.7% could perform at least subtraction. These results underline the continuing need to strengthen foundational learning through effective instructional practices (ASER Centre, 2025).

The present study is significant because it examines teaching-learning practices in relation to academic achievement, foundational competencies, creativity, social development, and educational inclusion. The paper provide useful insights for primary teachers, teacher educators, educational administrators, curriculum developers, policymakers, and researchers interested in improving educational quality.

4. Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the present paper is to examine the role of teaching-learning practices in promoting educational development at the primary level. It further aims to analyse the contribution of child-centred, activity-based, experiential, collaborative, and inclusive pedagogical approaches; explore the importance of formative assessment and instructional resources; examine the relevance of contemporary Indian educational policies; and suggest strategies for improving teaching-learning effectiveness in primary schools.

5. Research Methodology

The present paper adopts a descriptive and analytical narrative-review approach based on secondary sources of information. Relevant information has been examined from established educational theories, peer-reviewed research articles, published educational reports, and national policy documents.

The literature reviewed includes investigations concerning instructional effectiveness, formative assessment, cooperative learning, guided play, technology-supported learning, and foundational education. Important policy sources include the National Education Policy 2020, National Curriculum Framework documents, NIPUN Bharat guidelines, and the Annual Status of Education Report 2024.

The available literature has been organized thematically to identify the major teaching-learning practices associated with educational development at the primary level. No original field survey or experimental investigation was conducted. Accordingly, the discussion represents an evidence-informed synthesis rather than the statistical results of a new empirical study.

6. Review of Related Literature

Black and Wiliam (1998) reviewed research concerning classroom assessment and emphasized the importance of formative assessment in improving students' learning. Their analysis demonstrated that feedback, classroom questioning, and assessment practices designed to identify learning needs

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can contribute to educational improvement. The study highlighted the importance of using assessment information to guide instructional decisions rather than treating assessment exclusively as a mechanism for assigning grades.

Rosenshine (2012) presented research-based principles of effective instruction derived from cognitive science, classroom research, and investigations involving successful teachers. The principles included reviewing previous learning, presenting new material in manageable steps, asking questions, providing models, guiding student practice, and checking understanding. These findings emphasized the importance of systematic instructional planning and active teacher guidance in developing students' knowledge and skills.

Slavin (2014) examined the relationship between cooperative learning and academic achievement. The review indicated that cooperative learning can contribute to improved educational outcomes when group goals and individual accountability are appropriately structured. The study emphasized that productive group work requires purposeful instructional organization rather than merely placing students into groups.

Piper et al. (2016) investigated the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of technology-supported early-grade reading interventions in Kenya. Their randomized evaluation found that additional technology did not produce significantly better literacy outcomes than the underlying non-digital instructional programme. The findings suggested that instructional quality and cost-effectiveness should guide educational technology investments.

Banerjee et al. (2017) investigated strategies for implementing the Teaching at the Right Level approach in Indian elementary schools. Their research emphasized organizing instruction according to children's actual learning levels rather than relying exclusively on grade-level curriculum expectations. The study demonstrated that appropriately designed and implemented learning-level-based instructional programmes could improve foundational learning outcomes in government schools.

The World Bank (2018), in its World Development Report, examined the global learning crisis and highlighted the importance of ensuring that schooling results in meaningful learning. The report identified teacher preparation, learner readiness, instructional quality, educational resources, and institutional management as important factors influencing educational outcomes. It recommended assessing learning, acting on evidence, and aligning educational systems with learning objectives.

Skene et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis examining guided play and children's learning. The review included 39 studies, with 17 contributing to the meta-analysis. Guided play demonstrated advantages over direct instruction for certain outcomes, particularly early mathematics, shape knowledge, and task switching. However, significant advantages were not established across every learning domain. These findings support the selective and purposeful use of guided play alongside other instructional approaches.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (2022), through the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage, emphasized play, exploration, conversation, storytelling, music, art, and activity-based learning. The framework recognized that young children learn through meaningful interaction with their environment and recommended developmentally appropriate instructional practices.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (2023) further emphasized experiential, discovery-oriented, and interdisciplinary learning in the preparatory stage covering Grades III–V. The framework highlighted the importance of progressively developing conceptual understanding and enabling children to connect classroom knowledge with their immediate surroundings.

The ASER Centre (2025), through the Annual Status of Education Report 2024, documented improvements in some foundational learning indicators compared with 2022 while identifying persistent gaps in basic reading and arithmetic. The report reinforces the importance of instructional practices that respond to actual learning needs and strengthen foundational competencies.

7. Role of Teaching-Learning Practices in Educational

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Development

7.1 Child-Centred Teaching-Learning Practices

Child-centred teaching recognizes learners as active participants whose interests, experiences, developmental characteristics, and individual differences should influence instructional decisions. Rather than organizing all classroom activities around the teacher's presentation of information, child-centred education encourages participation, questioning, exploration, and meaningful engagement.

At the primary level, children demonstrate considerable variation in language proficiency, learning pace, prior knowledge, and cognitive development. Therefore, teaching practices should provide opportunities for individual and collaborative activities suited to their needs. For instance, a teacher introducing the concept of plants may encourage children to observe nearby vegetation, identify different parts of plants, and discuss their experiences. Such activities allow learners to connect classroom concepts with familiar environments. Child-centred instruction may strengthen confidence, curiosity, classroom participation, and conceptual understanding. Nevertheless, effective implementation requires purposeful teacher guidance, clear learning objectives, and suitable assessment practices.

7.2 Activity-Based and Experiential Learning

Activity-based learning involves engaging students in meaningful tasks that require observation, manipulation, experimentation, discussion, and reflection. Experiential learning extends this approach by encouraging students to construct understanding through direct experiences and their interpretation. At the primary level, concrete learning experiences are especially important because children frequently understand new concepts more effectively when they can connect abstract information with familiar situations.

Mathematical concepts, for example, may be introduced through counting objects, arranging materials, measuring classroom items, and comparing quantities. Environmental studies may involve observing plants, exploring local surroundings, or discussing community occupations.

The National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage emphasizes developmentally appropriate activities and opportunities for exploration (NCERT, 2022). These approaches can promote conceptual understanding, creativity, and practical application when activities are closely connected with instructional objectives. However, activity-based teaching should not be limited to entertainment. Teachers must ensure that children understand the concepts underlying each activity and receive appropriate opportunities for reflection and practice.

7.3 Play-Based Teaching and Learning

Play-based learning is particularly relevant during the early years of primary education. Through games, storytelling, role-playing, puzzles, songs, and guided exploration, children can develop language, reasoning, imagination, communication, and social skills. Play-based learning may be organized through free play, guided play, or structured play. Each form provides different opportunities for learning, depending on the level of teacher involvement and the intended educational outcomes.

Skene et al. (2022) reported that guided play produced favourable outcomes for selected mathematical and cognitive competencies. Their findings indicate that purposeful teacher guidance during playful activities can contribute to learning, although its effectiveness varies across outcomes.

In primary classrooms, educational games may be used to strengthen number recognition, vocabulary, sequencing, classification, and problem-solving. Such practices can make learning more engaging while supporting the development of specific competencies.

7.4 Collaborative and Cooperative Learning

Collaborative learning involves students working together to exchange ideas, solve problems, complete tasks, and construct shared understanding. Cooperative learning represents a more structured approach in which group activities are organized around common objectives and individual responsibilities.

Through collaborative learning, children encounter different perspectives, practice communication, and develop the ability to cooperate with peers. These experiences contribute not only

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to academic development but also to social adjustment and interpersonal competence. Slavin (2014) emphasized the importance of clearly structured group goals and individual accountability in promoting successful cooperative learning outcomes. At the primary level, teachers may organize storytelling groups, collaborative drawing activities, problem-solving exercises, or small-group reading sessions. Such experiences provide opportunities for peer interaction and mutual assistance. However, group activities require careful monitoring to prevent unequal participation. Teachers should ensure that quieter students, children with learning difficulties, and socially disadvantaged learners receive meaningful opportunities to contribute.

7.5 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Practices

Foundational literacy and numeracy are essential components of educational development because they enable children to access increasingly complex learning experiences. Foundational literacy involves oral language development, vocabulary, phonological awareness, decoding, reading fluency, comprehension, and written expression. Foundational numeracy includes number recognition, counting, comparison, mathematical operations, patterns, estimation, and basic problem-solving.

Effective instruction in these areas requires systematic teaching, meaningful practice, suitable learning materials, and continuous monitoring of students' progress. Reading activities should combine explicit instruction in appropriate foundational skills with storytelling, conversation, shared reading, and opportunities to understand texts. Mathematics teaching should progressively connect concrete objects, visual representations, and mathematical symbols.

The NIPUN Bharat guidelines emphasize strengthening foundational competencies through teacher development, appropriate resources, and the monitoring of individual learning progress (Ministry of Education, 2021). Improving these competencies is essential because weaknesses in early reading and mathematics may create difficulties across multiple subjects in subsequent classes.

7.6 Differentiated Instruction and Learning-Level-Based Teaching

Differentiated instruction recognizes that students within the same classroom may have different levels of readiness, interests, language abilities, and learning needs. Accordingly, teachers may modify instructional support, learning activities, and practice opportunities without compromising essential educational goals. Teaching at the Right Level provides an evidence-informed example of adapting instruction to students' current competencies. Banerjee et al. (2017) demonstrated that appropriately implemented programmes focusing on actual learning levels could produce meaningful improvements in foundational learning.

In practical classroom situations, teachers may use brief diagnostic assessments to identify children who require additional assistance in reading, writing, or arithmetic. Students can then participate in flexible learning groups and receive targeted instructional support. Such groupings should remain temporary and responsive to progress rather than becoming fixed labels of ability. Differentiated teaching can help reduce learning gaps and provide a more equitable educational experience.

7.7 Formative Assessment and Constructive Feedback

Assessment plays an important role in promoting educational development when it is used to understand learners' progress and improve teaching. Formative assessment includes classroom questioning, observation, oral activities, short exercises, discussions, student portfolios, and periodic checks of understanding. These practices help teachers identify misconceptions, recognize learning difficulties, and adjust instruction.

Black and Wiliam (1998) highlighted the positive contribution of formative assessment to learning improvement. Their work demonstrated the educational importance of feedback and learner involvement in assessment. At the primary level, assessment should be developmentally appropriate and should not create unnecessary examination-related pressure. Teachers may assess learning through activities, practical demonstrations, conversations, and short written tasks.

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Constructive feedback should explain what students have understood, identify specific areas requiring improvement, and suggest manageable next steps. Such practices can strengthen motivation, self-confidence, and progressive mastery of foundational skills.

7.8 Technology-Supported Teaching-Learning Practices

Educational technology can provide additional opportunities for improving access to learning resources and supporting classroom instruction. Digital stories, educational audio, interactive exercises, visual presentations, and accessible learning applications may enrich children's educational experiences.

However, the educational value of technology depends on its suitability, content quality, accessibility, and integration with effective pedagogy. Piper et al. (2016) found that technology additions to a structured early-grade reading programme did not significantly outperform the underlying instructional programme. Similarly, UNESCO (2023) emphasized that educational technology should respond to learners' needs and support, rather than replace, meaningful teacher-student interaction. Therefore, technology should function as a supplementary educational resource. At the primary level, teachers must consider students' age, language, available infrastructure, accessibility, and the risks of excessive screen exposure.

7.9 Inclusive and Multilingual Teaching Practices

Inclusive teaching-learning practices aim to ensure meaningful educational participation for all children, irrespective of gender, socioeconomic background, disability, language, or learning differences. Primary classrooms frequently include students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Instruction becomes more accessible when teachers recognize these differences and adopt flexible teaching strategies.

Multilingual practices may include using children's familiar languages during explanations, classroom discussions, storytelling, and the introduction of unfamiliar concepts. The National Education Policy 2020 recommends the use of the home language, mother tongue, local language, or regional language as the medium of instruction wherever possible, particularly during the early years. Inclusive teaching also requires accessible learning materials, positive classroom relationships, appropriate assistance for children with disabilities, and protection from discrimination. Such practices promote educational equity, belongingness, participation, and student confidence.

7.10 Teacher Competence and Classroom Environment

The effectiveness of teaching-learning practices depends considerably on teachers' professional knowledge, instructional skills, attitudes, and classroom-management abilities. Competent teachers establish clear learning objectives, select appropriate instructional strategies, create supportive learning environments, and evaluate students' progress. They also recognize individual differences and adapt classroom instruction accordingly.

A positive classroom environment encourages children to ask questions, express opinions, attempt challenging tasks, and learn from mistakes without fear of humiliation. Teacher professional development should therefore emphasize subject knowledge, foundational pedagogy, assessment literacy, inclusive teaching, classroom communication, and reflective instructional practice. Continuous professional support, mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, and access to appropriate teaching-learning materials are essential for implementing effective pedagogy consistently.

8. Teaching-Learning Practices in the Context of NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 provides an important framework for transforming teaching-learning practices in Indian schools. It emphasizes holistic development, foundational literacy and numeracy, conceptual understanding, creativity, experiential learning, and multilingual education. The policy introduced a 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure. Within this framework, Grades I–II form part of the Foundational Stage, while Grades III–V belong to the Preparatory Stage. This distinction recognizes children's changing developmental needs and the importance of

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progression between early learning and more systematic subject-oriented education.

The National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022 recommends play-based and activity-oriented pedagogical approaches for younger learners. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 extends these principles by emphasizing discovery, interaction, experimentation, and increasingly structured learning in Grades III–V. NIPUN Bharat focuses on strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy through improved instructional resources, teacher capacity building, and monitoring of learning outcomes. Together, these initiatives emphasize that educational development should be assessed through demonstrated competencies rather than merely through school attendance or textbook completion. Effective implementation requires adequate teacher preparation, appropriate educational materials, supportive leadership, and systematic monitoring of classroom learning.

9. Discussion

The reviewed literature demonstrates that teaching-learning practices play an important role in educational development by influencing the ways children acquire knowledge, develop competencies, participate in classroom activities, and respond to learning challenges.

A major theme emerging from the literature is the need to balance explicit instruction with active and experiential learning. Rosenshine (2012) emphasized systematic instruction and guided practice, whereas Skene et al. (2022) identified benefits of guided play for selected learning outcomes. These findings suggest that different instructional approaches may be effective for different educational objectives.

Similarly, Black and Wiliam (1998) and Banerjee et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of assessment and responsiveness to learners' actual competencies. Their contributions indicate that successful teaching depends not only on the methods employed but also on how accurately instruction addresses students' existing understanding and learning needs.

The Indian educational context further demonstrates the importance of instructional quality. The ASER 2024 findings illustrate continued weaknesses in foundational competencies despite improvements in some learning indicators. However, learning outcomes cannot be attributed exclusively to classroom teaching. Socioeconomic circumstances, parental education, language barriers, nutrition, school resources, attendance, and educational management may also influence development. Consequently, improving primary education requires a comprehensive approach that combines effective classroom pedagogy with equitable educational opportunities and supportive institutional conditions.

10. Educational Implications and Suggestions

Primary schools should prioritize foundational literacy and numeracy through systematic, developmentally appropriate instruction supported by regular assessment and targeted assistance. Teaching should be organized around clearly defined learning outcomes rather than exclusively around textbook completion.

Teachers should employ a balanced combination of explanation, demonstration, guided practice, storytelling, play, group activities, and experiential learning. The selection of instructional methods should depend on students' developmental levels, curriculum objectives, and demonstrated learning needs. Schools should also strengthen formative assessment practices and provide timely remedial support to learners experiencing academic difficulties. Professional development programmes should equip teachers with practical skills in inclusive pedagogy, multilingual classroom interaction, differentiated instruction, and assessment.

Educational administrators should ensure access to suitable teaching-learning materials, child-friendly classrooms, accessible infrastructure, and opportunities for collaborative professional learning. Parents and local communities should be encouraged to support regular attendance, reading habits, and educational participation. However, home-based activities should complement classroom learning rather than transfer excessive instructional responsibilities to families. At the policy level, monitoring should focus on actual learning

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outcomes, equitable participation, classroom implementation, and the quality of educational experiences.

11. Conclusion

The present study examined the role of teaching-learning practices in promoting educational development at the primary level through an analytical review of relevant research and educational policy documents. The literature indicates that effective teaching-learning practices contribute to the development of foundational competencies, conceptual understanding, classroom participation, creativity, communication, and social-emotional skills.

Child-centred learning, guided play, experiential activities, systematic instruction, cooperative learning, differentiated teaching, and formative assessment represent important approaches for supporting primary learners. However, their effectiveness depends on appropriate instructional planning, teacher competence, contextual suitability, and continuous evaluation. The National Education Policy 2020 and subsequent curriculum frameworks provide opportunities for strengthening the quality of primary education in India through competency-based, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate pedagogical practices.

It may therefore be concluded that meaningful educational development requires a balanced and supportive teaching-learning environment in which children receive appropriate instruction, opportunities for active participation, and timely assistance according to their learning needs. Strengthening these practices is essential for developing confident, competent, creative, and socially responsible learners and establishing a sustainable foundation for lifelong education.

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