Teaching Methods, Teaching Strategies, Teaching Techniques and Teaching Approach

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Abstract: *Quite often than not educators make much use of the terms teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching techniques, and teaching approach. Some make reference to them when talking about pedagogical issues and seem to use them interchangeably as though meaning the same thing while others use them to explain specific concepts in education. This paper seeks to probe into the distinct meaning of each term to enable one to clearly differentiate between their use as well as establish the relationship that exists between these educational terms.*

Keywords: Teaching, Methods, Techniques, Approach, and Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Meaning of Terms

Before we tackle the major terms, let's begin by defining their various components: teaching, methods, techniques, approach, and strategies.

The Mariam Webster Dictionary (2016) defines teaching as the act of imparting or providing knowledge or skills to another. Thus, the act, occupation, or profession of a teacher. It encompasses both instructions in procedures, a process to guiding pupils to the information they will need, and challenging them to engage in thinking about concepts they construct in their minds. All of these are needed in order to teach students to become fully functioning individuals with good thinking capacities.

Dictionary.com defines 'method' as a procedure, technique, or way of doing something, especially in accordance with a defined plan. Thus, it's a manner of a logical, orderly, and systematic procedure for instruction, investigation, experimentation, presentation, etc. For example, there are several methods of farming.

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2016) defines a technique as a way of carrying out a particular task, especially in the execution of duty. For instance, new surgical techniques mean quality treatment in a shorter time. Thus, a technique is a systematic formula by which a task is accomplished.

Cambridge dictionary (2016) defines an approach as a way of considering or doing something. For instance, a person's approach to life, thus, his perspective or view of life.

The Mariam Webster Dictionary (2016) again defines a strategy as a careful plan for achieving goals usually over a long period of time. It is a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal or series of goals. For instance, soldiers strategize ways to win a battle.

From the above definitions, we can come up with the following definitions for the various terms teaching methods, teaching techniques, teaching approach, and teaching strategies.

Teaching methods are the procedure, technique, or way of teaching, especially in accordance with a defined plan. The term **teaching method** refers to the general principles, or pedagogy used for classroom instruction. Your choice of teaching method depends on what fits you — your educational philosophy, classroom demographic, subject area(s), and school mission statement. Teaching theories primarily fall into two categories or "approaches" — teacher-centered and student-centered:

1.2 The Definition of Teaching Strateg

A teaching strategy is a generalized plan for a lesson that includes structure, instructional objectives, and an outline of planned tactics, necessary to implement the strategies (Stone and Morris, in Issac, 2010). Furthermore, Issac (2010)

explains that teaching tactics are the behavior of the teacher which he manifests in the class i.e., the developments of the teaching strategies, giving proper stimulus for timely responses, drilling the learned responses, increasing the responses by extra activities and so on.

In this paper, we use the term *strategy* to imply thoughtful planning to do something. When we use the term method, it implies some orderly way of doing something. Thus, we use the terms technique and procedure as synonyms to signify a series of steps that one takes to employ any general model being used in the classroom. Each of these aspects emanates from a broader and more encompassing model (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, &Brown, 2010:4). Furthermore, the following are the difference between teaching method and teaching strategy in more detail:

1.3 Teaching Method
1. it is limited to the presentation of subject matter;
2. Methods come under strategy;
3. It is a micro approach;
4. Teaching as an art;
5. Effective presentation of subject matter;
6. Classical Theory of the human organization;
7. **Work is important.**

1.4 Teaching Strategy
1. When we try to achieve some objectives by any method it becomes strategies;
2. Strategy is actually a combination of different methods;
3. For E.g. lectures or textbooks or question answer methods can be never be used separately;
4. It is a macro approach;
5. It considers teaching as a science;
6. Its purpose is to create a conducive learning environment;
7. It is based on modern theories of the organization;
8. (pre-determined objectives, becomes strategy);
9. Behavior of students and teachers and their mutual relationship.

1.5 The Position of Teaching Strategy in Curriculum Development
Taba developed Grades 1 through 8 social studies curriculums organized around teaching-learning units (Taba, 1971 in Lunenburg, 2011:2). In the process, a curriculum model evolved that is applicable to many types of curricula and that can be used in many different kinds of school settings and school levels: elementary school, middle school, and high school. The model includes an organization of, and relationships among, five mutually interactive elements: objectives, content, learning experiences, teaching strategies, and evaluative measures so that a system of teaching and learning is represented.

1.6 Designing Teaching Strategies
Conducting a teaching activity is essentially a network or set of decisions that the trainer takes to correlate the priority elements of his work and to build the best solution with respect to the educational situation again. The one who instructs must find a rational and appropriate formula to combine methods, procedures, techniques, means, and forms of organization that lead to optimal use of the potential of the trained subjects (Neacşu, 1990:219-220). Choosing the procedures for training in relation to the trained subject is the teaching strategy. It is well known that the teaching strategy is the key tool in instructional design the teaching strategy results in a didactic approach to teaching and learning, combining and optimal organizing of the methods, means, and forms of the grouping of the participants (Cerghit, 2006). These elements, integrated into the operational structures, are based on a systemic vision and designed to ensure active and creative learning of knowledge and to rationalize the training process. The concept of "strategy" is operated both at the macro level, the intermediate level, and the micro level, the latter level being directly linked with learning pedagogy, training theory, and practice. Adopting a strategy means adopting a guideline for action, and associating it with a certain global way of organizational learning and learning conditions, the use of certain methods and means. It should, naturally,

be pointed out that in reality, we adopt mixed and combined strategies, according to the objectives, the level of the group we are working with, the contents covered, etc.

It is understood that any trainer has great freedom to design their work, drawing graphs, charts, value tables, or simply mental schemes which can help increase their ability to decide and to use effectively combined sets of methods, tools, and other training resources (Aurea, Neacsu, Safta & Suditu, 2011; Keegan, 2013. Experience has shown, moreover, that each teaching activity is unique through the configuration of factors and interactions that constitute it, therefore the permanent correcting of some strategies thought beforehand can bring more rigor or rather can provide a positive feedback.

II. TYPES OF TEACHING STRATEGIES

There are many kinds of teaching strategies that can be applied in the language teaching process. Wehrli (2003) explained the teaching strategies as follow.

2.1 Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a process for generating multiple ideas/options in which judgment is suspended until a maximum number of ideas have been generated. Al-maghrawy in Al-khatib (2012: 31) also defines that brainstorming as a group creativity forum for general ideas.

Moreover, Sayed in Al-khatib (2012: 31) purposed some importance of brainstorming for the students. These are: (a) helping students to solve problems; (b) helping students to benefit from the ideas of others through the development and build on them; and (c) helping the cohesion of the students and building relationships among them and assess the views of others.

In addition, brainstorming has some advantages, they are: (a) actively involving learners in higher levels of thinking; (b) promoting peer learning and creating synergy; (c) promoting critical thinking, and (d) helping groups reach consensus.

On the other hand, there are some disadvantageous to brainstorming. (a) Requiring learner's discipline; (b) may not be effective with large groups, and (c) can lead to "group think".

2.2 Case-based Small-Group Discussion

In this teaching strategy, small groups of 5-10 address case-based tasks, exchanging points of view while working through a problem-solving process. In this teaching strategy process, Srinivasan, Wilkes, Stevenson, Nguyen, and Slavin (2007) explained that the group focuses on creative problem solving, with some advanced preparation. Discovery is encouraged in a format in which both students and facilitators share responsibility for coming to closure on cardinal learning points. Case-based Small-group Discussion has some advantageous.

They can be

1. Actively involves participants and stimulates peer group learning;
2. Helps participants explore pre-existing knowledge and build on what they know;
3. Facilitates exchange of ideas and awareness of mutual concerns; and
4. Promotes development of critical thinking skills;

On the other hand, Case-based Small-group Discussion has some disadvantageous.

It

1. Can potentially degenerate into off-task or social conversations;
2. Can be a challenge to ensure participation by all, especially in larger groups; and
3. Can be frustrating for participants when they are at significantly different levels of knowledge and skill.

2.3 Demonstration

Demonstration means performing an activity so that learners can observe how it is done in order to help prepare learners to transfer theory to practical application. Moreover, the demonstration strategy involves the teacher showing learners how to do something (Adekoya and Olatoye, 2011).

The advantage of demonstration is to

a. Help people who learn well by modeling others;

  b. Promote self-confidence;

  c. Provide an opportunity for targeted questions and answers; and

  d. Allow attention to be focused on specific details rather than general theories.

The disadvantageous of demonstration:

  a. is of limited value for people who do not learn best by observing others;

  b. May not be appropriate for the different learning rates of the participants; and

  c. requires that demonstrators have specialized expertise if highly technical tasks are involved.

2.4 Games

Games are used to bring competition, participation, drills, and feedback into the learning experience as a motivator and opportunity for the application of principles. Carefully planned uses of games in the classroom (e.g., for practicing certain verbs, tenses, questions, locatives, etc.) add some interest to a classroom (Brown, 2000: 146).

The advantages of game:

  a. Actively involves learners;

  b. Can add or regenerate motivation;

  c. promotes team learning and collaborative skills;

  d. provides a challenge that can lead to confidence in knowing and expressing the material;

  e. Provides feedback; and

  f. Can create a "fun" learning environment.

The disadvantageous of game:

  a. Can create in-group/out-group feelings;

  b. Can demotivate students who are not competitive by nature;

  c. Can create feelings of inadequacy in those not as skilled or forceful; and

  d. Can discourage creativity if the format is very rigid and the focus is strongly on winning.

2.5 Independent Study

Independent study is a teaching strategy designed to enhance and support other instructional activities. Learning activity is typically done entirely by the individual learner (or group of learners) using resource materials. It may be done using computer/web-based technology. Alberta Learning (2002: 73) also defines independent study as an individualized learning experience that allows students to select a topic focus, define problems or questions, gather and analyze information, apply skills, and create a product to show what has been learned.

The advantageous of independent study:

  a. fosters independent learning skills;

  b. Allows learners to progress at their own rate; and

  c. Enhances other learning experiences.

The disadvantageous of independent study: (a) may be disconnected from immediate objectives, and (b) may be difficult to identify/access appropriate materials.

III. THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGY

Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010: 113-114) proposed ten principles of effective teaching strategy. They are: (1) Teaching and curriculum design need to be focused on meeting students' future needs, implying the development in students of generic capabilities such as critical thinking, teamwork and communication skills, amongst others; (2) Students must have a thorough understanding of fundamental concepts even if that means less content is covered; (3) The relevance of what is taught must be established by using real-life, current and/or local examples and by relating theory to practice; (4) Student beliefs must be challenged to deal with misconceptions; (5) A variety of learning tasks that engage students, including student discussion, need to occur in order that meaningful learning takes place; (6) Genuine, empathetic relationships with individual students should be established so that interaction can take place; (7) Teachers should motivate students through displaying their own enthusiasm, encouraging students and providing interesting, enjoyable and active classes; (8) Curriculum design should ensure that aims, concepts, learning activities and assessment

are consistent with achieving learning outcomes related to future student needs; (9) Each lesson must be thoroughly planned but flexible so that necessary adaptations may be made based on feedback during the class; and (10) Assessment must be consistent with the desired learning outcomes and should, therefore, be authentic tasks for the discipline or profession.

3.1 Teacher-centered approach to learning

Teachers are the main authority figure in this model. Students are viewed as "empty vessels" whose primary role is to passively receive information (via lectures and direct instruction) with an end goal of testing and assessment. It is the primary role of teachers to pass knowledge and information onto their students. In this model, teaching and assessment are viewed as two separate entities. Student learning is measured through objectively scored tests and assessments. Some examples of the teacher-centered methods include: Lecture methods and whole group discussion

3.2 Student-centered approach to learning

While teachers are authority figure in this model, teachers and students play an equally active role in the learning process. The teacher's primary role is to coach and facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material. Student learning is measured through both formal and informal forms of assessment, including group projects, student portfolios, and class participation. Teaching and assessment are connected; student learning is continuously measured during teacher instruction. Some examples of child-centered methods include small group discussions, simulations, projects, etc.

The teaching approach is a way of going about teaching which suggests ways that encourage good performance. Thus, according to the British Council (2015), an approach is a way of looking at teaching and learning. Underlying any language teaching approach is a theoretical view of what language is, and of how it can be learned. An approach gives rise to methods, the way of teaching something, which use classroom activities or techniques to help learners learn. Examples of a teaching approach include the cognitive, behaviorist, and constructivist approaches to learning,

Teaching techniques are unique ways of carrying out a particular task, in the teaching and learning process. Thus, it's the individual teachers' unique way of applying a strategy. For instance, two teachers may decide to use small group discussions as their means of delivering a lesson but each may have a unique way of conducting the process of the discussion. One may decide to use two pupils to conduct the discussion; the other may decide to employ four pupils for that. Furthermore, each teacher will definitely have a unique way of delivering his lesson.

A teaching strategy is a careful plan of teaching activities to be undertaken that ensures effective teaching and learning. It is a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal or series of goals. At the planning stage of every lesson, the teacher decides what method of teaching to adopt, whether teacher-centered or child-centered. Upon deciding which method to adopt which ensures effective teaching and learning of that specific topic, he begins to carefully plan teaching activities that can help achieve effective learning.

3.3 Differences and Relationships

From the definitions of the root words provided by the various dictionaries, it is clear to see that the method, approach, strategy, and technique are not the same and therefore cannot be used interchangeably. While an approach is informed by one's view or perspective on issues, a strategy is a carefully planned activities use to achieve a goal; a method becomes the procedure one adopts in solving an issue whiles a technique becomes one's own unique ways of solving a situation at hand.

The definitions of the actual terms which stem from the meaning of the root word also suggest clear differences. Therefore, these words cannot be used interchangeably since doing so would to a distorted view of the terms.

These definitions, notwithstanding, depict a clear relationship between the terms: teaching approaches provide a basis for the development of teaching methods, teaching strategies also evolve to define the components of each teaching method and the teaching techniques provide unique ways of going about a strategy. In other words, the teaching approach becomes a universal set from which we get teaching methods. Teaching methods also give birth to teaching strategies from which we are defined by specific teaching techniques.
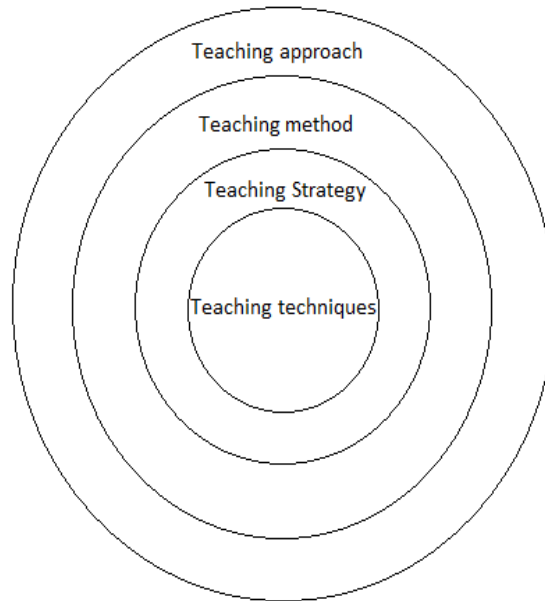
Below is a table giving examples which clearly depict the differences as well as the similarity in the use of the various terms:

Teaching Approach	Teaching Method	Teaching Strategy	Teaching Technique
Constructivist and cognitivist approach to learning	Child-centred method	Small group discussion, demonstration, buzz groups, etc	Pair work, discussions, snowballing, collaborating, etc
Objectivist approach to learning	Teacher-centred method	Lecture method, whole class discussion, whole class presentations, etc	Lectures, talks, conferences, symposium, etc

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