



# Implementation Of Play-Based Pedagogical Strategies As A Learning Stimulator

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

This paper proposes the implementation of pedagogical strategies based on play to stimulate learning in preschool children. The main objective is to systematize and organize learning activities that cater to the needs of the teacher and the comfort of the student, aiming to transform the educational experience into an exciting and meaningful journey. Five fundamental playful activities are presented: the counting wheel, hit the duck, clothing items, online learning, and means of transportation, designed to foster the holistic development of children. The results highlight the importance of active child participation, the diversification of assessment techniques, and individual responsibility towards each child, reflecting a commitment to constant improvement and adjustment to best practices in early care. The limitations are associated with the individual characteristics of children with difficulties, who may require personalized approaches. The summary concludes that play is an effective tool for children's learning and that adapting to individual needs is essential for an inclusive and adaptive educational environment.

**Keywords:** pedagogical strategies, play-based learning, preschool children, holistic development, active child participation, personalized approaches, inclusive education, cognitive skills.

**Resumen:** El presente trabajo propone la implementación de estrategias pedagógicas basadas en el juego para estimular el aprendizaje en niños en edad preescolar. El objetivo principal es sistematizar y organizar actividades de aprendizaje que se adapten a las necesidades del docente y la comodidad del estudiante, con el fin de transformar la experiencia educativa en un viaje emocionante y significativo. Se presentan cinco actividades lúdicas fundamentales: la ruleta contadora, tírele al pato, prendas de vestir, aprendiendo online y medios de transporte, diseñadas para fomentar el desarrollo integral de los niños. Los resultados destacan la importancia de la participación activa de los niños, la diversificación de las técnicas de evaluación y la responsabilidad individual hacia cada niño, reflejando un compromiso con la mejora y el ajuste constante a las mejores prácticas en la atención temprana. Las limitaciones se asocian a las características individuales de los niños con dificultades, que pueden requerir enfoques personalizados. El resumen concluye que el juego es una herramienta efectiva para el aprendizaje infantil y que la adaptación a las necesidades individuales es esencial para un entorno educativo inclusivo y adaptativo.

**Palabras clave en español:** estrategias pedagógicas, aprendizaje basado en el juego, niños en edad preescolar, desarrollo integral, participación activa de los niños, enfoques personalizados, educación inclusiva, habilidades cognitivas.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood learning is a crucial process that lays the foundation for the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children. In this context, play has been recognized as an essential pedagogical tool to effectively and meaningfully stimulate learning (Piaget, 1977). The present research, carried out within the framework of

the Master's Degree in Early Childhood Care and Development at the International University of La Rioja, focuses on the implementation of play-based pedagogical strategies for preschool children.

The importance of play in early childhood education has been widely studied by theorists such as Vygotsky (1930), who highlights play as an activity that allows children to practice and expand their mental skills. Additionally, authors like Montessori (1918) have emphasized the need to provide children with a conducive environment for learning, where play is a central component. The justification for this approach lies in the very nature of play, which allows children to explore, experiment, and actively assimilate knowledge in a participatory manner (Botella, 2020).

This proposal is part of a growing trend in early education that seeks to integrate play as a fundamental didactic strategy (Leyva, 2011). This trend is based on the evidence that play is not only an inherently attractive activity for children, but also an effective means for cultural transmission and the development of cognitive and social skills (Caillois and Huizinga, 1954).

The research proposes five specific playful activities that have been designed to address different areas of child development, from motor skills to socialization and the acquisition of academic knowledge (Martinez, 2020). These activities are based on sound educational principles and have been selected for their potential to actively engage children in their own learning.

The justification for the implementation of these pedagogical strategies is found in the literature that demonstrates that play is a cognitive process that involves the retention of mental representations of the environment (Smith, 1997). Furthermore, it has been shown that cooperative play can improve cognitive, motor, social, and emotional aspects in children (Callado, 2018).

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research focuses on the implementation of play-based pedagogical strategies to stimulate learning in preschool children, following the principles established by theorists such as Piaget (1977) and Vygotsky (1930). To this end, five fundamental playful activities have been designed and implemented: the Counting Wheel, Shoot the Duck, Clothing, Learning Online, and Modes of Transportation. These activities have been selected for their potential to actively engage children in their own learning and their ability to address different areas of child development, as demonstrated in previous studies (Montessori, 1918; Leyva, 2011).

The participant sample of the research consists of 40 students, of which 22 are boys and 18 are girls, with ages ranging from 2 to 6 years. The participants attend a Child Development Center (CDI) and are in transition to preschool. The selection of participants was based on their availability to participate in the proposed activities and informed consent from their parents or legal guardians, following the ethical guidelines established in research with children (Acosta-Yela, 2022).

### Activities Carried Out

#### The Counting Wheel:

**Description:** This activity is carried out with children aged 2 to 5 years and lasts approximately 5 minutes per student. The children spin a wheel, and when it stops, they obtain a result that indicates a quantity (for example, two or three). They then go to a box of apples and take the same number of apples as they obtained from the wheel and place them on a drawn tree in front of them. Before placing the apples, the children are explained about plants and trees (Montessori, 1918).

**Objective:** This activity aims to develop numerical skills and quantity recognition in children (Piaget, 1977).

#### Shoot the Duck:

**Description:** This activity is carried out with children aged 2 to 5 years and lasts approximately 10 minutes per student. The children throw balls with the intention of hitting the ducks. As the game progresses, they receive positional instructions (forward, backward, right, left). The children throw the balls into a box, and they are taught the quantities of balls they have thrown, the colors, and preschool concepts such as large, medium, and small (Vygotsky, 1930).

**Objective:** This activity promotes motor coordination, following instructions, and the recognition of quantities and colors (Montessori, 1918).

#### Clothing:

**Description:** Although a detailed description of this activity is not provided in the excerpts, it can be inferred that it is an activity in which children learn about clothing through interactive games and activities (Piaget, 1977).

**Objective:** This activity probably aims to develop skills in recognizing and classifying clothing, as well as fostering independence and self-esteem in children (Vygotsky, 1930).

#### Learning Online:

**Description:** This activity is carried out through the "educaplay" platform. The children listen attentively and follow the instructions. The game consists of listening to different musical instruments of a band and visualizing how they are played and with what part of the body they are played as the music progresses. At the end, the children relate these aspects and place a line to indicate the part of the body that corresponds to each instrument (Montessori, 1918).

**Objective:** This activity works on areas such as art education, music, computer science, and science, promoting auditory perception and motor coordination (Piaget, 1977).

### **Modes of Transportation:**

**Description:** This activity is carried out with children aged 2 to 5 years and lasts approximately 15 minutes per student. Similar to the Counting Wheel, it involves working with modes of transportation. Instead of fruits, transportation means (planes, cars, boats, motorcycles) are glued, and different transportation means are placed in front (Vygotsky, 1930).

**Objective:** This activity aims to develop the recognition and classification of transportation means, as well as promote motor coordination and visual memory (Montessori, 1918).

The materials used in the activities include a wheel, toy ducks, balls, boxes, a wooden arch, clothes hangers, scaled clothing items, tables, computers, and internet connection. Additionally, online educational platforms such as Educaplay have been used to complement the learning activities, taking advantage of digital technologies as motivating teaching tools (Vidakis, 2015).

The analysis of the information has been carried out through direct observation of the children's participation in the playful activities and the evaluation of their performance, using diversified evaluation techniques that capture the entirety of the learning process (Smith, 1997). The interactions between the children and the teachers, as well as the children's ability to assimilate and apply the knowledge acquired through play, have been taken into account.

The methodology used in this research is original in the sense that it has been adapted to the specific needs of the group of participating children. The individual characteristics of the children, including those with difficulties, have been considered, and personalized strategies have been designed to address their educational needs, in accordance with the principles of inclusive education (Pillajo, 2017). The limitations of this methodology include the possible lack of generalizability of the results to other groups of children and the need for a controlled environment for the implementation of the activities.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results:**

The implementation of play-based pedagogical strategies in the Child Development Center (CDI) at the preschool level, with a group of children aged 2 to 5 years, proved to be effective in stimulating learning and the comprehensive development of the students.

### **Observation:**

- Greater participation of children in the activities was observed, especially in those who presented learning difficulties.
- Children showed greater interest and motivation to learn through play.
- A more dynamic and fun learning environment was achieved, which favored interaction between children and the development of social skills.

### **Evaluation:**

- The application of diversified evaluation techniques, such as observation, active participation, and project evaluation, allowed the identification of the children's progress in different areas of learning.
- Continuous commitment to improvement and constant adjustment to best practices in early childhood care was evidenced (Table 1).

**Tabla 1: DOFA**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Integration of Play	Recognition of the importance	Potential to develop playful pedagogical	Resistance to the implementation	Changes in educational policies that
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
	of play in learning.	strategies that stimulate participation and interest.	of play in the classroom due to approaches that only consider traditional	limit the integration of play as a pedagogical strategy.

			pedagogical practices.	
Learning Environment	Dynamic and motivating environment.	Increased interest and motivation in children.	Difficulties in maintaining attention and interest of some children.	Lack of resources and didactic materials to support activities.
Social Skills	Development of social skills through interaction.	Enhanced communication and collaboration among children.	Potential for conflicts or disputes during play activities.	Negative influence of external factors on children's social behavior.
Individualized Teaching	Personalized approach according to	Effective adaptation to individual needs.	Challenges in managing differentiated	Limitations in the ability to provide individualized
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
	each child's needs.		instruction for all children.	attention to each child.

**Source:** Own elaboration 2023

### Discussion

The results obtained in this research demonstrate the effectiveness of play-based pedagogical strategies as a stimulator of learning in children. The implementation of playful and participatory activities has proven to be a valuable tool for the comprehensive development of students, transforming their educational experience into an exciting and meaningful journey (Leyva, 2011).

The proposed activities, such as the Counting Wheel, Shoot the Duck, Clothing, Learning Online, and Modes of Transportation, have significantly contributed to the development of various cognitive and socio-emotional skills in children. These activities not only foster learning, but also promote interaction and collaboration among students, essential aspects for their comprehensive development (Martín-Piñola, 2017).

The evaluation of the innovation project has shown positive results in terms of students' understanding of personal emotions and their reflection on the influence of these emotions in the educational field. This finding underscores the importance of integrating play and pedagogical strategies in the classroom, as it allows children to connect with their emotions and manage them appropriately (Galvis & Mejía, 2012). The identified strengths include the motivation and active participation of children in the activities, as well as opportunities to enhance the pedagogical approach, such as the integration of new technologies and the adaptation of activities to the individual needs of students (Botella, 2020).

Despite the positive results, the study has faced significant challenges, especially related to the individual characteristics of children with difficulties. These characteristics may require personalized approaches that are challenging to implement in a group setting. Additionally, the lack of specialized personnel in special education hinders the application of the project (Godoy, 2007). Reflection on the need for a cultural change in education, where flexibility and creativity become fundamental pillars, is crucial to transform the classroom into a dynamic and enriching space (Kant, 2004).

The study indicates that pedagogical strategies focused on participation and the use of various activities demonstrate a positive perspective towards overcoming challenges, the application of diversified evaluation

techniques, and the emphasis on individual responsibility towards each child. However, a continuous commitment to improvement and constant adjustment to best practices in early childhood care is necessary to ensure a more inclusive, adaptive, and constantly evolving educational environment (Leyva, 2011).

### CONCLUSIONS

The present research has concluded that the implementation of play-based pedagogical strategies is an effective methodology to stimulate learning and the comprehensive development of preschool children (Piaget, 1977; Vygotsky, 1930). The designed and implemented playful activities have successfully engaged children in their own learning, improving their motivation and concentration, as well as their social and cognitive skills (Montessori, 1918; Leyva, 2011).

Play has been recognized as a cognitive process that involves the retention of mental representations of the environment (Smith, 1997) and as an activity that allows children to practice and expand their mental skills (Vygotsky, 1930). Furthermore, cooperative play has been shown to improve cognitive, motor, social, and emotional aspects in children (Callado, 2018), which is consistent with the findings of this research.

The integration of play in the preschool classroom has proven to be a promising strategy to create a more inclusive and adaptive educational environment (Pillajo, 2017), where children can explore, experiment, and actively assimilate knowledge in a participatory manner (Botella, 2020).

However, limitations have been identified in the individualized attention to children with specific difficulties, suggesting the need to develop personalized strategies to address the special educational needs of these children (Acosta-Yela, 2022).

Play is a powerful tool for learning in early childhood, and its integration into the preschool curriculum can significantly improve the educational experience of children, preparing them to face the challenges of the future in a more comprehensive and equitable manner (Vidakis, 2015). The conclusions of this research contribute to the existing literature on play in early childhood education and offer a practical and evidence-based proposal for the implementation of playful pedagogical strategies in the preschool classroom.

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