The Role Of Learning Strategies And Teaching Skills In Improving Student Performance

PHD. Ouardia Saad University of Bouira (Algeria), E-mail: ou.saad@univ-bouira.dz

PHD. Sabah Touati University of Bouira (Algeria), E-mail: s.touati@univ-bouira.dz

Abstract:

Modern education aims to develop the student's personality from various cognitive, psychological, skill, emotional and social aspects. The role of the teacher is no longer limited to transferring knowledge and providing information to learners; rather, the teacher has become the planner, implementer and evaluator of the educational process. In order to fulfil their tasks successfully, teachers need to have a teaching competence that enables them to carry out the teaching activity with skill and commitment. In addition, their competence allows them to choose appropriate teaching strategies that match the students' abilities and their psychological and social needs. A competent teacher also guides students and helps them to select deep cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies that facilitate the learning process and achieve academic success.

The current study aims to shed light on the role of learning strategies and teaching competence in improving student performance.

Keywords: learning strategies, teaching competence, teaching strategies, student performance.

Introduction:

The education sector is considered one of the most important sectors that every country has to deal with in order to keep up with scientific and technological progress. Education today is based on investment in the human element, and part of the investment in the education system is focused on the competence of teachers and teaching methods and strategies.

The role of teachers is no longer limited to the transmission of knowledge and teaching skills, but they have become the planners, implementers and evaluators of the educational process. With this development, teachers are confronted with the reality that a competent teacher is one who possesses the necessary skills to achieve quality education by shaping and accompanying students in their educational path, enabling them to participate actively in social and economic life, and forming individuals (students) who have a sufficient level of mental well-being.

Teaching competence is a key component of the educational system, which interacts and integrates with teaching methods, objectives, curricula and educational resources, and through which teachers guide, train and educate students in the best possible way. Teachers can manage the educational process using different methods and technological innovations that enable

students to acquire sufficient skills to improve their performance and to choose appropriate learning strategies according to their abilities and inclinations.

Teaching competence is a set of skills and abilities that teachers must possess in order to be effective and efficient in their teaching. It includes performance skills, academic knowledge, and cognitive abilities that teachers should acquire during their pre-service training in order to correct and successfully integrate them into their behaviour during their practical work.

Learning strategies, on the other hand, are deliberate cognitive and behavioural steps taken by students to enhance their understanding and comprehension of educational experiences. These strategies facilitate the process of storing, using and retrieving knowledge and expertise at the appropriate time to achieve learning objectives.

Therefore, a competent teacher is the planner and facilitator of the learning process. They help learners to take an active part in making decisions about their learning, transforming them from passive recipients of teaching (instruction) to active participants in planning and implementing their learning.

Learning strategies, whether cognitive or metacognitive, are therefore crucial to the learning process. They enable students to organise the material and make it easier for them to learn. They have a strong relationship with student performance, especially when students use metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring and evaluating. These strategies help students to succeed because their awareness of their thinking processes and their skilled use of cognitive strategies such as memorising, organising and constructing enable them to improve and enhance their performance.

Many studies have shown a negative correlation between teaching competence and students' academic achievement, such as Al-Rashidi's study (2007) and Dewey's study (1966). Therefore, it is undeniable that the teacher's teaching competence plays a significant role in the success of the educational process by helping students to choose learning strategies that are appropriate to their abilities, especially deep learning strategies that aim to master the subject matter and achieve the learning objectives with competence and excellence.

It is worth mentioning the role of teaching skills in the ability to choose appropriate teaching strategies that encourage students to develop their skills and talents, such as problem solving methods, brainstorming, role-playing and project-based approaches.

This is what we aim to achieve in this research paper by investigating the role of teaching competence and learning strategies in student performance.

1- The concept of learning strategies:

can be defined as the behavioural patterns and cognitive processes used by students in the learning process (Jaber, 2008). According to Bshara and Khatam Al-Ghazou (2008), learning strategies are defined as conscious cognitive steps and behavioural procedures undertaken by the learner with the aim of improving and enhancing his understanding and comprehension of the presented experience. These strategies facilitate the process of storing, using and retrieving knowledge and expertise based on the learner's previous experiences (Shahin, 2010).

Based on the above definitions, learning strategies can be understood as a set of deliberate techniques used by learners to facilitate the learning process and achieve predetermined goals. Learning strategies enable learners to actively participate in making decisions about their learning, transforming them from passive recipients of teaching (instruction) to active participants in planning and implementing their learning.

2 Strategic classification of learning strategies:

Learning strategies are classified into:

- Cognitive strategies

- Metacognitive strategies

- Affective strategies

- Resource management strategies

2-1 Cognitive Strategies:

   a) Memorisation and recall strategy

   b) Organisation strategy

   c) Construction strategy

A) Memorisation and retrieval strategy: This strategy involves the learner's attempt to remember and retrieve information received in short-term memory and store it in long-term memory. It includes:

  - Repetition strategy

  - Association strategy

  - Categorisation strategy

B) Organisation strategy: This strategy focuses on the learner's selection of information, organising it according to its function and importance, whether it's basic or secondary information.

C) Construction strategy: This strategy is defined as a teaching method used by the learner during learning and focuses on linking information together.

2- 2 Metacognitive strategies:

According to Al-Zayyat (1994), metacognitive strategies are based on learners' awareness of their cognitive activity and their awareness of the cognitive strategies they use to understand the lesson in order to organise their working method effectively.

While cognitive strategies are concerned with carrying out and implementing the learning process through summarising, memorising and repeating, metacognitive strategies focus on monitoring, organising and following up the learning process.

Metacognitive strategies include:

1. Planning strategy: This strategy involves transforming learning into diagrams and summaries that can be easily stored and remembered, and setting clear goals for the lesson by asking questions that require answers, determining the time needed for review, and completing specific activities.

2. Monitoring strategy: Learners monitor what they have learned by creating a self-administered practice exam to assess their mastery of the information they have acquired. They monitor themselves to assess their own progress.

3. Evaluation strategy: The self-assessment strategy is supposed to involve comparing the learner's performance with the educational goals they have set for themselves. In reality, however, learners often evaluate themselves through self-administered tests during the revision process, similar to the monitoring strategy.

2-3 Resource management strategy:

The resource management strategy is related to the organisation of the learning process, and learners rely on it to create an appropriate learning environment. It includes:

- Time management: Organising the timing of study sessions, such as setting specific times for revision, whether in the evening or in the morning.

- Workspace organisation: Creating a quiet and appropriate study environment, choosing a place that is conducive to concentration and focus.

- Management of human and material resources: Managing the use of support lessons, dictionaries and various references as learning resources.

2-4 Socio-emotional strategy:

The socio-emotional strategy focuses on the interaction between the learner and others, such as teachers, educational supervisors, peers and administration. It includes:

- Working with peers: Working with classmates to solve problems or complete tasks.

- Discussing with peers: Discussing with peers, respecting roles and exchanging opinions.

- Self-expression: Expressing oneself and engaging in self-dialogue, reflecting on personal feelings and thoughts related to the learning process.

3- Instructional strategies:

Teaching is an intentional and planned process carried out by the teacher, in or out of school, under his or her supervision, with the aim of helping students to achieve specific goals.

Teaching strategy is defined as a set of procedures and methods used by the teacher which, when implemented, enable students to benefit from educational experiences and develop a plan to achieve the desired goals (Zaytoun, 2001).

Saieh (2001, p.2) defines instructional strategy as "a set of general guidelines that direct the educational process and instructional matters that determine and guide the teacher's work

during the lesson in an organised and sequential manner to achieve predetermined educational objectives".

Therefore, teaching strategy can be described as a set of activities carried out by the teacher (presentation, coordination, teaching, discussion) in order to achieve specific goals.

Teaching strategy consists of two essential components: methodology and procedure, which together form a complete plan for the teaching process.

The difference between teaching method, teaching style and teaching strategy:

The difference between teaching strategy, teaching method and teaching style is that teaching strategy is more comprehensive than the method. The strategy determines the appropriate method in different circumstances and variables in the educational context.

The method is broader than the style because the teaching method is the means of communication used by the teacher to convey the teaching objectives to the students.

Teaching style refers to the way the teacher approaches the method. Every teacher has his or her own preferred teaching style. Therefore, teaching style is related to the personal characteristics of the teacher.

4- Components of teaching strategies:

As outlined by Zaytoun (2001), the components of teaching strategies include:

- Teaching objectives: Clearly defined teaching objectives.

- Varied activities used by the teacher: Varied instructional activities used by the teacher.

- Examples, exercises and resources used to achieve the stated objectives: Illustrative examples, exercises and materials used to achieve the stated objectives.

- Pedagogical and organisational environment (pedagogical climate in the classroom): The pedagogical and organisational atmosphere in the classroom.

- Pupils' reactions to stimuli organised and planned by the teacher: Pupils' reactions to stimuli organised and planned by the teacher.

- Assessment methods used by the teacher during the teaching process.

5- Specifications of an effective teaching strategy:

As outlined by Shahin (2010), the specifications of an effective teaching strategy are:

- Inclusiveness: Ensuring that the teaching strategy includes all anticipated situations and possibilities in the classroom environment.

- Flexibility and potential for development: Ensuring that the strategy can be used from one class to another and from one level to another.

- Alignment with instructional goals: Direct alignment with the teaching objectives or subject matter.

- Consideration of individual student differences.

- Consideration of teaching style (individual or group).

- Consideration of the material resources available in the school.

- Accompanying the teaching process with a variety of assessment methods (diagnostic, formative, summative).

6- Some modern teaching strategies:

As mentioned earlier, teaching is an interactive process between the teacher and the students aimed at achieving desired goals. This interaction may take the form of discussions, questions, problems or the creation of specific situations. Therefore, teaching is an intentional and planned educational process consisting of dynamic elements that interact to facilitate effective learning.

Among the important modern teaching strategies that consider the student as a central and significant part of the learning process, we can mention

- Role-playing strategy

- Brainstorming strategy

- Problem solving strategy

- Exploration and discovery strategy

- Critical Thinking Strategy

- Cooperative learning strategy

- Project-based strategy

- Creative Thinking Strategy

7- Define the concept of competence:

Competence refers to the ability to face specific situations by adapting to them through the integration of a set of knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to achieve a competent and effective outcome.

According to Tommy (2005), teaching competence is a collection of self-resources (knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours and strategies) organised in a complex structure that allows their mobilisation, integration and transformation into appropriate performances in specific situations and at the right time.

Teaching competence is also seen as a set of necessary skills and abilities that teachers or supervisors must possess in the educational process to be able to practice teaching efficiently and effectively. It therefore encompasses a range of performance skills, academic knowledge and intellectual abilities that individuals should acquire during their training in order to correct and modify aspects of their behaviour in order to apply them successfully in practice.

Teaching competence is defined as the total behaviour of the teacher, including knowledge, attitudes and skills during the teaching situation. This behaviour is characterised by a high level of performance and accuracy (Al-Asadi, 2016).

Teaching competence is also defined as a set of skills and abilities possessed and practised by the teacher in the teaching situation to enable him/her to perform his/her teaching tasks effectively and competently. It is the ability to carry out the teaching activity based on a set of facts, concepts, principles and generalisations that are evident through the teaching behaviour that reaches the level of competence (Haddad, 2009).

According to Perrnoud (1998), teaching competence is the teacher's ability to activate different cognitive resources to cope with different situations.

Medley (1980) sees teaching competence as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable the teacher to prepare for the teaching situation. Knowledge may include subject-specific knowledge and general information relevant to the teacher's competence. Skills may include content-related skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. Attitudes, on the other hand, may relate to the teacher, the students and values.

Based on the above definitions, teaching competence can be described as the skills, knowledge, concepts, attitudes and behaviours that teachers possess and use to direct the teaching process towards the achievement of desired educational goals at a given level of competence.

8- Dimensions of teaching competence:

There are four dimensions of teaching competence:

- Ethical dimension

- Academic dimension

- Pedagogical dimension

- Social and human dimension

8-1 Ethical dimension:

   - This dimension represents an important aspect of the teacher's personality, characterised by the following qualities

   - Flexibility, courage, patience and perseverance.

   - Possession of high professional ethics.

   - Calm demeanour and not too reactive in the classroom.

   - Enthusiasm for teaching and fostering mutual respect between teacher and students, as well as among students themselves.

   - Listening and responding effectively to students.

   - Feeling comfortable and at ease in the classroom.

8-2 Academic (scientific) dimension:

- This dimension encompasses the academic (cognitive) competences necessary for effective and competent teaching of a subject, including

- Possessing skills of scientific inquiry and research.

- Use of the steps of scientific inquiry, investigation and teaching methodology.

- Familiarity with the general educational goals of their community.

- Familiarity with the educational objectives of the subject being taught.

- Use of illustrative examples that are relevant to the subject matter and at the same time stimulate learners' interest.

- Explanation of the links between key elements of the lesson.

- Instructional guidance that facilitates progression in difficulty and explains concepts clearly and engagingly.

- Explaining, interpreting and relating lesson topics to real-life problems to ensure maximum learner participation during the lesson (Al-Fatlawi, 2003, p. 38).

- Engaging learners in activities and tasks related to the content or topics of the lesson.

- Distinguishing between facts and personal opinions.

- Identifying necessary assumptions to ensure the validity of results.

- Possess a broad background in their subject area.

- Adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of learners in the classroom.

8-3 The pedagogical dimension:

The pedagogical dimension of teaching competencies is related to the ability to easily and competently use concepts, attitudes and types of performance behaviours in teaching to achieve educational objectives. The pedagogical dimension includes the following performance or achievement competencies:

A) Pre-teaching skills (planning):

- Analysis of subject content.

- Analysis of common features at different levels of development.

- Pre-conception of the situation and teaching procedures.

- Formulation of objectives for the subject.

- Determine the teaching methods to be used in the presentation of the lesson.

- Identifying the necessary strategies to be used in presenting the lesson.

B) Teaching skills:

- This is the essential stage of teaching and focuses on the following aspects

- Organising and arranging the classroom environment according to a series of steps and procedures.

- Preparing the lesson, preparing the learners mentally, physically and emotionally.

- Assigning homework to revise and master the information, concluding the lesson appropriately to help learners organise and crystallise the information in their minds.

C) Teaching outcomes competences:

- These competencies are related to the evaluation process that shows the extent to which the objectives of the lesson have been achieved and the progress in academic achievement (Osman, 2020).

8-4 The social and human dimension:

The social and human dimension includes the following emotional and social competences:

- Working with colleagues and administrators to ensure the success of the teaching and learning process in general.

- Offering problem-solving activities in a conscious and purposeful way.

- Understanding the nature of the community in which one works, thereby helping to translate educational goals for the benefit of the local community.

- Build relationships with learners based on understanding, co-operation and mutual respect.

- Provide clear and specific guidance and direction to teachers.

- Capable of promoting discipline among learners.

- Contribute to decision making in relation to the management of school matters and provide suggestions and opinions to help achieve the school's objectives.

- Encouraging students' participation in classroom interactions (Al-Fatlawi, 2003, p. 44).

9- Types of teaching competence:

Teaching competence comprises three domains as identified by Qarsham (2004):

A) Cognitive competence: This includes the types of knowledge, information and concepts that the teacher possesses in a particular subject area.

B) Affective competence: This refers to the attitudes the teacher should have and the values they believe in.

C) Performance competence: This includes sensorimotor skills related to technological materials, as well as physical and motor skills. The performance of these skills is related to the cognitive competence that the teacher possesses.

10- The role of learning strategies and teaching skills in improving student performance:

Learning strategies are used to improve the educational process by teaching students how to learn autonomously. This is achieved by helping them to choose the appropriate strategy to suit the educational situation and the nature of the subject matter. It is often observed that students rely on cognitive learning strategies and neglect metacognitive strategies that involve planning, monitoring and evaluation. These metacognitive strategies are crucial in the learning process as they enable learners to assess their progress, identify achieved and unachieved learning goals and make necessary revisions and adjustments. It is worth noting that learning strategies have a strong relationship with academic motivation.

Students with high motivation tend to use deep (elaborative) learning strategies such as constructing, organising, evaluating and planning. On the other hand, students with low motivation tend to rely on simple learning strategies, such as rote learning.

Hoeskma (1995), as cited in Al-Damin (2006), adds that learning strategies can be divided into two types: deep learning strategies and surface learning strategies. A student who relies on the former strategy studies for long hours with enthusiasm, diligence and perseverance. They break down the material into detailed parts, solve exercises and various homework tasks using different methods, and self-evaluate their progress. This self-evaluation includes taking practice tests to assess their skills, acquired knowledge and mastery of the subject matter, and to identify any weaknesses in order to address them at the appropriate time. Their study and revision habits are organised and continuous, extending beyond the eve of an exam. As a result, their performance is high and they achieve academic success with excellence.

On the other hand, in the case of the surface learning strategy, the student relies on memorisation and recall, gathering only a few pieces of information. Their main focus is on getting good grades to satisfy their parents, without trying to master the subject or achieve the set goals.

Therefore, students using the first strategy show strong determination. They prioritise understanding and focus more on the work itself and its mastery than on grades alone. For them, learning is seen as a rewarding experience and an opportunity for self-development, rather than as a means to an end such as getting good grades. They strive to achieve real success by improving their skills and achieving their educational goals.

Students using the second strategy (surface learning) focus their learning solely on getting grades and avoiding failure, as well as pleasing others such as parents and teachers. They do not strive for self-improvement but are satisfied with basic and superficial information. They constantly compare their performance with that of their peers, rather than evaluating the extent to which they are achieving their own goals. In addition, we cannot overlook the role of teaching skills in the success of the educational process. This is achieved through the selection of appropriate and purposeful teaching strategies where the student becomes a central figure in the learning process, actively participating in the acquisition of knowledge rather than having a negative outlook on the future. It is therefore incumbent upon the teacher to rely on

cooperative learning, based on the participation of all students, rather than on negative competition, which creates frustration, fear and lack of confidence.

Therefore, a competent teacher, when implementing a specific teaching strategy, should plan systematically, taking into account the needs of the students and respecting their individual differences. They create a positive learning environment characterised by activity, vitality, cooperation, exchange of opinions, positive discussion and stimulating challenge and excitement, all aimed at eliminating routine and boredom.

Therefore, based on the above, we can say that learning strategies, teaching methods and teacher competence play a positive and significant role in achieving student success.

Conclusion:

Teaching competence is a fundamental pillar that must be present in teachers in order to succeed in the educational process and improve educational performance. The role of teachers has changed from the classic, routine role of imparting knowledge and filling students' minds with information to a modern role where teachers act as guides, planners, implementers and evaluators of the educational process. This is reflected in the choice of modern teaching methods and strategies that place the student at the centre of the educational process. These strategies take into account students' abilities, psychological and social needs and respect for individual differences. They emphasise cooperation and participation among students, while excluding negative competition that stifles creativity and excellence. Therefore, a competent teacher is directly responsible for creating an educational environment full of activity, perseverance and challenge, adapted to the rapid developments of the times. This is achieved by implementing modern teaching strategies such as brainstorming, discovery learning, cooperative learning and self-directed learning. In addition, teachers' competence is related to learning strategies by assisting students in selecting the appropriate strategy and guiding them in its application and implementation in the learning process. Teachers encourage students to adopt deep learning strategies (cognitive and metacognitive) based on high quality learning goals for success and self-development.

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