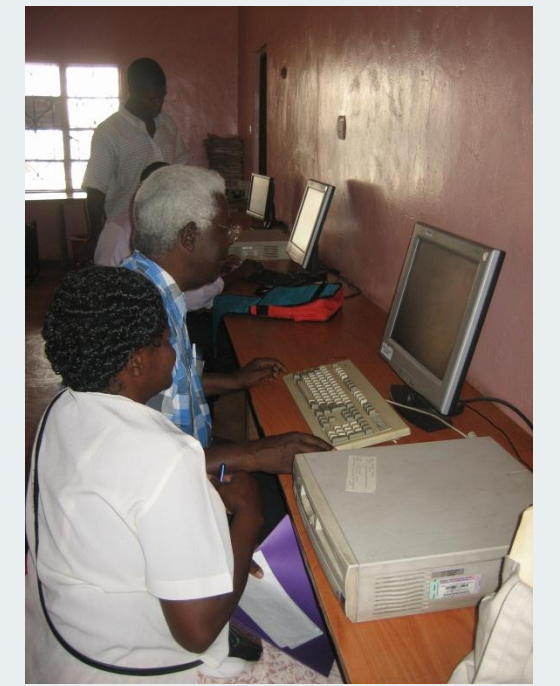


Effective Teaching Practices: Global Tools Used by Leaders in Early Childhood Education



Lisa Uribe ,Ph.D., Associate Director of Education in Africa and South America, Women's Global Connection,
Lynda Cavazos, M.A., Educational Consultant, Doctoral Student and adjunct at University
 Texas at San Antonio, Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching
Ana DeHoyos-O'Connor, M.Ed., Assistant Professor at San Antonio College, Department of Early Childhood



PURPOSE

The purpose is to draw from this triad of perspectives and their teaching strategies, with the intention to impact teachers working with young children in South Texas and rural areas of Zambia.

The Comparative Environments

Preschool Teacher Training in a Developing Country, Zambia

Since January of 2005, Lisa has worked with Women's Global Connection, WGC, as the coordinator of the Children under Seven Project in Zambia. WGC is a non-profit organization committed to building bridges of connection to promote the learning and leadership of women locally and around the world. The WGC Preschool Teacher Training Institute is a project that evolved after an investigative trip in June 2003 to address the preschool needs of orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia.

Teaching Students in Community College

Ana teaches at a community college, in the department of Early Childhood Studies. The college is a Hispanic-Serving Institution and the largest of five colleges within the district. Ana works to develop a relationship with the students by setting clear goals from the first day of class and having the students share what they expect from Effective Teaching Practices in Early Childhood Education. Ana also builds clear goals for the semester, creating a learning environment that challenges students to ponder on the topic and reflect, as an intellectual challenge.

Teaching Pre-Service Teachers in 4 Year University

Lynda teaches at a four year public university in the department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching for students who are seeking an EC-6 (Early Childhood through 6th grade) Generalist degree or an EC-6 Bilingual Generalist Certification. Her teaching promotes academic and pedagogical knowledge and research, engagement in reflective practice, a value for diversity, caring about the students and their profession, and advocacy for educational change. Her approach is interactive, involving technology, integration, lesson planning and field placements that requires engagement with the elementary students.

Analysis Implemented Strategies

Educational Environment	Interest and Explanation	Concern and respect for students	Assessment	Clear Goals and Intelligence	Independence, Control and Active Engagement	Learning from Students
Preschool Teacher Training in Developing Country	Execution of requested topics and strategies	Cultural competence through discourse	Daily evaluation of session used by instructors to modify curriculum	Contextual learning/ risk taking to demonstrate challenge	Adaptation of cumulative learning for home activities	Immediate use of student feedback
Community College Department of Early Childhood	Classroom observation & reflection	Student observes demonstration teacher	Conceptual understanding through application	Observation link to contextual learning	Model Approach for practical application	Classroom assessment and reflection
Four Year University School of Education	School Home connection	Risk taking	Reflection -Individual -Parallel -External	Problem Based Learning	Active agents in current educational research	Checking for Understanding through Reflection

RESULTS

After reviewing their strategies within Ramsden's (2003) effective teaching principles, they considered their strengths and limitations in comparison to the three teaching environments.

Common Strengths

Observation of students for practical applications was used within the community college and university environments, as well as, using reflection as a tool for assessment and evaluation. Contextual learning for understanding was used by instructors in the community college and the Non-governmental organization (NGO) preschool Teacher Training Institute. School-Home Connection activities were a common method used by the NGO Teacher Training Institute and the university school of education.

Common Limitations

Within the NGO Preschool Teacher Training Institute, several limitations existed, understanding a different reality, language barriers, distance, and time. The focus during the four week-long trainings was to transfer knowledge of child growth and development with age appropriate activities for conceptual understanding. Teaching concepts and application had precedence to reflection and observation of students. Within the community college early childhood studies, the instructor's limitation is the time constraints in which to check for understanding of student learning and application simultaneously. This is due to the varied standards of each student's classroom settings.

CONCLUSIONS

In three different lens, three Early Childhood teachers explain and substantiate their best teaching practices. Though each teacher has her own philosophical convictions, and through individualized contextual environment, she has executed the most appropriate teaching strategies to best fit the students' needs and students' learning experiences. These teaching strategies have organically defined the Early Childhood teacher's strengths, but have also served as a muse for each other and to continue to serve as muse to further their professional development as future Early Childhood leader.

