TECHNOLOGY IN ECE CLASSROOM

BS Programme

Code:8288 Unit 1–9



Department of Early Childhood Education and Elementary Teacher Education

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

READING MATERIAL

TECHNOLOGY IN ECE CLASSROOM

Course Code **8288**

Department of Early Childhood Education and Care
Allama Iqbal Open University
Islamabad

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Technology in the ECE Classroom, an essential course in your Bachelor of Science program designed to bridge the gap between foundational early childhood philosophy and the realities of the 21st-century learning environment. The young children you will teach are growing up in a digitally saturated world, and this course is built on the principle that our role as educators is not to resist this reality but to harness its potential thoughtfully and effectively. Our central mission is to move beyond the simple question of *whether* we should use technology and instead tackle the more critical questions of *how, when, and why* to integrate it in ways that are developmentally appropriate, pedagogically sound, and inherently inclusive.

Our journey will begin by establishing a crucial foundation, examining the broader context of Media and Technology in the 21st Century and its impact on young children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. This macro view will inform our deep dive into the specific applications and evaluation of tools in the unit on Technology in ECE. However, possessing technological knowledge is insufficient without strong pedagogy. Therefore, a significant portion of our time will be dedicated to Instructional Strategies, providing you with a framework for designing lessons where technology acts as a seamless scaffold for learning, creativity, and collaboration, rather than an isolated distraction.

We will apply these strategies to core academic domains, exploring Technology for Teaching Reading and Writing through interactive e-books and digital storytelling platforms. Crucially, we will investigate the vital role of Play in a technology-rich classroom, ensuring digital tools extend and enhance—rather than replace—the hands-on, sensory play that is the cornerstone of early learning. Furthermore, we will dedicate time to Inclusion, exploring how assistive technologies can break down barriers for children with disabilities, ensuring equitable access for all learners. Finally, we will examine modern methods for Assessment, using digital portfolios and tools to document progress and personalize instruction.

This course is designed to be highly practical. You will engage in critical evaluation, hands-on experimentation, and lesson design, empowering you to become a discerning and innovative educator capable of crafting dynamic, effective, and inclusive learning experiences for every child.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

After studying this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of technology integration in early childhood education (ECE).
2. Explain the role of media and technology in the 21st-century learning environment.
3. Analyze the impact of technology on children’s cognitive, social, and emotional development.
4. Apply appropriate methods for integrating technology in ECE classrooms.
5. Design instructional strategies that effectively combine pedagogy and technology.
6. Use digital tools to support the teaching of reading, writing, and other basic skills.
7. Evaluate the role of play in a technology-rich learning environment.
8. Promote inclusive education by using assistive technologies for diverse learners.
9. Use modern assessment tools such as digital portfolios to monitor children’s progress.

UNIT 1

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

Media and technology have a widespread influence on the lives of teachers and children as well. People are converting from traditional to digital citizenship. This social and technical transition gives opportunities for playing, entertainment, creating, making, learning, and communicating. Yet, excessive use of media technology is accompanied by the concerning impact of media technology on children. Today, media and technology have become an integral part of early childhood education settings. Several media are recurring digital and traditional technologies at the intersection of early education, such as black/whiteboard, charts, models, objects, commercial toys, TV, multimedia, cardboards, flashcards, computers, laptops, videos, digital devices and apps, online games, SMART boards, augmented and virtual realities, and many more. The use of media and technology strengthens teaching and learning programs. This helps children to discover the world, access possible solutions, and experience the digital world. Media and technology enable childhood teachers to improve outcomes from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten. Media technology-rich early childhood curriculum incorporates early literacy such as counting, letter recognition, language development, calculation, word association, story identification, drawing, painting, matching, etc. Appropriate integration of media and technology supports letter recognition, segmenting phonological knowledge, rhyme practices, and digit-symbolic learning. Subsequently, media technology resulted in greater development with an equal amount of participation by teachers and learners.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After learning this unit, early childhood educators will understand the importance of emerging media and technology in the field of ECE. The educators will be able to:

- Understand the concept of media and technology in the 21st century
- Describe traditional and digital media technology for ECE
- Identify different types of media technology
- State digitalized platform for early childhood education
- Develop instructional design for young children accordingly
- Understand appropriate access to technology and interactive media experiences
- Acknowledge challenges in media technology integration in ECE

1.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early childhood education (ECE) is an organized, formalized, and structured education. Almost every school arranges early childhood education in the name of pre-nursery, nursery, play-group, KG-I, KG-II, and pre-school. The importance of ECE is well-recognized around the world. Young children are influenced by their parents, environment, peers, and pre-school teachers. At this stage, the quality of early education lays the foundation for critical acquisition, overall childhood development, language development, concept development, and motor abilities. These seeds' lifetime productivity. Therefore, proper attention, quality of education, and planned activities are greatly required. In the 21st century, the standards of the core curriculum shifted from traditional preparation to future development. Most countries have adopted 21st-century frameworks to promote effective technology integration. The key components of the 21st-century core objectives are:

- Active and collaborative learning
- Equal access and opportunities
- Well-organized learning environment
- Multiple strategies to monitor and evaluate learning outcomes
- Technology integration and support for learning
- Building technology and instructional support for both teachers and students
- Focus on 4Cs: critical thinking, communication, creative innovation, and collaboration

Today, teachers use a large scale of instructions with media and technology integration. They use whiteboards, smartboards, and display screens to demonstrate concepts. They apply an outcome-based learning environment. Now, learning activities are extended from traditional grouping to effective media technology usage. Resourced institutes can improve learning outcomes. The education system is integrated through MultiTeach, EduTech, and media technology from the early years of education to higher education.

1.2 MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In the 21st century, most children are growing up with media and technology. They have easy access to digital devices like mobile phones, TVs, Tablets, etc. Most children aged less than 6 years can use mobile devices. The importance and benefits of media technologies are recognized across the world. The structure of communication has changed exclusively now. Preschoolers are spending most of their time with screen media at home. This habit will continue with their media experiences and usage. The attitude of preschoolers and advancement encourages teachers to understand the context and use of technology for early childhood education. Media technology-supported teaching is widely adopted in developed countries. People of the modern age live in a media and technology-suffused

environment. They have several reasons to support and use media and technology. The most common characteristics include:

- A global access and communication
- Abundance of information and news
- Rapid changes in the public system from documented to online
- Technology tools, gadgets, and support services
- Ability to collaborate and contribute at an unprecedented scale

Media and technology cannot be separated from contemporary global society. The term "media" is defined as a means of communication, whether print, electronic, or digital. Technology influences all these means of how and where information can be circulated. Technology supports media to be visualised, streamed, and executable. It gives advancement to the media. Each medium has different technologies that can deliver specific information, news, messages, and updates. For example, magazines print stories and news, television telecasts audio-visual materials, the radio transmits audio only, and the internet serves many digital platforms, whereas laptops, computers, and mobile phones perform multiple tasks. The selection of media technology depends on instructional objectives and availability, with advantages and limitations.

1.2.1 Educational Media

The word *media* is the plural form and originated in the Latin words "*medium*" and "*medius*", which means nominal use of the neuter of the *"middle".* It refers to any channel of communication, such as print media, the news, photographs, cinema, broadcasting, digital media, advertisements, and publishing material. Educational media is considered a means of transforming educational knowledge, information, and skills. It is used for people interaction, whether verbal or non-verbal. In traditional ways, there are many examples of media such as blackboards, whiteboards, newspapers, notebooks, text-books, television, magazines, stationery, maps, charts, cards, desktop computers, toys, and other audio-visual aids. Most media may be audio, video, or both. While the application of scientific knowledge to achieve educational goals is called technology. Technology can be applied through various media. The terminology of educational media is consistent and stable. It is used both for information and communication for education and media studies.

Bagoly-Simó and Sikorová (2021) defined educational media as "media are regarded as means or tools used to store or transfer information. They are one of the means or channels of communication in society".

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2018) defines media as a medium, as a means of effecting or conveying something," or as "a channel or system of communication, information, or entertainment".

Educational media refers to material products released for instructional purposes. This concept is linked with specialized services provided by institutes such as

publishing, broadcasting, photography, printed media, television, radio, white/black boards, charts, laptops, the internet, projectors, etc. Educational media is categorized into non-printed media (projected & non-projected), printed media, electronic media, and digital media.

Classifications of Media Used in Education

Projected Media	Non-projected Media	Print Media	Electronic Media	Digital Media
• Films	• Wall Charts	• Text-Books	• Audio Tapes	• Teleconferencing
• Overhead Projectors	• White/Black Boards	• Note-Books	• Radio	• Podcast
• Projectors	• Flannel	• Published Material	• Recorders	• Digital Library/e-library
• Filmstrips	• Bulletin	• Newspapers	• Cassettes	• Online Edu-Gaming
• Opaque	• Models	• Magazines	• Calculators	• Online Films/videos
• Slides	• Flash Cards	• Posters	• Computer	• Social Media Apps
• Multimedia Projectors	• Real Objects	• Pictorials	• Smartboards	• Blogs
• Computer Image Projection	• Pegboards	• Illustration	• Television	• Augmented & Virtual Reality
	• Flip Charts	• Booklets	• Video Tapes	• Mobile Phone Apps

• Dioramas	• Worksheets • Maps	• Cine Films • CD/DVD/USB	• Holograms • Animations

1.2.2 Educational Technology

The term technology is derived from the Greek word "technikoes" which means "art" in association with skills, physical things, and dexterity. It is a scientific application in art. Saettler defined this as "the word technology does not necessarily imply the use of machines, as many seem to think, but refers to any practical art using scientific knowledge". Today, the term technology is related to several modern practical arts used in daily life, whether manual tools or digital tools. It includes the following:

- Technology as tools; includes all the instruments, machines, handlers, and physical devices to perform a specific task.
- Technology as an implication of scientific knowledge; includes know-how of knowledge related understandings to several disciplines.
- Technology as practical art; includes many skills, practical work, methods, and technical processes done by technology.
- Technology as daily life solutions; includes several remedies, ideas, support, and solutions for daily problems.
- Technology as a socio-techno relationship; includes an interaction of people and technical objects from manufacturing to use.

In the early days, the term, media, was used as an integral part of the mass media of communication. Later, it is used as a media technology for social means of communication. It can be stated that "***Media and technology*** *are any hardware, software, or tool that is used to compose, create, produce, deliver and manage media including audio, video, images, information, interactive media, video games, virtual reality and augmented reality environments. This ranges from low-tech tools used to create art to the global media processing and distribution systems of large media organizations"(John Spacey, 2019).*

Technology can be considered as both a process and a product. As a process, it refers to the innovative application of scientific knowledge. As a product, it refers to the application of any equipment to facilitate the process. Technology is a multipurpose phenomenon that can be recognized in several fields as follows:

a) Instructional Technology

It is a systematic pathway to design, apply, and evaluate human-based teaching and communication. It combines human and non-human resources to achieve predetermined educational objectives. It makes teaching more efficient and effective.

b) Industrial Technology

It is used to improve the industrial product by the application of scientific knowledge and processes.

c) Educational Technology (EduTech)

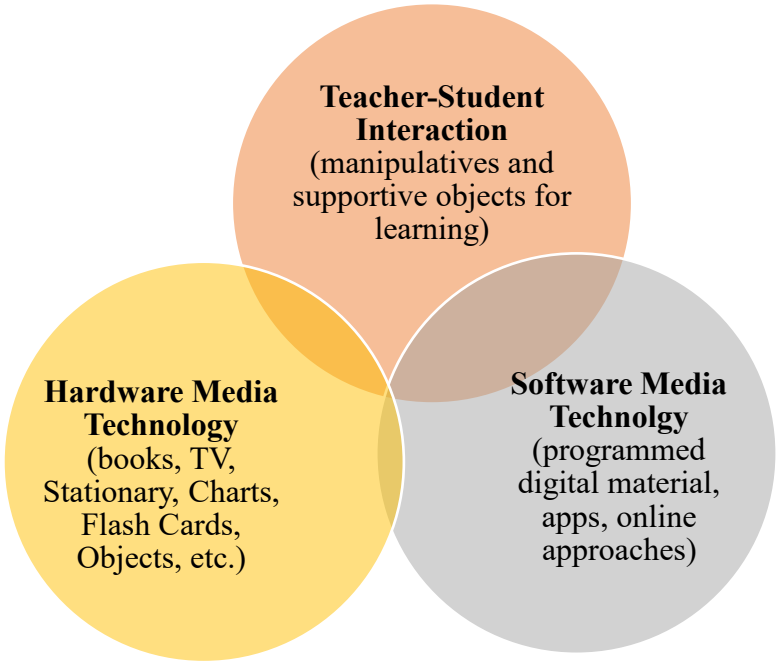
It is a general set of equipment, instruments, methods, and strategies to make education more reflective. It provides solutions to educational problems.

d) Information Technology (IT)

It facilitates the process of gathering, organizing, processing, disseminating, and evaluating educational information through different media.

1.3 INTEGRATION OF MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY IN ECE

Successful integration of media and technology in early childhood education means the utilization and use of media technology such as mobile phones, laptops, computers, television, radio, digital devices, digital applications, and internet access in classroom activities. The purpose of this integration is to achieve educational objectives. The most familiar use of media in early childhood education is in Froebel and Montessori educational settings. They used blocks, markers, graphical accessories, and paintbrushes for early-age education. Later, the use of media technology tools became digital. Now we have to balance these forms of media technology for better learning opportunities. So young children learn through human interaction, interactive media technology, and digitalization.



Media and technology can enhance the learning of learners of all ages. During the early years of education, children love colourful visualization, animations,

screening views, and gaming activities. A balanced integration of curriculum, learning environment, instructional activities, media, and technology can improve the recorded growth and development of students. It helps in learning, monitoring, and evaluation as well. Teachers can use suitable media and technology in several ways, such as planning, developing activities, building home-school connections, and measuring daily learning. Young children interact with technology materials in playful manners. It includes sensory-motor, practical, social, cognitive, and emotional development. They require opportunities to explore technology, science, vocabulary, calculation, and amazement in the digital world. Purposeful, equitable access and appropriate experience can bring outcome-based learning. Media cannot be reduced to technology as both of them are fully social determinations. Technology provides a bundle of possibilities, but not all of them are suitable for all educational objectives.

1.4 PRINCIPLES OF SELECTING MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

While integrating media and technology in early childhood education, the following principles should be kept in mind.

- The instruction objective is the primary principle of media technology selection.
- An appropriate purpose and practices of media technology integration.
- The well-being of children is important.
- Considering media technology is an integral part of early childhood education, not the centre of learning.
- Professional attitude to apply media technology with accuracy and appropriateness.
- Children's age, developmental level, needs, and interests should be considered.
- Empower the children to actively engage with learning through media technology rather than controlling.
- Provide adaptive scaffolding to accomplish predetermined tasks.
- Manage media technology to enhance children's cognitive, social, and emotional abilities.
- Provide equitable access and opportunity for each child.
- Establish and strengthen home-school connections through media technology.

1.5 Types of Media and Technology

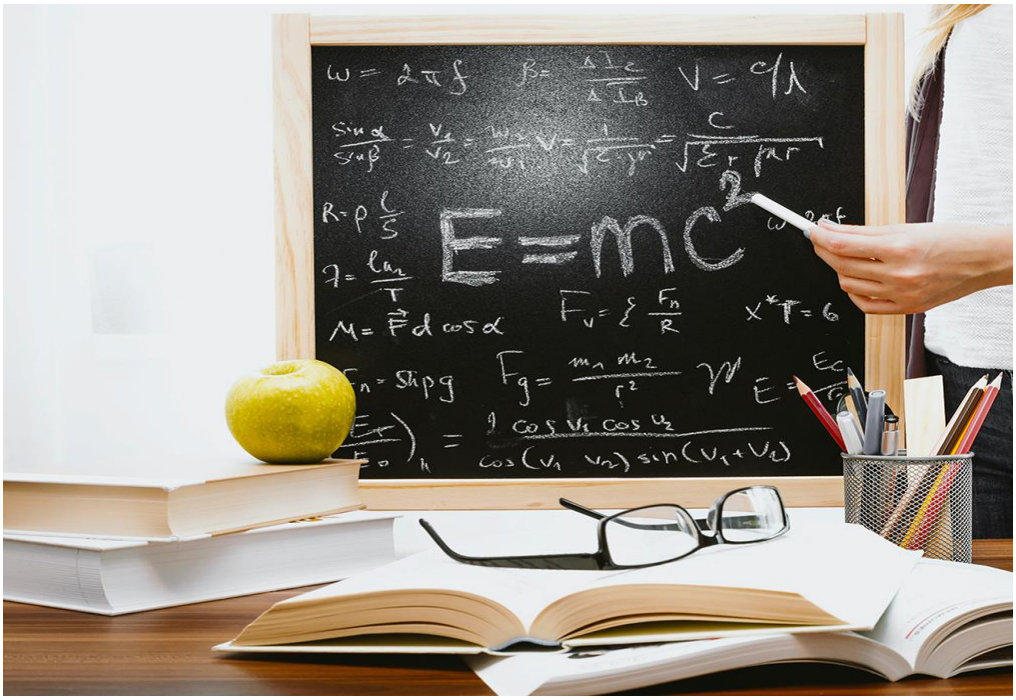
From the era of printing to modern technology, there are several types of media. The different types of media are emerging constantly due to rapid changes around the world. The following are the most common types of media that can be used for early childhood education.

1.5.1 Traditional Media Technology

The educational system has migrated from traditional media to digital technology.

Indeed, technology is considerable and has a powerful impact on the young generation. Yet, it does not mean it can replace traditional media used in education. Educational media is very broad, ranging from traditional to digital media. Before digital media, traditional media strengthened educational purposes. Traditional media have advantages and limitations depending on their types and usage. Traditional media like printed media (textbooks, newsletters, published material, etc.), white/black boards, radio, television, charts, and any supportive low-cost gadget. These media are user-friendly, easy to apply, and cost-effective. It is categorized by all educational tools that have been applied for decades. These are the traditional means of instruction to achieve educational goals. The structure of instructional media in traditional ways depends on face-to-face interaction between teachers and students. It focuses on teacher-led-explanation, teacher-controlled, and imparting knowledge to students. While digital media appointed the role of teachers as facilitators, monitors, and guides. The most common traditional resources are textbooks, worksheets, whiteboards/blackboards, charts, lab equipment, library, and models.

1.5.2 Print Media It's an old medium that is used for traditional educational set-ups. At present, this medium is still included in the education system. For early childhood education, there are lots of printed materials such as story books, colour



books, tracing copies, graphic displays, photos, and other published material. It is a sophisticated and low-cost media type. A widespread digital form of printing material is also accessible.



Figure 1 Printed Media

1.5.3 Television

In the 1930s, the integration of colour and sound took off in the film and TV industry. It is the best method to unify cultural, historical, and contextual touchstones for people. Today, TV entertains a larger number of people. Young kids are familiar with TV screens and love to watch animations. Several TV shows are broadcast for preschoolers at the early education stage. It can teach important lessons, concepts, and socialization. Research has proven that toddlers start counting after watching kids' shows on TV. They identify characters, colours, and names of objects. Proper exposure to TV can contribute to children's cognitive development. The TV landscape evolves quickly and effectively for the development of young children's lives. However, there are benefits and risks of adopting TV in classrooms. It depends on how the teacher optimizes and balances TV screens during early education.



Figure 2 Television

1.5.4 Movies/Films

Movies or films are types of motion picture technology. These days, movies are easily accessible on phones, computers, tablets, and laptops. It's a great source to present concepts with colourful visualization. Showing kids movies can build interest, repetition, and awareness in the classroom. It breaks the boredom of traditional classes also.



Figure 3 Digital Games

1.5.5 Digital Games

Since the 1980s, video games have gained much attention among youth. These days, the young generation of all ages loves digital games. Digital games give multidimensional visualization, realistic landscapes, simulation, and competition for each stage that connects excitement and interactive learning. Through this format, learners pretend to play games and understand puzzles, word identification, matching words with images, completing drawings, jigsaws, mimics, talking, counting, calculative, colouring, science puzzles, etc.

1.5.6 Multi-touch Technology

Today, the traditional white/blackboard, chalk, and talk form of teaching is transformed into smart boards, digital devices, and mobile devices. Multi-touch screens boost the learning environment and learners as well. Teachers can use

tablets, mobile phones, laptops, computers, LEDs/LCDs, with educational applications software and websites. The interface of multi-touch devices



Figure 4 Augmented Reality

determines multiple human touches at a time. It allows users to recognize multiple touches simultaneously. This kind of technology was designed to eliminate the problem of touching a single operation by supporting multiple touches and possessions. This technology is being used in a wide range of smartphones, touch screens, and tablets.

1.5.7 Augmented Reality (AR)

Augmented reality is an effective, motivational, and high-level engagement for young children. Through AR, young learners can interact, manipulate, and realistically understand the environment. It's not a replacement for traditional teachers but enhances the teaching-learning process meaningfully. Teachers can display surroundings, historical events, mathematical solutions, and scientific concepts with the help of AR. This media technology enriches the physical world with realistic 3D virtual objects. AR integrates 2D or 3D virtual objects in a real environment and reflects them in a real-time setting. A teacher can use digital devices (cameras, smartphones, tablets, etc.). In the early education system, children experience their surroundings differently as per their opportunities. They have individual differences and learning curves. The convincing pieces of evidence enable them to deal with a comprehensive environment and understanding. Özarslan (2013) conceptualised this as "*AR technology enriches the perception of the user, without abstracting the user from the reality they are in, with experiences such as touching, feeling, and moving objects that are not in reality through the contents of mobile AR technology applications".*

Classroom implementation

- A teacher should be fully aware of AR applications, including mathematics, social sciences, humanities, basic sciences, languages, and arts. A deal on how to integrate AR in what subjects.
- Design an AR classroom meaningfully. Specify purpose and plan aligned with learning goals.
- Avoid haphazard application of AR technology just for the sake of using AR.
- Select the right app to integrate the AR classroom. There are AR apps that teachers can use to enhance learning. toys, augment education, SkyMap, Fetch Lunch Rush, Human Anatomy Atlas, etc., are the most popular apps for AR classrooms.
- Verify the quality of AR, strategy, and equipment.
- Create equal opportunity for all children.
- Recapitulate children's experiences

1.5.8 Virtual Reality (VR)

Early childhood education revolves around young children's experiences. This is the age of technology, where progressive teachers utilize maximum benefits from an immersive 360-degree environment. It is used to enhance their surroundings in real-world exploration, which provides a solid foundation for students of early education.

Virtual reality provides real-time experiences and engagements. It boosts knowledge retention. One of the biggest advantages of VR it sparks interest and curiosity among young children. VR develops learning in the following ways:

- Communication skills development: Virtual reality in class builds experiences for students to practice imaginative communication skills. They use structured conversation, vocabulary demonstration, reading, and writing in gaming and task-oriented ways.
- Mathematical Approach: VR provides a practical way of estimating, calculating, reasoning, and hands-on and logical thinking. It also provides a fully engaged environment with revisit and reapply options.
- Science Experiences: Understanding science concepts is a strong base for education. VR facilitates students by providing first-hand, realistic experiences. It immerses students with 3D photos, 360-degree views of objects, simulation, explorable zoom-in scenes, adventurous visiting, and multidimensional science experiments such as solar system trips, moon trips, dinosaur world visits, exploring plants, etc.

Classroom Implementation:



Figure 5 Virtual Reality

The following aspects of VR can be applied in early education.

- An educator should develop a proper plan of how and when to use VR along with topics.
- Set predetermined goals and guidelines that ensure quality experiences for students.
- Make learning, human interaction, and VR active and balanced.
- Ensure that all the young learners are immersed in the synthetic learning.
- Remove distortions, hurdles, and messiness for smooth understanding.
- Assist young learners with complex topics.
- Add physical education, skills, and training through VR overall development, such as sports, practicals, etc.

		Extended Reality (XR)		
	Reality	Augmented Reality (AR)	Mixed Reality (MR)	Virtual Reality (VR)
Display	Naked eye/optical glasses	Translucent display	Translucent display	Occlusion display
Display example				
Example	 Real view of a trail	 Augmented virtual map and direction	 Interactive virtual contents	 Virtual gaming

- *Figure 6 Mixed Reality*

1.5.9 Mixed Reality

Mixed reality is a combination of augmented reality and virtual reality. It incorporates objects into real-world situations inside the class. It gives physical interaction to young learners like exploring space, the sea world, the universe, and its surroundings. zSpace is an example of MR educational technology. This technology is applied through a stylus and 3d glasses.

1.6 MEDIA TECHNOLOGY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING

All the resources developed by the teachers to facilitate children's learning experiences are called media in teaching, media technology, and teaching materials. These resources manifest in various forms, items, gadgets, and symbols.

They serve children with knowledge and experiences in an educational project. These teaching media technologies are classified for early childhood education, including but not limited to drilling, practice programs, gaming, problem-solving, puzzling, simulation, tutorials, demonstrations, interactive learning, storytelling, hard and multimedia books, objects, and modelling.

Media and technology are influencing and shaping the development of young children. It has the potential to support learning and instructional settings as well. Today, technology is playing an important role in teaching. It remained useful in supporting teaching and operating education more from the periphery to the central point of learning. In the last decade, media technology has influenced core elements of childhood teaching activities.

The trends by which media technology influences are both hybrid and blended. Online teaching-learning involves better online learning opportunities. Thus, this system of education is blended with face-to-face teaching-learning. It is a supplementary and traditional teaching approach. Hybrid learning involves the best experiences for learners through any possible techniques that ensure balanced learning. Blended learning deals with splitting online and traditional classroom settings.

1.6.1 Features of media technology in early childhood education

In general terms, Seoane and Rodríguez (2021) described the following features of media technology for early childhood education:

- Innovative in introducing new teaching patterns.
- Motivate children by capturing attention.
- Specific use of media technology in presenting a specific task or topic.
- Configure the balanced association between content, participation, and media technology.
- Grip up the learning objectives to be achieved.
- Materials and methods should be close to the curriculum.
- Formative and soliciting in pedagogical senses that aid certain learning activities.

Early childhood education engages with a broader array of play-way techniques. Here, play is distinguished by freely chosen activity, being fun only, or being subject to participation. Teachers acknowledge and understand the nature of learners and the curriculum, and relate it to the play-way technique. Meanwhile, teachers adapt several media and technologies in supportive ways. A professional teacher knows how to embed media technology in teaching practices. Digital media technology is interactively used for early childhood education so that children enhance learning experiences rather than passive viewing. The utilization of media technology in early childhood education is intended to guide teachers at several stages. It increases the productivity of the early childhood education setting when:

- Media technology is used appropriately and intentionally,
- Collaboration of interactive learning with the effective selection of tools,
- Early childhood teachers have information and resources about the implications of media technology,
- Early childhood teachers are aware of the limitations and delimitations of media and technology,
- Early childhood teachers know about special consideration of infants, toddlers, and young children's learning,
- Equitable access is placed in the classroom, and
- Believe in continuous teaching and professional development.

1.7 EDUCATIONAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The fast-tracking development in the digital and technological world changed many things, attitudes, lifestyles, and academic settings. Most urban young kids spend their time surrounded by digital technology. In the age of technology, children are super excited to learn through technology. It is about how a teacher can balance learning, digital safety, and integration of technology.

The following web tools, digital apps, and online platforms can be adapted for young children's education:

- Digital Material: The technology world has a variety of digital material for learners of all ages, such as digital citizenship, printables, videos, audio, and activities on blogs, websites, literacy sites, apps, etc.
- Digital Stories: A teacher can use several online apps, websites, and web tools to tell stories for young learners. Young learners love stories and graphical illustration influenced them greatly. There are several readymade digital stories a teacher can create, such as "My Story Book," is a web-based instrument to create digital stories for free. Some other examples are "YouTube, National Geographic Kids, etc."
- Digital Games: Preschool kids have a good understanding of games, puzzles, characters, and animations. A teacher can use websites and apps to

play vocabulary games, number games, alphabet games, geometrical shapes, and many more. While teachers can create their games and quizzes through several websites such as “Make Beliefs Comix”, “Brain Pop”, and “TinyTap”. Animal Jam, Captain Toad, prodigy, thinkrolls, dragonbox math, Endless Alphabets, Starfall Kids games, and PBS Kids games are educational games for young children aged from 3 to 8.

- Animation: an animated movie or story can be created through “ZimmerTwins” for fun in learning.
- Digital Sketching and Poster: apps can be used to create drawings, sketches, tracing, posters, and painting. As “Bubble.us”, “Art For Kids Hub”, and “Sketch.io” enabled teachers to create such a layout for free.
- Imitation and Talking: Several digital apps are used for imitating and talking avatars for speaking and listening skills development in children.
- Communication apps: A teacher can communicate with parents to understand, update, and share the learning process. There are several free social communication apps and websites. Such as “Class Dojo”, “Seesaw”, “WhatsApp”, etc., help to generate shareable learners’ portfolios.
- Reading and Writing Tools: The digital world has several interactive apps, websites, and digital gadgets for reading and writing skills development at various age levels. For example, Read, Write, Think.
- Safe Web Surfing: a teacher can conduct safe web surfing for kids through search sites for kids only, such as “YouTube Kids”, “Duckster”, “Fact Monster”, “KidsSearch”, “Kiddle”, etc.
- Science and Mathematics: several games and websites carry scientific knowledge and mathematical solutions playfully. The young learners can play games and learn counting, number identification, sorting them, solving simple problems, and matching them. Similarly, several apps can display 3D images of body parts, names of organs, simple scientific animations, matching names and body parts, and their use for early-age education.
- Scaffolding and Digital Learning: A four-stage teaching model for kids consisted of supportive activities, joint activities, demonstrative activities, and individual activities (Wray & Medwell, 1998).

1.8 INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING FOR TODDLERS

Primarily, toddlers need interaction with human beings. They have to explore and manipulate the environment freely. Today, at this stage, toddlers also interact with interactive media and the technological world. The use of media and technology for toddlers should be in safe, strong, and sturdy ways. For example, they learn to chew stuff, and they can chew any media and technology.

- Facilitate an interaction of digital media with human mediation.
- Shared use of devices, media, or anything should be preferred.
- Passive screen time should be avoided.

- Keep in mind that toddlers learn more with human interaction than with digital devices.
- A soft made media such as blocks, balls, super songs, etc.
- They need comfort and supportive help to explore things.
- Soft toy representations of digital objects can be used as media.
- Pretending media technology can be used for toddlers.

1.9 INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING FOR PRESCHOOLERS AND KINDERGARTEN

At this age, young kids start developing stages of initiative, creativity, and industry. They explore the environment curiously. They recognize media technology and prefer to use it. They communicate with their toys, environment, and a variety of kids' media such as hard building blocks, painting, crayon work, miniature, singing, dancing, role-playing, watching videos, etc. They use digital technology outlets for creative thinking, movements on songs, learning, and admiring animations.

- Free touch screens with a variety of games, colouring, videos, learning songs, and stories can be appropriated for learning.
- The traditional types of media can be used along with scaffolding.
- Record their stories of learning and achievement and project them for the feeling of success.
- Digital artwork games, animated educational songs, and storytelling. Voice narrators and photos can enhance their learning.
- Ebooks with digital illustrations can be used for groups of preschoolers.
- Other simulated devices, such as microscopes, computers, science, and other objects, can be used for demonstration and practice.
- Set up a play-way experience to practice what they have learned through media technology.

1.10 INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING FOR SCHOOL-AGE YOUNG CHILDREN

At the age of school, young children can use media technology. They are competent to learn these things quickly and use them independently. They prefer videos of stories, digital games (colouring, calculating, puzzle solving, matching, etc.), and exploring things. In the present day, young children emulate media technology usage. They have their self-expression on mastering media technology. Today, Web 2.0 is designed to allow children to produce, appropriately use, and add things to technology.

- Quality media technology can be used at stages such as educational software, learning through digital games, and e-drilling and practice.
- Purposeful assistive media technology can be used according to children's

needs only.

- Do not force media technology use on those children who prefer human interaction and physical activities.
- Include language development software and apps.
- Use apps that facilitate children to identify shapes, calculate, explore science, geometrical concepts, and videos to learn shrinking, stretching, and exercising.
- Integrate media technology with balanced learning rather than excessive use of tools.

1.11 Challenges in Media and Technology Integration

Despite rapid development in media technologies, there are often challenges and hesitations to integrating media technologies in education. Especially in low-income countries, there are numerous challenges and barriers to adopting media technology in classrooms.

1.11.1. Resources

The biggest challenge is budget limitations in media technology implementation. Especially, public institutions run with fiscal resources and materials. Most public schools tend to perform in traditional classroom settings. This traditional and repetitive early childhood teaching delayed the acquisition of media technology until resources were available. Not all schools have fancy media technology, and this problem is compounded by the ever-changing array of media technology. Therefore, early childhood teachers should prepare their instructional toolkits with inexpensive, traditional, and basic media technologies. So that they can support the curriculum with marginal availability.

1.11.2. Generational gaps

Generational gaps between early childhood education teachers and young children imposed hesitation to use media technology in class. Young kids are familiar with and used to living in technological surroundings. Present kids are the millennial generation and prefer technology usage in life. Yet, teachers who learn knowledge and skills about digital technology later in life face this gap. While younger teachers grew up in a technological environment and are comfortable adapting to classrooms. This particular challenge needs to be understood as preferred for early childhood education and its features.

1.11.3. Media Technology Adaptation

Some teachers have an attitude to deliver the curriculum in traditional ways. They

neglect new ways of teaching, such as viewing-doing, digital technology, planned programming, and advanced online teaching models. This situation highlights the difference between the teaching ability of media technology adaptation and traditional teaching. Some teachers are early adopters, and others are late adopters. The late adoption of media technology creates a challenging situation in early childhood education. The late adopters hesitate to apply new media technologies. This attitude of late adopters slows down young children's education

1.11.4. Lack of Training

During preservice preparation, teachers are woefully remiss in basic media technology integration in early childhood education. They need to develop competencies in media technology knowledge and skills. They have to train themselves how to plan, design, integrate, balance, and evaluate digital media technology. Unfortunately, most preservice teacher education programs are based on theoretical courses or modules. These programs have traditional media technology courses and limited skills. Those early childhood professionals enter the field with limited knowledge and skills. They face problems in integrating the latest digital media technology into the early childhood curriculum.

1.11.5. Accessibility

The integration of media and technology in early childhood education demands equal access and opportunity to equipment. Each young child has regular access and attention. However, with limited budgeting, it is difficult for teachers to provide consistent equipment in the classroom. Even many educators do not have access to media technology due to several administrative and professional barriers. Even libraries, which are the most common media, have limited availability of books.

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UNIT 2

TECHNOLOGY IN ECE

CONTENTS OF THE UNIT

2.1 Integrating Technology in Education

2.2 Demands of Early Childhood Education

2.3 Technology Integration in ECE

2.4 Technology Used in ECE

2.5 Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ECE

2.6 Benefits of Technology in ECE

2.7 Challenges in Using Technology

2.8 Preparing Pre-service Teachers

2.9 Conclusion and Way Forward

2.10 Self-Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The rise of technology in recent decades has been noticeable, and it continues to endure in several areas, including the primary, secondary, and tertiary economic hubs around the world. Due to its growth, the educational system has been under tremendous pressure to maintain quality at all costs, both in basic and higher education institutions. In particular, aspiring educators are methodically and meticulously prepared to work at their best in the rapidly evolving digital world while also receiving the necessary education to carefully and rigorously monitor and apply the requirements of Early Childhood Education (ECE). Primarily, the incorporation of technology in ECE classrooms is the point of discussion in this chapter. As we transition from the enduring transformations brought about by the pandemic on the digitally-mediated interactions among all educational stakeholders, this chapter can illuminate how we ought to persist in utilizing or re-envisioning the application of diverse technologies in ECE classrooms. Thus, this chapter seeks to accomplish the following learning outcomes.

OBJECTIVE:

At the end of the unit, you will be able to:

1. Define what technology integration in the ECE classroom means
2. Understand the needs and demands of technology integration in the ECE classroom
3. Explore the benefits, challenges, and misconceptions associated with the use of technology in ECE
4. Critically examine the role of the teacher in technology integration
5. Explore multiple technologies used in the ECE classroom
6. Overview of different ways of assessment in technology-equipped ECE classroom
7. Perform extensive activities using technology in the ECE classroom
8. Sketch their own technologically equipped ECE classroom

2. INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Over the last two decades, technological advancements have had a significant impact on the economic, financial, medical, and communication sectors across the globe. Numerous technical developments and advancements in science, space, media, and other domains have broadened specialists' knowledge, given rise to amazing discoveries, and paved the way for future achievement. Even though these fields are essential components of the global society, education is, without a doubt, the one most affected by technological innovation.

When paired with internet connectivity, mobile phone technology advancements were revolutionary, and the addition of games, music, and other apps provided a novel experience to the masses. From almost anywhere, people were sharing their lives via email, text messages, phone conversations, music, and gaming challenges. Innovative technology enhanced gadgets and apps year after year, and new versions were frequently introduced. For instance, in language learning, the Language translation apps, aided by artificial intelligence (AI), eventually made it possible for digitally mediated communication to grow even more, giving people the chance to speak with each other in any context and in any language (Wester, 2025).

Utilizing digital technologies in the teaching and learning process makes it easier for students to learn at their own pace, use resources and materials that meet their needs, and participate in easily accessible learning activities that improve their understanding and command of the subject matter. For example, websites like Coursera and Khan Academy provide courses that may tailor the delivery speed to each student's requirements and preferences while also offering personalized feedback and additional resources. Moreover, through massive open online courses (MOOCs), students from around the globe can sign up for classes taught by the most reputable universities in the world, participate in online discussion boards, and collaborate on group projects to create influential learning communities. Social media platforms like X (i.e., Twitter), Facebook, and LinkedIn are crucial resources for students to connect with other students, teachers, and experts in a certain sector or subject (Tariq, 2025).

In the academic setting, artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming more and more recognized as a revolutionary tool. With its advanced applications that facilitate instructional design, content personalization, and student evaluation, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have brought about new approaches to controlling learning processes. AI can improve student engagement through customized, interactive, and adaptable learning experiences by utilizing skills like machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, and data analytics. Hence, the move to AI-powered learning platforms is in line with larger trends in learning

pathway personalization, which take into account each learner's particular requirements, preferences, and skills. In addition to the necessity of incorporating technology into every classroom, early childhood education is still a hot topic these days. But before introducing or integrating technology in the ECE setup, first, there is a need to explore the demands of early childhood education. In light of that, technology should be used or implemented.

In this case, the SAMR model can assist in prioritizing the needs and finalizing the demands of technology integration, according to which it could be effectively utilized. Figure 1.1 shows how SAMR model assists in the successful and efficient integration of technology for the enhancement of the learning experiences, which leads to transformation. In the first stage, technology is utilized for the enhancement of the learning process in terms of quality through substitution and augmentation. Later on, such enhancement leads to transformation through modification and redefinition. Further detail is given in Figure 1.1 below.

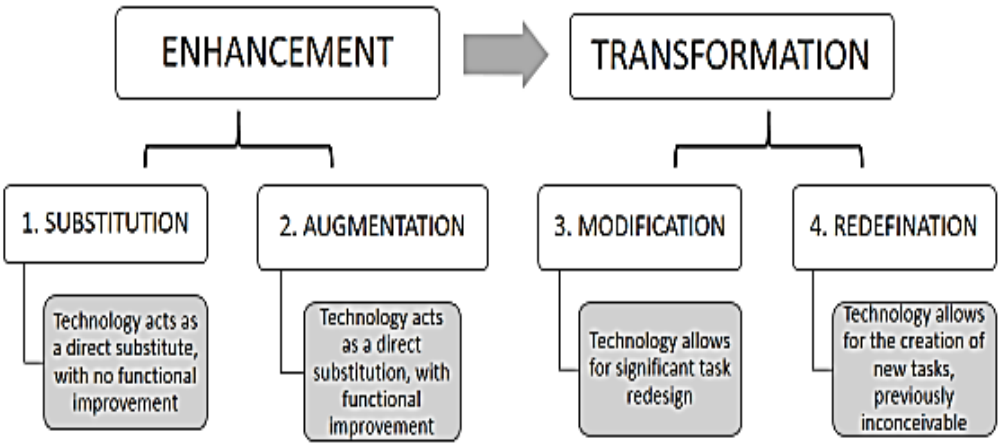


Figure 1.1 The SAMR Model for Integration of Technology in Education

2.1 DEMANDS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The objective of universal education begins with early childhood education, where the education of young children is seen as the cornerstone of fundamental education. Experts in pedagogy and child development theories concur that a large portion of brain development occurs during the early years of life. It is the educational level at which creativity, sociability, communication, and cognitive abilities are fostered. In early childhood education, young children are taught to

cultivate positive study habits, a positive self-image, identity, and confidence with the assistance of their instructors. Additionally, they are exposed to subject areas in early childhood education where they pick up knowledge and abilities in math, science, and social studies. Thus, Education serves as a cornerstone for societal development, particularly in the foundational years of childhood. Early childhood education (ECE) is instrumental in shaping cognitive, emotional, and social competencies, making it imperative for teachers to be adequately prepared for this responsibility. ECE, which is typically thought of as a means of preparing students for primary school, also has noticeable consequences on later life.

The foundation and origin of lifelong learning are found in early childhood education. Through learner-centered, culturally relevant, and developmentally appropriate teaching methods, it integrates education, health and nutrition, child safety and welfare, and child development. Hence, Early childhood education programs should be successful and efficient because the school system should recognize the significance of early childhood education in the development of foundational and functional literacy. For this, Early childhood educators ought to possess pedagogical expertise, topic understanding, and ICT proficiency. To cope with current challenges, there is a dire need to prepare our child in a way that he/she is able to thrive in this technologically revolutionized world as a fully competent, technologically literate adult. However, since using educational technology is not a solitary activity for users, it should be suitably included in early childhood education to enhance the abilities of young children as per their needs and demands (Pawilen & Broncano, 2025).

2.2 TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN ECE

The Alpha generation, which was born in 2010, is heavily reliant on computers and the internet. This means that, regardless of age group, integrating technology into the classroom is now required rather than being optional. In fact, the distribution of instructional technologies has been going on for decades, and more recently, early childhood education has also been included. Digital tools like iPads, programmable robotics kits, and other tangible technologies have quickly made their way into early education curricula and practices around the world. These tools frequently support more specialized objectives like the development of computational thinking or more general digital skills like the Swedish curriculum. In addition to being a part of the toys and tools kids play with daily, digital technology is currently being included in many early childhood programs. Additionally, technology changes how kids play with their peers and engage with peers, teachers, and material around them (Samuelsson, 2025).



Reflect back and share your experience with the partner regarding the use of technology in ECE classroom. What was used? When and how it was utilized? What worked well?

Notably, digital technologies have frequently entered early childhood education through "revolutions rather than evolutions," such as in other educational fields. This has resulted in an overabundance of digital technologies without the time and effort necessary to adapt them intentionally and with consideration for local and ecological factors. As a relatively recent development in early childhood education, educational technology might be viewed as boundary objects. In individual-site usage, boundary objects acquire a strong structure, but in common use, they are poorly organized. Consequently, the methods by which items are regionally classified provide a crucial clue as to how they are ultimately employed. For instance, touchscreen technology is widely used in children's homes and is becoming more and more prevalent in the educational environments they attend. Like that, the iPad is portable and may be used as a toy in one location and an instructional tool in another. In early childhood Education, educational robotics as a boundary object, demonstrates how educational robots can be used for a variety of learning objectives, spanning disciplinary boundaries, and as a tool to stimulate children's imagination and critical thinking.

2.3 TECHNOLOGY USED IN ECE

Kindergarten teachers mostly focused on drills and practice, using computers and interactive whiteboards to play music or view videos while students learned numbers. Other research revealed that kindergarten teachers utilize technology to see instructional films, view images, or play music in order to help kids with their math skills. For instance, one kind of instructional tool is digital storytelling through multiple apps like Storybird, Storyweaver, and Puppet Pals. Digital image books, animated storybooks, and backdrop effects are the three categories of productions. Digital picture books may be constructed by gathering digital images, text, and sound, then turning them into a little movie to aid kids in understanding the tale better. Computer-generated images can be used in animated storybooks to tell the tale. Students may be more interested in reading when background effects like noises and images are used.

Teachers can effectively support their students' language development by employing tools like iPads and Smart Boards. First of all, early childhood education is increasingly using interactive whiteboards, also referred to as Smart Boards, since they improve the caliber of instruction and learning. New generation touch-sensitive whiteboards, known as interactive whiteboards (IWBs), are managed by a computer linked to a digital projector. It enables educators to incorporate media into direct education, encouraging student participation in class. Using an interactive whiteboard instead of a regular one allows students to participate more actively and collaborate in the classroom.

Moreover, interactive games and applications have completely changed how kids



If you were given a chance to teach at ECE level, how will you make sure to overcome certain harm of technology usage and promote protected version of AI adoption?

learn in the current digital era, providing fresh and creative approaches to early language development. These resources offer dynamic, captivating learning

environments that accommodate a range of learning preferences and needs. They provide rich, interactive settings that promote language acquisition in ways that conventional teaching approaches might not be able to by combining multimedia components, individualized learning pathways, and immediate feedback. The emergence of digital technology, particularly interactive games and apps, has given teachers effective resources to support conventional language instruction. These digital platforms frequently provide socially engaging and contextually rich experiences. A crucial component of successful training is the ability of apps and games to adjust to each learner's unique speed while offering fast feedback and individualized content. Gamification techniques like progress tracking and reward systems also encourage young students to stick with their studies and stay involved (Shirindzi & Sikhwari, 2025). Thus, keeping in view numerous purposes of technology integration, Figure 1.2 shows multiple ways of utilizing technology in Early Childhood Education.

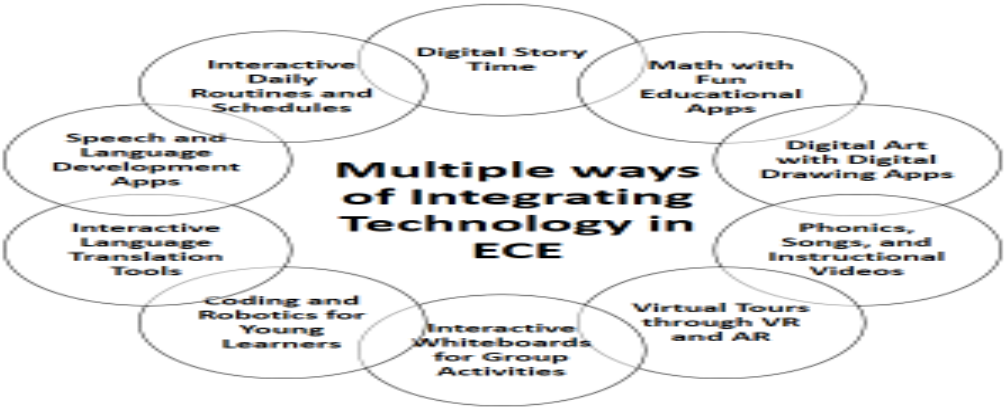


Figure 1.2 Multiple Ways of Integrating Technology in ECE

2.4 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) ADOPTION AND LIMITATIONS IN ECE

Digitalization has emerged as a key educational topic that is currently present in all educational systems. However, there is ongoing discussion about what constitutes effective use of digital technology in early childhood education. There is a common misconception that just providing access to technology is enough. However, just providing a technological tool to the instructors or stakeholders and then expecting change overnight is a strategy destined for failure. In fact, technology must meet a number of characteristics in order to be successfully integrated into practices. For instance, the emergence of AI-powered technology makes the social relationship dynamics much more difficult since social robots are made to mimic human reactions, creating emotional bonds similar to those with caretakers or pets. Children may view AI systems that can recognize and react to human emotions as friends rather than tools, which raises concerns about how these interactions affect social interaction expectations. Although artificial intelligence (AI) lacks true emotional reciprocity, its capacity to imitate relationship cues may make it difficult to distinguish between artificial and human ties.

ECE is distinct from other educational stages because of the special vulnerabilities that young children display. Generally, children from birth to age five are the focus of early childhood education (ECE), a formative time marked by significant turning points in their cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, and ethical development. Therefore, all types of Technology, including AI designs, must take into account these developmental imperatives since learning at this formative period is intricately linked to exploratory play, sensory experiences, and social interactions. However, the majority of AI products now on the market are made for kids eight years old and up, frequently putting efficiency and academic results ahead of the multimodal, relational, and experiential play-based learning that young children

need. This discrepancy highlights the need for developmentally appropriate AI adaptation for younger learners and poses serious concerns regarding the applicability of present AI models in ECE (Berson et al., 2025).

In early childhood education, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies must moderate the interactions between children, parents, and teachers, impacting how relationships are negotiated and knowledge is jointly created. Digital platforms that incorporate AI-powered learning companions need to do more than just provide material; they actively influence how children connect with peers, interact with information, and see interactions with technology. Therefore, the integration of AI into these networks needs to be carefully considered, not just for its educational advantages but also for its capacity to alter social roles, affect relationship expectations, and upend established hierarchies. Unfortunately, AI technologies run the risk of replacing the rich, human-centered learning interactions that are essential to early development of children's social and relational aspects. In short,

> Ainee, a Pakistan's first female AI- Powered teacher, is introduced in Karachi. She can respond
> students' queries, track their progress, and adjust lessons based on individual learning speeds,
> providing personalized learning experiences. This AI teacher represents a cutting-edge integrati
> artificial intelligence in education, enhancing the teaching process and student engagement. Do
> think such ideas work at ECE level? If yes, How? If No, Why?

while they learn. Early on, children develop solid foundational skills through repetition and immediate feedback.Technology provides tactile, visual, and auditory experiences to accommodate a variety of learning preferences. Animations, for example, are beneficial to visual learners, whereas music and sound are effective for auditory learners. Touchscreen gadgets that enable hands-on interaction are used by tactile learners. This guarantees that no child is left behind because of a misalignment between their learning and teaching styles.

Children are encouraged to independently ask questions, make predictions, and investigate solutions with the help of digital tools. They are frequently presented with scenarios in apps and virtual simulations like Cartoon Village that require critical thinking in order to proceed. This encourages active learning as opposed to passive learning and fosters curiosity. The foundation for lifelong learning skills is laid by inquiry-based activities.

Technology encourages collaborative problem-solving and teamwork when used in groups. Digital games teach kids to share ideas, take turns, and cooperate to achieve

a common objective. These social exchanges foster empathy and communication abilities. Technology-enabled collaboration mimics group dynamics in the real world.

Early technology exposure aids in children's comfort level with digital tools. They pick up fundamental skills like typing, swiping, clicking, and navigating user interfaces. In today's technologically advanced world, these fundamental digital skills are crucial. Additionally, early exposure fosters responsible digital behaviors.

Children with special needs benefit from assistive technologies like visual aids, audio books, and speech-to-text. They can engage in educational activities with their peers thanks to these resources like Card Talk, Avaz AAC, and Autismate. Technology can adjust to each learner's unique needs and learning style. As a result, the learning environment becomes more equitable and inclusive.

Collectively, parents and kids can interact through educational videos, e-books, or games. In addition to fostering learning, this shared screen time can improve parent-child relationships. Additionally, parents receive information about what their kids are learning and how they can help them. As a result, technology becomes a tool for family involvement in education.

Digital tools make high-quality resources accessible to kids from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Educational inequality is lessened when technology is made available in community centers or schools. Apps with multiple languages also aid non-native speakers in understanding concepts. As a result, technology significantly equalizes education.

Through games, quizzes, and activities that monitor student performance, technology facilitates rapid assessment. Immediate report viewing allows teachers to modify their lesson plans. This instant feedback loop aids in pinpointing areas in which students require additional assistance. Thus, overall learning outcomes are improved by ongoing assessment.

2.5 CHALLENGES IN USING TECHNOLOGY FOR ECE

Professional discussions on the use of technology in early childhood education settings are not a recent development. However, early childhood institutions continue to employ technology very seldom, even though the need for more technological literacy in educational settings is widely acknowledged. Digital technologies have numerous benefits, but there are also some drawbacks to using them in early language development. Several barriers to the use of technology in the classroom were covered by researchers in the literature. These obstacles include

inadequate or nonexistent classroom supplies, a lack of assistance from school officials, insufficient or incompetent teachers, a lack of digital teaching resources, and a dearth of opportunities for professional development (PD) (Elmalı et al., 2025). Thus, to make sure these technologies are utilized properly and efficiently, we need to solve problems like fair access to technology, worries about too much screen time, and protecting personal information.

Even with its benefits, using technology—more especially, artificial intelligence (AI)—in early childhood education (ECE) is not without its difficulties. For example, problems with data integrity, algorithmic biases, and inadequate flexibility to intricate pedagogical requirements might plague deep learning applications in education. Some AI methods' intrinsic reductionism may ignore important facets of cognitive and affective learning processes, which could have an effect on student engagement if left unchecked. According to research, even while AI is capable of processing enormous volumes of data, it frequently misses the contextual, humanistic, and subtle aspects of learning, like emotional intelligence and metacognitive abilities, which are essential for a child's holistic growth. Furthermore, the implementation of AI has particular difficulties in the education sector because of its dynamic and knowledge-intensive nature. These include correcting biases present in AI algorithms and making sure that they are in line with ethical norms, pedagogical best practices, and fair access to technology.

2.6 PREPARING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FOR TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN ECE

The adoption of technology in education has paradoxically intensified existing need to look for learners' need, particularly for learners from Early Childhood Education (ECE) spectrum, thereby undermining the potential of Technology equipped learning to democratize access to education with having diverse needs according to age group. A review of the literature reveals that teachers struggle to incorporate technology exclusively, primarily due to inadequate preparation and training which is required to teach at pre-school level. Infact, teacher-education programs have been struggling to produce teachers who can connect theory to practice. This means that there is a pressing need to modernize the pedagogical strategies and knowledge as it is evident that times are frequently changing, hence the education system and its conditions.

Specifically, in ECE, the pedagogical techniques have a long-lasting and significant role in making, organizing, and establishing child's educational experiences, which directly affect their life-long learning. Therefore, employing appropriate pedagogy is essential to accomplishing the goals of the specified curriculum for ECE. To make it more practical, the open dialogue, debate, research, and opportunities for

interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary thinking should all be valued in such education. To improve their proficiency and ensure that a child as a part of Early childhood education get the desired learning outcomes, teachers must receive training in various pedagogical approaches as per the needs and demands of certain age group (Ajani & Ajani, 2025). Thus, it is important to take into account the following aspects of educational training:

- Participate in active Digital Trainings
- Fulfilling each student's unique learning needs, including those of students with special needs, in the classroom.
- Involve parents in tech-based learning
- Acknowledging students' varied sensory, auditory, and visual learning styles.
- Balance between digital and non-digital learning
- Recognizing the diverse educational, social, cultural, disciplinary, and financial backgrounds of learners.
- Recognizing variations in children's speeds of learning.
- Monitor and evaluate the use of technology

2.7 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Technology in the infant and preschool classroom: catalyst for play Developments and the implication for early learner Children's creativity can be fostered and inspired through their engagement in, and exposure to technology.

Interactive applications, digital instructional videos, digital storytelling platforms and virtual simulations are some of the digital tools that have a potential to foster cognitive, social and emotional development when used properly as we discuss in this chapter.

Technology can support children with a variety of learning needs, foster creative expression, build foundational skills, and encourage different styles of learning and teaching. Innovations like A.I. are already making education more efficient and individualized, with flexible learning opportunities that are adapted to each child’s pace and development. However, there are challenges as well. Yet the potential for technology to buoy early learning environments is also stymied by issues such as too much screen time, unequal access to digital resources and insufficient teacher

training. Concerns about the privacy of children's data and excessive reliance on electronics must also be taken seriously. Technology must be carefully used, guided by developmentally appropriate practices, and balanced with relevant, real-world experiences that foster social interaction and hands-on exploration if it is to effectively meet the needs of early learners. Play and interpersonal relationships should not be replaced by technology; rather, it should be carefully crafted to enhance them.

In the future, the emphasis should be on developing an ethical, inclusive, and sustainable framework for the use of technology in ECE. First and foremost, funding pre-service and in-service teachers' professional development is imperative. To make sure that technology enhances learning rather than interferes with it, educators must be prepared to choose, assess, and integrate digital tools responsibly. Practical experience with educational technology, pedagogical approaches for integrating technology, and critical thinking regarding digital equity and child safety are all essential components of teacher education programs. In order to guarantee fair access to technology in all early childhood settings—urban and rural, public and private—policymakers and educational leaders should also give infrastructure development top priority.

It is imperative that parents and educators alike receive regular updates on research-based recommendations for screen time, content quality, and developmentally appropriate digital practices. Collaborations among educators, child development specialists, and education technology developers can aid in the creation of resources that genuinely meet the needs of young students. Last but not least, encouraging a balanced digital diet—where technology supports conventional approaches—will be essential to preparing kids for success in school and for lifelong learning in the digital age.

2.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT

Tick the statements which best apply to you;

1.	Now, I understand what it means to integrate technology in ECE classroom
2.	I can explain the need, demands, and use of technology in ECE
3.	I am aware of the potential benefits and limitations of using technology at ECE level
4.	I appreciate planning pre-service technology based training for ECE teachers.

5.	I feel committed and confident in using latest technology for improving quality of learning.
6.	I feel steadfast in giving technology exposure to young children
7.	I am ready to explore more about the

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Suggested Readings

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Stepp, C. (2025). Developing Identity with Technology in the Kindergarten Classroom. In *Cases on Enhancing P-16 Student Engagement with Digital Technologies* (pp. 121-142). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.

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UNIT 3

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES IN THE ECE CLASSROOM

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OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. To define the instructional strategies
2. To describe the instructional strategies in ECE
3. To apply the different activities and strategies in ECE classrooms
4. To design activities for ECE classrooms

3.1 DEFINITION OF STRATEGY.

A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.

3.2 WHAT ARE THE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES?

Instructional strategies are techniques teachers use to help students become independent, strategic learners. These strategies become learning strategies when students independently select the appropriate ones and use them effectively to accomplish tasks or meet goals.

Instructional strategies can:

- Motivate students and help them focus their attention
- Organize information for understanding and remembering
- Monitor and assess learning.

Effective instructional and learning strategies can be used across grade levels and subject areas, and can accommodate a range of student differences. So, this unit focuses on instructional strategies in ECE.

3.3 INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES IN ECE:

3.3.1 Literacy—including story book reading and reading and writing

In this critical year, kindergarten teachers need to capitalize on every opportunity for enhancing children's literacy. One approach is through listening to stories (Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein 1986; Elley, 1989). Children need to be exposed to vocabulary from a wide variety of genres, including informational texts as well as narratives. The learning of vocabulary, however, is not necessarily simply a byproduct of reading stories (Leung & Pikulski, 1990). Some explanation of vocabulary words prior to listening to a story is related significantly to children's learning of new words (Elley, 1989). Dickinson and Smith (1994), for example, found that asking predictive and analytic questions before and after the readings produced positive effects on vocabulary and comprehension.

Activities that help children clarify the concept of words are also worthy of time and attention in the kindergarten curriculum (Gough and Juel, 1991). Language experience charts that let teachers demonstrate how talk can be written down provide a natural medium for children's developing word awareness in meaningful contexts. Transposing children's spoken words into written symbols through dictation provides a concrete demonstration that strings of letters between spaces are words and that not all words are the same length. Studies confirm the value of what many teachers have known and done for years: Teacher dictations of children's stories help develop word awareness, spelling, and the conventions of written language.

Many children enter kindergarten with at least some perfunctory knowledge of the alphabet letters. An important goal for the kindergarten teacher is to reinforce this skill by ensuring that children can recognize and discriminate these letter shapes

with increasing ease and fluency (Mason, 1980; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Children's proficiency in letter naming is a well-established predictor of their end-of-year achievement (Bond & Dykstra, 1967), probably because it mediates the ability to remember sounds. Generally, a good rule according to current learning theory (Bishop and Adams, 1990) is to start with the more easily visualized uppercase letters, followed by identifying lowercase letters. In each case, introducing just a few letters at a time, rather than many, enhances mastery.

At about the time children are readily able to identify letter names, they begin to connect the letters with the sounds they hear. A fundamental insight in this phase of learning is that letters and letter sequences map onto phonological forms. Phonemic awareness, however, is not merely a solitary insight or an instant ability (Juel, 1991). It takes time and practice.

Children who are phonemically aware can think about and manipulate sounds in words. They know when words rhyme or do not; they know when words begin or end with the same sound; and they know that a word like bat is composed of three sounds /b/ /a/ /t/ and that these sounds can be blended into a spoken word. Popular rhyming books, for example, may draw children's attention to rhyming patterns, serving as a basis for extending vocabulary (Ehri & Robbins 1992). Using initial letter cues, children can learn many new words through analogy, taking the familiar word bake as a strategy for figuring out a new word, lake.

Further, as teachers engage children in shared writing, they can pause before writing a word, say it slowly, and stretch out the sounds as they write it. Such activities in the context of real reading and writing help children attend to the features of print and the alphabetic nature of English.

Early literacy activities teach children a great deal about writing and reading, but often in ways that do not look much like traditional elementary school instruction. Capitalizing on the active and social nature of children's learning, early instruction must provide rich demonstrations, interactions, and models of literacy in the course of activities that make sense to young children. Children must also learn about the relation between oral and written language and the relation between letters, sounds, and words. In classrooms built around a wide variety of print activities, when talking, reading, writing, playing, and listening to one another, children will want to read and write and feel capable that they can do so.

Activities for birth to preschool: the early years

Activity 1: Books and babies

Babies love to listen to the human voice. What better way than through reading!

What you'll need:

Some books are written especially for babies (books made of cardboard or cloth with flaps to lift and holes to peek through).

What to do:

- Start out by singing lullabies and folk songs to your baby. When your baby is about six months old, choose books with brightly colored, simple pictures and lots of rhythm in the text. (Mother Goose rhymes are perfect.) Hold your baby in your lap so he/she can see the colorful pages of the book. Include books that show pictures and names of familiar objects.
- As you read with your baby, point out objects in the pictures and make sure your baby sees all the things that are fun to do with books.
- Vary the tone of your voice with different characters in the stories, sing nursery rhymes, make funny faces, do whatever special effects you can to stimulate your baby's interest.
- Allow your child to touch and hold cloth and sturdy cardboard books.
- When reading to a baby, keep the sessions brief but read daily and often.

As you read to your baby, your child is forming an association between books and what is most loved – your voice and closeness. Allowing babies to handle books deepens their attachment even more.

Activity 2: Tot talk

What's "old hat" to you can be new and exciting to toddlers and preschoolers. When you talk about everyday experiences, you help children connect their world to language and enable them to go beyond that world to new ideas.

What you'll need:

Yourself and your child

What to do:

- As you get dinner ready, talk to your child about things that are happening. When your 2- or 3-year-old "helps" by taking out all the pots and pans, talk about them. "Which one is the biggest?" "Can you find a lid for that one?" "What color is this one?"
- When walking down the street and your toddler or preschooler stops to collect leaves, stop and ask questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. "Which leaves are the same?" "Which leaves are different?" "What else grows on trees?"
- Ask "what if" questions. "What would happen if we didn't shovel the snow?" "What if that butterfly lands on your nose?"
- Answer your child's endless "why" questions patiently. When you say, "I don't know, let's look it up," you show how important books are as resources for answering questions.
- After your child tells you a story, ask questions so you can understand better. That way, children learn how to tell complete stories and know you are interested in what they have to say.

- Expose your child to varied experiences – trips to the library, museum, or zoo; walks in the park; or visits with friends and relatives. Surround these events with lots of comments, questions, and answers.

Talking enables children to expand their vocabulary and understanding of the world. The ability to carry on a conversation is important for reading development. Remember, it is better to talk too much rather than too little with a small child.

Activity 3: R and R – repetition and rhyme

Repetition makes books predictable, and young readers love knowing what comes next.

What you'll need:

- Books with repeated phrases
- Short rhyming poems.

What to do:

- Pick a story with repeated phrases or a poem you and your child like. For example, read:

  (Wolf voice:) "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."
  (Little pig :) "Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin."
  (Wolf voice:) "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!"
- After the wolf has blown down the first pig's house, your child will soon join in with the refrain.
- Read slowly, and with a smile or a nod, let your child know you appreciate his or her participation.
- As the child grows more familiar with the story, pause and give him or her a chance to fill in the blanks and phrases.
- Encourage your child to pretend to read, especially books that contain repetition and rhyme. Most children who enjoy reading will eventually memorize all or parts of a book and imitate your reading. This is a normal part of reading development.

When children anticipate what's coming next in a story or poem, they have a sense of mastery over books. When children feel power, they have the courage to try. Pretending to read is an important step in the process of learning to read.

Activity 4: Poetry in motion

When children "act out" a good poem, they learn to love its rhyme, rhythm, and the pictures it paints with a few well-chosen words. They grow as readers by connecting feelings with the written word.

What you'll need:

Poems that rhyme, tell a story, and/or are written from a child's point of view.

What to do:

- Read a poem slowly to your child, and bring all your dramatic talents to the

reading. (In other words, "ham it up.")

- If there is a poem your child is particularly fond of, suggest acting out a favorite line. Be sure to award such efforts with delighted enthusiasm.
- Suggest acting out a verse, a stanza, or the entire poem. Ask your child to make a face the way the character in the poem is feeling. Remember that facial expressions bring emotion into the performer's voice.
- Be an enthusiastic audience for your child. Applause is always nice.
- If your child is comfortable with the idea, look for a larger setting with an attentive, appreciative audience. Perhaps an after-dinner "recital" for family members would appeal to your child.
- Mistakes are a fact of life, so ignore them.

Poems are often short with lots of white space on the page. This makes them manageable for new readers and helps to build their confidence.

Activity 5: Story talk

Talking about what you read is another way to help children develop language and thinking skills. You won't need to plan the talk, discuss every story, or expect an answer.

What you'll need:

Storybooks

What to do:

- Read slowly and pause occasionally to think aloud about a story. You can say: "I wonder what's going to happen next!" Or ask a question: "Do you know what a palace is?" Or point out: "Look where the little mouse is now."
- Answer your children's questions, and if you think they don't understand something, stop and ask them. Don't worry if you break into the flow of a story to make something clear. But keep the story flowing as smoothly as possible.
- Talking about stories they read helps children develop their vocabularies, link stories to everyday life, and use what they know about the world to make sense out of stories.

Activity 6: Now hear this

Children are great mimics. When you tell stories, your child will begin to tell stories, too.

What you'll need:

Your imagination

What to do:

- Have your child tell stories like those you have told. Ask: "And then what happened?" to urge the story along.

- Listen closely when your child speaks. Be enthusiastic and responsive. Give your child full attention.
- If you don't understand some part of the story, take the time to get your child to explain. This will help your child understand the relationship between a speaker and a listener and an author and a reader.
- Encourage your child to express himself or herself. This will help your child develop a richer vocabulary. It can also help with pronouncing words clearly.

Having a good audience is very helpful for a child to improve language skills, as well as confidence in speaking. Parents can be the best audience a child will ever have.

Activity 7: TV

Television can be a great tool for education. The keys to successful TV viewing are setting limits, making good choices, taking time to watch together, discussing what you view, and encouraging follow-up reading.

What you'll need:

A weekly TV schedule

What to do:

- Limit your child's TV viewing and make your rules and reasons clear. Involve your child in choosing which programs to watch. Read the TV schedule together to choose.
- Monitor what your child is watching, and whenever possible, watch the programs with your child.
- When you watch programs with your child, discuss what you have seen so your child can better understand the programs.
- Look for programs that will stimulate your child's interests and encourage reading (such as dramatizations of children's literature and programs on wildlife and science)

Many experts recommend that children watch no more than 10 hours of TV each week. Limiting TV viewing frees up time for reading and writing activities.

It is worth noting that captioned TV shows can be especially helpful for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, studying English as a second language, or having difficulty learning to read.

3.3.2 Early reading interventions

Children who struggle to develop emergent reading and writing skills may need early reading intervention in order to prevent reading failure.

Reading Intervention

Reading is the gateway to all learning. Without the development of good reading skills, students are placed at greater risk for academic failure. There are three areas

in which students may experience difficulties with reading:

- **Fluency** (or rate and automaticity),
- **Decoding** (or breaking words into syllables), and
- **Comprehension** (or understanding what has been read).

Early intervention refers to ideas and practices that are used to help struggling students as early as possible so that they experience better outcomes in school. Such interventions can be started as early as preschool, depending on the needs of each child. The key is for parents, teachers, and others who are familiar with a child to act quickly when the child first begins to show signs of difficulty in any developmental area. For the purpose of this lesson, however, the focus will be on early reading intervention.

Why Early Intervention?

Many students enter the classroom with poor reading skills. A child's socioeconomic status has been noted as a primary cause of poor reading skill development. Children from poor households tend to have less exposure to reading before they start school. As a result, they're more likely to know fewer words than children whose families are in the middle class or higher.

Research has pointed to early interventions as being the best way to improve the reading skills of students who are struggling. Even before they enter school for the first time, children may start to display problems with skills such as being able to identify the letters in the alphabet, word recognition, and word pronunciation. As the student moves on to the next grade, he or she will continue to show signs of poor reading skills if interventions are not put in place.

By third grade, poor readers face a higher probability of experiencing academic failure and will have a harder time trying to catch up with their peers.

Development of early reading skills is an essential component of later reading skills, and research indicates that children benefit when they enter kindergarten with phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts of print awareness, and practice with emergent writing.

5 Classroom Strategies for Early Reading Intervention

Beyond phonics, there are key intervention strategies that do not necessarily isolate students from one another by sorting them into leveled groups. For example, choral reading is a much-loved way to get the whole class reading along together, which may help less confident readers learn to recognize frequently used words in a more relaxed and community-based manner.

1. **PALS:** Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) exercises pair strong and weak readers who take turns reading, rereading, and retelling.
2. **Teacher Read-Aloud:** This activity, says Julie Adams of Adams Educational Consulting, is "perhaps one of the most effective methods for

improving student fluency and comprehension, as the teacher is the expert in reading the text and models how a skilled reader reads using appropriate pacing and prosody (inflection)." Playing an audiobook achieves similar results.

3. **Shared Reading/Modeling**: By reading aloud while students follow along in their own books, the instructor models fluency, pausing occasionally to demonstrate comprehension strategies.
4. **The Crazy Professor Reading Game:** According to the article, to bring the text to life, students will:

- Read orally with hysterical enthusiasm
- Reread with dramatic hand gestures
- Partner up with a super-stoked question-asker and -answerer
- Play "crazy professor" and "eager student" in a hyped-up overview of the text

5. **FORI**: With Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI), primary students read the same section of a text many times over the course of a week. Here are the steps:

- The teacher reads aloud while students follow along in their books.
- Students echo-read.
- Students choral-read.
- Students partner-read.
- The text is taken home if more practice is required, and extension activities can be integrated during the week.

There is a great deal of evidence to support the idea that students who cannot read well by the time they are eight or nine years old—when the emphasis in school becomes reading to learn and not learning to read—often struggle to catch up both academically and socially with their peers. Fortunately, research and shared best practices available today help teachers develop many different paths to intervention, from creating literacy-rich classrooms to utilizing essential whole-group and direct instruction strategies, which can help students become confident, capable, independent readers.

3.3.3 Patterns for writing

Learning to write is a huge process that takes many years. There are distinct stages that children go through, and there are many strategies to help them on the way. One of the best of these in the early days is pre-writing patterns. These cover the whole stage of progress in between beginning to mark-make and, later on, writing words.

Pre-writing patterns

Pre-writing patterns are different types of lines, such as zig-zags, waves, or spirals.

They are used by children when they are starting to get structure into their mark-making, moving beyond circles and dots. They are a bridge between the earliest mark-making and later writing letters.

They are a collection of lots of simple types of lines. Examples are things like circles and a line of dots. Pre-writing patterns have multiple benefits for getting children engaged in early mark-making, and let's take a look at some of them now…

The Benefits of Pre-Writing Patterns

Structure

Pre-writing patterns help children to get a level of structure into their mark-making. They encourage them to begin moving mark-making tools in different directions and in different formations.

Big or Small Scale

One of the beauties of writing patterns is that they can be done both on a small and a large scale. Writing patterns can be done in the air, or with paint brushes on fences, or with all sorts of other large equipment.

They help develop movements in their core, arms, shoulders, and wrists, as well as help them coordinate fine motor skills in their fingers and hands.

Introduce Different Movements

Trying to copy them gets their arms and hands moving in ways they will not have experienced before.

They will introduce some of the following movements:

- Writing horizontally
- Writing vertically
- Going anticlockwise
- Writing clockwise
- Creating curves and loops
- Creating straight lines
- Creating circles and other shapes
- Can be done on a big scale or a small one
- Can be done in a range of exciting and fun ways

Use loose parts and other objects

The Main Writing Patterns – The Order

There is an order from easier to harder. This is not set in stone, but I would say that it looks something like this:

Step.1 Circles And Dots

This is what many children start with anyway in their mark-making, so it is good to follow the order of nature.

Dots can go in different directions – e.g., horizontal or vertical.

The same with circles – they can be drawn in a line in different directions.

Circles and dots can be big or small!

Step.2 Straight Lines

The simplest straight lines to try are vertical or horizontal.

However, you can definitely expand to diagonal lines as well.

Once again, you can model these kinds of lines in a sequence, such as a line of vertical lines or a line of horizontal lines.

Step.3 Curved and Changing Lines

The most common of these are:

Zig-zags – These are normally quite achievable for most children

Waves on the sea – A wiggly line that can be shallow or more pronounced.

Springs – These are more difficult and really expand their spatial awareness. It is a continually curving line that interlocks over itself.

Crosses – Another very achievable one. Great for treasure maps – and x marking the spot.

Step.4 More Complex Lines

Turrets on a castle

Spirals

Complex wave patterns – These look like lifelike waves. They are great for beginning to form simple handwriting patterns.

Step.5 Some Simple Letters

You can definitely incorporate some letters into writing patterns later on. Particularly, the simpler ones to write are best for this.

This is letters like ‘o’, ‘l’, and ‘I’.

Get the children to bend their knees or stretch up tall as they are doing them, and use huge sideways movements as well.

The simplest way to do it is that you model how to do some patterns yourself, and the children copy. You could draw them on a huge piece of paper on the wall, or on a board. Alternatively, you can just do them actively in the sky and the children copy.

Tips for Writing Patterns

- Go in order! Start with the easiest pre writing patterns, and try more difficult ones when they get good at those
- Introduce them in a multi-sensory ways
- Use books and famous artists as a ‘hook’
- Allow them to use them in both adult-led and child-led scenarios

- Offer huge amounts of praise and encouragement to keep children focusses and wanting to do it

Stages of Writing Development and Ages

Writing development is a process of learning that takes years to complete. The process of writing and drawing for young people follows varying learning curves based on the individual child. However, every child transitions through similar stages of development with their art and writing. Each stage is unique in the writing development process. Understanding how written language represents verbal and cognitive ideas is a process of development in, and of itself.

There are seven basic stages of development that children travel through when they are developing their skills. Each stage is described below.

- Stage **1** is known as **random scribbling**, and this transpires from age fifteen months through age two and a half years.
- Stage **2** is known as **controlled scribbling**, and this can occur anywhere from age two years to three years.
- Stage **3** is known as **lines and patterns** which can transpire around age two and a half years to age three and a half years.
- Stage **4** is known as **pictures of objects or people**, and this can occur anywhere from age three years to five years.
- Stage **5**, is known as **letter and word practice** which can transpire from age three years to five years.
- Stages **6** is known as the **phrases stage** and children begin to show spacing between words making it clearer to read their work around the age of eight to ten.
- Stage **7** is known as the **conventional stage** of writing that shows words as spelled correctly, punctuation is present in sentences, and the writing is understandable and clear during the ages of eight to ten years.

Even though there are many schools of thought on how many stages of development in writing there are and what each stage may look like, all children travel through a similar trajectory of categories. Each child is unique and thus will show development in many ways. There is no precise time line, or age that a skill will emerge. Every child shows understanding and development at different ages.

Summary

Writing patterns are a huge and crucial phase in early mark-making. Luckily they are fun to try, and can be incorporate in many exciting adult-led or child-led learning experiences. Fire up children's curiosity about mark-making at this stage, and you will empower them to become confident writers later on.

3.3.4 Labeling, recognition and matching

Labels are an important necessity in all ECE and primary grade

classrooms. They are as important as toys and manipulative.

Labels are a precursor to reading in the primary classroom. No matter what the grade, students who are able to match a picture to a toy will eventually begin to read labels on their own.

Labeling is especially important because labels provide visual cues to the location of items throughout your classroom. While most students are able to ask about the location of an item, some students might need additional help. Having visual cues give students who are younger, non-verbal, or lack the confidence, the opportunity to be independent and move comfortably and safely through your room.

Suggestions and Best Practice Guidelines

- All labels should include a picture or visual.
- If you teach in a bilingual or ESL environment labels should be in both languages. English should be one color and the other language should be in a different color.
- Don't be wordy- each label should only include one word. For example use the term "Blocks" instead of "Multicolored Foam Blocks".
- While toys are known by different names don't be afraid to call them whatever your students call them. Not Magna tiles but tiles? Label them that way. Also remember that Spanish is regional (as are some of the other romantic languages- French, Portuguese, etc.) so fee free to label items in those languages by whatever name your kids use. Labels are easily updated so just try things out and see what works best for your kids or change them year to year.
- Label everything in both words and pictures! No item is too small or too unimportant. As a professor of mine advised, "liter the environment with print'. Students should be able to read the pictures and begin to make connections to the words of all items in your classroom.

Below you will find a "How To" guide to labeling your classroom. I promise, this will make your day a little less stressful and hopefully it will give you some extra time to work with students.

Preschoolers can develop an understanding and skills of classification, matching, seriation and patterning.

Classification

Classification is the skill of sorting or grouping items by similar characteristics, such as colors, shapes or sizes. Children naturally classify toys by type and sort crayons by color. Children between the ages of 3 and 4 years old enjoy sorting and classifying objects usually by one characteristic (color, shape or size). If preschoolers do not know the names of colors or shapes, it may be helpful to ask them to find something that is the same color or shape as a specific item. As children

develop, they can classify by more than one characteristic, such as sorting the green square blocks.

Preschoolers benefit from exploring a variety of materials and making discoveries. When selecting materials for young children, avoid any small items that could pose a choking hazard. As children explore a bin of rocks and leaves, they can learn which items are big, little, rough, smooth, thick, thin, hard, soft, wet or dry. Children are learning to classify items by similarities and differences.

Ideas to try:

Sorting Pom-poms: Provide children with a variety of pom-poms in different sizes and give them tongs to sort the pom-poms into a small, medium, or large container.

Sorting Graph: After sorting items such as leaves, large sea shells, or postcards, have the children record the information on a graph or chart. You can create a bar graph by listing the types of objects on the bottom and the number of objects on the side. (See example.)

Button, Button: Children can classify or sort large buttons by color, shape or size. They can sort by the type of button (metal, plastic, or cloth), whether the buttons are shiny or dull, or how many holes are in the button. Children could also create a graph to illustrate the different colors or sizes of buttons.

Matching is a simple form of sorting. It is finding items that are the same or alike, such as a pair of gloves. Matching can include finding items with the same specific characteristic (color, size, or shape). For example, children can match two items that are the color blue.Matching

Ideas to try:

Match the Socks: Mix up pairs of different colored socks in a basket. Invite children to find pairs of socks that match and hang them up together on a clothesline.

Matching Game: Trace the outline of common objects onto a sheet of paper. Have the children match the object to the corresponding outline on the paper. You could also take pictures from magazines of common items, such as spoons and cups, and have children find the real object in the kitchen area.

Bunny Tails: Create different colored bunny shapes and use pom-poms for bunny tails in corresponding colors. Children can match the bunny tail to the bunny shape of the same color.

Seriation

Seriation is arranging objects in order by size, location or position. Ordering requires the ability to see differences and compare multiple objects. For example, children in the classroom could be arranged from shortest to tallest, or story picture cards could be sequenced in the order the events happened in the story.

Ideas to try:

Car Race: Children can race cars down a track and then arrange the cars in the order

they finished the race from first to last.

Which is Longer?: Give children several crayons of different lengths. Have them put two crayons side by side and then tell you which is longer. Try it with another pair of crayons. Have children put all of the crayons in order from shortest to longest.

Story Time: Using books such as the Three Bears or Three Billy Goats Gruff, children can line up the characters from smallest to largest. They can arrange the Three Bears' porridge, chairs and beds by size.

Patterning

Children observe patterns at school, at home, at play and in nature. They notice patterns in clothing, songs, nature and even their daily routine. Patterns are sequences that repeat. The ability to recognize patterns supports math skills. It helps children make predictions about what will come next.

The most common pattern is the ABAB pattern: red, blue, red, blue. Other patterns include the ABCABC pattern and AABAAB pattern. For example, circle, square, triangle, circle, square, triangle (ABCABC). Children can create patterns using colors, shapes, sizes or other characteristics that are repeated multiple times.

Ideas to try:

Pattern Blocks: Children can create a pattern with different colors of interlocking blocks. You can also give them picture cards with sample patterns, and children can try to recreate the pattern.

What is missing? Create examples of patterns on a piece of paper with fun foam shapes. Leave missing spaces in the pattern and have the children fill in the missing parts with extra fun foam shapes. For example, triangle, rectangle, circle, triangle, _____,circle, and have the child fill in the blank. As children become familiar with making patterns, you can increase the complexity of the pattern or the number of missing parts.

What Comes Next?: Ask children to tell you what comes next as you create a pattern. For example, horse, cat, dog, horse, cat, _____.

Sound and Movement Patterns: Invite children to create physical patterns, such as clap-clap-hop, clap- clap-hop, or dance a pattern, such as shake, spin and wiggle (repeat).

Summary

Include items in the classroom and at home that promote mathematical thinking, such as manipulatives, measuring tapes, scales and rulers. Children gain an interest in mathematics by participating in hands-on experiences. It is also important for children to hear language focused on math concepts. Engagement in mathematical experiences helps children gain abilities in making predictions, solving problems, thinking, reasoning and making connections with their world.

3.3.5 Child centered learning

Child centered education in today's world is based on the thinking that students must be encouraged to learn at their own pace.

The traditional methods of teaching more often do not produce desirable results.

It is leading to students losing interest, piling up of home assignments and poor mental health for teachers, students and parents.

Children love to learn when they enjoy their lessons. Child focused schooling makes learning relevant and fun, giving even the tired students an incentive to keep trying.

The history of children specific education began in the twentieth century with ideas from John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Maria Montessori.

It is a reversal from the traditional teacher-centered understanding of the learning process and instead putting students at the center of the learning process.

Child-Centered classroom

Child-centered education begins with teachers involving students in a classroom to share in decision making processes and believing in their capacity to lead.

When a child learns about the relevance of the subject in discussion, it makes leaning more interesting for them.

During creative learning when a child chooses the focus of the content he/she can use their imagination to come up with interesting takes on the same subject. Brainstorm and engaging in dialog together helps children to match their interests with the skills and concepts.

It requires children to be active participants and be responsible participants for their own learning.

Child-centered teachers engage in an "active learning" process to help the child develop the knowledge and skills needed in all areas.

Importance of Play

A Child-Centered Kindergarten

The child-centered method is not a new kindergarten philosophy.

The idea actually dates back to the 19th century where kindergarten was believed to be "a garden for children", a place where each child could grow at their own pace by exploring their unique interests.

This idea has developed over the years into what's become a very popular alternative for many parents who feel their child isn't quite socially, emotionally and/or cognitively prepared for traditional kindergarten.

Continuum of Teaching Strategies		
Type of Strategy	**Role of the Teacher**	**When to Use It?**
Child-Discovery Learning Children are: Active explorers	Prepare the setting, actively observe and document, and ensure appropriate challenge. Intervene when safety or frustration are present.	During exploration, imaginative play, building, construction, task-oriented play.
Child-Directed Learning Children are: Active designers	Prepare the setting, scaffold and support learning, stimulate emerging skills, increase complexity and challenge, introduce and extend concepts, and enhance vocabulary.	During dramatic play and manipulative or exploratory play.
Shared Learning for Emergent Curriculum Children are: Collaborative learners	Document questions, provide processes and resources, and support demonstration of new knowledge.	During teaching moments, short-term projects, or longer-term investigations.
Teacher-Guided Learning Children are: Active participants	Introduce skills, strategies and concepts, demonstrate and scaffold learning, and facilitate cooperative activities.	During new activities and with new concepts or materials.
Teacher-Directed Learning Children are: Active learners	Teach and model new skills, and lead or facilitate mini-lessons, games, or small and large group interactive activities.	During content mini-lessons, reading, math games, and math talk.

3.3.6 Activity-based learning

The Activity-based Learning system, or the ABL, was first pioneered by David Horsburgh, the British-born educationist. Since its inception, it has seen implemented widely across the nation in many states.

Activity-Based Learning - An Effective Methodology

Activity-Based Learning (ABL) is a methodology where children learn at their own pace through various supervised activities. It is a more engaging and interactive way of teaching children. It allows for monitoring factors such as speech, coordination, social skills, and motor skills, amongst other key factors.

It is a fun approach to learning as it boosts the development of the brain in children by providing constant stimulus by prompting them for responses. Activity-based learning is achieved broadly in three ways, namely, exploration, experimentation, and expression.

Types of Activity-Based Learning

Activity-based learning can be categorized broadly into two types. The *student-*

centric approach, where the teaching is designed with the student as the major factor. This promotes self-learning. The second type is the *teacher-centric* approach, where the teacher is in the lead roleand leads the student through the entire process.

Benefits of Activity-Based Learning

Activity-Based Learning has innumerable benefits, especially in early childhood development. Let us comb through some of its benefits:

1. It encourages children to be inquisitive and independent. It helps them to think analytically. It kindles their curiosity, which in turn makes them active and not passive. The children become more observant. Its focus is on the 'learning by doing' method.
2. It supports the development of social skills. It improves their confidence, tests their cooperation levels when in groups, and builds their communication skills. The children learn to challenge themselves and come up with creative solutions.
3. It enhances memory. This is true even for adults and not just children. Anything we do, we remember for a longer period than anything we read or listen to. The retention and recall rates are undoubtedly better with activity-based learning.
4. It encourages them to express themselves freely. Activity-based learning helps children get in touch with their emotions and convey them.
5. Continuous engagement. This is perhaps the most significant benefit. As opposed to classroom teaching, activity-based learning faces no threat of inattention. Since the children are actively involved at every step, they cannot stray away.
6. Ability variability: This feature is hugely leveraged by activity-based learning. Not all children can grasp things at the same time, pace, or degree. Each child is unique, even in their ability to learn. Activity-based learning promotes learning at the pace of each child, thus eliminating the stress of time or the pace at which they learn.
7. Motivation: Unquestionably, each child feels a sense of accomplishment in performing each activity. They feel motivated by each of their achievements. This enhances their confidence to believe in their abilities.

The activity-based learning revolves around the following concepts:

- Experimentation – gathering knowledge through experience.
- Exploration – gathering knowledge and attaining skills through active investigation.
- Expression – encouraging kids to express their views through visual presentations.

Why Activity Based Learning is Important?

Activity-based learning not only helps kids enjoy the learning experience but also has multiple other benefits, which are mentioned below:

- Helping Students Remember Information
- Encouraging Kids to be Independent and Inquisitive
- Supporting Social Development
- Emphasizing the Relevance of Educational Material
- Encouraging kids to express themselves in Different Ways

3.3.7 Practical simulation

Simulation, a technique familiar to business and higher education, is presented in the context of training in early childhood education. Simulation refers to the creation of an environment that represents situations and personnel roles in actual work experience. Participants adopt roles of persons in the early childhood decision-making process.

With the increasing technology integration practices in education, the adoption of computer simulations to teach conceptual understanding of science concepts is widely accepted by educators across the globe.

How Does Simulation Work?

Simulations work by developing models or systems to recreate real-world scenarios. A **model** refers to any setup, device, or representation used to describe or simulate a process when it cannot be experienced directly. The steps needed to conduct a simulation are as follows:

1. Identify what scenario needs to be recreated and assess the feasibility.
2. Determine the objective or goal of the simulation and ensure that the planned simulation will provide it.
3. The device, parts, or models needed to execute the simulation are assembled. In some instances, test runs in small groups might be needed to ensure functionality and address any issues before the simulation is done on a larger scale.
4. Distribute or execute the simulation. Simulations are especially significant for otherwise dangerous scenarios, and utmost preparedness is crucial to the outcome. An example would be an earthquake drill; knowledge of what to do before a real event could be the difference between surviving or not. Simulations are also important for safety tests. A variety of products, equipment, and medications require testing to ensure safety, and often simulations are used to help achieve that. For example, car crash simulations occur to test a cars' safety before it is released for commercial use.

Processes That Can Be Simulated

There are a variety of processes that can be simulated, some of which include:

- Science experiments or scientific discovery
- Natural disaster drills; examples would include a tornado or fire drill.
- Weather forecasting
- Flying a plane
- Healthcare processes
- Movies; for example, a movie scene of actors in an ocean may actually be shot in a swimming pool and edited to look like it occurred in the ocean.
- Safety tests

They are also referred to as computational representations of real or hypothesized situations or phenomena, and an environment that provides a dynamic, interactive, and visualized learning experience (Murphy, Cook, and Fallon, 2021). The idea of computer simulations has also been connected to a web-based or remote laboratory, which provides participants with a way to conduct real-world experiments at a distance (Tho & Yeung, 2016). Computer simulations have a great application in a variety of fields, including education, aviation, and health sciences. They empower participants to grow their skills without being exposed to a situation that may result in severe consequences or require extra-high expenses otherwise. More importantly, such computer programs offer an efficient way of monitoring experimental variables, giving an opportunity for exploration and hypothesizing (Blake & Scanlon, 2007).

The Use of Computer Simulations in Teaching

Computer simulation emphasizes the learner as an active agent in constructing their knowledge. They have extraordinary potential to facilitate authentic inquiry practices that include articulating questions, hypothesis formulation, exploring the effect of data in a situation, and theory revision (Rutten et al., 2012). Wang et al. (2010) also highlight the value of simulations as they let learners effortlessly manipulate objects (virtual manipulatives), generate novel representations, carry out experiments to test hypotheses, and tentative ideas.

Advantages and disadvantages of simulation.

Advantages

- Simulation allows you to explore ‘what if’ questions and scenarios without having to experiment on the system itself.
- It helps you to identify bottlenecks in material, information, and product flows.
- It helps you to gain insight into which variables are most important to system performance.

Disadvantages

- The quality of the analysis depends on the quality of the model and the skills of the modeller, who requires specialised training.
- It's a time-consuming and expensive process, so it should not be used if an analytical method can provide quicker results.

Your child to find her way out!

3.3.14 Differentiated instructions

Differentiation means tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products, or the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping makes this a successful approach to instruction.

Teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile:

- **Content** – what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information.
- **Process** – activities in which the student engages to make sense of or master the content.
- **Products** – culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit; and
- **Learning environment** – the way the classroom works and feels.

Activities

- Counting: Ask the students to make groups of two blocks, three blocks, four blocks, and so on. See what number they can reach by grouping the blocks.
- Counting and attributes: The grouping might also be two blocks of the same color or three blocks of the same size. Ask, How do you know the size of a block? Is this block bigger or smaller than this other block? How do you know?
- Storytelling: Using a tower you build with a learner, or a small group of learners who seem ready for this step, start a story and let the child develop it—for example, "Many years ago, in this tower, lived a ___ (witch, fairy, girl, boy, monster, robot... let the child choose)"—and then provide prompts for them to continue expanding on the story.
- Use the blocks to construct beds for dolls, or assign the blocks different roles—turn them into microphones or mobile phones, or even make a family with the blocks.
- Ask the learners interested in the topic to touch the plant and name the different parts they can see. Then ask what part of the plant is in the soil (roots), what those are for, how big they are, and what color they are.
- If of students show that they know enough about the parts of the plant, ask them to choose a label (that you've prepared beforehand) with the name of

each part of the plant, and ask how they were able to read the labels, to check if they're aware of their decoding and reading process.

- Some children may not be interested in manipulating the plant and the soil, but they might want to draw a diagram of the plant or make a representation using modeling dough or clay. Later, the other children who were able to read the labels can place them on the diagram and show their peers how to determine where to put each label.
- For those who might be ready for deeper research work, ask them, What color is the plant? Why do you think this is? And from there, make a list of the different hypotheses the children come up with and develop an inquiry-based project.
- Children love to connect their learning with music, so ask them to come up with a simple song that includes, for example, the parts of the plant, the needs of the plant, and how to take care of the plant.

Differentiation Strategies

A student-centered classroom is built on autonomy and the elimination of traditional teaching practices. The student-centered classroom operates on collaboration, project-based learning, technology integration, and plenty of conversation between students and teachers about learning. Here are five steps to building a remarkable student-centered classroom.

1. **Create ongoing projects.** The ongoing project plays an essential role in promoting mastery. The key to ongoing projects is to provide plenty of project choices that enable students to demonstrate what they are learning. Many objectives or standards can be met in one well-crafted project that allows students to decide what the final product looks like. The ongoing project stimulates the workshop environment that is the foundation upon which the student-centered classroom is built.
2. **Integrate technology.** In today's digital world, it doesn't matter if your classroom is filled with computers; students have them in the palms of their hands. Mobile learning is no longer the wave of the future; it's the present. Learners will be more engaged in any activity or project if they can choose from the hundreds of amazing, free web tools that provide excellent platforms for presenting, curating, and sharing information. When students have an array of exciting web tools at their disposal, they become eager to participate in almost any class activity.
3. **Replace homework with engaging in-class activities.** The research on the effectiveness of homework ends up on both the pro and con sides. Most studies that support assigning homework suggest that it increases grades in class or on tests. Whether this is true or not is irrelevant. Measuring achievement with grades and test scores is a false barometer of learning because all the control in these areas is in the hands of the teacher, and there is no place for control in a student-centered classroom. With engaging, ongoing projects that are driven by interactive web tools, students produce more in class, making homework obsolete. Best of all, when not faced with "do-this-and-do-it-my-way" assignments, students become eager to complete the projects that they have created and choose to do schoolwork

outside of class. This autonomy breeds learning for the sake of learning—one of the best parts of the student-centered classroom.

4. **Eliminate rules and consequences.** The workshop environment of a bustling student-centered classroom encourages a pursuit of learning that allows little time for disruption. Set the tone from the first day of the school year by eliminating all discussion of rules and consequences. Explain that your learning environment is built on mutual respect and a quest for knowledge, so there won't be time for any behavior issues. Keep activities engaging, and behavior will never be an issue.
5. **Involve students in evaluation**. Numbers, percentages, and letters on activities, projects, and report cards say little about learning. A student-centered environment thrives through the use of narrative feedback that follows a specific formula and encourages students to resubmit assignments that do not demonstrate mastery. This approach relies on reciprocal feedback between the student and the teacher. Involving students in conversations about their learning not only builds trust but also helps them become critics of their own work, which is a remarkable part of the amazing student-centered classroom.

If you teach in a student-centered classroom, how does it differ from traditional learning? If your classroom is a traditional one, what fears do you have about converting to a student-centered learning environment?

3.3.15 Project-based learning

It focuses on children learning through investigating a topic or answering a question, which is an involved process that could last for as long as the children show interest. Facilitating PBL is easier when teachers pick something to explore based on the children's interests and implement their ideas in the project. When children are engaged in the process, they naturally develop skills they can apply later in life.

Self-Assessment Questions

Q1. Describe any 3 activities for Literacy—including story book reading and reading and writing with what you need and what you will do.
Q2. Why are early reading interventions important at the ECE level?
Q3. Differentiate the pre-pattern writing and main pattern writing.
Q4. What is the role of the teacher in a child-centered classroom?
Q5. What are the benefits of activity-based learning?
Q6. How does computer assisted simulations work in the classroom?
Q7. Explains the importance of problem-solving at the preschool level.
Q8. What are the elements of cooperative learning?
Q9. Explain the ways to get kids moving.

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UNIT 4

TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING READING

CONTENTS

4.1 Introduction to Teaching Reading in Early Childhood
4.2 Importance of Early Reading Skills
4.3 Role of Technology in Teaching Reading
4.4 Digital Tools for Teaching Reading
4.4.1 E-books and Digital Storybooks
4.4.2 Reading Apps
4.4.3 Audio-visual Materials
4.5 Interactive Reading Strategies Using Technology
4.6 Phonics and Language Development through Technology
4.7 Developing Vocabulary through Digital Media
4.8 Benefits of Using Technology for Reading
4.9 Challenges in Using Technology for Teaching Reading
4.10 Role of Teacher in Technology-Based Reading Instruction
4.11 Classroom Activities for Teaching Reading with Technology

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill in early childhood education, as it forms the basis for all future learning. Young children develop reading abilities through exposure to language, interaction with texts, and meaningful learning experiences. In today's digital age, technology has become an important tool to support and enhance the teaching of reading.

Technology provides a variety of opportunities for young learners to engage with reading in interactive and enjoyable ways. Digital tools such as e-books, reading applications, audio stories, and multimedia resources help children develop phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. These tools make learning more engaging by combining text, sound, and visuals, which support different learning styles.

This unit focuses on how technology can be effectively integrated into reading instruction in early childhood classrooms. It highlights the use of digital tools and strategies that support reading development while maintaining a balance between traditional and technology-based methods. The role of the teacher is also emphasized, as teachers guide children in using technology appropriately and meaningfully.

By the end of this unit, learners will understand how to use technology to create engaging, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate reading experiences for young children.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of reading skills in early childhood education.
2. Explain the role of technology in developing reading abilities.
3. Identify different digital tools used for teaching reading.
4. Use e-books, reading apps, and multimedia resources in reading instruction.
5. Apply interactive strategies for teaching reading through technology.
6. Support phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension using digital tools.
7. Design simple classroom activities for teaching reading with technology.
8. Evaluate the benefits and challenges of using technology in reading instruction.
9. Demonstrate the role of the teacher in guiding technology-based reading.

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING READING IN EARLYCHILDHOOD

Teaching reading in early childhood is a gradual and meaningful process that begins with the development of basic language skills such as listening, speaking, and early literacy awareness. At this stage, children are not expected to read fluently; instead, they are introduced to sounds, letters, words, and simple meanings through engaging activities.

Young children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. Therefore, teaching reading should be interactive, playful, and connected to real-life experiences. Teachers use storytelling, pictures, rhymes, songs, and games to develop children's interest in reading.

Reading is not only about recognizing letters or words; it also involves understanding meaning (comprehension). When children listen to stories and discuss them, they begin to connect words with ideas and develop thinking skills. Early reading instruction focuses on creating a strong foundation that prepares children for future academic learning.

4.2 IMPORTANCE OF EARLY READING SKILLS

Early reading skills are essential because they serve as the foundation for all future learning. Children who develop strong reading skills at an early age are more likely to succeed academically and socially.

Early reading helps children to:

- Understand and express ideas clearly
- Perform better in different subjects such as science and mathematics
- Develop confidence and independence in learning
- Improve language, communication, and thinking skills

In addition, reading enhances imagination and creativity. When children listen to stories or explore books, they develop curiosity and a love for learning. These skills support lifelong learning and personal development.

4.3 ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING READING

Technology plays an important role in modern classrooms by making reading more engaging, interactive, and accessible for young learners. It supports different learning styles and helps children understand concepts more easily.

Technology provides:

- **Visual support** (pictures, animations)
- **Audio support** (voice narration, sound effects)
- **Interactive experiences** (games, touch-based activities)
- **Access to diverse reading materials** (digital libraries, online stories)

Technology allows children to learn at their own pace, repeat activities, and receive instant feedback. It also motivates children to participate actively in reading activities and makes learning enjoyable.

4.4 DIGITAL TOOLS FOR TEACHING READING

Digital tools are widely used in early childhood classrooms to support reading development. These tools provide opportunities for practice, exploration, and interaction in a fun and engaging way.

4.4.1 E-BOOKS AND DIGITAL STORYBOOK

E-books and digital storybooks combine text with pictures, animations, and audio narration. These features make stories more attractive and easier to understand.

They help children to:

- Improve listening and comprehension skills
- Understand story sequences and characters
- Develop interest in independent reading

Children can listen to stories repeatedly, which strengthens their understanding and memory.

4.4.2 Reading Applications

Reading applications (apps) are designed to develop specific literacy skills through interactive activities and games.

These apps provide:

- Letter recognition activities

- Word-building exercises
- Phonics practice
- Matching and sorting games

Such applications make learning enjoyable and help children practice reading skills in an engaging way.

4.4.3 Audio-Visual Materials

Audio-visual materials include videos, songs, rhymes, and animated stories that support reading development.

They:

- Capture children's attention and interest
- Improve pronunciation and listening skills
- Help children understand concepts through visual and sound support

These materials are especially helpful for young learners who respond better to visual and auditory stimuli.

4.5 INTERACTIVE READING STRATEGIES USING TECHNOLOGY

Teachers can use technology to create interactive reading experiences that encourage active participation.

Some effective strategies include:

- Asking questions during digital storytelling
- Using touch-based or clickable activities
- Encouraging children to predict story outcomes
- Organizing group discussions after watching or reading

These strategies help children think critically, express their ideas, and engage deeply with the text.

4.6 PHONICS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Phonics refers to the relationship between letters and their sounds. It is an essential component of early reading.

Technology supports phonics learning by:

- Helping children recognize letter sounds
- Teaching how to blend sounds to form words
- Providing pronunciation practice through audio tools

Interactive phonics apps, games, and videos make learning sounds easier and more enjoyable for children.

4.7 VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA

Vocabulary development is an important part of reading. Digital media helps children learn new words in meaningful contexts.

Children can learn vocabulary through:

- Visual images that represent words
- Stories that show how words are used
- Repetition through videos and apps

Seeing and hearing words together helps children understand meanings more clearly and remember them for longer.

4.8 BENEFITS OF USING TECHNOLOGY FOR READING

Using technology in reading instruction offers many advantages:

- Makes learning fun and engaging
- Supports different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
- Provides immediate feedback to learners
- Increases motivation and interest in reading
- Supports individualized learning at each child's pace

4.9 CHALLENGES IN USING TECHNOLOGY

Despite its benefits, there are some challenges in using technology for reading:

- Excessive screen time may affect children's health

- Lack of proper guidance may reduce effectiveness
- Unequal access to devices among children
- Distractions from non-educational content

Therefore, technology should be used carefully and in a balanced way.

4.10 ROLE OF TEACHER IN TECHNOLOGY-BASED READING

The teacher plays a central role in integrating technology effectively in reading instruction.

The teacher's responsibilities include:

- Selecting appropriate and age-appropriate digital tools
- Guiding children on how to use technology properly
- Monitoring children's progress and engagement
- Balancing traditional teaching methods with digital tools

Teachers ensure that technology enhances learning rather than replacing essential human interaction.

4.11 CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING READING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Teachers can design various activities to make reading interactive and enjoyable:

- Digital storytelling sessions using e-books
- Interactive reading games and quizzes
- Phonics practice using educational apps
- Group reading activities with digital stories

These activities help children develop reading skills in a fun, meaningful, and effective way.

UNIT 5

TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING WRITING

CONTENTS

5.1 Introduction to Teaching Writing with Technology
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INTRODUCTION:

Technology in early childhood education comprises a variety of media, computer-mediated software, video-audio learning instruments, robotic building kits, etc. It affects both the process and product of written composition. With the development of writing skills, students begin to understand writing as a form of communication. Furthermore, writing helps students recognize that they have opinions, ideas, and thoughts that are worth sharing with the world, and writing is an effective way of getting them out there. This unit is focused on a variety of technological tools and methods used for teaching writing that can make the process easier and more fun for both teachers and students. It also analyses the challenges the present schools are facing in the use of technology in schools.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After learning this unit, the potential teachers will be able to;

1. Comprehend the significance of teaching writing at the early childhood level
2. Analyze the challenges both students and teachers face in teaching and learning writing skills
3. Appraise the research in the field of teaching writing skills by using technology at the early childhood education level
4. Select appropriate learning tools for teaching writing skills to their students

5.1 TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING WRITING

In the evolving landscape of education, technology plays a pivotal role, especially in teaching writing skills. The integration of technology in writing education has transformed traditional methodologies, offering innovative approaches that cater to diverse learning styles and needs. This unit explores various aspects of technology's role in enhancing writing skills, particularly in early childhood and elementary education.

The integration of technology in writing instruction has been a significant shift from conventional pen-and-paper methods. Word processors, for example, have revolutionized the way writing is taught and practiced. They offer tools like spell check, grammar suggestions, and easy editing, which encourage students to write more and worry less about making mistakes (Nguyen, 2021). These processors serve not just as writing aids but also as confidence boosters, especially for young learners who are just beginning to navigate the complexities of writing.



This illustration shows children in an early childhood classroom engaged in various writing activities. It depicts the environment of creativity and collaboration fundamental to early writing education.

Interactive tools and software have made writing more engaging for students. Programs like Storybird and Book Creator allow students to create digital stories, integrating text with multimedia elements such as images and audio. These tools not only enhance writing skills but also foster creativity and imagination. They allow students to see writing not just as a task but as a means of expression and storytelling.

Educational apps have become instrumental in teaching writing. Apps like Grammarly and Hemingway provide real-time feedback on writing, enabling students to improve their grammar, style, and clarity. For younger learners, apps

like ABCmouse and Endless Alphabet help in understanding the basics of letters and words, making the learning process fun and interactive (Kharbach, 2024).

Collaborative writing platforms such as Google Docs have transformed writing into a collaborative and interactive process. These platforms allow multiple users to write, edit, and provide feedback in real-time, fostering a sense of community and collaboration (Edwards, 2020). They also prepare students for the collaborative nature of modern work environments.

Assistive technology in writing education ensures inclusivity. Tools like speech-to-text software and adaptive keyboards cater to students with diverse needs, including those with physical or learning disabilities (Cabaleiro-Cerviño & Vera, 2020). These technologies provide equal opportunities for all students to express themselves through writing.

Research indicates that technology positively impacts writing skills development. A study by Carter, et al (2020) revealed that students using technology in writing classes showed significant improvements in writing skills, especially in areas of engagement and creativity. Technology facilitates a more personalized learning experience, allowing students to learn at their own pace and style.

Despite its benefits, integrating technology in writing education comes with challenges. One significant concern is the digital divide, where unequal access to technology can widen the gap in education quality. Moreover, over-reliance on technology can lead to a lack of fundamental writing skills. As Lu, et al (2022) points out, there is a need for a balanced approach that combines technology with traditional writing methods.

The future of writing education with technology looks promising. Advancements in AI and machine learning are expected to bring more personalized and adaptive learning tools. There is also a growing trend towards gamification, which makes learning more engaging and interactive (Bridges, et al 2020). As technology continues to evolve, so will the ways in which writing is taught and learned.

Technology has undeniably transformed writing education, making it more accessible, engaging, and inclusive. It has opened up new avenues for creativity and collaboration, preparing students for the digital age. However, it's essential to balance technology use with traditional methods to ensure the holistic development of writing skills. As educators and learners continue to adapt to these technological advancements, the future of writing education appears bright and full of potential.

5.2 The significance of teaching writing at early childhood level

The foundation of a child's education is laid during the early years, and writing is a fundamental part of this foundation. Teaching writing at an early childhood level is not just about developing a skill; it's about nurturing a mode of communication,

expression, and intellectual development. This topic explores the significance of teaching writing in early childhood, referencing various studies and expert opinions.



A digital illustration of an early childhood classroom where children are using tablets and computers for writing activities. This image highlights the role of technology in modern early writing education.

Developmental Significance

Early childhood is a critical period for cognitive development, and writing plays a key role in this process. According to Johnson and Rulo (2019), writing helps in the development of fine motor skills and cognitive abilities. It requires children to translate their thoughts into words and sentences, fostering critical thinking and creativity. The act of writing also enhances children's understanding of language and communication, forming a basis for future literacy skills.

Emotional and Psychological Benefits

Writing in early childhood is not just an academic exercise; it's a way for children to express their emotions and thoughts. Thompson, et al (2019) point out that writing provides a safe avenue for children to explore and articulate their feelings, which is crucial for emotional development and psychological well-being. This form of self-expression can be therapeutic and empowering for young children, helping them to make sense of their world and experiences.

Social Development

Writing skills in early childhood lay the groundwork for social interaction. As children learn to write, they begin to understand the power of words in communication. This understanding is essential for developing social skills and empathy, as they learn to express themselves and interpret others' written words (Hankerson, 2022). Writing activities often involve collaboration and feedback, further enhancing social interaction and teamwork skills.

Preparation for Academic Success

Early writing skills are predictive of later academic achievement. Taylor and Clarke (2021) argues that strong writing skills established in early childhood are linked to better performance in school, particularly in reading and language arts. Writing helps children to structure their thoughts, develop a rich vocabulary, and improve their grammar, all of which are essential skills for academic success.

The Role of Technology in Early Writing Education

The integration of technology in early writing education has opened new avenues for engaging young learners. Digital tools, such as educational apps and interactive games, can make the learning process more enjoyable and effective. These technologies can cater to different learning styles, providing personalized learning experiences that traditional methods may not offer. Despite its importance, teaching writing in early childhood comes with challenges. One major challenge is keeping young learners engaged and motivated. To address this, educators can use a variety of methods, including storytelling, play-based activities, and integrating technology, to make writing fun and relevant. Looking ahead, the future of early writing education appears to be increasingly intertwined with technology. With advancements in educational tools and methods, there is potential for more customized and interactive learning experiences. However, the core principles of early writing education - nurturing creativity, expression, and communication - will remain constant (Carter,et al 2020).

The significance of teaching writing at an early childhood level cannot be overstated. It is a critical tool for cognitive, emotional, and social development and a building block for academic success. While challenges exist, innovative teaching methods and the integration of technology offer promising solutions. As research and practice in this field evolve, the importance of writing in early childhood education will continue to be a key focus for educators and policymakers.

5.3 THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING WRITING SKILLS TO CHILDREN

Teaching writing skills to children is a complex and nuanced task, encompassing a range of pedagogical and developmental challenges. While writing is a crucial skill for academic and personal development, instilling these skills in young learners involves addressing various obstacles that both educators and students face. This topic explores the multifaceted challenges of teaching and learning writing skills to children, drawing on research and expert insights.

Understanding the Developmental Stages

One of the primary challenges in teaching writing is aligning instruction with the developmental stages of children. According to developmental psychology,

children go through distinct stages of cognitive and motor development, impacting their ability to write. Young children, for instance, are still developing fine motor skills essential for holding a pencil and forming letters. Cognitive development also plays a role, as children's ability to understand and organize thoughts into coherent writing evolves. Research indicates that children's writing skills develop in stages, corresponding to their cognitive and motor skill development. A study by Berninger et al. (2002) showed that as children grow, their writing evolves from drawing and scribbling to writing words and sentences, paralleling their cognitive development.



The illustration visually represents the various challenges in teaching and learning writing skills to children. These challenges include developmental stages, language acquisition, engagement and motivation, catering to diverse learning needs, the impact of technology, and the complexities of feedback and assessment.

The Role of Language Acquisition

Language acquisition is another significant challenge in teaching writing. For many children, especially those learning English as a second language, grasping the complexities of language can be daunting (Smith & Jones, 2021). This includes understanding grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and the nuances of written communication. Teachers must find ways to make these elements comprehensible to young learners, often requiring individualized attention and differentiated instruction. Challenges in language acquisition, particularly for non-native speakers, significantly impact writing development. August and Shanahan's research (August & Shanahan, 2006) highlights the need for tailored instruction to support English language learners in developing writing skills.

Engagement and Motivation

Maintaining engagement and motivation in writing classes is a widespread challenge. Children often view writing as a tedious or difficult task, leading to disengagement and lack of interest (Taylor & Clarke, 2021). Teachers need to employ creative and interactive methods to make writing enjoyable and relevant. This could include incorporating storytelling, play-based activities, or technology like educational apps and software, which can make the learning process more engaging. Marinak and Gambrell (2008) found that students' motivation to write decreases over time. They emphasize the importance of using engaging and relevant writing tasks to sustain interest and motivation in young writers.

Addressing Diverse Learning Needs

Each child is unique, with individual learning styles, paces, and needs. Catering to this diversity is a challenge for educators. Some children may struggle with dyslexia or other learning disabilities that affect writing (Thompson, et al 2018). Others may excel in verbal skills but find written expression challenging. Teachers must develop inclusive strategies that support the needs of all learners, often requiring personalized approaches and assistive technologies. Studies have highlighted the varied learning needs of students, including those with learning disabilities. Graham and Harris (2013) wrote that differentiated instruction and strategy instruction are effective in addressing these diverse needs.

The Impact of Technology

While technology can be a boon in teaching writing, it also presents challenges. The over-reliance on digital tools can lead to a decline in fundamental writing skills like handwriting and the ability to structure thoughts without digital aids (Brown & Green, 2021). Moreover, the digital divide means that not all children have equal access to technological resources, potentially widening educational disparities. The role of technology in writing instruction is a growing area of research. A study by Zheng et al. (2015) found that technology, when used effectively, can improve students' writing skills, but it also cautions against over-reliance on digital tools.

Feedback and Assessment

Providing effective feedback and assessment in writing is another challenge. Writing is a subjective skill, and assessing it requires a delicate balance between encouraging creativity and ensuring mastery of writing conventions. Teachers must provide constructive and meaningful feedback that guides improvement without discouraging the young writer. Providing feedback and assessing writing skills is complex. Finch, et al (2022) suggest that effective feedback should be timely, relevant, and specific to guide improvement in writing.

The Future of Writing Education

Looking forward, the challenges in teaching writing skills to children are likely to

evolve. The increasing integration of technology, the diversification of classroom demographics, and ongoing research in pedagogical methods will shape how writing is taught and learned (Brown & Green, 2021). Educators must remain adaptable and informed to meet these changing demands.

Teaching writing skills to children is a task filled with challenges, but also with immense rewards. By understanding and addressing the developmental, linguistic, motivational, and diverse needs of young learners, educators can instill in them the power and joy of written expression. Despite the hurdles, the goal remains clear: to equip children with the writing skills they need to succeed academically, personally, and professionally.

5.4 RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF TEACHING WRITING AT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEVEL

Research in the field of early childhood education consistently underscores the importance and effectiveness of teaching writing at a young age. This research covers a broad spectrum, from the developmental benefits of early writing skills to the effectiveness of various instructional methods and tools. Here are key findings and studies that highlight the significance of this research:

Developmental Benefits of Early Writing

Studies have shown that early writing skills are closely linked to later academic success. A foundational study by Puranik et al (2019) found that children's early writing abilities predict later reading and academic skills, suggesting the importance of integrating writing activities in early childhood education.

Importance of Phonological Awareness

Research by Sénéchal et al (2012) highlighted that phonological awareness, the understanding of sound structures in language, is a critical component in early writing development. Their study suggests that activities that promote phonological awareness can significantly improve early writing skills.

Impact of Technology on Early Writing

With the increasing integration of technology in education, research has focused on its effectiveness in teaching writing to young children. A study by Neumann (2018) found that interactive writing apps can enhance the development of early literacy skills, including writing, in preschool children.

Role of Play-Based Learning:

Play-based learning approaches have been found effective in teaching writing to young children. A study by Roskos and Christie (2017) showed that play environments rich in literacy opportunities support the development of writing skills in young children, emphasizing the need for incorporating playful learning in early education.

Home Literacy Environment

The role of the home environment in early writing development is also a focus of

research. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014) explored how the home literacy environment influences children's development of writing skills, concluding that activities such as shared book reading and access to writing materials at home positively impact early writing development.

Instructional Strategies

Effective instructional strategies in teaching writing to young children are a crucial area of research. The work of Graham, et al (2011) provides evidence for the effectiveness of strategy instruction in improving the writing skills of young learners, including those with learning difficulties.

These research findings collectively emphasize the significance of early writing instruction and highlight various effective strategies and environmental factors that can enhance writing skills in young children. They serve as a guide for educators, parents, and policymakers in shaping effective early writing education programs.

5.5 STAGES OF THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing is a complex cognitive process that evolves through various stages, each critical to the development of effective writing skills. Extending the understanding of these stages is crucial for educators and students to improve writing proficiency. This exploration delves deeper into the five stages of writing: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, incorporating research findings and practical implications.

1. Prewriting:

The Foundation of Writing

The prewriting stage is where ideas take shape. It involves brainstorming, research, and planning. According to a study by Hayes and Flower (1986), prewriting is where the writer's intentions are set, and a framework for the writing piece is established. Effective prewriting strategies include:

Mind Mapping: A tool for visually organizing thoughts.

Freewriting: Writing non-stop for a set period to generate ideas.

Research and Data Gathering: Collecting information relevant to the writing topic.

This stage is pivotal in setting the direction for the writing piece and can significantly impact the ease with which subsequent stages are navigated.

2. Drafting: Translating Ideas into Text

Drafting is the process of converting the prewriting plan into a written form. Bereiter et al (1988) model of writing development suggests that less experienced writers often use a 'knowledge-telling' strategy during drafting, writing down

information as it comes to mind. In contrast, more experienced writers use a 'knowledge-transforming' approach, organizing and reorganizing their thoughts. Drafting involves:

Writing Initial Content: Transforming ideas into paragraphs and sections.

Structuring the Narrative: Establishing a logical flow of information or story.

Drafting is often a nonlinear process, where writers may go back to the prewriting stage as new ideas emerge.

3. Revising: Refining and Clarifying the Message

Revising is a critical stage where the writer rethinks and reworks their draft to improve content and structure. According to Li (2022), revision is an art that requires the writer to be objective and willing to make tough decisions. Key aspects of revising include:

Content Enhancement: Strengthening arguments, descriptions, and narrative elements.

Organizational Changes: Rearranging sections and paragraphs for coherence and flow.

Seeking Feedback: Using peer reviews or mentor guidance to identify areas for improvement.

Revising is a recursive process and may involve several rounds of rewrites to refine the writing.

4. Editing: Perfecting Grammar and Style

Editing focuses on correcting grammatical errors, improving sentence structure, and refining the style of the writing. According to Lunsford (2009), editing is essential for ensuring clarity and readability. Editing tasks include:

Grammar and Syntax: Correcting grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Word Choice and Clarity: Choosing precise vocabulary and ensuring clarity of expression.

Consistency: Checking for consistent use of tense, point of view, and narrative style.

Effective editing enhances the professionalism and readability of the writing.

5. Publishing: Sharing the Writing with an Audience

Publishing is the final stage, where the writing is shared with others. Graves (2009) emphasizes the importance of publishing in the writing process, as it provides a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Publishing can take various forms:

Print Publishing: In books, magazines, or newspapers.

Digital Publishing: On blogs, websites, or social media.

Presentations: In academic, professional, or community settings.

Publishing not only completes the writing process but also opens up opportunities for feedback and further learning.

Understanding and mastering these five stages of the writing process are essential for developing writing skills. Each stage has its unique challenges and requirements, and navigating them effectively can lead to the creation of impactful and engaging written work. As writers grow and evolve, their ability to navigate these stages becomes more sophisticated, leading to better writing outcomes.

5.6 SELECTING TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

The selection of technological tools in education is a critical process that directly impacts the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

With the rapid advancement of technology, educators are presented with an array of digital tools that can enhance educational experiences. This topic provides a thorough examination of the factors to consider when selecting technological tools for educational purposes.

Understanding Educational Needs and Goals

1. **Curriculum Alignment:**

The chosen technology must align with the curriculum and educational objectives. It should support and enhance the learning outcomes rather than distract or detract from them.

2. **Student Needs and Learning Styles:**

Technology should cater to diverse student needs and learning styles. This includes considering tools that support different levels of ability, learning preferences, and engagement strategies.

Evaluating Technological Tools

1. **Usability and Accessibility:**

The ease of use and accessibility of technology are crucial. Tools should have an intuitive interface and be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

2. **Interactivity and Engagement:**

Technologies that promote interactivity, such as educational apps and interactive whiteboards, can increase student engagement and motivation.

3. **Content Quality:**

The educational content provided by the technology must be accurate, relevant, and up-to-date. It should also be appropriately challenging and stimulate critical thinking.

4. **Feedback and Assessment Capabilities:**

Tools that provide immediate feedback and assessment opportunities can enhance learning by allowing students and teachers to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

Cost and Resource Considerations

1. **Budget Constraints:**

Budget is a significant factor in selecting technological tools. Cost-effectiveness without compromising educational quality is key.

2. **Infrastructure and Support:**

The availability of necessary infrastructure, such as high-speed internet and technical support, is essential for the successful implementation of technology.

Integration and Compatibility

1. **Integration with Existing Systems:**

Technological tools should seamlessly integrate with existing educational systems and platforms used by the institution.

2. **Compatibility with Devices:**

The selected technology should be compatible with various devices that students and teachers use, including smartphones, tablets, and computers.

Ethical and Privacy Considerations

1. **Data Privacy and Security:**

Tools must comply with data privacy laws and protect the confidentiality of student information.

2. **Ethical Use of Technology:**

The ethical implications of using technology, such as digital equity and the digital divide, should be considered.

Future-Proofing and Scalability

1. **Adaptability to Future Changes:**

Technology should be adaptable to future educational needs and technological advancements.

2. **Scalability:**

Tools should be scalable to accommodate growing numbers of users and evolving educational requirements.

Selecting the right technological tools for education involves a comprehensive analysis of educational goals, usability, content quality, budgetary constraints, integration capabilities, and ethical considerations.

The right technology can profoundly impact teaching effectiveness and student

learning outcomes, making this a critical decision for educational institutions.

Table 1

Criteria for Selecting Educational Technology Tools

Criteria	**Description**
Curriculum Alignment	Compatibility with educational objectives and learning outcomes
Student Needs	Suitability for diverse learning styles and abilities
Usability	Ease of use and accessibility
Content Quality	Accuracy, relevance, and educational value
Feedback and Assessment	Capabilities for tracking and evaluating progress
Cost	Affordability and cost-effectiveness
Infrastructure	Required technological and support infrastructure
Integration	Compatibility with existing systems
Privacy and Ethics	Compliance with data privacy and ethical standards
Future-Proofing	Ability to adapt to future changes and advancements

Selecting the right technology is a multifaceted process that requires a balance of educational effectiveness, cost, infrastructure, and ethical considerations. The integration of technology in education should be approached with a strategic and informed mindset to ensure it serves its purpose in enhancing the learning experience.

5.6.1 General technology tools

In the realm of education, technology tools have become indispensable in enhancing learning and teaching experiences. Among these, general technology tools like word processors, multimedia software, and tools to organize writing have a profound impact on educational outcomes. This overview delves into the details of these tools, incorporating relevant research findings.

5.6.1.1. Word Processors

Word processors are more than just tools for typing text; they are platforms for learning and creativity. Research by AbuSeileek suggests that word processors can significantly improve the quality of student writing. Students are more willing to revise and edit their work, leading to better writing outcomes.

Advanced Features:

Collaborative Editing: Real-time collaboration features, as seen in Google Docs, facilitate peer learning.

Accessibility Features: Tools like voice-to-text cater to diverse student needs, including those with disabilities.

5.6.1 2. Multimedia Software

Multimedia software facilitates an immersive learning experience. Mayer's (2001) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning emphasizes that combining text, images, and audio enhances learning by catering to multiple sensory pathways.

Advanced Features:

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR): These technologies create immersive learning environments, significantly enhancing engagement.

Customizable Templates: Offer diverse options for presentations and projects.

A study by Plass et al. (2012) found that multimedia software supports cognitive processing and aids in the deeper understanding of complex concepts, especially in subjects like science and mathematics.

5.6.1 3. Tools to Organize Writing

Tools for organizing writing play a crucial role in structuring thoughts and ideas. Tuckman (1998) found that organizational tools help students in planning their writing, leading to more coherent and structured outputs.

Advanced Features:

Integration with Research Tools: Some tools integrate with databases and research tools for seamless data gathering.

Customizable Workspaces: Allow users to create personalized writing environments.

Research by Graham and Harris (2000) indicated that students who use writing organization tools demonstrate improved writing planning skills, leading to higher-quality writing.

Table 2

Advanced Features and Research Insights of General Technology Tools

Technology Tool	Advanced Features	Research Insights	Examples
Word Processors	Collaborative editing, Accessibility features	Improves writing quality and aids ELLs	Microsoft Word, Google Docs

Technology Tool	Advanced Features	Research Insights	Examples
Multimedia Software	VR/AR integration, Customizable templates	Enhances understanding of complex concepts	Adobe Creative Cloud, Canva
Tools to Organize Writing	Integration with research tools, Customizable workspaces	Improves writing planning and coherence	Evernote, Microsoft OneNote

Word processors, multimedia software, and tools to organize writing are pivotal in modern education. Their advanced features, supported by research findings, demonstrate significant benefits in enhancing learning experiences, improving writing skills, and fostering creative and analytical thinking. The effective integration of these tools in educational settings can lead to enriched teaching methodologies and improved learning outcomes for students.

5.6.2 Specific technology tools

In the diverse landscape of educational technology, specific tools are designed to meet particular needs in the teaching and learning process. These tools range from those aiding in physical and sensory access to those facilitating the creation and review of text. This topic explores these specific technology tools, emphasizing their features, benefits, and applications in education.

5.6.2.1. Tools for Physical and Sensory Access

These tools are designed to ensure that all students, regardless of physical or sensory limitations, have equal access to educational materials and experiences. They are vital in creating inclusive learning environments.

Types and Features:

Adaptive Keyboards and Mice: Devices tailored for individuals with limited mobility or fine motor skills.

Screen Readers and Text-to-Speech Software: Tools that read text aloud, essential for visually impaired students.

Braille Technology: Devices that convert text into braille for tactile reading.

Educational Benefits:

Enhanced Accessibility: Ensures all students can access and engage with educational content.

Increased Independence: Empowers students with disabilities to participate actively in their education.

Improved Learning Outcomes: Facilitates a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Studies like those conducted by Bridges (2020) have demonstrated that assistive technology can significantly improve the educational experiences of students with disabilities, leading to better academic outcomes.

5.6.2.2. Tools for Creating Text

These tools aid in the text creation process, offering functionalities beyond traditional word processing. They are particularly beneficial in enhancing the writing skills of students.

Types and Features:

Speech-to-Text Software: Allows users to dictate text, which is useful for students with writing difficulties.

Digital Storytelling Tools: Software for creating interactive and multimedia-rich stories.

Graphic Organizers: Visual tools for planning and organizing written work.

Educational Benefits:

Facilitates Diverse Expression: Enables students to express themselves in various formats.

Supports Writing Development: Assists in organizing thoughts and structuring writing.

Encourages Creativity: Provides creative avenues for storytelling and information presentation.

Research Insights:

Research by Lu et al (2022) indicates that tools like graphic organizers and speech-to-text software can significantly aid students with learning disabilities in organizing and expressing their thoughts.

5.6.2.3. Tools for Reviewing Text

These tools are focused on helping students and educators review and refine written text, ensuring quality and coherence.

Types and Features:

Grammar and Spell Checkers: Automated tools for identifying and correcting language errors.

Feedback Software: Platforms for providing and receiving feedback on written work.

Plagiarism Checkers: Tools for ensuring the originality of written content.

Educational Benefits:

Improves Writing Quality: Helps in refining language and grammar.

Enhances Revision Skills: Encourages iterative improvement of written work.

Promotes Academic Integrity: Teaches students the importance of original work.

Studies like those by Kharbach (2024) have shown that tools like automated grammar checkers can improve the writing skills of students, particularly in

enhancing their understanding of grammar and syntax.

Specific technology tools in education, such as those for physical and sensory access, creating text, and reviewing text, play a crucial role in enhancing learning experiences and outcomes. By providing tailored functionalities, these tools address diverse needs and challenges in education, contributing to more inclusive and effective learning environments. The integration of these tools, backed by research and tailored to specific educational requirements, can profoundly impact teaching methodologies and student success.

5.7 REQUIREMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN USING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT WRITING

Assistive technology for writing support represents a significant advancement in educational strategies for students with disabilities. However, its effective implementation is contingent on meeting certain requirements and overcoming various challenges. The analysis below delves deeper into these aspects, providing a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved.

5.7.1 Requirements for Effective Implementation

Comprehensive Needs Assessment:

A thorough assessment of individual student needs is crucial to determine the appropriate assistive technology tools. This involves understanding the specific challenges each student faces in the writing process.

Collaboration Among Stakeholders:

Effective implementation requires collaboration between teachers, special educators, therapists, parents, and students. Such teamwork ensures that chosen technologies align with educational goals and individual student needs.

Sustainable Funding Models:

Securing sustainable funding sources is essential for the long-term success of assistive technology programs. This could include school budgets, grants, or partnerships with technology providers.

Data Privacy and Ethical Considerations:

Ensuring the ethical use of assistive technology, particularly in terms of data privacy and student autonomy, is a significant requirement. Technologies must comply with legal standards like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Regular Evaluation and Adjustment:

Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of assistive technology tools is needed to ensure they meet evolving student needs. Adjustments should be made based on feedback and performance data.

5.7.2 Challenges in Using Assistive Technology

Technological Literacy and Acceptance:

A key challenge is ensuring that both educators and students are technologically literate and receptive to using assistive tools. Resistance can often stem from a lack

of familiarity or misconceptions about the technology.

Accessibility and Universal Design:

Ensuring that assistive technology is accessible to all students, including those with multiple or severe disabilities, is challenging. It requires adherence to universal design principles in technology selection and classroom integration.

Infrastructure Limitations:

Inadequate technological infrastructure, such as outdated hardware or insufficient internet access, can impede the effective use of assistive technology.

Cultural and Language Barriers:

For culturally and linguistically diverse students, assistive technologies must be sensitive to language and cultural nuances, which can be a significant challenge in tool selection and implementation.

Transition and Generalization:

Ensuring that skills developed using assistive technology transfer to other contexts (e.g., from school to workplace) and generalize across different tasks and environments is a challenge that requires careful planning.

Strategies to Address Challenges

Professional Development and Training:

Ongoing professional development for educators and training for students can mitigate technological literacy challenges and increase acceptance.

Building Robust IT Infrastructure:

Investing in robust IT infrastructure and technical support ensures the smooth functioning of assistive technologies.

Engaging with Diverse Communities:

Engagement with diverse communities can help in understanding and addressing cultural and linguistic needs in assistive technology implementation.

Developing Transition Plans:

Creating individualized transition plans can aid in applying the skills acquired through assistive technologies beyond the classroom.

The implementation of assistive technology to support writing in education is a multifaceted endeavor, fraught with unique requirements and challenges. Addressing these effectively requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, ongoing training, and a commitment to continuous evaluation and adaptation. By navigating these complexities, educators can harness the full potential of assistive technologies, thereby ensuring an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

5.8 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

The integration of technology in teaching writing skills has transformed educational

practices. While technology offers numerous benefits in enhancing the writing process, it also presents certain drawbacks that educators must consider. This comprehensive overview examines both the advantages and disadvantages of using technology in teaching writing skills.

Advantages of Using Technology in Teaching Writing

Enhanced Engagement:

Technology often makes the learning process more engaging and interactive. Tools like blogs, videos, and digital storytelling can captivate students' interest and motivate them to write.

Immediate Feedback:

Software programs provide immediate feedback on grammar, spelling, and punctuation, enabling students to make quick improvements.

Accessibility and Inclusivity:

Assistive technologies like speech-to-text and adaptive keyboards make writing more accessible to students with disabilities, fostering an inclusive learning environment.

Facilitates Collaboration:

Online platforms enable collaborative writing, allowing students to work together on projects regardless of their physical location.

Development of Digital Literacy:

Using technology in writing instruction helps students develop essential digital literacy skills, preparing them for the digital world.

Disadvantages of Using Technology in Teaching Writing

Over-reliance on Technology:

Dependence on spell-checkers and grammar tools can inhibit the development of fundamental writing skills.

Digital Divide:

Not all students have equal access to technology, leading to disparities in learning opportunities.

Distraction and Reduced Attention Span:

The plethora of digital tools and online resources can be distracting, potentially reducing students' ability to focus on writing tasks.

Loss of Traditional Writing Skills:

With the focus shifting to digital platforms, there is a concern that traditional writing skills, such as handwriting, may decline.

Technical Issues and Maintenance:

Technical problems with hardware or software can disrupt the teaching and learning process. Continuous maintenance and updates are required for smooth functioning.

The use of technology in teaching writing skills offers significant advantages by engaging students, providing instant feedback, fostering collaboration, and enhancing inclusivity. However, challenges such as the potential over-reliance on technological aids, accessibility issues, and the distraction factor need to be addressed. Educators must strive to balance technology use with traditional writing instruction methods and consider equity in access to maximize the benefits and mitigate the disadvantages.

This balanced approach is crucial for developing comprehensive writing skills in students, ensuring they are not only proficient in digital literacy but also retain fundamental writing abilities. The key is to integrate technology in a way that complements and enhances, rather than replaces, traditional writing skills.

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UNIT 6

TECHNOLOGY IN SHAPING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

CONTENTS

6.1 Social Behavior in Early Childhood
6.2 Role of Technology in Social Development
6.3 Positive Effects of Technology on Social Behavior
6.4 Negative Effects of Technology on Social Behavior
6.5 Digital Communication and Social Interaction
6.6 Promoting Healthy Technology Use
6.7 Role of Teacher in Shaping Social Behavior
6.8 Role of Parents in Guiding Technology Use
6.9 Classroom Activities for Social Development through Technology

INTRODUCTION

Social behavior refers to how children interact with others, express their feelings, and develop relationships. It includes important skills such as communication, cooperation, sharing, empathy, and understanding social norms. In early childhood, these skills are not naturally fully developed; rather, they are learned gradually through interaction with family members, teachers, and peers.

Early childhood is considered a critical period for social development. During these formative years, children begin to understand how to behave in different social situations, how to manage their emotions, and how to build relationships. Positive social behavior at this stage lays the foundation for future success in school, relationships, and life.

In today's digital age, technology has become an integral part of children's daily lives. From smartphones and tablets to educational apps, videos, and online games, children are increasingly exposed to digital environments from a very young age. These technological tools influence not only how children learn but also how they interact with others.

Technology offers new opportunities for communication and social interaction. Children can connect with others through video calls, interactive games, and digital learning platforms. These tools can enhance communication skills, encourage collaboration, and provide access to diverse social experiences. However, excessive or inappropriate use of technology can negatively affect children's social behavior by reducing face-to-face interactions and limiting real-world experiences.

This unit explores the role of technology in shaping children's social behavior. It examines both the positive and negative effects of technology and highlights the importance of balanced use. It also emphasizes the role of teachers and parents in guiding children to use technology responsibly and effectively to support their social development.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of social behavior in early childhood.
2. Explain how technology influences children's social development.
3. Identify the positive effects of technology on social behavior.
4. Recognize the negative impacts of excessive technology use.
5. Promote balanced and healthy use of technology among children.
6. Apply strategies to develop social skills using digital tools.
7. Understand the role of teachers and parents in guiding children.
8. Design activities that enhance social interaction through technology.

6.1 SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Social behavior includes the ways children interact with others and respond to social situations. It involves skills such as sharing, cooperating, communicating, helping others, and understanding emotions.

During early childhood, children learn social behavior through:

- Interaction with family members
- Playing with peers
- Observing adults
- Participating in group activities

For example, when children play together, they learn to take turns, share toys, and solve conflicts. These experiences help them understand social rules and develop emotional control.

Developing positive social behavior is essential because it:

- Builds strong relationships
- Enhances emotional well-being
- Supports academic success
- Promotes teamwork and cooperation

Teachers and parents play a key role in modeling positive behavior and creating opportunities for social interaction.

6.2 ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Technology has changed the way children communicate and interact. Digital tools such as videos, games, and communication apps provide new opportunities for learning social skills.

For example:

- Children can communicate through video calls
- Online games encourage teamwork and cooperation
- Educational apps promote interaction and participation

Technology can support social development by:

- Providing interactive learning experiences
- Encouraging collaboration
- Enhancing communication skills

However, it is important to ensure that technology complements, rather than replaces, real-life social interaction.

6.3 POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY ON SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

When used appropriately, technology can have several positive effects on children's social development:

- **Encourages communication:** Children can express their ideas through digital platforms.

- **Promotes collaboration:** Interactive games and activities require teamwork.
- **Enhances learning:** Shared digital activities support group learning.
- **Builds confidence:** Children feel comfortable expressing themselves using technology.

For example, children working together on a digital storytelling activity learn to share ideas, listen to others, and cooperate.

6.4 NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY ON SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Despite its benefits, excessive use of technology can negatively affect children's social behavior:

- **Reduced face-to-face interaction:** Children may spend less time interacting with others in real life.
- **Social isolation:** Overuse of devices can limit social engagement.
- **Screen addiction:** Children may become dependent on digital devices.
- **Poor social skills:** Limited real-life interaction may affect communication and empathy development.

Therefore, it is important to monitor and regulate children's use of technology.

6.5 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Digital communication tools such as messaging apps, video calls, and online platforms allow children to connect with others. These tools can support communication skills and help children stay connected.

However, digital communication should not replace direct interaction. Face-to-face communication is essential for developing:

- Emotional understanding
- Body language interpretation
- Real-life social skills

A balanced approach is necessary to ensure that children benefit from both digital and real-world interactions.

6.6 PROMOTING HEALTHY TECHNOLOGY USE

To ensure positive social development, teachers and parents should promote healthy use of technology by:

- Limiting screen time
- Encouraging physical and social activities
- Selecting age-appropriate content
- Promoting group interaction

A balanced routine that includes both digital and non-digital activities helps children develop social skills effectively.

6.7 ROLE OF TEACHER IN SHAPING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Teachers play a vital role in guiding children's social behavior in a technology-rich environment.

They should:

- Guide children in using technology responsibly
- Encourage group activities and collaboration
- Promote values such as sharing and cooperation
- Observe and support children's social development

Teachers can integrate technology in a way that supports interaction rather than isolation.

6.8 ROLE OF PARENTS IN GUIDING TECHNOLOGY USE

Parents are equally important in shaping children's social behavior.

They should:

- Monitor children's screen time
- Set clear rules for technology use
- Encourage family interaction and communication
- Participate in children's digital activities

Parental involvement ensures that children use technology in a safe and balanced way.

6.9 CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Teachers can use various activities to promote social skills using technology:

- **Digital storytelling:** Children create and share stories
- **Interactive group games:** Encourage teamwork and cooperation
- **Role-playing activities:** Use digital tools to simulate real-life situations
- **Collaborative learning apps:** Children work together on tasks

These activities make learning engaging while developing essential social skills.

UNIT 7

PLAY IN TECHNOLOGY-BASED ECE CLASSROOM

CONTENTS

7.1 Introduction to Play in Early Childhood Education
7.2 Importance of Play in Child Development
7.3 Types of Play in Early Childhood
7.3.1 Free Play
7.3.2 Guided Play
7.3.3 Structured Play
7.4 Role of Technology in Play
7.5 Technology-Supported Play Activities
7.5.1 Digital Games
7.5.2 Interactive Applications
7.5.3 Multimedia Play
7.6 Balancing Digital and Traditional Play
7.7 Benefits of Technology-Based Play
7.8 Challenges in Technology-Based Play
7.9 Role of Teacher in Play-Based Technology Learning
7.10 Designing Play Activities Using Technology

INTRODUCTION

This unit explores the role of play in early childhood education within the context of today's digital world. It highlights how technology, when used thoughtfully, can enhance traditional play and support children's overall development. The unit introduces different types of digital play—such as exploration, constructive, narrative, and outdoor play—and explains how these experiences can build skills in creativity, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration. It also emphasizes the importance of balancing screen-based activities with physical play to ensure learning remains active, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.

In addition to understanding the concepts, students will learn how to select suitable digital tools, design play-based activities, and integrate technology into everyday classroom routines. Practical examples, activity ideas, and case-based discussions will help future educators apply these strategies in real settings. By the end of the unit, learners will be equipped to make informed choices about using educational technology in ways that inspire curiosity, foster creativity, and promote holistic growth in young children.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Explain the concept and role of play in early childhood education.
2. Identify and describe various types of digital play relevant to early learners.
3. Evaluate the benefits and challenges of incorporating digital play in the ECE classroom.
4. Select and use age-appropriate digital tools for early learners.
5. Demonstrate strategies for integrating digital and physical play in the classroom.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The early stages of life are crucial for the development of psychosocial, foundational learning, language skills, cognitive abilities, emotional growth, physical health, social interactions, imagination, and creativity. These essential developments for both individuals and society are significantly better nurtured through play. In the modern world, technology is thoroughly integrated into everyday life—from smartphones and tablets to social media and various multimedia content. Over the last decade, the rapid digital transformation of culture has led to the extensive use of technology across personal, educational, and professional areas, resulting in continuous interaction with images, sounds, videos, and written information (Lowrie & Larkin, 2020). Early childhood educators face growing challenges in incorporating digital technologies, media, and aspects of popular culture into play-based learning environments. This effort has turned out to be difficult in practice. In light of the changing landscape of education and technology, teachers need to reflect on the function of technology in early learning contexts. Although studies offer differing viewpoints on the role of technology in early childhood education, the potential benefits seem to surpass the disadvantages when implemented with intention.

Let’s explore play and Digital play in Early Childhood Education.

7.2. PLAY IN A TECHNOLOGY-BASED ECE CLASSROOM

Play facilitates creativity by combining imagination and fantasy with a dynamic activity. During early childhood, play is more than just a pastime; it is an integral part of the development process. Play is regarded as essential for the development of children, and deprived of it, they may miss out on vital opportunities. In the natural course of development, young learners construct knowledge by engaging directly with their environment and experimenting with it. Children's play helps them learn about the world and how they fit into it by interacting with people, places, and objects around them. Play helps to develop a child’s knowledge and skills and prepares them for a lifetime of learning both in school and beyond. Play plays a significant role in the development of children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional abilities in their early years. Encouraging a child to make up a game and join in will help them to:

- become autonomous learners
- develop a lifelong passion for learning
- develop numeracy and literacy skills
- develop fine and gross motor skills
- develop language skills and vocabulary
- develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills

- build confidence and social skills
- foster creativity and imagination
- develop emotional maturity

Technology-based early childhood classrooms continue to place a high value on play, as it provides children with the opportunity to connect with the world around them. A child's understanding of the world is shaped by inquiring about various materials and experimenting with them. Whether they are mastering materials physically or experimenting with digital media, children engage in the same investigative process-observing, questioning, experimenting, and reflecting. These processes reflect the principles of scientific research and promote both cognitive and emotional growth. When carefully incorporated, digital play settings can deepen children's comprehension of their physical and social-emotional environments. Interactive games, simulations, and digital storytelling platforms provide valuable chances for children to interact with virtual objects, experiment with ideas, and collaboratively create content—activities that enhance conventional play while adding new layers of engagement.

Although there are worries about excessive screen time and the passive engagement with technology, when digital play is appropriately guided and balanced, it can be highly beneficial. It empowers children to take charge of their learning, maintain focus through excitement, and acquire vital skills like creativity, communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. For educators, the challenge lies in aligning structured educational objectives with play experiences that are directed by the child, both in physical and digital formats. An approach centered around the child that acknowledges the significance of play as a core aspect of learning—regardless of the medium—ensures that technology serves to enhance rather than supplant traditional developmental opportunities. By appreciating the role of play in digital environments, educators can promote overall development and nurture the growth of resilient, inquisitive, and capable learners in 21st-century early childhood education (ECE) classrooms.

7.2.1. Digital Play

Digital play refers to understanding how children can interplay, explore, and use digital technologies in the same manner as their traditional play activities (Edwards, 2018; Plowman, 2020). Digital play, on the other hand, appears when contemporary play types such as object play (with toys, dolls, or digital devices), constructions (building blocks), 'pretend play' (where children role-play as doctors or nurses), and physical play (involving motor activities) blend in and are mediated with digital technology in the form of mobile phones, computers, tablets/iPads, and cameras (Cannon et al., 2024). Concerning digital play in classrooms, these tech experiences are integrated throughout a wide range of play activities, breaking the tradition of

separating them from play when technologies are envisioned merely as tools to access information or communicate ideas. The expanded view of digital play shows that, far from being a deskbound activity, digital play can happen outdoors and involve a variety of active pursuits, including playing with activity trackers, guiding remote control vehicles, using walkie-talkies, or wearing Go-Pro cameras while climbing to the top of a climbing frame. Many teachers and parents are cautious about children playing with screens in early childhood, but there are many opportunities for exploration and experimentation with digital activities. Digital games can positively influence children's working memory (Di Lieto et al., 2020), cognitive flexibility, and inhibition (Veraksa et al., 2022). Screen-based technologies can also be combined with other types of play or used to enable off-screen games, like a photo-guessing game that involves taking pictures of objects from unusual angles.

7.2.2. Learning Through Digital Play in ECE Classroom

Digital play can foster a similar range of learning outcomes as traditional play, including problem-solving, creativity, and imagination. Digital technologies also offer some unique learning opportunities in the classroom, at school, and at home. For example, children can explore concepts like floating in space or exploring under the sea, and they can express their creativity in new ways, such as inventing wild hairstyles with apps on digital devices. There are examples of children engaging in social and sociodramatic play, creative play, language play, exploratory play, mastery play, and fantasy play, although sociodramatic play was (perhaps unsurprisingly) less common, and rule-based play was more prevalent (Utami et al., 2025).

In early childhood, interactive technology apps have been shown to improve literacy and numeracy learning and increase children's engagement, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Digital technologies also support children's emerging literacy, as they can create digital stories and extended narratives, and share information and ideas with others without needing advanced writing or drawing skills. It is believed that exposure to digital tools and technologies offers different ways of playing, thinking, and approaching learning compared to non-digital contexts. Digital technologies can help children develop the technological multiliteracies that are important now and will continue to be in the future.

7.2.3. Appropriate Age to Begin Digital Play

Children's abilities to interact with digital technologies change as they develop physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially, and emotionally. Their use also depends upon the features and design of digital media or digital devices. Moreover,

infants are not capable of engaging effectively with screens since they cannot learn from two-dimensional media and can't transfer what they see to real-life situations. Infants and toddlers are not always able to comprehend information communicated through symbolic media, such as images, models, and videos, and it has been demonstrated that screen use negatively impacts cognitive development at this age.

A child's comprehension levels are typically higher at around two and a half years of age, and he or she can engage more actively in screen-based technologies at this age. Developing fine motor skills is also important for older children, especially when using a mouse or trackpad, scrolling pages, and pressing buttons on remotes and phones. Playing games on a console requires children to be able to move both hands simultaneously. Each child develops cognitively, emotionally, and physically differently, and some need additional help. Even though children today are often referred to as 'digital natives', implying that they are naturally drawn to technology, we must remember that not all children are drawn to technology. There may be some who may not understand how to interact with a device without additional assistance and guidance. This can happen if digital devices and apps are not designed correctly, or if individuals have different learning styles or preferences.

7.3 DIGITAL PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The use of technology in early childhood education has become essential to learning nowadays, allowing children to explore and develop their creativity in a digital environment. Technology provides children with opportunities to develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills as well as engage in enjoyable and meaningful activities when thoughtfully integrated. Interactive apps, role-play scenarios, creative tools, and collaborative platforms facilitate exploration, problem-solving, and expression for young learners. There are several types of digital play in early childhood, and examples of activities can also be found below.

i. Exploratory Play (Digital Discovery)

Children explore digital tools for the purpose of gaining an understanding of how they work in exploratory/digital discovery. A digital storybook may allow them to tap icons to discover what happens, try out a new app, or navigate through an icon-based interface. Playing in this way helps them learn about technology, build confidence, and solve problems. This kind of exploration is encouraged by apps such as *Busy Shapes* and *Toca Nature*, as they encourage children to experiment and discover on their own. The following digital discovery activity will help ECE teachers introduce children to digital gadgets, apps, and games in the ECE council.

Sociodramatic and Pretend Digital Play Nowadays, with video games, apps, and digital toys, children often play roles and stories inspired by their favorite digital characters, shows, or games. Role-playing as doctors through medical simulation

apps or acting as chefs in cooking games such as Toca Kitchen, or running imaginary shops while using tablets as cash registers are some examples of how they can simulate these activities. Apart from providing entertainment, these digital role-playing activities are also beneficial for the development of children's skills. In the process of enacting their roles, children develop rich vocabularies and communication skills, foster collaboration with peers, and stimulate creativity throughout their play. In addition to fostering children's imaginations in virtual and physical environments, such play also allows them to bridge the gap between digital and real-life experiences. The activity mentioned below will help you design more pretend play experiences using digital tools to foster language, creativity, and collaboration in young learners.

Classroom Activity for Digital Pretend Play

ii. Constructive Digital Play

Children utilize digital tools alongside traditional block play and arts and crafts for creation, construction, or design activities. For instance, participants may construct a digital city in *Minecraft Junior*, create their characters, or utilize a stylus for drawing. These activities enhance spatial awareness, foster creativity, and refine fine motor skills. Notable examples include *Tayasui Sketches* for digital illustration and *LEGO Duplo World* for virtual construction and problem-solving activities. The following activity is intended for early childhood education (ECE) children and can be utilized by.

Tech Explorers – Let's Discover!

Type of Play: Exploratory Play (Digital Discovery)
Age Group: 3–6 years
Duration: 20–30 minutes
Tools: Tablets with Busy Shapes or Toca Nature apps
Objective: Children explore digital tools to build digital literacy, curiosity, and problem-solving through open-ended interaction.
Procedure:

- Teacher should briefly introduce the app to all children.
- Allow children to freely explore tapping, dragging, and interacting with digital tools.
- Teacher will observe engagement, reactions, and strategies.
- Conclude with a short reflection circle: "What did you discover?" and ask students to share their experience/discovery with class.

Digital Builders – Let's Create!

Type of Play: Constructive Digital Play
Age Group: 3–6 years
Duration: 30 minutes
Digital Tools: LEGO Duplo World (digital building), Tayasui Sketches (digital drawing) Minecraft Junior (creative construction)
Objective: To promote spatial reasoning, fine motor skills, and creativity through hands-on digital construction and design.
Procedure:

- Introduce the app and model basic features (e.g., how to build, draw, or design).
- Allow children to explore freely: build a house, draw a family, or create a simple landscape.
- Encourage storytelling around their creation ("Who lives here?", "What's this?").
- Display completed work digitally or via screenshots.

achers in classrooms to integrate constructive digital play and enhance fine motor skills.

Constructive Digital Play

iii. Narrative and Storytelling Play

A child interacts with or creates digital narratives that incorporate images, text, audio, or voice elements. Children can create a book with *Book Creator*, record a puppet show in *Puppet Pals*, and listen to audiobooks as examples of narrative and storytelling digital play. In addition to developing narrative structure, listening skills, and literacy skills, this play promotes the development of narrative skills. The activity given below illustrates methods for teachers to involve students in narrative and storytelling play in a technology-enhanced early childhood education classroom.

"Tell Me a Story" – My Talking Picture Book

Age Group: 3–5 years
Type: Narrative and Storytelling Digital Play
Tools: Book Creator/Puppet Pals
Learning Objectives:

- Develop early storytelling and sequencing skills
- Enhance expressive language and vocabulary

Materials:

- Tablet with selected app
- Picture cards (characters, settings)
- Simple story template (Beginning–Middle–End)

Procedure:

- Show children 2–3 themed pictures (e.g., a cat, a park, a balloon).
- Encourage to create simple story by describing what happens in each picture.
- With adult support, children insert pictures into Book Creator or Puppet Pals.
- Record their voice narrating the story in their own words.
- Replay and share the stories with peers or parents.

Activity for Narrative and Storytelling Play

iv. Rule-Based or Game Play

When children play digital games or use apps (like puzzles, memory games, or coding tasks), they follow a set of structured rules. Rules-based/game play can be seen with Playing *Thinkrolls, Moose Math, or Kodable*. Young learners need to play games with rules so that they can improve their working memory, attention, cognitive flexibility, and strategic thinking skills. The activity below can help teachers create more rule-based or game-play activities that integrate technology.

"Puzzle Time with Thinkrolls"
Age Group: 3–5 years **Type:** Rule-Based / Game Play **Tools:** Thinkrolls / Moose Math / Kodable (Beginner Level) **Learning Objectives:** Enhance working memory an develop logical thinking **Materials:** • Tablet with selected game app (e.g., Thinkrolls or Moose Math) • Visual game instructions (symbols or simple icons) • Timer (optional, for turn-taking) **Procedure:** • Introduce the app with a brief demo. • Children take turns playing a level or puzzle challenge on the app. • Encourage children to talk through their actions (e.g., "I need to move this block to help the ball roll.") • Use guiding prompts to support thinking strategies when needed. • Celebrate task completion and allow peer sharing of how they solved it.

Rule-Based or Game Play Activity

v. Creative Digital Play

The purpose of creative digital play is to provide children with an opportunity to express themselves through performance and movement using digital tools. Music can be composed of child-friendly apps, dances, and movement games, such as *GoNoodle, which* can be played interactively, and digital collages can be created using drawing and photo editing tools. One can use music apps to create rhythmic patterns, play movement-based games to follow dance routines, and design art using digital drawing apps. In addition to enhancing aesthetic appreciation and supporting physical coordination, this type of digital play fosters self-expression. Engaging with the arts in interactive, dynamic ways fosters creativity, rhythm, and movement in children.

My Dancing Animal

Age: 3–5 years
Type: Creative Digital Play
Duration: 15–20 mins
Learning Objectives: Basic tech use (touchscreen, simple apps) and Creativity & imagination
Materials: Tablet/interactive whiteboard, simple animation/drawing app (e.g., Toontastic, ChatterPix Kids), stylus/fingers.
Procedure:

1. Children choose or draw an animal on the app.
2. Add colors, clothes, or accessories.
3. Use the app to animate the animal with simple moves and music.
4. Share creations with the class.

Creative Digital Play Activity

vi. Outdoor Digital Play

Early childhood settings often utilize this type of play involving real-world exploration combined with simple technological devices, such as tablets, cameras, and augmented reality apps. During an outdoor discovery program, young children may take photographs, use magnifying apps to observe insects up close, or play movement-based games to acquaint them with the outdoors. As a result of this approach, children are not only encouraged to engage in physical activity but also foster a sense of curiosity, refine observational skills, and develop early inquiry skills. By incorporating technology into the classroom, learning is made more engaging, and children are able to connect their classroom experiences with the outside world. The following activity is designed for ECE teachers to apply this type of play in their classrooms.

Treasure Hunt-Let's Explore

Type of Play: Outdoor Digital Play
Age: 3–5 years
Duration: 15–20 mins
Materials: Tablet/smartphone with child-friendly AR app (e.g., Quiver, AR Flashcards, Seek by iNaturalist), printed AR markers or QR codes, safe outdoor space.
Learning Objectives:

- Introduction to augmented reality
- Outdoor exploration & movement
- Observation & problem-solving

Procedures:

1. Place AR markers or QR codes around the playground/garden.
2. Children use the device to scan and reveal virtual animals, objects, or clues.
3. Collect all "treasures" by spotting them in the app.
4. Share findings with the group.

Outdoor Digital Play Activity

Through the use of these different types of digital play, early childhood educators can foster a rich, balanced learning environment in which creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving can be enhanced. Children can be engaged by incorporating exploration, pretend play, constructive play, storytelling, games, creative play, and outdoor play thoughtfully. The combination of digital play with real-world experiences fosters not only 21st-century skills but also keeps learning joyful, imaginative, and meaningful.

Appropriate educational technology resources enable educators to create activities that enhance play experiences. These tools serve as a bridge between conventional play and novel educational experiences.

7.4 EDUCATIONAL TECH RESOURCES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

The selection of technological resources, applications, and games for early childhood education is always expanding, and each one has special advantages catered to particular age groups and learning objectives. In the section that follows, we'll look at a few instances of age-appropriate platforms, games, and applications that may be utilized to enhance engaging and enjoyable learning activities in ECE classes.

i. Educational Games and Applications.

In addition to making learning fun and engaging, educational games and apps aim to develop fundamental abilities in subjects like literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking. To keep kids interested and engaged, they frequently employ lively graphics, captivating plots, and interactive tasks. Additionally, digital technology makes it easier to collaborate, which is essential in early education. Children can collaborate to solve problems, discuss ideas, and produce digital artwork through multimedia platforms. Young children's social, cooperative, and communication skills are enhanced by the collaborative process (Masoumia & Bourbour, 2024). The most effective games go beyond basic drills and encourage kids to use what they've learned in situations that mimic real-world problem-solving, including controlling resources in a game, solving riddles, or following detailed directions to accomplish an objective. These applications and games make use of interactive and captivating components to encourage learning in subjects including critical thinking, problem-solving, reading, and numeracy (Papanastasiou et al., 2022). Table 1 below lists many age-appropriate educational games and applications that may be utilized in ECE classrooms or by parents to help their children in their early learning years.

Table 1

Educational Games & Apps

Literacy-Focused Apps			
App Name	**Key Focus**	**Suitable Age (years)**	**Features**
Starfall ABCs	Alphabet & phonics	3-6	Interactive letters, songs,

			and games for phonemic awareness
Endless Alphabet	Vocabulary & letter sounds	3-7	Animated puzzles, fun word meanings, and letter tracing
ABC mouse	Complete an early literacy curriculum	2-8	Step-by-step lessons in reading, phonics, and writing
Letter School	Handwriting & letter recognition	3-6	Tracing activities for upper/lowercase letters
Teach Your Monster to Read	Phonics & early reading	4-8	Game-based reading adventures
Reading Eggs	Phonics, sight words, fluency	3-10	Assessment-based lessons with games and eBooks
Numeracy-Focused Apps			
Moose Math	Counting, addition, subtraction	3–7 years	Fun missions to build foundational math skills
Endless Numbers	Number recognition, counting	3–6 years	Animated characters, number puzzles, and math facts
Todo Math	Comprehensive math skills	3–8 years	Daily math challenges, number tracing, and math games
Monkey Math School Sunshine	Basic operations & number sense	3–6 years	Engaging games on counting, patterns, and basic operations
Mathseeds	Early math learning (like Reading Eggs)	3–9 years	Interactive lessons,

			rewards, and math games
Numberblocks - Hide and Seek	Counting & number recognition	3–6 years	Based on a popular TV series, it helps us to understand numbers visually
Khan Academy Kids	Early math & logic	2–8 years	Free lessons, videos, and practice in math and problem-solving
Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving Apps			
Thinkrolls	Logic, problem-solving, physics	3–8	Puzzle mazes that require planning, reasoning, and sequencing.
Busy Shapes	Shape manipulation, spatial skills	2–5	Inspired by Piaget's theories, it helps develop reasoning through object play.
Marble Math Jr.	Math + problem-solving	3–8	Combines math problems with logic maze gameplay

ii. Online Learning Platforms.

The purpose of online learning platforms is to assist kids in studying independently while receiving guidance. They often provide games, movies, and step-by-step exercises that make learning enjoyable and simple. Many systems let kids go through classes or modules at their own pace while tracking their progress. As a result, kids may devote more time to subjects they struggle with and progress more quickly through those they grasp. These platforms may include anything from science and art to reading and arithmetic, and they frequently have badges or awards to keep kids interested. Some widely used learning platforms are mentioned below:

- Khan Academy Kids
- ABCmouse

- Sesame Street Online
- Storyberries
- TurtleDiary
- National Geographic Kids (Junior)

These are but a few examples; as technology advances, there are countless more platforms accessible, and new ones are created daily. Through empowering kids to take charge of their education, these resources foster self-assurance, self-reliance, and a feeling of accomplishment.

Early childhood educators need to use technology that fits their unique situation and complements their overarching learning objectives. These choices should also consider the instructors' personal experience, time limits, and financial limitations. There is no doubt that the educational technology sector is growing quickly, even though these considerations could influence the decisions taken. A plethora of new tools and chances that can further enhance early learning experiences are promised by ongoing advances.

Group Activity: Find/Search a new educational app or platform, explore its features, and explain how it could benefit ECE learners within budget, time, and expertise limits.

7.5 INTEGRATING PLAY IN TECHNOLOGY-BASED ECE CLASSROOM

7.5.1 Combining Digital Tools with Hands-On Play

Children's more conventional play activities are frequently incorporated into and blended with digital play. Children can interact digitally and play hands-on with certain digital programs that are connected to real-world items like wooden or plastic blocks. One program, for instance, combines tactile creation with visual feedback by encouraging kids to make shapes with 3D items and see them materialize on the tablet screen. Lego, playdough, or small-world setups may also be used with stop-motion animation applications, where kids shoot a sequence of pictures that are then played back as an animation. This method combines technology abilities like operating equipment and capturing pictures, visual narrative, and physical manipulation.

Digital media is widely used by kids to enhance and broaden their traditional play experiences. To use storytelling, pretend play, or craft projects, students can download and print images of their favorite media characters, such as superheroes, cartoon figures, or animals. These printed materials may be utilized as backdrops, characters, or objects in real-world play places, assisting kids in bridging the gap between the virtual and physical worlds. Like this, kids may act out stories or characters from video games or educational apps, turning virtual narratives into authentic, peer-performed performances.

7.5.2 Linking Media Worlds to Creative Classroom Play

A whole ecosystem of connected content, such as interactive games, mobile applications, collectible magazines, trading cards, and movies, supports many successful television shows targeted at young audiences. Children may explore characters, settings, and narratives in a variety of forms thanks to this transmedia approach, which provides them with various entrance points into the same fictional realm. This diversity gives them the chance to link their play in many settings—smoothly switching between interactive exercises, imaginative improvisation, and on-screen interaction. Playing with toys like figurines, construction sets, or dress-up costumes can also be influenced by characters from favorite TV shows and digital media. With the help of these objects, kids may reenact well-known situations, create brand-new adventures, and create original stories that combine their imaginative thoughts with what they have seen online. While maintaining play's high level of engagement and personal significance, the interaction between media-inspired material and child-led innovation fosters language development, storytelling skills, problem-solving, and social collaboration.

Additionally, by carefully integrating digital tools that enhance creativity and engagement, children might be inspired to enhance their non-digital play. They may snap pictures of their inventions or discoveries using the camera on their phone or tablet while they are exploring or engaging in imaginative play. For the sake of later viewing, reflecting, and even suggesting adjustments, teachers may film their students' role-playing scenarios, dance routines, or musical performances. Digital props like computerized cash registers for store play, digital scales for item weighing, calculators for managing "payments," or fictitious cell phones for making "calls" can be used to improve traditional role-play locations. These subtle yet intentional linkages foster language development, social engagement, and problem-solving abilities while bridging the gap between enjoyable learning and real-world technology use.

Children may move seamlessly between the digital and non-digital worlds when technology is included in physical play, which enhances both experiences. Digital technologies, when utilized effectively, may increase engagement, expand narrative, and foster creativity without taking the place of traditional play's imaginative, social, and hands-on benefits. Teachers may ensure that children benefit from both worlds in their early learning journeys by carefully combining these techniques to create dynamic learning spaces where technology fosters active exploration, cooperation, and skill development.

Activity: Design a short 15-**20-minute** collaborative digital play activity that promotes both social skills and problem-solving. Explain the tools and roles involved.

7.6 EFFECTIVE WAYS FOR PLAY AND TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN ECE CLASSROOM

It is important to ensure that digital tools enhance rather than replace the joy and creativity of play when integrating play into early childhood classrooms that incorporate technology. A well-planned technology experience can help children create, solve problems, and collaborate more effectively - enabling them to explore, tell tales, and solve problems. In the 21st century, digital devices, apps, and interactive platforms are useful tools for sparking curiosity and extending learning beyond the screen, while keeping young learners engaged through hands-on, sensory experiences. Here are a few strategies that can help teachers blend play with technology to make learning active, child-centered, and developmentally appropriate.

i. Prioritize Active, Child-Directed Tech Play

Students should be encouraged to be creators rather than passive consumers by using apps and tools. To accomplish this, children should select creative platforms such as drawing apps (e.g., Sketches School), storytelling tools (e.g., Book Creator), and music programs (e.g., GarageBand for Kids). Several open-ended resources have been developed to encourage children to explore and experiment, including digital cameras, handheld microscopes, and programmable robots (such as Bee-Bots).

ii. Blend Physical and Digital Play (Hybrid Play)

By combining hands-on activities and technology, both motor and cognitive skills can be strengthened. Screen-based activities may be connected to real-world items using Augmented Reality (AR) experiences, such as AR alphabet cards or sandboxes. Children may physically move blocks or paths to operate robots using coding toys like Cubetto or Sphero Indi, which combine tactile interaction with computational reasoning. Digital learning is kept dynamic and multisensory with this hybrid method.

iii. Foster Collaborative Tech Play

Technology has the potential to promote social connection and collaboration. Teachers may assign students to work in pairs on a single tablet to create collaborative projects like creating a virtual city or developing a digital garden, or they may utilize shared screens for group storytelling. Role-playing situations can also use technology, such as using a tablet to take "restaurant orders" or producing digital menus, to foster creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving.

iv. Select Play-Based Digital Tools

Not every app is suitable for young learners in terms of development. Teachers ought to seek digital resources that adhere to the ideals of play:

Open-ended: Provide several avenues for exploration without predetermined results (e.g., Endless Alphabet, Toca Boca).

Process-oriented: Put more emphasis on innovation and discovery than on winning.

Minimal distractions: Steer clear of intrusive pop-ups, animations, or advertisements.

Apps with timers, points, or competitive scoring should be used sparingly because they can cause stress and inhibit creativity. In the ECE classroom, it is crucial to carefully choose tools, activities, and applications that are age and developmentally appropriate (Jun & Zainudin, 2025).

v. Teacher as Play Facilitator

Rather than just keeping an eye on digital play, the teacher's job is to direct, expand, and enhance it. During the play, this involves asking open-ended questions like,

- "What would happen if we tried this?"
- Maintaining healthy habits involves balancing tech use with physical play by limiting tech sessions to 10 to 15 minutes and interspersing them with non-screen activities.
- Using technology to record and contemplate, such as taking pictures of block constructions to examine symmetry or balance.

vi. Professional Development and Mindset Shifts

Teachers must get ongoing training in play-based tech pedagogy. By using frameworks such as the SAMR Model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition), educators can include play and technology in a more meaningful way than a superficial one. Schools can establish groups called Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where educators share resources, ideas, and success stories. Importantly, the process should begin with defined learning objectives (such as growing empathy) before deciding on the right technology. Ongoing professional development is crucial to ensuring that educators are equipped to guide children through digital interactions in ways that are developmentally appropriate (Jun & Zainudin, 2025).

vii. Integrate Digital Storytelling

Children should be encouraged and assisted by their teachers in creating personal stories by combining animations, voice recordings, and photographs using story-creation tools. This combines artistic expression, emotional expression, and literacy. Children's work can be revisited and expanded upon through digital storytelling, transforming it into a dynamic, ever-evolving project. By relating this to real materials and role-play, educators may make sure that the storytelling process is both realistic and creative.

viii. Encourage Tech-Enhanced Outdoor Play

Indoor environments shouldn't be the exclusive domain of technology. Nature exploration apps (like Seek by iNaturalist), tablet-based digital scavenger hunts, or QR codes concealed in play spaces that unlock entertaining challenges can all

improve outdoor learning. This keeps kids moving while combining tech literacy, movement, and exploration.

Apart from the above-mentioned ways of integrating play in technology-based early childhood education, teachers can adapt/adopt other ways according to the situation or needs of the class/ students. These are not the only effective ways of play and technology integration.

Summary

In order to enhance rather than replace conventional learning experiences, this unit examines how play might be incorporated into technology-based Early Childhood Education (ECE). With an emphasis on how each promotes cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, it presents digital play and its primary forms: exploratory, pretend, constructive, narrative, rule-based, creative, and outdoor. With an emphasis on fusing interactive technology with hands-on exploration to foster creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills, the significance of striking a balance between digital and non-digital activities is underlined.

Practical strategies include encouraging child-directed tech play, blending physical and digital activities, fostering collaboration, choosing open-ended tools, and adopting a facilitator's role. The unit also covers digital storytelling, tech-enhanced outdoor play, and professional development for teachers. Examples of educational apps, games, and platforms guide resource selection based on learning goals, budget, and expertise. By the end, educators are equipped to design balanced, engaging environments where technology supports joyful and meaningful learning.

Exercise

1. Define "digital play" in your own words and explain how it differs from traditional play.
2. Identify three types of digital play and give one example activity for each.
3. Think of an existing traditional classroom activity (e.g., block building, storytelling, role-play). How could you adapt it to become a hybrid physical-digital experience?
4. How can educational games and apps help young children learn literacy, numeracy, and thinking skills? Give examples.
5. Explain how teachers can effectively integrate play and technology into the ECE classroom.
6. Reflect on your comfort level with integrating technology in ECE. Which strategies from the unit could help you grow in this area?

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UNIT 8

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

Technology has opened many educational doors to children, particularly to children with disabilities. Alternative solutions from the world of technology are accommodating physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments in many ways. Much of the technology we see daily was developed initially to assist persons with disabilities. Curb cuts at street corners and curb slopes, originally designed to accommodate people with orthopedic disabilities, are used more frequently by families with strollers or individuals with grocery carts than by persons with wheelchairs or walkers. The optical character reader, developed to assist individuals unable to read written text, has been adapted in the workplace to scan printed documents into computer-based editable material, saving enormous amounts of data entry labor. This concern to ensure equality and equity is evidenced in most of the international initiatives over the past decade, for example, the UNESCO-Weidong Group project "Harnessing ICTs for Education 2030," which will, over four years, support participating Member States in harnessing the potential of ICTs to achieve ODS 4 by 2030. The United Nations also adopted, during its General Assembly on 13 December 2006, the resolution drafted by the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, to promote measures for research and development of disability-friendly technologies and their availability and use, including specific technical devices designed to improve the daily lives of people with disabilities. In this regard, evidence has shown that digital technologies (computers, laptops, and mobile devices) have changed many students' lives (Bond, 2014). Despite these changes affecting education, little attention has been paid to how students with disabilities have incorporated technologies into their daily lives (Passey, 2013; European Schoolnet, 2014). In this context, digital technologies are a tool to access the curriculum. This is not surprising, given that existing research on children with disabilities is scarcely developed (McLaughlin et al., 2016), while generic research often excludes this sector of the student population (Connors & Stalker, 2007). This may be a challenge in terms of ensuring equal opportunities to access and benefit from digital technologies.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, students will be able to define and understand:

1. Inclusive classrooms and their requirements for children with disabilities
2. Technology as a tool to assist in designing student-centered lessons in the inclusive classroom
3. Types of technology and classify them according to purpose
4. Use and Application of Assistive Technology in Education
5. Impact of technology on teaching
6. Technology as an accommodation
7. Technology to resolve barriers

8.1 WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Inclusive education refers to an education system in which all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions, learn together in the same classroom environment. It is based on the principle that every child has the right to education and should be given equal opportunities to participate and succeed.

In an inclusive classroom, differences among children are respected and valued. Teachers modify their teaching strategies, classroom environment, and learning materials to meet the diverse needs of all learners. This includes ensuring that school infrastructure, such as classrooms, play areas, transport, and washrooms, is accessible to children with disabilities.

Inclusive education is not only about placing children with disabilities in regular classrooms, but also about providing appropriate support, resources, and teaching methods so that they can actively participate and learn effectively alongside their peers.

8.1.1 Inclusive Education and Human Rights

Inclusive education is closely linked with human rights. All human rights are interconnected, and the right to education cannot be achieved unless other rights are also fulfilled. When children with disabilities are included in education, it helps them enjoy other rights such as participation, equality, and dignity.

Inclusive education requires:

- Non-discrimination and equal treatment of all children
- Respect for the best interests of the child
- The right of children to express their views
- Protection from violence, abuse, and neglect
- Access to healthcare and rehabilitation services
- Support for mobility and independence

Inclusive education promotes:

- Participation in social and community life
- Employment opportunities in the future
- Independent living and self-reliance
- A better standard of living

Thus, inclusive education plays a vital role in ensuring that children with disabilities become active and valued members of society.

8.1.2 Requirements to Make Inclusive Education Possible

For inclusive education to be successful, certain conditions must be fulfilled:

- **Ending discrimination:** Schools must ensure equal treatment of all children.
- **Inclusion of all learners:** Children with disabilities should not be excluded from mainstream education.

- **Access to education:** Schools must provide accessible buildings, learning materials, and resources.
- **Reasonable accommodation:** Adjustments should be made according to the needs of each child.
- **Individual Education Plans (IEPs):** Personalized learning plans should be developed.
- **Specialized services:** Support such as Braille, sign language, and therapy services should be available.
- **Teacher training:** Teachers must be trained to handle diverse learning needs effectively.

These requirements ensure that inclusive education is not just a concept but a practical reality.

8.1.3 Technology as a Tool for Learner-Centered Classrooms

Technology plays a significant role in supporting learner-centered education. It allows children to actively participate in learning and take responsibility for their progress.

Some ways technology supports learner-centered classrooms include:

1. **Shifting responsibility to learners:**
   Digital tools such as online quizzes, educational apps, and interactive platforms allow students to learn at their own pace.
2. **Organizing learning content:**
   Learning management systems (LMS), online resources, and digital schedules help structure lessons clearly.
3. **Facilitating learning:**
   Teachers can use videos, simulations, and interactive activities to make learning more engaging.
4. **Encouraging ownership of learning:**
   Tools like blogs, discussion boards, and digital portfolios help students reflect on their learning.
5. **Supporting evaluation:**
   Technology enables continuous assessment through quizzes, feedback tools, and progress tracking systems.

Although integrating technology requires effort and training, it leads to improved student engagement and better learning outcomes.

8.2 TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Technology has transformed education by introducing innovative teaching methods and improving access to learning. It allows teachers to reach a large number of students and provides opportunities for personalized learning.

With the rapid advancement of technology, tools such as computers, tablets, mobile devices, and online platforms have become an essential part of modern classrooms. These tools help in delivering content effectively, supporting diverse learners, and enhancing overall educational experiences.

8.2.1 Instructional Technology

Instructional technology refers to tools and applications used to support teaching and learning processes. These tools are designed to reinforce learning and provide practice opportunities.

Examples include:

- Educational apps for reading and mathematics
- Interactive quizzes and games
- Digital learning platforms

Effective instructional technology should:

- Be user-friendly
- Provide clear instructions
- Offer immediate feedback
- Align with curriculum objectives

For children with learning difficulties, it is important to select tools that are simple and free from unnecessary distractions.

8.2.2 Assistive Technology

Assistive technology includes devices, tools, and systems that help individuals with disabilities perform tasks more easily and independently.

Examples include:

- Hearing aids
- Wheelchairs
- Speech-to-text software
- Screen readers

Assistive technology helps individuals overcome physical, sensory, or cognitive challenges and improves their quality of life. It includes both hardware (devices) and software (applications).

8.3 MERGING INSTRUCTIONAL AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Instructional and assistive technologies are closely related but serve different purposes. Instructional technology supports general learning, while assistive technology helps individuals overcome specific barriers.

When combined, these technologies create an inclusive learning environment where all students can participate equally. For example, a student with visual impairment can use screen readers (assistive technology) along with digital learning platforms (instructional technology).

8.4 IMPORTANCE OF USING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive technology is essential in inclusive education because it:

- Provides equal access to learning
- Enhances student participation
- Supports independent learning
- Improves confidence and self-esteem
- Helps teachers deliver personalized instruction

It also prepares students for future learning and employment opportunities.

8.5 USE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Assistive technology helps remove barriers and enables students with disabilities to access the curriculum effectively.

8.5.1 Applications of Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is used in different areas such as:

- Reading (text-to-speech tools)
- Writing (word processors, spelling tools)
- Communication (speech devices)
- Cognitive support (timers, organizers)

8.5.2 Students with Mobility Impairments

These students may use:

- Alternative keyboards
- Speech recognition software
- Adjustable desks and equipment

8.5.3 Students with Visual Impairment

They use:

- Screen readers
- Braille displays
- Audio books

8.5.4 Students with Low Vision

They benefit from:

- Magnifiers
- Large text displays
- Audio-assisted learning

8.5.5 Students with Hearing and Speech Impairments

They use:

- Hearing aids
- Speech-to-text tools
- Visual communication systems

8.5.6 Students with Learning Disabilities

They benefit from:

- Educational software

- Word prediction tools
- Audio-supported materials

8.5.7 Students with Intellectual Disabilities

They use:

- Audiobooks
- Communication devices
- Assistive learning apps

8.6 OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO INCLUSION

Despite its benefits, there are challenges in implementing assistive technology.

8.6.1 Availability and Accessibility

- Limited resources
- High cost of devices
- Lack of access in some areas

8.6.2 Attitudinal Barriers

- Negative perceptions
- Lack of awareness
- Resistance to using technology

8.6.3 Curriculum Adaptation

- Need for flexible teaching methods
- Integration of technology into lessons

8.6.4 Training and Support

- Teacher training is essential
- Students need guidance to use technology effectively
- Parents should be involved in the learning process

8.7 Summary

Inclusive education ensures equal opportunities for all learners. Technology plays a vital role in supporting children with disabilities by removing barriers and enhancing learning experiences. Effective use of assistive and instructional technologies can create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

UNIT 9

ASSESSMENT IN TECHNOLOGY-BASED ECE CLASSROOM

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INTRODUCTION

Technology and the digital environment have a significant and changing impact on assessment. This unit focuses on the technology-based assessment at ECE. Additionally, it gives an overview of new advances in computer-based assessment, computer-assisted assessment, e-marking technologies, and electronic assessment, beneficial for teachers as well as parents of students to get timely progress of their kids. Additionally, Teachers' perspectives about the use of technology at ECE assessments and various tools available online for effective and efficient assessment are also part of this unit.

With the advancement in technology and the transformation from traditional to technological pedagogy in the educational sector, the lines of three main themes are supported along with technology-based ECE assessments:

1. Electronic media brought technological affordances and efficiency.
2. Advances in educational settings alter the nature of assessment.
3. Technological assessments add value and improve the quality of the teaching-learning environment.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- Define the concept and importance of technology-based assessments.
- Know different strategies for digital assessment in the ECE classroom.
- Evaluate the role of the teacher in implementing technology-based assessment at ECE. • Explain the objectives of using technology for formative assessment.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

It is generally agreed that compared to conventional assessment activities, methodologies, and processes, technology and the digital world offer a variety of options and added value to enhance students' participation and learning abilities.

The advantages of technology-based assessment focus on:

i. Accessibility to assessment from potentially any geographic place and at any time.

ii. Automated administration enables students to take online assessments repeatedly and reevaluate their understanding.

iii. Adding interactive and media-rich elements to the assessment items. iv. Easy use of automated scoring and adaptive testing in computer data processing. v. Sophisticated reporting, including both the simple collection and analysis of student replies or behavioral data to allow the marker to fine-tune and alter assessment activities and instruction.

vii. Economic efficiencies brought forth by scale and automation.

Technology-based assessment can improve, add quality, or value to both the assessment and feedback processes in addition to focusing on operational and efficiency improvements. Digital technology has been recognized for its revolutionary potential, which includes a wider range of potential approaches, designs, and assessment methodologies, beyond only quality enhancement.

The majority of young children entering kindergarten or early primary education have already been exposed to various types of technology at home, and an increasing proportion are engaging with digital devices regularly in the learning environment. This shift toward a greater use of technology in the classroom opens up new opportunities for early childhood education to participate in teaching, learning, and assessment strategies. Along with other pedagogical and curriculum changes, trends toward increased technology use have emerged in the ECE setting.

It has been suggested that, when used properly, technology could support child-centered pedagogy in pre-schooling through play-based learning. Students in a US kindergarten class used iPads to engage in creative storytelling and share these stories with their families, while students.

An Australian primary school used iPads to play literacy-themed activities and make their own audiovisual alphabet books (Lynch & Redpath, 2014).

9.1 ASSESSMENT

9.1.1 DEFINITION:

The methodical foundation for concluding students' learning and development is assessment. It involves defining, picking, designing, compiling, analyzing, interpreting, and using information about the knowledge that students have acquired via their educational experiences. The outcomes are often used to pinpoint areas that want development and make sure the course material satisfies student learning requirements.

9.1.2 PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENTS:

According to the definition, assessments generally aim to evaluate and enhance student learning, while specific aims may vary slightly based on the sort of assessment being conducted. The main goal of assessment is to enhance student learning and teacher instruction as both parties react to the information it generates. The connection between teaching and learning leads to a continuing process called assessment for learning, which describes how effectively the information is used to determine how successful an assessment is for learning.

9.2 EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT

According to Dr. Anthony Petrosino, a student's mind is frequently a "black box" or a mystery. Language, logic (mathematical analysis), spatial representation, musical thinking, use of the body, understanding others, and self-awareness are the seven separate intelligences that Gardner claims are exclusive to humans. All of these intelligences are observable and researchable. A teaching style that differs greatly from the conventional method is produced by constant feedback between teachers and pupils.

9.2.1 WHAT IS CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT?

The process of doing a childhood assessment is gathering data on a child, analyzing the data, and using the data to develop educational activities that are accessible to and useful to the child.

Early childhood assessment is a method used to collect and deliver vital data on a child's growth and development to educators and parents. An element of child evaluation is now a requirement for early childhood programs.

An early childhood curriculum that is of the finest quality must include assessment. When educators conduct assessments, they watch students to learn about their abilities and knowledge. An educator can compile a record of a child's growth and development by observing and recording a child's work and performance over the

course of a year. Teachers can use this knowledge to start planning effective curricula and personalized instruction for every child.

This assessment record is a wonderful site to share with parents so they can monitor their child's academic progress, identify their child's strengths and weaknesses, and make plans for extending the learning at home.

9.2.2 IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT AT ECE:

Assessment offers vital knowledge about a child's growth and development to teachers, parents, and the community.

i. Provide a history of progress in all developmental domains, including cognitive, physical/motor, linguistic, social-emotional, and learning strategies.

ii. Identify children who might require extra assistance and decide whether intervention or support services are required.

iii. Assist educators in creating individualized lesson plans for a single child or a group of kids who are going through the same developmental stage.

iv. Identify a programme's strong points and deficiencies, as well as information on how effectively the programme satisfies the children's needs and goals.

v. Establish a point of agreement amongst parents, guardians, and educators so that they can work together to develop a plan of action to help their child.

9.2.3 CHILD ASSESSMENT METHODS:

Long conversations with children can yield a lot of insight, but they are frequently impractical in the classroom. Instead of waiting until the conclusion of the lesson to receive feedback, various assessment techniques now allow us to do so frequently. The following are a few child assessment methods:

a) There are informal (doing natural observations, gathering information, and children’s work for portfolios, using educator and teacher ratings) and formal methods of assessing children (using assessment tools such as questionnaires and standardised testing). Both approaches work well and can provide educators and parents with information about a child's development.

b) Children's activities can be observed with little to no interference. Every aspect of growth, including the intellectual, linguistic, social-emotional, and physical, can be regularly observed by educators.

c) Portfolios serve as a repository for information gathered from the work that students have produced throughout time. The collection amply demonstrates a child's developmental progress. Portfolios can be a necessary element for fostering

an interaction between students, teachers, and parents. Portfolios can be created using technology as well.

Scanners, digital photos, and computer-produced movies are all acceptable components of a student's multimedia portfolio. A digital, multi-media portfolio has the benefit of being accessible to many different communities, which is one of its advantages.

d) Educator Ratings can be used to assess a child's social-emotional growth as well as their cognitive and language skills. These scores may be connected to further assessment techniques, such as standardized testing or other assessment instruments.

e) Parent Ratings involve parents in the assessment process. Parents who are encouraged to watch and listen to their children can assist in identifying and focusing on key developmental stages and behaviors.

f) Exams designed to adhere to a set of testing criteria are known as standardized tests. These examinations are regularly used to evaluate the performance of kids in programs since they are given, scored, and administered consistently.

9.2.4 EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT FOR PRESCHOOL:

Toddlers arrive with a variety of skills. Throughout the academic year, preschool teachers employ formative assessments to monitor the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development of their pupils. They can close learning gaps as pupils get ready for kindergarten

based on the findings of formative assessments. Here are some illustrations of formative preschool assessments.

i. Monitoring:

To determine whether each student is understanding a concept or participating in a lesson, preschool teachers regularly monitor their class. Monitoring might take place during playing or during group activities. The teacher can use their observations to create a small group or offer one-on-one assistance if numerous students are having trouble with a certain ability. CCTV cameras are also used as a technology assessment technique for monitoring by school heads and administration.

ii. Games playing:

Preschool games can be a great way to assess understanding. Students who have trouble with their gross motor abilities could fall behind in relay or tag races. In a class guessing game, some students might not be able to name every letter. Every

time, the game gives the teacher more knowledge to use. Involving the students in game playing may enhance cognitive learning skills, and teachers can easily assess the students' capability of receiving knowledge through this activity. Use of multi-media technology for games is a recent advancement in classroom assessment strategy, which will be described under online assessment tools of this unit.

iii. Parent Communication:

Parents now have a great opportunity to view and respond to their children's classroom work. The ability to integrate the work into a bigger, more comprehensive dialogue is one of the main benefits of digital technology. Then, feedback can be obtained from a growing number of communities. An excellent strategy to make sure that learning is taking place is to maintain constant communication with parents. Periodically, teachers can send brief surveys home to parents so they can track their child's development in areas like emotional control, following simple and complex instructions, and reaching physical milestones. Parent-Teacher meetings are the best way to communicate about kids' performance. Email and other social media platforms are also good and instant means of communication with parents about child participation and learning achievements at school.

iv. Physical Response

Physical responses are useful formative assessments for toddlers because they frequently express themselves more physically than verbally. Students can clap when they understand an idea. When using Total Physical Response (TPR) techniques, this kind of examination is extremely beneficial. The documentation of activities based on performance, such as athletic, dramatic, musical, and other performance-based activities, is made possible by the inclusion of speeches, musical performances, and compositions in the proper file formats.

v. Use of Technology:

Technology can offer an additional set of tools to evaluate what students comprehend and learn, given the limitations of the classroom. It enables ongoing assessment of the teachings taught in the classroom. Teachers can now create items for evaluation using an entirely new variety of technologies that are readily available. It can be made such that the students' parents, their teacher, or their peers can review it. Even better, it can be published online so that everyone can see the pupils' work.

9.3 TECHNOLOGY-BASED ASSESSMENT:

It is generally agreed that technology and the digital world offer a variety of options

and added value compared to the conventional assessment activities, methodologies, and processes. The benefits of technology-based assessment include:

a) Access to assessments from conceivably anywhere and at any time;

b) Automated administration allowing students to take online tests again and reassess their understanding;

c) improving the static presentation of assessment items with interactive and media-rich content;

d) computer data-processing abilities like automatic scoring and adaptive testing;

e) sophisticated reporting, including both the simple collection and analysis of student responses or behavioral data to allow the marker to fine-tune and adapt assessment activities and instruction; and

f) cost efficiencies arising from scaling and automation.

Technology-based assessment includes many different types of assessment and has changed through time in terms of its emphasis. Technology-based assessment can improve, add quality, or value to both the assessment and feedback processes in addition to focusing on operational and efficiency improvements. Beyond quality improvement, digital technology has been praised for its transformative potential. While some computer-based technologies and computer-assisted assessments (MCQ e-tests, e-exams, in-class student response systems, and e-portfolios) have remained largely stable or experienced modest growth, other technologies, like electronic submission (e-submission) and electronic marking (e-marking) of coursework, are just a few examples of the wide range of possible approaches, designs, and methods of assessment that have gained popularity.

9.3.1 APPROACHES TOWARD LEARNING

Technology is merely a new set of tools, and they are only valuable if they enhance the learning process. Technology-based assessment, as the name suggests, is the process of assessing and evaluating student achievement in educational environments using electronic devices and software. Thus, it includes computer-based new assessment methods as well as electronic versions of conventional measuring processes.

The process of making observations and using assessment methods can be sped up by technology-based assessment. Technology can help interagency service coordination because computers can store and handle enormous data sets that can then be quickly accessed by educators and parents. With the help of technological

advancements, assessment techniques may now monitor and analyse special education programmes, better serve the needs of individuals, and comply with ever-changing requirements while using fewer resources.

For instance, technology like voice recognition, handwriting interpreters, pointers, pen tools, and touchscreens enable users to interface with computers without utilizing keyboards and their fairly restricted fine-motor skill requirements for addressing students with physical disabilities.

According to Irvin and Walker's study, which focused on the use of technological apps to evaluate students' social competence, the evaluator can acquire perspective by observing students in a variety of scenarios when different talents are assessed across several domains. This all-

The encompassing technique creates a portrait of pupils in real-world scenarios that gives a complete understanding of their skills.

Technology provides new opportunities for learning and for exhibiting learning. Computers can reveal latent strengths for some youngsters who have distinctive learning methods. Children can approach learning at the computer from a variety of angles and take a variety of paths to a goal. Limiting screen time, assisting kids with task focus, and picking software that doesn't use overly exciting noises or constantly changing images can all help with poor concentration and attention issues. If spontaneous play time is incorporated as a crucial component of the child's daily routine, including any technology use, worries that technology speeds up the pace of learning and diminishes childhood can be reduced. Computers may enhance children's learning and play as they explore and experiment if used properly.

9.4 DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

“Digital assessment” is the presentation of evidence for judging student achievement, managed through the medium of computer technology. (Computer technology refers to hardware, software, and networks.)

E-assessment facilitates the development of high-order skills such as critical thinking, reflection, and teamwork. These skills subsequently help support curriculum goals through the use of information technology. Frequently assessing student progress is critical to ensure they are meeting their educational goals.

Examples in technology-based assessment include: A video-based computer-assisted test able to learn the language preference of the student and automatically switch to it to increase the validity of its measurement; Video segments from popular movies used as elements of a moral dilemma in real life.



Ways to Assess Student Learning

Picture retrieved from: Helen Colman eLearning Basics June 29, 2021 9 Online https://www.ispringsolutions.com/blog/8-ways-to-assess-online-student-learning

9.4.1 BEST DIGITAL/ ONLINE ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

Exams are used for more than just grades. Teachers will need to assess pupils for more than just academic achievement during remote learning. The greatest online assessment solutions for teachers provide one-on-one communication with pupils, frequently via video conferencing.

These are still fantastic tools to utilize, and recently, each of them has added new features that really interest students and give them fresh, original opportunities to hone their skills both inside and outside of the classroom.

What mood are they in? How is life at home going? Can they concentrate on their

work? Teachers might not explicitly ask these questions, but they can be quickly inferred from body language indicators. "It is crucial to really see and speak with kids via online video calls and communication platforms. Being alone at home can cause our students to experience a lot more than we are aware of. There are occasions when the evaluation must be on a level higher than academics. For measuring student morale, a top-notch screen-casting programme like Zoom or Flipgrid is a necessity. The teacher may utilize a variety of summative or formative assessment techniques to either grade students after the lesson is over or to help shape future lessons.

Quizzes, homework, in-class questions, and group discussions are all examples of formative assessment methods that teachers use to monitor and direct (or mould) their students' learning.

That works both ways because teachers frequently base their lesson ideas and lectures on the responses provided by their students through formative assessment methods. The final essays and exams that are provided at the conclusion of a project, course, semester, unit, programme, or academic year are known as summative assessment tools. These are used by teachers to assess student learning by contrasting performance against a standard. These tests have a high point value and are very important to a student's grade. Term papers and midterm exams are a couple of examples. Here are a few examples of the highlights that have really changed the classroom and motivated students to study and practice.

The range of assessments that teachers can develop and use in the classroom has increased thanks to the accessibility of online programmes like Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizlet.

1. Using **quizzes and Quizlet** in the classroom is a lot of fun since you can see how engaged the students are, and you can use the feedback right away. You will have access to the reports to track student progress and search for trends in their responses, and all of this information is maintained in your account, just like when you use quizzes in class as homework assignments. You may review the cards with the students to evaluate and provide feedback, and the students can also see the right answers on their devices, which is a really useful feature.

2. **Socrative** has received high marks in hundreds of internet evaluations from both professionals and educators, making it one of the best tools for teachers. You can quiz, grade, and assess using this interactive digital tool instantly, "at the speed of learning**."** Quick questions for immediate feedback, class counts to see who is logged in, or comprehensive tests for deeper knowledge are all options available to teachers. You can make tests with multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions using the quiz

creation tool Socrative. An entertaining game called Space Race, in which students "race" to the finish line, and exit tickets for the students to provide feedback on the lesson are some of its other intriguing aspects.

3. Teachers frequently use **Google Forms** to quickly and easily construct and automatically grade quizzes. Design short-answer or multiple-choice tests, and make a simple answer key with point allocations for each question. For an instant overview of the entire class, teachers can view graphs and summaries of frequently missed responses. A straightforward and commonly used tool for creating surveys and graded quizzes is Google Forms. Students can be given multiple-choice or short-answer questions to answer. You can specify the right answers and points, and you can give feedback on both the right and wrong answers.

4. **Mentimeter** is a free assessment tool that lets teachers build interactive presentations with 13 interactive question types, including word clouds and quizzes, and see how the students interact with the presentation in real time. It also creates quizzes and tests, manages student expectations, engages students, and even runs a teacher training workshop.

5. **Poll Everywhere:** With the help of this programme, you may analyse student performance and export findings as a PDF or Excel file. 300,000 teachers use Poll Everywhere. By constructing questions as word clouds, open-ended student responses, or with multiple-choice alternatives, you may get a quick overview of where students are having trouble. Then permit students to respond using their tablets, laptops, or phones. Without contacting particular people, teachers can receive real-time feedback on their question slides and implement assessment as an integrated element of a longer lecture. Giving students a say in the direction of live lesson plans in this way is a terrific idea.

6. **Teachers can make** "grids" on the website **Flipgrid** to help with video discussions. Every grid is similar to a bulletin board where professors may post questions, or "topics," and their pupils can respond with videos that are displayed in a tiled grid display. Classes, small groups, or any group of users interested in a similar set of questions can all share grids. Both the number of subjects in each grid and the number of responses for each topic are infinite. Text-based topics and resources like images, videos, Giphy, emojis, and attachments are both acceptable. Privacy is protected by customizable security settings for students. Students can answer using any camera-enabled device through the Flipgrid app or website, or by uploading a previously recorded video. Teachers may also allow students to record their comments to those of their peers. Teachers can activate or deactivate moderating elements depending on the topic. Multiple teachers can serve

as grid moderators via the CoPilot feature.

7. A tool made expressly for using movies is called **EdPuzzle**. It enables the addition of voice-overs, resources, comments, and quizzes to videos by both teachers and students. Additionally, instructors may monitor whether students are watching videos, how often they are seeing each portion, and how well they understand the material.

8. A web-based programme called **Nearpod** is used to create interactive lessons with fun exercises, including simulations, virtual reality, and gamified tests. With the use of formative evaluations, such as polls, open-ended inquiries, draw-it-yourself exercises,

   and more, you can keep track of how far advanced your students are in their learning. Both post-session reports and real-time student insights are available.

9. **Fluency Tutor** is made to monitor and evaluate kids' oral reading development. You can acquire recordings of the assigned reading passages and distribute them to your class. A library of more than 500 already-written reading fluency passages is included with the programme. Spiral is a collection of 5 apps for formative evaluation. You may give feedback to all of your students in real time, convert slides into discussion threads, allow students to make and share group presentations, and convert videos into live chats with questions and quizzes.

10. The **iSpring Suite** is a complete toolkit for creating eLearning. In addition to PowerPoint-based courses, video lessons, interactions, and flipbooks, it enables you to construct interactive quizzes, surveys, and dialogue simulations for student assessment. Despite offering a wide range of possibilities, the toolkit is incredibly simple to use and ideal for those with no prior knowledge of creating eLearning content.

11. The **ClassDojo** mobile app can be used to contextually record student behavior and accomplishments.

12. **ClassFlow** can also be used to promote learning by assigning various questions to various students (or groups of students), depending on their aptitude, learning style, or project. Students are less likely to feel frustrated and distracted and more likely to succeed when assessments are made in a way that is appropriate for them.

13. **Kahoot** is a free formative assessment tool that has been extensively utilized in education. It is a real-time platform for game-based learning. It has been a terrific approach to involve kids in a game to practice vocabulary, verbs, culture, trivia, and much more. It also brings out a great

deal of energy and passion in the students. Playing in Team Mode is the new Kahoot feature. As well as encouraging teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, playing in team mode allows you to involve all of your kids in the activity while also teaching them about technology. Students adore the

game-based learning and assessment methods used by Kahoot. More than 40 million learning games are available for teachers to choose from, or they can make their own in a matter of minutes, either live or on demand, and host games. Even better, students can design their own "Kahoots" to share with their peers and make learning more engaging. You may search their 500 million-item question library, import questions from spreadsheets, and quickly create quiz games. In addition, Kahoot allows you to include YouTube videos in your questions. Students can design the assessment games alone or in groups, and teachers can include true/false or multiple choice questions in the games. The games are timed and scored using point systems that the teacher has established. Additionally, you can download simple spreadsheet reports. Some assessment tools that are ideal for online evaluation have already been highlighted. Let's review the software you might require for each purpose and then take a look at some additional tools.

Additional online assessment tools for teachers, both formative and summative, are listed below: These tools include: **AnswerGarden**, a real-time polling and brainstorming tool; **Backchannel Chat**, a teacher-moderated Twitter-like assessment tool for education; **Chatzy**, which enables students to ask questions or offer comments during lectures; **Coggle**, a mind-mapping tool that enables you to understand how students are thinking; **Flipgrid**, which enables students to create quick videos in response to teacher prompts; and **Formative**, which allows you to give live assignments and grade assessments. **Plickers** - Real-time formative assessment data collection without the need for student devices. **Remind** - Send brief texts to students and parents to check understanding. **The Queue** - Free educational chat tool that is similar to Twitter and facilitates remote class discussion. **Quizalize** - Create homework and quizzes quickly, with a fast-grading feature. **Quizlet** - Develop tests, quizzes, flashcards, and study games for students to play. **Sparkpost Adobe app - SurveyPlanet**, which allows teachers to quickly assess students' knowledge. To create polls with visual components, use **Typeform**. Create discussions around papers, videos, and other resources using **VoiceThread**. Create student surveys that are optimised for mobile use with **Zoho Survey**.

9.4.2 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT:

Technology can be used in a variety of ways, such as recording students' progress over time, enabling rapid assessment. The use of edtech to enable formative assessment can help increase engagement, identify knowledge gaps, and support

further/deeper learning, which is perhaps even more compelling. Here are just a few examples of how educational technology might support instruction and evaluation in the classroom:

1. **Increase flexibility:**

   As you might have observed during lockdown, cloud-based learning offers greater flexibility because students can access and complete online exams whenever it is most convenient for their particular learning requirements and styles. All they want is a web-based or virtual environment and a device that can connect to the internet. Such student-led initiatives are growing in popularity all over the world because individualized learning has been proven to inspire students to become investors in their own education.

2. **Improve feedback:**

   With real-time evaluations and immediate polling, cloud-based edtech like ClassFlow enables teachers to gauge their students' understanding as they are studying. Teachers can then adapt their courses to the actual needs of each student by quickly recognizing and filling any knowledge gaps. Some potentially intriguing ideas for ongoing improvement have also been brought to light by research into aided assessment. Use of automatic feedback to assist students with written assignments is one instance of this. The technology used in these comparisons highlighted and clearly represented the similarities and differences between the learners' work and that of their classmates. Students were able to recognize overlapping and missing basic concepts, according to early investigations. Their intelligence, ability, and performance are all enhanced by the development of self-reflection and interest in feedback.

3. **Recognize and cater for differences:**

   Teachers have long put forth an effort to satisfy the needs of all of their students because everyone learns a little bit differently. They carefully set and print several exams for

   diverse students based on their ability. This procedure is significantly facilitated by technology that is intended for the classroom. Along with a wide selection of online learning tools, teachers can assess students based on their individual interests, skills, and goals with the aid of a wide variety of applications. Understand the importance of emotion: Every teacher is aware of the significant influence that emotion has on the learning process as a whole, yet it can be challenging to comprehend the various emotional demands of students. Subtle Stone, a handheld device created to let students quietly express their emotional states to the teacher, is one example of how

technology is being used to support teachers in examining the emotional impact of their learning activities, assessments, and teaching approaches.

4. Consolidate learning

Additionally, students can use audio and video capabilities to make podcasts and presentations to summarize their coursework. Students will generate a useful learning resource for other students as well as consolidate their information in a format that is familiar to them.

9.5 TECHNOLOGY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (Pros and Cons):

When weighing the pros and negatives of computer use, it is important to consider the child's age and developmental stage. When introducing young children to anything new, including technology, two crucial questions must be asked: Is it developmentally suitable, that is, does it match the child's current developmental stage, and how does a youngster grow and learn? Will the child gain from the activity? The answers to these questions are typically "no" for very young toddlers. Most young children under the age of three do not understand the purpose of using a computer. Preschool, three to five years old, as kids mature and develop, so will their computer-related activities and experiences. Very young children frequently utilize computers with an adult or older child's assistance.

Children use computers increasingly independently as they become older, and the teacher's role shifts from providing supervision to active monitoring and facilitation. Exploration and discovery are the main ways that young kids learn. Children who are exposed to computers in kindergarten, preschool, or child care facilities should have a variety of activities to choose from.

Children usually use computers for brief intervals before becoming interested in something else. Children aged three to five often use computers for about the same amount of time as they do other activities, like building with blocks or painting.

When an adult is present, the students are more engaged and less easily frustrated, and the instructor will likely support or moderate a large portion of the computer use, which is consistent with best practices at this level. In this day and age, a computer's worth lies in its versatility rather than in its ability to produce goods.

The teacher's job is to foster an environment in which students can become aware and inquire, and then to take various actions to encourage their inquiry and exploration. Software programmes for this age group ought to be few in number and suitable for the intended usage as well as the children's skill level.

Children usually utilize computers for brief intervals before becoming interested in

something else. Children aged three to five often use computers for about the same amount of time as they do other activities, like building with blocks or painting. When an adult is present, the students are more engaged and less easily frustrated, and the instructor will likely support or moderate a large portion of the computer use, which is consistent with best practices at this level.

Technology is a tool that can teach children another method to study and understand the world around them. Computers can be misused, just like blocks or any other items, or they can be employed in developmentally appropriate ways that are helpful to children. Computers, cameras, or any other kind of technology do not replace other instruments but rather broaden the range of options available to kids for exploration, creation, and communication. This is analogous to how pencils do not replace crayons but rather offer different means of expression.

Technology may enhance and extend learning in useful ways when utilized effectively by qualified teachers, which can increase educational opportunities for students. Finding the right balance between the components of a healthy upbringing and the special powers provided by technology is crucial.

9.6 TECHNOLOGY-BASED ASSESSMENTS: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

The availability and application of new technologies in the classroom have rapidly increased. According to the United States Energy Information Administration (2016), there were 71% more computers in American schools in 2012 compared to 1999, and over a million iPad tablets have been sold to educational institutions globally.

The fundamental impact of the movement for more accountability in education, which started in the 1990s, has been a rise in standards-based curricular demands in primary and secondary schools. This change is now beginning to trickle down into kindergarten. As a result, there are now more established academic standards in kindergarten education, and teachers are under more pressure to incorporate assessments that track and encourage students' performance.

In order to evaluate and report on students' current levels of accomplishment, these educators must engage in routine and continuing assessment procedures that support student learning and instructional strategies.

While this is happening, there has been a recent pedagogical movement in favor of play-based teaching and learning, which fosters both academic and developmental learning skills in the setting of children's play. With a plethora of technology-based tools and resources, kindergarten educators are challenged with the task of integrating instruction and evaluation in play-based contexts to fulfill curriculum and developmental goals. Researchers have issued a warning that just increasing

the availability of technology will not result in meaningful technology use that significantly improves student learning.

Although there is a small but growing body of research on the use of technology to improve classroom instruction in the early years, little research has looked at how new technologies can affect and possibly improve classroom assessment practices in early education.

Studies of kindergarten assessment procedures in the past have revealed that teachers use technology selectively to gather assessment data, frequently considerably more data than they could before integrating it, but less so to analyze or report on student learning. Therefore, rather than being a useful addition to assessment-based learning, technology may just be employed as a tool for recording. The current study's goal was to explore kindergarten teachers' attitudes and

Routines towards the application of technology to assessment in play-based learning environments.

9.6.1 ASSESSMENT AND PEDAGOGY IN KINDERGARTEN

While historically kindergarten has placed a strong emphasis on teaching and evaluating developmental targets to make sure that young children are developmentally prepared for formal schooling practices, movements toward higher standards and accountability have shaped curricular changes that place a greater emphasis on academic learning expectations.

A growing number of studies addressing the advantages of play for children's early learning and development has supported moves toward increased implementation of play-based learning pedagogy in kindergarten, which has been driven by proponents of developmentally appropriate practices.

Today's kindergarten teachers must make sure that children's play is used to further both academic and developmental goals. Researchers have defined play-based learning as a continuum of various activities that include child-directed free play, play with some adult guidance or involvement (guided play), and structured games or playful activities (teacher

directed play), as play can take a variety of forms. In this kindergarten setting, educators' assessment practices are starting to change from examining the tangible results of learning, like worksheets or standardized tests, to a focus on examining the process of learning, like documenting children's individual development and how learning proceeds within various classroom activities. Early educators are currently faced with the challenge of navigating play

based pedagogy within a more rigorous accountability framework that demands the

integration of assessment into educators' teaching and learning practices, as well as the growing integration of new technologies to support these practices in the classroom.

In research and policy related to kindergarten, the following three methods of assessment are frequently mentioned: Assessment as learning, which has been described as a subset of formative assessment; summative evaluation/assessment of learning, and formative assessment/assessment for learning. When assessment information is gathered in order to report on certain learning outcomes, it places an emphasis on measuring students' present level of knowledge or competence at a given time point. Assessment for learning, on the other hand, is the gathering and

analysis of data or feedback regarding a student's learning to identify the subsequent learning steps and the instructional strategies to support them. Students must actively participate in assessment tasks that encourage examination of and reflection on their own learning as part of assessment for learning. Formative assessment is primarily concerned with the development of student learning rather than accountability requirements or reporting on student performance.

Researchers have provided some prevailing assessment principles for kindergarten education to support both summative and formative assessment practice. These principles include that assessment should be an ongoing process that informs classroom teaching, that multiple methods should be implemented for gathering assessment information from diverse learners, that curricular learning goals should guide the assessment process, and that assessment should reflect a commitment to learning.

Furthermore, policy directives from all over the world urge kindergarten teachers to incorporate assessment into their routines to support student learning (formative assessment) and summative assessment, which has led to the perception that assessment is something kindergarten teachers do daily.

This procedure includes the continuous gathering and analysis of data on student learning that is relevant to both academic and developmental objectives, as well as the active use of that data by educators and learners to advance learning. These assessment fundamentals may be implemented in the classroom with the use of digital assessment technologies, including iPad apps, electronic portfolios (e-portfolios), digital images, and videos. For instance, these tools enable students to express their knowledge and thoughts in various ways and retain and share various sorts of evaluation data.

The introduction of digital assessment tools in early education and how their use has affected educators' assessment techniques has been the subject of a few recent studies. Beaumont-Bates (2017) investigated educators' perspectives on the implementation of an e-portfolio programme in a New Zealand preschool

classroom and discovered that using e-portfolios significantly improved upon paper portfolios and increased the reported level of collaboration between educators and parents.

However, difficulties with technology utilization were identified, such as how time-consuming it is to upload and manage visual data. In British Columbia, a six-week experiment of a digital assessment software application in seven primary and two middle school classrooms resulted in teachers using formative assessment more frequently (Carter & Crichton, 2014). However, frequent chances for inter-professional cooperation between teachers, researchers, and software developers were provided, which were essential to these positive outcomes. In a study of early educators' assessment practices in classrooms in Ontario, Pyle and DeLuca (2017) discovered that while technology encouraged an increase in the amount of assessment data collected, educators were not always equipped with the data literacy skills necessary to extract useful information for assessment purposes. This finding is in line with recent theoretical studies on educators' assessment literacy. Overall, there is some evidence that the use of technology in assessment can help educators' assessment practices, but this evidence comes primarily from studies that looked at educators' perceptions of a single type of digital assessment (such as an e-portfolio programme) when it was first introduced, rather than the broad range of digital tools currently available. Additionally, studies on technology in assessment have not yet looked at its application in play-based pedagogy while taking into account the possible difficulties that technology may present for assessment practice. The current study set out to look at how technology was used to assess students in kindergarten classrooms as well as how it supported teachers' assessment techniques in play-based settings.

Furthermore, research has shown that both kindergarten teachers and kids have positive attitudes toward the rising use of technology in the classroom to foster learning and enjoyment. Many studies have identified barriers or obstacles to the effective use of technology in early childhood settings, including a lack of comfort, a lack of technical support, and insufficient training, even though new technologies have the potential to enhance play-based kindergarten education (Blackwell, Lauricella, & Wartella, 2014; Nikolopoulou & Gialamas, 2015).

There have always been worries that new technologies will be exploited to replace rather than augment or enhance present teaching approaches, and the true influence of technology in education depends on how it is employed.

While using pictures and videos in early education is not a brand-new concept (e.g., pedagogical documentation; Buldu, 2010), new digital devices and readily accessible software have

revolutionized how teachers and kids can interact with technology in the classroom.

For instance, since the iPad was initially debuted in 2010 with a plethora of educational apps for kids and teachers, it has been progressively made available in school settings (Reeves, Gunter, & Lacey, 2017). This convergence has been embraced by policies. For instance, according to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2014), students should have access to a variety of educational opportunities, "including the opportunity to benefit from the effective and responsible use of technology in the classroom" (p. 4).

9.7 SUMMARY:

Regularly assigning a wide range of assignments that are well explained and giving students insightful feedback on the quality of their work are two examples of online assessment methods. Projects, portfolios, self-evaluations, peer evaluations, and weekly assignments with quick feedback are examples of effective assessment methods. The importance of receiving insightful criticism cannot be overstated.

The assessment issues are considerably more significant in the relatively young field of online learning. Although there has been more focus on finding efficient methods to evaluate student learning in online courses. Some contend that outstanding traditional teaching and learning practices, such as pushing students to think critically, giving them a reason to attend class, showing a willingness to provide extra support and encouragement, and assigning varied and meaningful work, should serve as the foundation for effective online assessment techniques. But unlike traditional training, online evaluation also needs a more continuous, methodical approach.

Additionally, because online assessment modifies human interaction, communication, learning, and assessment methods, educators must change their methods of instruction to make them more innovative than traditional instruction. This is because the assessment methods must match the level of desired competencies.

Due to this, numerous academics have discovered major difficulties when evaluating students' learning in online courses. Another study has noted advantages for instructors and administrators when administering tests online. In particular, several researchers have discovered the following advantages:

a) Grades can be immediately entered into the electronic grade book.

b) students have quicker access to results;

c) assessment fosters a student-centered learning environment; and

d) It allows for measuring learning more accurately.

Effective online assessment methods include

a) creating realistic learning scenarios,

b) matching learning objectives to realistic scenarios,

c) utilizing software as soon as possible,

d) having access to online mentors, and

e) Providing on-site, instructor-based training that takes into account the unique learning preferences of each student.

To find efficient online instructional and assessment methods, further study on online teaching and learning is required.

Instant evaluation made possible by technology can be added to enhance student engagement, reveal knowledge gaps, and promote deeper learning. Accurate knowledge of a student's present understanding is especially essential to ensuring that all students reach their full potential, given the recent disruptions to their education. Effective learning depends on knowing what students already know and what they don't. Students who attempt tasks that are too challenging are likely to give up and fail. They won't likely advance as they ought to if they are given jobs that are too simple.

There are many new tools available to educators because of current technology that can be employed in the classroom. Technology can assist teachers in monitoring and evaluating both their own and their pupils' performance in the classroom. Additionally, it can be used to improve student-teacher interaction and to conveniently transfer from grade to grade digital records of student progress and development.

Teachers can use technology to increase the productivity of their own work by using spreadsheets to keep track of student work and lesson plans. This type of record-keeping might

point out areas that the instructor needs to concentrate on in their own teaching if a group of pupils is performing poorly in a certain subject.

Administrators can use these techniques to evaluate and enhance teacher effectiveness. Another option for sharing information about assessment, evaluation, and curriculum development with the larger community is the Internet.

In conclusion; most teachers now recognize the advantages of technology for assessment due to the present popularity of remote learning and the rising interest in e-assessment. Technology based assessment can be used for more than merely tracking results and subject-matter expertise, although this is not yet widely acknowledged. Technology also holds enormous promise for assisting students in

learning through evaluation by fusing data with learning analytics. To understand how these educational technology advantages can transform your instruction, schedule a demo.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

Answer the following questions:

Q1 Explain the concept of technology- based assessment at ECE level.

Q2 What are the main advantages of technology-based assessment at early education?

Q3 What do you know about digital assessments? Elaborate with various ways to Assess Student Learning at ECE.

Q4 Enlist and explain best online assessment tools available for teachers and parents to assess child's performance efficiently.

Q5 Advancement in Technology shifted the traditional method of assessment to modernization" Write teachers' perspective in light of above statement.

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