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## Experiences of Kindergarten Teachers Utilizing Play-based Learning Strategies and Instructional Techniques

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### Abstract

A pedagogical strategy called "play-based learning" was one of the new visions, purposes, and objectives introduced by the kindergarten program. Play-based learning is a child-centered approach that emphasizes play-based learning in the curriculum material. This qualitative study's goal was to investigate the pedagogical methods instructors in full-day kindergarten are employing to encourage play-based learning. Participants in the study were interviewed using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. To find new patterns, the data was transcribed, coded, and memorized. This qualitative research study discovered that there are various pedagogical approaches to play-based learning. With some sub-themes, three major themes emerged: the full-day kindergarten teacher's awareness of play-based learning, Strategies for promoting play-based learning in full-day kindergarten and concerns regarding play-based learning in full-day kindergarten through the significant influence that teaching had on a play-based learning environment, teachers realized the critical significance of student outcomes in determining the true effectiveness of the learning environment. This research shows that teachers strongly advocate the importance of providing play-based learning for students. This research had several limitations, most notably that participants lacked a comprehensive grasp of PBL, and the number of uncontrolled factors that affected the study's findings was negligible. The results of this study will provide information to educators about how to provide best support to kindergarten teachers in their pedagogical decision-making.

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### Introduction

Considering our greatest future: (Pascal & Ontario, 2009) report on implementing early learning in Ontario led to new changes being made by FDK. The goals of (Pascal & Ontario, 2009) study were to assure a strong foundation for the early years, provide extended-day learning for kids ages four and five, and facilitate kindergarteners' transition to first grade. These modifications and goals were incorporated into the new FDK curriculum by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The educational approach known as play-based learning (PBL), which was covered in Pascal's research, was also applied in the new FDK program.

Most elementary school classrooms no longer use PBL. The benefits of play for children from birth to age eight

are well supported by a wealth of research (Jay & Knaus, 2018; Nolan & Paatsch, 2018) and a component of cognitively suitable practice play (Naeyc, 2021). Play is crucial to children's development because it fosters the growth of their imagination, originality, physical prowess, social and emotional intelligence, and cognitive abilities, according to a study by (Miller & Almon, 2009) that looked at a report from the American Academy of Pediatrics. The expectations for first and second grades have been replaced by the learning targets for kindergarten. Play, an important stress reliever, is no longer part of the educational day (Miller & Almon, 2009). PBL is described as a kid-centered approach in the curriculum paper where children engage in and learn through play (OME, 2010). Because it enables children to investigate their surroundings and acquire information, play and learning have strong connections to numeracy, literacy, and the development of social, physical, and emotional skills in children (OME, 2016). Play trains students' problem-solving strategies with strong connections to real-world situations, supporting experiential learning (Pramling Samuelsson & Johansson, 2006); (Pyle & Bigelow, 2014).

Despite the fact that learning through play can have a significant impact on young children's learning, there are drawbacks to this new strategy, including assessment strategies (Karia, 2014; Pelletier, 2012; Martlew, Stephen, & Ellis, 2011), balancing play with expectations from the teaching curriculum (Bennett et al., 1997; Pyle & Bigelow, 2015), and a lack of time to prepare the environment for play (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012; Karia, 2014; Bennett, 1997).

### **Research Purpose**

This research focused on the pedagogical approaches used by instructors to enhance PBL in FDK. In light of this topic, understanding these approaches can help teachers feel more confident in their capacity to promote children's learning. According to (Pyle and Bigelow, 2014), Play allows children to improve their skills and apply what they've learnt in class in a variety of circumstances (Pyle & Bigelow, 2014). Play promotes and aids a child's development of language, social and emotional skills, and mathematical concepts (Martlew, Stephen, & Ellis, 2011). To reduce stress and unhappiness among instructors, a new study is needed to better understand various classroom-based PBL methodologies (Pyle & Bigelow, 2014). This study would benefit from being able to employ these strategies in the classroom as a new teacher and provide additional guidance to seasoned instructors. Learning via play is a part of every classroom in Bangladesh, and understanding what it is, what it looks like, and how it is taught is critical to properly teaching it.

### **Research Question**

This study's main research question was: What pedagogical techniques do teachers in FDK use to facilitate PBL? These were the research sub-questions:

1. What have the FDK instructors' experiences been with PBL?
2. How are instructors implementing PBL? What pedagogical techniques are they employing?
3. Which pedagogical strategies have advantages and disadvantages?
4. When employing a play-based approach, what changes do teachers detect in their students?

## **Literature Review**

PBL in kindergarten classes was one of the topics that several parts addressed. There is a dearth of knowledge on the use of play as a teaching tool for kindergarten through second grade students, particularly when there have high academic expectations. There is a wealth of information regarding the advantages of play for early childhood education and instruction delivery (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018). Rigid academic requirements have led to a reduction in play in primary schools, even though research indicates that play benefits children in kindergarten through grade two (Bidzakin Yenpad Mercy, 2021; March & Peters, 2015; Miller & Almon, 2009).

Even in schools that have gone as far as to make PBL compulsory, it is still difficult to execute effectively. This is because of a variety of things, such as a lack of consensus on what play is (D'Sa et al., 2024; Miller & Almon, 2009; Pyle & Alaca, 2018; Pyle & Danniels, 2017; Wallerstedt & Pramling, 2011); high standards for accountability and student achievement (Miller & Almon, 2009; Pyle & Danniels, 2017; Taylor & Boyer, 2029) a lack of PBL and child development training for teachers (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018).

Although the implementation of PBL in FDK classes attracted a lot of attention and enthusiasm, it left instructors feeling uneasy and frustrated (Charles & Bellinson, 2019; Karia, 2014). This literature review's objective is to learn more about the experiences and instructional strategies that teachers use to implement PBL. The FDK program is still in its infancy, so it's crucial to understand how instructors are responding to it and what instructional strategies might be used to make them feel less frustrated. In this review of the literature, the rationale for PBL and its importance for pupil growth will also be discussed. Further research will be done on both positive and negative PBL teaching encounters. Finally, the research team will look at potential instructional techniques that professors may already be employing in PBL situations.

Several topics of information were identified during the literature review that was connected to the use of Experiences of teachers using PBL strategies and teaching methods in kindergarten. The following topics will be covered: FDK with PBL, PBL in the classroom: teacher perspectives, including positive encounters and issues; PBL teaching techniques, including fundamental tactics, techniques used by kindergarten instructors, and methods for PBL that are based on research for the effective implementation of play and PBL in the kindergarten. All of these topics emerged as pertinent categories and will be covered.

### **Kindergarten with a Full Day & PBL**

Early childhood education refers to the instruction of children from infancy to age six in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, there are primarily three types of early development education and care institutions. Children ages 0 to 3 are supposed to attend nurseries, children ages 3-6 are supposed to go to kindergarten, and kids ages 5 to 6 are supposed to go to what's termed "preschool courses" at elementary schools (Xiaofei & Edward, 2017). The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sanitation have traditionally had authority over kindergartens and nurseries, respectively. Many kindergartens now take children as early as 2-3 years old and provide instructional and guiding services to families with children between the ages of 0 and 2.

A child-centered approach described in the curriculum document as PBL involves young children learning via play (OME, 2016). It is believed that play and learning are closely related, “, particularly in the areas of problem-solving, language acquisition, literacy, numeracy, and social, physical, and emotional skills” (OME, 2016). Early childhood educators (ECEs) and teachers are required to give young children learning experiences that are “meaningful, relevant, and respectful,” whether through “whole-class teaching, small group, autonomous, or at learning centers” (OME, 2016). To give their kids a top-notch PBL environment, teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs) collaborate as co-educators (OME, 2016). To encourage creativity and facilitate experiential learning, educators must strike a balance between teacher-directed and student-directed learning (Samuelsson & Johansson, 2006; OME, 2016). The teacher and ECE should give the kids access to materials for exploration, a literacy-rich environment, and opportunities to make connections to real-world situations (Pyle & Bigelow, 2014). PBL encourages social engagement and self-control (OME, 2016; Lynch, 2015). Children have more time to interact with their classmates and learn how to control their behavior in certain settings while they play (OME, 2016).

### **Various Views on Play**

The topic of play has recently taken on new meaning in light of evidence from kid interviews, particularly in relation to learning. The significance of the teacher's role in play has been emphasized by numerous academics. From earlier viewpoints, it was believed that teachers shouldn't interfere with children when they are playing. Children's ideas on how play and learning are connected are influenced by the extent to which teachers participate in play (Pyle & Alaca, 2018). Playtime with students can help students concentrate and advance their learning (Lozon & Brooks, 2019).

### **Connection between Learning & Play**

Pyle and Alaca (2018) interviewed 134 kindergarten students in 10 classes as part of a qualitative study that examined the perspectives of children in kindergarten regarding how they understand play and how it relates to learning. (Wallerstadt and Pramling, 2011) carried out a project involving 27 kids between the ages of six and eight together with their three teachers to observe the relationship between play and learning. All participants were included in a three-year study on the integration of the arts in early childhood education, and as a result, researchers frequently visited the students' classrooms.

Teachers attempted to educate pupils on how to understand rhythm and musical counting in this particular study, which was a part of a bigger project, in order to see what the kids did with new learning during free time. Three music lessons were given to the kids in an effort to help them learn to listen to music. Each lecture lasted around 40 minutes and was recorded, written down, and then interpreted. When the class was over and the kids had free play, several of them used what they had learned and practiced “the beat” while playing the drums. According to this study, children continued to apply their learning during playtime and that play and learning were intertwined. Children's play was not a vacation from their education (Wallerstedt & Pramling, 2011).

### **PBL in the Classroom: Teachers' Perspectives**

Research on teachers' experiences has been ongoing due to the relative youth of PBL. The new curriculum still worries teachers, despite their comments about the benefits of play and learning. Teachers have reported having great experiences with PBL, including how it has helped them clarify their roles, encouraged diversity, and given them insight into how to set up the classroom to assist learning (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012; Martlew, Stephen, & Ellis, 2011; Karia, 2014; Bennett, 1997; Pyle & Bigelow, 2014).

#### **Favorable Encounters**

For instructors, the new play-based curriculum resulted in a variety of good outcomes. First of all, teachers talked about how their experience teaching kindergarten helped them understand their position in the classroom. The co-learners, facilitators, and scaffolds of children's learning were how they saw their roles as educators (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012; Martlew, Stephen, & Ellis, 2011). Teachers frequently participate in co-creating the curriculum with kids in order to accommodate their interests while also meeting curricular criteria (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012). As children play, teachers act as observers (Karia, 2014; Bennett, 1997); as the kids work through challenges, observation provides a clear understanding of what's going on inside a kid's head to understand how they learn and how to aid them (Bennett, 1997). Students would participate in play as a regular activity by exchanging information, asking questions, and exhibiting their unique skills (Pyle & Bigelow, 2014).

It's crucial to remember that not all teachers have had positive experiences with PBL, even though it may give them positive experiences. There are a lot of issues with this new strategy. First, teachers complained that there wasn't enough time to set up a play-based classroom (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012; Karia, 2014; Bennett, 1997). (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012) recognized that teachers regularly adapt their classrooms to meet the requirements of the students and explained how creating a supportive classroom takes time. In fact, according to (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012) in order to provide a supportive classroom for kids, teachers must constantly seek the advice of their peers and connect with other schools to observe effective practices.

#### **PBL Teaching Techniques**

Some of the issues teachers expressed regarding PBL are addressed through a variety of instructional techniques. These tactics have been implemented in a number of nations, including the United States, Scotland, and the Netherlands, and they serve as beneficial examples for assisting kids' learning. They give teachers insight into the minds of the students and boost their confidence to support PBL.

#### **Fundamental Tactics**

A multitude of books presents diverse educational strategies for instructing children from kindergarten to grade 12. The significance of observations, employed to enhance understanding of children's learning, is highlighted by (Schindler's, 2019). (OME, 2016). Observations increase our comprehension of young children's learning,

enabling effective instruction (Schindler, 2019). Emphasis should transition from rigidly following a lesson plan to effectively teaching students and understanding their cognitive processes.

Portfolios and documentation provide a comprehensive account of children's achievements and development across time, serving as a resource for teachers in the preparation of report cards (Schindler, 2019). Portfolios may contain samples of children's work, photographs, and observational notes as proof of their progress (OME, 2016). Educators often conduct interviews with children post-play to gain insights into their thoughts, rather than interrupting their play activities. This interview is later included into a portfolio or shown on a classroom wall to monitor students' development (Guillaume, 2015). Technology integration may also serve to showcase children's work (Guillaume, 2015).

Schindler (2019) advocates for project-based learning as a method to equilibrate student- and teacher-directed instruction. Play/Project-based learning enables students to engage in projects that allow them to apply the knowledge acquired from a unit of study and present it in a manner of their choosing to their teachers and peers. He asserts that play-based learning empowers students to take charge of their education while fulfilling curriculum standards. He asserts that educators can achieve this by linking information to students' personal experiences, relating curricular requirements to local news, and providing students with opportunities to integrate their learning to practical skills.

### **Techniques Employed by Kindergarten Instructors**

Educators recognize that every student in a kindergarten classroom acquires knowledge in a distinct manner. They acknowledge the significance of individualized instruction to enhance student learning. (Grant, Hindman, and Stronge, 2010; Guillaume, 2012) asserted that differentiated instruction is a pedagogical approach in which educators modify their lectures to accommodate the diverse needs of pupils. Teachers continuously assess the learning needs of their pupils to devise exercises that enhance their confidence.

(Guillaume, 2012) asserted that educators write lesson plans utilizing a three-tiered framework. The initial layer analyzes the content's purpose, objectives, and resources provided to youngsters. The second tier evaluates the instructional strategies that educators are considering implementing, including independent, small-group, or whole-group instruction. The fourth layer assesses how students utilize a product to exhibit their learning. Educators recognize the merit of the product tier, as students select their preferred methods of demonstrating their learning, such as through projects. To instruct and engage with PBL, the educators also deliberated on their adoption of a High Scope curricular framework. (Bennett, 1997) concluded that this method is closely associated with play-based learning due to its emphasis on active learning, child-initiated play, and the plan-do-review process. The plan-do review, conducted by children, has had favorable outcomes. Children strategize their intended activities during the initial phase and commence execution.

Children are engaging in play and executing their strategy in the second stage. Children are now articulating and disseminating their acquired knowledge to educators and classmates in the last phase. In a (High-scope, 2021)

model approach, educators allocate time for children to explore and engage in activities prior to convening the class for a review and discussion of their learning or achievements during circle time. (Bennett, 1997) asserted that circle time fosters respect among children as they attentively listen to their peers' contributions. They recognize that educators utilize this review session as a form of evaluation rather than disrupting children's learning.

When both the educator and the learner collaborate in constructing the learning environment, it becomes straightforward for the educator to oversee the classroom arrangement. (Diamond, 2011) asserted that classroom routines should be collaboratively established at the beginning of the academic year. In a play-based classroom, she asserts that educators hold students accountable for preserving the learning environment. She emphasizes that instructors and facilitators ought to exemplify appropriate behavior for pupils; for example, educators should tidy up after themselves during cleaning time. Educators may fully harness the potential of PBL through these teaching strategies. PBL offers an advantage due to its somewhat open-ended nature, notwithstanding (Karia, 2014) assertion of its lack of structure. To ascertain the most suitable teaching technique for their students' needs, educators might experiment and acquire new knowledge.

#### **Methods for PBL that are Based on Research**

The methodology for teaching Play-Based Learning (PBL) has been elucidated through research. (Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo's, 2010) study identified an interactive method for educators to incorporate reading into the classroom by aligning curricular requirements with children's learning. (Brown, 2010) asserted that the implementation of writing workshops improves students' learning outcomes. The seminars enable students to select any topic, create written or artistic representations, and convey it in the manner they find most meaningful (Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo's, 2010). Teachers regarded this as child-led due to the receptiveness to concepts and the children's ability to work at their own pace (Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo's, 2010). Educators have observed that they promote children's creation of spellings, and mistakes remain uncorrected (Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo's, 2010). Students return to the classroom after completing their assignment to discuss their writing with a teacher or a classmate (Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo's, 2010). Throughout the academic year, educators have seen that their students have composed genuinely and meaningfully, resulting in enhancements in both writing and spelling (Brown, 2010; Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo's, 2010).

Alongside writing workshops, educators found that read-aloud sessions effectively enhanced literacy (Isaac, 2018). The researchers concluded that the use of read-aloud by teachers significantly impacted the children's learning. The narrative was comprehended more effectively by the pupils, who were also able to recall it and enhance their vocabulary. Van Oers and Duijkers (2012) proposes five steps: orienting, broadening, structuring and deepening, contributing, and reflecting. They characterized these five processes as a framework for educators to evaluate their teaching methodologies. For example, they illustrated how instructors may examine play with children and encourage them to continue their experiential learning. Inquiring about the children's activities in the doctor's office will facilitate the initiation of play if they are engaged in the dramatic center with a doctor's office theme. Their discussion encompassed a distinct instance of broadening, wherein educators link one activity to



another, facilitating students' comprehension of the links between two disparate subjects.

Documentation is an essential pedagogical approach in kindergarten. Documentation allows educators to record and assess student progress (OME, 2016). Researchers agree with the conclusions of (Guillaume's, 2012; Shindler's, 2016) studies regarding the significance of documentation. Observation acts as a guide for students' learning, leading teachers to realize that documentation facilitates alignment with curriculum needs (Karia, 2014; Wood, 2014). This study illustrates that numerous classroom management strategies can be employed by educators to improve student learning outcomes.

## **Methods**

In this research, a phenomenological research methodology was used. For the research, semi-structured interviews with instructors from Parashmoni Laboratory School, Dhaka were conducted. Inquiry-based qualitative research, according to Creswell (2013), begins with a wide assumption and an interpretive or theoretical perspective to look at a study problem. Because qualitative research addresses worries about social or human issues, it is crucial to comprehend and interpret its findings (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. 2016; McGregor, 2017). Qualitative research provided a view into the PBL experiences, issues, and solutions of teachers from a real-world viewpoint because of the nature of the study subject and goal. This research recorded instructors' PBL experiences as well as their teaching methods. The scholar reads and rereads for one to two days. According to (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021) the first stage in data analysis in an interpretive study is to fully immerse oneself in the data.

## **Data Collection Equipment**

Semi-structured interviews and observation of the teacher's classroom are the main method used to collect data for this study. In-depth information about a participant's experiences with a subject is provided through interviews. The researcher were conducted one face-to-face interview with each of the three participants. Interviews were conducted with each person individually. The purpose of these interviews is to allow the primary researcher to enter into the observation of teacher's classrooms, and conduct behavioral coding and analysis to understand teachers' implementation strategies for PBL.

## **Participants**

The participants were chosen based on the following standards:

- a) Teachers who have worked in kindergarten classrooms for at least two years
- b) Teachers that worked at Parashmoni Laboratory School, Dhaka.
- c) Teachers needed to comprehend PBL
- d) Teachers were required to demonstrate some understanding of teaching techniques and the effects of PBL on student growth.

To handle the primary study problem, the instructors had to have a minimum of two years of experience instructing in a kindergarten classroom. This was done to make sure that educators were informed about both the benefits

and drawbacks of PBL in addition to the technique itself. Since the researcher was interested in finding out what teachers in this school board were doing and what their teaching practices were, teachers also needed to cooperate within the Parashmoni Laboratory School (PLS). Teachers were also expected to be knowledgeable about different PBL teaching methods and how they affect students' growth. This would explain and serve as a manual for new teachers on how to instruct this innovative learning strategy.

### ***Finding Participants***

Convenience, purposeful (or deliberate), and theoretical sampling are the three types of sampling techniques that might be used in a qualitative investigation. This research used convenience sampling because convenience sampling saves time and effort, it allows researchers to choose subjects that are easily accessible (Douglas, 2022). According to (Koerber & McMichael, 2008; Gentles et al, 2015) purposeful (or deliberate) sampling enables the researcher to choose participants who may have characteristics pertinent to the research subject. Theoretical sampling counsels researchers to construct hypotheses that are supported by their data and select new samples for their research (Koerber & McMichael, 2008; Douglas, 2022). Because the investigation was small-scale and methodological, the researcher used both convenience and judgment sampling. Convenience sampling allowed the researcher the opportunity to select people for recruitment from among these already-existing networks and relationships. In that regard, judgment sampling was used to have the ability to choose participants for this research study based on the information they supply for the research questions. Primarily were chosen four but in the final, there were three teachers picked. This quantity will enable fast data collection and offer a thorough understanding of the issue. In qualitative research, a small sample size or a few instances are frequently examined. This is due to the fact that each additional person or location reduces the researcher's overall capacity to present a complete picture (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. 2016).

### **Data Analysis**

According to Creswell (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. 2016), qualitative research involves gathering codes and categorizing themes, preparing and structuring the data for analysis, understanding the data, and representing it. The procedures described below are intended to promote reflection on the participant's account.

***Step 1: Reading and re-reading.*** Throughout this process, the researcher was reading each interview transcript several times. The researcher listened to the interview audiotapes in addition to reading the transcripts. This made the participants the main focus and enable the listener and reader to hear the participants' voices. This method enabled the researcher to engage with the data more actively. Then started to observe the teacher's classroom. How they behave and focused on play-based learning. Also, at the same time, the researcher takes notes on what researcher observed.

***Step 2: Initial note taking.*** Researcher identified three types of note-taking. These are following

- a) The topic of the conversation is described in the transcript's descriptive notes.
- b) Language usage is the main focus of linguistic notes.

- c) Conceptual remarks focus on the more specific ideas discussed.

The researcher started taking notes by concentrating on one person's transcript at a time. The researcher used keywords, descriptions, and examples provided by each participant during this process to help identify any important themes that surface among the individuals. The participant biographies method previously used these remarks, descriptions, and particular situations to create a profile of each participant.

**Step 3: Identifying themes.** The researcher identified patterns in the data gathered from the interviewees in this step. These commonalities helped the researcher discover important patterns in the data, which will then help them pinpoint instances where kindergarten instructors have used PBL tactics and teaching techniques. The researcher generated the topics from the transcript using codes before classifying them into several categories, subcategories, and themes (Saldana, 2009). The themes that were created were based on codes that were consistently expressed by researcher participants through their words, expressions, and ideas (Turner, 2010).

The researcher employed descriptive, in-vivo, and value codes to help her shift her codes to groups and subcategories, and ultimately into themes, during the data analysis process. In order to convey the main idea or issue underlying the research data in descriptive codes, the researcher employed concise phrases and terms (Saldana, 2009). The main objective of these descriptive codes was to enable the researcher to learn from the data what she heard and observed. Through ongoing review and evaluation, these descriptive codes were eventually organized into divisions and subcategories. Used all three coding techniques to produce three central themes of the paper. After developing their topics, researchers linked them to previously published works on the subject.

## Findings

Three conversations with kindergarten teachers at Parashmoni Laboratory School, Dhaka were conducted by the researcher, and the results are reported and discussed in this chapter. The subjects will only be referred to as Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy in order to safeguard their privacy. What educational approaches do teachers in FDK use to support PBL? Was the primary research question that the researcher's data from the three interviews helped to address? The researcher separated the data into three main themes (followed by numerous sub-themes) in order to address the study question:

- a) FDK teacher's awareness of PBL,
- b) Strategies for promoting PBL in FDK,
- c) Issues/Concerns regarding PBL in FDK.

### FDK Teacher's Awareness of PBL

The way a teacher understands PBL can influence how they run and design their classroom. As a result, one way to obtain this information is to hold talks about the participants' definitions of PBL and the teacher's role in the approach.

### ***Developing Comprehension of PBL***

The study examined the understandings of Play-Based Learning (PBL) among participants, including Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy. Meily believed that PBL is student-centered, allowing children to interact with their surroundings to develop their knowledge. She believed in giving children a voice in the classroom and the impact of peer-to-peer contact on student learning. Cecilia, on the other hand, showed caution in discussing her personal thoughts on PBL, as she had never received formal training in using PBL techniques in her classroom. Cecilia emphasized the importance of learning via play and social engagement, which involves games, manipulative s, blocks, and other physically engaging activities. She highlighted times when kids are most frequently seen learning via play and highlighted the use of hands-on activities and centers, such as the theatre center and science center.

Cecilia also stressed the role of a teacher in a play-based classroom, emphasizing the importance of being observant, supporting interactions, and helping children reflect on the experience. Ivy, a kindergarten teacher, stressed the value of providing opportunities for students to acquire social skills, such as getting along with peers and working together. Despite the challenges, all participants agreed that PBL is the best way to teach children, but they also acknowledged the need for proportionate teacher-to-student ratios and paraprofessional support. This interpretation aligns with the importance of developing a child-centered strategy where children engage in PBL while learning from their classmates.

### ***Recognizing the Teacher's Role in Play-Based Education***

Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy shared their perspectives on their roles in a play-based classroom. Meily, a teacher, engages in clear teaching and serves as a model for students' learning. She focuses on listening, observing, and asking questions to help students come up with answers. She also models specific behaviors and skills for her students to imitate. In a PBL setting, she uses support staff and integrates social skill lessons from the Second Step Program.

Cecilia, on the other hand, focuses on co-teaching with students and acting as a facilitator for their learning. She focuses on being conscious of the kids' interests and allowing them to guide her instruction. Ivy, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of classroom management and maintaining a controlled atmosphere for students. Both participants agreed that observing students is crucial to developing a student-centered atmosphere. Both educators believe that PBL planning and classroom management are essential for a successful learning environment.

### ***Strategies for Promoting PBL in FDK***

Participant suggestions for implementing PBL in the classroom were mentioned often throughout the interviews. The merits of each method were discussed, as well as how they were used. Additionally, the participants shared various plans and setups for their classrooms that facilitate PBL. The sub-themes of teaching philosophy, mindfulness, and observations, setting up, and planning will all be investigated.

### ***Educational Philosophies***

Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy who have adopted various teaching philosophies in their classrooms, focusing on inquiry learning and cross-curricular content. Meily uses a STEAM-based educational strategy, incorporating play-based activities and literacy through writing and speaking questions. This approach allows students to be highly engaged in the learning process and makes curriculum content relevant. Cecilia, on the other hand, prioritizes student interests and participation, allowing them to take responsibility for their education. Ivy, on the other hand, uses STEAM to engage students and make curriculum material relevant through various centers. Both teaching philosophies offer student-driven learning and fulfill curriculum requirements, as they are open-ended and enable teachers to incorporate different pedagogical strategies into their classrooms.

### ***Being Present***

Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy educators, have implemented mindfulness techniques to promote self-regulation in their students. Meily uses tangible objects, yoga exercises, breathing techniques, and calming bottles to develop social skills and self-control. Cecilia focuses on promoting interaction skills through a variety of words and facial expressions. Ivy, on the other hand, participates in PBL by group reading, observing interactions and asking questions. Both teachers agree that the main objective is to encourage individual learning and the application of these abilities in various contexts. Research shows that teachers have a significant impact on students' learning through mindfulness practices and self-regulation.

### ***Observations***

Cecilia and Meily utilized observation to gauge students' learning. Meily used a "board" to record student activities and referred to her observations when submitting reports. In her classroom, PBL was centered on social connections, allowing her to observe student interactions and apply language skills. Cecilia, on the other hand, used her observational notes to assess students' comprehension in the present and come up with strategies for advancing their development. She believed that children need strong linguistic abilities and social skills to succeed in a PBL environment. Cecilia's classroom was observed to understand what makes a PBL environment work. She had a space with tables, chairs, an open rug area, board games, and educational tools. She also had a section set aside as the library, complete with bookshelves and decorative pillows. The physical design of the classroom was favorable for PBL, with open rug areas, table configurations, and a sand and water table. Both participants demonstrated the value of observations, but Cecilia's approach would provide for more in-depth teaching that would help students develop their talents.

### ***Establishing the Play Areas***

Cecilia and Meily uses classroom resources to encourage student curiosity and ownership in their learning. Meily provides curriculum-related materials, while Cecilia creates centers based on students' interests. Both teachers provide guidance and support while students investigate the materials. Cecilia involves her students' voices in

setting up centers, while Ivy gives them the freedom to design and operate their own centers. Both teachers emphasize the importance of incorporating curriculum material throughout the process, despite the lack of structure in PBL classrooms.

### ***Preparation***

Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy have contrasting opinions on planning in the context of PBL. Meily believes that planning is crucial for creating centers and lessons, while Cecilia goes with the flow and doesn't understand the need for planning. Ivy, on the other hand, plans to change reading group time to play-based activities, focusing on developmentally appropriate, hands-on, engaging, and social aspects. Both teachers emphasize the importance of monitoring student engagement and the need for more studies to support their teaching strategies. Despite the differences in opinions, it is crucial to monitor student engagement and create learning centers that align with the curriculum.

### **Issues/Concerns Regarding PBL in FDK**

The participants' worries regarding PBL were numerous. The worries expressed stem from past events that the participants have had to deal with or have seen throughout time. The other issues raised included the disparate aesthetics of PBL environments and a lack of PBL assistance.

### ***Variations in PBL Environments***

Cecilia and Ivy, two kindergarten teachers, have different perspectives on the value of student participation and co-learning in their classrooms. Meily, who believes play-based learning (PBL) is erroneous and misinterpreted, takes professional development classes to better understand her views on PBL. On the other hand, Cecilia believes that the teachers' entire teaching philosophies and structure depend on PBL, and she sees this as a good thing. Ivy's classroom setups vary, with an open carpeted section, a table and chair area, and a library section.

Teachers emphasize the importance of providing play-based learning for students, taking into account the differences in student skills drawn from home, preschool, and daycare environments. They identify early prerequisite skills that allow students to get along with peers, cooperate, collaborate, and use problem-solving skills. Social skills have the power to alter a planned sequence of lessons and impact a student's capacity to earn a degree. Play opportunities are crucial at every learning level, introducing ideas through play, transferring them to the academic setting, and providing practice as students pick up necessary skills.

Play has a beneficial effect on learning that would have been challenging to assess otherwise. Students develop social interaction skills, emergent literacy skills, and a grasp of written language abilities. Responsibility is acknowledged as crucial to the success of PBL, and every play-based activity typically has a recording aspect to ensure accountability. Research shows that teachers find it difficult to incorporate PBL into their classrooms due to varied understandings of the concept. To follow, there should be a shared understanding and examples for

teachers to follow.

### ***Lack of Assistance with Game-Based Learning***

The survey revealed a lack of support for play-based learning (PBL) in schools. Teachers suggested two types of support networks: providing necessary tools and training, and addressing the gap in preparation for senior kindergarten students. Teachers assessed students' learning based on their social and intellectual skill sets, as PBL enables students to combine cognitive and linguistic abilities to create new meanings and better connect with their environment. Teachers can recognize signs of social interactions and learning even when students have limited language skills or language barriers. Teachers' influence can be felt in a PBL setting through planning resources, exercises, and asking techniques. Students must develop fundamental skills to take shifts, share resources, adhere to rules, foresee logical repercussions, and respect classroom and school supplies. To evaluate students' social and scholastic skill sets, teachers should watch and listen to them perform, practicing speaking through motions, conversations, arguments, and other vocal and nonverbal techniques in a secure and polite setting.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Three themes emerged after analyzing the data from the interviews with Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy, a primary school teacher in Parashmoni Laboratory School, Dhaka.

The primary topics are as follows, with a variety of related sub-themes:

- a) Play Based Learning instructor knowledge.
- b) Play Based Learning promotion strategies in Full Day Kindergarten.
- c) Problems with or worries about Play Based Learning in Full Day Kindergarten.

In FDK, play-based learning (PBL) is a flexible approach that allows teachers to use various teaching strategies to support students' learning. Teachers like Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy have different perspectives on their role as instructors in the classroom. Meily believes it is her duty to guide students' learning and employ specific teaching strategies, while Cecilia capitalizes on students' interests to impart critical skills. Both teachers use observations as an evaluation instrument, with Cecilia applying them immediately and Meily at the end of a unit. Classroom setups vary, with Meily establishing areas by providing materials and Cecilia developing centers by fusing students' passions. Planning is essential for a PBL environment, but teachers need proper support to ensure consistency. Ivy also faces challenges in providing tools and connecting SK students to Grade 1 students. The study results will focus on the pedagogical strategies teachers use to support PBL in FDK and provide suggestions for further research.

### **Consequences, Limitations, and Recommendations**

The researcher proceeds to elucidate the significant discoveries in this chapter: Which educational strategies do educators in FDK employ to enhance PBL? This chapter encapsulates the key results and their implications prior to addressing the researcher's suggestions for the educational community and the researcher's personal practice as

an emerging educator. Furthermore, the researcher offers recommendations for various stakeholders, including school boards, educators, and administrators. The researcher subsequently delineates avenues for further investigation that would benefit this endeavor.

## **Overview of Important Findings and Their Importance**

This study explores the perspectives of educators on Play-Based Learning (PBL) and their roles in the classroom. Participants, including Meily, Cecilia, and Ivy, had varying views on PBL, with Cecilia focusing on student inquiry, Meily demonstrating diverse behaviors and skill sets, and Ivy employing dynamic pedagogical methods. Both participants used different instructional methods, including mindfulness activities and daily classroom observations, to assess students' knowledge. They also discussed classroom arrangement strategies, with Meily providing necessary supplies and Ivy arranging according to students' research. However, they all acknowledged a lack of support for appropriate materials and preparation for grade 1 students. The study highlights the importance of teachers' methodologies in PBL, and the need for appropriate metrics and methods to help educators create a conducive learning environment. The study underscores the need for educators to use appropriate metrics and methods to support PBL in their classrooms.

## **Recommendations**

The suggestions that come out of this study are focused on what teachers can do to find out more about PBL and its resources. The administration, ministries of education, and kindergarten are just a few examples of the various stakeholders for whom this also entails addressing areas that need improvement.

### **Teachers**

The researcher advises that teachers hold monthly meetings or workshops to support one another based on the data she has acquired from her participants about PBL in FDK. It is vital that teachers obtain the appropriate support from their peers because PBL may be new to those who have never taught kindergarten. These events would allow teachers the chance to exchange information and resources in order to better comprehend PBL. These meet ups or workshops would allow educators the ability to stay current on new tools or techniques and exchange examples of how they might be used in the classroom. Teachers would then be able to see how they may better support their youngsters. A PBL setting changes in every classroom that researcher participant [Ivy, and Cecilia] has witnessed, according on what they said in the interview. Conducting these conferences or workshops could resolve any ambiguity and enhance instructor effectiveness.

Furthermore, educators must have access to ongoing professional development programs provided by their respective ministries of education or governing authorities. This would allow educators to have a deeper understanding of PBL, in addition to the meetings and seminars at their school. Educators would be acquainted with other professionals or resources that have been researched through these professional development programs.



## **Administrations**

The researcher recommends that administrators provide teachers with access to appropriate professional development programs in order to enhance the efficacy of teachers across the board. The notion that kids are supported throughout the full school year would be conveyed to teachers from this. The teachers are responsible for providing the appropriate direction in order to support their kids. This is because the students who are entering kindergarten come from a variety of backgrounds and have different needs. It has been suggested by researchers that in order for administrators to acquire information about prevalent best practices, they should also be aware of relevant resources and maintain a level of familiarity with them. This could be accomplished by organizing meetings with other administrators from different schools or by visiting to other schools in order to discuss the recurring themes that are communicated by their teachers.

The researcher advises that kindergarten should reduce the number of kids that are enrolled in each classroom in light of the findings of the research (for example, increasing the maximum number of students to fifteen). For the purpose of providing students with the most beneficial educational experience possible, teachers would be able to construct lessons with the assistance of their own personal interests. If the class size was kept small, it would be possible to meet and support the needs of each and every child during the whole school year. In the event that it is not possible to lower the number of students in the class, it is recommended that additional help be provided to the kind by introducing maybe two Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) into the classroom. For instructors who are just beginning their careers in kindergarten, the researchers also propose that the Ministry of Education should require them to take training courses. They would have a better understanding of what kindergarten entails as a result of this, and they would feel more prepared to comprehend where they may find additional information.

Incorporating a clear and explicit concept of problem-based learning (PBL) into the curriculum is something that the ministries of education ought to do. It is up to the teachers to decide what exactly is included in play-based learning (PBL), despite the fact that the current curriculum framework emphasizes the importance of play. Examples of project-based learning (PBL), preparation, and strategies for preparing students for success should also be included in the document, according to the recommendations of the researchers. The adjustment would be easier for children who are beginning their first year of school if this were implemented. A further recommendation made by the researcher is that educational ministries provide their teachers with the appropriate resources. If it is believed that play-based learning (PBL) is the most effective method of instruction for kindergarten students, then there have to be materials available for teachers to use. Tasks that fall under the purview of teachers and administrators include having conversations about and making a list of the resources that are necessary for the classroom. The Ministry will then obtain this in order to make it possible for it to be implemented for all grade levels.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to identify the pedagogical tactics employed by instructors in FDK to facilitate PBL. This finding is significant for educators working with kindergarten pupils, as play is increasingly recognized

as a crucial developmental activity. The researcher discovered that there are various interpretations of PBL, which affect how educators use it in their classrooms. Modeling students' learning and utilizing direct education strategies serve as alternatives to guiding and co-teaching with students. The research also revealed a scarcity of instructional resources and support systems for educators in PBL. Teachers sometimes had to independently seek educational materials and resources without assistance. To enhance their service to students, educators continually adjust their methodologies and philosophies. Nonetheless, the investigation yielded substantial insights into this process. The proposals encompassed the implementation of professional development programs, the establishment of new documentation that guarantees precise descriptions, and the provision of suitable resources. This new tactic, which would also improve their pedagogical techniques, might provide educators with increased confidence.

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