

Instructional Continuity, Teacher Agency, and Pedagogical Transition from Early Years to Primary in Malaysian International Schools: A Composite Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Transition from early years to primary education is among the most significant yet least theorized pedagogical transition of a child's educational experience. The transition process is additionally complicated in Malaysian international schools due to the combination of pedagogies for play-based and academic instruction, frequent teacher turnover, specific traits of Generation Alpha, and EAL learners' existence. Although a wide range of literature has addressed the issues of instructional designs separately, there is still a major gap in terms of theoretical explanation of how instructional continuity across levels of education could be modelled, especially in Malaysian international schools. This paper suggests a composite conceptual framework, which sees instructional continuity as the main mediator between pedagogical transition, teacher agency, and student results. The framework uses principles of instruction as explained by Rosenshine (2012); cognitive load theory developed by Sweller (1988); social learning theory of Bandura (1971); zone of proximal development by Vygotsky (1978); and connectivism learning theory by Siemens (2005). The Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework described below demonstrates how theoretical and institutional inputs get mediated by practitioners' agency into pedagogical outputs.

Keywords: instructional continuity, early years, primary education, teacher agency, generation alpha, Malaysian international schools, pedagogical transition, conceptual framework

INTRODUCTION

"Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it" (Foucault, 1972, p. 227). In the context of education, teaching strategies are essential for teachers to promote holistic learning for learners, regardless of the type of institution, whether government, public, or international. Consistency in teaching strategies is necessary to meet the diverse needs of students. A study has shown that successful schools are led by effective and passionate administrators who are dedicated to fostering growth through a strong philosophy and collaborative teamwork among the academic and non-academic teams (Parveen et al., 2024).

In Malaysia, a study revealed that one of the key factors in the decline in achievement on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) was uneven teaching pedagogy in translating theory into practice (Ong et al., 2023). This study reflects that without the unified instructional teaching strategies, students are exposed with varies learning experiences that may cause overload in their working memory. Based on Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) by Sweller (1988; 2021), when teaching strategies change from class to class, the working memory load can be overwhelming. Therefore, the instructional continuity of teaching

strategies would be beneficial for all students to receive consistent and clear guidance during the learning process.

The current education in Malaysia is shifting towards holistic and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) for future generations. Malaysia's national curriculum included guidelines for preschool and primary levels, which are the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (NPSC) and the Primary School Standards-Based Curriculum, also known as KSSR (*Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah*). Malaysia's education system has promoted the evolution of the learning system by emphasising holistic student development, 21st-century skills, Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), and student-centred learning (MOE, 2013). Furthermore, the latest Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026-2035 stated that diversity, equity and inclusion create a strong sense of community and belonging in education. Sustainability ensures long-term educational well-being and supports future generations. The transformation will enable learners to receive equitable, high-quality education with global exposure (Ministry of Higher Education, 2025).

According to the 5-Year National Progress Report (5-NPR) on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which focuses on the quality of education, it provides an overall assessment guideline for Malaysia to reform and align with education policy (UNICEF Malaysia, 2023). A comprehensive report revealed that key challenges include improving the preschool teachers' teaching quality, aligning skills training with industry needs, and enhancing ICT skills among teachers and students to meet the demands of the digital economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, the report emphasises the school-based assessments to evaluate a wider range of student skills, moving beyond exam-driven outcomes to support Malaysia's sustainable education goals by 2030 (UNICEF Malaysia, 2023). Therefore, the instructional continuity of teaching strategies plays an important role in the education system in Malaysia by providing transparent learning guidelines. It is a belief that the teaching strategies can be adopted in any education system, as these strategies could be modified and be well-suited for all subjects and year groups.

Education for Generation Alpha and Beyond

The teaching strategies are crucial to the modern learner who is Generation Alpha and English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. Generation Alpha is a group of individuals born from 2010 to 2024. Generation Alpha has been called the "Glass Generation", and the Alphas cannot stay away from technology (McCrindle & Fell, 2020). As education rapidly evolves for Generation Alpha learners, schools must adapt a learning framework that can guide innovation without losing instructional quality. The existence of a unified pedagogical framework provides a balance between structure and flexibility by considering the characteristics and learning styles of Generation Alpha.

Furthermore, research by Zakirman et al. (2023) found that an average percentage of 86% of Alpha learners have more enjoyment when learning with the use of electronic games. Generation Alpha prefers a visual and interactive learning style, such as hands-on learning experiences. Moreover, Generation Alpha learned better through media and gamification lessons than through traditional learning methods. Hands-on learning should be the main aspect of learning for Generation Alpha instead of memorising a textbook (Fernando & Premadasa, 2024). Therefore, a positive classroom environment by incorporating gamification can enhance levels of student engagement, improve specific skills, and optimise learning outcomes based on the learning traits of Generation Alpha (Gaurina et al., 2025). As a result, it is believed that key theories that inspired and adapted in this pedagogical framework can provide effective learning for Generation Alpha.

The Transition from Early Years to Primary

The transition from early years to primary education levels remains a significant concern, as the changes from pre-formal education to formal education. In many schools, the move from the play-based learning environment of the early years to the structured, academic expectations of primary levels often causes children stress and anxiety, resulting in reduced desires to learn (Bird et al., 2025). The transition of a child from early years to the primary levels should be supported by the instructional continuity of teaching strategies across the school. While the core teaching strategies remain consistent, the application shifts from play-based in the

early years to more explicit structures in primary. According to the findings from Shuey et al. (2019), the curricula are often understood differently across early years and primary education levels. The differences in the learning approaches could lead to a lack of support in the transition from early years to primary school (Shuey et al., 2019).

Besides, Malaysia's School Curriculum 2027 outlines the curriculum focus for each educational stage. At the preschool level, the learning focus is based on social, emotional, and character development, whereas the learning focus, where the attainment of literacy and numeracy competencies alongside character development will be further enhanced, is at the primary level, year 1 and 2. In years 3 and 4, the learning focus shifts toward the application of skills, knowledge, and values while maintaining character formation. In years 5 and 6, the focus will be on analytical skills and the ability to generate innovation, as well as the development of character (MOE, 2025). Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the issue of transitioning by linking the discontinuities in learning approaches between early years and primary education levels in school.

Study that revealed the experiences and education a child receives in the first five years of life can have far-reaching effects which shape not only their academic success but also their social-emotional development, career paths, health, and well-being into old age (Kallapiran et al., 2025). It is undeniable that children who attend early years programs are more likely to adapt well to the school environment when transitioning to primary education levels.

In the recent news in Malaysia, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced that he will make preschool education mandatory for children starting at the age of five, to reform and strengthen the national education system (Loheswar, 2025). This is because early childhood centres have fostered the development of these critical life and mental health skills, such as cooperation, self-control, and problem-solving (Muir et al., 2023).

Moreover, Zhang et al. (2023) discovered that childhood circumstances have a strong link to cognitive impairment as they were growing up, such as emotional neglect and physical abuse that occurred before the age of 18. Therefore, early years and primary education levels are both important in providing the holistic development and best-fit education for Generation Alpha. In order to have a better understanding of how a framework could help students transition from early years to primary education levels, it is crucial to compare the teaching strategies between early years and primary education levels in the targeted international school.

This paper argues that what is needed, for these children, for their teachers, and for the Malaysian international schools that serve them, is a theoretically grounded, contextually responsive framework for instructional continuity: one that bridges the early years and primary stages without erasing the developmental distinctiveness of either. The central question guiding this work is: How do instructional continuity, teacher agency, and pedagogical adaptation theoretically link to support a smooth and developmentally appropriate transition from early years to primary education in Malaysian international schools?

Problem Statement and Conceptual Gaps

Instructional Continuity

The future shocks that were revealed a few decades ago show that changes in education are an ongoing process to meet the needs of modern learners. This statement reflects the importance of change in education; the key to success lies in adapting rather than clinging to static knowledge. However, there will be problems arising from differences among practitioners in the school, including teachers and management. The different views of teaching strategies are based on the frontline educators in interpreting the best-fit teaching for learners from early years to primary levels.

This issue happens where the school has a formal, structured lesson plan flow, but a lack of interpretation regarding how individual teachers define and deliver these strategies into real-life classroom practice. These approaches are criticised for their negative impact on the diversity of learning opportunities for children, de-

professionalisation of teachers and restrictions on their autonomy, and a high level of control over the education process (Menzies, 2023)

Besides, it could lead to teachers experiencing "unvoiced resistance" because they do not feel empowered to share how the formal plan diverges from their practical experience. This could link with a phenomenon of quiet quitting described by Konal Memiş and Tabancalı (2024). In this state, teachers fulfil their basic job scopes but withdraw their psychological commitment and sense of belonging. Quiet quitters display a lack of motivation, underdevelopment of skills, a lack of flexibility and an inability to work in a team setting (Konal Memiş and Tabancalı, 2024). As a result, the low engagement in working would hinder the success of any teaching strategies.

Furthermore, even if clear and shared teaching strategies have been delivered, certain teachers' beliefs could deviate or even criticise the selected teaching strategies. Meng (2025) also observed that teachers experience the shifting curricula as a disorienting dilemma that causes feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, and intellectual anxiety. It could further lead them to reconsider their professional identity. Based on the current research, it is significant to reveal teachers' opinions on the ways to engage with effective teaching strategies to maintain a healthy workplace (Kamali & Javahery, 2024).

Teacher Agency

Certain challenges should be revealed in the international school settings. The most common issue is the high turnover of teachers, as the homeroom teachers are contract-based and will leave every two years. In international school settings, where staff diversity and high turnover are common (Gibbons et al., 2021). Effective leadership that prioritises, supports, and fosters teachers' well-being is essential for sustaining a stable and satisfied teaching workforce (Womack, 2025). This suggests that fostering teachers' well-being and professional growth can help address high turnover rates and motivate educators to adapt to ongoing educational changes.

Hence, teachers' voices are crucial for identifying the specific challenges that need to be addressed to refine these teaching strategies into an effective and transferable framework. There is a quote by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009, p. 88), stating that "Teachers are the ultimate arbiters of educational change. The classroom door is the open portal to innovation or the raised drawbridge that holds it at bay." Treacy and Leavy (2023) also supported with the statement that the quality of teachers is synonymous with the quality of an education system in an education system.

Teacher turnover can disrupt the continuity of the learning process for students. Gibbons et al. (2021) found that schools tend to keep new teachers away from teaching upper primary level students, but also give them a lower teaching workload than the incumbent teachers, perhaps to give time for adapting to the new environment.

This finding proves that turnover can be one of the factors that affect learning effectiveness. As stated by Hajovsky et al. (2023), the rapport relationship between teacher and students, which in turn encourages student engagement and facilitates academic success. Besides, retaining long-term teachers poses a common challenge for international school administrators. Many organisations struggle to retain their employees due to the ineffectiveness of a management team in identifying retention factors and practices (Leong & Said, 2024).

Based on the challenges that could be discussed, the school support system in which the leadership should take place would be crucial. The school leadership must implement a whole-school approach to meet the needs of all students (Department of Education and Training, 2020).

There is a common issue in school, which is the overwhelming amount of content and ideas for students to grasp, where teachers need to choose and implement a teaching method that enhances students' learning (Cadungog & Rollo, 2024). Based on the challenges that the school will face, it is significant to make learning visible to students through various steps. It is a belief that effective school stakeholders are key to ensuring

the efficiency and excellence of a school, which provides the most suitable education for diverse learners (Parveen et al., 2024).

On top of that, the barriers in implementing the teaching strategies as assigned by the leadership team, as well as the support efficacy. In school, teachers often face significant practical challenges, such as heavier administrative burdens, while managing high levels of children's challenging behaviour (Zhao et al., 2025). The challenges can lead to a stressful work environment and cause the ineffectiveness of promoting the teaching strategies effectively. Giri et al. (2025) stated that establishing a shared vision is fundamental to school development and the change process, as it guides the learning organisation toward achieving the long-term goals. Based on this finding, a common goal for school development can only be achieved through positive collaboration between teachers and leadership.

However, the teaching elements that are negotiable and non-negotiable, and the balance between flexibility and rigidity, remain unexplored. This framework aims to seek how the set of teaching strategies works based on the considerations of teachers and the school. Thus, the research proposes a transferable lesson plan flow designed to ensure longitudinal continuity across early years to primary education levels that is applicable to government, private, and international sectors.

Pedagogical Transition from Early Years to Primary in Malaysian International Schools

Improving the current teaching strategies, is believed to bridge the gap between the exploratory stage of early years and the academic practice in primary education levels. This study is necessary to expose the benefits and challenges of implementing an instructional continuity pedagogical framework that adapts explicit instruction in the targeted school. It is significant in improving educational policy and practice within the international school context. According Cadungog & Rollo (2024), the understanding and implementation of explicit instruction for young learners will be able to enhance their holistic development.

Bird et al. (2025) indicate that a balance between child-initiated play and teacher-direct teaching can encourage specific content learning. Nevertheless, Amani and Fussy (2023) argued that child-centred practices cannot be implemented without the active support of the teacher. This statement provides an insight into how this framework could be beneficial for teachers to reflect and redefine the teaching strategies to meet the teachers' autonomy and beliefs in teaching. Thus, the teaching strategies in balancing between pre-formal and formal could be discussed further on teachers' input.

Apart from this, the proposed composite conceptual framework aims to maintain a set of structured teaching strategies to overcome the challenges, such as the needs of Generation Alpha and English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. In international school settings, students come from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. There is a need to adopt a systematic and consistent learning process which suited for students, including those with language barriers and special needs.

However, traditional teaching methods will not fully address the needs of all learners in Generation Alpha (McCrindle & Fell, 2020). The learning style of Generation Alpha revealed that "Keeping their attention, things need to be very fast paced" (Huss & Eastep, 2024). The issue will be visible where the rigid structure of the lesson plan could be modified to meet the needs of Gen Alpha in connecting learning in this digital era.

This framework proposes to clarify the instructional continuity of teaching strategies across early years and primary education levels in the targeted international school. This framework aims to address the needs of Generation Alpha and EAL learners in coping with learning using a set of instructional continuity teaching strategies that are supported by explicit instructions as introduced by Rosenshine (2012). Furthermore, this composite conceptual framework seeks to reveal challenges and barriers faced by teachers in utilising the instructional continuity teaching strategies.

Through an in-depth research design and methodology, this proposed framework aims to provide a holistic understanding of how these teaching strategies contribute to a structured lesson plan flow and therefore foster a high-quality environment for longitudinal learning without changing the school's epistemological beliefs.

Generally, it is significant to reveal the effectiveness of the teaching strategies and further discover the modifications of them to meet the rapid change in learning style of the young generations. This research underscores the critical disconnection between the mandate of structured teaching strategies and the practical interpretation in real-life classroom practice.

When lack of teachers' autonomy to define these strategies, it could face "unvoiced resistance" and lead to the withdrawal of psychological commitment. On the other hand, schools should improvise strategies that bridge the gap between play-based early years and academic primary levels to maintain longitudinal learning. Furthermore, it is undeniable that the success of any framework depends on alleviating the significant practical challenges in school. Findings of this proposed composite conceptual framework is believed to modify and improve the teaching strategies and provide the most suitable lesson plan flow to help students in their learning journey.

Proposed Composite Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study focuses on a composite conceptual framework that investigates the interrelationship between theoretical pedagogical foundations, practitioner implementation, and institutional continuity. The framework follows an Input-Process-Output (IPO) structural methodology. As proposed by McGrath (1964), the IPO provides a structured approach to systems analysis based on individual, team and organisation.

Based on this study, the Inputs are foundational theories and national standards, which can be transformed through a Process which is teacher implementation and classroom reality, to produce a specific Output of a standardised lesson plan flow. The selection of the IPO structural methodology is due to its capacity to analyse the whole-school dynamic system.

This IPO is suited for a qualitative case study, as it focuses on a group functioning based on the antecedents (Inputs), internal dynamics (Processes), and consequences (Outputs) (McGrath, 1964). The researcher moves beyond linear observations to treat the transition from early years to primary as a complex, integrated organisational system. As a holistic system, the IPO model is highly relevant for investigating the relationships between team training (I), team learning (P), and team coordination (O) (Kérivel et al., 2021).

In this study, the Inputs (I) are the school's instructional epistemology and core pedagogical theories, which are further aligned with external academic standards, including the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7. The inputs are actively transformed during the Process (P), which is the stage of practitioner implementation. This is the stage where teachers interpret and adapt these inputs within the lived reality of the classroom. Throughout the process, the challenges and barriers would be revealed from this study. The Output (O) of this systemic interaction is a preliminary pedagogical framework delivered as a standardised lesson plan flow.

The researchers acknowledges that the framework is not a "one size fix all" solution, but it could be an in-depth discovery mechanism for refining and aligning the school's instructional epistemology with global standards. As studied by Wang (2018), the outputs of a well-designed system or teaching strategies have a feedback impact on future inputs. By standardising the lesson plan flow, the school establishes a new "reference belief" that stabilises the instructional epistemology for future academic cycles.

Therefore, this systemic approach allows the researcher to identify where 'pedagogical friction' occurs during the transition from early years to primary education levels, ensuring that the final output is both functional and sustainable within the school's unique context, as shown in Figure 1.1. In-depth discussion of the proposed composite conceptual framework is presented in the next section.

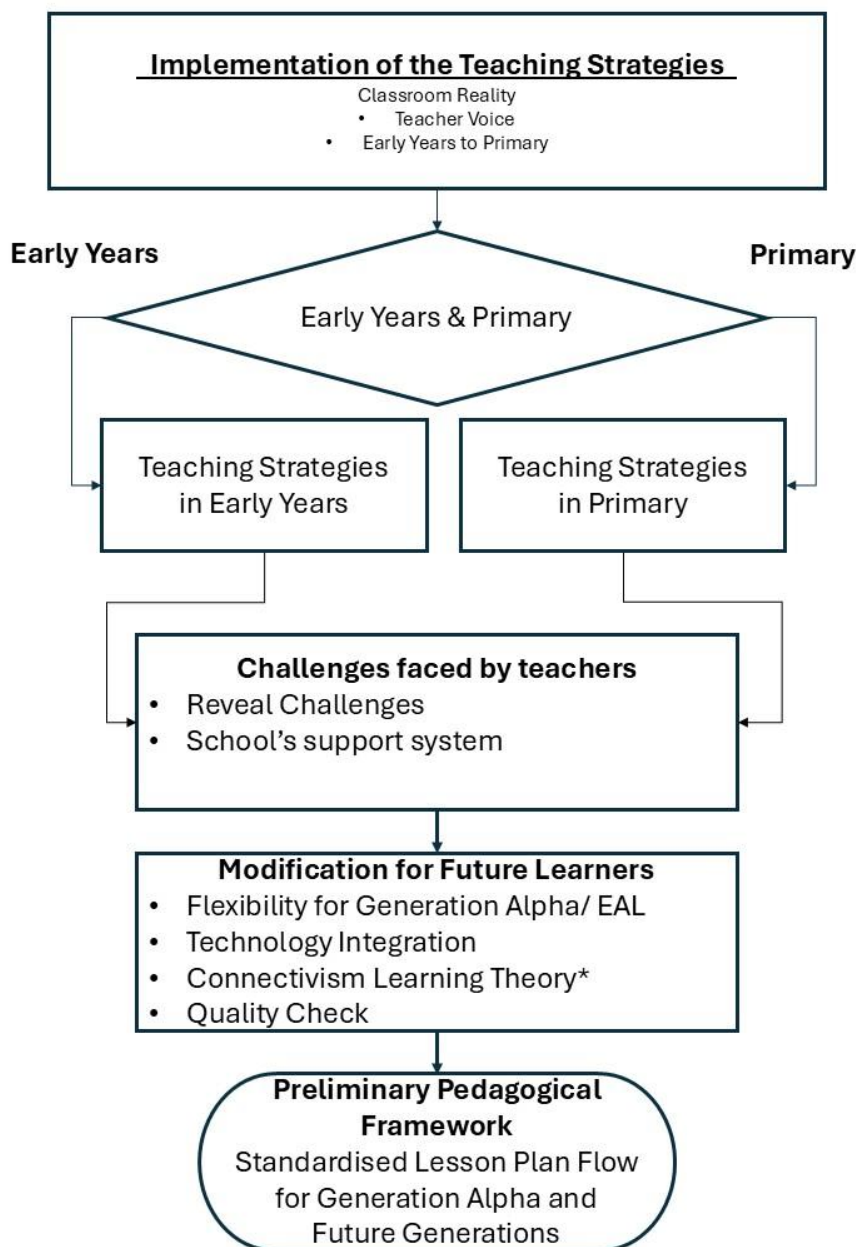


Figure 1: Composite Conceptual Framework of the Study

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED COMPOSITE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Implementation of the Teaching Strategies and Challenges Faced by Teachers

The framework represents the dynamic environment where theoretical strategies are transformed into classroom practice, which is based on the teachers' voice, the difference between early years and primary education levels as well as the classroom reality. Teachers' perceptions and experiences are the keys to performing a successful whole-school approach. Teacher perceptions encompass the usability and impact of instructional continuity teaching strategies in their specific classroom settings. Teachers' beliefs regarding the effectiveness of instructional routines, their confidence in applying those routines, and their emotional engagement with the change process are the key factors in evaluating the effectiveness of the pedagogical framework. As Ourda et al. (2025) highlighted, no educational reform can succeed without acknowledging and addressing the beliefs and attitudes of the very individuals responsible for its implementation.

The framework highlights that the effectiveness of these teaching strategies depends heavily on the educator. Therefore, it is essential that teachers across all year groups are thoroughly engaged, informed about the goals of the whole-school approach, and aligned with the intended outcomes of the instructional framework. Furthermore, the teachers' cultural and professional backgrounds, prior exposure to pedagogical frameworks, and levels of understanding regarding the instructional continuity flow are the factors that shape how they implement the school's teaching strategies. These factors contribute to variations in how the framework is enacted across different age groups. This framework also posits that a direct relationship exists between teacher perceptions and the fidelity of implementation. Therefore, teachers' voices play an important role in evaluating the overall application and impact of the instructional flow. However, it can be challenging to capture teachers' beliefs because these attitudes are subject to shifts over time. Razak et al. (2023) mentioned that teachers' attitudes and motivation in adapting a set of teaching strategies are crucial for the successful implementation of a curriculum framework. The framework also further emphasised the importance of aligning school policies with the specific practices of each institution to respect the diversity of teacher experiences.

Besides that, teacher experiences and confidence levels are significant factors affecting the implementation of the instructional continuity teaching strategies. Participation in training sessions, engagement with Continuing Professional Development (CPD), collaboration with colleagues, and ongoing classroom practices directly influence the learning outcomes produced by this instructional approach. As Kamali and Javahery (2024) highlighted, experiential learning in schools plays a pivotal role in shaping the pedagogical competence and instructional adaptability of teachers. Furthermore, teachers are believed to reinforce or transform their initial perceptions of the teaching strategies based on their daily practice in the classroom. For instance, a teacher who has doubts about implementing retrieval practice may revise their view on the instructional flow after observing a remarkable improvement in students' progress. Thus, teacher engagement with the instructional continuity strategies serves as a critical mediator between perception and practice, influencing both the fidelity and sustainability of the pedagogical implementation within the school.

Modification for Future Learners

For the early years stage, the instructional continuity teaching strategies prioritise the establishment of learning environments that are rich in sensory play and social interaction with clear and simple instructions. The instructional flow in the early years is based on the belief that meaningful learning occurs when children are actively engaged in hands-on learning. Teacher-guided interactions using simple visual cues also needed to provide guidance based on their developmental stage. As Feng et al. (2024) mentioned, ongoing and hands-on experiences furnish authentic contexts for the application of newly acquired knowledge and skills, presenting possibilities for prompt feedback and iterative enhancement. A key feature among these teaching strategies for the early years is the practice of modelling, which is closely associated with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978) and Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) (1971). During the lesson, the teacher acts as the "more knowledgeable other" to guide students through explicit modelling and clear guidance. Moreover, hands-on learning is frequently employed within this pedagogical framework to reinforce oral language development and boost holistic growth. Strategies such as explicit teaching provide young learners with repeated cues, which indirectly promote oral speaking and confidence at a young age.

These strategies are foundational in early childhood pedagogy and align with research emphasising the importance of multisensory learning environments in fostering language acquisition and memory retention among early learners (Lucido et al., 2024). In addition, the early years instructional approach encourages the use of concrete and colourful learning materials, including colourful cue cards from the beginning of the lesson. As noted by Zuo et al. (2023), cognitive scaffolding with audiovisuals and pictorial materials, as seen in the designs of Abdelaziz and Al Zehmi (2020), is effective in supporting diverse learners across various linguistic backgrounds. The teaching strategy, such as Think Pair Share (TPS), could be utilised in early years settings to foster social interaction of young learners and to build their confidence while expressing themselves. According to Erbil (2020), language develops through social interactions and serves as the medium through which knowledge is passed to children and acts as a tool that shapes intellectual development. Thus, social interaction remains a key feature to boost the holistic development of young children. In summary,

the instructional strategies in early years classrooms reflect a deep understanding of early childhood development by blending the play-based approach into a structured instructional approach.

The application of the instructional continuity teaching strategies adapts to support the growth of cognitive maturity and learning autonomy of primary students. Although the core principles of modelling and structured support remain the same as in the early years, the pedagogical approach during the primary stage embraces a more explicit and academic method. The key feature of these teaching strategies in the primary setting is the systematic use of formal, explicit instruction. The systematic approach includes structured activities tasks using mini whiteboards to write words or sentences based on the previous lesson. These strategies are employed in cognitive science research, demonstrating the powerful effects of retrieval on long-term memory consolidation and schema development (Witter, 2025). Through retrieval practice, students not only reinforce neural connections but also develop fluency and confidence in applying knowledge across learning contexts.

Furthermore, the instructional framework integrates explicit instruction and retrieval practice methods to promote the cognitive abilities of primary-level learners. The teaching approaches for Primary learners aim to trigger executive function skills, such as planning and self-monitoring, by following the structured instructional flow. Research conducted by Kliegl and Bäuml (2021) underscored the advantages of interleaved retrieval in facilitating long-lasting learning, whereas Rosenshine (2012) highlighted the importance of structured reviews and guided practice in mitigating cognitive overload and improving instructional clarity. For the primary teaching approaches, the independent task phase is critical in reinforcing student learning. This phase differs from the early years stages, as students are required to utilise the knowledge and skills they have acquired through formal writing or project-based activities. This approach aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) (1971), which asserts that learning is enhanced through active participation and the internalisation of observed behaviours.

On the other hand, the instructional continuity strategies in the primary levels also integrate the use of formative challenge tasks and summative assessments. These tasks provide students with transparent learning goals and the means to self-assess their progress, which in turn fosters autonomy and motivation. According to Abd Halim et al. (2024), structured formative assessment practices are essential for evaluating students' learning, as they enable teachers to tailor instruction according to demonstrated needs and abilities. As a result, the more structured and academic instructions employed in the primary phase reflect a systematic and coherent approach to teaching and learning. The equilibrium of structure between the Early years and primary education levels fosters an atmosphere that encourages continuous learning within the school. The transition from scaffolded assistance in the early years stage to independent application in the primary stage reflects the dedication to cultivating lifelong learners who possess the cognitive and metacognitive skills essential for thriving in progressively intricate academic environments.

Preliminary Pedagogical Framework

The success of a pedagogical framework depends heavily on the effectiveness of the school's support systems. However, the transition from theoretical input to classroom real-life practice often encounters significant organisational barriers. This study identifies three Primary challenges that necessitate a more dynamic approach to professional development, which are staff turnover, rigidity versus flexibility and evolving needs of diverse learners. The high teacher turnover presents a critical barrier to the institutional memory, where require teachers to be trained and utilise the ten teaching strategies in their teaching subjects. When experienced or well-trained teachers depart, the collective understanding of instructional continuity routines as introduced in school will be diluted (Gibbons et al., 2021). The school will be at risk when facing the reset of the new staff. Next, certain teachers who come from different backgrounds will face issue which the set of teaching strategies sometimes restricts the flexibility to adapt to classroom practice and the needs of Generation Alpha. Gramata (2025) revealed that the service-learning context where teachers expressed a need for clear implementation guidelines and better curricular alignment to ensure instructional coherence. While standardisation ensures quality, over-rigidity can prevent teachers from adapting to the shorter attention spans and high expectations of digital-native learners.

To address these challenges, professional development must be provided by the leadership team. As McLeod (2025) and Kamali and Javahery (2024) argued, when professional development is rooted in teachers' lived experiences, it increases teacher efficacy and the sustainability of teaching strategies. The integration of collaborative planning sessions allows the school to build an open conversation in delivering better education for future generations. Furthermore, support must attend to contextual variation. Differentiating strategies for early years versus primary ensures the flow is developmentally appropriate according to the year group of learners. By addressing these diverse needs, the school ensures that the instructional continuity lesson plan flow empowers educators to meet the complex needs of Generation Alpha while maintaining high academic standards.

To ensure the sustainability of instructional continuity teaching strategies, the school must provide a well-planned support system that addresses the challenges faced by teachers and learners. This study emphasises that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs should be provided to ensure the whole school approach is well-adapted in the school. By integrating collaborative planning and weekly meetings, the school ensures that instructional flow remains consistent despite staff turnover. As McLeod (2025) and Kamali and Javahery (2024) argued, when CPD is provided for teachers and coupled with reflective inquiry, it significantly increases the effectiveness and confidence in implementing the unified pedagogical framework. Next, leadership plays a pivotal role in maintaining the fidelity of implementation. Leaders are responsible for monitoring the consistent application of these teaching strategies. Through learning walks and peer-observation cycles, leadership can identify pedagogical friction early and provide targeted support. This oversight ensures that the consistent routines are not merely administrative requirements but are executed with high quality to meet the diverse needs of Generation Alpha.

The final phase of the composite conceptual framework represents the transition from a set of instructional continuity teaching strategies to a future-ready lesson plan flow. This modification is a strategic evolution designed to address the specific needs of Generation Alpha and English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners within the international school context. Research has revealed that Generation Alpha often demonstrates limited social communication and struggles in following instructions (Apaydın Çırık & Aksoy, 2023). Thus, the teaching strategies must transition from strict standardisation toward a more flexible and responsive structure. While explicit instruction framework offer a necessary scaffolded learning pathway, future enhancements must ensure these routines remain adaptable for diverse learners. The modification of the instructional continuity teaching strategies acknowledges that learning personalisation must not undermine pedagogical coherence or equity (MOHE, 2025). Therefore, the refined instructional flow maintains essential routines, but the content of the strategies could be deviated and flexible based on teacher and students' opinions. This modification supports learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation by allowing students to apply standardised skills within authentic, real-world contexts.

For EAL learners, teachers can provide high-intensity verbal scaffolding during the modelling phase while gradually removing supports as students move toward independent tasks. By balancing the "non-negotiable" structure of explicit instruction with the "negotiable" flexibility of student-led inquiry, this modified approach ensures an inclusive and equitable learning environment as aligned with SDG 4 (UNICEF, 2023). A defining characteristic of Generation Alpha is their inherent digital nativity, which necessitates a shift in pedagogical delivery (Huss & Eastep, 2024). The incorporation of technology has transitioned from being an optional enhancement to a compulsory requirement for future generations to maximise their learning experience. While the foundational instructional continuity teaching strategies utilise essential low-tech resources such as mini whiteboards must adapt to include digital devices across both early years and primary education levels to enhance diverse content delivery methods. Research indicates that visual and interactive digital scaffolds are particularly effective in supporting students with language processing difficulties, especially within the international and multilingual contexts of this study (Zuo et al., 2023).

Furthermore, as Witter's (2025) study demonstrated, technology can significantly amplify the effectiveness of retrieval practice when repetition and rapid feedback loops are embedded directly into the teaching and learning flow. By integrating these digital tools, the standardised lesson plan flow provides Generation Alpha with a familiar and engaging medium for learning, ensuring that the lesson and assessment phases are both

data-rich for the teacher and highly interactive for the student. This integration fosters digital literacy, preparing learners for the increasingly complex technological landscapes they will encounter in higher academic stages. In developing a framework modification for future learners, the integration of Connectivism learning theory, which was introduced by Siemens (2005) and further developed by Downes (2008), provides a critical theoretical bridge to technology-driven education. Siemens (2005) described connectivism as "a learning theory for the digital age," emphasising that technology has fundamentally transformed how individuals interact and learn in daily life (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). The theory views learning as a process of forming networks that connect people and information sources. It extends beyond traditional theories such as behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism by recognising networking and digital interconnectedness as a primary source of knowledge. In this pedagogical framework, learners are not required to memorise all information but must develop the capacity to comprehend and apply relevant knowledge when needed.

Corbett and Spinello (2020) highlighted how connectivism can be fostered from early childhood through activities that link internal classroom experiences with external learning sources supported by technology. For example, Hu et al. (2024) demonstrated that even learners with diverse needs could engage in complex learning using digital tools such as virtual manipulatives and programmable robots. Hence, Connectivism justifies the transition toward more open-ended, technology-integrated tasks. By teaching students to utilise digital tools to find and connect information, it prepares Generation Alpha for a future where the ability to maintain and traverse a network of information is as important as the foundational knowledge itself.

A systematic quality check is vital to ensuring the continued fidelity and sustainability of the instructional continuity teaching strategies. This process incorporates instructional coaching cycles, reflective inquiry, and collaborative planning to maintain high pedagogical standards across the Early Years and Primary departments. Ross et al. (2023) emphasised the utility of affirming "learning walks" and observations by peers or leaders to encourage improvements in the implementation of these teaching strategies. By embedding these quality assurance measures into the instructional framework, the school ensures that the explicit instruction with the set of teaching strategies can be consistently improved. Furthermore, the revision of the preliminary pedagogical framework must remain strictly data-driven. The framework integrates diagnostic tools and longitudinal assessment data, such as an observation rubric, to guide iterative enhancements. This ensures that the standardised lesson plan flow remains responsive to the shifting needs of Generation Alpha and EAL learners, while staying firmly aligned with the quality benchmarks of the MQF 2nd Edition and SDG 4.7.

Implications

This study addresses research gaps that correspond to gaps in the literature showing how teachers navigate their professional autonomy within mandated teaching strategies and the school's epistemology (Nxasana et al., 2023). There is a developmental discontinuity gap due to the absence of longitudinal data tracking the transition and differences in teaching strategies from early years to primary education levels. As mentioned by Bird et al. (2025), the study should focus on how to create a potentially seamless transition for children from ECE services to primary schools. Moreover, the challenges of implementing these strategies in high-turnover environments remain unexplored, where researchers should examine these implementation hurdles, such as teacher autonomy as studied by (Nguyen et al., 2021) and environmental factors that could undermine teacher commitment and organisational motivation (Konal Memiş & Tabancalı, 2024). There is a need for a synthesised framework that accommodates the complex needs of Generation Alpha in which the composite conceptual framework proposes the components of the preliminary pedagogical framework. As Lammert et al. (2022) highlighted, further research is required to theorise the roles that adaptiveness plays in professional development.

The existing literature emphasises the mechanics of explicit teaching but is insufficient regarding teacher perceptions and professional identity. Even though Menzies (2023) mentioned that the consistency and routines create predictability at an institutional level by maintaining management continuity where staff can adapt how things are done in the new workplace, there is a need to explore how international school teachers who come from diverse global backgrounds adapt and negotiate their autonomy in following the school's epistemology across early years to primary education levels. This paper critiques the mandated nature of

teaching strategies by investigating how teachers' perceptions influence the fidelity of the continuity and shift of teaching strategies in school. In addition, visible longitudinal studies are crucial to investigate the effects of explicit instruction across early years to primary education levels. As Degli Esposti & Cigala (2025) mentioned, there should be a more explicit examination of cross-contextual differences, divergent child perspectives, and the cultural and institutional dynamics shaping the preschool-to-primary school transition. The literature found has yet to explore or compare how these teaching strategies function implement across the early years and primary education levels to ensure a seamless pedagogical transition that avoids discontinuities in teaching style. Therefore, the study requires further empirical investigation using longitudinal designs that track learner outcomes over time.

Apart from this, there is a critical lack of evidence regarding the challenges of teachers in implementing instructional teaching strategies in the high-turnover environment. As Ardenlid et al. (2025) highlight, the main problem of practice is meeting the needs of diverse learners for both early years and primary educational levels, yet the literature has not identified the specific elements of schools' teaching strategies. While many teachers appreciate leaders who provide flexibility and acknowledge challenges (Womack, 2025), the literature has not yet identified the specific elements within school cultures that could undermine organisational motivation. As Konal Memiş and Tabancalı (2024) argue, elements that diminish teacher commitment should be eliminated from the organisational culture to ensure the sustainability of any teaching framework. Thus, further study should be applied in addressing the challenges and motivations of teachers in implementing these teaching strategies.

A meaningful research gap exists regarding the synthesis of the instructional continuity framework between early years and primary education levels. There is an urgent need for an adaptable pedagogical framework that prioritises evidence-based processes to overcome challenges caused by uncertain, unpredictable, complex, and constantly changing times of the digital era, globalisation, and the rapidly increasing knowledge economy of the 21st century (Giri et al., 2025). The literature should further explore how a pedagogical framework could transition from the play-based exploration of the early years and modelling learning of the primary education levels, while allowing the flexibility with the extent to which it accommodates culturally specific teaching methods. This framework seeks to develop a *Standardised Lesson Plan Flow* that acts as a transferable pedagogical framework that bridge continues learning from early years to primary education levels.

Therefore, this study addresses four critical research gaps that stem from the current international school landscape. There is a lack of evidence in viewing the perceptions of teachers in negotiating their professional autonomy within a mandated framework and the school's epistemology. Furthermore, there is a developmental discontinuity gap due to the absence of longitudinal data tracking the transition and differences from the teaching strategies of early years to primary education levels. Besides, some challenges remain unexplored while implementing the teaching strategies for both early years and primary education levels. On the other hand, there is an urgent need for a synthesis of instructional teaching strategies with the flexibility required to accommodate the complex needs of Generation Alpha. In summary, the literature strongly supports the core tenets and practical strategies embedded within this composite conceptual framework. However, the review also reveals the need for ongoing inquiry into the adaptability and teacher well-being when implementing the instructional continuity teaching strategies. Therefore, addressing these gaps will not only strengthen the credibility of the framework but also ensure its relevance across diverse educational contexts. As schools continue to evolve in response to future generations, demographic changes, and pedagogical innovation, the instructional framework must remain dynamic and responsive to longitudinal learning.

Innovation and Novelty

This study claimed that existing instructional continuity tends to treat early childhood and primary education levels separately. By identifying the application of these strategies across different developmental stages, this study could introduce novelty through pedagogical symmetric continuity. The proposed framework maintains identical macro-structural lesson phases across both departments, while allowing the micro-delivery format to balance between play-based and academic modalities according to the developmental appropriateness of each stage.

Preliminary Validation Framework

A pilot study was employed to assess the feasibility and validity of this conceptual framework through a two-phase preliminary validation design before the full implementation. In Phase 1, an expert panel review was conducted with two academic specialists who are a UK-trained Head of School and an early childhood teacher holding a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Management to evaluate the conceptual framework. A review of the interview questions and observation field notes has been completed by these experts to ensure strict alignment with school's epistemology. In Phase 2, a targeted micro-pilot was conducted over a minor cycle, where the framework's standardised lesson plan flow was piloted across the selected teachers who are implementing the pedagogical framework in a targeted international school.

SUMMARY

This conceptual framework has provided a comprehensive overview of the research focused on the instructional continuity teaching strategies implemented within a targeted international school. The study is designed to evaluate the implementation of these pedagogical routines across both the early years and primary education levels based on teachers' voices. By comparing the application of these strategies across different developmental stages, this research seeks to determine if a set of instructional continuity teaching strategies applicable to instructional flow can effectively bridge the gap between early childhood and primary education. Furthermore, proposed composite conceptual framework aims to reveal the challenges and barriers faced by the practitioners with the primary goal of identifying necessary modifications of a preliminary pedagogical framework to ensure greater alignment with the needs of future learners, specifically those of Generation Alpha and the upcoming Beta generation. This evolution is essential to equip future generations with the cognitive, social, and digital competencies required to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected global landscape.

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