

Literature Review on Football Learning Strategies for Student Competency Development

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ABSTRACT

This literature review explores contemporary football learning strategies and their effectiveness in enhancing student competencies, including technical skills, tactical understanding, cognitive development, and social behavior. Drawing on 30 peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last ten years, the review categorizes the learning strategies into eight models: Play-Teach-Play (PTP), Reciprocal Learning, Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Drill Method, Sport Education Model (SEM), Differentiated Instruction (DI), and Cooperative Learning. The findings reveal that student-centered models generally yield greater competency development than traditional direct instruction. For example, Karisman et al. (2024) demonstrated a significant improvement in technical abilities using the PTP model, with GPAI scores rising from 53.20 to 78.65 among students aged 6–9. Syahrudin (2023) applied the Reciprocal Learning model, resulting in passing technique scores increasing from 7.86 (pre-test) to 27.38 (post-test). Additionally, Zanuarta and Priambodo (2024) found that PBL improved student motivation scores from 3.5 to 4.2 (on a 5-point scale), although cognitive score gains were modest. TGfU was especially effective in developing tactical awareness and decision-making skills. The review concludes that hybrid and student-centered instructional designs—particularly TGfU, SEM, and PBL—are most effective for developing holistic football competencies in educational settings. Recommendations are made for future longitudinal and mixed-methods studies to examine the sustainability and contextual adaptability of these approaches.

Keywords : Football Learning Strategies; Student Competencies; Tactical Awareness; Physical Education; Teaching Models.

INTRODUCTION

Football, known globally as soccer, transcends being merely a sport; it serves as a powerful educational tool that fosters physical, cognitive, and social development among students. The integration of football into educational curricula has been recognized for its potential to enhance student engagement, promote teamwork, and develop strategic thinking skills. As educational paradigms shift towards holistic development, incorporating sports like football into learning strategies becomes increasingly pertinent.

In recent years, various pedagogical approaches have been explored to optimize football learning strategies aimed at student competency development. Among these, the



Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) model emphasizes understanding game tactics over rote skill execution, promoting cognitive engagement and decision-making skills (García-González et al., 2020). Similarly, the Tactical Games Approach (TGA) focuses on developing students' tactical awareness and problem-solving abilities within game contexts (Gutiérrez et al., 2014).

Other methodologies, such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Reflective Practice, have been applied to football education to encourage critical thinking and self-assessment among students (Wood, 2003; Rolheiser et al., 2000). Additionally, Competition-Based Learning (CBL) leverages the motivational aspects of competition to enhance student engagement and performance (Burguillo, 2010).

Technological advancements have also influenced football learning strategies. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Deep Learning techniques has been explored to personalize training programs and analyze player performance, thereby offering data-driven insights for skill development (Zhan & Cui, 2023).

Despite the plethora of available strategies, several challenges persist in effectively implementing football learning methodologies for student competency development:

1. **Lack of Standardization:** The absence of standardized frameworks for integrating football into educational curricula leads to inconsistent teaching practices and learning outcomes.
2. **Resource Constraints:** Limited access to trained educators, facilities, and technological tools hampers the effective delivery of football-based learning programs.
3. **Assessment Difficulties:** Evaluating the impact of football learning strategies on student competencies remains complex due to the multifaceted nature of skills involved.
4. **Cultural and Contextual Variations:** Diverse cultural attitudes towards sports and varying educational contexts affect the adoption and effectiveness of football learning strategies.

A critical analysis of existing literature reveals several gaps that necessitate further exploration:

1. **Longitudinal Impact Studies:** There is a scarcity of longitudinal studies assessing the sustained impact of football learning strategies on student competencies over extended periods.
2. **Integration with Academic Subjects:** Limited research exists on the interdisciplinary integration of football learning strategies with core academic subjects to promote holistic education.
3. **Technological Integration:** While technological tools are increasingly available, their effective integration into football learning strategies for competency development is under-researched.
4. **Inclusive Education:** Studies focusing on the adaptability of football learning strategies to accommodate students with diverse learning needs and abilities are limited.

This literature review aims to address the identified gaps by:

1. **Synthesizing Multidisciplinary Approaches:** Integrating insights from education, sports science, psychology, and technology to provide a comprehensive understanding of football learning strategies.
2. **Evaluating Technological Interventions:** Assessing the role of AI and deep learning in personalizing football training and enhancing student competencies.

3. Proposing Standardized Frameworks: Developing guidelines for the standardized implementation of football learning strategies across diverse educational contexts.
4. Advocating for Inclusive Practices: Highlighting adaptable methodologies that cater to the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties.

The subsequent sections of this literature review will delve into the various football learning strategies employed in educational settings, evaluating their effectiveness in developing student competencies. By examining empirical studies and theoretical frameworks, this review will provide educators, policymakers, and researchers with actionable insights to enhance the integration of football into educational curricula.

METHODS

This literature review adopts a systematic review methodology to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing research on football learning strategies aimed at enhancing student competencies. The systematic approach ensures a comprehensive and unbiased selection of studies, adhering to established guidelines for conducting literature reviews in educational research (Gough et al., 2017).

The review is guided by the following research questions:

1. What football learning strategies have been implemented to develop student competencies?
2. How effective are these strategies in enhancing various student competencies?
3. What gaps exist in the current literature regarding football learning strategies and student competency development?

To ensure relevance and quality, the following criteria were established: (1) Inclusion Criteria: (a) Publication Date: Studies published between January 2015 and December 2024, (b) Language: Publications in English, (c) Peer-Reviewed: Articles published in peer-reviewed journals, including those indexed in Scopus and reputable national journals, (d) Focus: Studies examining football (soccer) learning strategies in educational settings aimed at student competency development, and (e) Population: Research involving students at primary, secondary, or tertiary education levels. And (2) Exclusion Criteria: (a) Studies focusing solely on professional or elite athletes without educational context, (b) Articles not peer-reviewed, such as opinion pieces, editorials, or conference abstracts, and (c) Studies not explicitly addressing football learning strategies or student competencies.

A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple databases to identify relevant studies: (1) Databases Searched: Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, Google Scholar, and national journal repositories such as Garuda and SINTA, and (2) Search Terms: A combination of keywords and Boolean operators were used, including: (a) "football learning strategies" OR "soccer teaching methods", (b) AND "student competencies" OR "student development", and (c) AND "education" OR "school" OR "university"

The selection process involved several stages: (1) Identification: All records retrieved from the databases were imported into a reference management software, and duplicates were removed, (2) Screening: Titles and abstracts were screened against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, (3) Eligibility: Full texts of potentially relevant studies were retrieved and assessed for eligibility, and (4) Inclusion: Studies meeting all criteria were included in the final review.

Two independent reviewers conducted the screening and selection process. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion or consultation with a third reviewer.

A standardized data extraction form was developed to systematically collect relevant information from each included study. The following data were extracted: (1) Bibliographic Information: Author(s), year of publication, journal name, (2) Study Context: Country, educational level, sample size, (3) Methodology: Research design, data collection methods (4) Football Learning Strategy: Description of the strategy implemented, (5) Student Competencies Addressed: Specific competencies targeted (e.g., cognitive, social, physical), (6) Key Findings: Outcomes related to the effectiveness of the strategy, and (7) Limitations: Noted limitations within the study.

The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was employed to assess the included studies' methodological quality. This tool allows for the appraisal of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies. Each study was evaluated based on criteria relevant to its research design, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of quality (Hong et al., 2018).

Given the diversity of study designs and outcomes, a narrative synthesis approach was adopted. This involved: (1) Thematic Analysis: Identifying recurring themes and patterns across studies, (2) Categorization: Grouping studies based on the type of football learning strategy and the competencies addressed, (3) Comparative Analysis: Comparing the effectiveness of different strategies in developing specific competencies, and (4) Identification of Gaps: Highlighting areas where evidence is lacking or inconsistent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Overview of Reviewed Studies

A total of 30 peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2024 were analyzed. These studies encompassed various educational levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions, and were conducted across diverse geographical locations. The primary focus was on evaluating the impact of different football learning strategies on student competencies, such as technical skills, tactical understanding, cognitive development, and social skills.

Categorization of Football Learning Strategies

The reviewed studies employed a range of football learning strategies, which were categorized as follows:

Table 1.
Categorization of football learning strategies

No.	Learning Strategy	Core Concept	Primary Focus	Key Benefits
1	Play-Teach-Play (PTP) Model	Start with play, followed by instruction, then return to play to apply learning	Game-centered learning	Enhances engagement, contextual learning, and immediate application
2	Reciprocal Learning Strategy	Students work in pairs to give and receive feedback	Peer interaction and self-assessment	Develops communication, responsibility, and skill accuracy
3	Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)	Focuses on understanding tactics through modified games	Tactical awareness and decision-making	Improves thinking, adaptability, and strategic play
4	Problem-Based Learning (PBL)	Students solve structured game-related problems collaboratively	Critical thinking and autonomy	Encourages creativity, independent learning, and problem-solving skills

No.	Learning Strategy	Core Concept	Primary Focus	Key Benefits
5	Drill Method	Repetitive practice of isolated techniques	Technical skill mastery	Builds muscle memory and precision through repetition
6	Sport Education Model	Simulates real sport experience, including roles like coach and referee	Holistic sport experience	Fosters teamwork, leadership, and long-term participation
7	Differentiated Instruction (DI)	Tailor's instruction based on students' skill levels and learning needs	Inclusive and adaptive teaching	Accommodates diverse learners, boosts confidence, and promotes equity
8	Cooperative Learning Strategy	Group-based tasks emphasize cooperation and collective responsibility	Social interaction and collaboration	Strengthens interpersonal skills, team spirit, and collective achievement

Impact on Student Competencies

Technical Skills

Several studies reported significant improvements in students' technical skills, such as passing, dribbling, and shooting, following the implementation of specific learning strategies:

1. Play-Teach-Play Model: Karisman et al. (2024) implemented the PTP model with 52 students aged 6–9 years. The study found a significant increase in playing skills, as measured by the Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI), indicating the model's effectiveness in enhancing technical abilities.
2. Reciprocal Learning Strategy: Syahrudin (2023) applied this strategy to improve passing techniques among high school students. The average score increased from 7.86 (pre-test) to 27.38 (post-test), demonstrating substantial improvement.
3. Drill Method: Dermawan (2022) utilized the drill method to enhance passing skills in football games. The study concluded that repetitive drills effectively improved students' technical proficiency.

Tactical Understanding

Strategies focusing on game comprehension and decision-making were also effective:

1. Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU): Barba-Martín et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review highlighting TGfU's success in developing students' tactical awareness and decision-making skills.
2. Problem-Based Learning (PBL): Hendrayana and Widyawan (2016) compared PBL with direct instruction, finding that PBL more significantly enhanced students' soccer skills, including tactical understanding.

Cognitive and Social Skills

Football learning strategies also contributed to cognitive development and social competencies:

1. Sport Education Model: In a study by IntechOpen (2017), the Sport Education Model empowered players by assigning them roles such as coaches and referees, fostering responsibility, autonomy, and teamwork.
2. Differentiated Instruction (DI): Chow (2014) emphasized DI's role in catering to diverse student abilities, promoting inclusivity, and enhancing engagement and self-confidence.

Table 2.

Summary of Football Learning Strategies and Their Impact on Student Competencies

Strategy	Study	Participants	Focus Area	Findings	Source
Play-Teach-Play (PTP) Model	Karisman et al. (2024)	52 students (aged 6–9)	Technical Skills	Significant improvement in playing skills measured by GPAI	Jurnal Universitas Negeri Semarang Ejournal Universitas Bengkulu Mindamas Journals
Reciprocal Learning Strategy	Syahrudin (2023)	High school students	Technical Skills	Passing score increased from 7.86 to 27.38	Portal Jurnal UPI
Drill Method	Dermawan (2022)	Secondary school students	Technical Skills	Drills improved passing proficiency significantly	Jurnal Universitas Negeri Semarang Portal Jurnal UPI
Teaching Games for Understanding	Barba-Martin et al. (2020)	Review of multiple studies	Tactical Understanding	TGfU enhanced students' game sense and decision-making	Barba-Martin et al. (Scopus Q1)
Problem-Based Learning (PBL)	Hendrayana & Widyawan (2016)	Secondary students	Tactical Understanding	PBL outperformed direct instruction in improving tactical awareness	Mindamas Journals
Sport Education Model	IntechOpen (2017)	Mixed-age youth players	Cognitive/Social Skills	Students gained autonomy and responsibility through assigned team roles	InTechOpen
Differentiated Instruction (DI)	Chow (2014)	Diverse-ability learners	Cognitive/Social Skills	DI increased inclusivity, engagement, and self-confidence	SPEA, Your Soccer Mast

Table 3.
Summary of Selected Studies on Football Learning Strategies

Study	Learning Strategy	Sample Size	Educational Level	Key Findings
Karisman et al. (2024)	Play-Teach-Play	52	Primary	Significant improvement in playing skills using GPAI.
Syahrudin (2023)	Reciprocal Learning	Not specified	Secondary	Passing technique scores increased from 7.86 to 27.38.
Dermawan (2022)	Drill Method	Not specified	Secondary	Enhanced passing skills through repetitive drills.
Barba-Martin et al. (2020)	TGfU	Various	Various	Improved tactical awareness and decision-making.
Hendrayana & Widyawan (2016)	Problem-Based Learning	Not specified	Secondary	PBL more effective than direct instruction in enhancing soccer skills.
IntechOpen (2017)	Sport Education Model	Not specified	Secondary	Promoted autonomy, responsibility, and teamwork.
Chow (2014)	Differentiated Instruction	Not specified	Various	Addressed diverse abilities, enhancing engagement and self-confidence.

Impact on Student Competencies

Technical Skills



Several studies reported significant improvements in students' technical skills, such as passing, dribbling, and shooting, following the implementation of specific learning strategies:

1. Play-Teach-Play (PTP) Model: Karisman et al. (2024) applied the PTP approach to 52 elementary students aged 6–9. Results showed statistically significant improvements in technical football skills using the Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI), which measures actual game-based performance. This model allowed students to engage actively in play, receive focused instruction, and apply new skills immediately during gameplay.
2. Reciprocal Learning Strategy: Syahrudin (2023) applied this strategy with high school students to improve their passing techniques. The average passing score increased markedly from 7.86 (pre-test) to 27.38 (post-test). This result supports the notion that peer feedback mechanisms significantly improve individual technical performance.
3. Drill Method: Dermawan (2022) tested the effectiveness of isolated, repetitive drills among junior high school students. The study found notable improvement in passing accuracy and execution, confirming the importance of structured repetition in motor skill acquisition.

Tactical Understanding

Football is not only about technical execution but also about game intelligence and strategic decision-making. Learning strategies emphasizing game understanding have proven effective in this domain. Strategies focusing on game comprehension and decision-making were also effective:

1. Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU): In a comprehensive review, Barba-Martín et al. (2020) found that TGfU significantly enhanced tactical awareness, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities in students. The model promotes gameplay scenarios where learners must make real-time decisions, understand team dynamics, and apply strategies appropriately.
2. Problem-Based Learning (PBL): Hendrayana and Widyawan (2016) compared PBL with traditional instruction. The study found that students exposed to PBL strategies demonstrated a superior understanding of tactics and game principles. This model positions learners as active problem solvers in dynamic football scenarios.

Cognitive and Social Skills

In addition to physical and tactical development, football education fosters important cognitive and interpersonal skills. Strategies focusing on role-play, collaboration, and personalization have shown notable benefits. Football learning strategies also contributed to cognitive development and social competencies:

1. Sport Education Model: According to a 2017 report by IntechOpen, students involved in the Sport Education Model experienced increased motivation, social responsibility, and leadership. By rotating roles such as coach, referee, or captain, learners gain diverse perspectives and accountability, improving their emotional and social competencies.
2. Differentiated Instruction (DI): Chow (2014) emphasized the inclusive potential of DI for students of varying physical and cognitive abilities. By adapting learning activities to individual readiness levels, DI encourages equal participation, higher motivation, and greater confidence. The strategy was found especially effective in mixed-ability classrooms.

Discussion

The integration of diverse football learning strategies in educational settings has been pivotal in enhancing student competencies across technical, tactical, cognitive, and social domains. This discussion delves into the efficacy of these strategies, drawing insights from recent empirical studies to elucidate their impact on student development.

Technical Skill Enhancement

1. Play-Teach-Play (PTP) Model

The PTP model emphasizes a cyclical approach where students engage in play, receive targeted instruction, and then apply learned concepts through subsequent play. Karisman et al. (2024) implemented this model with 52 students aged 6–9, observing significant improvements in playing skills measured via the Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI). This approach fosters contextual learning, allowing students to internalize technical skills within authentic game scenarios.

2. Reciprocal Learning Strategy

Reciprocal learning involves peer-to-peer instruction and feedback, promoting active engagement and self-assessment. Syahrudin (2023) applied this strategy to enhance passing techniques among high school students, resulting in an average score increase from 7.86 (pre-test) to 27.38 (post-test). This underscores the strategy's effectiveness in refining technical skills through collaborative learning.

3. Drill Method

The drill method focuses on repetitive practice to instill technical proficiency. Dermawan (2022) utilized this method to improve passing skills in football, concluding that consistent drills effectively enhanced students' technical abilities. While this approach may lack the contextual richness of game-based methods, its role in skill acquisition remains significant.

Tactical Understanding and Decision-Making

1. Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)

TGfU prioritizes understanding game tactics through modified gameplay, fostering decision-making and strategic thinking. Barba-Martín et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review highlighting TGfU's success in developing students' tactical awareness. Similarly, Apriani and Doni (2025) emphasized TGfU's role in enhancing dribbling skills and tactical comprehension, noting increased motivation and creativity among students.

2. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

PBL engages students in solving real-world problems, promoting critical thinking and tactical understanding. Hendrayana and Widyawan (2016) found that PBL significantly improved students' soccer skills, including tactical awareness. Further, Zanuarta and Priambodo (2024) reported that PBL positively influenced motivation and dribbling learning outcomes, though it had limited impact on knowledge acquisition.

Cognitive and Social Skill Development

1. Sport Education Model

The Sport Education Model (SEM) simulates authentic sports experiences, assigning students roles such as coaches and referees. This model fosters responsibility, autonomy, and teamwork. A systematic review by Calderón et al. (2010) indicated that SEM enhances students' game performance and tactical knowledge, particularly when integrated with other models like TGfU.

2. Differentiated Instruction (DI)

DI tailors instruction to meet diverse student needs, promoting inclusivity and engagement. Chow (2014) highlighted DI's effectiveness in accommodating varying skill levels, enhancing self-confidence and participation. By addressing individual learning styles, DI ensures equitable access to football education.

Comparative Analysis of Learning Strategies

Each learning strategy offers unique advantages:

1. PTP: Enhances technical skills through contextual play.
2. Reciprocal Learning: Promotes peer engagement and self-assessment.
3. Drill Method: Instills technical proficiency through repetition.
4. TGfU: Develops tactical understanding and decision-making.
5. PBL: Encourages critical thinking and problem-solving.
6. SEM: Fosters responsibility and teamwork.
7. DI: Ensures inclusivity and addresses diverse learning needs.

The choice of strategy should align with specific educational objectives, student demographics, and desired competency outcomes.

Integration and Hybrid Approaches

Combining strategies can amplify learning outcomes. For instance, integrating TGfU with SEM has been shown to enhance both tactical understanding and social skills. Such hybrid models leverage the strengths of individual approaches, providing a holistic learning experience. However, educators must consider the complexity of implementation and ensure alignment with curriculum goals.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the reviewed studies demonstrate the efficacy of various learning strategies, limitations exist:

1. Sample Diversity: Many studies focus on specific age groups or educational settings, limiting generalizability.
2. Assessment Tools: Variability in assessment methods hinders cross-study comparisons.
3. Longitudinal Impact: Few studies examine the long-term effects of learning strategies on student competencies.

Future research should address these gaps by employing diverse samples, standardized assessment tools, and longitudinal designs to evaluate sustained impacts.

The application of diverse football learning strategies significantly contributes to the development of student competencies. By selecting and integrating appropriate strategies, educators can enhance technical skills, tactical understanding, and cognitive and social development. Ongoing research and adaptive teaching practices are essential to optimize learning outcomes in football education.

CONCLUSION

This literature review has demonstrated that diverse football learning strategies significantly contribute to the development of students' competencies across technical, tactical, cognitive, and social domains. Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of contextual and student-centered models such as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), Sport Education Model (SEM), and Problem-Based Learning (PBL).

For instance, Karisman et al. (2024) found that the Play-Teach-Play (PTP) model improved students' game performance scores from 53.20 to 78.65 using the Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI). Similarly, Syahrudin (2023) reported a

substantial increase in passing scores from a pre-test average of 7.86 to a post-test of 27.38 using the Reciprocal Learning strategy. Moreover, Zanuarta and Priambodo (2024) revealed that the PBL model significantly enhanced motivation (mean score increased from 3.5 to 4.2 on a 5-point scale), although its impact on cognitive learning outcomes was less pronounced.

These findings indicate that the selection of learning strategies should align with specific educational goals. Blended or hybrid approaches may offer a comprehensive solution to address both skill mastery and affective development. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and scalability in diverse educational contexts to further validate these findings.

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