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Teaching-Learning Practices in *Araling Panlipunan*: An Educational Perspective

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Abstract

This study examined the teaching-learning practices in Araling Panlipunan at Dibacong Elementary School from an educational perspective. Employing a descriptive mixed-methods research design, the study investigated the instructional strategies, classroom practices, and assessment techniques used by teachers, as well as their influence on pupils' engagement, understanding of social concepts, critical thinking, and values formation. Quantitative data were collected through survey questionnaires and classroom observation checklists administered to Araling Panlipunan teachers and selected pupils, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were utilized to analyze the data. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a very high level of learner-centered and contextualized teaching practices, particularly in the use of discussions, inquiry-based activities, and local examples. Pupils exhibited very high levels of classroom participation and positive learning outcomes, especially in values formation and citizenship awareness. However, challenges such as varied learner abilities, limited instructional materials, and time constraints were identified. Despite these challenges, teachers employed adaptive strategies, including lesson modification and the use of improvised instructional materials, to sustain effective learning experiences. The study concludes that effective and contextualized pedagogical practices significantly enhance the quality of Araling Panlipunan instruction in elementary education. The findings provide a basis for instructional improvement, institutional support, and future research aimed at strengthening social studies teaching in public elementary schools.

Keywords: *Araling Panlipunan, teaching-learning practices, elementary education, learner-centered instruction, social studies education*

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Introduction

Araling Panlipunan plays a vital role in elementary education as it develops learners' understanding of history, culture, geography, governance, and citizenship. Through this subject, pupils are expected to acquire not only knowledge of social realities but also values such as nationalism, social responsibility, and critical awareness of community and national issues. Effective teaching-learning practices in *Araling Panlipunan* are therefore essential in helping learners meaningfully connect social concepts to their lived experiences. Teachers are expected to use learner-centered, contextualized, and inquiry-based approaches that promote active participation and reflective thinking. This study examines the teaching-learning practices in *Araling Panlipunan* at Dibacong Elementary School from an educational perspective, with the aim of understanding how instructional strategies, classroom practices, and assessment methods influence pupils' engagement and learning outcomes.

In the Philippine basic education curriculum, *Araling Panlipunan* is designed to foster informed and responsible citizens who can critically understand social issues and actively participate in nation-building (Department of Education [DepEd], 2016). However, teaching *Araling Panlipunan* at the elementary level presents several challenges, including learners' varying levels of comprehension, limited instructional resources, and the tendency to rely on textbook-centered and lecture-based approaches. In rural and public elementary schools such as Dibacong Elementary School, contextual factors such as class size, availability of materials, and pupils' socio-cultural backgrounds further influence teaching-learning processes. Understanding how teachers implement pedagogical practices in this context is important in identifying strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement in *Araling Panlipunan* instruction. This study responds to the need for context-based research that examines actual classroom practices and their educational implications.

Studies on social studies education emphasize the importance of learner-centered and inquiry-based approaches in promoting meaningful learning. According to NCSS (2013), effective social studies instruction encourages critical thinking, discussion, and active exploration of social issues. Research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) found that interactive and discussion-based teaching strategies enhance learners' engagement and understanding of complex social concepts. In the Philippine context, Bilbao et al. (2018) highlighted that contextualized teaching strategies in *Araling Panlipunan* help pupils relate historical and social concepts to their local environment, thereby improving comprehension and retention.

Assessment practices also play a crucial role in social studies learning. Shepard (2019) emphasized that formative assessment supports deeper understanding by providing continuous feedback and opportunities for reflection. Similarly, Corpuz and Salandanan (2018) noted that varied assessment strategies in *Araling Panlipunan*, such as performance tasks and group projects, allow pupils to demonstrate understanding beyond rote memorization. However, several studies report persistent challenges in *Araling Panlipunan* instruction, including limited instructional materials and teachers' reliance on traditional methods due to time constraints and curriculum demands (Dela Cruz, 2021; Montebon, 2019). These findings suggest the need for instructional innovation and contextual support in elementary social studies teaching.

While existing literature has explored effective strategies in social studies and *Araling Panlipunan* instruction, most studies focus on secondary education or general national trends. There is limited empirical research that specifically examines teaching-learning practices in *Araling Panlipunan* at the elementary level within a single public school context, particularly in rural settings. Moreover, few studies integrate teachers' pedagogical practices, pupils' engagement, learning outcomes, and classroom challenges in one comprehensive investigation. This study addresses this gap by providing a context-specific analysis of *Araling Panlipunan* teaching-learning practices at Dibacong Elementary School, offering insights that may inform instructional improvement and support effective social studies education in elementary schools.

Research Objectives

The study aims to examine and analyze the teaching-learning practices employed in *Araling Panlipunan* at Dibacong Elementary School from an educational standpoint. Specifically, it seeks to describe the instructional strategies, teaching approaches, and classroom practices used by teachers in delivering *Araling Panlipunan* lessons, including the use of learner-centered methods, contextualized materials, and varied assessment techniques. The study also aims to determine how these teaching-learning practices influence pupils' engagement, understanding of social

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concepts, critical thinking, and values formation, particularly in relation to history, culture, citizenship, and community awareness. In addition, it intends to identify the challenges encountered by teachers and pupils in the teaching and learning of *Araling Panlipunan*, such as limitations in resources, time, and learner diversity, as well as the strategies employed to address these challenges. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide a basis for enhancing instructional practices and improving the quality of *Araling Panlipunan* education in elementary schools through informed pedagogical and educational interventions.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive mixed-methods research design to examine the teaching-learning practices in *Araling Panlipunan* at Dibacong Elementary School from an educational perspective. The descriptive approach was appropriate because the study sought to describe existing instructional strategies, classroom practices, and assessment methods without manipulating variables. The mixed-methods design enabled the integration of quantitative data on pedagogical practices and pupil engagement with qualitative data that provided in-depth insights into teachers' and pupils' experiences, challenges, and coping strategies.

The locale of the study was Dibacong Elementary School. The participants consisted of *Araling Panlipunan* teachers and selected intermediate-grade pupils. Teachers were chosen through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in teaching the subject, while pupils were selected using simple random sampling to ensure representative participation.

Data were collected using three research instruments: (1) a researcher-made survey questionnaire to describe teaching-learning practices and assessment strategies; (2) a classroom observation checklist to assess learner engagement and instructional implementation; and (3) semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with pupils to identify challenges and strategies in *Araling Panlipunan* instruction. The instruments were validated by experts in social studies education.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and ranking. Qualitative data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using **thematic analysis**. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study.

Results/Findings

Quantitative Results

Table 1
Teaching-Learning Practices in *Araling Panlipunan*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Use of learner-centered strategies	4.28	Very High
Integration of contextualized/local examples	4.35	Very High
Use of discussion and inquiry-based activities	4.21	Very High
Use of instructional materials and visuals	4.10	High
Application of varied assessment techniques	4.18	High
Overall Mean	4.22	Very High

The overall mean indicates a very high level of teaching-learning practices, demonstrating that teachers consistently employ effective instructional approaches in *Araling Panlipunan*. The frequent use of learner-centered and contextualized strategies suggests that teachers intentionally design lessons that actively involve pupils and relate social studies content to their everyday experiences, community contexts, and cultural backgrounds. By connecting lessons to pupils' lived realities, teachers make abstract concepts more meaningful and easier to understand, thereby enhancing engagement and participation. This alignment with effective social studies pedagogy reflects a teaching approach that values relevance, interaction, and learner agency, ultimately

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contributing to deeper understanding and more meaningful learning outcomes in *Araling Panlipunan*.

Table 2
Pupils' Engagement and Learning Outcomes in *Araling Panlipunan*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Participation in class discussions	4.26	Very High
Understanding of social concepts	4.14	High
Development of critical thinking	4.08	High
Demonstration of values and citizenship	4.30	Very High
Overall Mean	4.20	Very High

Pupils demonstrated very high levels of engagement and positive learning outcomes, particularly in the areas of values formation and citizenship, underscoring the significant role of *Araling Panlipunan* in promoting holistic education. Active participation in discussions, collaborative activities, and contextualized lessons enabled pupils to develop a deeper understanding of social responsibilities, respect for culture, and awareness of their roles as members of the community and nation. Through meaningful learning experiences, pupils were able to internalize values such as cooperation, responsibility, and nationalism, which go beyond cognitive learning and contribute to character development. These outcomes highlight that *Araling Panlipunan* is not only a subject focused on content knowledge but also a vital avenue for shaping socially aware, morally grounded, and responsible citizens, reinforcing its importance in the overall development of learners in elementary education.

Table 3
Challenges Encountered in Teaching and Learning *Araling Panlipunan*

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Limited instructional materials	11	55%
Varied learner abilities	13	65%
Time constraints	10	50%
Overloaded content	8	40%

The most common challenge identified in the study was the wide variation in learners' abilities, which made it difficult for teachers to address the diverse learning needs of pupils within a single classroom. Differences in reading comprehension, prior knowledge, and learning pace often required teachers to adjust instruction to ensure that all pupils could understand the lesson. This situation underscores the need for differentiated instruction, where teaching strategies, activities, and assessments are tailored to accommodate varying levels of learner readiness and ability. In addition to learner diversity, limited instructional resources and time constraints significantly affected lesson delivery. Insufficient teaching materials and visual aids restricted teachers' ability to implement interactive and contextualized activities, while limited class time constrained opportunities for in-depth discussion and learner participation. Together, these challenges highlight structural and instructional constraints that influence the effectiveness of teaching-learning practices and emphasize the importance of institutional support and flexible pedagogical approaches in enhancing classroom instruction.

Qualitative Results

Table 4
Emerging Themes from Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

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Theme	Description
Contextualized and learner-centered instruction	Lessons linked to local culture and experiences
Active participation and discussion	Pupils learn through sharing and inquiry
Instructional challenges	Resource limits and learner diversity
Adaptive teaching strategies	Improvisation and peer learning

Participant Responses:

“Mas naiintindihan ng mga bata kapag halimbawa ay galing sa kanilang komunidad.” (Teacher)

“Mas gusto namin ang talakayan kaysa basta pagbabasa lang.” (Pupil)

“Kailangan talagang mag-adjust kapag kulang ang materyales.” (Teacher)

The qualitative findings affirm that contextualized and interactive teaching-learning practices play a crucial role in enhancing pupils’ understanding and engagement in *Araling Panlipunan*. When lessons are anchored on learners’ local experiences, community issues, and familiar cultural contexts, pupils are better able to connect abstract social concepts to real-life situations, making learning more meaningful and relevant. Interactive strategies such as class discussions, group activities, and inquiry-based tasks encourage active participation, promote critical thinking, and allow pupils to express their ideas confidently. These practices create a supportive classroom environment where learners become active participants rather than passive recipients of information.

Moreover, the findings reveal that adaptive teaching strategies are essential in helping teachers manage instructional challenges such as varied learner abilities, limited instructional materials, and time constraints. Teachers’ flexibility in modifying lesson plans, improvising learning resources, and adjusting teaching pace enables them to address diverse learning needs while maintaining lesson objectives. The use of peer learning and differentiated activities further supports pupils who require additional guidance, ensuring that no learner is left behind. Overall, these adaptive practices demonstrate teachers’ professional commitment and pedagogical responsiveness, highlighting the importance of instructional innovation and contextual sensitivity in delivering effective and inclusive *Araling Panlipunan* instruction.

Discussions

The findings of the study reveal that teaching-learning practices in *Araling Panlipunan* at Dibacong Elementary School are generally very effective, particularly in the use of learner-centered and contextualized instructional strategies. The frequent integration of local examples, discussion-based activities, and inquiry-oriented tasks supports the view that social studies learning becomes more meaningful when connected to learners’ lived experiences. This finding is consistent with the National Council for the Social Studies (2013), which emphasizes inquiry, discussion, and civic engagement as core elements of effective social studies instruction.

High levels of pupil engagement and values formation observed in the study further indicate that *Araling Panlipunan* contributes significantly to pupils’ understanding of citizenship, culture, and social responsibility. These results align with Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who emphasized that interactive and reflective teaching practices enhance learners’ critical thinking and social awareness. However, the study also identified challenges such as varied learner abilities, limited instructional materials, and time constraints, which echo the findings of Dela Cruz (2021) and Montebon (2019) on instructional limitations in public elementary schools. Despite these challenges, teachers’ adaptive strategies such as improvising materials and adjusting lesson pacing demonstrate pedagogical flexibility and commitment to learner-centered education.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that effective and contextualized teaching-learning practices in *Araling*

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Panlipunan positively influence pupils' engagement, understanding, and values formation at Dibacong Elementary School. Teachers' use of learner-centered strategies and local contexts enhances pupils' comprehension of social concepts and promotes active classroom participation. While instructional challenges persist, teachers' adaptive and resourceful practices help sustain meaningful learning experiences. Overall, the study affirms the importance of pedagogical innovation and contextual relevance in improving the quality of *Araling Panlipunan* instruction in elementary education.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teachers should continue strengthening inquiry-based and discussion-oriented strategies while integrating differentiated instruction to address varied learner abilities.
2. School administrators should provide adequate instructional materials and allocate sufficient time for *Araling Panlipunan* activities to support effective teaching.
3. Curriculum planners and DepEd may consider offering professional development programs focused on contextualized and learner-centered social studies instruction.
4. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct comparative or longitudinal studies on *Araling Panlipunan* teaching practices across different school contexts.

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Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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