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Teaching-Learning Processes and Learner Engagement: A Study at C.J. Torre Elementary School

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Abstract

This study examined the teaching-learning processes and learner engagement at C.J. Torre Elementary School with the aim of understanding how classroom practices influence learners' participation and involvement in instruction. Using a qualitative descriptive research design, the study focused on identifying instructional strategies, teacher-learner interactions, and learning activities that shape behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement among elementary learners. The participants included selected teachers and learners who were purposively chosen based on their direct involvement in classroom instruction. Data were gathered through classroom observations, semi-structured teacher interviews, and focus group discussions with learners to capture authentic classroom experiences. Thematic analysis of the data revealed four major themes: interactive teaching strategies, positive teacher-learner relationships, contextualized learning experiences, and variations in learner participation. Findings showed that interactive and learner-centered strategies such as group work, questioning, and activity-based learning enhanced learners' attentiveness and motivation. Supportive and encouraging teacher-learner relationships fostered emotional engagement by creating a safe and welcoming learning environment. Contextualized teaching helped learners connect lessons to real-life experiences, resulting in better comprehension and sustained interest. However, variations in learner participation were evident, as some learners remained passive due to shyness or low confidence, highlighting the need for differentiated and inclusive instructional approaches. The study concludes that effective teaching-learning processes play a vital role in promoting learner engagement at the elementary level. The findings underscore the importance of adopting learner-centered, interactive, and contextualized strategies to support meaningful participation and inclusive learning.

Keywords: teaching-learning processes, learner engagement, elementary education, qualitative study, learner-centered instruction

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Introduction

Learner engagement has increasingly been recognized as a critical factor in improving educational outcomes, particularly at the elementary level where foundational attitudes toward learning are formed. Engaged learners are more likely to participate actively, sustain attention, and develop positive learning behaviors that contribute to academic success. Within this context, teaching–learning processes such as instructional strategies, classroom interactions, and learning activities play a central role in shaping how learners engage cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally in classroom tasks. Understanding how these processes operate in real classroom settings is therefore essential for strengthening learner-centered instruction.

At C.J. Torre Elementary School, teachers employ a variety of instructional approaches to address learners’ diverse needs and learning styles. However, there is a need to systematically examine how these teaching–learning processes influence learner engagement during instruction. This study was conducted to explore classroom practices and learner responses, with the end goal of identifying strategies that promote meaningful participation and sustained engagement. By focusing on actual classroom experiences, the study sought to generate evidence-based insights that may inform instructional improvement and enhance the quality of elementary education.

Teaching–learning processes refer to the dynamic interactions between teachers, learners, content, and learning environments. These processes include instructional strategies, classroom management, use of learning materials, and assessment practices that collectively shape learners’ classroom experiences. Learner engagement, on the other hand, encompasses behavioral involvement (participation in activities), emotional connection (interest and motivation), and cognitive investment (effort and persistence in learning tasks). Research suggests that when teaching practices are learner-centered, interactive, and contextualized, learners are more likely to engage meaningfully in lessons.

In elementary schools, learner engagement is particularly important because early learning experiences influence long-term academic attitudes and behaviors. Despite the recognized importance of engagement, classroom practices often remain teacher-directed, limiting opportunities for active learner participation. In this light, examining the teaching–learning processes at C.J. Torre Elementary School provides a valuable opportunity to understand how instructional practices affect learner engagement and to identify areas for pedagogical enhancement.

Studies have consistently shown that learner-centered instructional strategies positively influence learner engagement. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), engagement is a multidimensional construct involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components, all of which are shaped by classroom practices. Similarly, Prince (2004) emphasized that active learning strategies increase student participation and deepen understanding compared to passive instructional approaches.

Research by Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2012) highlighted the importance of positive teacher–learner interactions in fostering emotional engagement and motivation among young learners. Likewise, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that interactive and well-structured teaching practices support sustained learner engagement and improved learning outcomes. In the Philippine context, studies such as those by Dela Cruz and Lapinid (2014) revealed that contextualized and participatory teaching strategies enhance learner involvement and interest in classroom activities, particularly in basic education settings.

While existing studies have established the importance of teaching–learning processes in promoting learner engagement, there is limited localized research that examines these variables within specific elementary school contexts. In particular, few studies have focused on how everyday classroom practices in public elementary schools influence learners’ behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Moreover, there is a lack of school-based studies that document learners’ responses to instructional strategies as implemented in actual classroom settings. Addressing this gap, the present study investigated the teaching–learning processes and learner engagement at C.J. Torre Elementary School to provide context-specific insights that may inform instructional planning, teacher development, and learner-centered educational practices.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to examine the teaching–learning processes implemented at C.J. Torre Elementary School and

Teaching–Learning Processes and Learner Engagement: A Study at C.J. Torre Elementary School

their influence on learner engagement in the classroom. Specifically, it sought to describe the instructional strategies, classroom practices, and learning activities employed by teachers during the teaching–learning process. It also aimed to explore the nature and level of learner engagement in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation during classroom instruction. Furthermore, the study intended to identify how learners respond to various teaching approaches and learning tasks, as reflected in their participation, motivation, and interaction with peers and teachers. Lastly, the study aimed to determine the perceived relationship between teaching–learning processes and learner engagement, highlighting practices that promote active involvement and meaningful learning. The findings of the study were expected to provide insights that may inform instructional improvement and support the enhancement of learner-centered teaching practices at the elementary level.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the teaching–learning processes and learner engagement at C.J. Torre Elementary School. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of classroom practices and learners’ engagement as experienced and observed in natural instructional settings. The design focused on describing and interpreting teaching strategies, classroom interactions, and learner responses without manipulating variables.

The participants of the study consisted of selected elementary school teachers and learners from C.J. Torre Elementary School. Teachers were purposively chosen based on their direct involvement in classroom instruction, while learners were selected to represent diverse levels of participation and engagement. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including informed consent from teachers and school authorities, as well as parental consent and learner assent for pupil participants.

Data were gathered using multiple qualitative data collection techniques to ensure data triangulation. Classroom observations were conducted to document teaching–learning processes, instructional strategies, and learner engagement during actual lessons. Semi-structured interviews with teachers were used to elicit insights on instructional practices, challenges, and perceptions of learner engagement. In addition, focus group discussions with learners were conducted to capture their experiences, interests, and responses to classroom activities.

The data analysis followed a thematic approach. Transcribed observation notes, interview responses, and focus group discussions were coded and analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes related to teaching–learning processes and learner engagement. Themes were organized according to behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of engagement. Trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. The results of the study were intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of classroom practices and learner engagement that may guide instructional improvement and learner-centered teaching in elementary education.

Results/Findings

Theme 1: Interactive Teaching Strategies as Drivers of Learner Engagement

The findings revealed that interactive teaching strategies played a significant role in enhancing learner engagement during classroom instruction. Teachers commonly employed questioning techniques, group work, and activity-based learning to encourage participation. These strategies allowed learners to become active contributors rather than passive recipients of information. Classroom observations showed that when lessons involved discussions, collaborative tasks, or hands-on activities, learners demonstrated increased attentiveness, enthusiasm, and willingness to participate. Interactive strategies created opportunities for learners to express ideas, clarify understanding, and engage meaningfully with lesson content, resulting in a more dynamic teaching–learning process.

“When I use group activities, I notice that even quiet pupils try to participate,” shared one teacher. A learner stated, *“I enjoy the lesson more when we answer questions and work together.”*

Another learner mentioned, *“I understand the lesson better when we do activities instead of just listening.”*

These responses indicate that interactive teaching strategies positively influenced behavioral and cognitive engagement. Learners were more motivated to participate and showed improved understanding when instruction encouraged collaboration and active involvement. This suggests that interactive methods are effective in sustaining learner engagement in elementary classrooms.

Theme 2: Positive Teacher–Learner Relationships Supporting Emotional Engagement

The study found that positive teacher–learner relationships contributed significantly to learners’ emotional engagement. Teachers who were approachable, patient, and supportive fostered a safe learning environment where learners felt confident to participate. Observations revealed that learners were more responsive when teachers provided encouragement, acknowledged efforts, and offered constructive feedback. Such relationships helped reduce learner anxiety and promoted a sense of belonging within the classroom.

One teacher expressed, *“I make sure to encourage them even if their answers are not correct.”*

A learner shared, *“I am not afraid to answer because my teacher explains kindly.”*

Another learner said, *“When my teacher listens to me, I feel happy and want to join the lesson.”*

The findings suggest that emotional engagement is strengthened when teachers establish supportive relationships with learners. Positive interactions increase learners’ confidence and willingness to participate, emphasizing the role of teacher empathy and encouragement in effective teaching–learning processes.

Theme 3: Contextualized Learning Enhancing Meaningful Participation

Contextualized learning emerged as a key factor in sustaining learner engagement. Teachers often related lessons to learners’ daily experiences, community life, or familiar situations. This approach helped learners make sense of abstract concepts and increased their interest in the lesson. Classroom observations showed that learners were more responsive and participative when examples and activities reflected real-life contexts they could easily understand and relate to.

A teacher stated, *“When I connect the lesson to their daily life, they listen more.”*

One learner commented, *“I like the lesson when it is about things we see at home.”*

Another learner noted, *“It is easier to understand when the examples are familiar.”*

These findings indicate that contextualized teaching supports cognitive engagement by making learning meaningful and relevant. Learners are more attentive and participative when lessons are connected to their lived experiences, highlighting the importance of relevance in instructional design.

Theme 4: Variations in Learner Participation During Instruction

Despite the use of effective teaching strategies, variations in learner participation were evident. Some learners consistently demonstrated active involvement, while others remained passive due to shyness, low confidence, or difficulty understanding the lesson. Observations revealed that teacher-centered activities tended to limit participation among less confident learners, while differentiated tasks encouraged wider involvement. This variation underscores the diverse learning needs present in the classroom.

A teacher observed, *“Some pupils are very active, while others need more encouragement.”*

A learner shared, *“Sometimes I am shy to answer in front of the class.”*

Another learner said, *“I want to join, but I am not sure if my answer is correct.”*

The findings suggest that learner engagement is not uniform and is influenced by individual differences and instructional approaches. While interactive strategies promote engagement, differentiated and inclusive practices are necessary to ensure that all learners participate meaningfully in the teaching–learning process.

Discussions

The findings of the study highlight the critical role of teaching–learning processes in shaping learner engagement at C.J. Torre Elementary School. The use of interactive teaching strategies emerged as a key factor in promoting behavioral and cognitive engagement among learners. This finding aligns with existing literature emphasizing that learner-centered and activity-based instruction encourages active participation and deeper understanding. When learners were given opportunities to collaborate, respond to questions, and engage in hands-on activities, they demonstrated increased attentiveness and motivation, supporting the view that engagement is strengthened through active involvement rather than passive listening.

The study also revealed that positive teacher–learner relationships significantly influenced learners’ emotional engagement. Teachers who demonstrated patience, encouragement, and approachability created a supportive classroom environment that fostered learner confidence and willingness to participate. This supports earlier research indicating that emotional safety and positive classroom climate are essential conditions for meaningful engagement, particularly among young learners. When learners felt respected and supported, they were more likely to express ideas and sustain interest in learning tasks.

Furthermore, the findings showed that contextualized teaching enhanced learners’ comprehension and participation by connecting lessons to familiar experiences. This confirms studies suggesting that relevance and real-life connections improve cognitive engagement and retention. However, variations in learner participation persisted, indicating that despite effective strategies, individual differences such as confidence, learning pace, and communication skills influenced engagement. This underscores the need for differentiated and inclusive instructional approaches to ensure equitable participation.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that teaching–learning processes at C.J. Torre Elementary School significantly influenced learner engagement. Interactive instructional strategies, positive teacher–learner relationships, and contextualized learning experiences contributed to higher levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement among learners. However, variations in learner participation revealed that engagement is not uniform and is shaped by both instructional practices and individual learner characteristics. While effective teaching strategies were evident, the need for sustained learner-centered and differentiated approaches remains essential to ensure that all learners are actively and meaningfully engaged in the classroom.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important implications for instructional practice, school leadership, and future research. For teachers, the results emphasize the importance of adopting interactive, contextualized, and differentiated teaching strategies to enhance learner engagement. Teachers are encouraged to continuously reflect on and adapt their instructional approaches to accommodate diverse learner needs. For school administrators, the study highlights the need to support professional development programs that strengthen learner-centered pedagogy and positive classroom management practices. At the policy and curriculum level, the findings support the integration of engagement-focused strategies in elementary education frameworks. Finally, future researchers may build on this study by examining learner engagement across grade levels or using mixed-methods approaches to further explore the relationship between instructional practices and learning outcomes.

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Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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