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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Contextualized Teaching Practices and Learner Engagement in Araling Panlipunan: Perspective from Grade 9 Classrooms in Cabagan Riverside National High School

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#### Abstract

*Contextualized teaching practices play an important role in strengthening learner engagement and meaningful learning experiences in Araling Panlipunan education. This study explored the contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement experiences in Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan classrooms at Cabagan Riverside National High School. Anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory and Culturally Responsive Teaching Theory, the study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine instructional practices, classroom participation, learner experiences, and engagement in Araling Panlipunan instruction. Participants included Grade 9 learners and Araling Panlipunan teachers of Cabagan Riverside National High School. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach was utilized in analyzing the gathered data. Findings revealed that contextualized instruction, localized examples, collaborative classroom discussions, experiential learning activities, and culturally relevant teaching approaches significantly strengthen learner participation and engagement in Araling Panlipunan classes. Learners demonstrated greater interest and participation when lessons were connected to community experiences, historical realities, social issues, and real-life situations. The findings further revealed that supportive teacher-learner relationships and learner-centered instructional approaches contribute significantly to behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in classroom learning. However, challenges such as limited instructional resources, varying learner participation, short attention spans, and difficulty understanding abstract socio-political concepts affected classroom engagement. The study concludes that contextualized and culturally responsive teaching practices contribute significantly to meaningful learning experiences and learner engagement in Araling Panlipunan education. Strengthening localized instructional materials, collaborative learning strategies, and learner-centered pedagogical approaches is recommended to improve learner participation and classroom engagement in social studies education.*

**Keywords:** contextualized teaching, learner engagement, Araling Panlipunan, culturally responsive teaching, social studies education, qualitative research, learner-centered instruction

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## Introduction

Araling Panlipunan serves as an important learning area in the Philippine educational system because it develops learners' historical understanding, civic consciousness, critical thinking, cultural awareness, and social responsibility. Through the study of history, geography, economics, governance, and societal issues, learners develop a deeper understanding of their identity, community, nation, and role in society. Consequently, effective instructional practices in Araling Panlipunan are essential in promoting meaningful learning experiences and active classroom participation among learners.

One of the most significant approaches in improving social studies instruction is contextualized teaching. Contextualized teaching refers to instructional practices that connect lessons to learners' experiences, community realities, cultural backgrounds, and real-life situations. Through contextualized instruction, learners become more capable of understanding abstract concepts because lessons become relevant, relatable, and meaningful to their daily lives and social experiences.

Learner engagement, on the other hand, refers to learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation in classroom instruction and learning activities. Engaged learners demonstrate attentiveness, participation, curiosity, motivation, and active involvement in classroom discussions and learning tasks. In Araling Panlipunan education, learner engagement is strengthened when instructional approaches encourage collaboration, critical thinking, social interaction, and reflection on societal realities.

Within the Philippine educational context, the Department of Education emphasizes contextualization and localization in implementing the K-12 curriculum to make learning more responsive to learners' socio-cultural realities and community experiences. Teachers are encouraged to utilize localized examples, contextualized activities, culturally relevant materials, and learner-centered pedagogies to strengthen meaningful learning and classroom participation.

At Cabagan Riverside National High School, Araling Panlipunan teachers continuously employ contextualized instructional practices to improve learner engagement and participation in Grade 9 classrooms. Teachers integrate local history, current social issues, community experiences, collaborative activities, and experiential learning approaches to make lessons more relevant and understandable to learners. However, despite these efforts, some learners still encounter difficulties related to participation, motivation, conceptual understanding, and classroom engagement.

Several studies emphasized that contextualized and culturally responsive teaching practices positively influence learner participation and meaningful learning. Gay (2018) explained that culturally responsive instruction strengthens learner engagement by connecting lessons to learners' experiences, identities, and cultural realities. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2021) argued that contextualized instruction promotes critical thinking, participation, and meaningful classroom interaction among learners.

Although contextualized teaching practices have been widely discussed in educational literature, there remains limited qualitative research exploring learner engagement experiences in Araling Panlipunan classrooms within rural Philippine secondary schools. Thus, this study aimed to explore contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement in Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan classrooms at Cabagan Riverside National High School.

## Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory by Vygotsky (1978) and Culturally Responsive Teaching Theory by Gay (2018).

Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction, collaboration, reflection, and meaningful experiences. Learning becomes more effective when instructional activities are participatory, contextualized, and connected to learners' prior knowledge and social realities.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Theory emphasizes the importance of integrating learners' cultural experiences, identities, backgrounds, and community realities into classroom instruction. Instruction becomes more meaningful when lessons are connected to learners' lived experiences and socio-cultural contexts.

These theories provided the framework for understanding how contextualized teaching practices influence learner engagement and meaningful participation in Araling Panlipunan classrooms.

## Statement of the Problem

This study explored the contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement experiences in Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan classrooms at Cabagan Riverside National High School.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do Grade 9 learners describe their experiences in Araling Panlipunan instruction and classroom activities?
2. What contextualized teaching practices contribute to learner engagement in Araling Panlipunan classrooms?
3. How do learners demonstrate behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during classroom instruction?
4. What challenges do teachers and learners encounter in contextualized Araling Panlipunan instruction?
5. What insights may be drawn from the participants' experiences to strengthen learner engagement and contextualized teaching practices in Araling Panlipunan education?

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to explore the contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement experiences in Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan classrooms at Cabagan Riverside National High School. Specifically, it sought to examine learners' classroom experiences and participation in Araling Panlipunan instruction and identify contextualized teaching practices that contribute to learner engagement in classroom learning activities. The study further aimed to explore how learners demonstrate behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during Araling Panlipunan instruction. Additionally, it intended to identify the challenges encountered by teachers and learners in implementing contextualized social studies instruction and classroom participation. Finally, the study aimed to derive insights from the participants' experiences that may serve as basis for strengthening contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement in Araling Panlipunan education.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement experiences in Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan classrooms at Cabagan Riverside National High School. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather rich and contextualized descriptions regarding instructional interactions, classroom participation, learner engagement, and contextualized teaching experiences in social studies instruction. Through qualitative inquiry, the study captured the lived classroom experiences of learners and teachers and examined how contextualized instruction influences classroom participation and meaningful learning.

The study was conducted at Cabagan Riverside National High School located in Cabagan, Isabela, Philippines. The school operates under the supervision of the Department of Education and serves secondary learners from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

The participants of the study included selected Grade 9 learners and Araling Panlipunan teachers. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who possessed direct experiences and active involvement in Araling Panlipunan instruction and classroom learning activities. The selected learners represented varying participation levels, academic experiences, and classroom engagement patterns.

The study utilized semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides, classroom observation notes, and document analysis checklists as qualitative research instruments. Interview questions focused on classroom experiences, learner participation, instructional practices, contextualized teaching strategies, engagement behaviors, and challenges encountered during Araling Panlipunan instruction.

Prior to data gathering, permission was secured from school administrators and ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study. Data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. All interviews and discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The gathered data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. Significant statements and recurring patterns were identified, coded, categorized, and organized into themes representing contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement experiences. Trustworthiness was established through triangulation, member checking, audit trails, and thick description to ensure credibility and dependability of the findings.

## Results and Discussion

### Theme 1: Contextualized and Localized Instruction Strengthens Learner Participation

The findings revealed that contextualized and localized teaching practices significantly strengthen learner participation and engagement in Araling Panlipunan classrooms. Participants consistently emphasized that learners become more interested and actively involved when lessons are connected to community experiences, local history, societal realities, and real-life situations familiar to them. Teachers explained that contextualization helps learners understand complex socio-political and historical concepts more effectively because lessons become relatable and meaningful.

One learner participant stated:

“Mas naiintindihan ko ang lesson kapag ginagawang example ang mga nangyayari sa community namin.”

Another learner shared:

“Kapag related sa totoong buhay ang discussion, mas interesado akong makinig.”

Similarly, another participant explained:

“Mas madali naming maintindihan ang Araling Panlipunan kapag may local examples.”

These responses indicate that contextualized instruction positively influences learners’ behavioral and cognitive engagement during classroom instruction. Learners become more attentive, participative, and reflective when instructional content is connected to familiar experiences and social realities.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of integrating local issues and community-based examples in classroom discussions.

One teacher participant stated:

“Mas nagiging active ang learners kapag local issues at real-life situations ang ginagamit sa discussion.”

Another participant explained:

“Kapag contextualized ang lesson, mas madaling ma-relate ng learners ang concepts.”

The findings imply that contextualized teaching practices contribute significantly to meaningful learning experiences in Araling Panlipunan education. Learners develop deeper understanding and stronger classroom participation when instruction recognizes their cultural background, social environment, and lived experiences.

The findings support Gay (2018), who emphasized that culturally responsive and contextualized instruction strengthens learner engagement by connecting lessons to learners’ identities and community experiences. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2021) argued that meaningful and contextualized instruction promotes active participation, critical thinking, and learner empowerment within classroom settings.

The findings further align with Vygotsky’s (1978) Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that learners construct understanding more effectively when instruction is connected to meaningful social experiences and prior knowledge.

Classroom observations further revealed that learners demonstrated higher levels of attentiveness and participation during discussions involving local history, societal issues, community problems, and current events.

One learner participant shared:

“Mas gusto ko ang AP kapag pinag-uusapan ang totoong nangyayari sa lipunan.”

This finding highlights the importance of contextualized and localized teaching approaches in strengthening learner engagement and meaningful participation in Araling Panlipunan classrooms.

### Theme 2: Collaborative and Interactive Learning Encourages Classroom Engagement

The study further revealed that collaborative and interactive classroom activities significantly improve learner engagement and participation in Araling Panlipunan instruction. Participants emphasized that group activities, debates, role-playing, collaborative discussions, reporting, and experiential learning activities encourage learners to express opinions, exchange ideas, and participate actively in classroom learning.

One learner participant stated:

“Mas natututo ako kapag may group activities at discussions kasi nakakapag-share kami ng ideas.”

Another participant shared:

“Kapag interactive ang activities, mas hindi boring ang lesson.”

Similarly, another learner explained:

“Mas confident akong sumali kapag collaborative ang activities.”

These responses indicate that collaborative instructional practices positively influence learners’ behavioral and emotional engagement in classroom activities. Learners become more motivated and willing to participate when learning experiences are interactive, participatory, and socially engaging.

Teachers also highlighted that collaborative learning activities improve communication skills and critical thinking among learners.

One teacher participant stated:

“Mas nagiging expressive at analytical ang learners kapag collaborative ang discussions.”

Another participant explained:

“Malaking tulong ang debates at group activities para mas maintindihan nila ang issues.”

The findings suggest that learner-centered and interactive instructional approaches strengthen classroom engagement and meaningful participation in Araling Panlipunan education. Collaborative activities encourage learners to analyze societal issues, communicate perspectives, and develop social awareness through active interaction.

The findings support Johnson and Johnson (2020), who emphasized that collaborative learning strengthens learner participation, communication skills, and academic engagement. Similarly, Fredricks et al. (2019) explained that participatory classroom activities strengthen behavioral and emotional engagement among learners.

The findings further align with Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that learning occurs more effectively through interaction, collaboration, and shared experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

Participants further emphasized that collaborative learning activities make Araling Panlipunan lessons more enjoyable and less intimidating.

One learner participant stated:

“Mas masaya ang lesson kapag nagtutulongan kami at may sharing of ideas.”

This finding highlights the importance of collaborative and interactive pedagogical approaches in strengthening learner engagement and participation in social studies education.

### **Theme 3: Supportive Teacher-Learner Relationships Foster Confidence and Meaningful Learning**

The findings revealed that positive teacher-learner relationships significantly contribute to learner confidence, classroom participation, and meaningful engagement in Araling Panlipunan instruction. Participants consistently described effective teachers as approachable, understanding, encouraging, and capable of facilitating open discussions where learners feel respected and heard.

One learner participant stated:

“Mas ginaganahan akong sumali kapag approachable at mabait ang teacher.”

Another learner explained:

“Hindi ako natatakot magbigay ng opinion kapag supportive si teacher.”

Similarly, another participant shared:

“Kapag maganda ang relationship namin kay teacher, mas active kami sa discussions.”

These responses indicate that emotionally supportive classroom environments positively influence learners’ emotional engagement and confidence during classroom discussions and participatory activities. Learners become more willing to express opinions and participate in socio-political discussions when they feel respected and emotionally safe within the classroom.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of creating open and respectful learning environments in Araling Panlipunan classes.

One teacher participant stated:

“Importante na maging open ang classroom para makapagpahayag ang learners ng kanilang opinions.”

Another participant explained:

“Kailangan maramdaman ng learners na safe silang magsalita at magtanong.”

The findings suggest that positive teacher-learner relationships contribute significantly to meaningful classroom participation and critical engagement in social studies education. Emotionally supportive environments encourage learners to participate actively and develop confidence in expressing ideas and perspectives.

The findings align with Pianta et al. (2021), who emphasized that supportive teacher-learner relationships significantly influence learner engagement, confidence, and classroom participation. Similarly, Fredricks et al. (2019) argued that emotional engagement is strengthened when learners feel respected and encouraged within educational settings.

The findings further support Culturally Responsive Teaching Theory, which emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive and supportive classroom environments that value learners' voices, experiences, and identities (Gay, 2018).

Participants further explained that supportive teachers help learners appreciate the relevance of Araling Panlipunan in understanding societal issues and civic responsibilities.

One learner participant shared:

"Mas na-appreciate ko ang AP dahil sa way ng pagtuturo ni teacher."

This finding highlights the importance of supportive instructional relationships in promoting meaningful learning and learner engagement in Araling Panlipunan classrooms.

#### **Theme 4: Instructional Challenges and Learner Participation Difficulties Affect Engagement**

Despite positive engagement experiences, the findings revealed that teachers and learners encounter several challenges affecting contextualized instruction and classroom participation in Araling Panlipunan education. Participants identified limited instructional resources, short attention spans, varying learner participation, lack of confidence, and difficulty understanding abstract socio-political concepts as major barriers to learner engagement.

One learner participant stated:

"May mga topics po na mahirap intindihin lalo na kapag abstract ang concepts."

Another learner explained:

"Minsan nahihiya akong sumagot kapag hindi ako sigurado sa answer ko."

Similarly, another participant shared:

"May mga classmates na hindi masyadong sumasali sa discussions."

These responses indicate that emotional and cognitive barriers negatively influence learner participation and engagement during classroom instruction. Learners who experience confusion or low confidence become less willing to participate in discussions and collaborative activities.

Teachers also emphasized that instructional limitations affect classroom implementation and learner participation.

One teacher participant stated:

"Challenge minsan ang kakulangan sa instructional materials at localized resources."

Another participant explained:

"May mga learners na madaling mawalan ng focus lalo na kapag mahaba ang discussion."

The findings suggest that resource limitations and learner diversity affect the effectiveness of contextualized teaching practices and classroom engagement in Araling Panlipunan instruction.

The findings support OECD (2019), which highlighted that instructional limitations, learner diversity, and classroom engagement challenges significantly influence teaching effectiveness and learner participation. Similarly, Fullan (2020) emphasized that classroom engagement is affected by instructional support systems, resource availability, and learner motivation.

Participants further revealed that some learners experience difficulty analyzing socio-political issues and historical concepts.

One learner participant stated:

"Minsan mahirap intindihin ang topics tungkol sa politics at economics."

This finding implies that teachers need to continuously simplify abstract concepts and utilize contextualized examples to improve comprehension and participation among learners.

Despite these challenges, participants emphasized that contextualized instruction, collaborative activities, and

supportive classroom environments help improve learner engagement and classroom participation.

One teacher participant shared:

“Kapag engaging at relatable ang lesson, mas nagiging active ang learners.”

This finding highlights the importance of responsive and learner-centered instructional approaches in strengthening classroom engagement and meaningful learning experiences in Araling Panlipunan education.

## **Conclusion**

The study revealed that contextualized teaching practices significantly contribute to learner engagement and meaningful learning experiences in Grade 9 Araling Panlipunan classrooms at Cabagan Riverside National High School. Contextualized and localized instruction helps learners better understand socio-political, historical, and societal concepts by connecting lessons to their community experiences, cultural realities, and real-life situations. Learners become more participative, attentive, and reflective when instructional content is relevant and meaningful to their lived experiences.

The findings further revealed that collaborative and interactive classroom activities such as group discussions, debates, role-playing, and experiential learning strengthen behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement among learners. Learner-centered and participatory instructional practices encourage learners to express ideas, analyze issues, and participate actively in classroom discussions.

The study also found that supportive teacher-learner relationships significantly influence learners' confidence, participation, and classroom engagement. Emotionally supportive learning environments help learners feel comfortable in expressing opinions, asking questions, and participating in socio-political discussions and collaborative activities.

However, the findings revealed that challenges such as limited instructional resources, varying learner participation, short attention spans, low confidence, and difficulty understanding abstract concepts continue to affect classroom engagement and instructional implementation in Araling Panlipunan education.

Overall, the study concludes that contextualized and culturally responsive teaching practices play a significant role in promoting meaningful learning experiences, active participation, and learner engagement in social studies education. Strengthening localized instruction, collaborative learning approaches, supportive classroom environments, and learner-centered pedagogical strategies is essential in improving engagement and participation in Araling Panlipunan classrooms.

## **Implications of the Study**

The findings of the study provide important implications for social studies education, learner engagement, instructional practices, educational leadership, curriculum implementation, and future research. The study highlights the importance of contextualized and culturally responsive teaching practices in strengthening meaningful learning experiences and classroom participation among secondary learners.

## **Educational Implications**

The findings imply that Araling Panlipunan instruction should become more contextualized, localized, interactive, and learner-centered to strengthen learner engagement and participation. Teachers may integrate local history, societal issues, community experiences, current events, and culturally relevant examples to make lessons more meaningful and relatable to learners.

The study further implies that learner engagement in social studies education is strengthened when instructional practices encourage collaboration, participation, reflection, and critical thinking. Interactive classroom activities such as debates, collaborative discussions, role-playing, and experiential learning tasks may improve learners' participation and social awareness.

Additionally, the findings suggest that social studies instruction should emphasize meaningful learning experiences that help learners connect classroom lessons to real-life societal issues and civic responsibilities.

## **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings imply that teachers play a critical role in shaping learner engagement, classroom participation, and critical thinking in Araling Panlipunan education. Teachers should demonstrate instructional flexibility, empathy,

encouragement, and responsiveness in facilitating classroom discussions and learner participation. The study also highlights the importance of contextualized and culturally responsive pedagogies. Teachers may utilize localized examples, collaborative activities, reflective discussions, visual learning materials, and experiential learning approaches to strengthen learner comprehension and engagement. Furthermore, the findings imply that emotionally supportive classroom environments contribute significantly to learners' confidence and willingness to participate in classroom discussions and collaborative learning activities.

### **Institutional and Policy Implications**

The findings provide important implications for educational leaders and policymakers within the Department of Education regarding the strengthening of contextualized instruction and learner-centered pedagogical practices in Araling Panlipunan education. Schools may strengthen instructional implementation by providing localized instructional materials, contextualized learning resources, teacher training programs, and professional development opportunities focusing on culturally responsive and contextualized teaching approaches. Educational institutions may also strengthen collaborative learning environments and classroom engagement initiatives that encourage active learner participation and critical thinking in social studies instruction. Moreover, the findings suggest the importance of providing adequate instructional resources and support systems that help teachers effectively implement contextualized and participatory instructional practices.

### **Social Implications**

The findings imply that contextualized Araling Panlipunan instruction contributes significantly to learners' social awareness, civic consciousness, and understanding of societal realities. Through meaningful classroom discussions and contextualized learning experiences, learners develop deeper appreciation of their community, culture, history, and social responsibilities.

The study also highlights the importance of promoting inclusive and participatory classroom environments where learners are encouraged to express opinions, analyze social issues, and engage in meaningful dialogue.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The findings highlight the need for future studies exploring contextualized teaching practices and learner engagement across different educational contexts and subject areas. Future researchers may conduct comparative studies involving urban and rural schools to examine variations in contextualized instruction and learner participation.

Longitudinal and mixed-methods studies may also be conducted to explore the long-term influence of contextualized teaching practices on learner engagement, academic performance, and civic consciousness.

Future studies may likewise investigate the role of technology integration, cultural diversity, and experiential learning in strengthening contextualized instruction and learner participation in social studies education.

Overall, the study emphasizes that strengthening learner engagement in Araling Panlipunan education requires collaborative efforts among teachers, school leaders, educational institutions, policymakers, and learners. Contextualized instruction, collaborative learning environments, culturally responsive pedagogies, and supportive classroom relationships are essential in promoting meaningful learning experiences and active participation in social studies education.

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