



Azal Arts and Humanities

Volume 3, Issue 2, 2026 |
<https://azalpub.com/index.php/AAH>

OPEN ACCESS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Article Info

Received: 3/5/2026
 Accepted: 4/30/2026
 Published: 5/30/2026

Beyond One-Size-Fits-All Instruction: Exploring Learning Styles among Elementary Learners in a Rural Philippine School

¹ Jose Maneja Jr.

Teacher III

Villa Fuerte Elementary School
 San Mateo South District

Abstract

Learners possess diverse ways of acquiring, processing, and retaining information, making the recognition of learning styles an important consideration in contemporary educational practice. In rural elementary schools, understanding learners' preferred approaches to learning can assist teachers in designing responsive and inclusive instructional strategies that address individual differences. This study explored the learning styles of elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School, San Mateo South District, Philippines. Using a qualitative case study design, the research investigated how learners perceive, experience, and express their learning preferences within the classroom context. Participants included fifteen (15) elementary learners, six (6) teachers, three (3) school administrators, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Findings revealed that learners exhibit diverse learning preferences characterized by visual learning, auditory learning, kinesthetic learning, collaborative learning, independent learning, and technology-assisted learning. The study further found that learner engagement and academic participation increase when instructional strategies align with learners' preferred modes of learning. The findings underscore the importance of differentiated instruction and learner-centered pedagogies in promoting meaningful educational experiences in rural elementary schools. The study provides valuable insights for educators seeking to create inclusive learning environments that accommodate learner diversity.

Keywords : learning styles, differentiated instruction, elementary education, rural education, learner-centered learning, Philippines, qualitative research

Introduction

Education is founded on the principle that learners differ in their abilities, interests, experiences, and ways of learning. As classrooms become increasingly diverse, educators are challenged to move beyond traditional one-size-fits-all approaches and adopt instructional strategies that recognize and respond to individual learner differences. Among the factors influencing educational experiences are learning styles, which refer to the preferred ways in which learners perceive, process, organize, and retain information. Understanding learning styles can provide valuable insights into how learners engage with educational content and how teachers can enhance instructional effectiveness.

The concept of learning styles has gained significant attention in educational research because it emphasizes learner diversity and the need for personalized learning experiences. Learners may prefer visual representations, auditory explanations, hands-on activities, collaborative interactions, or independent exploration when acquiring knowledge. Recognizing these preferences enables teachers to create learning environments that accommodate different learners and maximize educational outcomes.

In the Philippine educational context, the Department of Education promotes learner-centered and inclusive approaches that recognize individual differences among learners. This emphasis is particularly important in rural schools where learners often come from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Teachers in rural settings frequently encounter varying learning needs and must adapt instructional practices to ensure meaningful participation and learning success for all students.

Villa Fuerte Elementary School, located in the San Mateo South District, serves learners from predominantly agricultural communities. Teachers have observed that learners exhibit diverse ways of understanding lessons, completing tasks, and participating in classroom activities. While some learners excel through visual materials, others demonstrate stronger engagement through discussions, group work, or experiential activities. These observations highlight the need to understand learning styles from the perspectives of learners themselves.

This study explored the learning styles of elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School. Specifically, it sought to understand how learners experience and describe their preferred ways of learning and how these preferences influence their engagement and participation in educational activities.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore the learning styles of elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Explore learners' preferred ways of learning and acquiring knowledge.
2. Examine how learning styles influence learner engagement and participation.
3. Identify factors that shape learners' learning preferences.
4. Investigate teachers' perceptions of learner diversity in learning.
5. Determine instructional practices that support various learning styles.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Experiential Learning Theory of David Kolb and the Multiple Intelligences Theory of Howard Gardner.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory posits that learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Individuals develop preferences for particular

modes of learning based on their experiences and interactions with the environment.

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory emphasizes that learners possess different forms of intelligence and therefore learn in diverse ways. According to the theory, learners may demonstrate strengths in linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and other domains. These perspectives support the view that effective instruction should accommodate learner diversity rather than relying on uniform teaching approaches.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the learning styles of elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School, San Mateo South District. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of learners' experiences, perceptions, and preferences regarding learning. The case study design allowed for a comprehensive examination of learning styles within a real-life educational setting.

The participants consisted of fifteen (15) elementary learners, six (6) classroom teachers, three (3) school administrators, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Learners were chosen based on their willingness to share their experiences and their active participation in classroom activities. Teachers, administrators, and parents were included to provide complementary perspectives regarding learner preferences and instructional practices.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews explored learners' preferred learning methods, classroom experiences, and factors influencing their learning. Observations documented learner participation, interactions, and responses to various instructional approaches. School documents and instructional materials were reviewed to support data triangulation.

Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework was utilized to analyze the data. Coding procedures were employed to identify recurring patterns and themes that reflected learners' experiences and learning preferences. Trustworthiness was established through triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement within the research setting.

Findings and Discussion

Theme 1: Visual Learning Enhances Understanding and Knowledge Retention

One of the most prominent themes that emerged from the study was learners' preference for visual learning. Many participants reported that they understood lessons more effectively when teachers utilized pictures, diagrams, charts, illustrations, videos, and other visual materials. Learners explained that visual representations helped them remember information, understand complex concepts, and maintain attention during classroom instruction.

One learner shared:

"Mas naiintindihan ko po ang aralin kapag may larawan o video dahil nakikita ko kung ano ang itinuturo ng guro."

Another participant remarked:

"Mas madali kong maalala ang mga aralin kapag may drawing o chart na ipinapakita."

Teachers similarly observed that visual materials increased learner engagement and comprehension.

One teacher stated:

"Kapag gumagamit kami ng larawan, graphic organizers, at multimedia presentations, mas nakatutok ang mga bata at mas mabilis nilang nauunawaan ang aralin."

Classroom observations revealed that learners actively responded to visual aids and demonstrated greater participation when lessons included visual stimuli. Learners frequently referred to charts, illustrations, and visual organizers when explaining concepts and completing classroom tasks.

The findings suggest that visual learning serves as an important mechanism for knowledge acquisition among elementary learners. These findings align with the work of Howard Gardner, who emphasized the significance of visual-spatial intelligence in learning. Research further indicates that visual learning materials enhance comprehension, retention, and learner engagement by providing concrete representations of abstract concepts.

Theme 2: Auditory Learning Supports Understanding through Listening and Discussion

Another significant theme was the importance of auditory learning experiences. Several learners reported that they learned best through listening to explanations, participating in discussions, and engaging in verbal interactions with teachers and peers.

One learner explained:

“Mas natututo ako kapag nakikinig sa paliwanag ng guro at kapag may talakayan sa klase.”

Another learner stated:

“Kapag pinag-uusapan namin ang aralin, mas naiintindihan ko kaysa kapag nagbabasa lang ako.”

Teachers observed that many learners benefited from storytelling, questioning techniques, oral presentations, and classroom discussions.

One teacher shared:

“May mga batang mas mabilis matuto kapag naririnig nila ang paliwanag at nakakapagbahagi sila ng kanilang opinyon.”

Classroom observations confirmed that auditory learners actively participated in recitations, discussions, and collaborative conversations. These learners demonstrated enthusiasm when given opportunities to express ideas verbally and engage in interactive dialogue.

The findings support sociocultural perspectives on learning, particularly the work of Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized the role of language and social interaction in cognitive development. Through listening and discussion, learners construct understanding and strengthen communication skills that contribute to academic success.

Theme 3: Kinesthetic Learning Encourages Active Participation

A third theme highlighted learners' preference for hands-on and experiential learning activities. Participants consistently reported that they learned more effectively when actively involved in tasks that required movement, manipulation of materials, experimentation, and direct participation.

One learner remarked:

“Mas gusto ko po kapag may ginagawa kami kaysa nakaupo lang at nakikinig.”

Another participant explained:

“Mas natututo ako kapag may activities, projects, at mga laro sa klase.”

Teachers likewise acknowledged the effectiveness of experiential learning opportunities.

One teacher stated:

“Kapag may hands-on activities, mas nagiging interesado ang mga bata at mas tumatagal ang kanilang pagkatuto.”

Classroom observations showed that learners exhibited increased enthusiasm and concentration during laboratory activities, educational games, role-playing exercises, and collaborative projects.

These findings align with Experiential Learning Theory developed by David Kolb, which posits that learning occurs most effectively through direct experience and active engagement. Research consistently demonstrates that kinesthetic learning activities enhance learner motivation, retention, and conceptual understanding.

Theme 4: Collaborative Learning Strengthens Academic and Social Development

The study revealed that many learners preferred collaborative learning experiences that involved interaction with classmates. Participants described group work, peer tutoring, and cooperative activities as enjoyable and beneficial learning experiences.

One learner shared:

“Mas masaya po ang pag-aaral kapag nagtutulungan kami ng mga kaklase ko.”

Another learner explained:

“Kapag may hindi ako alam, natutulungan ako ng mga kaibigan ko.”

Teachers observed that collaborative activities encouraged communication, teamwork, and shared problem-solving.

One teacher remarked:

“Nagiging mas aktibo ang mga bata kapag may group activities dahil natututo silang makinig at makipagtulungan sa iba.”

Observations indicated that collaborative learning opportunities enhanced learner confidence and encouraged participation among students who were otherwise hesitant to engage individually.

The findings support Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. Collaborative learning allows learners to co-construct knowledge, develop interpersonal skills, and build confidence through shared experiences. Research has similarly shown that cooperative learning enhances both academic performance and social competence.

Theme 5: Independent Learning Fosters Responsibility and Self-Confidence

While many learners valued collaborative activities, another theme highlighted the importance of independent learning. Participants reported that working independently allowed them to focus, think critically, and develop confidence in their abilities.

One learner stated:

“Mas gusto ko minsan na magtrabaho mag-isa para makapag-isip nang mabuti.”

Another participant explained:

“Kapag natatapos ko ang gawain nang sarili ko lang, mas proud ako sa aking nagawa.”

Teachers observed that independent learning activities helped learners develop responsibility and self-management skills.

One teacher shared:

“Mahalaga rin ang mga gawain na nagpapalakas ng kakayahan nilang mag-isip at gumawa nang mag-isa.”

Classroom observations revealed that learners who engaged in independent tasks often demonstrated persistence, concentration, and initiative. These experiences contributed to the development of self-confidence and academic autonomy.

The findings align with Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which emphasizes learners' ability to manage their own learning processes through planning, monitoring, and reflection. Independent learning opportunities encourage responsibility and prepare learners for lifelong learning.

Theme 6: Technology-Assisted Learning Enhances Engagement and Motivation

The final theme emphasized the growing role of technology in supporting learning. Learners expressed enthusiasm for educational videos, digital presentations, online resources, and interactive technologies that made learning more engaging and accessible.

One learner remarked:

“Mas interesado akong matuto kapag gumagamit kami ng video at computer.”

Another participant stated:

“Mas naiintindihan ko ang mga aralin kapag may educational videos.”

Teachers noted that technology enhanced learner motivation and allowed them to present information in diverse formats.

One teacher explained:

“Malaki ang naitutulong ng teknolohiya sa pagkuha ng atensyon ng mga bata at pagpapadali ng pag-unawa sa mga konsepto.”

Although access to technology in rural schools remained limited, participants recognized its value in enriching learning experiences and supporting diverse learning styles.

These findings are consistent with contemporary educational research emphasizing the role of educational technology in promoting learner engagement, personalized learning, and multimodal instruction. Technology provides learners with opportunities to access information through various formats that accommodate diverse learning preferences.

Conclusion

The study concludes that elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School demonstrate diverse learning styles that influence how they engage with educational experiences. Learners exhibit preferences for visual, auditory, kinesthetic, collaborative, independent, and technology-assisted learning approaches, highlighting the complexity and individuality of the learning process. The findings reveal that no single instructional strategy is universally effective for all learners. Instead, effective teaching requires flexibility, responsiveness, and recognition of learner diversity.

The study further demonstrates that learner engagement and academic participation increase when instructional practices align with learners' preferred ways of learning. Teachers who employ varied instructional approaches create more inclusive learning environments that accommodate different learner needs and strengths. The findings

underscore the importance of moving beyond one-size-fits-all instruction toward differentiated and learner-centered pedagogies that promote meaningful and equitable learning opportunities.

Ultimately, understanding learning styles enables educators to design instructional experiences that maximize learner potential, foster academic success, and support holistic development. In rural educational settings such as Villa Fuerte Elementary School, recognizing and responding to learner diversity remains essential for promoting educational quality and learner engagement.

Implications of the Study

1. Teachers should adopt differentiated instructional strategies that address diverse learning preferences.
2. Schools should provide professional development opportunities focused on learner-centered and inclusive teaching practices.
3. Educational leaders should support the integration of varied instructional materials and resources that accommodate different learning styles.
4. Parents should be informed about their children's learning preferences to provide appropriate support at home.
5. Curriculum implementation should encourage flexibility in instructional delivery to address learner diversity.
6. Rural schools should strengthen access to educational technologies that support multiple modes of learning.

Recommendations

1. Develop instructional programs that incorporate visual, auditory, kinesthetic, collaborative, and technology-enhanced learning experiences.
2. Conduct regular assessments of learner preferences to inform instructional planning.
3. Provide teacher training on differentiated instruction and learner diversity.
4. Increase access to multimedia and technological resources in rural schools.
5. Strengthen school-home partnerships that support individualized learning.
6. Conduct future research involving larger populations and multiple schools to further examine learning styles among elementary learners in rural contexts.

References

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (3rd ed.). Basic Books.
- Kolb, D. A. (2015). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Ormrod, J. E. (2020). *Human learning* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Schunk, D. H. (2020). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (8th ed.). Pearson.

- Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). *How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms* (3rd ed.). ASCD.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Schunk, D. H. (2011). *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance*. Routledge.
- Zhao, Y. (2021). *Learner-centered education in the age of technology*. Teachers College Press.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). *Innovative learning environments*. OECD Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2022). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO Publishing.