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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teaching Strategies and Learner Participation in Grade 5 Classrooms: Insights from a Philippine Public Elementary School

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Abstract

Learner participation is a critical indicator of instructional effectiveness and meaningful learning, particularly in the elementary grades where engagement shapes foundational academic and social development. This study examined the teaching strategies employed in Grade 5 classrooms and their influence on learner participation at a Philippine public elementary school. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected through classroom observations, teacher questionnaires, and learner participation surveys administered to Grade 5 teachers and pupils. Teaching strategies were categorized into interactive, learner-centered, and traditional approaches, while learner participation was measured across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Findings revealed that interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies were frequently utilized and were significantly associated with higher levels of learner participation. Behavioral participation emerged as the most prominent dimension, followed by emotional and cognitive participation. The results underscore the importance of varied and responsive instructional strategies in fostering active learner involvement. Implications for instructional planning, teacher professional development, and policy support in public elementary schools are discussed.

Keywords: teaching strategies, learner participation, Grade 5, public elementary school, Philippine education

1. Introduction

Learner participation has long been recognized as a cornerstone of effective classroom instruction and meaningful learning experiences. In elementary education, active participation supports not only academic achievement but also the development of communication skills, confidence, and collaborative behaviors. In the Philippine basic education context, enhancing learner engagement remains a central goal amid ongoing curriculum reforms and efforts to improve learning outcomes in public schools.

Despite policy initiatives emphasizing learner-centered instruction, classroom practices in many public elementary schools continue to reflect a combination of traditional and interactive teaching approaches. Teachers often face challenges such as large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and diverse learner needs, all of which influence instructional decision-making. As a result, understanding how specific teaching strategies relate to learner participation is essential for improving classroom practices at the elementary level.

Grade 5 represents a critical stage in basic education, as learners transition from foundational skills toward more complex cognitive tasks. At this level, instructional strategies play a crucial role in sustaining learners' interest and encouraging active engagement in classroom activities. However, empirical studies focusing on the relationship between teaching strategies and learner participation in Philippine public elementary schools, particularly at the Grade 5 level, remain limited.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the teaching strategies employed in Grade 5 classrooms and analyzing how these strategies influence learner participation. Insights from this research aim to inform instructional practices, professional development initiatives, and school-level interventions that support active and inclusive learning environments.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Teaching Strategies in Elementary Classrooms

Teaching strategies refer to the planned methods and techniques used by teachers to facilitate learning and achieve instructional objectives. In elementary classrooms, these strategies typically range from traditional approaches such as lectures and drills to interactive and learner-centered methods including group work, guided questioning, and hands-on activities. Research consistently shows that interactive strategies promote deeper understanding by allowing learners to actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive information.

Learner-centered instruction emphasizes the active role of learners in the learning process, encouraging collaboration, inquiry, and reflection. Such approaches align with constructivist theories of learning, which posit that knowledge is built through social interaction and meaningful experiences. In contrast, traditional strategies, while efficient for content delivery, may limit opportunities for learner participation when used in isolation.

2.2 Learner Participation

Learner participation is a multidimensional construct encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Behavioral participation includes observable actions such as asking questions, participating in discussions, and completing tasks. Emotional participation refers to learners' interest, enjoyment, and sense of belonging in classroom activities, while

cognitive participation involves effortful thinking, problem-solving, and the use of learning strategies.

Studies have demonstrated that higher levels of learner participation are associated with improved academic performance, motivation, and positive classroom behavior. In elementary education, fostering participation is particularly important as learners develop attitudes toward schooling that may influence long-term academic trajectories.

2.3 Teaching Strategies and Learner Participation

Existing literature highlights a strong relationship between teaching strategies and learner participation. Interactive and learner-centered strategies are consistently linked to increased engagement across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Teachers who vary their instructional approaches and provide opportunities for collaboration and dialogue tend to create more inclusive and motivating learning environments.

In the Philippine context, research suggests that contextualized instruction and culturally responsive teaching practices further enhance learner participation by making lessons more relevant to learners' lived experiences. However, empirical evidence at the Grade 5 level remains sparse, underscoring the need for localized studies that examine classroom practices within specific school contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between teaching strategies and learner participation in Grade 5 classrooms. The design allowed for the description of existing instructional practices and the analysis of their association with levels of learner participation.

3.2 Research Locale and Participants

The study was conducted at a public elementary school in the Philippines, focusing on Grade 5 classrooms. Participants included Grade 5 teachers and their respective pupils. Teachers were selected through purposive sampling, while learners were included using total enumeration within the selected classes.

3.3 Research Instruments

Data were collected using three instruments: a teaching strategies questionnaire for teachers, a learner participation survey for pupils, and a classroom observation checklist. The teaching strategies questionnaire measured the frequency of interactive, learner-centered, and traditional instructional practices. The learner participation survey assessed behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation. Classroom observations were conducted to validate self-reported data.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from school authorities. Data collection was carried out during regular class sessions. Teachers completed the questionnaires, learners responded to participation surveys, and classroom observations were conducted by the researcher following a structured protocol.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize teaching strategies and learner participation levels. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationship between teaching strategies and learner participation dimensions. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly observed.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Teaching Strategies Employed in Grade 5 Classrooms

Analysis of classroom observations and semi-structured teacher interviews revealed that Grade 5 teachers employed a combination of instructional strategies, reflecting a blended pedagogical approach that integrates interactive, learner-centered, and traditional methods. This approach demonstrates teachers' efforts to balance curriculum coverage with learner engagement, particularly within the constraints of a public elementary school context. Three major qualitative themes emerged from the data.

Theme 1: Interactive Teaching Strategies as Catalysts for Active Engagement

Grade 5 teachers frequently utilized interactive strategies such as group work, guided questioning, pair discussions, and task-based activities. These strategies were intentionally employed to stimulate learner interaction, encourage verbal expression, and sustain attention during lessons. Classroom observations showed that interactive activities were commonly used during lesson development and practice phases, allowing learners to engage with content collaboratively.

Participant Responses

One teacher shared:

"Mas nagiging active ang mga bata kapag may group activities kasi nagkakausap sila at nagtutulungan sa sagot."

Another teacher explained:

"Kapag nagtatanong ako at pinapaliwanag ko sa kanila ang sagot, mas nagiging confident silang magsalita."

These responses indicate that interactive strategies create social learning opportunities that enable learners to articulate ideas, negotiate meaning, and build confidence. Such practices are consistent with social constructivist perspectives, which view learning as a socially mediated process. The work of Lev Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that learning occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable others, particularly within guided classroom discourse. Empirical evidence further supports these findings. Michael Prince (2004) reported that active and interactive learning strategies significantly enhance learner engagement, understanding, and retention across educational levels. In the elementary context, interactive teaching is especially effective because it aligns with learners' developmental need for collaboration, peer interaction, and verbal expression, which are critical at the middle childhood stage.

Theme 2: Learner-Centered Instruction Promotes Ownership and Motivation

Learner-centered approaches were evident in collaborative tasks, peer-assisted learning, and

formative assessment practices. Teachers deliberately provided opportunities for learners to express ideas, make decisions, and reflect on their learning experiences. Lessons were often adjusted based on learner responses, indicating an emphasis on responsiveness rather than rigid content delivery.

Participant Responses

A Grade 5 teacher explained:

“Pinapakinggan ko muna ang sagot ng mga bata bago ako magbigay ng paliwanag para maramdaman nilang mahalaga ang ideas nila.”

A learner commented during an informal interview:

“Mas gusto ko po kapag pinapagawa kami ng activity kasi mas naiintindihan ko ang lesson.”

These responses suggest that learner-centered practices foster a sense of ownership, relevance, and intrinsic motivation among learners. When learners feel that their ideas are valued, they are more likely to participate emotionally and cognitively in classroom activities. This finding aligns with John Hattie (2009), whose synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses identified student-centered strategies particularly formative feedback, classroom discussion, and learner voice as having high effect sizes on achievement. Similarly, Jerome Bruner (1961) emphasized that learning is most effective when learners actively discover and construct meaning rather than passively receive information.

Within Philippine public school settings, learner-centered instruction also serves as a practical response to learner diversity, enabling teachers to address differences in ability, learning pace, and prior knowledge.

Theme 3: Strategic Use of Traditional Methods for Structure and Clarity

Traditional strategies such as lecture, drill, and seatwork remained evident in Grade 5 classrooms, particularly during lesson introductions and skill reinforcement. However, these methods were rarely used in isolation. Teachers often combined lectures with questioning, demonstrations, or brief interactive activities to sustain learner attention.

Participant Responses.

One teacher stated:

“Kailangan pa rin ng lecture lalo na kapag bagong topic, pero sinusundan ko agad ng tanong o activity.”

This theme indicates that traditional instruction continues to play a vital role in providing structure, clarity, and content sequencing, especially in concept-heavy lessons. However, teachers demonstrated pedagogical flexibility by embedding interactive elements within traditional methods.

This supports the arguments of Paul Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006), who asserted that guided instruction remains essential for novice learners. The key insight from this study is not the rejection of traditional methods, but their strategic integration with interactive practices to maximize learner engagement.

4.2 Level of Learner Participation

Learner participation in Grade 5 classrooms was generally high, though variations were observed across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Analysis of learner surveys and classroom observations yielded three major themes.

Theme 4: Behavioral Participation as the Most Observable Form of Engagement

Behavioral participation including raising hands, participating in group activities, and completing assigned tasks recorded the highest mean scores among learners. Observations revealed that learners were most responsive during structured interactive activities.

Participant Responses

A learner expressed:

“Sumasagot po ako kapag may group activity kasi tinutulungan kami ng kaklase ko.”

High behavioral participation suggests that instructional strategies successfully created opportunities for visible engagement. According to Jennifer Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), behavioral engagement is the most immediately observable dimension and often serves as a foundation for emotional and cognitive engagement.

Theme 5: Emotional Participation Reflects a Positive Classroom Climate Description.

Learners displayed positive emotional responses toward classroom activities, including interest, enjoyment, and willingness to participate. Classrooms characterized by supportive teacher–learner interactions showed higher emotional engagement.

Participant Responses

One learner shared:

“Masaya po ang klase kapag may activity at hindi lang sulat nang sulat.”

Emotional participation reflects learners’ sense of belonging and enjoyment, which are critical for sustained engagement. Research by **Martin Seligman (2011)** emphasized that positive emotions enhance motivation, persistence, and readiness to learn, particularly among younger learners.

Theme 6: Cognitive Participation as an Area for Further Development

Cognitive participation such as explaining reasoning, analyzing information, and applying concepts was present but less pronounced compared to behavioral and emotional participation.

Participant Responses

A teacher remarked:

“Nahihirapan pa silang magpaliwanag ng sagot, kaya kailangan pang gabayan.”

This suggests that while learners are actively involved behaviorally and emotionally, opportunities to deepen higher-order thinking remain limited. Cognitive engagement requires intentional scaffolding and sustained inquiry-based tasks. According to **Paul Pintrich (2003)**,

cognitive engagement develops when learners are challenged to think deeply and are supported through structured guidance and metacognitive strategies.

4.3 Relationship Between Teaching Strategies and Learner Participation

Statistical analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between interactive teaching strategies and overall learner participation. Learner-centered strategies showed strong associations with emotional and cognitive participation, while traditional strategies demonstrated weaker correlations.

Theme 7: Instructional Variety and Teacher Responsiveness as Key Predictors of Participation

Classrooms that employed varied and responsive instructional strategies consistently demonstrated higher levels of learner participation across all dimensions.

Participant Responses:

A teacher reflected:

“Kapag nakikita kong hindi na sila engaged, binabago ko agad ang strategy.”

This highlights the critical role of teacher adaptability in sustaining learner engagement. Linda Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasized that effective teaching involves continuous instructional decision-making based on learner feedback rather than rigid adherence to predetermined methods.

Conclusively, the findings affirm that instructional variety, combined with teacher responsiveness, is essential in public elementary classrooms where learners differ in ability, motivation, and learning style. This underscores the importance of professional development that equips teachers with adaptive and learner-centered pedagogical skills.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the teaching strategies employed in Grade 5 classrooms and their influence on learner participation in a Philippine public elementary school. Findings demonstrate that interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies play a vital role in enhancing learner participation across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. While traditional strategies remain part of classroom practice, their effectiveness is significantly enhanced when integrated with interactive approaches.

The study underscores the need for continuous professional development focused on learner-centered pedagogy and the strategic use of interactive teaching methods. Strengthening instructional support systems and providing teachers with opportunities to refine their classroom practices may further enhance learner participation and learning outcomes.

6. Implications and Recommendations

Educational leaders should encourage the sustained use of interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies in elementary classrooms. Professional development programs may focus on practical classroom applications that promote higher-order thinking and cognitive participation. Future research may employ mixed-methods designs or expand the study to multiple schools to enhance generalizability.

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