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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Pedagogical Practices and Learner Performance: A Qualitative Study

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#### Abstract

This qualitative study explored pedagogical practices and their influence on learner performance at C.J. Torre Elementary School. Using a descriptive qualitative research design, the study examined teachers' instructional strategies, classroom practices, and learners' experiences to understand how pedagogy shapes engagement, comprehension, and academic performance. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving selected teachers and pupils. Thematic analysis was employed to identify emerging patterns and themes. Findings revealed that learner-centered instruction, contextualized teaching, and differentiated practices significantly enhanced learner engagement and understanding. Teachers actively involved pupils through interactive activities and connected lessons to real-life experiences, making learning meaningful and relevant. Differentiated instruction addressed varied learner abilities, enabling inclusive participation and improved performance. Despite challenges such as limited resources and time constraints, teachers demonstrated adaptive practices by improvising materials and modifying instruction to meet learners' needs. The study concludes that effective and responsive pedagogical practices play a crucial role in improving learner performance at the elementary level. The findings provide insights for instructional improvement, school leadership, and curriculum development aimed at fostering inclusive and meaningful learning experiences.

**Keywords:** pedagogical practices, learner performance, qualitative study, elementary education, learner-centered instruction

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# Pedagogical Practices and Learner Performance: A Qualitative Study

## Introduction

Pedagogical practices play a crucial role in shaping learners' academic performance, engagement, and overall learning experiences, particularly at the elementary level where foundational skills are developed. Teachers' instructional decisions such as the strategies they employ, how they manage classrooms, and the ways they assess learning directly influence how learners understand lessons, participate in activities, and demonstrate learning outcomes. In recent years, there has been growing emphasis on learner-centered, inclusive, and context-sensitive pedagogies that respond to diverse learner needs and promote meaningful learning. Understanding how these pedagogical practices are enacted in actual classroom settings is essential in improving instructional quality and learner performance.

In elementary schools, effective teaching practices are especially important as learners are still developing basic literacy, numeracy, and social skills. While quantitative studies have measured learner performance through test scores and achievement data, fewer studies have explored how teachers' pedagogical practices are experienced and perceived by both teachers and learners. A qualitative examination allows for deeper insights into classroom realities, teacher decision-making, and learners' responses to instructional practices. This study explores the pedagogical practices employed at C.J. Torre Elementary School and examines how these practices influence learner performance from the perspectives of teachers and learners.

The Philippine basic education curriculum emphasizes the use of learner-centered, differentiated, and inclusive pedagogical approaches to improve learner outcomes (Department of Education [DepEd], 2016). Teachers are encouraged to employ varied instructional strategies, formative assessment, and contextualized learning activities that support learner engagement and academic growth. However, challenges such as large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and varied learner abilities often affect the consistent implementation of these pedagogical approaches in public elementary schools. In schools like C.J. Torre Elementary School, understanding how teachers navigate these challenges and implement pedagogical practices in real classroom contexts is necessary to inform instructional improvement and support learner performance.

Research has consistently shown that effective pedagogical practices positively influence learner performance. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasized that learner-centered and developmentally appropriate instruction enhances learners' engagement and academic achievement. Similarly, Hattie (2012) found that teacher practices such as clear instruction, feedback, and active learning strategies have a significant impact on student learning outcomes. In qualitative studies, Richards (2017) highlighted that teachers' instructional choices and classroom interactions shape learners' motivation and understanding.

In the elementary context, differentiated instruction has been found to address diverse learning needs and improve learner performance (Tomlinson, 2014). Studies by Gay (2018) further stressed that culturally responsive pedagogy fosters learner engagement by connecting instruction to learners' backgrounds and experiences. Locally, Montebon (2019) reported that teachers who use interactive and contextualized teaching strategies contribute to improved learner participation and comprehension. However, other studies noted that teachers often struggle to balance curriculum demands with learner-centered practices due to time constraints and limited resources (Corpuz & Salandanan, 2018).

While existing literature has established the importance of effective pedagogical practices in enhancing learner performance, most studies rely on quantitative measures of achievement or focus on secondary and higher education contexts. There is limited qualitative research that examines pedagogical practices and learner performance at the elementary level within a specific school setting, particularly from the perspectives of both teachers and learners. Moreover, few studies explore how pedagogical practices are implemented amid contextual challenges in public elementary schools. This study addresses this gap by providing a qualitative, context-specific exploration of pedagogical practices and their influence on learner performance at C.J. Torre Elementary School, offering insights that may inform instructional improvement and educational decision-making.

## Research Objectives

The study aims to explore and describe the pedagogical practices employed by teachers and examine how these practices influence learner performance in the elementary school context. Specifically, it seeks to identify and characterize the teaching strategies, instructional approaches, and classroom practices used by teachers in facilitating learning, including learner-centered methods, differentiated instruction, and assessment practices. The study also aims to examine teachers' and learners' perceptions of how these pedagogical practices affect learners' academic performance, engagement, and skill development. In addition, it intends to identify the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing effective pedagogical practices and the strategies they use to address these challenges. Ultimately, the study seeks to generate qualitative insights that may inform instructional improvement and support effective teaching practices aimed at enhancing learner performance at C.J. Torre Elementary School.

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## Research Method

The study employed a qualitative research design to explore the pedagogical practices of teachers and their influence on learner performance at C.J. Torre Elementary School. This approach was appropriate as the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' instructional practices and the meanings participants attributed to their teaching and learning experiences. A phenomenological and descriptive qualitative approach was used to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, and insights of teachers and learners regarding classroom practices and learner performance.

The participants of the study consisted of selected classroom teachers and pupils from C.J. Torre Elementary School. Teachers were chosen through purposive sampling based on their teaching experience and direct involvement in classroom instruction, while pupils were selected with the assistance of teachers to ensure ethical considerations and relevance to the study. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, which included lesson plans, pupils' outputs, and assessment records. These data-gathering methods allowed for triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Data collection was conducted over several weeks to ensure sufficient immersion in the research setting. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and were transcribed verbatim. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, wherein significant statements were coded, categorized, and clustered into emerging themes. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement. Ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the research process.

## Results and Findings

The qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis. Four major themes emerged that describe the pedagogical practices of teachers and their influence on learner performance at C.J. Torre Elementary School.

### Theme 1: Learner-Centered Instruction as a Foundation for Active Engagement

Teachers consistently employed learner-centered strategies such as group activities, questioning techniques, and interactive discussions to actively involve pupils in the learning process. These practices encouraged learners to participate, express ideas, and collaborate with peers, leading to increased classroom engagement.

#### Participant Quotes:

*"Mas natututo ang mga bata kapag sila ang gumagawa at nagsasalita, hindi lang nakikinig."* (Teacher 1)

*"Mas gusto namin ang group work kasi natutulungan kami ng kaklase namin."* (Pupil 2)

These findings suggest that learner-centered instruction plays a crucial role in promoting active participation and sustained engagement, which are essential elements in improving learner performance. By shifting the focus of instruction from teacher-led delivery to student involvement, learners are given opportunities to ask questions, share ideas, collaborate with peers, and take ownership of their learning. Such active participation fosters a more dynamic classroom environment where learners are not merely passive recipients of information but active constructors of knowledge. As a result, learners demonstrate greater interest, motivation, and confidence in learning tasks, which positively influences their comprehension, retention of concepts, and overall academic performance.

### Theme 2: Contextualized Teaching Enhances Understanding and Meaningful Learning

Teachers frequently connected lessons to learners' real-life experiences, community contexts, and familiar situations. Contextualized examples made abstract concepts more concrete and understandable for pupils.

#### Participant Quotes:

*"Kapag ang halimbawa ay galing sa buhay nila, mas mabilis nilang naiintindihan ang aralin."* (Teacher 3)

*"Mas madali ang lesson kapag may halimbawa sa bahay o sa barangay."* (Pupil 4)

Contextualized teaching helped learners relate lessons to their everyday experiences, resulting in deeper comprehension and improved retention of concepts. By using familiar situations, local examples, and real-life contexts, teachers were able to make abstract ideas more concrete and meaningful to learners. This approach allowed pupils to see the relevance of what they were learning, thereby enhancing understanding and reducing

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confusion. Rather than relying on rote memorization of facts, learners were encouraged to analyze, reflect, and apply knowledge to real-world situations. Consequently, contextualized instruction supported meaningful learning, where learners developed a clearer grasp of concepts, retained information longer, and were better able to transfer their learning to new and practical contexts.

## Theme 3: Differentiated Instruction Addresses Diverse Learner Needs

Teachers recognized differences in learners' abilities and learning pace and responded by adjusting activities, providing additional support, and using varied instructional materials.

### Participant Quotes:

*"May mga batang mabilis at may mga kailangang gabayan, kaya ina-adjust ko ang activities."* (Teacher 2)

*"Mas naiintindihan ko kapag inuulit at pinapaliwanag ng teacher."* (Pupil 1)

Differentiated instruction enabled teachers to effectively address learner diversity within the classroom, ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their varying abilities, learning pace, and needs, were given equitable opportunities to participate and succeed. By adjusting instructional strategies, learning tasks, and levels of support, teachers were able to accommodate both fast and struggling learners, allowing each pupil to engage with the lesson at an appropriate level. This inclusive approach minimized learning gaps, encouraged active participation, and fostered a supportive learning environment where pupils felt valued and capable. As a result, learners were able to demonstrate improved understanding and performance, highlighting the importance of differentiated instruction in promoting inclusive and effective teaching practices.

## Theme 4: Instructional Challenges and Adaptive Teaching Practices

Teachers encountered several challenges in the implementation of effective pedagogical practices, including limited instructional materials, large class sizes, and time constraints, which often affected lesson delivery and classroom management. Insufficient resources restricted the use of varied instructional aids, while large class sizes made it difficult to provide individual attention to learners. Time limitations further constrained opportunities for extended discussions and differentiated activities. Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated a high level of adaptability and resourcefulness by improvising instructional materials, modifying lesson plans to suit available resources, and encouraging peer learning among pupils. These adaptive strategies helped sustain meaningful instruction, promoted collaboration among learners, and ensured that learning objectives were still achieved despite existing constraints.

### Participant Quotes:

*"Kahit kulang ang materials, gumagawa kami ng paraan para matuto ang mga bata."* (Teacher 4)

*"Tinutulungan kami ng teacher kahit maraming estudyante."* (Pupil 3)

Adaptive teaching practices played a crucial role in sustaining effective instruction, particularly in the face of various classroom and institutional constraints. Teachers' flexibility in adjusting instructional strategies, modifying activities, and responding to learners' needs allowed them to maintain the flow and quality of instruction despite limitations in time, resources, and class size. Their commitment to learning ensured that lessons remained meaningful and engaging, even under challenging conditions. By continuously adapting their approaches, teachers were able to support continuous learning, promote learner engagement, and uphold instructional effectiveness, demonstrating the importance of pedagogical resilience in delivering quality education.

## Discussion

The findings of the study underscore the critical role of learner-centered, contextualized, and differentiated pedagogical practices in enhancing learner performance across diverse classroom settings. Learner-centered approaches position students as active participants in the learning process, allowing them to construct knowledge through interaction, collaboration, and meaningful engagement. The consistent use of interactive strategies such as guided discussions, cooperative learning activities, and formative feedback strongly aligns with the work of Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) and Hattie (2012), who emphasize that active learning environments and strong teacher-student relationships are among the most influential factors in improving learner achievement and academic growth.

Contextualized instruction further strengthens learning outcomes by connecting academic content to learners' cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and community realities. This approach enhances relevance and meaning

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in instruction, enabling learners to better comprehend and internalize concepts. Such findings support Gay's (2018) assertion that culturally responsive and contextually grounded teaching practices promote higher levels of engagement, motivation, and understanding, particularly among learners from diverse and marginalized backgrounds. By validating learners' identities and experiences, contextualized instruction fosters inclusive classroom environments that support equitable learning opportunities.

Moreover, the implementation of differentiated instruction effectively addresses learner diversity by recognizing variations in readiness levels, learning styles, and abilities. Teachers' efforts to modify content, processes, and learning tasks align with Tomlinson's (2014) framework, which emphasizes that instructional adaptation enhances learner access to curriculum and improves overall learning outcomes. Despite persistent instructional challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes, and heterogeneous learner needs, teachers demonstrate professional resilience and instructional adaptability. These adaptive practices reflect a strong commitment to inclusive teaching and resonate with Montebon's (2019) findings on the importance of instructional flexibility in public school contexts. Overall, the findings affirm that effective and responsive pedagogical practices significantly influence learner performance, even in resource-constrained educational settings.

## Conclusions

The study concludes that the pedagogical practices implemented at C.J. Torre Elementary School are predominantly learner-centered, contextualized, and responsive to learner diversity, thereby contributing significantly to improved learner performance. These instructional approaches place learners at the core of the teaching-learning process, fostering active participation, sustained engagement, and a positive disposition toward learning. Teachers' consistent use of interactive strategies such as guided discussions, collaborative activities, and hands-on tasks along with the integration of real-life examples, enabled pupils to better relate academic content to their everyday experiences, resulting in deeper comprehension and more meaningful learning.

Furthermore, the application of differentiated instruction addressed the varied learning needs, abilities, and readiness levels of pupils, promoting inclusivity and equitable access to learning opportunities. Such practices enhanced learners' confidence, encouraged self-expression, and supported the development of foundational skills essential at the elementary level. Although instructional challenges such as limited resources, diverse learner profiles, and time constraints remained evident, teachers demonstrated adaptability and professional commitment by modifying instructional strategies to meet learners' needs. Overall, the findings highlight the critical role of pedagogical flexibility and learner-centered teaching in sustaining meaningful, inclusive, and effective learning experiences, ultimately improving learner performance in elementary school settings.

## Recommendations

1. Teachers should continue strengthening learner-centered and differentiated strategies to support diverse learning needs.
2. School administrators should provide additional instructional materials and support professional development focused on inclusive pedagogy.
3. Curriculum planners may integrate more contextualized learning resources aligned with local experiences.
4. Future researchers may conduct longitudinal qualitative studies to examine the long-term impact of pedagogical practices on learner performance.

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