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## Teaching-Learning Processes and Students' Learning Styles: A Study of Pedagogical Practices

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### Abstract

*Understanding how pedagogical practices align with students' learning styles is essential to strengthening teaching-learning processes in elementary education. This qualitative descriptive study examined pedagogical practices at Esperanza Elementary School and explored how these practices address students' diverse learning styles. Semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with learners were conducted to capture instructional strategies, classroom experiences, and learning engagement. Thematic analysis revealed four major themes: (1) adaptive pedagogy responsive to learning styles, (2) multimodal instruction enhancing engagement, (3) teacher facilitation of meaningful learning, and (4) contextual challenges in aligning pedagogy with diverse learners. Findings indicate that instruction accommodating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning preferences promotes learner participation, comprehension, and motivation, consistent with differentiated and learner-centered frameworks (Dunn & Dunn, 1993; Tomlinson, 2014). However, constraints related to time, class size, and instructional resources limit sustained implementation. The study concludes that pedagogical practices aligned with students' learning styles positively influence teaching-learning processes, provided that institutional support mechanisms are in place. Implications for classroom practice, curriculum design, and school leadership are discussed.*

**Keywords:** pedagogy, learning styles, teaching-learning process, elementary education, qualitative research

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# Teaching-Learning Processes and Students' Learning Styles: A Study of Pedagogical Practices

## 1. Introduction

The teaching-learning process is a complex interaction among teachers, learners, content, and context, particularly in elementary education where foundational skills and learning dispositions are formed (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Pedagogical practices play a decisive role in shaping how learners engage with content, process information, and develop understanding. Effective pedagogy recognizes learner diversity and adapts instruction to support varied cognitive and developmental needs (Tomlinson, 2014).

Learning styles refer to learners' preferred ways of processing information, commonly categorized as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities (Dunn & Dunn, 1993; Fleming & Mills, 1992). Studies suggest that when instructional practices align with learners' learning preferences, engagement and comprehension improve, particularly in early grades where learners rely heavily on sensory and experiential input (Pashler et al., 2008). Although debates persist regarding rigid learning-style matching, research consistently supports the use of varied and multimodal instruction to enhance learning for diverse learners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Contemporary pedagogical frameworks emphasize learner-centered and differentiated instruction as effective approaches for addressing learning diversity (Tomlinson, 2014). Differentiated pedagogy involves adjusting content, process, and products based on learners' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, thereby supporting inclusive and meaningful learning experiences. However, public elementary schools particularly in rural contexts often face challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes, and time constraints that hinder consistent implementation of responsive pedagogy (UNESCO, 2020).

Despite the recognized importance of learning-style-responsive teaching, empirical studies examining how teachers enact such practices in real classroom contexts remain limited, especially in rural elementary schools. Understanding how pedagogical practices influence teaching-learning processes in relation to students' learning styles is therefore essential. This study examined pedagogical practices at Esperanza Elementary School and explored how these practices shape learners' engagement and learning experiences.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine teaching-learning processes and students' learning styles in relation to pedagogical practices at Esperanza Elementary School. Specifically, it sought to identify pedagogical strategies used to address diverse learning styles, explore learners' experiences of the teaching-learning process, examine how pedagogy influences engagement and understanding and identify challenges in aligning instruction with students' learning styles.

## 3. Methodology

A qualitative descriptive research design was employed to capture rich, in-depth accounts of pedagogical practices and learners' experiences within their natural classroom contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design was deemed appropriate because it allows for a comprehensive description of instructional practices as they are enacted in everyday teaching-learning situations, without imposing predetermined theoretical interpretations. By focusing on participants' perspectives, the study sought to document how teachers implement pedagogical strategies and how learners experience these practices in relation to their learning styles.

Participants included elementary school teachers and learners at Esperanza Elementary School who were directly involved in classroom instruction. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants possessed relevant experiences and could provide meaningful insights into the teaching-learning process (Patton, 2015). Teachers were selected based on their active role in planning and delivering lessons, while learners were chosen from classes where varied instructional strategies were regularly observed. This sampling approach ensured that the data reflected authentic classroom practices and learner experiences.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group discussions (FGDs) with learners. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility in probing participants' responses while maintaining focus on key areas such as instructional strategies, classroom interaction, learning activities, and learner engagement. Focus group discussions with learners provided opportunities to explore shared experiences and collective perspectives on how teaching practices influenced their learning. All interviews and FGDs were conducted with informed consent, audio-recorded for accuracy, and transcribed verbatim to preserve participants' original meanings.

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The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the systematic procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved familiarization with the data, initial coding, identification of patterns, and development of themes that captured recurring ideas and meanings across participant responses. To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the findings, several strategies were employed, including data triangulation across teachers and learners, member checking to validate interpretations, and peer debriefing to enhance analytical credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These procedures strengthened the validity and reliability of the qualitative findings and ensured that the results accurately reflected participants' experiences.

## 4. Results and Findings

### Theme 1: Adaptive Pedagogy Responsive to Learning Styles

Teachers reported intentionally adapting their instructional strategies to address the needs of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners in order to ensure accessibility and meaningful participation for all students. Visual materials such as charts, pictures, flashcards, and videos were commonly used to support learners who benefit from seeing information presented graphically. At the same time, teachers emphasized clear oral explanations, storytelling, and class discussions to reinforce understanding among auditory learners, allowing them to process ideas through listening and verbal interaction. Hands-on activities and movement-based tasks were also integrated to support kinesthetic learners, particularly in lessons that required active engagement and experiential learning. Teachers noted that incorporating manipulatives, role-playing drawing and simple physical activities helped learners better grasp concepts and sustain attention. By combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches within a single lesson, teachers were able to create inclusive learning environments where diverse learners could access content through their preferred modalities, resulting in improved engagement, comprehension, and classroom participation.

#### Participant responses:

“May bata na mas natututo kapag may larawan.” (Teacher 6)

“Mas naiintindihan ko kapag may drawing.” (Learner 9)

“Kapag may activity, mas natatandaan ko.” (Learner 6)

These findings indicate that adaptive pedagogy enhances learning by intentionally aligning instruction with learners' preferred modalities, thereby supporting the core principles of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014). When teachers adjust teaching strategies to accommodate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners, instruction becomes more accessible and responsive to individual differences. This alignment allows learners to engage with content in ways that match their strengths, making learning experiences more meaningful and reducing barriers that often lead to disengagement or confusion. As a result, learners are better able to process information, participate actively in class activities, and demonstrate understanding through varied forms of expression.

Adaptive pedagogy also reflects a commitment to equity in the classroom by recognizing that learners do not learn in the same way or at the same pace. Differentiated instruction emphasizes modifying content, learning processes, and outputs to address learners' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). The findings of this study suggest that when teachers adopt adaptive approaches such as using visuals alongside verbal explanations or integrating hands-on activities learners are more likely to remain engaged and motivated. This responsiveness not only supports academic learning but also fosters learner confidence and autonomy, reinforcing inclusive teaching-learning environments where all learners are given opportunities to succeed.

### Theme 2: Multimodal Instruction Enhancing Engagement

Lessons that integrated storytelling, visuals, movement, and discussion were widely perceived by learners as engaging and enjoyable learning experiences. Teachers explained that storytelling helped capture learners' interest and provided meaningful contexts for understanding concepts, while visual materials such as charts, pictures, and videos supported comprehension by making ideas more concrete. Movement-based activities, including role-playing and hands-on tasks, allowed learners to actively participate, particularly benefiting those who learn best through physical engagement. Learners reported that combining these strategies made lessons more lively and less monotonous, helping them stay focused and motivated throughout the class. Discussions further enhanced enjoyment by giving learners opportunities to

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share ideas, ask questions, and interact with peers. Together, these integrated approaches created dynamic classroom environments that supported active participation, sustained attention, and positive attitudes toward learning.

## Participant responses:

“Mas active ang klase kapag may video.” (Teacher 9)

“Mas masaya kapag may galaw.” (Learner 6)

“Hindi kami agad nabobore.” (Learner 4)

Multimodal instruction addresses multiple learning styles simultaneously by integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements within a single lesson, thereby sustaining learners' attention and engagement. When instruction incorporates varied modalities such as images, oral explanations, hands-on activities, and collaborative tasks, learners are able to process information through channels that align with their preferred ways of learning. This diversity of instructional inputs helps prevent monotony and reduces the likelihood of disengagement, particularly in elementary classrooms where learners' attention spans and learning preferences vary widely.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasize that multimodal and developmentally responsive instruction supports deeper learning by actively involving learners in sense-making and application rather than passive reception of information. By engaging multiple senses and encouraging interaction, multimodal instruction promotes sustained focus, motivation, and cognitive engagement. As a result, learners are more likely to remain attentive throughout lessons, participate actively in classroom activities, and develop a stronger understanding of the content being taught.

## Theme 3: Teacher Facilitation of Meaningful Learning

Teachers emphasized the use of guided questioning and timely feedback as essential strategies for supporting learners' understanding during the teaching-learning process. Guided questioning was described as a way to prompt learners to think critically, reflect on ideas, and articulate their reasoning rather than simply recall information. By asking open-ended and follow-up questions, teachers were able to gauge learners' understanding and adjust instruction to address misconceptions and deepen comprehension.

Feedback was likewise highlighted as a crucial component of effective teaching, as it provided learners with clear information about their progress and areas for improvement. Teachers noted that constructive and immediate feedback helped learners recognize mistakes, refine their thinking, and build confidence in their abilities. Together, guided questioning and feedback created interactive learning environments where learners were actively involved in meaning-making, reinforcing understanding and sustaining engagement throughout the learning process.

## Participant responses:

“Ginagabayan ko ang bata hanggang maintindihan.” (Teacher 11)

“Mas madali kapag may tanong si teacher.” (Learner 5)

Teacher facilitation strengthens meaning-making by scaffolding learners' cognitive processes, as it provides structured support that helps learners move from what they already know toward more complex understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). Through strategies such as guided questioning, modeling, feedback, and gradual release of responsibility, teachers assist learners in making sense of new concepts while maintaining active engagement in the learning process. This scaffolding enables learners to connect prior knowledge with new information, clarify misconceptions, and develop higher-order thinking skills in a supportive environment.

Moreover, facilitative teaching recognizes that learning occurs most effectively within the learner's *zone of proximal development*, where tasks are challenging but achievable with appropriate guidance (Vygotsky, 1978). By adjusting the level of support based on learners' responses and needs, teachers promote independent thinking while preventing frustration or disengagement. As learners gain confidence and competence, scaffolding is gradually withdrawn, allowing them to take greater ownership of their learning. In this way, teacher facilitation not only enhances cognitive development but also fosters autonomy, motivation, and sustained participation in the teaching-learning process.

## Theme 4: Contextual Challenges in Learning-Style Alignment

Participants cited large class sizes, limited instructional time, and insufficient teaching materials as persistent barriers to the effective implementation of differentiated and learner-centered pedagogy. Teachers explained that managing a large number of learners with varied abilities and learning styles made it difficult to provide individualized support and monitor active participation during lessons. As a result, opportunities to design and implement varied activities that cater to different learning preferences were often constrained.

In addition, limited instructional time and the lack of adequate teaching materials further restricted teachers' ability to sustain adaptive and multimodal strategies. Participants noted that while they recognized the value of hands-on activities and varied instructional approaches, time pressures and resource shortages frequently required them to simplify lessons or rely on more uniform teaching methods. These barriers highlight the need for institutional support in terms of manageable class sizes, flexible scheduling, and adequate resource provision to enable teachers to effectively address learner diversity and sustain meaningful teaching-learning processes.

### Participant responses:

“Mahirap kapag marami ang bata.” (Teacher 6)

“Kulang ang oras sa activities.” (Teacher 1)

These challenges reflect broader systemic constraints that significantly affect the implementation of differentiated instruction, particularly in rural education contexts. Factors such as limited instructional resources, large and multi-grade classes, heavy teacher workloads, and restricted instructional time often constrain teachers' capacity to tailor instruction to diverse learner needs. In rural schools, these challenges are further intensified by geographic isolation and limited access to professional development opportunities, which can hinder teachers' exposure to innovative and differentiated teaching strategies.

Consistent with studies on rural education, UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that inclusive and differentiated instruction in rural settings requires strong institutional and policy support to address structural inequities. Without adequate resources, flexible curricular structures, and sustained professional support, teachers may struggle to consistently implement differentiated practices despite their commitment to inclusive teaching. These findings underscore the importance of system-level interventions that prioritize resource allocation, capacity-building, and supportive learning environments to ensure that differentiated instruction can be effectively sustained in rural education contexts.

## 5. Discussion

The findings confirm that pedagogical practices aligned with students' learning styles significantly enhance learner engagement, comprehension, and motivation, reinforcing the principles of differentiated and learner-centered instructional frameworks (Tomlinson, 2014; Dunn & Dunn, 1993). When teachers intentionally design lessons that accommodate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning preferences, learners are provided with multiple entry points to understand content and participate actively in classroom activities. Such alignment allows learners to engage with lessons in ways that match their strengths, reducing frustration and increasing confidence. Multimodal and adaptive instruction, therefore, promotes inclusive teaching-learning processes by recognizing learner diversity as an instructional asset rather than a limitation.

Moreover, the use of varied instructional approaches supports deeper comprehension by enabling learners to process information through multiple sensory and cognitive channels. Visual representations, oral explanations, hands-on activities, and collaborative tasks collectively enhance meaning-making and retention. Research on differentiated instruction emphasizes that when learners are given opportunities to interact with content through different modalities, they are more likely to develop sustained interest and intrinsic motivation (Tomlinson, 2014). Similarly, learning-style-based approaches highlight that responsiveness to individual learning preferences can strengthen learners' sense of agency and engagement in the classroom (Dunn & Dunn, 1993).

Teacher facilitation also emerged as a critical factor in translating pedagogical strategies into meaningful learning experiences. Teachers' roles as guides, facilitators, and mediators of learning enabled them to scaffold learners' understanding through questioning, feedback, and guided practice. Guided interaction helps learners connect new

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information with prior knowledge, while timely feedback supports cognitive development and self-regulation (Vygotsky, 1978). Through facilitative teaching, learners are encouraged to reflect, clarify misunderstandings, and deepen their understanding, thereby sustaining engagement throughout the learning process.

However, despite the demonstrated benefits of responsive pedagogy, contextual challenges remain significant. Time constraints, large class sizes, and limited instructional resources restrict teachers' ability to consistently implement adaptive and multimodal strategies. These challenges underscore the need for strong institutional support to sustain responsive pedagogy in elementary classrooms. Research suggests that effective teaching practices are most sustainable when supported by flexible curricula, adequate resources, and ongoing professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Addressing these systemic constraints is essential to ensuring that pedagogical practices aligned with students' learning styles are not only adopted but maintained over time, ultimately leading to more equitable and effective teaching-learning processes.

## 6. Conclusions

This study concludes that pedagogical practices responsive to students' learning styles play a vital role in enhancing teaching-learning processes at Esperanza Elementary School. When teachers intentionally employ adaptive, multimodal, and facilitative instructional approaches, learners are provided with multiple pathways to access content, process information, and demonstrate understanding. Such practices acknowledge learner diversity and promote active engagement by allowing students to learn through visual, auditory and kinesthetic modalities. As a result, learners show increased participation, improved comprehension and greater motivation, contributing to a more inclusive and effective classroom learning environment.

Furthermore, the study highlights that sustaining learning-style-responsive pedagogy extends beyond individual teacher effort and requires systemic support. Curriculum flexibility is essential to allow teachers sufficient time and autonomy to implement differentiated and multimodal strategies without the pressure of rigid content coverage. Professional support, including continuous training and collaborative learning opportunities, equips teachers with the skills and confidence needed to refine adaptive instructional practices. In addition, adequate resource provision such as instructional materials, learning aids, and classroom support strengthens teachers' capacity to address diverse learning needs consistently. Addressing these systemic constraints ensures that responsive pedagogical practices are not only implemented but also sustained, ultimately enhancing the quality and equity of teaching-learning processes in elementary education.

## 7. Implications

Teachers are encouraged to sustain and further enhance adaptive and multimodal instructional strategies that address the diverse learning styles present in elementary classrooms. By continuously integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches—such as the use of visual aids, interactive discussions, hands-on activities, and collaborative tasks—teachers can create inclusive learning environments that cater to varied learner preferences. Sustaining these strategies supports learner engagement, improves comprehension, and fosters positive attitudes toward learning. Ongoing reflection on instructional practices and responsiveness to learners' needs can help teachers refine their pedagogical approaches and ensure that learning remains meaningful and accessible to all students.

At the curricular level, curriculum planners may consider allowing greater flexibility within instructional frameworks to support differentiated instruction. Flexible curricula enable teachers to adjust pacing, content depth, and learning activities according to learners' readiness and learning styles, rather than strictly adhering to uniform lesson structures. Such flexibility reduces pressure to prioritize content coverage over understanding and allows for deeper exploration of concepts through varied instructional methods. By embedding differentiation as a core curricular principle, curriculum planners can support more inclusive and learner-centered teaching-learning processes.

School leaders also play a crucial role in strengthening institutional support for adaptive pedagogy. Leadership initiatives may include providing targeted professional development programs that equip teachers with skills in differentiated and multimodal instruction, as well as allocating sufficient instructional resources such as teaching materials, technology, and learning aids. Additionally, school leaders can create supportive conditions by managing teacher workloads, encouraging collaborative planning, and fostering a school culture that values innovation and inclusivity. Strengthening these institutional supports is essential to sustaining effective pedagogical practices and ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all learners.

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## Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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