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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Pedagogical Practices in GMRC Instruction: A Qualitative Exploration of the Teaching Experiences and Student Learning at San Mateo North Central School

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Abstract

Values education plays a crucial role in shaping learners' moral development and social behavior within basic education systems. In the Philippines, the subject Good Manners and Right Conduct (**GMRC**) has been reintroduced as a core component of the K-12 curriculum to strengthen ethical values and civic responsibility among young learners. This study explored the pedagogical practices used in GMRC instruction and examined how these practices influence student learning at San Mateo North Central School. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, focus group discussions with students, and document analysis of lesson plans. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in teachers' instructional practices and students' learning experiences. The findings revealed that teachers frequently utilized storytelling, reflective discussions, contextualized examples, and collaborative learning activities to facilitate values formation. These strategies enhanced students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in the classroom. However, challenges such as limited instructional materials, time constraints, and varying levels of student interest were identified as factors affecting effective implementation. The study emphasizes the importance of learner-centered and culturally responsive pedagogy in values education and highlights the need for institutional support to strengthen GMRC instruction in Philippine public schools.

Keywords: values education, GMRC, pedagogy, qualitative research, student engagement, Philippine education

Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in the holistic development of individuals, extending beyond the acquisition of academic knowledge to the formation of moral values and ethical behavior. Schools are expected not only to develop students' cognitive skills but also to cultivate responsible, respectful, and socially aware citizens. In response to this goal, values education has been recognized as an essential component of the curriculum in many countries.

In the Philippines, the subject Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) has been reintroduced in the K–12 curriculum through Republic Act No. 11476 to strengthen moral formation among learners. GMRC focuses on instilling virtues such as respect, discipline, honesty, responsibility, and empathy. These values are considered essential in guiding students toward positive behavior and responsible participation in society.

The effectiveness of values education, however, depends largely on the pedagogical approaches used by teachers. Teaching moral values requires instructional strategies that allow students to actively reflect on ethical issues, analyze moral dilemmas, and connect lessons to real-life experiences. Traditional lecture-based approaches may not be sufficient in promoting meaningful moral development among learners.

Recent educational research highlights the importance of learner-centered pedagogy, which emphasizes active participation, collaboration, and reflection in the learning process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Learner-centered approaches allow students to construct knowledge through meaningful engagement and interaction with others. In values education, such approaches are particularly important because they enable learners to internalize ethical principles rather than simply memorizing moral rules.

Teachers often use various strategies to teach values effectively. These strategies include storytelling, role-playing, group discussions, reflective questioning, and contextualized learning experiences. These methods help students explore ethical situations, evaluate different perspectives, and develop moral reasoning skills (Nucci et al., 2018).

Despite the recognized importance of values education, teachers frequently encounter challenges in implementing effective pedagogical practices. These challenges may include limited instructional resources, time constraints, and varying student attitudes toward moral education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2019). Understanding how teachers navigate these challenges is essential for improving the quality of GMRC instruction.

In the Philippine context, there is limited empirical research examining the pedagogical practices used in GMRC classrooms. While policy initiatives emphasize the importance of values formation, few studies explore how teachers implement GMRC lessons and how students experience these instructional practices in real educational settings.

This study therefore aimed to explore the pedagogical practices used in GMRC instruction and examine how these practices influence student learning at San Mateo North Central School. By understanding teachers' experiences and students' perspectives, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on values education and provides insights for improving teaching practices in GMRC.

Review of Related Literature

Pedagogical Approaches in Values Education

Pedagogy refers to the methods and practices used by teachers to facilitate learning and support student development. In values education, effective pedagogy involves creating

meaningful learning experiences that encourage students to reflect on moral principles and apply them in everyday life. Research suggests that learner-centered instructional approaches are particularly effective in promoting moral reasoning and ethical awareness among students (Nucci et al., 2018).

Teachers play a crucial role in modeling ethical behavior and guiding students toward moral understanding. According to Berkowitz and Bier (2019), values education becomes more effective when teachers integrate discussion-based learning, experiential activities, and reflective exercises into classroom instruction.

GMRC and Character Formation

Character education programs aim to develop learners' moral values, social responsibility, and positive attitudes toward others. GMRC, as part of the Philippine curriculum, focuses on the development of virtues such as respect, honesty, and discipline. Studies show that well-designed character education programs can improve student behavior, promote empathy, and strengthen interpersonal relationships in schools (Lickona, 2019).

The integration of culturally relevant examples in values education also enhances learners' connection to moral lessons. When teachers relate ethical concepts to students' cultural experiences and community contexts, learners are more likely to internalize the values being taught.

Student Engagement in Moral Learning

Student engagement is a multidimensional concept that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in the learning process. Behavioral engagement refers to students' participation in classroom activities, emotional engagement refers to students' interest and motivation, while cognitive engagement involves critical thinking and reflective understanding of lesson content (Fredricks et al., 2019).

In values education, participatory learning strategies such as group discussions and moral dilemma analysis encourage students to engage more deeply with ethical issues. These approaches allow students to explore multiple perspectives and develop a stronger sense of moral responsibility.

Challenges in Teaching Values Education

Although values education is widely recognized as important, teachers often face challenges in implementing effective teaching strategies. Limited instructional materials, heavy curriculum demands, and large class sizes may restrict opportunities for interactive learning activities. Additionally, differences in students' cultural backgrounds and personal experiences may influence how they interpret moral lessons (Berkowitz & Bier, 2019).

Addressing these challenges requires strong institutional support, teacher training programs, and the development of innovative instructional strategies that promote meaningful engagement in values education.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on Learner-Centered Pedagogy and Student Engagement Theory. The framework assumes that teachers' pedagogical practices influence students' learning experiences and engagement in the classroom.

Pedagogical strategies such as storytelling, group discussions, role-playing, and contextualized examples serve as instructional mechanisms that promote moral reflection and ethical understanding among learners. These strategies influence students' behavioral

participation, emotional connection to the lesson, and cognitive engagement in moral reasoning.

However, the effectiveness of these practices may be influenced by contextual factors such as instructional resources, classroom environment, and institutional support.

Methodology

The research used qualitative case study design to observe GMRC teaching methods and student learning at San Mateo North Central School. The researchers selected qualitative research method because it enabled them to study participants' educational experiences as they naturally occurred in their educational surroundings. Researchers use case study research to study specific educational methods that exist in real classroom situations because it helps them observe teaching methods as they are practiced in educational institutions. The study used this method to explain how values education is taught through GMRC lessons which results in different ways students engage with the subject and learn from it. The study enables researchers to capture complete participant experiences because it permits them to study the meanings which participants make from their experiences, while quantitative methods fail to achieve this (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study involved GMRC teachers plus specific students from San Mateo North Central School who participated in teaching and learning GMRC material. The research team selected study participants through purposive sampling which enables qualitative researchers to find people with essential expertise about the studied phenomenon. The study selected teachers who were teaching GMRC at the time while student participants came from classes that implemented GMRC teaching. The sampling method selected for this study guaranteed that the selected participants possessed direct experience with GMRC teaching methods and their impact on student learning in classroom settings.

Researcher used various qualitative data collection techniques to achieve a complete understanding of the studied phenomenon. The research team conducted semi-structured teacher interviews and student focus group discussions plus classroom observations and document analysis of lesson plans and instructional materials. Teachers shared their experiences through semi-structured interviews which included details about their teaching methods and the difficulties they faced when implementing GMRC lessons. Students used focus group discussions to share their opinions about classroom activities and their learning about moral values through those activities. Researchers conducted classroom observations to see how teachers used their teaching methods during lessons and how students took part in learning activities. Document analysis of lesson plans helped researchers understand which teaching methods and learning goals were used in the GMRC instructional design. The research team used diverse data sources to create data triangulation which resulted in greater research credibility and data validity.

The researcher used thematic analysis to study the collected data because this method helps researchers find recurring themes and patterns that exist in textual information. The analysis process began with the research team transcribing both the interview and focus group material, followed by detailed reading and coding of the acquired data. The researchers assigned initial codes to essential text segments which contained key information about teaching methods and student educational experiences. The researchers organized the codes into larger categories which they turned into primary themes that showed the main discoveries of the research. The researcher used this structured approach to understand how participants saw things while finding out which teaching methods drove student participation and academic success in GMRC classes.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of interview transcripts, classroom observations, and document analysis generated several key themes related to pedagogical practices in GMRC instruction and students' learning experiences at San Mateo North Central School. Four major themes emerged from the data: interactive teaching strategies, contextualized learning experiences, student engagement in moral reflection, and challenges in GMRC instruction. These themes reflect how teachers implement values education and how students respond to these instructional practices in the classroom.

Theme 1: Interactive Teaching Strategies in GMRC Instruction

One of the most prominent themes that emerged from the data was the use of interactive teaching strategies in GMRC instruction. Teachers reported that they frequently used storytelling, guided discussions, reflective questioning, and collaborative classroom activities to facilitate moral learning. These strategies allowed students to actively participate in lessons and express their ideas about ethical issues.

Classroom observations confirmed that teachers often introduced moral concepts through short stories or real-life scenarios before initiating reflective discussions. Through this approach, learners were encouraged to analyze situations, identify moral values, and propose appropriate actions. These participatory activities helped create a learning environment where students felt comfortable sharing their perspectives.

Interactive teaching strategies are particularly effective in values education because they allow learners to engage emotionally and cognitively with moral issues rather than simply memorizing ethical principles. According to constructivist learning theory, students construct knowledge through active participation and social interaction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In the context of GMRC instruction, these participatory approaches help students develop deeper understanding of values such as respect, responsibility, and empathy.

Responses from Participants

Teacher participant:

"Kapag nagkukuwento ako tungkol sa isang sitwasyon sa paaralan o sa pamilya, mas naiintindihan ng mga bata kung bakit mahalaga ang paggalang at disiplina."

Another teacher shared:

"Mas nagiging aktibo ang klase kapag may discussion. Nakakapagbigay ng opinyon ang mga bata tungkol sa kung ano ang tama at mali sa isang sitwasyon."

Student participant:

"Mas naiintindihan namin ang GMRC kapag nagkakaroon ng talakayan kasi pwede kaming magbahagi ng sariling karanasan."

The use of storytelling and discussion-based learning supports the development of moral reasoning and reflective thinking among learners. Previous research suggests that participatory teaching strategies encourage students to examine ethical issues from multiple perspectives and develop deeper understanding of moral principles (Nucci et al., 2018). Similarly, Berkowitz and Bier (2019) emphasize that character education becomes more meaningful when students are given opportunities to reflect on real-life situations through dialogue and collaborative learning.

The findings of this study indicate that interactive teaching strategies contribute to increased student engagement and participation, which are essential components of effective values education.

Theme 2: Contextualized Learning Experiences

Another significant theme that emerged from the analysis was the use of contextualized learning experiences in teaching GMRC. Teachers frequently connected moral lessons to real-life situations that students encounter in their homes, schools, and communities. These examples allowed learners to understand how moral values can be applied in everyday interactions.

Teachers reported that contextualizing lessons made it easier for students to relate to the concepts being taught. Instead of presenting abstract definitions of moral values, teachers used familiar situations such as helping classmates, respecting elders, or resolving conflicts among peers.

Classroom observations also showed that teachers often asked students to share personal experiences related to the lesson. These discussions helped learners reflect on their behavior and consider how they could apply moral values in similar situations.

Verbatim Responses from Participants

Teacher participant:

"Kapag ikinokonek ko ang lesson sa mga nangyayari sa bahay o sa komunidad, mas nagiging makahulugan ang GMRC para sa mga bata."

Another teacher explained:

"Hindi lang dapat teorya ang GMRC. Kailangan ipakita kung paano ito ginagawa sa totoong buhay."

Student participant:

"Kapag may halimbawa tungkol sa pamilya o kaibigan, naiisip namin kung paano namin gagawin ang tama sa ganung sitwasyon."

The integration of real-life examples in values education aligns with the principles of contextualized learning, which emphasize connecting academic content to learners' lived experiences. Research indicates that contextualized teaching enhances students' ability to understand and apply knowledge in real-world situations (Gay, 2018).

In the context of GMRC instruction, contextualized learning supports the internalization of moral values by allowing students to relate ethical principles to their daily interactions. This approach also reflects culturally responsive pedagogy, which recognizes the importance of integrating students' cultural and social contexts into classroom instruction (Gay, 2018).

The findings suggest that contextualized teaching practices play a crucial role in helping students translate moral concepts into practical behavior.

Theme 3: Student Engagement in Moral Reflection

A third theme that emerged from the data was the active engagement of students in moral reflection. Teachers reported that students became more interested in GMRC lessons when they were given opportunities to analyze moral dilemmas, participate in role-playing activities, and engage in group discussions.

These activities encouraged learners to think critically about ethical issues and consider the consequences of their actions. Through collaborative discussions, students explored different perspectives and developed a deeper understanding of moral decision-making.

Observations indicated that students were particularly enthusiastic during role-playing activities, where they acted out scenarios involving respect, honesty, and responsibility. These activities allowed learners to experience moral situations in a simulated environment, making the lessons more meaningful and memorable.

Responses from Participants

Student participant:

"Mas masaya ang GMRC kapag may role play kasi parang nararanasan namin ang sitwasyon."

Another student shared:

"Kapag pinag-uusapan namin ang mga problema sa klase o sa bahay, natututo kami kung paano gumawa ng tamang desisyon."

Teacher participant:

"Kapag pinapaisip ko sila kung ano ang gagawin nila sa isang sitwasyon, mas nagiging reflective sila."

Student engagement is widely recognized as a critical factor in effective learning. According to Fredricks et al. (2019), engagement consists of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions that collectively influence students' learning outcomes.

The findings of this study suggest that participatory activities such as role-playing and moral dilemma discussions enhance these dimensions of engagement. Behavioral engagement was observed through students' active participation in activities, emotional engagement was evident in their enthusiasm during lessons, and cognitive engagement was reflected in their ability to analyze ethical situations.

These results support previous research indicating that experiential and reflective learning strategies promote deeper moral understanding among students (Lickona, 2019).

Theme 4: Challenges in GMRC Instruction

Despite the positive impact of interactive teaching strategies, teachers also reported several challenges in implementing effective GMRC instruction. One of the most common challenges mentioned by participants was the lack of instructional materials specifically designed for values education.

Teachers also noted that limited class time made it difficult to conduct interactive activities such as role-playing and group discussions. Additionally, some teachers observed that students sometimes viewed GMRC as a less important subject compared to other academic subjects.

These challenges affected teachers' ability to consistently implement learner-centered teaching strategies in the classroom.

Responses from Participants

Teacher participant:

"Minsan kulang ang oras para gawin ang mga activity tulad ng role play dahil kailangan pa naming tapusin ang ibang lesson."

Another teacher shared:

"Hindi rin sapat ang mga materyales na magagamit sa pagtuturo ng GMRC kaya kailangan pa naming gumawa ng sariling halimbawa."

Student participant:

"May mga kaklase po na hindi masyadong seryoso sa GMRC kasi iniisip nila na madali lang ang subject."

The challenges identified in this study are consistent with previous research on values education. Studies indicate that teachers often face structural constraints such as limited resources, heavy curriculum demands, and large class sizes when implementing interactive teaching strategies (OECD, 2020).

Addressing these challenges requires institutional support in the form of teacher training, adequate instructional materials, and school policies that prioritize values education. Strengthening these support systems will enable teachers to sustain learner-centered pedagogical practices and enhance the effectiveness of GMRC instruction.

Synthesis of the Findings

The results of the study highlight the importance of interactive, contextualized, and reflective teaching strategies in promoting meaningful learning in GMRC instruction. These approaches encourage students to actively engage with moral concepts, reflect on ethical situations, and apply values in their daily lives.

However, the sustainability of these pedagogical practices depends on the availability of institutional support and adequate instructional resources. Schools must therefore create supportive environments that empower teachers to implement innovative strategies in values education.

Discussion

The findings indicate that learner-centered pedagogical strategies significantly enhance student engagement in GMRC instruction. Teachers who employ storytelling, reflective questioning, and collaborative activities create opportunities for students to actively participate in moral learning. These findings support previous research suggesting that participatory learning approaches promote deeper understanding and ethical reflection among students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

The integration of real-life examples in GMRC lessons also strengthens students' ability to connect moral concepts with everyday experiences. This aligns with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasize the importance of contextualizing instruction within students' social and cultural environments (Gay, 2018).

Furthermore, the study highlights the interconnected nature of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in values education. Students who actively participate in discussions and reflective activities demonstrate stronger understanding of moral principles and greater motivation to apply these values in real-life situations (Fredricks et al., 2019).

However, structural constraints such as limited teaching materials and large class sizes may affect the sustainability of interactive teaching strategies. Addressing these challenges requires stronger institutional support and professional development opportunities for teachers.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were implemented following established qualitative research standards. Credibility was ensured through data triangulation, which involved gathering information from multiple sources such as teacher interviews, classroom observations, focus group discussions with students, and document analysis of lesson plans. The use of these different data sources allowed the researcher to verify the consistency of the findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical practices in GMRC instruction. Dependability was established through the careful documentation of the research procedures, including the data collection process, interview protocols, and the steps followed in conducting thematic analysis. Maintaining a clear and systematic record of the research process ensured that the study could be examined and replicated by other researchers if necessary. Confirmability was addressed by

presenting verbatim responses from participants to support the identified themes and interpretations. These direct quotations ensured that the findings were grounded in the actual experiences and perspectives of the participants rather than the researcher's personal assumptions. Lastly, transferability was achieved by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and instructional practices observed in the study. These rich descriptions allow readers and other researchers to determine whether the findings may be applicable to similar educational settings or contexts.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of learner-centered pedagogical practices in promoting effective GMRC instruction. Interactive strategies such as storytelling, reflective discussions, and contextualized learning experiences enhance student engagement and support the internalization of moral values.

However, the sustainability of these practices depends on institutional support, adequate instructional resources, and continuous teacher professional development. Strengthening these support systems will enable schools to improve the effectiveness of values education and foster the development of responsible and ethical learners.

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