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# BOOSTING LEARNERS' CLASS PARTICIPATION: TEACHERS' GAME PLAN IN THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study phenomenological study explored the experiences of elementary teachers in boosting learners' class participation, drawing insights from twelve (12) purposively selected teachers. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, two key themes emerged on the strategies that teachers employ to enhance participation such as gamification and interactive activities and collaborative and peer-based learning. Meanwhile, themes on the challenge's teachers face in fostering participation included fostering psychological safety and confidence building to overcome fear and employing differentiated participation strategies to conquer anxiety. From the lived experiences of the participants, this study derived insights to address these challenges, such as strengthening collaborative and peer-based learning and integrating confidence-building approaches. The findings underscore the need for pedagogical innovation: prioritizing student-centered, interactive strategies and differentiated participation techniques to accommodate diverse learner needs. This study is particularly relevant in today's learnercentered education landscape, where active participation is critical for developing critical thinking, social skills, and academic confidence among young students. By addressing these challenges, educators can cultivate an inclusive and engaging classroom environment, ensuring all students actively participate and develop essential communication and social-learning competencies.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Boosting Learners' Class Participation; Teachers' Game Plan.*

## INTRODUCTION

Class participation is a vital part of learning, especially in elementary school, where students are just starting to express their ideas and thoughts. When teachers encourage students to share their opinions and ask questions, it helps build their confidence and makes learning more fun and engaging. Class participation offers numerous advantages for elementary learners that significantly enhance their educational experience. Overall, encouraging class participation creates a vibrant learning atmosphere that benefits students academically and personally.

Globally, efforts to boost learners' class participation have gained momentum in recent years, driven by a recognition of its critical role in educational success and equity. One significant global effort is the implementation of participatory teaching strategies that promote active learning. According to Pérez et al. (2020), adopting methods such as collaborative group work and project-based learning helps create a more engaging classroom environment where all students can contribute.

Since learners' class participation is crucial in learning engagement, schools around the world have different strategies of boosting learners' class participation. In Japanese classrooms for instance, participation often emphasizes group harmony and collective learning rather than individual expression. Tsui (2019) notes that while students may not speak up as frequently in traditional discussions, they engage deeply in collaborative activities, fostering a supportive environment where learning is a shared responsibility. While the American education typically encourages open dialogue and active participation. Duncan and Noonan (2021) note that classrooms employing discussion-based learning significantly enhance student engagement and critical thinking.

Meanwhile, in Bhutanese classrooms majority of learners involved in passive participation like sitting quietly, writing notes, listening and paying attention only (Ghalley & Rai, 2019) as cited in Kinley and Pradhan (2022). Also, Rohi & Muslim (2023) note that most Afghan female and male students at the undergraduate level do not actively participate in their classroom learning. Students do not actively participate in classroom activities.
In the Philippine settings, schools in the Philippines emphasize class participation through various strategies, including interactive teaching methods, the incorporation of technology, and fostering a supportive classroom

environment. Panganiban, M. (2019) observes the active learning strategies in Filipino classrooms through group discussions and peer teaching which significantly enhanced student participation and engagement. Meanwhile, technology integration using online platforms and tools is highlighted by Bautista, J. R. (2020). The constructive feedback and encouragement from teachers were key motivating students to engage actively promoting class participation (Alvarez, T. M.,2022).

However, Wonder (2021) noted that, in the Philippine classrooms, class participation is associated to mere "recitation," such as student responses to teacher-generated questions with limited interaction with peers. There is a strong power distance relationship between student and teacher and that the fear of failure restricted their class participation.

On the reasons of learners' reluctance to participate in classroom engagement, Ahmad (2021) conveys the top three causes of reluctance to participate such as being tensed when forced by teachers to answer a question, getting tensed and nervous to speak in front of the whole class, and having faulty pronunciation in English. Similarly, Moneva and Inday (2020) observed that in a certain school in Mandaue City, some students who are passively participating in class feel nervous and anxious when speaking in class and joining in discussions and prefer to just listen and watch their teacher talk.

In our school, teachers' familiar comment is on the learner's poor class participation. They have noticed the limited engagement of learners during classroom activities and discussions. However, instead of pointing and blaming to the learners, my study endeavors to explore on the teachers' strategies of boosting the class participation of their learners. Contemplating on the present practices of teachers in increasing the class participation of learners is vital and crucial in understanding the weak point of teachers' strategies and thereby develop appropriate strategies that would boost the learners' active class participation.

## REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

Enhancing class participation in the classroom is the primary focus of this research. This section offers a comprehensive overview of the knowledge surrounding student engagement. It discusses and critiques published works in this area of study. Key materials are presented to substantiate the claims regarding the practices adopted by elementary school teachers. It also incorporates relevant studies that validates a diverse array of techniques and methodologies.

### *Learners' Class Participation*

Learners' class participation plays a crucial role in enhancing educational outcomes and fostering a dynamic learning environment. Active participation encourages students to engage deeply with the material, promoting critical thinking and retention of information. When learners contribute to discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with peers, they not only reinforce their understanding but also develop essential communication and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, participation allows educators to gauge student comprehension and adapt their teaching strategies, accordingly, creating a more responsive and effective classroom atmosphere.

For the students or learners to acquire knowledge, they must engage themselves in an active learning experience in the classrooms. Learner participation generally refers to the involvement of students in the academic life in the school. Ken (2006) as cited in Amaefule (2022) describes class participation as students' opportunities to participate during teaching and learning. By allowing them to ask questions as well and be allowed to brainstorm with fellow students in a small group with a specific task in focus, learning occurs.

Effective class participation not only enriches the learning experience but also empowers students to take ownership of their education. When learners feel comfortable sharing their ideas and engaging with the material, it fosters a sense of community and belonging, enhancing motivation and overall academic performance. This dynamic interaction between students and instructors is vital for creating an effective learning environment that supports diverse perspectives and encourages intellectual growth. Bahmanbijar,et.al (2019) convey that class participation is considered as a pivotal concept in understanding classroom instruction and development of critical thinking skills that are necessary for students. Students who actively participate in classroom settings will perform more efficiently than those who do not.

At the flip side, a silent classroom may indicate the lack of class participation and engagement of learners. Cox (2024) assets that unengaged students, who are hesitant to raise their hands or voice their thoughts, can be deafening for teachers. It's one thing when the classroom is silent because students are concentrating on a task or taking a test, but it's another thing when the silence is due to a lack of engagement. Bahmanbijar,et.al (2019)

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clarify that participation is a pivotal concept in understanding classroom instruction and development of critical thinking skills that are necessary for students.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explored on the experiences of teachers in boosting the class participation of learners. To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions are formulated to elucidate realities based on the lived experiences of the participants.

1. How do elementary grade teachers boost learners' class participation?
2. What measures are in place to cope with the challenges of boosting learners' class participation?
3. What insights can be drawn from the findings of the study?

## METHODOLOGY

This section provides a comprehensive account of the methods employed in this study, specifically focusing on the strategies that teachers use to boost class participation among learners. It delves into the foundational philosophical principles guiding the research, the deliberate use of a qualitative approach to capture in-depth insights, and the meticulous design of the study to align with its objectives. The section also details the careful selection of participants, ensuring they are representative of the teaching population involved in promoting learner participation. Ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality, are emphasized to protect the integrity of the research. Additionally, it highlights the researcher's pivotal role in data collection and interpretation, innovative methods for gathering rich and meaningful data, systematic strategies for analyzing the information, and the robust measures implemented to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings.

### *Design and Procedure*

The research design for my study was qualitative phenomenological. Phenomenology's main goal was to gather unprocessed, unrefined data. This method looked at the common experiences of people in certain groups and investigated how a phenomenon affected them, exposing the meanings they attached to it. Observing real-life occurrences and traits was the main objective. As noted by Flood (2010) and cited in Tomaszewski et al. (2020), the phenomenological approach in qualitative research emphasized the essential elements of lived experiences or phenomena, which could be perceived from diverse perspectives.

In the context of this phenomenological study, participants engaged in discussions regarding their observations and experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher primarily utilized in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for data collection. According to Smith et al. (2009) and cited in Alase (2017), the fundamental purpose of conducting interviews in phenomenological inquiry was to facilitate an interaction that enabled participants to articulate their personal narratives in their own words. Furthermore, focus group discussions, as elaborated by Lune and Berg (2017) and cited in Tumen, Akyildiz, and Ahmed (2021), provided a valuable method for convening individuals with shared experiences to explore a specific area of interest, thus yielding rich insights from a variety of viewpoints.

### *Research Participants*

This study focused on the strategies of elementary grade teachers in boosting the class participation of learners. In exploring the phenomenon, twelve (12) teachers served as participants. These participants were elementary grade teachers who had been in service for at least three (3) years. To obtain a variety of data, the participants were sampled from three different schools in Carmen District in Davao del Norte Division. The participants came from schools categorized as small, medium, and large to obtain varied school environments.

Qualitative analyses typically required a smaller sample size in phenomenological investigations. Creswell (2013), as cited in Sarfo et al. (2021), stressed that five to twenty-five participants were adequate for phenomenological studies. Although small sample sizes were common in phenomenological studies, the researcher needed to keep adding individuals until saturation was reached to fulfil the study's goal.

Moreover, in the selection of participants, my study employed simple random sampling. In a simple random sample, every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The sampling frame included the whole population. Simple random sampling was an extensively used sampling method in scientific research. Simple random sampling was selected for populations that were highly homogenous, where the members of the research were randomly selected to participate in the study (Bhardwaj, 2019).
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***Data Analysis***

The data gathered was meticulously processed for analysis. I conducted a thorough review of the transcriptions, extracting the core meanings of the participants' responses to the research questions. By organizing the information around the key themes that emerged, I ensured that I accurately captured the true implications of each statement made during our discussions. Understanding the participants' viewpoints were essential, and I attentively tracked every detail they provided.

An integral part of this analysis involved categorizing and coding the ideas presented in the transcriptions. This method, as outlined by Grane Heim and Lundman (2004) and cited in Vinitha (2019), involved weaving together the underlying meanings that spanned the various categories. This approach not only enhanced our understanding of the participants' experiences but also allowed for a nuanced interpretation of the latent content within their narratives, ultimately leading to richer and more impactful insights.

The next step is to develop meaningful themes revealing key insights from the data. This analytical process is called Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) which according to King (2004) as cited in Dawadi (2020) is a search for themes that can capture the narratives available in the account of data sets. It involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of the transcribed data. To illustrate the steps or phases on Thematic Content Analysis (TCA),

Braun & Clarke (2006) has the following 6 steps or phases:

Step/ Phase 1: Become familiar with the data,
Step/ Phase 2: Generate initial codes,
Step/ Phase 3: Search for themes
Step/ Phase 4: Review themes,
Step/ Phase 5: Define themes
Step/ Phase 6: Write-up

Further, this study specifically utilized environmental triangulation. The insights gathered from various environments were compared and integrated to enhance the validity of the findings. According to Vivek (2023), environmental triangulation was a research strategy that required data collection from multiple contexts to strengthen the credibility and reliability of qualitative results. This approach aimed to reduce potential biases that could arise when a phenomenon was examined in only one or a limited setting. Nightingale (2020) explained that triangulation was a methodology to analyze results of the same study using diverse techniques of data collection to assure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings.

In summary, the data collected underwent careful analysis, focusing on extracting the core meanings from participants' responses to the research questions. By organizing this information into key themes, I aimed to accurately represent the implications of their statements and ensure a thorough understanding of their perspectives. A critical aspect of this process involved categorizing and coding the ideas in the transcriptions, allowing for a nuanced interpretation of the underlying meanings in their narratives. Additionally, I employed Thematic Content Analysis to identify meaningful themes that captured the insights from the data. This study also incorporated environmental triangulation, comparing insights gathered from various contexts to enhance the validity of the findings and mitigate biases associated with examining a phenomenon in limited settings. Triangulation utilized diverse data collection techniques to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the study's outcomes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the study on junior high school teachers' experiences in integrating technology into Araling Panlipunan instruction in Compostela West District. It provides a detailed analysis of qualitative data, outlining the procedures used to identify and categorize emergent themes from indepth interviews with the nine teacher-participants. The study navigated the strategies of teachers of integrating technology in AP instructions and the challenges they encountered. Moreover, insights drawn from the participants' lived experiences inform concrete recommendations to mitigate these challenges and foster a supportive ecosystem that prioritizes both teacher capacity-building and enhanced instructional quality in 21st-century Araling Panlipunan education.

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***Boosting Learners' Class Participation***

The integration of technology in teaching Araling Panlipunan offers transformative potential to make historical and cultural lessons more engaging and accessible for junior high school students in Compostela East District. By leveraging tools like multimedia presentations, interactive quizzes, and digital storytelling, educators can bridge traditional teaching methods with 21st-century learning experiences. However, successful implementation requires addressing challenges such as infrastructure limitations, teacher training needs, and equitable student access to digital resources.

***Gamification and Interactive Activities***

Gamification and interactive activities are dynamic teaching strategies that enhance student engagement by incorporating game-like elements, such as points, challenges, and rewards, into learning. These methods transform traditional lessons into immersive experiences, leveraging tools like quizzes (Kahoot), role-playing, and hands-on tasks to make participation fun and motivating. By tapping into students' natural competitiveness and curiosity, gamification fosters active involvement, deeper understanding, and a livelier classroom environment. The following narrations of participants in reference to the theme.

I use gamification strategy, turn learning activities into games to make participation fun and engaging.". (P2)

Uses engaging activities such as games, role-playing, show-me-board, and Q&A portion (P1)

Mix strategies like questions, games, and role-playing (P4)

Uses engaging activities, games to have fun learning (P6)

Other statements of participants that support to the use of Gamification and interactive activities.

Gamification: Quizzes with Kahoot/Quizizz, escape roomstyle challenges, or classroom competitions. (P9)

Used interactive and hands-on activities. (P2)

Encouraging pupils by reward system/extrinsic motivation. In game activities,students have more interest in lesson and become more participative (P5)

Interactive and learning-by-doing activities like role-playing, solving simple problems, games, and using manipulative learning materials (P7)

The study revealed that gamification and interactive activities are highly effective strategies for boosting student participation and engagement in the classroom. Participants consistently reported using game-like elements, such as quizzes (Kahoot/Quizizz), role-playing, escape room challenges, and hands-on tasks, to make learning more dynamic and enjoyable. Teachers observed that these methods not only increased students' interest but also encouraged active involvement by tapping into their natural competitiveness and curiosity. Additionally, reward systems, such as points or small incentives, were often integrated into these activities to further motivate participation. The findings suggest that transforming traditional lessons into interactive, game-based experiences fosters a livelier and more immersive classroom environment, ultimately enhancing both student engagement and understanding.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the versatility of gamification, with teachers adapting these strategies across various subjects and age groups. Participants emphasized the importance of interactive, learning-by-doing approaches, such as role-playing simulations and manipulative learning materials, to reinforce concepts and maintain student interest. Some teachers also noted that combining gamification with extrinsic rewards, like certificates or small treats, amplified participation, particularly among reluctant learners. Overall, the data underscores gamification as a practical and impactful tool for creating student-centered, engaging lessons that cater to diverse learning preferences while making education both fun and effective.

## IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Presented in this section are the implications and future directions of the study on strategies to enhance elementary learners' class participation. The findings revealed themes such as Gamification and Interactive Activities and Collaborative and Peer-Based Learning as the strategies of teachers in boosting class participation. With the challenges hindering consistent engagement, the coping strategies of teachers yielded the themes such as Fostering Psychological Safety and Confidence Building to Overcome Fear and Employing Differentiated Participation Strategies to Conquer Anxiety.

This study's insights lead to actionable recommendations such as Intensify Integration of Gamification and Interactive Activities and Strengthen Collaborative and Peer-Based Learning. These insightful recommendations entirely support the teacher's effort of engaging class participation through reliable and tested techniques while addressing the barriers encountered by teaching practitioners.

This study is aligned strongly with Vygotsky's Constructivist Learning Theory and Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) through its focus on social interaction, scaffolding, and intrinsic motivation. Vygotsky's emphasis on social constructivism is reflected in your collaborative strategies, where students coconstruct knowledge through guided interactions with teachers and peers, mirroring his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Meanwhile, SDT's core principles of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are addressed through gamification, differentiated participation, and psychological safety. By creating a supportive environment where students feel capable, connected, and in control of their learning, this study operationalizes SDT, while Vygotsky's framework justifies the social and scaffolded nature of your participation strategies.

***Implications***

This study underscores the critical role of active learning strategies in enhancing elementary learners' classroom participation. The effectiveness of gamification and collaborative methods demonstrates that young students thrive in environments where learning is interactive, socially engaging, and psychologically safe. For educators, these findings highlight the need to move beyond traditional lecture-based instruction and adopt student-centered approaches that align with children's developmental needs, such as play-based learning and peer interaction. School administrators should prioritize teacher training and resource allocation to support these strategies, ensuring educators can implement tools like Kahoot, role-playing, or think-pair-share effectively. Also, the study's emphasis on psychological safety and differentiated participation suggests that addressing emotional barriers, like fear of mistakes, is as vital as pedagogical innovation. This calls for systemic shifts in classroom culture, where mistakes are normalized, and participation is scaffolded through varied response options.

The study also has broader implications for educational policy and professional development. Schools should integrate these evidence-based strategies into teacher training programs, emphasizing practical workshops on gamification, collaborative techniques, and anxiety-reducing practices. Policymakers could advocate for technology investments to enable gamified learning in under-resourced classrooms. Furthermore, the findings advocate for flexible participation frameworks in curriculum design, recognizing that uniform response methods exclude anxious or introverted students.

***Future Directions***

This study outlines doable steps for teachers, schools, policymakers, and researchers to enhance student participation through evidence-based strategies. Future efforts should focus on implementing professional development, equitable resource allocation, and systemic policy reforms to sustain inclusive and engaging classrooms.

For teachers, this study underscores the need to adopt ongoing professional development in student-centered pedagogies, particularly in implementing gamification, collaborative learning, and differentiated participation strategies tailored to elementary learners. Future training should focus on practical workshops for designing low-anxiety participation frameworks (e.g., non-verbal response systems) and integrating play-based methods aligned with developmental stages.

For Students, they would benefit from structured programs that gradually build participation confidence, such as school-wide "speaking circles" or peermentoring initiatives, while curricula should embed more choice-based tasks to nurture autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

For School administrators, must prioritize resource allocation for interactive tools such as digital platforms, manipulatives and establish participation metrics to track equity in student engagement across demographics.

The Department of Education (DepEd) could institutionalize teacher training modules on psychological safety and differentiated instruction, alongside funding classroom technology grants to support gamified learning.

Future researchers, longitudinal studies could examine the sustained impact of these strategies on academic performance and social-emotional growth, while action research might explore contextual adaptations for marginalized learners. Cross-cultural comparisons could also reveal how participation barriers and solutions vary across educational systems.

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