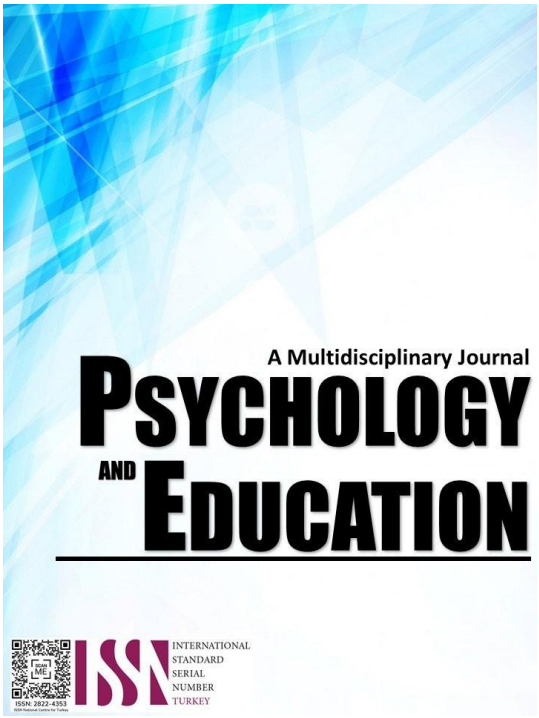
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INNOVATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OF GRADES 6 LEARNERS



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Research Article

The Relationship between Innovative Teaching Strategies and Student Engagement of Grades 6 Learners

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of emerging teaching strategies on the academic performance, engagement, and perceptions of Grade 6 students at North Cabadbaran Central Elementary School, Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte, during the first quarter of the 2024–2025 academic year. Specifically, it explored four instructional approaches: collaborative learning, technology-enhanced learning, differentiated instruction, and gamification. Using a descriptive–correlational quantitative design, data were collected through student surveys that assessed engagement and perceptions of instructional methods. Results indicated a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.82$) between innovative teaching strategies and student engagement, with an average weighted mean of 4.68 for engagement and 3.99 for perceptions of strategy. Students expressed a clear preference for technology-enhanced learning, while collaborative learning strengthened teamwork and communication. The study recommends professional development programs for teachers, broader integration of technology, and the development of a unified instructional strategy guide. Overall, the findings confirm that modern pedagogical approaches have a significant impact on enhancing student engagement and academic outcomes.

Keywords: *administration and supervision, teaching strategies, grade 6 students, enhanced teaching guide, correlational quantitative, North Cabadbaran Central Elementary School, Philippines*

Introduction

Teaching methods must continually evolve to address the diverse needs of learners in today's dynamic educational landscape (Bidabadi et al., 2016). Contemporary educational frameworks emphasize critical thinking, technology integration, and student-centered approaches to prepare learners for the demands of the 21st century (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Globally, countries such as Finland and Singapore have demonstrated the success of these reforms by prioritizing creativity, collaboration, and inquiry-based learning. Finland emphasizes teacher autonomy and integrated curricula, whereas Singapore focuses on the effective use of technology and the development of problem-solving skills (Sahlberg, 2015; OECD, 2018). Studies consistently show that technology-enhanced learning environments improve engagement and academic performance, underscoring the need for ongoing professional development for teachers and the use of diverse instructional strategies (Bond et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, the K–12 reform aimed to modernize education through the integration of technology and learner-centered practices (DepEd, 2013). However, a persistent gap remains between policy and classroom implementation, as many teachers continue to rely on traditional, lecture-based methods (Villanueva, 2019). Factors such as limited teacher training, overcrowded classrooms, resource constraints, and pressures from standardized testing hinder the adoption of interactive, critical-thinking-oriented strategies (Calderon, 2018; Alegado & Tandog, 2019; Pascua & Sanciangco, 2017). Without adequate support, educators struggle to fully enact the reform's intended innovations, limiting students' learning opportunities (Abaya & Orlina, 2019; Garcia & Weiss, 2019).

Mindanao offers a distinctive context for exploring these issues, given its varied educational settings that both offer opportunities and pose challenges for implementing modern teaching approaches. While previous studies in the region have primarily focused on student performance and infrastructure, little research has examined the specific instructional strategies employed in Mindanaoan classrooms, particularly in Agusan del Norte (Abulencia, 2015). This gap constrains the development of context-sensitive professional learning programs and policy interventions.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the impact of emerging teaching strategies—collaborative learning, technology-enhanced learning, differentiated instruction, and gamification—on the engagement, perceptions, and academic performance of Grade 6 students at North Cabadbaran Central Elementary School. By employing a descriptive–correlational design, the study aims to generate empirical insights that inform evidence-based improvements in instructional practices and guide stakeholders in strengthening the implementation of learner-centered education (UNESCO, 2020).

Research Questions

This study examined the influence of modern educational approaches and emerging instructional trends on the academic performance, engagement, and perceptions of Grade 6 students at North Cabadbaran Central Elementary School, Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte, during the first quarter of the 2024–2025 academic year. The investigation aimed to address the existing gap in understanding how innovative teaching strategies contribute to student engagement and learning outcomes. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of students' perception of instructional strategies employed by their teachers in the following domains:

1.1. collaborative learning (i.e., group-based tasks promoting interaction and shared problem-solving);
1.2. technology-enhanced learning (i.e., the use of digital tools and platforms to support instruction);
1.3. differentiated instruction (i.e., teaching methods tailored to varied learning needs and abilities); and
1.4. gamification (i.e., the use of game elements to increase motivation and participation)?

2. What is the level of student engagement associated with each of these instructional domains?
3. Is there a significant relationship between students' perceptions of instructional strategies and their level of engagement?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design to examine the relationship between teachers' use of emerging instructional strategies and students' levels of engagement and perception. The descriptive component was used to determine the prevailing trends in instructional practices and student responses, while the correlational component analyzed the strength and direction of associations between these variables. This design was deemed appropriate because it allows for the identification of relationships without implying causality, focusing instead on describing existing conditions and patterns that inform pedagogical practice.

Respondents

The respondents in the study consisted of 14 Grade 6 teachers and 100 Grade 6 students from North Cabadbaran Central Elementary School in Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte, during the first quarter of the 2024–2025 academic year. The teachers were purposively selected based on their active implementation of emerging teaching strategies, such as collaborative learning, technology-enhanced learning, differentiated instruction, and gamification. Their inclusion provided professional insights into the application and perceived effectiveness of these strategies.

The student participants were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across different Grade 6 sections. The sample size of 100 was determined using Slovin's formula, which included a 5% margin of error, ensuring that the findings were statistically reliable and generalizable to the target population. This combination of purposive and random sampling enhanced both the depth and representativeness of the data.

Instrument

Data were gathered through structured survey questionnaires designed to measure teachers' instructional practices and students' engagement levels. The instruments included Likert-scale items (5-point scale: Strongly Agree to Disagree Strongly) that assessed perceptions of four instructional domains: collaborative learning, technology-enhanced learning, differentiated instruction, and gamification.

Standardized checklists and items were adapted from validated tools: the Web Survey Tool for Collaborative Learning (Allen & Linn, 2004) for assessing group interaction and teamwork; instruments on Student Attitudes toward Educational Technology (Tomlinson, 2001) for technology use and comfort; Strategies for Differentiated Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001); and Gamification Frameworks in Education (Kapp, 2012) for motivation and participation.

To ensure validity and reliability, the instruments underwent expert validation by three education specialists in pedagogy and educational technology. Pilot testing was conducted with 20 non-participating Grade 6 students, and the tool achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to triangulate survey data and validate self-reported responses.

Procedure

Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the school administration and the Division Office of Agusan del Norte. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature, and they provided informed consent in accordance with the principles of research ethics.

Data collection took place over a period of two weeks. Teachers and students completed the researcher-prepared and expert-validated surveys during scheduled sessions. The collected data were tabulated, encoded, and statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for perception and engagement levels, and Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine relationships between instructional strategies and engagement. Findings were presented in tabular and graphical form for interpretation by the researcher and statistician.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical research standards to ensure the protection of participants' rights and welfare. Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the school administration and relevant education authorities. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from both teachers and students, with parental consent also secured for minors. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by coding

responses and excluding personally identifiable information from all reports. Data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. The study complied with the ethical principles of voluntary participation, beneficence, and respect for human dignity, ensuring that no harm came to any respondent throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

Modern Educational Approaches

Modern educational approaches have emerged in response to the evolving needs of learners and the complexities of the 21st-century educational landscape. As societies shift towards a more interconnected and technology-driven world, there is a growing recognition that traditional, teacher-centered instructional methods may not adequately prepare students for the challenges they will face. Further, modern educational approaches encompass a variety of instructional techniques and philosophies that prioritize student engagement, critical thinking, and adaptability. Collaborative Learning

Effective learning is deeply rooted in student engagement, and one of the most impactful approaches to enhancing this engagement is through collaborative learning. In collaborative learning environments, students work together in pairs or groups to accomplish shared academic goals, engaging in dialogue, problem-solving, and mutual support.

Table 1. *Collaborative Learning*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. I often group the students with different classmates to work on projects or activities.	4.64	0.48	Strongly Agree
2. When working in groups, I assign specific roles for each member (e.g., leader, recorder, timekeeper).	4.93	0.26	Strongly Agree
3. When working in groups, I make sure everyone understands the common goal we need to achieve together.	4.93	0.26	Strongly Agree
4. I encourage the students to talk to each other and share ideas while working in groups.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
5. I hold each group member accountable for their individual contribution to the group work.	4.57	0.73	Strongly Agree
6. I encourage the students to help and support each other while working in groups. Sessions are useful for my teaching.	4.71	0.45	Strongly Agree
7. I sometimes ask the students to reflect on how well our group worked together.	4.57	0.73	Strongly Agree
8. I often have the students present their group work to the entire class.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
9. I acknowledge and celebrate the success of the class group work.	4.86	0.35	Strongly Agree
10. I ask the students to reflect on what they learned individually from working in groups.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
Over-all	4.76	0.45	Strongly Agree

The data reveal a strong positive attitude toward collaborative learning, with an overall weighted mean of 4.76 and all statements scoring above 4.5, indicating very high levels of agreement. Students reported that collaborative learning is an engaging, motivating, and effective way to understand lessons. They value opportunities to participate in group discussions, share ideas, and improve their interaction with peers, which contributes to a more pleasant learning environment. The highest scores (4.93) were given to statements emphasizing clear group objectives and communication, highlighting the importance students place on role clarity within group work. Scores for accountability and reflection (4.57 each) suggest that students recognize the value of being responsible for their contributions and reflecting on group performance. These results imply that collaborative learning effectively promotes student engagement, encourages teamwork, and enhances learning outcomes when implemented consistently. The strong positive responses toward collaborative learning indicate that this strategy fosters meaningful participation and supports the development of social and cognitive skills among students. Overall, the results confirm that collaborative learning significantly enhances both engagement and academic performance, aligning with the study's goal of identifying practical, student-centered instructional approaches.

Bächtold et al. (2023) found that students view cooperative learning positively, especially when they have prior experience with group work. They value activities that promote communication and mutual understanding, with motivation and reflection strongly linked to engagement. These findings highlight the importance of well-structured collaborative tasks in improving academic performance, social skills, and overall classroom engagement.

Technology-Enhanced Learning

Technology-enhanced learning (TEL) leverages digital tools, such as interactive platforms, multimedia content, and educational apps, to create dynamic, personalized learning experiences that significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. For Grade 6 learners, TEL stimulates curiosity, supports diverse learning preferences, and allows students to progress at their own pace, creating a more immersive, hands-on classroom environment.

The data reveal a strong agreement among respondents on the integration of technology in the classroom, with an overall weighted mean of 4.69, interpreted as "Strongly Agree." The highest score (5.00) was for using technology, such as presentations and videos, to enhance lessons, indicating that teachers consider these tools essential for capturing student interest and improving understanding. High mean scores of 4.79 for troubleshooting technological problems and teaching responsible use of technology reflect not only consistent

use but also active management and guidance.

Table 2. *Technology-Enhanced Learning*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. I use computers, tablets, or other devices regularly in our lessons.	4.50	0.19	Strongly Agree
2. I use educational software or apps to help students learn.	4.29	0.19	Strongly Agree
3. I use websites, videos, or other online resources in our lessons.	4.71	0.19	Strongly Agree
4. I assign projects or activities that require us to use technology.	4.57	0.19	Strongly Agree
5. I encourage students to use technology to research topics for projects or assignments.	4.71	0.19	Strongly Agree
6. I use technology (e.g., presentations, videos) to present our work to the class.	5.00	0.19	Strongly Agree
7. I help troubleshoot any problems we encounter with technology in class.	4.79	0.19	Strongly Agree
8. I use technology to make learning more engaging and interactive.	4.86	0.19	Strongly Agree
9. I have a clear expectation for how we should use technology in class.	4.64	0.19	Strongly Agree
10. I emphasize the importance of using technology responsibly and safely.	4.79	0.19	Strongly Agree
Over-all Mean	4.69	0.20	Strongly Agree

These results suggest that teachers have developed a culture of technology use that supports diverse learning needs, fosters student engagement, and promotes responsible digital citizenship. The strong agreement among teachers underscores the significant role of technology integration in creating interactive, engaging, and adaptive learning environments for Grade 6 students. Overall, the results reinforce the study's conclusion that technology-enhanced learning is a key driver of student motivation and performance, validating its inclusion as a core component of emerging teaching strategies.

UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that responsible integration of technology can create inclusive and equitable learning experiences. Such integration is vital for equipping students with digital skills needed for future success while making lessons more interactive and engaging. The findings align with this perspective, underscoring the importance of technology as a pedagogical tool that not only enhances learning but also prepares students for the demands of the 21st century.

Differentiated Instruction

The educational method known as differentiated instruction (DI) adapts lesson plans, exercises, and curriculum to each student's unique needs. To enhance student engagement and achievement, DI aims to provide more personalized learning pathways, recognizing that every student has unique skills, interests, and learning preferences. Differentiated instruction can have a particularly significant influence on Grade 6 children, who are at a critical juncture in their academic careers, by making them feel appreciated and encouraged while they learn.

In practice, DI can involve modifying the complexity of tasks, offering a variety of learning materials, grouping students flexibly, and using both formative and summative assessments to monitor progress. It is rooted in the belief that students learn best when instructional delivery aligns with their individual strengths and needs, thereby fostering more profound understanding and long-term retention of knowledge.

Table 3. *Differentiated Instruction*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. I offer different learning activities to cater to different learning styles.	4.79	0.11	Strongly Agree
2. I sometimes provide different levels of difficulty for assignments or materials.	4.86	0.11	Strongly Agree
3. I sometimes group students based on their learning needs or abilities.	4.64	0.11	Strongly Agree
4. I offer extra help or support to students who need it.	4.79	0.11	Strongly Agree
5. I sometimes allow students to choose how we complete assignments or projects.	4.64	0.11	Strongly Agree
6. I adjust the pace of instruction based on student needs.	4.64	0.11	Strongly Agree
7. I use different ways to assess our learning, such as tests, projects, or presentations.	4.79	0.11	Strongly Agree
8. I provide feedback that helps us understand our strengths and weaknesses.	4.57	0.11	Strongly Agree
9. I celebrate the progress that each student makes, regardless of their starting point.	4.93	0.11	Strongly Agree
10. I ask students' input on how we learn best.	4.71	0.11	Strongly Agree
Over-all Mean	4.74	0.11	Strongly Agree

The data indicate a strong commitment among teachers to differentiated and student-centered approaches, with an overall weighted mean of 4.74, interpreted as "Strongly Agree." High scores reflect teachers' efforts to accommodate diverse learning needs and adapt teaching methods accordingly. Examples include providing feedback to help learners understand their strengths and weaknesses (4.57) and grouping students based on their learning needs or capabilities (4.64). The highest rating was given to acknowledging the success of every learner, regardless of their starting point, underscoring teachers' focus on individual growth and motivation. There is also strong agreement on using varied assessment methods (4.79) and involving students in identifying how they learn best (4.74), which highlights a flexible, inclusive approach to instruction. These practices ensure students are heard, actively involved, and able to learn at a pace and level suited to their needs, ultimately boosting self-confidence, participation, and the development of lifelong learning skills.

Research supports these findings, with meta-analyses showing that differentiated instruction significantly improves learning outcomes across diverse educational contexts, including in Asia (M.A. AM et al., 2023). Strategies such as adaptive grouping and targeted feedback have been linked to greater engagement, motivation, and equitable opportunities for success.

Recent studies also highlight that clustering students according to their needs or skills enhances participation and fosters a positive learning environment (Helpful Professor, 2024). Collectively, these insights emphasize that differentiated instruction not only addresses learner diversity but also cultivates a more inclusive and supportive classroom culture that drives both academic achievement and holistic development.

Gamification

Gamification, the integration of game-like elements, such as competition, challenges, and rewards, into educational activities, has become a popular strategy for enhancing student motivation and engagement. By increasing motivation, encouraging collaboration, and making lessons more immersive, gamification promotes active participation, more profound exploration of content, and stronger peer interaction. As a result, students show greater focus, enthusiasm, and willingness to complete tasks, ultimately enhancing both engagement and learning outcomes.

Table 4. *Gamification*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. I use points, badges, or other rewards to motivate students to learn.	4.71	0.52	Strongly Agree
2. I assign learning activities that feel like challenges or quests.	4.57	0.54	Strongly Agree
3. I use leaderboards or friendly competition to motivate students to learn.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
4. I set clear learning goals and levels that feel like progress in a game.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
5. I use games, simulations, or other interactive activities to make learning fun.	4.71	0.52	Strongly Agree
6. I give students feedback and recognition for our achievements in a way that feels like a game.	4.93	0.25	Strongly Agree
7. I connect learning activities to the game's theme or story.	4.71	0.41	Strongly Agree
8. The games and activities I use keep us engaged and motivated in the lesson.	4.79	0.50	Strongly Agree
9. I sometimes offer gamified activities as an alternative to traditional assignments.	4.64	0.41	Strongly Agree
10. I use gamification in a way that balances having fun with learning the material.	4.64	0.50	Strongly Agree
Over-all Mean	4.73	0.46	Strongly Agree

The data reveal a very high level of agreement among respondents regarding the use of gamification, with an overall weighted mean of 4.73. Most statements scored 4.71 or higher, indicating strong support for integrating points, badges, challenges, clear goals, interactive activities, feedback, and engaging content into classroom practice. Statement 3, on the use of leaderboards or friendly competition, received a slightly lower mean of 4.57, suggesting that while teachers agree with its value, they may prefer other gamification strategies.

These findings suggest that teachers perceive gamification as a valuable tool for motivating students and enhancing the learning process, making it more enjoyable and aligned with learning objectives. However, they also recognize the need for moderation, ensuring that gamified activities remain relevant to the topic and cater to students' diverse needs and interests, as not all learners respond equally well to gamified approaches.

Research supports these insights, emphasizing that gamification is most effective when carefully planned and aligned with instructional goals. Huseinović (2024) highlights that connecting incentives to learning objectives helps keep students focused on mastery rather than solely seeking extrinsic rewards.

Similarly, Alenezi (2023) and Tepho & Srisawasdi (2023) report that gamification enhances cognitive engagement, promoting problem-solving skills and positive attitudes toward challenging subjects. Studies by Alsadoon (2023) and García-López et al. (2023) further demonstrate that the systematic use of points, badges, and challenges sustains motivation, strengthens engagement, and fosters an environment conducive to improved academic performance.

Students' Engagement in Collaborative Learning

This discussion explores the impact of collaborative learning within the context of emerging teaching strategies, with a specific focus on Grade 6 students. By examining how collaborative learning influences student engagement, academic performance, and overall classroom dynamics, this study sheds light on the potential of collaborative approaches to transform learning experiences and prepare students for future challenges.

The survey results show that respondents generally agree with the statements on collaborative learning, with a weighted mean of 4.10, indicating a positive attitude toward this strategy. Students believe that collaborative learning enhances their understanding, develops their skills, and fosters a supportive classroom environment. The high level of agreement across all statements highlights that collaborative learning is a valuable pedagogical approach that encourages group discussions, project collaboration, and active participation in class activities. These findings suggest that teachers should create an enabling environment that allows students to work together effectively, share ideas, and engage meaningfully in group tasks.

Table 5. *Students' Engagement in Collaborative Learning*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. I actively participate in group discussions and activities.	4.12	0.72	Agree
2. Collaborative learning helps me understand concepts better.	4.14	0.70	Agree
3. I feel motivated when working with my classmates on group tasks.	3.99	0.75	Agree
4. Group work improves my problem-solving and critical thinking skills.	4.13	0.71	Agree
5. I find collaborative learning enjoyable and engaging.	4.12	0.73	Agree
Over-all Mean	4.10	0.72	Agree

Johnson et al. (2014) support these findings, emphasizing that collaborative learning improves student achievement, engagement, retention of material, and interpersonal skills. Structured group work promotes critical thinking and active participation, leading to better learning outcomes compared to individual study. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding group dynamics, addressing challenges, and assessing both individual and group contributions to ensure equitable participation and meaningful learning for every student.

Students' Engagement in Technology-Enhanced Learning

Technology is becoming increasingly necessary to integrate into educational settings as it evolves, transforming how teachers and students learn. Using digital tools and resources to enhance and support the learning process, making it more accessible, engaging, and individualized, is known as technology-enhanced learning, or TEL. TEL provides a dynamic platform that transcends conventional approaches in the context of teaching sixth-grade students, allowing them to engage with the material in novel and participatory ways.

This discussion explores the impact of Technology-Enhanced Learning as an emerging teaching strategy for Grade 6 students. By examining how digital tools, such as interactive applications, online resources, and multimedia content, contribute to a deeper understanding and higher engagement, the study highlights TEL's role in fostering a more stimulating learning environment. With TEL, students not only gain familiarity with essential technologies but also develop digital literacy, critical thinking, and self-directed learning skills, which are increasingly important in the 21st century. This analysis aims to highlight the benefits and challenges of TEL, offering insights into its potential to improve teaching and learning experiences.

Table 6. *Students' Engagement in Technology-Enhanced Learning*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. I find learning through technology tools (e.g., tablets, computers) engaging	3.94	0.78	Agree
2. Technology-enhanced learning makes lessons easier to understand.	4.14	0.73	Agree
3. I prefer using technology in class to traditional learning methods	3.50	0.85	Agree
4. The use of technology increases my interest in the subject matter	3.92	0.79	Agree
5. I am more involved in lessons when technology is used.	3.70	0.82	Agree
Over-all	3.84	0.79	Agree

The survey results reveal a generally positive student perception of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL), with weighted means ranging from 3.50 to 4.14 and an overall mean of 3.84, indicating agreement that technology enhances learning by making lessons more interactive, easier to understand, and more engaging. The highest-rated statement was ease of understanding, suggesting that students believe technology helps simplify complex concepts. Although preference for technology over traditional methods received the lowest rating (3.50), students still showed strong agreement on statements highlighting technology's ability to increase interest and involvement in lessons. These findings suggest that students enjoy using technology tools for learning and that teachers should continue integrating digital resources to make lessons more dynamic, motivating, and curiosity-driven.

Technology-Enhanced Learning also fosters student ownership of learning by allowing them to explore content at their own pace through tools such as online simulations, educational games, and interactive videos. This supports differentiated instruction in mixed-ability classrooms while cultivating essential 21st-century skills, including digital literacy, collaborative problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Research reinforces these results, with Schindler et al. (2017) reporting that technology increases student motivation and engagement, while Miller et al. (2012) found that technology-enhanced instruction improves academic performance compared to traditional methods. Together, these findings highlight the value of a blended learning approach that combines digital tools with traditional teaching strategies to enhance understanding, engagement, and overall learning outcomes.

Students' Engagement in Differentiated Instruction

The variety of students' skills, interests, and learning preferences in today's classrooms presents teachers with both exceptional opportunities and challenges. The goal of differentiated instruction (DI) is to address these various demands by customizing learning activities, content, and teaching strategies for each learner.

The results show that students generally have a positive perception of differentiated instruction (DI), as all statements received weighted means above 3.5, indicating agreement. The strongest result was a weighted mean of 4.02, reflecting students' belief that teachers tailor lessons to meet individual learning needs, which demonstrates effective implementation of DI practices. Students also appreciated the relevance and personalization of the learning process (3.97), suggesting they feel connected and in control of their own learning. They

found differentiated tasks both challenging and supportive, with weighted means of 3.99 and 3.86, indicating that such practices encourage active participation and engagement. These findings underscore the value of DI in fostering inclusive and interactive classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to assess students' strengths and needs, group them according to abilities and interests, and provide diverse activities and resources to address different learning styles, thereby enhancing participation and improving overall learning experiences.

Table 7. *Students' Engagement in Differentiated Instruction*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. My teacher tailors lessons to meet my individual learning needs.	4.02	0.76	Agree
2. Differentiated instruction makes learning more relevant and personal to me.	3.97	0.77	Agree
3. I am more engaged when activities are designed to match my learning style.	3.99	0.77	Agree
4. I feel challenged but supported through differentiated tasks.	3.86	0.80	Agree
5. I participate more in lessons when instruction is personalized to my abilities.	3.99	0.77	Agree
Over-all Mean	3.97	0.77	Agree

Research supports these findings, demonstrating that differentiated instruction has a positive impact on student motivation, engagement, and academic self-perception. Pozas et al. (2020) found that personalized instruction helps students feel their education is relevant, which boosts involvement and positive attitudes toward class activities. Similarly, Barbier et al. (2023) reported that individualized instruction in diverse classrooms increases students' sense of belonging and control over their education, leading to improved participation. These findings emphasize the importance of continually monitoring and adjusting DI practices to ensure their effectiveness. By maintaining and refining differentiated strategies over time, educators can sustain student interest, foster a supportive learning environment, and promote the development of essential skills that lead to long-term success.

Students' Engagement in Gamification

Adding features of games to education, or "gamification," has garnered considerable interest as a cutting-edge strategy to enhance learning outcomes, student motivation, and engagement. By applying game-like elements to classroom activities, such as point scoring, competition, and reward systems, gamification enhances the dynamic and interactive nature of the learning process. Because sixth-graders are often quite open to games and play-based activities, gamification can transform routine lessons into engaging tasks that pique kids' interest and motivate them to participate.

Table 8. *Students' Engagement in Gamification*

Statement/indicators	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
1. I enjoy learning more when lessons involve games or game-like elements.	4.18	0.71	Agree
2. Gamification increases my motivation to participate in class activities.	4.05	0.74	Agree
3. The competitive nature of gamified lessons keeps me engaged.	3.97	0.77	Agree
4. I understand the subject better when it is presented in a gamified format.	3.93	0.78	Agree
5. Gamified activities make me more eager to complete tasks or challenges.	4.09	0.73	Agree
Over-all Mean	4.04	0.75	Agree

The data indicate that students generally hold a positive attitude toward gamification, with an overall mean of 4.04, reflecting strong agreement across most statements. Students reported that gamified lessons are engaging, motivating, and valuable to their learning, with many appreciating the competitive elements that keep them motivated and eager to participate. They also agreed that gamification enhances their understanding of concepts and increases their desire to complete tasks and overcome challenges. These findings suggest that gamification can be an effective tool for increasing participation, motivation, and academic performance, making it a valuable strategy for teachers seeking to create more dynamic and student-centered classrooms.

Research supports these results, with Lampropoulos and Sidiropoulos (2024) reporting that students in gamified settings demonstrate higher levels of interest, engagement, and comprehension compared to those in conventional classrooms. Similarly, Yu et al. (2022) found that gamified learning fosters intrinsic motivation and enjoyment, helping students stay actively involved while improving concept mastery. Together, these studies confirm that gamification's interactive and competitive elements make lessons more captivating and relatable, supporting better academic outcomes and a more fulfilling learning experience for students.

Table 9. *Significant Difference Between Emerging Trends in Teaching Strategies and Student Engagement*

Analysis of Means					
Variables	*Mean*	*sd*	*T-computed*	*P-value*	*Decision*
Students' Perception of Teachers' Instructional Strategy	3.99	0.16	10.4813	0.0001	Reject Ho

The data suggest that there is no statistically significant relationship between the use of innovative teaching strategies and active engagement. However, the findings still highlight how approaches such as collaborative learning, technology-enhanced instruction, student-centered strategies, and gamification foster interactivity, motivation, and sustained focus during lessons. These innovative methods also link classroom learning to practical, real-world contexts, making the material more meaningful and relevant to students.

Such alignment between content and real-life application is crucial for enhancing student interest and participation, as learners are more likely to engage when they see the value of what they are studying.

These results align with research indicating that creative teaching approaches have a positive impact on student engagement. Mali and Lim (2023) emphasize that gamification, technology integration, and collaborative learning make lessons more meaningful and relevant, which increases motivation and participation. Similarly, Piogroup (2023) highlights how project-based learning enables students to apply their knowledge in practical settings, thereby deepening their understanding and promoting critical thinking. The findings further imply that active learning environments, supported by technology and differentiated instruction, cater to diverse learning needs and encourage students to play an active role in their education. Such approaches stimulate critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, helping learners go beyond passive reception and engage more deeply with the content.

Conclusions

The study demonstrated a significant positive relationship between innovative teaching strategies and student engagement, affirming that approaches such as collaborative learning, technology-enhanced instruction, differentiated teaching, and gamification meaningfully enhance students' learning experiences. These findings reinforce the TPACK Framework, underscoring that effective instruction arises from the seamless integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. They also align with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocates for flexible and inclusive methods that address the diverse needs of learners. Collectively, the results highlight that when teachers adopt adaptive and student-centered strategies, they create learning environments that are more engaging, equitable, and conducive to academic growth.

In light of these insights, it is recommended that schools prioritize continuous professional development focused on integrating emerging instructional strategies with technology and inclusive pedagogy. Administrators should institutionalize support systems—such as mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, and access to digital resources—to sustain innovation in teaching. Furthermore, future research may explore longitudinal and experimental studies to examine the causal effects of these strategies on performance and to evaluate their applicability across different grade levels and subject areas. By advancing these initiatives, educators and policymakers can foster a culture of innovation that prepares learners for the demands of 21st-century education.

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