

**“SOMETHING HAPPENED TO MY STUDENTS”: SELECTED  
FILIPINO TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHANGES IN  
THEIR STUDENTS AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THEIR  
IMPLICATIONS ON IMPROVED TEACHER TRAINING IN BASIC  
EDUCATION, LEARNING THEORIES, AND COMMUNICATION**

**BRIAN BANTUGAN<sup>1</sup>, EVA NAVARRO<sup>1</sup>, ESTELLE CLAUDETTE ARCILLA<sup>2</sup>,  
MARIS JOY RELOX<sup>2</sup> & DOROTHY FRITZ UY<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty Member, St. Paul University Manila

<sup>2</sup>Graduate Student, St. Paul University Manila

**ABSTRACT**

This study explored changes in grade school students' qualities and learning engagement before and after COVID-19 through teachers' observations. Using open-ended surveys and a literature review, it examines shifts in student behavior, academic performance, and teaching methods. Twenty volunteer teachers provided insights, analyzed thematically, to identify patterns in student engagement and instructional adjustments. The literature review contextualized findings with research on digital learning and differentiated instruction. The study highlights the evolving needs of students and the necessity of enhancing teacher training to address pandemic-related educational changes. The study revealed significant differences in students' qualities before and after the pandemic. Pre-pandemic students were academically stronger, socially engaged, and emotionally resilient, while post-pandemic students faced challenges in learning engagement, emotional well-being, and social skills. However, they demonstrated adaptability and digital proficiency. Teachers emphasized the need for targeted interventions, including mental health support, emotional regulation strategies, and a balanced integration of technology. They have adjusted their teaching methods by incorporating differentiated instruction, social-emotional support, and hands-on learning experiences. To address these evolving challenges, teacher training programs in the Philippines must integrate technology, social-emotional learning, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Additionally, communication training is crucial for effective student engagement and collaboration. These adaptations will help educators foster student success in a post-pandemic world, ensuring academic achievement and emotional well-being. The study underscores the importance of continuous teacher development to navigate the changing educational landscape effectively.

**Keywords:** Student engagement, Teacher training, Emotional well-being, Differentiated instruction, Technology integration

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education worldwide, affecting grade school students in numerous ways. With school closures and the transition to remote learning, many students experienced a decline in learning engagement. According to research, in countries like the United States, students experienced significant learning losses, especially in reading and math, with some falling behind by half a grade level (Associated Press, 2025). Similarly, international studies on the pandemic's effects on learning engagement indicate that educational systems

globally struggled with resource gaps, exacerbating challenges for students in rural or low-income areas. Despite this, countries like Australia saw improvements, as reflected in their performance in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), where students ranked significantly higher, showing resilience and adaptability in their education system (The Guardian, 2024).

In the Philippines, the pandemic led to severe disruptions in the education sector. The Department of Education (DepEd) quickly shifted to online and blended learning modalities, which posed significant challenges due to widespread issues with access to technology and internet connectivity (Department of Education, 2020). Moreover, socio-economic disparities exacerbated these issues, leaving many students in rural or low-income areas struggling to maintain engagement. The government and local educational organizations implemented various programs to address these gaps, such as the Genyo E-learning platform, which has provided online resources for students (Genyo E-learning, n.d.). However, studies on the effectiveness of these platforms in enhancing student engagement remain scarce, highlighting a gap in research specific to the Philippine context. The pandemic's long-term impact on learning outcomes and engagement in Filipino grade school children continues to be an area needing more focused investigation.

## **1.1 Comparing Grade School Children's Learning Engagement before the Pandemic and after**

The shift from traditional in-person learning to online learning during the pandemic significantly altered how grade school students engaged with their education. Before the pandemic, traditional in-person learning supported active engagement through classroom interactions and peer collaborations. However, after the pandemic, a shift toward digital and hybrid learning models exposed several challenges. Studies have found that many students who graduated before the pandemic demonstrated higher levels of engagement in classroom-based learning, benefiting from face-to-face interactions and immediate feedback from teachers (The Guardian, 2024). In contrast, students graduating after the pandemic faced increased isolation and disengagement due to the transition to remote learning. Despite this, there were efforts to recover lost learning, such as targeted interventions, tutoring programs, and summer schools that helped bridge some gaps (Associated Press, 2025).

## **1.2 Comparing Grade School Children's Learning Engagement during the Pandemic and after**

During the pandemic, students' learning engagement was severely impacted due to the sudden shift to online and remote learning. In the Philippines, students faced challenges such as a lack of access to the internet and necessary technological tools, which hindered their engagement with the curriculum (Department of Education, 2020). Internationally, studies showed that the shift resulted in increased disengagement, especially among younger students, who were more reliant on face-to-face interaction for learning (The Guardian, 2024). However, post-pandemic, there has been a concerted effort to re-engage students. For example, the Philippines introduced various interventions to address learning gaps, such as face-to-face classes in select areas and digital learning tools like Genyo. While some studies indicated that these interventions have led to improvements, especially in the areas of mathematics and science (Associated Press,

2025), challenges remain in ensuring consistent engagement across all demographic groups. The adaptation of students to post-pandemic learning environments also highlights differences in engagement, with some students exhibiting better outcomes due to structured recovery programs.

### **1.3 Research Gaps on Learning Engagement of Grade School Students Before, During, and After the Pandemic**

While much has been studied about the effects of the pandemic on grade school students' learning engagement, there are still significant research gaps. Specifically, longitudinal studies that track the learning engagement of grade school children before, during, and after the pandemic are scarce. In the Philippines, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that explore how learning engagement evolved over the course of the pandemic and what long-term effects these changes may have on educational outcomes (Second Congressional Commission on Education, 2025). Additionally, research on the effectiveness of digital platforms such as Genyo E-learning in sustaining engagement during the pandemic is limited (Genyo E-learning, n.d.). To fill these gaps, future research should focus on longitudinal data that captures changes in learning engagement and the effectiveness of various interventions over time. Understanding these trends will be crucial for designing educational strategies that support long-term engagement and academic success, especially for students in low-income or rural areas.

Several studies have examined teachers' observations regarding changes in their grade school students in the Philippines following the COVID-19 pandemic (Department of Education [DepEd], 2022; EDCOM II, 2025). These studies highlight various challenges and adaptations experienced by both educators and students during this period.

A phenomenological study focused on public school teachers in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that educators experienced various challenges, including the need to adapt to online teaching, address students' emotional needs, and manage increased workloads (DepEd, 2022). Teachers had to take on multiple roles, such as counselors and content creators, to support their students effectively.

An exploration of educational situations in the Philippines from the perspectives of basic education teachers during the pandemic highlighted that teachers had to reshape conventional education methods (EDCOM II, 2025). They faced challenges in delivering quality education amidst the pandemic, including adapting to online learning platforms and addressing students' diverse needs.

An exploratory study on Filipino teachers' perceptions toward distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic indicated that educators had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of online learning (DepEd, 2022). While some appreciated the flexibility, others faced challenges related to technology access and student engagement.

The UNICEF Education COVID-19 Case Study on the Philippines reported that the pandemic led to school closures affecting almost 25 million students (DepEd, 2022). The shift to distance learning highlighted significant challenges, including limited access to technology and the digital divide, impacting students' ability to continue their education effectively.

These studies collectively underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by teachers in the Philippines during the pandemic, including the need for rapid adaptation to online teaching, addressing students' emotional and educational needs, and managing increased workloads. They also highlight the resilience and dedication of educators in navigating these unprecedented circumstances to support their students' learning.

This study focusing on teachers' personal observations in the Philippines would help fill the gap in understanding the human experience behind the quantitative data on learning loss and engagement. While there are studies on the overall impact of the pandemic, there is limited qualitative research that captures the day-to-day experiences of educators in the Philippines, especially regarding the post-pandemic period (Cuenca, 2020; Guinto, 2021). Personal narratives from teachers would offer rich, descriptive data, contributing to a deeper understanding of how the pandemic has reshaped the educational landscape from the perspective of those who are closest to the students (Salazar & De Guzman, 2021). These personal insights are essential for revealing the complexities of the learning process during this period and can help inform educational strategies and policies aimed at recovery and future preparedness (Zhang et al., 2022).

## 2.0 STUDY FRAMEWORK

Teachers' observations of students' learning engagement during and after the COVID-19 pandemic can be explained through three complementary constructivist theories: Social Constructivism, Cognitive Apprenticeship, and Situated Learning Theory. Vygotsky's Social Constructivism emphasizes the role of social interactions in learning, highlighting how the disruption of face-to-face learning affected students' cognitive and emotional engagement (Vygotsky, 1978). Cognitive Apprenticeship illustrates how teachers, as facilitators, guide students through learning by modeling and providing feedback, with teachers' observations revealing how the shift to online learning impacted students' ability to engage in authentic activities (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991). Finally, Situated Learning Theory underscores the importance of learning in real-world contexts, noting how the pandemic disrupted students' participation in the learning community and how teachers adapted to re-engage students in meaningful ways (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Together, these theories highlight the critical value of teachers' observations in understanding the transformation of student engagement and learning during the pandemic.

When viewed together, these three theories—Social Constructivism, Cognitive Apprenticeship, and Situated Learning Theory—offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the value of teachers' observations in explaining students' learning engagement. Teachers' insights are not only grounded in their ability to notice shifts in student behavior and participation but also in their understanding of the broader context in which learning occurs. Through these observations, teachers can explain how social interaction, teacher guidance, and participation in authentic contexts were affected by the pandemic, providing a deeper understanding of students' struggles and successes in the changing educational landscape.

Teachers, as the closest observers of student behavior, provide a critical source of qualitative data that cannot be captured through quantitative measures alone. By integrating these constructivist theories, we can appreciate the role of teachers in interpreting the complex and

dynamic learning processes that occurred during and after the pandemic. Their observations offer valuable insights into how students' learning engagement evolved and what factors influenced their ability to learn and succeed in new and challenging circumstances. Teachers' observations, when framed within these constructivist theories, contribute to a richer, more nuanced understanding of the impact of the pandemic on students' learning engagement. These observations provide essential qualitative data that complement and deepen the findings from quantitative research, filling in the gaps in our understanding of how the pandemic reshaped education.

## 2.1 Statement of the Problem

This study explored and analyze the changes in grade school students' qualities and learning engagement before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as observed by their teachers. Specifically, the study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the selected teachers' observations on a marked difference in the qualities of their students before and after the pandemic?
2. What are the selected teachers' observations on how different the students who graduated before the pandemic are compared to those who graduated after the pandemic?
3. How do the selected teachers explain the differences they have observed in their students' qualities and learning engagement?
4. How have the selected teachers adjusted their teaching methods to produce the learning outcomes expected from your students in the subjects they teach?
5. How teachers training competencies in the Philippine education system should be modified to address the multifaceted and pandemic-related changes in students?
6. How important is communication training in the proposed enhancement of basic education teacher training?

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study that utilized an 5-item open-ended survey and literature review underscored teachers' observations on their students who experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. Open-ended surveys are an effective tool for exploring changes in grade school students' qualities and learning engagement before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. These surveys allow teachers to provide detailed, context-rich responses that capture the complexity of observed changes, such as shifts in emotional, behavioral, and academic development (Creswell, 2014). Teachers can explain their adjustments in teaching methods, reflecting their personal and professional growth, and share their unique strategies for fostering learning outcomes (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, open-ended questions enable teachers to offer valuable insights into how teacher training competencies, especially communication skills, should be modified to address pandemic-related challenges and improve teaching effectiveness (Mertens, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). This flexibility allows for deeper understanding of the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic on education and provides essential data for educational reform.

Twenty basic education teachers participated voluntarily upon personal invitation by the researchers. The validity of using 20 volunteer teachers for this study is justifiable based on

considerations of sample size, purposive sampling, and the specific focus of the research. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select individuals who possess specific knowledge or experience that is directly relevant to the research questions (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In this study, teachers who have directly observed and responded to the changes in students' qualities and engagement due to the pandemic are ideal participants. Additionally, the sample size of 20 teachers is reasonable for qualitative studies, as it allows for rich, detailed data while remaining manageable for analysis (Creswell, 2014). According to Patton (2015), qualitative research benefits from smaller, purposefully selected samples that can provide in-depth insights, particularly when exploring complex issues like the pandemic's effects on education. This sample size is adequate to capture diverse perspectives and ensures that the data collected can be used to derive meaningful conclusions about the shifts in students' qualities and the teaching adjustments needed.

The thematic analysis conducted on the responses from the 20 volunteer teachers was aimed at identifying the recurring themes or patterns in how they perceived the changes in students' qualities and learning engagement before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This process involved reading through the teachers' responses and categorizing them into coherent themes that represented the teachers' observations and explanations of the shift in students' characteristics and engagement due to the pandemic.

Using a literature review to enrich the data and discussion of a study is a valuable method to provide context, deepen the analysis, and synthesize data sets. A well-conducted literature review enables the researcher to compare and contrast existing findings with the new data generated from the study, thereby enhancing the overall robustness and validity of the research. By integrating previous studies and theoretical perspectives into the analysis, the literature review not only supports the study's findings but also situates them within a broader academic and real-world context.

In this study, the literature review was used to further enrich the data collected from the teachers' responses by referencing prior research on topics such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning, the role of technology in education, and the importance of teacher training and professional development. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the patterns and themes identified in the teachers' responses, such as the changes in students' social-emotional development and engagement, and how teachers have adjusted their teaching strategies. For example, teachers' observations about students' increased reliance on technology for learning were linked to studies that emphasize the necessity of digital tools in bridging the educational gaps exacerbated by the pandemic (Trust, 2021).

Moreover, the literature review was employed to synthesize data sets by aligning teachers' perceptions with broader trends and conclusions drawn from previous studies. For instance, the teachers' emphasis on differentiated teaching strategies and individualized support for students was examined in light of existing literature on differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014), which highlights its importance in catering to the diverse needs of students, especially during times of disruption like the pandemic. This synthesis of primary data with secondary sources allowed the research to paint a fuller picture of how educational practices are evolving in response to pandemic-related challenges.

Additionally, the literature review acted as a bridge between theory and practice, offering a theoretical foundation for the changes teachers observed and explaining how such shifts in student behavior and teaching methods are consistent with or diverge from previous findings. This helped to validate the study's conclusions, ensuring that the data were not viewed in isolation but were contextualized within a broader field of educational research.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 What are the selected teachers' observations on a marked difference in the qualities of their students before and after the pandemic?

The responses reveal a stark contrast in students' qualities before and after the pandemic. While students' academic, emotional, and social capacities were more robust pre-pandemic, the post-pandemic period has highlighted challenges in learning engagement, emotional well-being, social skills, and behavioral regulation. Teachers' observations underscore the need for targeted interventions, including mental health support, emotional regulation strategies, and a balanced integration of technology to foster students' learning engagement and overall development. The pandemic has undeniably reshaped the learning landscape, requiring teachers to adjust their pedagogical approaches and provide more individualized and empathetic support to students.

**A decline in academic performance following the pandemic.** Teachers noted that before the pandemic, students exhibited "stronger academic performance, with more structured learning, better engagement, and well-developed foundational skills." They also "communicated effectively, worked well in groups, and had a clear understanding of classroom norms." However, after the pandemic, many students experienced learning gaps, particularly in areas such as reading and math. One teacher observed, "students after pandemic are so lazy compared to students in the pre-pandemic... they don't like to read and do researches." Teachers highlighted that the students showed "shorter attention spans" and were more dependent on technology, which led to "widening the gap between high and low achievers." Despite the setbacks, some teachers acknowledged that students became "more inclined with life skills and technology" and developed "self-directed learning and technological knowledge."

**Emotional and behavioral shifts were prominent.** Before the pandemic, students displayed better emotional regulation and "viewed school as a safe space for learning and social interaction." However, post-pandemic, many students exhibited heightened emotional difficulties. One teacher shared, "students after the pandemic are struggling with anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional outbursts, relying heavily on adults for reassurance." Teachers observed that students had difficulty managing emotions, with "increased restlessness, oppositional behavior, and difficulty adapting to structured environments." A teacher further stated, "students seem to have unstable temperaments," with "misunderstandings and emotional outbursts" becoming more frequent. This shift emphasized the need for more individualized interventions and mental health support.

**Social interaction is a key area of concern.** Before the pandemic, students were described as "active and more eager to learn," with "better social interactions" and the ability to "work well in groups." After the pandemic, however, students exhibited less engagement with peers and teachers. One teacher observed that some students were "not socially confident in carrying a conversation with others," and noted a difference in online versus in-person participation:

“Some of them are actively participative in online public chats but they do not participate in onsite class participation.” Additionally, a teacher observed that students became “passive after pandemic probably because of less interaction with classmates and teachers,” and that students seemed to “lack the confidence to engage socially in person.” The decreased ability to form relationships and communicate effectively in person highlighted the impact of the disrupted learning environment.

**The shift to online learning was a significant factor in altering students' learning behaviors.** While some students became more familiar with technology, this shift also affected their engagement with traditional learning methods. One teacher noted, “Students after the pandemic are so attached to paper and pen activities than interaction and discussion type.” Teachers observed that many students preferred passive learning, with one stating, “Students seem to always multitask even though somebody is in front speaking,” showing a tendency to be distracted by technology during lessons. The increased dependence on digital tools and technology was apparent, as another teacher observed, “the only thing that the students gain from the pandemic was they became technology savvy.” However, this dependence on digital tools was often coupled with a decline in verbal communication and critical thinking skills, with teachers noting, “They cannot express their thoughts well verbally.”

**Relationship to General Findings Outside the Philippines.** The observations made by teachers regarding the changes in students' academic, emotional, social, and behavioral qualities before and after the pandemic reflect broader trends that have been reported internationally. Studies across various countries have highlighted similar challenges, particularly in the areas of academic performance, emotional regulation, social skills, and the adaptation to online learning. These findings are consistent with global research that emphasizes the lasting impact of the pandemic on students' overall development.

Teachers in the Philippines observed a decline in academic performance, noting that students displayed stronger academic skills and engagement before the pandemic but faced learning gaps afterward. This observation mirrors global trends. For instance, studies in the United States and Europe report that school closures and the shift to online learning led to significant learning losses, particularly in core subjects such as reading and math (Engzell, Frey, & Verhagen, 2021). The “widening the gap between high and low achievers” and the noted “shorter attention spans” in the responses are similar to findings in other regions, where students struggled with focus and were less motivated in remote learning environments (Choudhury & McLeod, 2020). Furthermore, while students became “more inclined with life skills and technology,” this shift towards self-directed learning and increased technological knowledge has been acknowledged as both an advantage and a challenge. Internationally, students became more tech-savvy during the pandemic but simultaneously faced difficulties in adapting traditional skills like reading comprehension and problem-solving, which require more active engagement (OECD, 2021).

The emotional and behavioral challenges observed by teachers in the Philippines, such as increased anxiety, low self-esteem, emotional outbursts, and difficulty adapting to structured environments, are not unique to this context. Research globally has shown that the pandemic exacerbated mental health issues in students, with many showing increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal. A report from the American Psychological



Association (2021) noted that the pandemic contributed to heightened emotional distress, especially among children and adolescents, leading to difficulties in emotional regulation and behavioral issues. The observation that students "seem to have unstable temperaments" and were "relying heavily on adults for reassurance" is aligned with findings in other countries, where caregivers and educators have noted an increased need for emotional support and mental health services (Duan et al., 2020). In response to these changes, schools worldwide have emphasized the importance of integrating social-emotional learning programs and mental health support into their curricula to help students cope with the emotional fallout of the pandemic (Durlak et al., 2011).

Social interaction emerged as a significant concern in the Philippines, with teachers observing that students became less confident in social settings after the pandemic, with some preferring online interactions over in-person conversations. This shift is echoed globally, where research has found that students' social skills were severely impacted by extended periods of isolation and remote learning. A study conducted in the UK noted that children showed delays in social development, struggling with communication and peer relationships after prolonged school closures (Cameron et al., 2021). Similarly, in the United States, educators reported that students returned to school with reduced social confidence and struggled with basic social interactions, a direct result of the disruption in regular face-to-face communication during the pandemic (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). The decreased ability to "form relationships and communicate effectively in person" noted in the Philippines is therefore a phenomenon observed in many countries where the social impact of the pandemic on students has been profound (Lee et al., 2021).

The shift to online learning, a central feature of the pandemic response, was universally impactful. In the Philippines, teachers observed an increased reliance on digital tools, which some students found more engaging but also led to distractions and a decline in verbal communication and critical thinking skills. This trend is consistent with findings from other countries. In the UK, a study on the impact of remote learning found that while technology allowed for continued access to education, it also exacerbated disengagement, particularly among students who lacked motivation or struggled with independent learning (Jillings et al., 2021). Furthermore, the observation that students became "so attached to paper and pen activities" post-pandemic reflects a common challenge faced globally: students who had become accustomed to passive, tech-driven learning struggled to transition back to interactive, in-person educational settings (OECD, 2020). As technology became more integrated into learning, it raised concerns about the loss of essential skills such as verbal communication and face-to-face interaction, which many educators globally have identified as critical to students' holistic development (Blazer, 2021).

#### **4.2 What are the selected teachers' observations on how different the students who graduated before the pandemic are compared to those who graduated after the pandemic?**

The findings from the thematic analysis show significant differences between students who graduated before and after the pandemic. Pre-pandemic graduates were academically stronger, more socially engaged, and emotionally resilient, benefiting from structured, in-person learning environments. In contrast, post-pandemic graduates faced challenges in academic

preparedness, social interactions, emotional well-being, and accountability. However, they also displayed increased adaptability and proficiency in digital tools, reflecting the unique nature of their educational experience during the pandemic. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address the gaps in learning, social skills, emotional regulation, and work ethic that have emerged as a result of the shift to online education during the pandemic. Teachers noted that while post-pandemic graduates had developed resilience in some areas, they required ongoing support to thrive in academic and professional settings.

**Academic Readiness and Knowledge Retention.** One of the most prominent themes highlighted by the teachers is the academic performance and readiness of students before and after the pandemic. Graduates before the pandemic were seen as more academically prepared, with teachers having more direct and consistent oversight over their learning. These students were described as more knowledgeable due to face-to-face classes, where teachers could monitor progress and guide students in real-time. As one teacher noted, “Students who graduated before the pandemic were more skillful than after pandemic,” implying a stronger academic foundation. In contrast, post-pandemic graduates experienced challenges related to foundational skills, such as reading and math, primarily due to the shift to online and modular learning. Teachers noted that post-pandemic students were “more likely to be weak in their academics, most barely passed or graduated because of the effects of the pandemic.” One teacher explicitly observed that “students who graduated after the pandemic lacked guidance from teachers and help from classmates,” a direct consequence of remote learning that hindered daily, real-time academic support.

**Social Skills and Interpersonal Communication.** Another key theme that emerged is the difference in social skills between pre- and post-pandemic graduates. Before the pandemic, students were described as more socially adept, with better communication skills and the ability to engage in face-to-face interactions. They had more opportunities to interact with peers and teachers, attend school activities, and develop relationships through in-person socializing. As one teacher noted, pre-pandemic students were “more active than the non-pandemic grad” and had “better social interactions” due to the natural opportunities for engagement. Post-pandemic graduates, on the other hand, struggled significantly in social scenarios. Teachers observed that students lacked confidence in in-person communication and had trouble engaging in face-to-face conversations. One teacher shared, “Some of them are actively participative in online public chats but they do not participate in onsite class participation.” This decrease in social confidence was attributed to the long period of social isolation and virtual learning during the pandemic. Another teacher mentioned that post-pandemic students “lack the confidence to engage socially in person,” indicating the disruption in social development caused by the shift to online education.

**Emotional Well-Being and Resilience.** The emotional and mental health of students was another area where differences were observed. Pre-pandemic graduates were seen as more emotionally resilient, able to handle stress and challenges, and having a more stable emotional state. As one teacher put it, pre-pandemic students “viewed school as a safe space for learning and social interaction.” In contrast, post-pandemic graduates were described as emotionally fragile, with heightened anxiety, stress, and a greater need for emotional support. Teachers noted that post-pandemic students “struggling with anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional outbursts” often relied on adults for reassurance. One teacher shared, “Students after the

pandemic are more sensitive and weaker in terms of coping up with difficulties and struggles,” further emphasizing the emotional challenges these students faced. Another teacher observed, “Students seem to have unstable temperaments,” pointing to a heightened emotional volatility that required more individualized mental health support.

**Adaptability and Technology Dependency.** While students after the pandemic exhibited weaknesses in foundational academic skills and social interactions, they also demonstrated a significant shift towards technology proficiency. Teachers observed that post-pandemic graduates were more adaptable to digital tools and remote learning environments, often becoming more comfortable with technology than their pre-pandemic counterparts. As one teacher remarked, “Students after the pandemic became technology savvy,” indicating a positive shift towards digital proficiency. However, this adaptability came at a cost, with many students becoming overly reliant on digital tools, often to the detriment of their critical thinking, verbal communication, and traditional learning skills. A teacher commented, “The students who graduated after pandemic are more reliant on AI tools,” reflecting the shift towards technology dependence, which at times hindered the development of more traditional learning habits. As another teacher noted, post-pandemic students “seem to always multitask even though somebody is in front speaking,” showing how distractions caused by technology affected focus and engagement during lessons.

**Work Ethic and Accountability** The work ethic and accountability of students’ post-pandemic were also notable points of contrast. Before the pandemic, graduates were seen as more independent and disciplined, with a stronger work ethic. Teachers could monitor their performance closely and ensure they remained on track with their assignments and responsibilities. One teacher pointed out that pre-pandemic students were “more independent” and more capable of “self-learning at their own pace.” Post-pandemic students, however, exhibited a decline in self-regulation and accountability, often struggling with time management and responsibility due to the flexible nature of remote learning. One teacher noted, “Post-pandemic students lacked the structure and discipline that in-person classes provided,” implying that remote learning environments reduced the urgency and structure needed for academic success. Another teacher observed that “students who graduated after pandemic lacked social skills” and had a “poor work ethic,” partly because of the relaxed and disconnected nature of online learning.

**Relationship to General Findings Outside the Philippines.** The experiences of students in the Philippines during the pandemic reflect broader global trends, including learning setbacks, increased reliance on technology, and challenges in emotional and social development. These parallels underscore the need for targeted interventions and support systems to address the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic on education worldwide.

Globally, the shift to remote learning during the pandemic led to significant learning gaps, particularly in foundational subjects like reading and math. A report by Ofsted (2021) in the UK highlighted that “some children at every age group had regressed in their skills” due to school closures and the challenges of remote education. Similarly, in the Philippines, teachers observed that post-pandemic graduates “lack guidance from teachers and help from classmates,” which resulted in diminished academic preparedness (Philippine Teachers, 2024). These findings are consistent with a study by the World Bank (2020), which found that students

who experienced remote learning performed worse academically compared to those who had in-person classes before the pandemic.

The pandemic's disruption of traditional schooling also had profound effects on students' emotional and social development worldwide. In the UK, mental health concerns among children were heightened, with many students experiencing anxiety, depression, and social isolation (The Guardian, 2025). This mirrors observations in the Philippines, where teachers noted that post-pandemic students were "struggling with anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional outbursts" (Philippine Teachers, 2024). According to a study by the UNICEF (2021), children worldwide reported an increase in mental health challenges during and after the pandemic, with anxiety and emotional difficulties becoming more prevalent.

The accelerated integration of technology into education during the pandemic led to increased digital proficiency among students globally. However, this shift also resulted in challenges related to technology dependence. A report by the Financial Times (2024) indicated a global "boom in home schooling," driven by dissatisfaction with traditional schooling and a desire for more flexible, technology-enabled learning options. Similarly, in the Philippines, teachers observed that post-pandemic students were "more reliant on AI tools" and were "technology savvy," but lacked critical thinking and communication skills developed through traditional learning methods (Philippine Teachers, 2024). This shift toward technology has been similarly noted by researchers in the US, where a report by the Brookings Institution (2021) showed that while students became more adept with digital tools, many struggled with face-to-face communication and problem-solving abilities.

The flexibility of remote learning environments posed challenges for student accountability and work ethic globally. A study by the OECD (2021) found that absenteeism and disengagement were higher in many countries during the pandemic. Similarly, teachers in the Philippines observed that post-pandemic students "lack the structure and discipline that in-person classes provided," leading to concerns about their work ethic and accountability (Philippine Teachers, 2024). This aligns with findings from a global survey conducted by UNESCO (2021), which showed that students' work habits deteriorated during the pandemic, as remote learning environments lacked the same level of accountability and engagement present in traditional classrooms.

#### **4.3 How do the selected teachers explain the differences they have observed in their students' qualities and learning engagement?**

The differences observed in students' qualities and learning engagement can be attributed to several factors, including disrupted education, changes in learning environments, and the impact of technology on learning. Post-pandemic students exhibited notable gaps in foundational academic skills and emotional resilience, despite being more adaptable and tech-savvy. These findings align with global trends that emphasize the negative consequences of remote learning on social development and academic performance, while also acknowledging the resilience and adaptability of students in the face of unprecedented challenges.

**Disruption of Learning and Foundational Skills.** A recurring theme is the significant impact that the disruption of education during the pandemic has had on students' academic competencies. Post-pandemic graduates, many of whom experienced online learning or

modular education, were observed to have gaps in foundational skills and a weakened understanding of academic concepts. One teacher noted that post-pandemic students "can comply with academic requirements but understanding was not in depth," highlighting the lack of engagement and interaction that are vital for deeper learning (Philippine Teachers, 2024). Another teacher further elaborated that "online education is not helpful in honing students' skills; skills must be taught in face-to-face learning mode," pointing to the limitations of remote learning in fostering comprehensive academic skills (Philippine Teachers, 2024).

This observation aligns with global findings, such as those from the World Bank (2020), which indicated that many students experienced substantial learning losses due to the shift to remote education. In countries around the world, students demonstrated lower academic performance, especially in subjects requiring hands-on experience and deeper engagement, which was often lacking in online learning setups (OECD, 2021).

**Social and Emotional Well-being.** Another key theme is the emotional and social challenges faced by post-pandemic students. Many teachers noted that the isolation caused by remote learning had a profound effect on students' emotional and social development. For instance, one teacher observed, "Being contained at home and having limited persons to talk and share with affect the emotional aspect of students," pointing out how the lack of social interactions led to heightened emotional struggles (Philippine Teachers, 2024). These students, often isolated and disengaged, are seen as less confident and more "awkward with social interactions," which reflects a decline in emotional resilience and social skills.

This trend is corroborated by international studies, such as those by UNICEF (2021), which found that many students worldwide reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and social isolation due to prolonged school closures. The lack of face-to-face interactions during critical developmental years contributed to difficulties in communication and emotional well-being (UNICEF, 2021).

**Technology Use and Digital Proficiency.** The role of technology in education has become more prominent, particularly for students who graduated post-pandemic. Teachers highlighted that these students were more "technology savvy" and "adaptable" but struggled with skills that go beyond digital tools. One teacher explained, "Students can also learn through digital media since we are living in the digital world," suggesting that digital fluency became a critical part of their learning experience (Philippine Teachers, 2024). However, this proficiency came at the cost of other important skills, such as critical thinking, teamwork, and in-depth subject knowledge. Another teacher remarked that post-pandemic graduates were "more reliant on AI tools" but lacked the ability to "retain and apply information most effectively" when compared to their pre-pandemic counterparts (Philippine Teachers, 2024).

Globally, reports from the OECD (2021) and Brookings Institution (2021) highlighted the increased reliance on technology during the pandemic, which, while fostering digital skills, also led to issues with students' ability to engage in more traditional academic tasks such as problem-solving, collaboration, and independent learning.

**Adaptability and Resilience.** While the pandemic created numerous challenges for students, post-pandemic graduates have developed adaptability and resilience in response to the uncertainty and rapid shifts in education. Teachers observed that post-pandemic students were

more adaptable and better equipped to navigate digital learning environments, with one noting that these graduates "developed adaptability, digital fluency, and resilience in the face of uncertainty" (Philippine Teachers, 2024). This reflects a broader global trend where students showed remarkable resilience during the pandemic, as noted in research by the World Bank (2020), which emphasized the capacity of students to adapt to remote learning environments.

However, despite their adaptability, these students often struggled with time management and accountability due to the flexibility of online learning environments. Teachers noted that online learning contributed to "weaker time management and accountability," as students were less supervised and often multitasked during lessons (Philippine Teachers, 2024). This observation echoes findings from the OECD (2021), which identified concerns over absenteeism and disengagement in remote learning settings.

**Impact of External Factors: Family and Socioeconomic Conditions.** The influence of external factors, particularly family and socioeconomic conditions, was also highlighted as a key difference. Teachers in public schools mentioned that many post-pandemic graduates had to rely on their parents for support in completing assignments, which affected their independence. One teacher explained, "Public school students did not have the privilege to have asynchronous/synchronous classes... it might have contributed to the students depending on their parents to answer their work for them" (Philippine Teachers, 2024). This situation was exacerbated by the economic difficulties many families faced during the pandemic, where students had to balance schoolwork with helping their families. This points to the critical role of family support during the pandemic, which shaped the learning outcomes of many students, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds.

#### **4.4 How have the selected teachers adjusted their teaching methods to produce the learning outcomes expected from your students in the subjects they teach?**

Teachers have adjusted their methods in several key ways to meet the evolving needs of students and ensure that learning outcomes are achieved. By integrating technology, offering differentiated instruction, focusing on social-emotional support, and remaining flexible in their approaches, teachers have created an environment where students can thrive despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Continuous reflection and adaptation, as well as the inclusion of real-world and hands-on learning experiences, have been essential to their strategies for fostering student success. As one teacher summarized, "As a teacher, I've had to adapt significantly to ensure students achieve learning outcomes, especially given the evolving educational landscape."

**Use of Technology and Digital Tools.** A significant number of responses indicate that teachers have incorporated technology and digital resources to facilitate learning. Teachers have integrated platforms like Flash Academy and interactive tools to enhance student engagement and promote self-paced learning: "I integrate technology, such as Flash Academy and interactive tools, to support self-paced learning and engagement." Additionally, teachers have adapted by using online communication tools to offer real-time assistance: "Making myself more accessible through messenger to answer firsthand the queries of parents and or pupils about the lessons."

**Differentiated Instruction.** Several teachers emphasized the importance of tailoring their teaching strategies to the diverse needs of students. As one teacher put it, "I tailor lessons to accommodate diverse needs, using scaffolding and personalized learning plans for English learners and students with special needs." This approach also includes offering students various methods for demonstrating their learning, such as writing or performing: "I would often adjust to the learner's preference of demonstrating the outcome. If the student is capable of producing and demonstrating the outcomes via singing, I would ask the student to sing." This flexibility in assessment and instruction helps ensure that each student can engage with the material in a way that suits their individual learning style.

**Social-Emotional Support.** Teachers highlighted the need to focus on the emotional well-being of students, especially after the disruptions caused by the pandemic. As one teacher noted, "Social-emotional learning is prioritized to build resilience and self-regulation." Teachers recognized that students had faced emotional struggles due to isolation and the shift to remote learning, and they made adjustments accordingly: "I have to extend my patience because they are also very sensitive. They do not communicate their struggles and emotions, and I do not want to be a trigger." They also sought to create an atmosphere of understanding and support by offering guidance and reassurance, as one teacher mentioned: "During orientation, I would always tell them that it is not my obligation to learn, I am there to teach."

**Ongoing Reflection and Adaptation.** Continuous reflection and adaptation were crucial for many teachers. One teacher explained, "If my students do not meet the expected learning outcomes, I always reflect on my teaching approach and methods," while another stated, "I always look after the needs of my students especially the full refresher one." Teachers also recognized the importance of updating instructional materials: "As a teacher, due to the demand on the learning outcome, I was able to upgrade all my instructional material that are needed in the learning outcome." This process of ongoing evaluation ensures that teaching methods remain responsive to the changing needs of students.

**Group Activities and Collaborative Learning.** Teachers emphasized the importance of group activities and collaborative learning to foster student interaction. One teacher noted, "In terms of teaching strategies I made sure that I always include group work activities to help the students interact with their classmates." Collaborative learning not only supports cognitive development but also nurtures the social skills that may have been hindered during the pandemic. Teachers also highlighted the value of peer feedback in helping students improve: "I foster collaboration through group activities and peer feedback."

**Contextualized and Relevant Materials.** Many teachers adjusted their teaching by using more contextually relevant materials to make lessons more relatable to students. For example, one teacher stated, "I use contextualized materials so that they can relate more to the lesson." This practice involves incorporating local issues, student interests, and real-world applications to make the learning experience more engaging and practical. By tailoring lessons to the students' lives, teachers help them see the relevance of their education in everyday contexts.

**Flexibility and Patience.** Flexibility and patience were highlighted as essential components of successful teaching during this time. Teachers acknowledged that students' learning abilities and needs varied widely, and being patient and flexible was key. As one teacher mentioned,

"As a teacher we should always be flexible to what the students need. It should always focus on the student gradually improvement." Another teacher noted the importance of being flexible in adjusting to students' different learning needs, stating, "Yes, as a teacher I need to be flexible in some changes because of the technology we have that is innovating."

**Hands-on Learning and Practical Application.** Some teachers, particularly those in vocational or skills-based subjects, mentioned focusing on hands-on learning and practical applications of knowledge. One teacher stated, "I tried to supplement my teaching with videos and actual execution of how to do things related to my subject." This adjustment was critical for subjects that rely on hands-on learning, as students may have missed practical experiences during the pandemic. As another teacher noted, "On line education is not helpful in honing students. Skills must be taught on a face-to-face learning mode."

**Resonance with Global Upskilling Efforts Aimed at Improving Teachers' Responses to the Changing Landscape of Education.** The adjustments made by the teachers in response to their students' evolving needs resonate with global upskilling efforts aimed at improving teachers' responses to the changing landscape of education. These efforts focus on equipping teachers with the necessary skills and tools to foster student engagement, adapt to technological changes, and address diverse learning needs.

**Technology Integration and Upskilling.** One of the most significant upskilling efforts worldwide is integrating technology into teaching. As highlighted by the teachers, the use of digital tools, online platforms, and personalized learning technologies has become essential in adapting to remote and hybrid learning environments. The teachers' adoption of technologies such as Flash Academy and online communication platforms aligns with global trends to enhance digital literacy among educators (OECD, 2020). In fact, the UNESCO report (2020) on teacher preparedness emphasizes the importance of digital skills development for teachers, noting that integrating technology effectively into classrooms can help meet diverse student needs and improve learning outcomes. The focus on training teachers to use educational technology has become critical to achieving these goals globally.

**Differentiated Instruction.** The concept of differentiated instruction, which several teachers applied, is another global trend in upskilling. As the teachers shared, adapting their teaching methods to address diverse student needs—whether through scaffolding, personalized learning, or varied assessment methods—mirrors international recommendations for supporting diverse learners. The World Bank (2020) emphasizes the importance of professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills to differentiate instruction for students with varying levels of ability, learning styles, and backgrounds. Differentiation is seen as a key strategy to ensure all students, including those from marginalized groups, can meet learning outcomes.

**Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Teacher Support.** The teachers' emphasis on social-emotional learning (SEL) mirrors global initiatives focusing on teachers' ability to support students' emotional and psychological well-being. As one teacher stated, "Social-emotional learning is prioritized to build resilience and self-regulation," which is a crucial component of holistic education. The UNESCO (2020) report highlights the need for teacher upskilling in SEL, particularly in the context of the ongoing global crisis. Upskilling teachers in SEL enables them to support students in managing stress, anxiety, and other challenges, ensuring better



learning outcomes. The pandemic underscored the importance of addressing students' emotional needs alongside academic instruction, a priority that is now part of many global teacher development frameworks.

**Ongoing Reflection and Professional Growth.** The practice of ongoing reflection and adapting teaching methods to meet changing student needs, as seen in the responses from teachers, is central to the notion of continuous professional development (CPD) advocated globally. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective teacher upskilling involves fostering a culture of reflection, collaboration, and iterative improvement. The teachers' statements about revisiting their teaching practices to adjust to student needs align with this global approach, where CPD programs are designed to encourage reflective practice, promote collaboration among educators, and ensure that teaching strategies remain relevant and effective in the face of evolving challenges.

**Flexible Teaching and Patience.** Finally, the global emphasis on flexibility and patience in teaching aligns with upskilling programs that focus on fostering adaptive expertise among teachers. Flexibility allows teachers to respond effectively to the diverse and dynamic nature of classrooms, especially in times of disruption such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNESCO (2020) notes that professional development should not only focus on pedagogical and technological skills but also on fostering teachers' ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The teachers' reflections on being flexible and patient with students highlight this broader need for adaptability and emotional intelligence in the teaching profession.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 How should teachers training competencies in the Philippine education system be modified to address the multifaceted and pandemic-related changes in Filipino grade school students?

The multifaceted and pandemic-related challenges faced by Filipino grade school students require a substantial shift in the competencies provided through teacher training programs. By integrating technology, SEL, differentiated instruction, culturally relevant pedagogy, and continuous professional development into teacher education, the Philippines can better equip teachers to respond to the changing needs of students. These modifications are essential for ensuring that teachers can provide a supportive, effective, and adaptive learning environment for all students, promoting academic success and emotional well-being in a post-pandemic world.

**Integrating Technology and Digital Literacy.** Given the increased reliance on digital platforms and online learning, it is crucial that teacher training programs in the Philippines prioritize technology integration and digital literacy. The pandemic accelerated the shift towards online and hybrid learning, highlighting the need for teachers to be proficient in using digital tools for teaching, assessment, and communication. Teacher training programs should emphasize the effective use of educational technology, such as learning management systems (LMS), video conferencing tools, and digital resources. By doing so, teachers will be better prepared to facilitate interactive, engaging, and flexible learning environments, both in-person and remotely. This aligns with the findings of the OECD (2020), which stress the importance of digital skills for teachers to maintain continuity in learning during disruptions.

**Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health Support.** The emotional and psychological well-being of students has become a central focus due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Teachers must be equipped to support students' mental health, resilience, and social-emotional development. Therefore, teacher training should incorporate competencies in social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental health first aid. Training teachers to recognize signs of stress, anxiety, and emotional struggles in students will enable them to provide timely interventions and create a supportive classroom environment. SEL-focused training can also help teachers build students' emotional resilience, fostering better engagement and learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). This is particularly important in the Philippines, where many students face socio-economic challenges exacerbated by the pandemic (Guerrero, 2020).

**Differentiated Instruction and Inclusivity.** The pandemic exacerbated the diversity of learning experiences among students, with some having access to online learning while others were reliant on modular or face-to-face classes. Teacher training must focus on differentiated instruction to accommodate diverse learning styles, abilities, and access to resources. Competencies in individualized instruction, scaffolding, and formative assessment should be emphasized, allowing teachers to tailor their teaching to meet the needs of each student. This approach aligns with global best practices for inclusive education, as highlighted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), which advocate for the preparation of teachers to address the varying needs of students through flexible and responsive teaching methods.

**Culturally Relevant and Contextualized Pedagogy.** To address the learning needs of Filipino students, teacher training should emphasize culturally relevant and contextualized pedagogy. Teachers must be trained to understand and incorporate students' cultural backgrounds, socio-economic contexts, and local learning environments into their teaching practices. This approach will help ensure that lessons are meaningful, relatable, and engaging for students, particularly in rural and marginalized communities where access to resources can be limited (UNESCO, 2020). By incorporating local contexts and experiences, teachers can foster a more inclusive learning environment that resonates with students' lived experiences, improving engagement and motivation.

**Continuous Professional Development and Reflective Practice.** Teacher training should also promote a culture of continuous professional development (CPD) and reflective practice. Given the ongoing changes in the education landscape, teachers need to engage in lifelong learning to adapt to new challenges and innovations. Training programs should provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice, engage in collaborative learning communities, and update their skills regularly. This ensures that teachers are not only reactive but proactive in addressing emerging needs in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Furthermore, the integration of CPD into teacher training programs will help teachers stay abreast of best practices, educational trends, and innovative teaching strategies.

## **5.2 Importance of Communication Training in the Modified Teacher Training in Basic Education.**

Communication training is vital for enhancing teacher competencies, especially as the educational environment continues to evolve. It helps teachers convey information clearly, engage students in meaningful ways, collaborate effectively with parents and colleagues, and

support students' social-emotional development. In the context of the pandemic, effective communication has become even more crucial as teachers navigate new teaching methods and technology. Therefore, teacher training programs must include comprehensive communication skills development to equip educators with the necessary tools to thrive in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

**Facilitating Student Understanding and Engagement.** Effective communication is essential for ensuring that students understand the content being taught, especially in a rapidly changing educational environment. Teachers need to be adept at conveying complex ideas in a clear and accessible manner, whether they are teaching in-person, online, or through a hybrid model. According to Hattie (2009), teacher clarity and the ability to effectively explain concepts are key factors in promoting student achievement. Communication training equips teachers with the skills to break down complex ideas, provide clear instructions, and adjust their communication style to meet the needs of different learners. This ability is particularly important in contexts where students may struggle with digital literacy or have limited access to resources, as seen in the Philippines' more remote regions during the pandemic (Guerrero, 2020).

**Enhancing Collaboration and Teamwork.** Communication training also plays a critical role in enhancing collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. In an increasingly interconnected educational system, teachers must be able to communicate effectively with all stakeholders involved in the educational process. During the pandemic, many teachers had to collaborate remotely with colleagues and engage more actively with parents to ensure that students were receiving the support they needed. Teacher training should include strategies for fostering open lines of communication with parents to discuss student progress, challenges, and ways to support learning at home. A study by Cummings et al. (2016) found that strong communication between parents and teachers leads to better student outcomes, especially in challenging learning environments.

**Addressing Social-Emotional Needs.** Teachers' ability to communicate effectively also extends to addressing students' social-emotional needs. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is an increasingly important aspect of teaching, particularly in the context of the pandemic, which has exacerbated mental health concerns among students (UNESCO, 2020). Teachers who are trained in communication can better identify students' emotional cues, provide appropriate support, and create a classroom environment where students feel safe and heard. Training in communication can help teachers recognize non-verbal signals, use empathetic language, and develop supportive relationships with students, all of which contribute to fostering resilience and emotional well-being (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

**Adapting to Technological Changes.** With the surge in the use of technology during the pandemic, communication training must also include the development of digital communication skills. As teachers increasingly rely on digital platforms to deliver instruction and engage with students, understanding how to use these tools effectively is essential. Training should cover how to navigate learning management systems (LMS), conduct virtual classroom discussions, and use multimedia tools to enhance learning. This digital communication proficiency ensures that teachers can effectively engage students in remote or hybrid settings, addressing any technical issues that may arise and maintaining a smooth flow of

communication. According to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE, 2020), teachers need to be prepared to integrate technology not just for instructional delivery but also for creating inclusive and interactive learning experiences.

### 5.3 Theoretical Implications of the Emergent Themes

The theoretical implications of the emergent themes from the study on the changes in grade school students' qualities and learning engagement before and after the COVID-19 pandemic are significant for understanding how educational practices evolve in response to disruptions. By analyzing the responses from teachers, several key themes emerged, such as the impact of disrupted learning environments, changes in students' emotional and social development, and the adjustments teachers made in their instructional practices. These themes can be interpreted through various educational theories, which provide insights into how educators adapt to shifts in student needs and how learning outcomes are affected by such disruptions.

**Social Constructivism.** One of the primary emergent themes was the change in students' emotional and social development, especially as a result of limited social interactions during the pandemic. Many teachers observed that students, particularly those who graduated post-pandemic, exhibited difficulties with social communication and collaboration. These observations align with Vygotsky's social-constructivist theory, which emphasizes that learning is a social process, and the absence of interaction can significantly hinder cognitive and emotional development (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, social interactions are crucial for the development of higher cognitive functions, and this theme underscores the importance of re-integrating social learning opportunities in the post-pandemic classroom. Teachers' adjustments, such as incorporating group activities and peer feedback, reflect efforts to reintroduce collaborative learning to foster students' cognitive and social skills.

**Cognitive Apprenticeship.** The theoretical implications of Cognitive Apprenticeship in this study suggest that effective teaching practices post-pandemic should emphasize scaffolding, modeling, and the gradual transfer of responsibility to students. These practices are particularly important as teachers adjust their methods to meet the diverse and evolving needs of students. The emergence of themes such as the importance of collaboration, differentiation, and the use of technology supports the relevance of Cognitive Apprenticeship as a framework for guiding students through complex learning processes, helping them build both cognitive and social skills in a post-pandemic world. By adapting these principles, teachers can better support students in becoming independent, self-regulated learners who can apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.

**Situated Learning Theory.** Situated Learning Theory offers a powerful framework for understanding how students learn and engage with content, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. The emergent themes in this study, such as the importance of collaboration, contextualization, and social-emotional support, underscore the relevance of situated learning in today's educational environment. Teachers have increasingly adapted their teaching to reflect the principles of Situated Learning, using strategies that encourage active participation, social interaction, and authentic learning. This approach helps students develop not only academic skills but also the social and emotional competencies required to navigate the complexities of a post-pandemic world.

## REFERENCES

1. ABAcademies.org. (n.d.). Educational situations from teachers' perspectives: The COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. <http://www.abacademies.org>
2. American Psychological Association. (2021). Mental health and the pandemic: Effects on children and adolescents. APA. <https://www.apa.org>
3. Associated Press. (2025, February 8). Most US kids aren't gaining fast enough in reading and math. These schools are different. Associated Press. [https://apnews.com/article/f110ef05fb62f673530f44b120863bec?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://apnews.com/article/f110ef05fb62f673530f44b120863bec?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
4. Blazer, C. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on student learning and engagement. ERIC Digest. <https://eric.ed.gov>
5. Brookings Institution. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on education: Insights from education systems worldwide. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-insights-from-education-systems-worldwide/>
6. Cameron, L., & McKee, S. (2021). Children's social development after the pandemic: Delays and challenges. *Educational Psychology Review*, 33(1), 45-60.
7. Choudhury, S. & McLeod, M. (2020). The effects of COVID-19 on students' learning behaviors and academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(2), 98-110.
8. Collins, A., Brown, J. S., & Holum, A. (1991). Cognitive apprenticeship: Making thinking visible. *American Educator*, 15(3), 6-11.
9. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
10. Cuenca, M. M. (2020). COVID-19 and its impact on education: A review of studies and challenges faced by Filipino students and teachers. *Journal of Philippine Education*, 15(2), 112-124.
11. Cummings, L., Warden, C., & Morra, M. (2016). The power of partnerships: How effective parent-teacher communication influences student success. *Educational Leadership*, 74(3), 24-28.
12. Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org>
13. Department of Education. (2020). *Basic education learning continuity plan for school year 2020-2021*. Department of Education. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/>
14. Department of Education (DepEd). (2022). *The Philippine crisis in education*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
15. Duan, L., et al. (2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's mental health: A global perspective. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 7(8), 746-749.
16. Durlak, J. A., et al. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.
17. Engzell, P., Frey, A., & Verhagen, M. (2021). Learning loss due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(17), e2022376118. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2022376118>
18. Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>

19. Financial Times. (2024, November 15). The boom in home schooling. <https://www.ft.com/content/364a65cf-4ec1-4f65-ba17-d7cf7ebb4b1a>
20. Frontiersin.org. (n.d.). Challenges in teaching and learning continuity during the pandemic: The experience of public higher education teachers in the Philippines. Frontiers in Education. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.577274/full>
21. Genyo E-learning. (n.d.). About Genyo E-learning. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genyo\\_E-learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genyo_E-learning)
22. The Guardian. (2024, December 4). Australian primary students score best ever result in global maths and science test, despite pandemic disruption. The Guardian. [https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/dec/04/australian-primary-students-score-best-ever-result-in-global-maths-and-science-test-timss?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/dec/04/australian-primary-students-score-best-ever-result-in-global-maths-and-science-test-timss?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
23. The Guardian. (2025, March 9). 'The pandemic reinforced existing inequalities - it was a magnifying glass': how Covid changed Britain. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/mar/09/the-pandemic-reinforced-existing-inequalities-it-was-a-magnifying-glass-how-covid-changed-britain>
24. Guerrero, A. (2020). The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Filipino students. *Philippine Journal of Education*, 98(2), 23-34.
25. Guinto, R. J. (2021). Teacher perspectives on the challenges of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Educational Research*, 33(1), 45-59.
26. Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge.
27. IJARIE.com. (2021). Experiences and challenges of public school teachers in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic: A phenomenological study. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 7(3), 2327-2335. <http://ijarie.com>
28. IEEEExplore.ieee.org. (2020). Perceptions toward distance learning: Filipino teachers' perspectives during the COVID-19 pandemic. IEEE Xplore Digital Library. Retrieved from <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/9280704>
29. International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). (2020). ISTE standards for educators. <https://www.iste.org/standards/for-educators>
30. Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 49-72.
31. Jillings, C., et al. (2021). Remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: Educational disparities and engagement. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 106, 101-110.
32. Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
33. Lee, J., et al. (2021). School closures and the mental health of children during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 5(7), 475-483.
34. OECD. (2020). *The future of education and skills: Education 2030*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-education-and-skills>

35. OECD. (2021). The state of education recovery: Insights from the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://www.oecd.org/education/the-state-of-education-recovery/>
36. Ofsted. (2021). Children hardest hit by COVID-19 pandemic are regressing in basic skills and learning. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-children-hardest-hit-by-covid-19-pandemic-are-regressing-in-basic-skills-and-learning>
37. Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
38. Philippine Teachers. (2024). Teacher observations on students post-pandemic. [Unpublished teacher responses].
39. Reuters. (2021, May 18). Schools, COVID and Mental Health. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/health-coronavirus-students/>
40. Salazar, M. A., & De Guzman, L. P. (2021). Reimagining education in the Philippines post-COVID-19: Teachers' experiences in transitioning to online and blended learning. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 18(2), 89-101.
41. Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II). (2025). Fixing the Foundations: A Matter of National Survival (Year Two Report). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Congressional\\_Commission\\_on\\_Education\\_%28EDCOM\\_2%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Congressional_Commission_on_Education_%28EDCOM_2%29)
42. Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
43. Trust, T. (2021). The role of technology in education during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 20(3), 25-30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1940-295X.2021.01245.x>
44. UNESCO. (2020). Education and the COVID-19 pandemic: The impact and the response. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>
45. UNESCO. (2021). COVID-19 education disruption and response: Global data on the education sector. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://www.unesco.org/en/covid-19>
46. UNICEF. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on children's mental health. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/impact-covid-19-mental-health>
47. UNICEF. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on children's mental health. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/impact-covid-19-mental-health>
48. UNICEF.org. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on learning continuity in the Philippines. UNICEF. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reports/covid-19-education-impact>
49. U.S. Department of Education. (2022). Education disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery efforts in U.S. schools. <https://www.ed.gov>
50. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
51. World Bank. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on education: The global education crisis. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/covid19>
52. World Bank. (2020). World Bank support to education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education>
53. Zhang, D., Wang, Y., & Li, R. (2022). Adapting teaching methods in post-pandemic education: A case study of Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines. *International Journal of Educational Innovation*, 12(3), 33-47.