

Exploring the Filipino Teachers' Roles and Teaching Strategies on Student Learning Experiences in the United States: A Qualitative Inquiry

Glory Mae B. Cutor

Master of Arts in Education Major in English, University of Perpetual Help System DALTA, Las Pinas City, Philippines

ABSTRACT: This study examined the roles and teaching strategies of Filipino educators in the United States and their impact on student learning outcomes. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected from 20 Filipino teachers across California, New York, Texas, Illinois, and Florida through semi-structured individual interviews. The research aimed to explore the instructional methods employed by Filipino teachers, the challenges they encountered in adapting to U.S. classrooms, and the professional development opportunities that could enhance their teaching effectiveness. Findings revealed that Filipino teachers predominantly employ student-centered instructional strategies, including experiential learning, differentiated instruction, gamification, and technology integration, to foster cognitive, behavioral, and affective student engagement. However, the transition from traditional, teacher-centered approaches to student-led learning posed challenges, particularly in classroom management, cultural adaptation, and resource accessibility. To address these issues, teachers implemented culturally responsive teaching techniques, strengthened student-teacher relationships, and utilized scaffolding strategies to enhance engagement and participation. The study also highlighted the urgent need for targeted professional development programs in behavioral management, culturally responsive pedagogy, and technology-enhanced instruction to better support international educators. Additionally, mentorship programs and institutional support systems were identified as critical factors in helping Filipino teachers navigate the complexities of the U.S. education system. This research contributes to the broader discourse on international teacher adaptation and best practices for engaging diverse learners. It offers practical recommendations for school administrators, policymakers, and educators, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive training programs, mentorship initiatives, and structured support systems to enhance the effectiveness of Filipino teachers in multicultural classrooms.

KEYWORDS: classroom management, culturally responsive teaching, international educators, *student engagement*, *teaching strategies*

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a central role in shaping student learning outcomes, serving as both facilitators of knowledge and architects of the classroom experience. The strategies teachers employ and the roles they assume in the classroom significantly impact students' academic performance, motivation, and social development. Schnitzler, Holzberger, and Seidel (2020) emphasized that effective teaching strategies foster emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement among students, which is essential for their ability to comprehend and apply knowledge. Research consistently links well-executed teaching practices to improved academic performance, enhanced critical thinking skills, and higher retention rates (Tight, 2020). Conversely, a lack of effective teaching strategies can hinder student engagement, leading to lower academic outcomes and higher dropout rates (Wang et al., 2019). These findings underscore the critical influence of teachers' roles and instructional strategies on student success.

In the context of classroom instruction, teaching strategies are the foundation upon which effective learning environments are built. These strategies bridge curriculum content with student engagement, shaping the interactions between students, the material, and the educator (Knoster & Goodboy, 2021). Approaches such as collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, and problem-based learning have been shown to engage students actively, catering to diverse learning needs and encouraging deeper cognitive investment (Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019). Additionally, culturally responsive teaching strategies play a vital role in addressing the diverse backgrounds of students, creating inclusive environments where all learners feel valued and supported. As Han (2021) noted, the thoughtful application of teaching strategies tailored to specific classroom contexts is crucial for fostering meaningful student engagement and achieving positive educational outcomes.

Teachers' roles extend beyond the delivery of content to encompass mentorship, guidance, and the creation of an environment conducive to learning. These roles include being facilitators, motivators, and role models for their students, directly influencing their academic and social development. Teachers who embrace these roles effectively help build a classroom culture

Exploring the Filipino Teachers' Roles and Teaching Strategies on Student Learning Experiences in the United States: A Qualitative Inquiry

that promotes trust, collaboration, and mutual respect. According to Knoster and Goodboy (2021), the ability to adapt teaching strategies and roles based on the needs of the students and the classroom context is a hallmark of effective educators. This adaptability is particularly significant in diverse and multicultural educational settings, where understanding students' unique experiences and perspectives can enhance their engagement and learning outcomes.

For Filipino teachers working in the United States, their roles and teaching strategies take on additional layers of complexity due to cultural and systemic differences in the educational landscape. As noted by Macapagong et al. (2023), Filipino teachers often bring with them a rich pedagogical tradition shaped by the educational practices of the Philippines. These educators frequently address teacher shortages in the U.S. and contribute their expertise to schools with diverse student populations. However, the transition to American classrooms presents unique challenges, including adapting to different teaching norms, managing varied student behaviors, and aligning their methods with the expectations of a new system (Curammeng, 2020). Despite these challenges, many Filipino teachers excel in their roles by leveraging their cultural heritage, demonstrating resilience, and building strong connections with their students. Salpocial and Palma (2023) highlighted the positive impact of Filipino teachers' instructional approaches, noting their ability to adapt and innovate in response to the needs of their students.

While Filipino teachers play a vital role in the U.S. education system, research on their specific contributions and challenges remains limited. There is a need for focused studies that examine how their teaching strategies and roles influence student learning outcomes in diverse classrooms. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing targeted support systems that enable Filipino teachers to maximize their impact on student achievement.

This study investigates the roles and teaching strategies of Filipino educators in the United States and their impact on student learning outcomes. By exploring this intersection, the research contributes to educational theory by providing a deeper understanding of how teachers' practices shape academic performance, motivation, and social development in diverse and multicultural settings. For educational practice, the findings can inform professional development programs and policy initiatives aimed at supporting Filipino teachers in navigating the complexities of the U.S. educational landscape. Ultimately, this study seeks to empower Filipino educators to enhance their teaching effectiveness and foster meaningful learning experiences for their students.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What specific teaching strategies are employed by Filipino educators in the United States to enhance student learning outcomes?
2. How do Filipino teachers' roles influence their approach to facilitating student learning in American classrooms?
3. What is the impact of Filipino teachers' roles and teaching strategies on students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective learning outcomes?
4. What challenges do Filipino educators face in implementing effective teaching strategies, and how do they address these challenges?
- 5: What professional development opportunities can further enhance the roles and teaching strategies of Filipino teachers to improve student learning outcomes?

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative case study design to explore the impact of Filipino teachers' roles and teaching strategies on student learning in the United States. The participants selected for this study were Filipino teachers who were residing and teaching in the United States at the time of the research. Specifically, the study targeted educators working in the states of California, New York, Texas, Illinois, and Florida from different grade levels - elementary, middle, and high school, as well as various subject areas. Through in-depth individual interviews, the study provided a comprehensive account of how these strategies were employed and how they impacted students' learning outcomes. Additionally, the study examined the challenges faced by Filipino teachers in the U.S., including cultural differences, classroom dynamics, and institutional constraints. This study employed thematic analysis to analyze the data and effectively address the research questions.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study identifies several themes pertinent to the Filipino teachers' roles and teaching strategies on student learning experiences in the United States.

Teaching Strategies Employed

Filipino educators in the United States employ a variety of student-centered teaching strategies that highlight engagement, adaptability, and active participation. Experiential learning is one of the most prominent approaches, particularly in fields such as music, special education, and technical subjects. By prioritizing hands-on activities and differentiated instruction,

Exploring the Filipino Teachers' Roles and Teaching Strategies on Student Learning Experiences in the United States: A Qualitative Inquiry

these teachers provide opportunities for students to choose learning pathways suited to their needs, abilities, and interests. Such strategies enhance retention, improve performance, and foster greater ownership of learning.

Gamification and technology integration also play vital roles in promoting student motivation and participation. Through the use of competitive tasks, point systems, and rewards, gamification supports collaboration, teamwork, and intrinsic motivation. Similarly, the integration of digital platforms, apps, and interactive tools expands learning opportunities beyond the classroom and enables more personalized instruction. While challenges such as unequal access to technology persist, many educators address this through blended learning, effectively combining traditional and digital approaches to balance accessibility and innovation.

Instructional decisions are shaped by classroom dynamics and student feedback, which allow teachers to adjust strategies for sustained relevance and engagement. Collaborative projects, gamified activities, and technology-driven lessons demonstrate how Filipino educators foster confidence, teamwork, and inclusivity among learners. Overall, their transition from teacher-centered to student-centered practices reflects both adaptability to American educational contexts and resilience in overcoming challenges such as cultural adjustment, classroom management, and resource limitations. Despite these barriers, Filipino educators in the U.S. remain committed to creating meaningful learning experiences that promote academic success and holistic development.

Teachers' Role in Facilitating Learning

Filipino teachers in the United States assume multifaceted roles that go beyond traditional notions of teaching, often shifting between facilitator, mentor, and motivator. Unlike in the Philippines, where the teacher's role is typically more authoritative and directive, Filipino educators in U.S. classrooms recognize the importance of encouraging student autonomy and engagement through facilitation. This shift requires them to balance structure with interactive, student-centered practices that foster active learning. Many Filipino teachers note that American students expect more participatory and discussion-based learning, which compels them to adapt their instructional approaches in order to align with classroom culture and expectations.

Equally significant is the emphasis on relationship-building, which Filipino teachers identified as central to fostering student engagement and discipline. While many initially adopted a friendly and nurturing style, they soon realized the importance of balancing warmth with clear boundaries to maintain classroom management. Personalized approaches such as one-on-one check-ins, mentorship, and positive reinforcement allow these teachers to cultivate trust and motivate students to participate more actively in class. At the same time, Filipino educators highlight their responsibility to support students' emotional and social development, recognizing that many learners in the U.S. face stress and personal challenges that require teachers to provide encouragement, empathy, and guidance beyond academics.

Cultural adaptation also emerged as a defining factor in shaping Filipino teachers' classroom roles. Unlike in the Philippines, where respect is often assumed, U.S. classrooms demand that teachers earn students' respect through relational and inclusive practices. Filipino educators respond by adjusting their communication styles, adopting culturally responsive strategies, and integrating inclusive materials to reflect the diverse backgrounds of their learners. These findings underscore that Filipino teachers in the U.S. are not only instructional guides but also cultural navigators, relationship-builders, and emotional supporters. Their adaptability in these roles demonstrates resilience and professional growth, though it also highlights the need for continued professional development in culturally responsive pedagogy and student relationship-building strategies to ensure long-term effectiveness.

Impact on Student Learning Outcomes

Filipino teachers in the U.S. assess the effectiveness of their teaching strategies through a holistic lens that goes beyond traditional measures such as grades and test scores. While academic performance remains a core indicator, teachers place strong emphasis on classroom engagement, student participation, attentiveness, and enthusiasm as signs of meaningful learning. They also integrate student feedback and reflective practices, allowing learners to articulate their understanding and progress. This multidimensional approach acknowledges that success in teaching is not only about knowledge acquisition but also about fostering critical thinking, interest, and self-awareness among students.

Teachers also observed substantial improvements in students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective engagement when employing interactive, student-centered approaches. Strategies such as gamification, performance-based assessments, differentiated instruction, and technology-assisted learning were particularly effective in enhancing motivation and participation. Students demonstrated greater curiosity, accountability, and self-discipline when provided with opportunities for active involvement and responsibility. Moreover, the incorporation of digital tools and experiential learning activities helped create more inclusive and stimulating environments, encouraging even reluctant learners to engage more confidently with the material.

A central theme across the findings is the emphasis on cultivating student autonomy and ownership of learning. Filipino teachers promote independence through practices such as student-led discussions, goal-setting, and reflective exercises, while also reinforcing growth mindsets through encouragement and mentorship. This empowerment not only fosters intrinsic motivation but also equips students with long-term skills in resilience, accountability, and self-regulation. Overall, Filipino teachers' strategies

Exploring the Filipino Teachers' Roles and Teaching Strategies on Student Learning Experiences in the United States: A Qualitative Inquiry

significantly influence students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective outcomes, demonstrating that holistic, student-centered, and autonomy-driven approaches are vital in supporting success across diverse learning contexts.

Challenges in Strategy Implementation

Filipino teachers in the U.S. face considerable challenges in adapting their teaching strategies to align with the expectations of American classrooms. One of the most significant adjustments involves shifting from teacher-centered instruction, which is prevalent in the Philippines, to student-centered approaches that encourage inquiry, dialogue, and collaboration. This transition is particularly challenging in terms of classroom management, as methods that rely on strict rules and authority are less effective in U.S. settings, where students expect autonomy and explanations. Additionally, cultural differences shape how respect and authority are negotiated, requiring Filipino educators to establish rapport and credibility in ways that differ from their home context. These challenges echo broader findings in the literature on international educators, which highlight the need for balance between maintaining classroom structure and fostering student voice.

Cultural diversity in U.S. classrooms further complicates the teaching experience for Filipino educators. Unlike in the Philippines, where classrooms tend to be more culturally homogenous, American classrooms often comprise students from varied racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Teachers must therefore modify content, communication styles, and engagement strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners. They also contend with language barriers, as some students struggle to understand accents or cultural idioms. These issues are compounded by wide variations in learning styles, which demand differentiated instruction and the creation of multiple learning pathways. Behavioral challenges such as disengagement, defiance, and lack of motivation add another layer of complexity, requiring teachers to explore personalized, autonomy-based strategies to re-engage students and sustain participation.

Institutional barriers, including limited resources, insufficient training, and inadequate school support, further hinder Filipino teachers' adaptation. Educators working in underfunded districts often face shortages of instructional materials, while professional development opportunities rarely address the unique struggles of international teachers. To overcome these gaps, Filipino educators employ creativity, reflection, and resilience, adopting blended learning, differentiated instruction, and technology-assisted strategies to enhance engagement. Despite these challenges, their adaptive responses demonstrate flexibility and resourcefulness. The findings underscore the importance of providing targeted professional development, culturally responsive training, and systemic support to ensure the success of Filipino teachers and, ultimately, the students they serve.

Professional Development Needs

Filipino teachers in the U.S. view continuous professional development (PD) as essential for enhancing their teaching strategies and aligning with the expectations of American classrooms. Many emphasized the need for targeted training in classroom management, student-centered learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. Unlike in the Philippines, U.S. classrooms demand more interactive, inquiry-based methods and greater attention to diversity and inclusivity. Teachers expressed a strong desire for training that not only equips them with skills for differentiated instruction and project-based learning but also helps them adapt behavior management strategies that reflect restorative rather than punitive approaches. These findings affirm that effective PD must be research-driven, relevant, and tailored to the unique challenges faced by international educators.

A recurring theme was the importance of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) as a professional development priority. Filipino teachers recognized that U.S. classrooms, with their diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic makeup, require instructional approaches that validate students' cultural backgrounds and build stronger connections between home and school. Participants highlighted the need for training on addressing implicit bias, fostering inclusivity, and designing lessons that reflect multicultural perspectives. In addition, technology integration emerged as a critical area for development, as teachers reported struggling to adapt to the heavy reliance on digital platforms, learning management systems, and blended learning models in the U.S. education system. PD in digital literacy and blended instruction would not only strengthen teaching effectiveness but also enhance student engagement in both in-person and virtual settings.

Beyond instructional strategies, Filipino teachers stressed the value of mentorship and support systems to ease their transition into American schools. Many participants noted that mentorship from experienced educators could help them navigate unfamiliar policies, cultural expectations, and classroom practices. Peer support groups or communities of practice were also identified as crucial spaces for sharing experiences, exchanging strategies, and fostering resilience. Together, these insights suggest that effective PD for Filipino teachers must be holistic—addressing pedagogy, cultural competence, classroom management, and technology—while also providing relational supports that promote professional growth and adaptation. Ultimately, structured, ongoing PD initiatives tailored to international educators can empower Filipino teachers to thrive in U.S. classrooms and contribute to improved student learning outcomes.

Exploring the Filipino Teachers' Roles and Teaching Strategies on Student Learning Experiences in the United States: A Qualitative Inquiry

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that Filipino educators in the United States play a vital role in shaping student learning outcomes through innovative strategies and evolving professional roles. By adopting student-centered approaches such as experiential learning, differentiation, gamification, and technology integration, these teachers actively engage learners and foster critical thinking, autonomy, and motivation. Their transition from traditional authority figures to facilitators, mentors, and emotional supporters also aligns with constructivist principles, allowing them to scaffold student learning within supportive and culturally responsive environments. Despite challenges in adapting to U.S. classroom norms, managing diverse behaviors, and addressing resource limitations, Filipino educators demonstrate resilience and adaptability by refining practices, seeking mentorship, and embracing inclusive strategies to meet varied student needs. The recommendations emphasize the collective responsibility of policymakers, administrators, teachers, students, and researchers in strengthening the contributions of Filipino educators. Schools are urged to provide continuous professional development in active learning strategies, digital integration, and culturally responsive pedagogy, while mentorship and collaborative networks can ease role transitions. Policymakers are encouraged to design structured programs and support systems for international educators, while students are called to engage actively in experiential and collaborative learning. Teachers, in turn, are encouraged to refine practices that support holistic student development, including cognitive, behavioral, and affective growth. Finally, researchers are recommended to pursue further studies on professional development models and blended learning approaches to ensure sustainable improvements in teaching efficacy and student outcomes.

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