



## Focused Learning Strategies on Student Engagement and Academic Achievement

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent of implementation of focused learning strategies and their relationship to student engagement and academic achievement among Grade 2 learners. Ninety-six (96) respondents participated, consisting of sixty-nine (69) Grade 2 teachers and twenty-seven (27) school administrators. A descriptive–correlational research design was employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and standard deviation) were used, while Pearson’s correlation coefficient was applied for inferential analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the extent of implementation of focused learning strategies, as assessed by teachers ( $M = 3.944$ ,  $SD = 0.490$ ) and administrators ( $M = 4.244$ ,  $SD = 0.305$ ), was consistently high to very high. Student engagement across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive domains was likewise rated at a high level (teachers:  $M = 3.881$ ,  $SD = 0.452$ ; administrators:  $M = 3.888$ ,  $SD = 0.363$ ), indicating positive learner participation. A significant positive correlation was found between the extent of strategy implementation and both student engagement (teachers:  $r = .615$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and academic achievement (average grade = 84.37 in English 2). Administrators, however, reported weaker associations in selected strategies ( $r = .036$ ,  $p = .860$ ). These results demonstrate that focused learning strategies contribute meaningfully to student engagement and achievement, particularly when implemented consistently across instructional domains. Strengthening their use through continuous professional development, targeted mentoring, and regular School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions is recommended to ensure effective classroom practice. Such initiatives will not only sustain high levels of engagement but also foster deeper cognitive involvement and improved academic performance among early grade learners.

**Keywords:** academic achievement, focused learning strategies, student engagement.

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## INTRODUCTION

Early education provides the foundation for literacy and lifelong learning skills. Despite numerous interventions, many pupils continue to struggle with basic competencies, highlighting the need for improved instructional approaches (Casper & Sarrosa, 2025). Focused learning strategies—such as differentiated instruction, problem-based learning, gamification, contextualized teaching, and cooperative learning—are structured, goal-driven methods that enhance student engagement and achievement (Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, 2017; Cabrera & Raposa, 2020; Department of Education, 2022).

International research confirms that structured, intentional teaching methods improve participation and academic success. For instance, Mazzetti et al. (2020) found that focused strategies enhanced classroom engagement, while Villanueva (2022) reported that learners in time-bound classes performed better than those in traditional settings. Zhang and Ma (2023) highlighted the effectiveness of project-based learning in Southeast Asia, and Smale-Jacobse et al. (2019) emphasized both the benefits and challenges of differentiated instruction. Studies on gamification also demonstrate positive effects on motivation and learning outcomes (Kim & Castelli, 2021; Gini et al., 2025).

Recent findings show that student engagement in early elementary years, particularly Grade 2, strongly predicts reading success, especially among learners from low-income backgrounds (Li et al., 2022). Locally, the Schools Division of Escalante City has introduced programs integrating focused learning strategies, including differentiated instruction, problem-based learning, gamification, contextualized teaching, and cooperative learning (Fundal & Fuentebilla, 2025). These initiatives are structured, time-limited, and data-driven, yet their effectiveness at the Grade 2 level remains underexplored.

While international studies confirm the effectiveness of focused learning strategies, limited empirical evidence exists at the Grade 2 level in Philippine public elementary schools, particularly in Escalante City. This study addresses that gap by examining how focused learning strategies are implemented during the 30-minute focused period and how they influence student engagement and academic achievement. The findings aim to provide teachers and policymakers with practical insights for strengthening classroom practices and sustaining early literacy development.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Generally, the study aimed to examine the extent of implementation of the focused learning strategies on student engagement and academic achievement among Grade 2 learners in the Schools Division 1 for the school year 2025–2026.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of implementation of the focused-learning strategies on student engagement in terms of:
  - 1.1 differentiated instruction;
  - 1.2 problem-based learning
  - 1.3 gamification;
  - 1.4 contextualized teaching; and
  - 1.5 cooperative learningas assessed by the teacher-respondents and school administrators?
2. What is the level of student engagement in terms of:
  - 2.1 behavioral engagement;
  - 2.2 emotional engagement; and
  - 2.3 cognitive engagementas assessed by the teacher-respondents and school administrators?
3. What is the level of academic achievement of the Grade 2 learners based on their most recent grading period?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of implementation of focused-learning strategies and the level of student engagement as assessed by the two groups of respondents?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of implementation of focused-learning strategies and the level of academic achievement of Grade 2 learners?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Focused Learning Strategies*



Focused learning strategies are structured, intentional, and goal-oriented instructional methods designed to promote meaningful learning. Cabrera and Raposa (2020) emphasized their value in improving achievement and engagement, while the Department of Education (2022) formally recognized them as essential practices in Philippine classrooms. However, challenges remain: Darling-Hammond and Rothman (2020) noted that teachers face time and resource constraints, and Fullan (2021) highlighted resistance to student-centered approaches. Meta-analyses (Frontiers in Education, 2021) confirm that distributed practice and active recall are highly effective, yet these strategies are not consistently applied in local contexts (Fernandez-Rio & Suarez, 2020; Ramos, 2025). This indicates a gap between theoretical effectiveness and practical implementation.

## ***Student Engagement***

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) established engagement as a multidimensional construct—behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Later studies (Reeve et al., 2020; Halverson & Graham, 2019) reinforced that engagement reflects persistence, effort, and emotional investment. While international research links engagement to improved achievement (Deci & Ryan, 2020; Harackiewicz et al., 2019), local studies remain limited. Collaborative learning has been shown to foster problem-solving and teamwork (Wentzel & Ramani, 2021), but Han (2021) cautioned that not all forms of collaboration yield positive outcomes, underscoring the need for context-specific evaluation.

## ***Academic Achievement***

Academic performance is often measured through grades and standardized tests (Slavin, 2018). Studies confirm that structured literacy programs improve reading proficiency (Snow & Matthews, 2022), and active participation strategies enhance outcomes across subjects (Hattie & Zierer, 2021). However, long-term studies (Hughes et al., 2008; Froiland & Oros, 2014) reveal that motivation and engagement in early grades strongly predict later success. This suggests that achievement cannot be separated from engagement, and instructional strategies must address both simultaneously.

While international studies confirm the effectiveness of focused learning strategies, limited empirical evidence exists at the Grade 2 level in Philippine public elementary schools, particularly in Escalante City. Existing literature highlights both the promise and the challenges of these strategies, but few studies critically examine their local implementation. This study therefore contributes by addressing a specific gap: evaluating how focused learning strategies influence engagement and achievement in early primary classrooms within a Philippine context.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design. The survey method served as the primary source of data from teacher-respondents and school administrators. According to Creswell (2012), descriptive–correlational research examines variables and their interrelationships without manipulation.

The unit of analysis in this study was the individual respondent (teacher or administrator). A total of ninety-six participants were included: sixty-nine Grade 2 teachers and twenty-seven elementary school heads from Schools Division 1 for School Year 2025–2026. The total enumeration technique was used to ensure accuracy and relevance of findings.

Two instruments were administered: one for teachers and one for administrators. Each instrument had three parts: demographic profile, implementation of focused learning strategies, and student engagement. Responses were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 indicated “Very High Extent” and 1 indicated “Very Low Extent.” Reliability testing yielded Cronbach’s alpha values of 0.934 for the focused learning strategies instrument and 0.916 for the student engagement instrument, both indicating excellent internal consistency.

For the correlational analysis, Pearson’s  $r$  was computed per teacher-respondent, linking their reported extent of strategy implementation with their assessment of student engagement. Academic achievement data were drawn from the most recent grading period in English 2, aggregated at the school level (average grade = 84.37). These grades were not matched to individual teachers but were treated as representative of overall learner performance in the participating schools. Thus, correlations reflect relationships between teachers’ reported practices and general achievement outcomes, rather than one-to-one teacher–student grade matching.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Frequency counts and percentages described the demographic profile, while means and standard deviations determined the extent of implementation and engagement levels. Pearson’s  $r$  tested relationships among focused learning strategies, student engagement, and academic achievement at the 0.05 level of significance.



Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Informed consent was obtained, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained through secure data storage and restricted access.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1**

*Extent of Implementation of the Focused-Learning Strategies on Student Engagement as Assessed by Teacher-Respondents and School Administrators*

Indicators	Teachers (n=69)			School Administrators (n=27)		
	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Differentiated Instruction	4.014	.587	High Extent	4.352	.225	Very High Extent
Problem-Based Learning	3.910	.543	High Extent	4.264	.511	Very High Extent
Gamification	3.857	.712	High Extent	4.134	.571	High Extent
Contextualized Teaching	3.971	.590	High Extent	4.194	.402	High Extent
Cooperative Learning	3.967	.593	High Extent	4.273	.372	Very High Extent
<b>Extent of Implementation</b>	<b>3.944</b>	<b>.490</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>4.244</b>	<b>.305</b>	<b>Very High Extent</b>

**Note.** The mean scores were interpreted using five evenly distributed levels of extent. Scores from 1.00–1.80 indicate *very low extent*, 1.81–2.60 indicate *low extent*, 2.61–3.40 indicate *moderate extent*, 3.41–4.20 indicate *high extent*, and 4.21–5.00 indicate *very high extent*.

Table 3 presents the extent of implementation of focused-learning strategies on student engagement as assessed by 69 teacher-respondents and 27 school administrators. Both teachers and administrators assessed the implementation of focused-learning strategies at high to very high levels. Teachers reported an overall mean of 3.944 (SD = 0.490), indicating consistent integration of strategies such as differentiated instruction, contextualized teaching, and cooperative learning. Administrators provided slightly higher ratings (M = 4.244, SD = 0.305), suggesting a perception of stronger implementation across schools.

The difference in ratings may reflect administrators' broader program-level perspective, which emphasizes policy adoption and institutional support, whereas teachers' assessments are grounded in daily classroom realities and practical challenges. This divergence highlights the importance of triangulating perspectives to capture both systemic and classroom-level dimensions of implementation.

Among the strategies, gamification received the lowest ratings from both groups, though still within the "high extent" range. This suggests that while gamification is recognized as beneficial, it may be less consistently applied compared to more traditional approaches such as differentiated instruction and cooperative learning. The findings align with prior research (Hattie, 2018; Cabrera & Raposa, 2020) emphasizing the effectiveness of tailoring instruction and fostering collaboration, while also pointing to the need for greater innovation in integrating game-based methods. Overall, the results confirm that focused-learning strategies are actively embedded in classroom practice and supported institutionally. This strong implementation provides a foundation for enhancing student engagement, consistent with Fredricks et al.'s (2004) multidimensional model, which underscores that structured and intentional instruction strengthens behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

**Table 2**

*Level of Student Engagement as Assessed by Teacher-Respondents and School Administrators*

Indicators	Teachers (n=69)		School Administrators (n=27)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD



	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Behavioral Engagement	3.841	.494	High Engagement	4.000	.373	High Engagement
Emotional Engagement	3.986	.463	High Engagement	4.033	.481	High Engagement
Cognitive Engagement	3.817	.507	High Engagement	3.630	.532	High Engagement
<b>Overall Level of Engagement</b>	<b>3.881</b>	<b>.452</b>	<b>High Engagement</b>	<b>3.888</b>	<b>.363</b>	<b>High Engagement</b>

**Note.** The mean scores were interpreted using five evenly distributed levels of engagement. Scores from 1.00–1.80 indicate *very low engagement*, 1.81–2.60 indicate *low engagement*, 2.61–3.40 indicate *moderate engagement*, 3.41–4.20 indicate *high engagement*, and 4.21–5.00 indicate *very high engagement*.

Both teachers and administrators assessed Grade 2 learners as demonstrating high engagement across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive domains. Teachers reported an overall mean of 3.881 (SD = 0.452), while administrators provided a nearly identical rating (M = 3.888, SD = 0.363). This consistency strengthens the credibility of the findings through triangulation, indicating that engagement is assessed as robust across perspectives.

Teachers rated emotional engagement highest (M = 3.986), suggesting that classroom climates foster belongingness, enthusiasm, and positive teacher–student interactions. Administrators also emphasized emotional engagement (M = 4.033) and behavioral engagement (M = 4.000), reflecting their broader view of school culture and institutional support. However, administrators rated cognitive engagement slightly lower (M = 3.630) compared to teachers (M = 3.817), pointing to a potential area for improvement in inquiry-based and problem-solving approaches that stimulate deeper thinking.

The effect sizes implied by these means are moderate to strong, showing that engagement is consistently high but not yet at the “very high” threshold. This suggests that while learners are attentive and emotionally connected, further emphasis on strategies that build cognitive persistence—such as problem-based learning and metacognitive scaffolding—could elevate engagement to higher levels.

Overall, the findings align with Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris’ (2004) multidimensional model of engagement, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive domains. They also resonate with recent studies (Fundal & Fuentesbilla, 2025; Li, Ma, & Shi, 2023) showing that differentiated instruction and gamification enhance motivation and performance. Schools should therefore continue nurturing behavioral and emotional engagement through supportive environments while prioritizing professional development in strategies that strengthen cognitive engagement, ensuring learners not only participate but also invest in sustained, deeper learning.

### Table 3

*Academic Achievement of Grade 2 Learners Based on Their Most Recent Grading Period*

Number of Schools	Average Grade in English 2
27	84.37

Across the 27 participating schools, Grade 2 learners achieved an average grade of 84.37 in English 2, reflecting a satisfactory level of academic performance. This outcome indicates that when focused-learning strategies are consistently implemented, learners demonstrate not only high engagement but also measurable achievement.

The results align with Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris’ (2004) multidimensional model, which emphasizes that active participation and engagement foster stronger academic outcomes. Supporting evidence from prior studies reinforces this link: Zhang and Ma (2023) found that project-based and problem-based learning significantly improved achievement and higher-order thinking skills in Southeast Asian contexts, while Smale-Jacobse et al. (2019) reported small to moderate gains from differentiated instruction, particularly when teachers received adequate training. Similarly, Li, Ma, and Shi (2023) concluded that gamification enhances motivation and achievement, and Fundal and Fuentesbilla (2025) demonstrated that combining differentiated instruction with gamification improved competence and performance among early grade learners.

Cooperative learning also emerged as a critical contributor to achievement. Wentzel and Ramani (2021) highlighted that teamwork and peer collaboration strengthen problem-solving skills, which directly support academic success. Taken together,



these findings suggest that strategies emphasizing collaboration, contextualization, and active problem-solving are particularly effective in raising achievement levels.

Overall, the evidence confirms that focused-learning strategies provide a dual benefit: they sustain high engagement and translate into improved academic performance. This underscores the importance of embedding these approaches into instructional design and teacher training programs to ensure consistent application across classrooms.

**Table 4**

*Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of Focused-Learning Strategies and the Level of Student Engagement When Taken as Whole as Assessed by the Two Groups of Respondents*

Group	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Teachers	69	.615	.000	Significant
School Administrators	27	.036	.860	Not Significant

**Note.** The level of significance used in this study was  $\alpha = .05$ .

For teachers, the correlation between the extent of implementation of focused-learning strategies and student engagement was strong and statistically significant ( $r = .615, p < .001$ ). This indicates that higher levels of strategy use were consistently associated with greater behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. In contrast, administrators reported a very weak and non-significant correlation ( $r = .036, p = .860$ ), suggesting that their perceptions of implementation were not directly linked to observed engagement outcomes.

The strong teacher-reported relationship underscores the importance of classroom-level practices in shaping engagement. Teachers, who interact with learners daily, are better positioned to observe how strategies such as differentiated instruction and problem-based learning translate into active participation and deeper involvement. These findings align with Sun and Rueda (2021), who emphasized that inquiry-based and problem-solving tasks stimulate cognitive effort and sustained engagement, and Guthrie and Carlin (2024), who highlighted the role of cognitive strategies in literacy learning.

The discrepancy between teacher and administrator ratings may be explained by differences in perspective. Administrators often evaluate implementation at a programmatic or policy level, which may lead to overestimating adoption without capturing the nuances of classroom practice. Teachers, on the other hand, assess engagement based on direct learner responses, making their ratings more sensitive to instructional quality and consistency. This divergence highlights the need for administrators to complement oversight with classroom visits, structured observations, and teacher feedback mechanisms to better align perceptions with actual learner outcomes.

Overall, the findings reinforce that genuine student engagement depends not only on the presence of focused-learning strategies but also on their quality, consistency, and responsiveness in daily instruction. Strong teacher-reported correlations confirm that deliberate, student-centered approaches are essential for maximizing engagement, while the weaker administrator-reported associations point to the importance of bridging policy-level support with classroom realities.

**Table 5**

*Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of Focused-Learning Strategies and the Level of Student Engagement as Assessed by Teachers*

Pair		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	Behavior Engagement	.604	.000	Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.717	.000	Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.654	.000	Significant
<b>Problem-Based Learning</b>	Behavior Engagement	.516	.000	Significant



	Emotional Engagement	.534	.000	Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.414	.000	Significant
<b>Gamification</b>	Behavior Engagement	.444	.000	Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.444	.000	Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.481	.000	Significant
<b>Contextualized Teaching</b>	Behavior Engagement	.532	.000	Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.677	.000	Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.598	.000	Significant
<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	Behavior Engagement	.405	.001	Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.550	.000	Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.343	.004	Significant

**Note.** The level of significance used in this study was  $\alpha = .05$ .

All correlations between focused-learning strategies and student engagement, as assessed by teachers, were statistically significant. Differentiated instruction demonstrated the strongest associations, particularly with emotional engagement ( $r = .717$ , very strong), indicating that tailoring instruction to learner needs fosters enthusiasm and positive classroom climates. Strong correlations with behavioral and cognitive engagement further confirm its broad effectiveness.

Problem-based learning showed strong effects on behavioral and emotional engagement ( $r = .516$  and  $r = .534$ ) and a moderate effect on cognitive engagement ( $r = .414$ ). This suggests that while inquiry-driven tasks sustain participation and emotional investment, additional scaffolding may be needed to deepen cognitive persistence.

Gamification yielded moderate correlations across all dimensions ( $r = .444$ – $.481$ ), reflecting its role in stimulating motivation and participation but with less impact on sustained cognitive effort compared to other strategies. Contextualized teaching, by contrast, produced strong correlations across all domains, particularly emotional engagement ( $r = .677$ ), underscoring the value of connecting lessons to real-life contexts to enhance relevance and interest.

Cooperative learning demonstrated moderate to strong effects, with the highest correlation in emotional engagement ( $r = .550$ ). This highlights the importance of peer collaboration in fostering belongingness and motivation, though its cognitive impact was weaker ( $r = .343$ , moderate).

Taken together, the results confirm that teachers' consistent application of focused-learning strategies significantly enhances student engagement. Differentiated instruction and contextualized teaching emerged as the most influential, while gamification and cooperative learning provided moderate but meaningful contributions. These findings emphasize that engagement is maximized when strategies are applied in combination, balancing personalization, collaboration, and contextual relevance.

**Table 6**

*Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of Focused-Learning Strategies and the Level of Student Engagement as Assessed by School Heads*

Pair		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	Behavior Engagement	.126	.531	Not Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.043	.831	Not Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.062	.758	Not Significant



<b>Problem-Based Learning</b>	Behavior Engagement	.187	.351	Not Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.479*	.011	Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.043	.833	Not Significant
<b>Gamification</b>	Behavior Engagement	.163	.418	Not Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.493**	.009	Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	-.075	.709	Not Significant
<b>Contextualized Teaching</b>	Behavior Engagement	.176	.379	Not Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.308	.118	Not Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	-.064	.751	Not Significant
<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	Behavior Engagement	.239	.230	Not Significant
	Emotional Engagement	.299	.130	Not Significant
	Cognitive Engagement	.235	.239	Not Significant

**Note.** The level of significance used in this study was  $\alpha = .05$ .

School administrators' assessments revealed that most correlations between focused-learning strategies and student engagement were weak and not statistically significant. Differentiated instruction, contextualized teaching, and cooperative learning showed no meaningful associations with behavioral or cognitive engagement. This contrasts sharply with teachers' assessments, which consistently reported strong and significant relationships.

The only significant findings from administrators' assessment were moderate correlations with emotional engagement: problem-based learning ( $r = .479, p = .011$ ) and gamification ( $r = .493, p = .009$ ). These results suggest that administrators perceive certain strategies as effective in fostering students' motivation and emotional involvement, but do not observe strong links to behavioral or cognitive dimensions.

The divergence between teacher and administrator ratings highlights differences in vantage points. Teachers, who interact directly with learners, are more attuned to how strategies influence day-to-day participation and thinking. Administrators, by contrast, evaluate implementation at a programmatic level, which may limit their ability to detect subtle classroom-level effects. This gap underscores the importance of complementing administrative oversight with classroom observations and teacher feedback to ensure a more accurate understanding of engagement outcomes.

Overall, the findings indicate that while administrators recognize the emotional benefits of problem-based learning and gamification, they may underestimate the broader impact of focused-learning strategies on behavioral and cognitive engagement. Bridging these perspectives is essential for aligning policy-level support with classroom realities and ensuring that strategies are fully leveraged to enhance all dimensions of student engagement.

**Table 7**

*Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of Focused-Learning Strategies and the Level of Academic Achievement of Grade 2 Learners*

Group	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Teachers	69	.648	.038	Significant
School Administrators	27	.411	.029	Significant

**Note.** The level of significance used in this study was  $\alpha = .05$ .

Both teachers and administrators reported significant positive relationships between the implementation of focused-learning strategies and learners' academic achievement. Teachers identified a strong correlation ( $r = .648, p = .038$ ), indicating that consistent application of strategies such as differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and contextualized teaching is closely associated with higher performance in English. Administrators observed a moderate correlation ( $r = .411, p = .029$ ),



suggesting that while they recognize the positive impact of these strategies, their perspective reflects broader program-level outcomes rather than direct classroom effects.

The stronger teacher-reported correlation highlights the importance of instructional quality and daily application in shaping achievement. Teachers, who directly implement strategies, are more attuned to how these practices influence learners' comprehension and performance. This finding supports Tomlinson (2017) and Hmelo-Silver (2019), who emphasized that lessons tailored to student needs and structured around problem-solving tasks enhance understanding and achievement.

School administrators' moderate correlation suggests that while they acknowledge the benefits of focused-learning strategies, their assessments may be influenced by institutional factors such as resource allocation, training, and policy implementation. This aligns with Dichev and Dicheva (2020), who noted that engaging and well-planned strategies improve learning effectiveness but require consistent support to maximize impact.

Overall, the results confirm that both teachers and administrators perceive focused-learning strategies as beneficial to academic achievement, though the strength of association differs. This underscores the need to bridge classroom-level practice with institutional oversight, ensuring that strategies are not only adopted but also consistently and effectively applied to sustain measurable gains in learner performance.

**Table 8**

*Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of Focused-Learning Strategies as Assessed by Teachers and the Level of Academic Achievement of Grade 2 Learners*

Pair		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	Academic Achievement	.496	.000	Significant
<b>Problem-Based Learning</b>	Academic Achievement	.599	.000	Significant
<b>Gamification</b>	Academic Achievement	.373	.002	Significant
<b>Contextualized Teaching</b>	Academic Achievement	.562	.000	Significant
<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	Academic Achievement	.672	.000	Significant

**Note.** The level of significance used in this study was  $\alpha = .05$ .

All correlations between focused-learning strategies and academic achievement, as assessed by teachers, were positive and statistically significant. Cooperative learning demonstrated the strongest relationship ( $r = .672$ , strong), underscoring the value of peer collaboration in enhancing comprehension and performance. This finding supports Johnson and Johnson (2020), who emphasized that cooperative structures foster deeper understanding through shared responsibility and teamwork.

Problem-based learning ( $r = .599$ , strong) and contextualized teaching ( $r = .562$ , strong) also showed substantial associations with achievement. These results highlight the importance of real-life tasks and inquiry-driven approaches in promoting higher-order thinking and retention, consistent with Hmelo-Silver (2019) and Bernal et al. (2021). Differentiated instruction ( $r = .496$ , moderate) was significantly related to achievement, reflecting the benefits of tailoring lessons to diverse learner needs, as noted by Tomlinson (2017).

Gamification, while yielding the lowest correlation ( $r = .373$ , moderate), still demonstrated a meaningful impact. Its moderate effect suggests that game-based elements enhance motivation and participation, though they may be less influential on sustained academic performance compared to collaborative or inquiry-based strategies. This aligns with Dichev and Dicheva (2020), who found that gamification increases engagement but requires careful integration to maximize learning outcomes.

Overall, the results confirm that teachers' consistent application of focused-learning strategies contributes significantly to academic achievement. Strategies emphasizing collaboration, contextualization, and inquiry appear most impactful, while differentiated instruction and gamification provide complementary benefits. These findings reinforce the need for balanced instructional design that integrates multiple approaches to optimize learner performance.



**Table 9**

*Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of Focused-Learning Strategies as Assessed by School Heads and the Level of Academic Achievement of Grade 2 Learners*

Pair		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	Academic Achievement	-.133	.508	Not Significant
<b>Problem-Based Learning</b>	Academic Achievement	.551	.003	Significant
<b>Gamification</b>	Academic Achievement	.344	.079	Not Significant
<b>Contextualized Teaching</b>	Academic Achievement	.551	.003	Significant
<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	Academic Achievement	.540	.004	Significant

**Note.** The level of significance used in this study was  $\alpha = .05$ .

School heads' assessments revealed that three strategies—problem-based learning ( $r = .551$ , strong), contextualized teaching ( $r = .551$ , strong), and cooperative learning ( $r = .540$ , strong)—were significantly associated with academic achievement. These findings highlight the perceived importance of inquiry-driven tasks, real-life contextualization, and collaborative learning in improving performance. Such strategies are consistent with Hmelo-Silver (2019), Bernal et al. (2021), and Johnson & Johnson (2020), who emphasized that authentic problem-solving and teamwork foster deeper understanding and stronger achievement outcomes.

By contrast, differentiated instruction ( $r = -.133$ , ns) and gamification ( $r = .344$ , ns) were not significantly related to achievement in administrators' assessments. The weak and non-significant correlation for differentiated instruction suggests that administrators may not observe direct performance gains from tailoring lessons, possibly because its effects are subtler and more long-term. Similarly, gamification showed only a moderate but non-significant association, indicating that while game-based elements may enhance motivation, administrators may perceive them as less impactful on measurable academic outcomes.

The divergence between significant and non-significant results underscores the difference between classroom-level and program-level perspectives. Teachers reported consistent positive associations across all strategies, while administrators identified only selected strategies as strongly linked to achievement. This suggests that administrators may prioritize strategies with visible, collective outcomes (e.g., cooperative learning, contextualized tasks) over those whose effects are more individualized (e.g., differentiated instruction).

Overall, the findings confirm that school heads recognize the academic value of collaborative, contextualized, and inquiry-based approaches, but may underestimate the contribution of differentiated instruction and gamification. Bridging these perspectives through closer classroom observation and dialogue with teachers could help administrators develop a more comprehensive understanding of how all strategies contribute to learner success.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings derived from the study, the researcher drew the following conclusions:

The findings made by the researcher imply that the focused learning strategies being implemented by the schools are effective. These results suggest that both teachers and administrators recognize strong implementation of focused-learning strategies, with school administrators perceiving slightly higher levels of implementation. School administrators generally rated the strategies higher than teachers. The findings underscore a positive trend in adopting strategies that promote student engagement, reflecting a strong commitment to enhancing the learning experience of the learners.

Student engagement was consistently assessed at a high level across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive domains. Teachers emphasized emotional engagement, while administrators highlighted behavioral and emotional aspects, suggesting complementary perspectives. Importantly, correlations revealed that teachers' implementation of strategies was strongly linked to engagement, underscoring the importance of classroom-level practice in sustaining learner involvement.



The study further confirmed significant positive relationships between focused learning strategies and academic achievement. Teachers reported strong correlations across all strategies, with cooperative learning showing the highest association, while administrators identified problem-based learning, contextualized teaching, and cooperative learning as particularly influential. These findings reinforce that deliberate, student-centered approaches not only sustain engagement but also translate into measurable academic success.

Based on these findings, an enhancement program was proposed to strengthen the consistent use of focused learning strategies. This program emphasizes continuous professional development, structured mentoring, and regular School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions to build teacher capacity and ensure effective classroom implementation. By institutionalizing these supports, schools can foster sustained engagement and improved achievement among early grade learners, contributing to stronger foundations in literacy and lifelong learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

**Policy.** The Department of Education and local school divisions may institutionalize the integration of focused learning strategies into early grade instruction. Since differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and contextualized teaching were consistently rated at high to very high levels of implementation, policies should ensure these strategies are embedded in lesson planning standards, monitoring tools, and classroom observation protocols.

**Teacher Training.** Professional development programs should prioritize strategies shown to have strong correlations with student engagement and achievement. For teachers, cooperative learning ( $r = .672, p < .001$ ) and problem-based learning ( $r = .599, p < .001$ ) were most strongly associated with academic achievement, while differentiated instruction and contextualized teaching were highly linked to engagement. Training modules and SLAC sessions should therefore emphasize these approaches, with practical demonstrations and peer coaching to ensure consistent application.

**Institutional Support.** School administrators may strengthen support systems by providing time, resources, and structured mentoring for teachers. Since administrators rated implementation higher than teachers, bridging this perception gap requires closer classroom monitoring and feedback mechanisms. Institutional support should also focus on strategies that administrators identified as effective in emotional engagement, such as gamification and problem-based learning, by allocating resources for interactive materials and technology integration.

**Future Research.** Further studies may adopt mixed-method or longitudinal designs to capture deeper insights into how focused learning strategies influence engagement and achievement over time. Expanding the scope to other grade levels, subjects, or divisions will validate the generalizability of findings. Additionally, matching individual teacher implementation data with specific learner achievement records could provide more precise evidence of direct instructional impact.

## Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no financial or personal relationships that could in any way influence or bias the content of this work.

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