

Enhancing Grade 8 Learner's Engagement Through the Use of Certificate Strategy as Reward in Teaching World War

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Abstract— Engagement is a major factor in effective learning, especially in classes such as social studies, where understanding complex happenings in history is key. Through a classroom-based research methodology, the study aimed to enhance Grade 8 learners' engagement through the use of certificates as a reward in teaching World War lessons at a certain public secondary school during the school year 2024-2025. Thirty-five students were chosen through purposive sampling. A researcher-made rubric and checklist were used for data collection, and the analysis included calculating the mean and standard deviation and conducting a t-test. The study found that students initially showed low participation and engagement in World War lessons, often appearing uninterested and inactive in class. After implementing the certificate reward strategy, there was a significant improvement in their motivation, participation, and overall classroom engagement, highlighting the positive impact of recognition-based incentives. Therefore, the certificate strategy is an effective tool for enhancing the students' engagement and participation in World War lessons. Certificate strategies can be effectively incorporated to enhance student motivation, engagement, and participation in classroom activities, especially in subjects or topics where learners tend to lose interest.

Index Terms— Education, Students, Certificate, Classroom-based, Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective learning is significantly facilitated by engagement, especially in subjects such as social studies, where it is necessary to understand complex historical occurrences (Filgona et al., 2020). Encouraging intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in students significantly enhances their performance and engagement when learning history (Moore & Wang, 2021). However, despite its importance, student engagement is often still an issue, particularly in the more conventional classroom setup where lectures can sometimes seem disconnected from students' interests and real-world applications (Villena et al., 2022).

The seeming irrelevance is a common issue in social studies, particularly when educating topics such as World War history, leading to disengagement and poor academic performance (Anis, 2021). Conventional teaching methods often fail to captivate students, resulting in passive learning settings (Villena et al., 2022). This disengagement can lower the students' understanding of crucial historical concepts and hinder the development of critical thinking and historical empathy, among other essential skills (Bartelds et al., 2020).

Teachers have explored various strategies for engaging students, including gamification, differentiated teaching, and the utilization of digital tools, to address disengagement in students (Velasco, 2024). Even though these methods hold promise, they are often resource-intensive and time-consuming, which makes them difficult to implement in most classrooms (Mbete, 2022). Research has also demonstrated how encouraging strategies, such as awarding certificates, can enhance engagement, motivation and productivity (Suratman et al., 2020). However, few studies specifically talk about the use of certificates as an incentive tool in social studies, especially in the Philippine educational context (Ocariza et al., 2023).

With the strict, one-size-fits-all teaching methods common in practice, it remains challenging to interest Grade 8 students in history class, especially for topics like World War (Anis, 2021). Lessons feel meaningless and boring because such models often fail to take note of the students' cultural and social contexts (Garcia, 2021). An uncomplicated and inexpensive approach like the certificate can bridge this gap since it offers concrete evidence that gives rise to intrinsic motivation and invites active engagement (Hernandez et al., 2020).

Research identifies the impact of participation on learning achievements and how intrinsically motivated students generally perform well and remain more engaged (Moore & Wang, 2021). Student certification and positive reinforcement have been linked with improved academic outcomes and participation (Suratman et al., 2020). Students' ability to connect historical events and develop critical thinking skills is enhanced further through the development of historical empathy by contextualized learning (Bartelds et al., 2020).

There appears to be a practical-knowledge gap in the prior research. There is a lack of rigorous research in the prior literature. Some of these unexplored engagement strategies appear to be lacking in the practice of Social Studies education (Villena et al., 2022). The discipline of Social Studies is at an opportune time for an examination of practical emphasis research on affordable methods such as certificates (Ocariza et al., 2023). Most of the earlier research is aimed at the theoretical nature of the student motivation and engagement field (Filgona et al., 2020). However, there are very few practical studies or action research in the field of motivating students in Social Studies (Hernandez et al., 2020). This makes it significant and worth exploring in teaching history to Grade 8 students (Anis, 2021). An investigation of these issues is important because traditional methods often fail to engage students and foster critical thinking (Bartelds et al., 2020). Furthermore, earlier theoretical work has centered mostly on gamification and technology and very little practical investigation has been conducted on less complex, scalable strategies in Social Studies classrooms (Miles, 2017).

II. STRATEGY

Certificates have a significant impact on student's lives. Rewards and recognition are the primary aspects that drive classroom motivation and participation (Capece, 2020). Prizes and recognitions are extrinsic motivators that may enhance student grades in global history classes as well as promote good behaviors (Balamurugan, 2022). The method focuses on rewarding effort, behavior, and teamwork along with cognitive achievement such as tests and class participation (Jacobs et al., 2021).

Certifications motivate students to stick with it, acquire new skills, and experience a sense of achievement (Martin & Davies, 2022). To affirm student engagement and achievement in world history courses, official acknowledgement, like student of the week awards is important (Resch et al., 2022). Through positive behavior management and an achievement culture, extrinsic rewards enhance motivation and engagement (Balamurugan, 2022). Certificate-seeking students are often seen with higher participation, involvement, and improved learning outcomes (Liu et al., 2022). Persistence and performance are enhanced when intrinsic motivation and the desire for rewards are combined (Semenova, 2022).

Students may not engage in activities if they are not motivated to learn during the discussions. This can hinder teaching strategy effectiveness (Sebbowa & Ng'ambi, 2020). The researcher suggests certificates as a motivating factor for students in world history. This approach encourages students to take part in class, cooperate, finish tasks, and exhibit good behavior as requirements for obtaining certificates, which can be demanding for less motivated world history learning students.

In this strategy, students will be introduced to the strategy with a clear explanation of its purpose and benefits (Howell, 2021). The selection process will be transparent to build trust and understanding among students (Mayo-Wilson et al., 2021). Student engagement and performance will be tracked and recorded during the lesson, with contributions from co-teachers or group facilitators (McTigue et al., 2022). Every week, a short ceremony will take place in class to post the student recipient and hand out the award (Ringstaff, 2023). Peer clapping and classroom acknowledgement will reward good behavior and encourage other learners (Sidin, 2021). Reflection and feedback will be used to determine the impact of the program and permit requisite adjustments to be made (Silver et al., 2023).

III. Research Questions

This research aims to enhance Grade 8 learners' engagement through the use of certificates as a reward in teaching World War lessons at a certain public secondary school during the 2024-2025 school year.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of the students' class participation before the use of certificate strategy?
2. What is the level of the students' class participation after the use of certificate strategy?
3. What is the level of the students' engagement before the use of certificate strategy?
4. What is the level of the students' engagement after the use of certificate strategy?
5. Is there any significant difference between the level of the students' class participation before and after using the certificate strategy?
6. Is there any significant difference between the level of the students' engagement before and after using the certificate strategy?

IV. Methods

Research Design

This study used a classroom-based action research design to assess learner's learning motivation through students of the certificates and their potential impact on the students in a month-long lesson in Grade 8 Araling Panlipunan (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021). This action research design enabled teachers to explore their practice and find out what went well and did not go well for their students in their classrooms (Cronholm & Gobel, 2022). This design is considered feasible since it intended to utilize student of the week certificate approach in world war lesson teaching to support the grade 8 students throughout the school year 2024 – 2025 at a given public secondary school in Ozamiz City.

Site

The study will be conducted at one of the secondary public schools in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental. This institution is a public secondary learning school in Ozamiz City. Ever since it was established in 1952, the school has been committed to providing curriculum-based, quality, and affordable education to the people within the community. With the resolution imposed by the Department of Education (DepEd), it is now leading the implementation of the K to 12 basic education program, including the junior and senior high school levels. According to the DepEd directive, the Junior High School curriculum extends from grade 7 through grade 10, which shows the determination of the institution to offer a complete and contemporary learning experience for its students (Pernia, 2022). The school provides Araling Panlipunan subject and tolerates heterogeneous type of students. The school provides Department of Education prescribed subjects and one of them is Araling Panlipunan.

Participants

The participants of the study were 35 grade 8 students from a particular section where the researcher was teaching. The participants were determined through a purposive sampling method. The participants were selected according to the following criteria: Students who were taking classes at the Junior High School Department of a specific secondary public school as grade 8 students for school year 2024-2025; students who were enrolled in a specific section of grade 8 curriculum; students who enrolled in the Araling Panlipunan subject; and students who gave their full agreement in joining the study. Before administering the survey, the researcher made sure that each of these conditions were met.

Research Instruments

The following instruments were used in this study:

- A. Class Participation Rubric.** The researchers constructed a 20-point rubric to measure Grade 8 students' participation, engagement, and performance during World War lessons. The rubric uses clear and specific criteria that cover the lesson plan objectives and the "Student of the Week" reward strategy. The rubric measures factors like level of class participation, listening, behavior, and preparation. Before it was utilized, the rubric was critiqued by the cooperating teacher for clarity and applicability and was accordingly revised based on expert comments. This tool was used as an assessment and monitoring tool during the pilot run in a chosen secondary school in Misamis Occidental for S.Y. 2024–2025.

In determining the test performance, the following scale will be used.

| Score | Grade Equivalent | Interpretation |
|-------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 17-20 | 90-100 | Outstanding |
| 16 | 85-89 | Very Satisfactory |
| 14-15 | 80-84 | Satisfactory |
| 12-13 | 75-79 | Fairly Satisfactory |
| 1-11 | Below 75 | Did not meet expectation |

- B. Learner's Engagement Likert Scale.** The researchers used a researcher-made Likert scale questionnaire to measure the effect of the certificate strategy on the classroom engagement of the students. The instrument has three parts: Learner Engagement with the Use of Certificate, Effect on Students' Active Engagement, and Receiving Certificate as a Reward. Each statement was rated using a 5-point Likert scale: (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree. To ensure the validity of the test, the researcher will get experts to validate it, such as the research adviser, cooperating teacher, school head, and Principal. The instrument was pilot tested and the results computed using statistical software, which resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.9151, reflecting high reliability and validity. The instrument doubled as both a pre-test and a post-test monitoring tool in the course of implementation in a chosen secondary school in Misamis Occidental for S.Y. 2024–2025.
- C. Lesson Plan.** The researchers will design a lesson plan focused on World War with the Certificate of the Week strategy to enhance Grade 8 students' motivation to learn about the subject. The lesson plan will be carefully reviewed by the cooperating teacher prior to implementation and will be revised accordingly by the researchers. The approach will be implemented in a secondary school in Misamis Occidental, among Grade 8 students during the S.Y. 2024-2025.
- D. Certificate.** The researchers used certificate as a reward strategy to recognize students' achievements, including academic performance, class participation, and positive behavior. The researchers provided certificates weekly on set criteria and aimed at encouraging the students to participate fully in the lessons regarding World War topics.

Data Collection and Procedure

A. Pre-Implementation Phase

The researcher requested permission from the dean of the College of Education, the Schools Division Superintendent, and, once granted, obtained approval from the school principal, head teacher, cooperating teachers, and the parents of the students to conduct the study. Upon securing permission, consent forms were forwarded to the students' parents and assent forms were obtained from the students themselves. Data collection only started after acquiring all the required permits. In this phase, evaluations and activities were made ready based on the PowerPoint presentations and lesson plans of the teachers.

B. Implementation Phase

The researchers presented and discussed the lessons integrating the certificate strategy at the end of each week. Detailed instructions were also provided to the students on the function, rules, and application of the certificate strategy for activities and tests. A post-test was conducted after a month of using the strategy to establish the students' level of engagement towards World History lessons.

C. Post-Implementation Phase

The post-implementation stage includes drawing a conclusion, giving recommendations, proofreading, editing, and finalizing the research study. It also involves the proper dissemination of the research results to a certain group of people.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical research practice entails respectful treatment of participants, transparency through full disclosure, and assuming alternative views to uphold the integrity of research (Bosma & Granger, 2022). Good, meaningful research begins with ethical researchers. Consequently, research studies will be successful if the researcher is sensitive to ethical concerns.

Prior to the conduct of the research, Misamis University's College of Education approval was requested. Participants were solicited through letters requesting permission to join the study. The participants were assured that confidentiality in collecting, using, and presenting data is strictly maintained. For instance, all names were replaced to maintain individuals' identities should confidentiality be exercised. This process guaranteed that research with human subjects was morally and safely carried out.

Data Analysis Plan

The researcher calculated descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviations, to assess the level of performance both before and after implementing the certificate strategy.

Mean and Standard Deviation used to summarize the level of performance and engagement of students before and after the use of Certificate Strategy as Reward in Teaching World War.

T-Test used to explore the significant difference in students' performance and engagement before and after the use of Certificate Strategy as Reward in Teaching World War.

V. Results And Discussions

Students' Class Participation Before the Use of Certificate Strategy

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of students' class participation prior to the implementation of the Certificate Strategy. Overall, results show that students' participation level did not reach the standard expected ($M = 8.14$, $SD = 1.99$). According to the given scale, this mean score is in the lowest performance range (1–11), which falls under the category of Did Not Meet Expectations.

This result shows that, without the intervention, the majority of learners were not participating in the recitations or discussions that took place in class. The mean here implies that student participation was most probably restricted by lacking adequate motivation, interest, or even self-confidence during class. The standard deviation ($SD = 1.99$) shows that the dispersion of scores is moderate, which means that the majority of the students scored badly but not equally badly.

The result's implication is significant to teachers, school administrators, and curriculum designers (Ghamrawi et al., 2024). It emphasizes the necessity for successful intervention programs that can interact with students (Wong & Liem, 2022). Therefore, the use of recognition-based methods like the Certificate Strategy appears opportune and necessary (Kloos et al., 2023).

To compensate for the gap, concerned teachers can consider implementing motivational strategies such as student incentives for participation, participative classroom games that stimulate participation, peer discussions to prevent subjecting students to excessive pressure, and incorporating students' interests in lessons to promote their participation (Jacobson, 2025). By reinforcing positive behavior through tangible rewards and an open and nurturing classroom, schools can promote more active participation and improve overall student performance (Bhadouria, 2024).

Table 1. *Students' Class Participation Before the Use of Certificate Strategy*

| Level of Participation | M | SD |
|---|------|------|
| Did not Meet the Expectations | 8.14 | 1.99 |
| <i>Note Scale: 17-20 (Outstanding); 16 (Very Satisfactory); 14-15 (Satisfactory); 12-13 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1-11 (Did Not Meet Expectations)</i> | | |

Students' Class Participation After the Use of Certificate Strategy

Table 2 presents the levels of students' class participation after the implementation of the Certificate Strategy. The general mean ($M = 18.34$, $SD = 1.47$) is at the "Outstanding" level of participation, which shows a high rate of participation among the students following the use of the strategy. The score is significantly higher than the minimum ($M = 17$) that would constitute an "Outstanding" level, indicating the success of the reward-based strategy in raising participation levels in class.

This result shows that a majority of the students showed significantly greater participation, maybe due to the motivation and concrete appreciation mechanism embedded in the Student of the Week Certificates. The relatively low standard deviation ($SD = 1.47$) also shows that there was consistency among the performance of the students, with the majority of learners scoring very close around the mean score.

The findings indicate that the Certificate Strategy not only stimulated higher levels of participation but also provided a classroom environment where students felt motivated and rewarded for their efforts (Heilporn et al., 2021). The reward possibly tapped into their intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, especially by those students who are driven by praise or competition (Takop, 2021). The encouragement is likely to have urged them to participate more actively during class discussions and activities (Adam Ismail, 2023).

Based on the above observations, it is recommended that subject teachers and class advisers adopt such reward-based interventions to enhance and sustain participation from students (Boss & Krauss, 2022). School leaders would also help this by institutionalizing easy rewards mechanisms acknowledging students' work on a weekly or monthly basis (McNair et al., 2022). Suggested activities include using "Student of the Week" bulletin boards, mini-ceremonies, or implementing digital badges for attendance (Resch, et al., 2022). For other students who may still struggle to participate, individual support or peer mentoring can be implemented to ensure all students benefit from the motivational climate created by the strategy (Khodadad, 2023).

Table 2. *Students' Class Participation After the Use of Certificate Strategy*

| Level of Participation | M | SD |
|---|-------|------|
| Outstanding | 18.34 | 1.47 |
| <i>Note Scale: 17-20 (Outstanding); 16 (Very Satisfactory); 14-15 (Satisfactory); 12-13 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1-11 (Did Not Meet Expectations)</i> | | |

Students' Engagement Before the Use of Certificate Strategy

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of students' engagement before the introduction of the Certificate Strategy. Overall outcome is that students showed an extremely low level of involvement in class activities ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 0.24$). The mean score is within the lowest end of the given scale (1.00–1.79), which is reflective of the "Very Low" category of engagement.

This result shows that, before the use of the certificate strategy, students were extremely low in learning participation. This specifically includes low alertness in showing up for class, low engagement in interactive processes, low motivation in executing

tasks, and low or no reciprocal interaction with other students. The low standard deviation ($SD = 0.24$) also indicates that scores were tightly packed together, which is a reflection of pervasive disengagement for most of the students, in contrast to random instances.

The markedly low level of engagement may be due to a range of probable reasons such as no acknowledgment, minimal reinforcement of effort, or an inert classroom environment (Li, & Xue, 2023). Such situations can have discouraged students from playing a participatory role in class activities, which can negatively affect their academic progress, learning interest, and social and communication skills development (Yu, 2022). The findings call for prompt action from teachers, school principals, and program implementers to address the documented gap in student participation (Aldhafeeri & Alotaibi, 2022). One of the highly-recommended solutions is to sustain and expand motivational processes such as the Certificate Strategy, which has been shown in the past to maximize enrollment and engagement in other research (Maki, 2023). Teachers can narrow the engagement gap by employing interactive and student-centered methods such as group work, games, and role-playing (Tzenios, 2022).

Teachers can also develop reward programs that reward effort and good conduct, and not exclusively academic success, so as to engage more students (Akabor, 2021). Moreover, incorporating students' feedback, reflection time, and students' choice in lesson planning can boost motivation and learning ownership (Caulfield, 2023). By producing a more responsive and positive learning environment, teachers are able to reduce disengagement significantly and help students build stronger academic and social-emotional skills needed for lifelong learning (Van Pham, 2024).

Table 3. Students' Engagement Before the Use of Certificate Strategy

| Level of Engagement | M | SD |
|---------------------|------|------|
| Very Low | 1.57 | 0.24 |

Note Scale: 4.20-5.00 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (High); 2.60-3.39 (Moderate High); 1.80-2.59 Low); 1.00-1.79 (Very Low)

Students' Engagement After the Use of Certificate Strategy

Table 4 presents the level of students' engagement before the implementation of the Certificate Strategy. Overall, the data show that mean ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.15$) falls within the "Very High" level of students' engagement, as indicated by the scale used in the study, signifying a strong level of active participation and interest among students even before any reward-based strategy was introduced.

This very high engagement level shows students were already positively inclined towards participating in class activities. The low standard deviation ($SD = 0.15$) also implies that there was little variation in responses, an indication of consistency in students' experience and perception. The outcome may be an already motivated set of students or a class environment already established due to factors such as the mode of instruction by the teacher, classroom atmosphere, or the situation of the content.

The research indicates that students' motivation was already high, it is therefore important for classroom advisers and school leaders, in particular, to sustain and enhance such high motivation using effective practices (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021). The use of reward-based interventions like the Certificate Strategy can even further sustain students' work and create an excellence culture (Amaefule, (2025).

To meet any gaps, such as the requirement to engage quieter or less obvious students, teachers might consider applying the Certificate Strategy alongside individualized feedback, peer reward systems, or rotating leadership roles in group tasks (Roy, 2024). These methods can help guarantee sustained involvement and participation from various types of learners (Eden et al., 2024). Also, multiple reflection sessions and feedback gathering from the students can help to improve strategies to remain valid and effective (Kohn, 2024).

Table 4. Students' Engagement After the Use of Certificate Strategy

| Level of Engagement | M | SD |
|---------------------|------|------|
| Very High | 4.55 | 0.15 |

Note Scale: 4.20-5.00 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (High); 2.60-3.39 (Moderate High); 1.80-2.59 Low); 1.00-1.79 (Very Low)

Significant Difference Between the Level of the Students' Class Participation Before and After Using the Certificate Strategy

Table 5 presents the results of a t-test examining whether there is a significant difference between students' class participation before and after the use of the Certificate Strategy. The result indicates a statistically significant difference in student participation between both conditions, with a highly significant p-value ($t = 28.03$, $p = 0.00$). Since the p-value is below 0.01, the null hypothesis (H_0), that there is no significant difference between both levels of participation, is rejected.

The result is a statistically significant increase in class participation after the implementation of the Certificate Strategy. The pre-intervention mean value was comparatively low ($M = 8.14$, $SD = 1.99$), while the post-intervention mean score was highly elevated ($M = 18.34$, $SD = 1.47$). This improvement suggests that the Certificate Strategy brought a significant and positive impact on the behavior of the students to become active and participative during classroom discussions and activities (McQuinn et al., 2022). The change is also reflective of increased motivation, perhaps reward and recognition led, that facilitated sustained engagement for students (Ruede et al., 2023).

These results have important implications for teachers, school administrators, and curriculum designers (Bellibas et al., 2021). The very strong increase in learner engagement after introducing the Certificate Strategy reveals it is an effective motivational and behavioral tool (Nazari et al., 2021). In response, teachers are encouraged to adopt recognition-based systems into their daily classroom routines (Zhang et al., 2022).

To further leverage on these findings, it is recommended to integrate certificate or incentive systems in class policies and implement several identification categories like Most Participative, Most Improved, or Team Contributor to enhance inclusivity (Akabor, 2021). It is also recommended that trainers train instructors in positive reinforcement, participation monitoring, and combining certificate strategies with student self-monitoring to allow external and internal motivation (Allahverdiyeva, 2024). Thus, the Certificate Strategy not only motivated students to participate more actively but also generated a more interactive and active

learning environment (Cayubit, 2022). With rewards tied to in-class behavior and scholarship, students are empowered to be more constructively contributory towards the learning process (Seger, 2024).

Table 5. *Significant Difference Between the Level of the Students' Class Participation Before and After Using the Certificate Strategy*

| Variables | M | SD | t-value | p- | Decision |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|-----------|
| Before the Certificate Strategy | 8.14 | 1.99 | 28.03** | 0.00 | Reject Ho |
| After the Certificate Strategy | 18.34 | 1.47 | | | |

Ho: There is no significant difference between the level of the students' class participation before and after using the certificate strategy

*Note: Probability Value Scale: ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not Significant)*

Significant Difference Between the Level of the Students' Engagement Before and After Using the Certificate Strategy

Table 6 presents the results of a t-test examining whether there is a significant difference between students' engagement before and after the use of the Certificate Strategy. The comparison of the two levels of student engagement indicates a statistically significant difference between the two conditions, with a very significant p-value ($t = 70.67$, $p = 0.00$). Since the p-value is smaller than 0.01, the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant difference between the two engagement levels is rejected.

Results show significant students' engagement after the implementation of the Certificate Strategy. The mean before intervention was very low ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 0.24$), while the post-intervention mean was much higher and was rated as very high ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.15$). This remarkable improvement shows that the Certificate Strategy contributed positively to the emotional, behavior, and cognitive engagement of the students (Hasanov et al., 2021). The increase reflects increased interest in studying driven by the strength of motivation by the appreciation and encouragement provided by the certificates (Burden, 2025). The findings have far-reaching implications for teaching, school principals, and curriculum planners (Kilag & Sasan, 2023).

The considerably high rate of student involvement attests to the success of the Certificate Strategy as an effortless yet potent tool of motivation (Khursheed & Alwi, 2023). Teachers are encouraged to use the same reward approach to sustain students' interest and active engagement throughout class (Sigalingging et al., 2023). Furthermore, school administrators can also apply recognition systems within school policy and promote systematic application in all grade levels to create a more participative and motivated student population (Scaletta & Hughes, 2022).

Table 6. *Significant Difference Between the Level of the Students' Engagement Before and After the Certificate Strategy*

| Variables | M | SD | t-value | p- | Decision |
|---------------------------------|------|------|---------|------|-----------|
| Before the Certificate Strategy | 1.57 | 0.24 | 70.67** | 0.00 | Reject Ho |
| After the Certificate Strategy | 4.55 | 0.15 | | | |

Ho: There is no significant difference between the level of the students' engagement before and after using the certificate strategy

*Note: Probability Value Scale: ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not Significant)*

VI. CONCLUSION

Summary

The study was conducted to enhance Grade 8 learners' engagement through the use of certificates as a reward in teaching World War lessons during the academic year 2024-2025 in one of the public secondary schools in Ozamiz City. The research employed classroom action research design with the selection of 35 students via purposive sampling. A checklist and rubric were prepared by the researcher for collecting data, and analysis was performed by calculating the mean, standard deviation, and performing a t-test. More specifically, the study was intended to: (1) determine the level of the students' class participation before the use of certificate strategy; (2) determine the level of the students' class participation after the use of certificate strategy; (3) determine the level of the students' engagement before the use of certificate strategy; (4) determine the level of the students' engagement after the use of certificate strategy; (5) identify a significant difference between the level of the students' engagement before and after using the certificate strategy; and (6) identify a significant difference between the level of the students' engagement before and after using the certificate strategy.

Findings

The following were the key findings of the study:

1. Before implementing the strategy, students had minimal class participation. They were not actively involved in lessons and class discussions.
2. After the use of the certificate strategy, students were enthusiastic and active in class. The participation was significantly high, which suggests that the reward stimulated them.
3. During the time before intervention, the level of engagement by students was very low. They were not interested even when they did not pay attention and barely collaborated during classes.

4. Student engagement became much better after the strategy was applied. Students were more focused, driven, and active in class exercises.
5. There was a marked and significant difference in participation before and after the use of the certificates, suggesting that the strategy had a positive impact on the behavior of students.
6. Also, engagement was greatly enhanced once the strategy came into effect, affirming that identification of students with certificates can enhance their overall participation in learning.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The students initially lack interest in classroom activities, as evidenced by their low participation rates, limited collaboration, and little attentiveness prior to introducing the certificate strategy. This places the importance of motivational strategies on stimulating active learning.
2. The use of the certificate strategy leads to increased student engagement. Students become more engaged, motivated, and interested in taking part in classroom discussions and activities, demonstrating that the reward system works effectively.
3. The continuous increase in classroom participation upon implementing certificates validates the effectiveness of the strategy. The acknowledgment serves as a positive reinforcement that enhances student morale and encourages a more participative and interactive classroom setting.
4. Reward-based recognition, such as certificates, is an effective and practical approach to improving students' involvement. It increases a feeling of accomplishment, promotes good behavior, and enhances learner engagement, particularly in educating subjects such as World War in World History.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusions, it is recommended that:

1. Future researchers are encouraged to collaborate with subject teachers in areas such as Mathematics, Science, and English in applying the certificate approach to other subjects. Guided by school principals and academic coordinators, they can pilot a study to look into whether the implementation of certificates as incentives increases participation on the part of students in a wide range of learning areas. This can be done by creating a standardized certificate system that has precise participation criteria and tracking student participation by means of classroom observation and teacher report.
2. Future researchers are suggested to carry out a comparative study involving classroom teachers and school guidance counselors to examine the impact of various forms of rewards, including certificates, verbal compliments, badges, or points, on students' participation. This exercise can also include psychologists or behavioral experts to gain further insights. Researchers can label different reward systems for different class groups and see which approach generates the most engagement by using student feedback forms and participation tracking sheets.
3. Future researchers must promote the integration of reward-based approaches such as the "Most Participative Learner" certificate in the school-wide recognition program. In collaboration with school heads, class advisers, and student affairs coordinators, they can recommend the adoption of this approach during homeroom sessions, flag ceremonies, or PTA meetings. This recommendation seeks to institutionalize positive reinforcement as part of school culture and encourage persistent student participation through public recognition.

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