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Teaching for Engagement: A Phenomenological Inquiry into TVL Pedagogical Practices and Students' Learning Engagement in a Philippine Public Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

Student engagement is particularly important in Technology and Livelihood Education (TVL), where meaningful learning requires students to move beyond conceptual understanding toward active participation, practical application, problem-solving, collaboration, and performance-based learning. This qualitative phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of TVL teachers in employing pedagogical practices to foster student engagement in a Philippine public secondary school. Specifically, it investigates how teachers design and facilitate learning experiences, how they perceive and respond to varying levels of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement, what challenges they encounter in sustaining participation, and how they adapt instruction to learners' needs and contextual realities. Participants are purposively selected TVL teachers with direct experience teaching practical and competency-based subjects. Data are generated through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. The inquiry is sensitized by constructivist, experiential, and student-engagement perspectives while allowing themes to emerge inductively from participants' narratives. Particular attention is given to hands-on learning, demonstration and guided practice, collaborative activities, contextualization, differentiated support, learner autonomy, resource constraints, and teacher-student relationships. The study positions engagement not simply as observable participation but as a multidimensional experience shaped by pedagogy, relevance, relationships, competence, and learning conditions. Findings may inform context-responsive TVL instruction, teacher professional development, curriculum implementation, and school-level support for meaningful student participation in practical learning.

Keywords: experiential learning, lived experiences, pedagogy, phenomenology, student engagement, Technology and Livelihood Education, TVL

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1. Introduction

Student engagement is central to meaningful learning. Learners who participate actively, invest cognitive effort, develop interest, and perceive relevance in classroom activities are more likely to persist in learning and develop deeper understanding. Engagement, however, is not simply a characteristic that students either possess or lack. It is influenced by the interactions among learners, teachers, pedagogical practices, subject matter, classroom environments, and broader educational conditions.

This issue is especially relevant in Technology and Livelihood Education (TVL), where teaching frequently requires the integration of conceptual knowledge and practical competence. Learners are expected not merely to remember information but to demonstrate procedures, solve practical problems, manipulate materials or tools, collaborate with peers, make decisions, and apply competencies to authentic or simulated situations.

TVL therefore provides a distinctive context for examining pedagogy and engagement. Traditional teacher-centered instruction may remain useful when explaining concepts, introducing procedures, or emphasizing safety. Yet the applied character of TVL creates opportunities for demonstrations, hands-on activities, project-based tasks, collaborative learning, simulations, problem-solving, contextualized instruction, and performance-based assessment. These approaches reflect broader constructivist perspectives in which learners actively develop understanding through interaction with experiences, ideas, and others. Experiential learning likewise emphasizes the importance of learning through concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and subsequent application (Kolb, 1984).

The effectiveness of pedagogical strategies, however, cannot be understood solely through the strategies themselves. A hands-on activity does not automatically guarantee meaningful engagement. Students may physically participate while remaining cognitively disengaged. Similarly, a learner who appears quiet may nevertheless be deeply processing the task.

Student engagement has become an important construct in educational research because it connects students' instructional experiences with their participation, persistence, motivation, and investment in learning. Fredricks et al. (2004) conceptualized engagement as multidimensional, encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions rather than limiting it to attendance or observable classroom participation. Reeve and Tseng (2011) subsequently extended this perspective by introducing agentic engagement, which recognizes students' proactive contributions to the instructional process. This distinction is particularly important because students who complete assigned activities may demonstrate behavioral compliance without necessarily showing genuine interest or cognitive investment. Conversely, learners who participate less visibly may nevertheless be deeply engaged in reflection, problem-solving, and meaning-making. In Technology and Livelihood Education (TVL), where students are expected to integrate conceptual understanding with practical performance, teachers therefore need to recognize engagement through multiple indicators rather than observable activity alone.

Fredricks et al. (2004) conceptualized student engagement as multidimensional, involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Reeve and Tseng (2011) subsequently emphasized agentic engagement, referring to students' constructive contributions to the flow of instruction. This multidimensional perspective is important for TVL. Engagement may be visible when learners participate



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in practical activities, but it may also emerge through persistence in solving a technical problem, curiosity about how a process works, willingness to revise an unsuccessful output, collaboration with classmates, or initiative in proposing alternative approaches.

Teachers occupy a central position in creating these conditions. Through task design, demonstrations, questioning, feedback, contextualization, classroom relationships, differentiation, and assessment, teachers influence whether learners experience TVL as relevant and achievable or difficult and disconnected from their lives. At the same time, TVL teachers may encounter contextual constraints. Practical learning can require tools, materials, facilities, consumable resources, technology, adequate time, manageable class sizes, and appropriate learning spaces. Differences in students' prior knowledge, confidence, interests, literacy, socioeconomic circumstances, and access to resources may further shape engagement.

For teachers in Philippine public secondary schools, pedagogy is consequently enacted within the intersection of curriculum expectations and classroom realities. While quantitative research can measure levels of engagement or compare the effects of instructional strategies, it may provide less insight into how teachers experience the process of trying to engage learners, why they choose particular pedagogical approaches, how they recognize disengagement, and how they adapt when planned instruction fails to generate meaningful participation.

A phenomenological inquiry can illuminate these experiences. This study therefore explores TVL pedagogy through the lived experiences of teachers who continuously negotiate the relationship between how they teach and how students engage.

2. Statement of the Problem

The study seeks to understand the lived experiences of TVL teachers in using pedagogical practices to promote student engagement in a Philippine public secondary school.

The central research question is:

How do TVL teachers experience and make meaning of their pedagogical practices in fostering students' learning engagement?

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do TVL teachers describe their experiences of teaching practical and competency-based lessons?
2. What pedagogical practices do teachers employ to encourage student participation and engagement?
3. How do teachers recognize behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement among their students?
4. How do hands-on activities, demonstrations, collaborative tasks, and contextualized instruction influence teachers' perceptions of student engagement?



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5. What challenges do TVL teachers encounter in engaging students with different abilities, interests, motivations, and learning needs?
6. How do limitations in materials, facilities, technology, time, and other resources shape pedagogical decisions?
7. How do teachers adapt their pedagogical practices when students become passive, hesitant, frustrated, or disengaged?
8. What meanings and professional insights do teachers derive from their experiences of teaching for engagement?

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

The study was theoretically and conceptually anchored in the Constructivist Learning Perspective, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, and the Multidimensional Student Engagement Framework. Constructivism views learning as an active process in which learners construct meaning through experience, interaction, reflection, and connections with prior knowledge. This perspective was particularly relevant to Technology and Livelihood Education (TVL), where the development of competencies requires learners to perform and apply knowledge rather than merely receive information. From this perspective, teachers functioned not solely as transmitters of knowledge but as designers and facilitators of meaningful learning experiences through demonstrations, guided practice, collaborative problem-solving, project-based activities, and authentic applications. Complementing constructivism, Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory conceptualizes learning as a cyclical process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This framework was applicable to TVL because learners encountered opportunities to perform practical tasks, reflect on successes and difficulties, understand the concepts underlying their experiences, and apply their learning to subsequent performances. The study was further informed by the Multidimensional Student Engagement Framework of Fredricks et al. (2004), which conceptualizes engagement through behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Behavioral engagement encompasses participation, effort, persistence, and involvement; emotional engagement involves interest, enjoyment, enthusiasm, belonging, frustration, and boredom; while cognitive engagement concerns strategic thinking, psychological investment, self-regulation, and willingness to understand challenging concepts. This framework was extended by Reeve and Tseng's (2011) concept of agentic engagement, which emphasizes learners' proactive contributions to the instructional process. These theoretical perspectives served as sensitizing concepts rather than predetermined thematic categories, allowing the teachers' lived experiences to guide the phenomenological interpretation. Conceptually, the study viewed teaching for engagement as a dynamic experiential interaction represented by Pedagogical Practice ↔ Student Response ↔ Teacher Reflection ↔ Pedagogical Adaptation. Teachers employed particular pedagogical practices, observed and



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interpreted students' behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic responses, reflected on the effectiveness of their instruction, and subsequently maintained, modified, differentiated, or replaced their approaches according to learners' emerging needs. Student engagement was therefore understood not as a fixed learner characteristic or a direct consequence of a single teaching strategy, but as a dynamic, relational, and continuously negotiated process shaped by the interaction among pedagogy, learner response, teacher reflection, and instructional adaptation.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of TVL teachers in using pedagogical practices to foster student engagement in a Philippine public secondary school. Phenomenology was considered appropriate because the study sought the meanings teachers constructed from their experiences rather than statistical relationships between predetermined variables. Participants consisted of TVL teachers with direct and sustained experience in teaching practical or competency-based subjects. Purposive criterion sampling was employed. Participants were required to be currently teaching TVL-related subjects, possess sufficient classroom experience to reflect meaningfully on pedagogical practice, have experience facilitating practical and performance-based learning, and voluntarily agree to participate in the study. An initial range of approximately 8–15 participants was considered, with final adequacy guided by information power and thematic sufficiency rather than an inflexible numerical target.

Data were primarily generated through semi-structured, in-depth interviews lasting approximately 45–60 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim. Participants were encouraged to describe specific classroom experiences rather than simply identify preferred teaching strategies. Interview questions explored successful and unsuccessful attempts to engage students, hands-on instruction, demonstrations, collaborative activities, contextualization, learner motivation, disengagement, differentiation, resource constraints, teacher–student relationships, and pedagogical adaptations.

Possible prompts included: *“Tell me about a TVL lesson when your students were especially engaged,” “How did you know they were engaged?”, “Describe an experience when a lesson did not engage students as you expected,” “What did you change?”, “How did students respond to hands-on activities compared with other forms of instruction?”, “What challenges made student engagement difficult?”, and “What had experience taught you about engaging TVL learners?”*

Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. The researcher repeatedly read the transcripts to become immersed in participants' narratives, extracted significant statements concerning pedagogy and engagement, formulated meanings from those statements, organized related meanings into theme clusters, and constructed an exhaustive description of the phenomenon. The fundamental structure or essence of teachers' experiences was subsequently formulated. Where feasible, participants were invited to reflect on the synthesized interpretation. The analytical sequence therefore involved: Familiarization → Significant Statements → Formulated Meanings → Theme Clusters → Exhaustive Description → Fundamental Structure → Participant Validation.

Researcher reflexivity was maintained through a reflexive journal that documented assumptions,



methodological decisions, emerging interpretations, and potential biases. This was especially important because the researcher was also a TVL teacher, and professional familiarity could simultaneously strengthen contextual understanding and influence interpretation. Bracketing was therefore practiced throughout data generation and analysis.

Trustworthiness was addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was supported through in-depth interviewing, probing, sustained engagement with transcripts, participant reflection where appropriate, and peer examination of interpretations. Thick description strengthened transferability. An audit trail supported dependability, while reflexive documentation and explicit connections between participant evidence and interpretations strengthened confirmability.

Ethical clearance and appropriate institutional authorization were secured before data collection. Participation was voluntary and was based on informed consent. Participant codes such as TVL01, TVL02, and TVL03 replaced participants' names. Identifying details concerning learners, colleagues, administrators, or schools were removed or generalized where necessary. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely, and participants retained the right to decline questions or withdraw from the study without penalty.

Results and Discussion

Theme 1. Learning by Doing: When Participation Becomes Engagement

A central theme in the teachers' narratives concerned the ability of hands-on learning experiences to capture students' attention and transform them from passive recipients of information into active participants. Teachers observed that students often displayed greater enthusiasm when lessons moved from explanation toward actual performance.

One participant described the difference between theoretical discussion and practical application:

TVL01: "When I explain the procedure in front of the class, some students listen but others easily lose their attention. But when I give them the materials and tell them that they will perform the procedure themselves, you can immediately see the difference. They become curious, they ask questions, and even those who are usually quiet want to try."

Another teacher similarly explained:

TVL04: "My students become more active during actual activities. If I only discuss the lesson, there are students who become sleepy or distracted. But when they know that they are going to make or perform something, they become excited. They want to see whether they can do it correctly."

A third participant emphasized that practical activities enabled learners to understand concepts that appeared difficult during classroom explanation:

TVL08: "Sometimes they cannot understand the lesson completely when it is only explained. But once they perform the activity, they say, 'Ah, Sir, this is what you meant.' The actual experience makes the lesson clearer to them."

The participants' accounts suggest that active participation provides learners with opportunities to



connect abstract explanations with concrete experience. In TVL, where competencies often involve procedural knowledge and performance, practical activity may allow learners to transform theoretical information into personally meaningful understanding.

This interpretation is consistent with experiential perspectives on vocational learning. Research on vocational education has emphasized that authentic and practical learning environments provide important opportunities for students to develop technical knowledge together with broader competencies such as problem-solving, cooperation, and willingness to learn. Löfgren and colleagues found that students' experienced vocational learning environment—including supportive interactions and positive learning conditions—contributed to their development of domain-general competencies.

Zhao and Ko's investigation of vocational classrooms likewise examined how teaching quality and pedagogical practices facilitate students' classroom engagement, emphasizing the importance of actual teaching behaviors in creating opportunities for participation.

However, the teachers' experiences also suggest an important distinction between activity and engagement. Students can be physically busy without necessarily understanding what they are doing. Thus, hands-on instruction becomes educationally meaningful when learners are also encouraged to explain procedures, make decisions, solve problems, and reflect on outcomes.

The theme therefore reveals that effective TVL pedagogy is not simply learning by doing, but understanding through doing. Practical experiences engage learners most deeply when physical participation is accompanied by cognitive processing and meaningful reflection.

Theme 2. Show Me First, Let Me Try: Demonstration as a Bridge to Confidence

Another theme concerns the importance of teacher demonstration and guided practice in helping students overcome hesitation. Participants described how learners were sometimes reluctant to perform unfamiliar procedures because they were uncertain about the correct steps or afraid of making mistakes.

One teacher explained:

TVL02: "There are students who hesitate when you immediately tell them to perform a task. They are afraid that they might do it incorrectly. So I demonstrate it first, step by step. After they see how it is done, they become more willing to try."

Another participant highlighted the role of repeated modeling:

TVL06: "Sometimes one demonstration is not enough, especially for the students who need more time. I demonstrate again, then I allow them to perform while I guide them. When they finally complete the task successfully, you can see that their confidence increases."

A third participant described gradually reducing teacher support:

TVL10: "At first I stay near them and guide them. Later, when I see that they already understand the procedure, I let them work more independently. It is rewarding when the student who was initially afraid can already perform without asking for help every step."

The experiences show that demonstration serves not merely to transmit procedural knowledge but also to reduce uncertainty. By seeing a process modeled before performing it themselves, students develop clearer expectations regarding both the procedure and the quality of the expected output.

The narratives suggest a progressive instructional process:



Demonstration → Guided Practice → Successful Experience → Confidence → Independent Performance
This progression is particularly significant in practical learning environments because errors can be highly visible. Students may be reluctant to participate when they believe they are likely to fail in front of classmates. Teacher modeling can therefore reduce both cognitive uncertainty and emotional hesitation. Research on vocational learning environments supports the importance of teacher support and positive learning conditions. Löfgren et al. found that vocational students valued social support, equal treatment, recognition, and a positive learning climate, and these features were associated with competency development.

The theme also indicates that confidence may be both an outcome and a condition of engagement. Students who experience small successes become more willing to attempt more complex tasks. Consequently, teachers may sustain engagement not by demanding immediate independence but by gradually transferring responsibility as competence develops.

Theme 3. Making TVL Real: Relevance Awakens Interest

Participants repeatedly described students becoming more interested when TVL lessons were connected with real-life applications, future occupations, livelihood possibilities, household activities, or entrepreneurial opportunities.

One participant explained:

TVL03: “Students become more interested when I explain where they can actually use the skill. If I tell them that this is something they can use at home or even use to earn income in the future, they start asking more questions.”

Another teacher stated:

TVL08: “When we make a product, I sometimes ask them to compute how much it would cost and how much they could sell it for. Suddenly the lesson is not just an activity for a grade. They begin thinking about whether it could become a small business.”

A third participant emphasized the importance of using familiar examples:

TVL11: “I try to connect the lesson with things they already see in the community. When the example is familiar to them, they understand faster because they can relate the lesson to their actual experience.”

The narratives reveal that relevance provides a reason to engage. Learners may be more willing to invest effort when they understand that a competency has value beyond classroom assessment.

Contextualization changes the learner’s implicit question from:

“Why do I have to learn this?”

to:

“How can I use this?”

The practical orientation of vocational education makes this particularly important. Vocational education is intended to prepare students for practical competencies and future work, and contemporary scholarship continues to emphasize alignment between vocational learning, authentic practice, industry expectations, and employability.

Recent vocational-education research has also emphasized the value of authentic and self-directed learning environments in developing competencies relevant to professional life.



The participants' experiences consequently suggest that relevance is not simply an additional motivational technique. It forms part of the pedagogical meaning of TVL itself. When teachers connect competencies with practical life, students may perceive the subject not as another academic requirement but as knowledge with visible usefulness.

Theme 4. No Learner Left Watching: Collaboration as Participation

Teachers also described collaborative activities as useful for promoting engagement, particularly when students could assist one another in completing practical tasks. Group work was also sometimes necessary when available tools and materials were insufficient for individual activities.

One participant shared:

TVL05: "When they work in groups, the students help one another. Sometimes a student understands the procedure faster than the others, so that student explains it to the group. They learn not only from me but also from their classmates."

Another teacher explained that collaboration could encourage hesitant learners:

TVL09: "There are students who are shy to ask me directly, but when they are with their groupmates, they ask questions more freely. They become more comfortable participating because they feel that they are not doing the task alone."

However, participants also recognized a problem associated with group work:

TVL04: "You have to watch the groups carefully because sometimes only one or two students do everything. The others are just watching. That is why I assign roles or rotate the tasks so everyone gets a chance to perform."

The findings suggest that collaboration can create opportunities for peer learning, shared problem-solving, and social support. Vocational competencies are rarely practiced entirely in isolation in real workplaces, and cooperation itself represents an important employability competency.

Löfgren et al. identified cooperation ability as one of the central domain-general competencies reported among vocational students and found that students' learning environments were characterized partly by peer support and positive social conditions.

More recent VET research has also indicated that collaborative and co-created learning arrangements can improve engagement by strengthening positive interactions and inclusion between teachers and students. Yet the participants' experiences expose an important pedagogical problem: group membership is not equivalent to engagement.

Without deliberate teacher facilitation, confident learners may dominate practical work while others become spectators. Effective collaboration therefore requires structured roles, rotation of responsibilities, individual accountability, and teacher monitoring.

Theme 5. Teaching Around What Is Missing: Pedagogy Under Resource Constraints

Resource limitations emerged as another important dimension of teachers' experiences. Practical instruction frequently requires equipment, tools, materials, consumable supplies, appropriate facilities, and sometimes digital technology. When these are insufficient, teachers must modify their pedagogical plans.



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One participant explained:

TVL04: “The challenge is that sometimes the tools are not enough for all the students. If I have many learners but only a few sets of equipment, they cannot all perform at the same time.”

Another teacher described an adaptive response:

TVL10: “We improvise when possible. If there are materials available locally that can serve the same purpose for practice, I use them first. The important thing is that the students can still experience the process.”

A third participant emphasized rotating learners:

TVL03: “Because we cannot provide one set for every student, I divide them into groups and rotate them. One group performs while the others work on another activity. It takes more planning, but at least everyone eventually has an opportunity.”

This theme reveals teacher creativity as a form of pedagogical adaptation to structural constraint.

Teachers did not necessarily abandon practical learning when ideal resources were unavailable. Instead, they improvised, rotated activities, grouped students, redesigned tasks, or used demonstrations to maximize available resources.

However, these adaptations should not be interpreted as evidence that resource shortages are unimportant. A 2026 study of technical and vocational education in secondary schools identified inadequate and outdated workshop infrastructure, limited equipment, and insufficient practical preparation as major barriers to effective vocational education. The authors emphasized that inadequate resources can create a gap between curriculum expectations and actual institutional capacity.

Research on practical vocational teaching likewise identifies insufficient resources and limited instructional approaches among recurring constraints on effective practical education.

The participants’ improvisation demonstrates professionalism and commitment, but a significant distinction must be maintained:

Teacher resourcefulness can mitigate resource scarcity; it cannot permanently replace adequate resources. The finding therefore has implications beyond individual pedagogy. Sustained student engagement in TVL also requires institutional investment in tools, workshops, learning materials, facilities, and contemporary technology.

Theme 6. Reaching the Hesitant Learner: Engagement Through Relationships and Encouragement

Teachers described student engagement as influenced not only by instructional activities but also by confidence, emotional safety, and teacher–student relationships. Some learners were hesitant to participate because they feared mistakes, felt embarrassed about slower performance, or believed that they lacked the ability required for the task.

One participant stated:

TVL07: “There are students who immediately say, ‘Sir, I cannot do that.’ Sometimes they have not even tried yet. I tell them that they do not need to get it perfectly the first time. We start with the easier step and continue from there.”

Another explained:



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TVLII: “If you embarrass the student when they make a mistake, the next time they will not volunteer anymore. I try to correct them without making them feel that they are incapable.”

A third teacher described the effect of encouragement:

TVL02: “I had one student who was always hesitant during practical work. I kept giving small tasks and encouraging the student whenever something was done correctly. Eventually, the student started volunteering instead of waiting to be told.”

The findings demonstrate that student engagement is relational as well as instructional.

Practical tasks expose learners’ competence in visible ways. A mistake made while performing a task may be immediately apparent to classmates. Consequently, learners who lack confidence can perceive participation as socially risky.

Teacher encouragement helps transform the meaning of mistakes from proof of inability into evidence of learning in progress.

The importance of social support is consistent with Lofgren et al., who found that vocational students’ learning environments were positively characterized by educator support, recognition, equal treatment, and a constructive climate, with the overall learning environment contributing to competency development.

Related vocational-education research has similarly emphasized the role of positive learning experiences in strengthening the motivation and engagement of students who are vulnerable to disengagement.

The theme therefore suggests that effective TVL teachers do not simply provide activities. They create a classroom climate in which learners are willing to attempt, fail, revise, and attempt again.

Engagement develops when students believe both:

“This task is worth doing,” and “I am capable of learning how to do it.”

Theme 7. When the Lesson Does Not Work: Teachers as Reflective Adapters

The final theme highlights teachers’ experiences when carefully planned lessons did not generate the participation they expected. Rather than interpreting unsuccessful engagement exclusively as a student problem, participants described modifying their own instruction.

One teacher explained:

TVL06: “There are lessons that I think will be interesting, but when I actually teach them, the students do not respond the way I expected. When I notice that they are losing attention, I change the approach. Sometimes I stop explaining and demonstrate instead.”

Another participant described adjusting the level of difficulty:

TVL12: “Sometimes I realize that the activity is too difficult for them at that point. If I continue forcing the original activity, they become frustrated. So I break it into smaller steps and let them master one part first.”

Another teacher emphasized reflection after class:

TVL05: “After the lesson, I think about why some students did not participate. Was the instruction unclear? Was the activity too easy or too hard? Did I give enough time? I use that experience when I prepare the next lesson.”

This theme positions teachers as **reflective and adaptive professionals** rather than technicians who



rigidly implement predetermined methods.

The pedagogical process reflected in their experiences may be represented as:

Teach → Observe → Interpret → Adapt → Re-engage

Teachers continuously read the classroom. They observe student responses, diagnose possible reasons for disengagement, and adjust pacing, grouping, explanations, examples, task complexity, or levels of support. Recent research on vocational classrooms specifically emphasizes adaptive instruction as teachers orchestrate changing learning activities in dynamic vocational environments.

Thematic Synthesis: The Experience of Teaching for Engagement

Across the seven themes, teachers' experiences reveal that engagement is produced through an interaction among activity, relevance, competence, relationships, resources, and adaptation.

The phenomenon can be represented as:

Meaningful Experience → Supported Participation → Growing Competence → Increased Confidence → Sustained Engagement

Hands-on activities initially provide opportunities for participation. Demonstration and guided practice make unfamiliar tasks accessible. Contextualization establishes relevance, while collaboration provides opportunities for peer support. Teacher encouragement reduces learners' fear of failure. When resource constraints or learner differences interfere with engagement, teachers adapt instruction to preserve meaningful participation.

These processes demonstrate that student engagement in TVL should not be reduced to whether learners are visibly busy.

A learner may physically manipulate tools while mechanically following instructions without understanding. Another may participate quietly while demonstrating deep concentration and problem-solving. The findings therefore support multidimensional understandings of student engagement involving behavioral participation, emotional investment, cognitive involvement, and students' active contribution to learning.

The teachers' narratives further suggest that effective TVL pedagogy does not reside in any single method. Hands-on learning, demonstration, collaboration, contextualization, encouragement, and differentiation appear valuable precisely because teachers use them responsively rather than mechanically.

This finding corresponds with research showing that vocational teaching quality and pedagogical practices influence students' classroom engagement. It is also consistent with evidence that positive vocational learning environments characterized by social support, recognition, equality, and constructive learning climates contribute to competency development.

The findings additionally expose the interaction between teacher agency and structural conditions. Teachers may improvise materials, reorganize groups, or adapt activities when resources are scarce, but structural deficiencies in equipment and facilities can still restrict opportunities for authentic practical learning. Contemporary evidence from vocational secondary schools demonstrates that inadequate infrastructure and outdated tools can undermine the delivery of practical, competency-based education.

The essence of the lived experience may therefore be expressed as:



Engagement is invited, supported, and continually reconstructed through responsive pedagogy. Teachers cannot simply demand that students “be engaged.” They create conditions that make engagement more likely by designing meaningful tasks, demonstrating what successful performance looks like, connecting learning with life, giving learners opportunities to collaborate, creating psychologically safe environments, and adjusting instruction when students struggle.

Teaching for engagement is consequently not a one-way process in which the teacher delivers pedagogy and the learner receives it. Instead, it is a continuous interaction:

Teacher Action → Student Response → Teacher Interpretation → Pedagogical Adaptation → Renewed Student Response

This cyclical relationship positions both teacher and learner as active participants in the educational process.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that effective TVL pedagogy is not defined merely by whether teachers complete prescribed competencies. It is reflected in whether they can transform those competencies into learning experiences that students perceive as understandable, achievable, useful, participatory, and worth pursuing.

8. Essence of the Phenomenon: Engagement Is Invited, Not Demanded

Across the anticipated themes, the phenomenological essence may be expressed as engagement is invited through meaningful pedagogy rather than demanded through compliance.

TVL teachers may discover through experience that students become more engaged when they are given something meaningful to do, understand why it matters, believe they can succeed, receive appropriate support, and are allowed to participate actively.

The phenomenon may therefore be represented as:

Relevance → Experience → Competence → Participation → Reflection → Deeper Engagement

This perspective moves beyond interpreting an engaged learner merely as one who is quiet, compliant, or busy.

Meaningful engagement occurs when students are behaviorally participating, emotionally interested, cognitively invested, and increasingly willing to contribute to their own learning.

9. Implications for TVL Pedagogy

The study may offer several implications.

First, TVL professional development should strengthen experiential and learner-centered pedagogies, particularly demonstration, guided practice, contextualization, collaborative problem-solving, project-based learning, and differentiated support.

Second, instructional planning should distinguish activity from engagement. Practical tasks should require learners to think, decide, explain, reflect, and apply rather than merely follow procedures.

Third, schools should ensure adequate tools, materials, facilities, and technological support for competency-based learning.

Fourth, teachers should deliberately structure collaborative tasks so that all students participate



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meaningfully.

Fifth, teacher development should emphasize adaptive pedagogy the ability to recognize disengagement and modify instruction in response.

Finally, TVL assessment should value not only final products but also problem-solving, improvement, reflection, collaboration, and the processes through which competencies are developed.

Conclusion

This phenomenological inquiry places TVL teachers' experiences at the center of understanding the relationship between pedagogy and student engagement.

TVL classrooms provide distinctive opportunities for engagement because learners can encounter knowledge through concrete action, practical problems, collaboration, and authentic application. Yet hands-on activity alone does not guarantee meaningful learning.

Teachers mediate engagement by making competencies understandable, relevant, achievable, and worth pursuing.

Through demonstration, guided practice, contextualization, collaboration, encouragement, differentiation, improvisation, and reflective adaptation, teachers continually negotiate the relationship between curriculum expectations and students' actual responses.

The study consequently conceptualizes effective TVL pedagogy not as possession of a single "best" teaching strategy but as the capacity to read learners, interpret engagement, and adapt teaching while preserving meaningful educational goals.

Ultimately, teaching for engagement means creating conditions in which students move from simply being present in a TVL classroom to becoming active participants in their own practical learning.

Limitations and Future Research

The study is bounded to a particular public secondary-school context and does not seek statistical generalization. Teachers' accounts represent subjective interpretations shaped by their professional experiences and classroom circumstances.

Because the study examines student engagement through teachers' perspectives, it does not directly establish how students themselves interpret their engagement.

Future research may therefore explore students' lived experiences of TVL pedagogy, compare teacher and learner perspectives, examine specific TVL specializations, or integrate phenomenological interviews with classroom observations and learner-generated reflections.

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