

# The Relationship of Reflective Learning to Students' Academic Performance in a Filipino Course

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## ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental study explored the link between reflective learning and students' academic performance in a Filipino course at a private university in Central Philippines. It used two intact sections of third-year college students enrolled in a Filipino class during the First Semester of AY 2023-2024. A total of 76 students participated, with 38 students in each group. The study employed a 45-item multiple-choice test, complemented by a 10-point essay exam, which was validated and tested for reliability before the study began. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics at a .05 level of significance. Results showed that students exposed to the reflective learning approach performed better academically in the Filipino course than those taught via the lecture-discussion method. The study also indicated that the reflective learning method has a strong potential to enhance the quality of instruction in the Filipino course through improved student performance.

**Keywords:** Reflective Learning; Academic Performance; Filipino Course

## INTRODUCTION

The significance of studying Filipino cannot be understated, as it serves as a vital medium through which students learn to value their culture and heritage. However, for many learners, studying Filipino feels like learning an entirely new language (Napil & San Jose, 2020). Although the national language of the Philippines is Filipino, various regions—particularly in the central and southern parts of the country—utilize different dialects in their daily communication. Consequently, students from these areas are only exposed to Filipino as an academic subject, beginning in elementary school and continuing through college, as mandated by the Commission on Higher Education's CMO No. 4, series of 2018.

Teaching Filipino subjects poses significant challenges for educators. Many students exhibit low motivation and interest in the subject, which results in poor comprehension and engagement. As Rebato (2024) noted, Filipino is often viewed as one of the least favored subjects in the curriculum. Similarly, Ancheta and Perez (2017) observed that students consider Filipino one of the most challenging subjects to learn. They argued that learners expect teachers to employ a variety of approaches—such as communicative activities, the natural approach, technology integration, and multisensory techniques. Nonetheless, despite these efforts, language learning difficulties persist due to mismatches between students' learning styles and instructional methods. Napil and San Jose (2020) further emphasized that students became more proficient in Filipino when teachers related lessons to real-life contexts.

According to Minnot (2019), the most effective way to address these challenges is for teachers to implement diverse teaching strategies that can stimulate students' interest and meet their varied learning needs. Higher education institutions also aim to develop learners who are independent, self-directed, and critical thinkers. Achieving this goal requires the use of instructional methods that foster critical thinking and self-reflection.

One promising approach is reflective learning, a strategy that involves examining and learning from one's experiences. Fullana et al. (2016) explained that reflective learning helps students gain a deeper understanding of themselves, their learning processes, and their motivations. It encourages them to become more aware of how they learn and to develop strategies for addressing the challenges they encounter during learning. Moreover,

reflective learning supports personal growth by helping students redefine their academic identities and adapt to new situations. As Colomer et al. (2013) suggested, teachers can model reflective practices by sharing their own experiences and providing meaningful feedback.

Considering these insights, the researchers aim to examine the relationship between reflective learning and students' academic performance in the Filipino course.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between reflective learning and students' academic performance in the Filipino subject during the Second Semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. Specifically, the researchers sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the student's academic performance in a Filipino course before and after their exposure to the (a) lecture-discussion method, and (b) the reflective learning method?
2. Is there a significant difference in students' academic performance before and after their exposure to the lecture-discussion method?
3. Is there a significant difference in students' academic performance before and after their exposure to the reflective learning method?
4. Is there a significant difference in students' academic performance after exposure to the lecture-discussion method versus the reflective learning method?

## **THE REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Napil and San Jose (2020) reported that many students find learning Filipino difficult, a challenge that is reflected in their academic performance. The authors themselves noted their own struggles in using Filipino for communication. Students were more encouraged to speak Filipino when they heard their teachers use the language fluently and naturally. This exposure helped learners assess their understanding of ideas, pronunciation, and grammar. However, some students admitted that they sometimes lose interest in the subject when they are unable to comprehend the lessons, making Filipino literature particularly difficult for them. According to Napil and San Jose, one primary reason for this lack of interest is the limited range of teaching strategies employed by instructors. Consequently, many students attend Filipino classes merely because they are required for program completion.

Reflective learning has emerged as an increasingly relevant teaching approach, particularly in response to the demands of a technologically advanced and constantly changing world (Junsay, 2016; Colomer et al., 2020). Reflection allows learners to connect new experiences with previous ones across different contexts. As Gathu (2022) described, it is a process that uses prior experiences to gain deeper insights and understanding that inform future actions. Adebisi (2020) emphasized that reflective learning encourages teachers to evaluate both their own instructional productivity and their students' learning outcomes. Through reflection, learners gain a sense of control over their future decisions and direction, fostering the development of essential knowledge, skills, and competencies. Colomer et al. (2020) further stressed that cultivating reflective and critical competencies is vital for tertiary educators adapting to evolving curricula and the shifting landscape of education.

Reflective learning, as a teaching methodology, encourages students to make sense of classroom experiences by relating new information to prior knowledge. This process helps them resolve cognitive dissonance that arises when new ideas conflict with what they already know. According to Colomer et al. (2013), reflective learning promotes greater awareness of the learning process, enhances critical thinking, and enables students to analyze their own capabilities. It also helps them develop strategies for improvement and for addressing challenges encountered during learning, empowering them to become active participants in the educational process. Similarly, Wang et al. (2023) found that reflective learning enhances students' critical thinking, insight, empathy, and computational thinking skills, ultimately improving their ability to solve complex problems.

Yu (2023) posited that reflective practice benefits learners across all levels by improving academic achievement and fostering personal growth. Reflective learning empowers students to become independent and self-directed by analyzing their own experiences, linking theoretical and practical knowledge, and developing problem-solving and adaptive skills (Colomer et al., 2020). Junsay (2016) also demonstrated the effectiveness of reflective learning compared to traditional lecture-discussion methods, noting that students taught through reflective learning achieved scores 50% higher. Similarly, Uswahzulhasanah (2021) identified its significant advantages, including the promotion of practical knowledge, professional responsibility, confidence, and critical thinking. Reflective learning encourages students to evaluate their study habits and classroom performance, prompting necessary adjustments to improve their performance.

Bond et al. (2020) observed that teachers typically use lectures and group discussions to engage students. However, Capuno (2019) argued that instructors should go beyond these conventional methods by designing activities that awaken students' awareness, creativity, and potential in learning Filipino. Activities that encourage students to speak, write, listen, and actively participate in discussions can significantly enhance their language skills—and such engagement can be effectively achieved using reflective learning.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory serves as the theoretical basis for this research. Experiential learning includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb & Wolfe, 1981, as cited in Yu, 2023). Embedded in the experiential learning theory is reflective learning, which promotes reflection and observation, formation of concepts and inferences, and testing concepts in new situations (Yu, 2023), which is essential in improving academic performance.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study used a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent pretest-posttest control group design. In this method, participants in both the experimental and control groups were chosen without random assignment. Each group completed both the pretest and posttest assessments (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). However, only the experimental group was exposed to the intervention, specifically the reflective learning method. To ensure the validity of the study, participants were matched based on their proficiency level in the subject.

### Participants of the Study

The participants in this study were students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management program who took Filipino during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year at a private university. Two sections, each composed of 38 students, were chosen based on the following criteria: the two sections utilized the same assigned classroom; the schedule of classes was consecutive; and only one teacher handled both classes. Table 1 below shows the distribution of participants per group.

**Table 1 Profile of Participants**

|                           | Number of Participants | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Lecture-discussion Group  | 38                     | 50.0           |
| Reflective learning Group | 38                     | 50.0           |
| Total                     | 76                     | 100.0          |

### Instrumentation

The instruments utilized in this study consisted of lesson plans and assessment materials, which included 45 multiple-choice items and a 10-point essay question. These instruments were subjected to content validation by experts in the fields of education, research, and assessment to ensure that the lesson content was accurately

represented and effectively delivered during the scheduled classes. The validation process also aimed to confirm that the test items appropriately measured the students' academic performance.

One of the validators was a subject matter expert in teaching the Filipino course, ensuring alignment between the instructional content and the intended learning outcomes. Based on the validators' recommendations, students' academic performance was classified into the following categories: Poor (27 and below), Low (28–35), Moderate (36–45), and High (46–55).

### **Validation and Reliability Testing of Instruments**

All the instruments developed by the researchers were content-validated by professionals in the fields of education, research, and assessment. Before the commencement of this research, a pilot test was implemented on two sets of 38 students, and a reliability test was administered. The reliability test of the instrument for multiple-choice items was done using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. The result of KR (20) = .7515 (test questions). For the essay part, a rubric was used to score the students' answers.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The participants of this study were drawn from two sections of Filipino classes and were matched based on their academic performance during the preceding term (preliminary period). The two sections were then randomly designated as either the control group or the experimental group. Both groups completed a pretest before the intervention. The experimental group received instruction through the reflective learning method, whereas the control group was taught using the traditional lecture-discussion approach. Following the intervention, both groups were administered a posttest to evaluate their academic performance.

Data on students' academic performance were obtained from the quizzes and assessments conducted throughout the term. The final evaluation consisted of a 45-item multiple-choice test and a 10-point essay, which were developed by the researchers and validated by subject matter experts. These assessments measured the extent of knowledge and understanding that students acquired during the study, serving as the primary basis for evaluating their academic performance.

### **Data Analysis**

This study employed descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, to summarize and describe the students' academic performance. Mean and standard deviation were calculated to assess the central tendency of the scores and the variability or dispersion around the mean. To determine significant differences, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the control and experimental groups, while paired samples t-tests were used to examine differences between pretest and posttest scores within groups. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Academic Performance in Filipino Before Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion and the Reflective Learning Methods**

The students' academic performance in Filipino for both the control and experimental groups before the implementation of the interventions is summarized in Table 2. As indicated, 26 out of 38 students (68.4%) in the control group and 24 out of 38 students (63.2%) in the experimental group demonstrated a low level of academic performance before being exposed to the lecture-discussion and reflective learning methods, respectively. In contrast, 9 students (23.7%) in the control group achieved a moderate level, while only 3 students (7.9%) attained a high level of performance. Within the experimental group, 14 students exhibited a moderate level of academic performance, with no students reaching a high level. The mean academic performance of the control group was  $M = 32.0$ ,  $SD = 7.086$ , and that of the experimental group was  $M = 33.05$ ,  $SD = 4.562$ , which, according to the scoring scale, are both classified as low.

The observed low performance in Filipino is primarily attributed to students' lack of motivation in the course. Ranque et al. (2024) noted that students who possess positive motivation tend to achieve higher proficiency in learning a second language compared to those lacking motivation, highlighting the critical role of motivation in language acquisition. Abelon (2023) further emphasized that, specifically in Filipino courses, engaging students in reading is challenging, as boredom often leads to disengagement and consequently, lower comprehension of the text (p. 3522).

**Table 2: Students' Level of Academic Performance in Filipino before Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Approach**

| Control Group     |    |      | Experimental Group |    |      |
|-------------------|----|------|--------------------|----|------|
| Low               | 26 | 68.4 | Low                | 24 | 63.2 |
| Moderate          | 9  | 23.7 | Moderate           | 14 | 36.8 |
| High              | 3  | 7.9  |                    |    |      |
| Mean = 32.0 (Low) |    |      | Mean = 33.05 (Low) |    |      |
| SD = 7.086        |    |      | SD = 4.562         |    |      |

Level: Poor 27 below; Low (28 - 35); Moderate (36 – 45); High (46 – 55)

### Academic Performance in Filipino After Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion and the Reflective Learning Methods

Table 3 presents the academic performance of students in Filipino for both the control and experimental groups following the implementation of the respective interventions. The results indicate that 25 out of 38 students (65.8%) in the control group continued to demonstrate a low level of academic performance after receiving instruction through the traditional lecture-discussion method. In contrast, the remaining students attained a moderate level.

In contrast, within the experimental group, 24 out of 38 students (63.2%) achieved a moderate level of performance following the reflective learning intervention, and 11 students (28.9%) reached a high level. Only three students remained at a low level of performance. The mean academic performance of the experimental group also showed a noticeable increase, indicating an overall improvement after exposure to reflective learning.

These findings are consistent with the study by Iman et al. (2024), which reported that reflective learning significantly enhances students' academic performance. The authors further noted that reflective learning supports the development of problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and self-awareness, as it encourages students to engage deeply with their own learning processes and gain a more comprehensive understanding of their cognitive strategies (p. 47).

**Table 3: Students' Level of Academic Performance in Filipino 12 after Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Method**

| Control Group      |    |      | Experimental Group      |    |      |
|--------------------|----|------|-------------------------|----|------|
| Low                | 25 | 65.8 | Low                     | 3  | 7.9  |
| Moderate           | 13 | 34.2 | Moderate                | 24 | 63.2 |
|                    |    |      | High                    | 11 | 28.9 |
| Mean = 31.76 (Low) |    |      | Mean = 42.97 (Moderate) |    |      |
| SD = 6.732         |    |      | SD = 5.543              |    |      |

Level: Poor 27 below; Low (28 - 35); Moderate (36 – 45); High (46 – 55)

Significant Difference in the Mean Score in Academic Performance of Students in Filipino Before Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Method

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that the mean academic performance of students in the control group before exposure to the traditional lecture-discussion method was 32.00. In contrast, the experimental group, before receiving instruction through the reflective learning method, had a mean score of 31.76. Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in the academic performance between the control and experimental groups ( $p = 0.703$ ), suggesting that both groups were comparable at baseline.

These results imply that students' academic performance in Filipino may be influenced by factors such as the teaching strategies employed by instructors, their attitudes, and the students' motivation to learn the subject. This observation aligns with the findings of Napil and San Jose (2020), who noted that students often lose interest in lessons when they struggle to comprehend the teacher's instruction. The authors further emphasized that students perceive Filipino literature as challenging, and a limited variety of instructional strategies employed by teachers contributes to this lack of engagement and low motivation in learning the subject.

**Table 4: Difference in the Mean Academic Performance of Students in Filipino 12 before Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Method**

| Treatment                  | N  | Mean  | SD    | df | t-value | p-value |
|----------------------------|----|-------|-------|----|---------|---------|
| Lecture-Discussion Method  | 38 | 32.00 | 7.086 |    |         |         |
|                            |    |       |       | 74 | 3.83    | .703    |
| Reflective Learning Method | 38 | 31.76 | 6.732 |    |         |         |

Difference in the Mean Academic Performance of Students in Filipino before and after Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method

Table 5 indicates that there was no significant difference ( $p = 0.778$ ) between the pretest ( $M = 32.00$ ,  $SD = 7.086$ ) and posttest ( $M = 32.05$ ,  $SD = 7.226$ ) scores of the control group following instruction through the traditional lecture-discussion method. The absence of a significant improvement in academic performance may be attributed to students' attitudes toward the subject. Specifically, the findings suggest that some students exhibit low motivation in learning Filipino when instructional delivery lacks variety in teaching strategies, which may limit their engagement and hinder the development of comprehension and skills in the subject.

**Table 5: Difference in the Mean Academic Performance of Students in Filipino Before and after Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method**

| Traditional Lecture-Discussion Method (Control Group) | N  | Mean  | Diff. | SD    | df | t-value | p-value |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|-------|-------|-------|----|---------|---------|
| Before the Treatment                                  | 38 | 32.00 |       | 7.086 |    |         |         |
|                                                       |    |       | 0.05  |       | 37 | .284    | .778    |
| After the Treatment                                   | 38 | 32.05 |       | 7.226 |    |         |         |

Difference in the Mean Academic Performance of Students in Filipino Before and After Exposure to the Reflective Learning Method

Table 6 presents the mean academic performance of students in the experimental group before ( $M = 33.05$ ,  $SD = 4.562$ ) and after ( $M = 42.88$ ,  $SD = 5.507$ ) exposure to the reflective learning approach. The results indicate a statistically significant performance improvement ( $p = 0.000$ ) following the intervention, suggesting that students' academic outcomes in Filipino were enhanced after engaging with reflective learning.

These findings underscore the importance of implementing varied instructional strategies to increase student engagement and facilitate learning. Consistent with Sarfraz et al. (2022), the adoption of innovative teaching approaches can support students in achieving their academic objectives. The integration of diverse instructional methods has been shown to positively impact academic performance by fostering a deeper understanding and active participation in the learning process.

**Table 6: Difference in the Mean Academic Performance of Students in Filipino before and after Exposure to the Reflective Learning Method**

| Reflective Learning Method<br>(Experimental Group) | N  | Mean  | Diff. | SD    | df | t-value | p-value |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|-------|-------|-------|----|---------|---------|
| Before the Treatment                               | 38 | 33.05 |       | 4.562 |    |         |         |
|                                                    |    |       | 9.63  |       | 37 | 11.724* | .000    |
| After the Treatment                                | 38 | 42.68 |       | 5.507 |    |         |         |

\*Significant at .05

**Difference in the Mean Academic Performance of Students in Filipino 12 Who Belong to the Controlled Group After Exposing to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Method**

Table 7 presents the mean academic performance of students in the Filipino subject following the instructional interventions. The control group, which received the traditional lecture-discussion method, had a mean score of  $M = 32.05$  ( $SD = 7.226$ ), while the experimental group, exposed to the reflective learning approach, achieved a mean score of  $M = 42.68$  ( $SD = 5.507$ ). Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference ( $p = 0.000$ ) between the two groups, indicating that students who engaged in reflective learning outperformed those who experienced the traditional lecture-discussion method.

These findings support the assertions of Yu (2023), who emphasized that reflective practice significantly enhances learners' academic achievement and overall effectiveness. The results highlight the value of employing innovative and reflective instructional strategies to improve student engagement, understanding, and performance in Filipino.

**Table 7: Difference in the Mean of Academic Performance of Students in Filipino after Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Method**

| Treatment                  | N  | Mean  | SD    | df | t-value | p-value |
|----------------------------|----|-------|-------|----|---------|---------|
| Lecture-Discussion Method  | 38 | 32.05 | 7.226 |    |         |         |
|                            |    |       |       | 74 | 8.519*  | .000    |
| Reflective Learning Method | 38 | 42.68 | 5.507 |    |         |         |

\*Significant at .05

**Difference in the Mean Gain in the Academic Performance of Students in Filipino 12 after Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Method**

Table 8 presents the mean gain in academic performance in Filipino for both the control and experimental groups. The control group, which was exposed to the traditional lecture-discussion method, exhibited a minimal mean gain of 0.05 ( $SD = 5.138$ ). In contrast, the experimental group, which engaged in the reflective learning approach, demonstrated a substantial mean gain of 9.63 ( $SD = 5.216$ ). Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference ( $p = 0.000$ ) in mean gain between the two groups, indicating that students who participated in reflective learning experienced significantly greater improvement in academic performance.

These results are consistent with the findings of Colomer et al. (2013), which asserted that reflective learning not only enhances academic performance but also promotes learners' awareness of the learning process, encouraging critical thinking and self-assessment of their abilities. Furthermore, Uswahzulhasanah (2021) highlighted that the primary advantage of reflective learning lies in its capacity to stimulate practical knowledge acquisition, foster professional responsibility, enhance students' confidence, and develop critical thinking skills, all of which contribute to measurable improvements in academic achievement.

**Table 8: Difference in the Mean Gain in the Academic Performance of Students in Filipino after Exposure to the Lecture-Discussion Method and the Reflective Learning Method**

| Treatment                  | N  | Mean | sd    | df | t-value | p-value |
|----------------------------|----|------|-------|----|---------|---------|
| Lecture-Discussion Method  | 38 | 0.05 | 5.138 |    |         |         |
|                            |    |      |       | 37 | 8.882*  | .000    |
| Reflective Learning Method | 38 | 9.63 | 5.216 |    |         |         |

\*Significant at .05

## FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

### Findings

The findings of the study indicate that, although there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students in the control group before exposure to the lecture-discussion method and those in the experimental group before receiving the reflective learning intervention, students in the experimental group demonstrated a marked improvement in academic performance following the reflective learning approach. In contrast, students in the control group, who were exposed to the traditional lecture-discussion method, showed minimal improvement. This enhancement in performance among the experimental group is further supported by the significant difference observed in their mean gain, underscoring the effectiveness of reflective learning in promoting academic achievement.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that reflective learning be adopted as a teaching strategy across all university-level courses, as it provides diversity in instructional delivery and affords students the opportunity to actively engage in class while reflecting on their learning. Such an approach not only enhances academic performance but also cultivates **critical thinking skills**, enabling students to assess their own progress and make informed improvements—skills that are essential for their future academic and professional endeavors.

Furthermore, it is suggested that school administrators and curriculum planners incorporate reflective learning into professional development programs and teacher training seminars, equipping educators with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective implementation in the classroom. Curriculum developers are also encouraged to consider embedding reflective learning methodologies within course design, particularly for Filipino subjects, given the documented challenges in engaging students in these courses. Finally, for future research, it is recommended that the findings of this study serve as a foundation for further investigations into the effectiveness of reflective learning as a pedagogical approach, particularly in the context of tertiary education. Such research could provide additional evidence of its impact on student engagement, comprehension, and overall academic achievement.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings, the students in the control and experimental groups had similar (average) academic performance before exposure to the lecture-discussion and reflective learning approach, respectively. The students in the experimental group recorded a significant improvement in their academic performance after being exposed to the treatment. Thus, research hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 in this study are rejected, and it can be concluded that the reflective learning approach is more effective in improving students' academic performance compared to the lecture-discussion methodology.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to two intact sections of third-year students from a single private university, which may limit the generalizability of the results. The lack of random assignment in the quasi-experimental design may



also have introduced selection bias. Moreover, the study covered only one Filipino course within a single semester, and other factors such as students' prior knowledge, motivation, and instructor differences were not fully controlled. These factors should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

### Ethical Considerations

The university's research ethics board approved this research. Before the commencement of the study, the researcher secured written permission from the proper authorities including school administrators, college deans, and parents/guardians. The letter of consent for the participants in the study to participate voluntarily in the research study was given directly to the participants. It was made clear to all participants that data derived from the study were utilized for research purposes only and that their privacy was protected. Raw data were securely stored and only parties involved in research were given access to the data. After, the implementation of the study the data were shredded which would be impossible for any party not related to the research to reconstruct.

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