

Students' Learning Engagement In Contextual Teaching And Learning Strategies Management: The Voices From English Education Classroom

Delli Sabudu

Universitas Negeri Manado

dellisabudu@unima.ac.id

Refien Khouni Silva Rawung

Universitas Negeri Manado

refienrawung@unima.ac.id

Abstract: This study investigates how Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategies influence student engagement in higher education, particularly in a Drama Analysis classroom. Employing a qualitative design, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and reflective writings. Thematic analysis identified three interrelated dimensions of engagement: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. Findings show that CTL enhances participation, critical reflection, and empathy, yet challenges remain in managing open-ended tasks. The study underscores the pedagogical value of CTL in fostering meaningful and engaging learning experiences in higher education. The findings revealed that CTL strategies enhanced student engagement, encompassing behavioural, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Students showed increased behavioral engagement through better attendance and enthusiastic participation, while cognitive engagement was evidenced by active involvement in assignments and peer learning. Emotional engagement also rose, leading to improved communication skills, personal growth, and empathy. However, some challenges, such as navigating open tasks, were also identified. In conclusion, the findings of this study illustrate the significant influence of CTL strategies on student engagement and learning outcomes in drama classes. Consequently, the study provides educators with practical implications for the creation of engaging and meaningful learning experiences through the utilisation of CTL strategies. In conclusion, the application of engaging and contemporary pedagogical strategies that are aligned with the specific context is essential for meaningful learning.

Keywords: Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL); Student Engagement; Drama Analysis Classroom; Higher Education; Thematic Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

There are a multitude of reasons that may contribute to students' willingness or reluctance to engage in classroom learning. Students who are content to engage in learning are typically those who are diligent and possess a high level of intelligence, which often results in them being regarded as the teacher's favorites. Conversely, those who demonstrate less diligence or engagement tend to participate less actively in their learning. Zohud (2015) points out that there is a positive role of teaching strategies on students' engagement to learn English. Indeed, teachers generally acknowledge the

beneficial impact of utilizing specific teaching strategies to enhance student involvement in English language acquisition. There was a positive correlation between student engagement and academic performance. Students who are engaged display a high level of effort and energy investment in their studies, along with a strong dedication to their work. Their frequent immersion in their academic activities serves as an effective predictor of academic performance. Students who consistently focus on their studies have been observed to adopt a goal-oriented approach, which facilitates more effective learning (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Students who are engaged in their learning demonstrate a number of positive behaviours, including being mindful, participating in class discussions, applying effort to in-class exercises, and displaying learning interest and motivation (Fredricks et al., 2004). Student engagement in learning is regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for any motivation-related requirement. Furthermore, it is not merely an end in itself but also a means to achieving favorable academic outcomes (Russell et al., 2005). Genuine engagement has been demonstrated to lead to enhanced academic achievement throughout a student's academic career (Zyngier, 2008).

In the contemporary era of digitalization, which is characterized by the pervasive use of technology across all aspects of life, individuals are increasingly prone to distraction from the physical world. The virtual world has the potential to distract individuals from activities in the real world. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in the educational environment, particularly within the context of teaching and learning. A common occurrence in educational contexts is the loss of focus among students due to their use of numerous digital devices. As a result, the learning process becomes less interesting, leading to a lack of serious engagement with the learning activities. Although various background variables may contribute to low levels of student engagement, the influence of learning methods on outcomes is a crucial area requiring deeper exploration. Such exploration can provide more robust and logical insights to inform effective solutions for addressing low student engagement in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, educators should prioritize fostering student engagement to enhance learning outcomes and promote lifelong learning.

Student engagement has primarily and historically focused upon increasing achievement, positive behaviors, and a sense of belonging in students to promote retention in school (Parsons & Taylor, 2011). Over time, student engagement strategies were further developed and more broadly implemented to manage classroom behaviors. More recently, student engagement has shifted towards enhancing all students' abilities to learn how to learn and become lifelong learners in a knowledge-based society (Gilbert, 2007). Student engagement has become both a strategic process for learning and an

accountability outcome in itself. Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort, and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions. This investment aims to optimize the student experience, enhance student learning outcomes, and the development of students and the performance and reputation of the institution (Trowler, 2016). Engagement is more than involvement or participation – it requires feelings and sense-making as well as activity (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Acting without feeling engaged is just involvement or even compliance; feeling engaged without acting is dissociation. Although focusing on engagement at a school level, Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2006), drawing on Bloom (1956), usefully identify three dimensions to student engagement, as discussed below:

1. Behavioural engagement

Students who are behaviorally engaged would typically comply with behavioral norms, such as attendance and involvement, and would demonstrate the absence of disruptive or negative behavior.

2. Emotional engagement

Students who engage emotionally would experience affective reactions such as interest, enjoyment, or a sense of belonging.

3. Cognitive engagement

Cognitively engaged students would be invested in their learning, would seek to go beyond the requirements, and would relish challenges.

Student engagement has been defined as “participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes” (Kuh, 2009), and as “the extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes” (Krause & Coates, 2008). Similarly, Hu and Kuh (2002) define engagement as “the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes”. Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (2007) defined engagement as “the process whereby institutions and sector bodies make deliberate attempts to involve and empower students in the process of shaping the learning experience”. Coates (2007) describes engagement as “a broad construct intended to encompass salient academic as well as certain non-academic aspects of the student experience.” Coates (2009) measured engagement along six scales:

1. Academic Challenge (extent to which expectations and assessments challenge students to learn);

2. Active Learning (students' efforts to actively construct their knowledge);
3. Student And Staff Interactions (level and nature of students' contact with teaching staff);
4. Enriching Educational Experiences (participation in broadening educational activities);
5. Supportive Learning Environment (feelings of legitimation within the university community);
6. Work-Integrated Learning (integration of employment-focused work experience into study).

Others have proposed that engagement is a more complex phenomenon, encompassing behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. For instance, Hagel et al. (2012) posit that behavioural constructs refer to the positive action's students' exhibit across academic, social, institutional, and extracurricular activities. In contrast, they define emotional constructs as the connections that students have with their teachers, peers, and institutions. Trowler (2016) further develops this theory, proposing that these constructs may manifest as positive, neutral, or negative on a continuum. An illustration of positive engagement within the behavioural construct is attendance and participation. Conversely, negative engagement may manifest as boycotting or disrupting classes. Similarly, Krause (2005) posited that engagement could be conceptualised negatively as a battle or conflict that some students experience within an unfamiliar, uninviting university culture.

CTL is a pedagogical strategy that integrates academic content with real-world scenarios, enabling students to utilize their knowledge and abilities in tangible and purposeful ways. This methodology fosters active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving by situating learning within a context that is both familiar and pertinent to the students. Drawing upon a plethora of educational theories, CTL incorporates Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978), which places a premium on social interaction in learning, as well as Dewey's Experiential Learning Theory (1938), which champions learning through experience and reflection. Drama may prove to be an invaluable pedagogical tool in facilitating the integration of CTL strategies.

In the Drama Analysis class, students are engaged with literary texts in the form of drama scripts, live performances, and dramatization techniques that reflect real-world scenarios. These scenarios are derived from human experience, which is shaped by the interaction between thought, emotion, and imagination. This setting provides students with ample opportunities for the exploration and examination of complex themes, the development of empathy,

and the enhancement of communication skills. Drama, with its emphasis on interactivity and collaboration, is an ideal context within which to study the impact of contextual learning strategies, as it embodies many of the principles of CTL. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) has been the subject of considerable academic scrutiny, with numerous studies demonstrating its impact on aspects such as student engagement, learning outcomes, and practical implementation within diverse educational contexts. Johnson (2002) found that CTL promotes active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. It also increases student motivation and engagement by making learning relevant to students' lives. The findings of Hudson and Whisler (2001) suggest that the implementation of CTL leads to increased student engagement, higher retention rates, and improved academic performance. Teachers report that students are more motivated and participate actively in the learning process. Sears (2002) found that CTL increases the relevance of learning, making students more likely to engage with the material. This approach encourages collaboration, critical thinking, and application of knowledge to real-world situations.

Initial observations revealed that students enrolled in the drama analysis class encountered difficulties when learning to express character through role-playing. They also exhibited diminished motivation in exploring roles and undertaking improvisation activities to comprehend the nuances of the dramatic text. This was postulated to be the result of an inappropriate learning methodology, which was not aligned with the learning activities and student characteristics, thereby leading to a lack of engagement in the teaching and learning process. Lecturers were unable to maintain their enthusiasm to guide their students effectively, while students became less motivated to be fully engaged in their learning activities. This prompted the researchers to identify an appropriate method for teaching drama analysis classes. A review of the literature revealed that CTL is a promising approach to addressing the challenges commonly encountered in drama analysis classes.

Nevertheless, the voices of students themselves have frequently been excluded from the discourse surrounding contextual teaching and learning strategies. This research seeks to address this gap by incorporating student perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding the pedagogical approaches under consideration. The aim is to gain a more nuanced understanding of how students perceive and engage with these approaches within the context of a drama analysis classroom (Zhang, 2021).

The principal objective of this study is to examine the impact of CTL strategies on student engagement in an undergraduate Drama Analysis classroom. This study aims to ascertain how contextual learning approaches can be used to enhance student engagement and foster greater depth of

understanding. It also seeks to identify ways in which these approaches can be used to facilitate improvements in critical thinking skills. To achieve this, the voices and perspectives of students will be captured. Gaining insight into how students engage with their learning and experience the educational process can yield invaluable data that will inform educators of how most effectively to implement CTL strategies and establish best practices in this field. The present study is situated within the context of a higher education institution, wherein the subject of analysis is a class devoted to the analysis of drama. The course entails the study and performance of dramatic texts, with a particular focus on comprehending themes, characterization, and the socio-cultural context of the works. The incorporation of CTL strategies is intended to enhance student engagement and render the learning experience more pertinent and meaningful.

Student engagement is a cornerstone of effective learning, influencing academic performance, motivation, and retention. Previous research highlights that teaching strategies play a significant role in enhancing students' engagement in language classrooms (Zohud, 2015; Fredricks et al., 2004; Trowler, 2016). In the current digitalized learning environment, students' attention is often fragmented, leading to decreased participation. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers a promising approach by linking academic concepts with real-world contexts, thereby promoting relevance, collaboration, and reflection. However, empirical evidence from students' own perspectives particularly in drama-based English learning contexts remains limited. This study explores how CTL strategies affect behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement among university students in a Drama Analysis class.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore how Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategies shape students' engagement within the context of a higher education Drama Analysis classroom. The qualitative approach was selected for its strength in capturing the depth and complexity of human experiences, allowing the researcher to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives rather than through predefined variables.

The participants consisted of twenty undergraduate students (12 females and 8 males, aged 19–23) enrolled in the *Drama Analysis* course within the English Education Department at Universitas Negeri Manado. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure that all participants had substantive experience with CTL-based instruction and were able to provide rich, reflective

insights. The diversity in gender, academic standing, and prior exposure to drama learning enriched the range of perspectives obtained.

Data were collected over the span of one academic semester through three complementary methods: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and reflective journals. The observations focused on students' participation, collaboration, and emotional expressions during CTL-based activities such as role-play, group discussions, and performance rehearsals. The semi-structured interviews encouraged students to articulate their lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges encountered in CTL learning environments. Reflective journals, maintained throughout the semester, provided longitudinal evidence of students' cognitive and emotional growth. This multi-source data collection enabled methodological triangulation, enhancing both the depth and credibility of the findings.

Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. The analytic process was iterative and interpretive, involving continuous comparison across data sets to identify patterns of engagement within CTL practice. Credibility was strengthened through *member checking*, wherein participants verified the accuracy of emerging interpretations. Dependability and confirmability were supported by maintaining a detailed *audit trail* and engaging in *peer debriefing* sessions with fellow researchers to ensure analytical transparency. The researcher also maintained a reflexive journal to critically examine personal assumptions and potential biases, thereby enhancing the integrity and authenticity of the interpretation.

Through this rigorous methodological framework, the study sought not merely to document classroom engagement, but to illuminate how students *make sense of learning through context*, offering a grounded understanding of CTL as a transformative pedagogical experience in higher education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The qualitative analysis of data collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and written reflections revealed several key themes regarding the impact of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategies on student engagement in a Drama Analysis class. These findings

provide a nuanced understanding of how CTL strategies influence student learning experiences, participation, and overall engagement.

Table 1. The Findings

Kinds of Engagement	Engagement	Aspects	CTL Principle	Student's Voice
1. Behavioral engagement (Towler, 2016)	Attends lectures,	Enhanced Engagement Through Real-World Connections	Real World Relevance: students' perception that the integration of real world scenarios into drama activities provides a more relevant and meaningful learning experience. They claim that connecting drama works with current social issues, historical events, and personal experiences has the potential to deepen their understanding and interest in the subject matter so that the level of participation in class becomes significant.	"When I play a character role in a drama where the scenes reflect real life situations, I feel more connected to the material. It wasn't just acting; it's like living a personal experience and understanding it on a more serious level than just acting out a drama."
	participates with enthusiasm	Active Participation and Immersion	Interactive Learning: students' perceptions that role playing, simulations and group discussions encourage them to participate actively and deepen the material. Students argue that this interactive method allows them to engage with learning activities more dynamically and creatively	" Playing the roles of different characters from my own helps me see things from more diverse points of view. It became interesting because I had to think more comprehensively and react like other people in that situation."
	participates with enthusiasm	Collaboration and Peer Learning	Peer Interaction: Student's perceptions that CTL strategies in drama classes emphasize collaboration and peer learning. Activities such as group activities and collaborative projects allow students to learn from each other, share different and diverse points of view, and develop a good sense of community and cooperation.	" It is my opinion that working in groups is really beneficial. We can exchange ideas with each other and build our strengths and self-confidence. This makes us feel that the learning process is more fun and without feel of distress."
2. Cognitive engagement (Towler, 2016)	Meets or exceeds assignment	Development of Critical Thinking and Reflection	Critical Analysis: Students demonstrate improved critical thinking skills through analysis of drama	" Analyzing character behavior and the implications for the storyline makes me think

	requirements		scripts and performances. Reflective practices, such as discussing character, characterization, and thematic elements, stimulate more comprehensive understanding and analytical thinking.	critically about the themes and messages the author wants to convey. Reflecting on our drama activities also made it easier for me to understand my own learning process."
	Meets or exceeds assignment requirements	Challenges with Open-Ended Assignments	Navigating Ambiguity: Some of students were challenged by the open-ended nature of the drama assignment. In drama class the emphasis is on creativity and initiative skills, while this is a scary thing for us because we prefer assignments that are more structured and have clear guidelines so that they do not require creativity and initiative.	" At first I had difficulty working on open-ended assignments because I wasn't sure if I was doing them correctly. My critical and creative thinking skills are still low and even lack initiative. However, after participating in current activities, I learned to accept ambiguity and use it as an opportunity to be more creative and have initiative."
3.Emotional engagement (Towler, 2016)	Interest	Improved Communication Skills	Expressive Skills: Engaging in drama activities helps students improve their communication skills, including verbal expression, body language, and emotional articulation and discover their potential. These aspects are very useful in increasing self-confidence and public speaking skills.	" Drama really helped me become more confident in expressing myself where previously I was so nervous and anxious. Whether it's speaking in front of the class or acting out a scene, I feel more able to convey my thoughts and emotions. Even when acting in a drama scene, I become more expressive because I feel emotionally connected to the character."
	Interest	Personal Growth and Empathy	Emotional Connection: Through embodying different characters and scenarios, students can develop greater empathy and emotional intelligence. This personality development is reflected in their ability to understand and relate to a variety of human experiences and even be able to involve them emotionally.	" Playing different and varied roles allows me to step into someone else's shoes. This makes me more empathetic and aware of the complexity of emotions and relationships between human beings."

The findings of this research reveal diverse perspectives regarding student engagement with Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategies.

According to Trowler (2016), engagement comprises three elements: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Students expressed that the level of participation and enthusiasm, as well as their ability to meet assignment requirements and interest in learning using the CTL strategy, had increased significantly. Because their learning experiences are based on real-world contexts and interactive learning modalities (Afdal et al., 2022; Margana & Maristy, 2020; Quan, 2022). The students highlighted the effectiveness of using CTL strategies in drama learning, noting key areas such as: Enhanced Engagement Through Real-World Connections, Active Participation and Immersion, Collaboration and Peer Learning, Development of Critical Thinking and Reflection, Challenges with Open-Ended Assignments, and Improved Communication Skills (Zhang, 2021). These aspects not only improved their information literacy skills but also fostered critical thinking and expanded their knowledge of the subject matter. Furthermore, students emphasized the important role of instructors as facilitators, motivators, and resource providers in creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. The study also revealed the challenges students face, such as adapting to new learning approaches, balancing academic demands, and navigating the complexities of collaborative work. Overall, the results of this study offer a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences in drama analysis classes, where contextual teaching and learning strategies are actively implemented. By capturing student voice, this research also provides valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policy makers, enabling them to align learning approaches with student needs and preferences. The findings of this study have significant implications for enhancing student engagement, improving learning outcomes, and promoting a more inclusive and productive educational environment.

Discussion

The findings of this study illuminate the several elements of student engagement, namely behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement, by applying CTL strategy in a drama analysis class. The extent to which CTL strategies can increase student engagement in drama analysis classes in the English education department of UNIMA is examined through students' experiences and their gathered perspectives, which are reflected in their engagement in student learning activities. The discussion integrates these findings with existing literature, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of implementing CTL in a drama analysis class. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) has been described as an instructional approach that connects foundational skills and college-level content, accelerating the progress of academically underprepared college students (Perin, 2011). This methodology is particularly relevant in developmental reading and study strategy contexts, where

instructors are increasingly pressured to include real-world content in their curriculum to bring contextualized teaching and learning to life (Ambrose et al., 2013). Contextualized instruction has been found to result in greater gains in summarization skills and accuracy compared to traditional, decontextualized approaches (Perin, 2013).

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1. Behavioral Engagement

The drama activity that presents a reflection of real life with diverse issues in society is an element that influences student involvement. Students were voluntarily and enthusiastically involved in the drama activity. The study revealed a notable increase in students' engagement when the curriculum included activities grounded in real-world scenarios and incorporating elements of drama. This is in accordance with Dewey's experiential learning theory, which places great importance on the integration of education with real-world experiences, thus making learning more meaningful and engaging. Reflections and interviews with students indicated that contextualising drama pieces with contemporary social issues and personal experiences helped them perceive the applicability of the learning to their lives, thereby increasing their interest and investment in the subject. It is recommended that educators consider incorporating real-world connections in their lesson plans to enhance student engagement. One approach could involve the selection of drama texts that reflect current societal issues, or encouraging students to identify similarities

between their own experiences and those explored in the classroom (Kemeh, 2015; Piriaphokanont & Sriswasdi, 2022; Stephanie et al., 2011).

The application of CTL strategies shows that the level of student involvement, specifically their behavioral involvement, is through their presence in the drama analysis class and the extent of their participation in teaching and learning activities. The table of findings shows that the aspect that stimulates them is the real-world connection, which is one of the principles of the CTL strategy. Vygotsky's social development theory asserts that social interaction plays a pivotal role in cognitive advancement, proposing that students can learn at a more efficient rate when engaged in collaborative endeavours. This principle is particularly pertinent in the context of drama education. Collaborative activities foster peer learning and a sense of community among students, which is beneficial to students' cognitive development. The study's findings indicate that working in groups not only facilitated students' comprehension of the material but also assisted in the development of essential social and communication skills. The application of collaborative learning in educational settings offers the potential to unleash a distinctive intellectual and social synergy between teachers and students. However, this approach necessitates a reframing of traditional assumptions regarding the processes of learning and the roles of teachers and students within a classroom environment (MacGregor, 1990). Educators can facilitate a culture of collaboration by implementing group-based projects and performances, which provide opportunities for students to learn from one another. This approach aligns with the principles of Vygotsky's social development theory, which emphasises the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. As one educator observed, integrating Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development within a drama-based curriculum can effectively promote multiliteracies and facilitate scaffolded learning (MacGregor, 1990; Macy, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

2. Cognitive Engagement

One of the forms of engagement demonstrated by students in the drama analysis class is cognitive engagement. It can be observed that when CTL (Critical Thinking and Learning) strategies are implemented in a drama analysis class, students demonstrate cognitive engagement. This engagement can be evidenced by their meeting or exceeding assignment requirements, which indicates that they are developing their critical thinking abilities through the results of their critical analysis of drama scripts and drama performances. In the reflective component of the practice, students engage in discourse on the characters, themes, and other internal elements of drama, including plot and setting. This is accomplished through the use of a variety of pedagogical

techniques, such as role-play, simulations, and group discussions, which encourage students to participate actively in the learning process. The incorporation of role-play, simulations, and group discussions facilitated the creation of an environment that fostered active participation in the learning process. This finding corroborates the literature on drama education, which posits that drama activities naturally engage students by requiring them to actively embody characters and scenarios. The immersive nature of these activities facilitates the students' ability to internalize and comprehend the material more profoundly. In order to achieve the greatest level of engagement, educators should design activities that require students to assume active roles. Such activities might include improvisation exercises, debates, and dramatic re-enactments of historical or literary events. The engagement of students through interactive learning activities has been demonstrated to facilitate a more profound comprehension and internalization of the subject matter (Talbert & Mor-Avi, 2019).

The utilization of role-play, simulations, and group discussions facilitates the creation of an immersive learning environment that necessitates active student participation, thereby aligning with the principles of drama education. The embodiment of characters and scenarios enables students to internalize and comprehend the content more effectively, which in turn facilitates enhanced learning outcomes. It is recommended that educators design activities that compel students to take on active roles, such as improvisation exercises, debates, and dramatic re-enactments (Boggs et al., 2007). This interactive mode of engagement, characterized by constructive dialogues and a sufficient degree of turn-taking, has been linked to improved cognitive engagement and active learning outcomes. In contrast, traditional lecture-based instruction can promote a more passive and detached learning dynamic, whereas interactive activities foster deeper investment, investment, and personal investment on the part of the student. This immersion in the learning process allows students to forge meaningful connections with the material, transcending mere memorization or superficial familiarity. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of many interactive activities encourages students to engage with the material in a more active and engaged manner. It can be posited that open-ended assignments, as exemplified in the field of drama, can serve as effective instruments for fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-expression (Verlaan & Verlaan, 2020). The opportunity to deviate from a prescribed course of action and engage in imaginative problem-solving can be transformative, enabling students to draw upon their distinctive perspectives and establish a more profound connection with the subject matter. However, this freedom can also be a double-edged sword, as some students may encounter difficulties in negotiating the ambiguity

of such an approach and find themselves overwhelmed by the lack of clear guidelines (Knorr, 2020).

3. Emotional Engagement

The involvement of students in drama activities has been found to facilitate the development of a range of communication skills, including verbal articulation, body language, and emotional expression. These findings support the existing research, which highlights the value of drama as a tool for developing effective communication skills. It would be prudent for those engaged in the instruction of drama to continue to emphasise activities which facilitate the development of effective communication skills. Integration of techniques such as vocal exercises, body language workshops, and public speaking opportunities into the curriculum can be employed to further enhance these abilities. It has been demonstrated that engagement in drama-based activities has a considerable effect on the advancement of students' communication abilities, which encompass verbal articulation, body language, and emotional expression. This corroboration serves to reinforce and extend existing research, which has highlighted the pivotal role of drama as a means of fostering effective communication abilities. It is therefore recommended that drama educators continue to prioritize activities that build upon and refine these essential skills (Podlozny, 2000). The incorporation of vocal exercises, body language workshops, and public speaking opportunities into the curriculum can facilitate the enhancement of students' communication proficiencies. Furthermore, drama-based pedagogical approaches have the potential to not only facilitate the development of language skills but also to cultivate critical thinking, empathy, and creativity – all of which are vital for success in the 21st-century classroom and beyond. Studies have demonstrated that American high school students who participate in theatre exhibit superior reading skills compared to their non-theatre peers, with their reading abilities demonstrating accelerated growth during the high school years (Podlozny, 2000). Furthermore, students who report studying drama in high school exhibit significantly higher verbal scores on the Scholastic Assessment Test. It can be argued that drama-based education represents a highly effective instrument for enhancing academic performance and communication abilities. The performative and interdisciplinary nature of drama makes it an ideal subject for developing communication competencies and overall academic performance.

The engagement in dramatic activities has been found to facilitate personal growth and the development of empathy among students. By assuming

different roles and engaging with a range of human experiences, students develop a deeper understanding of others' perspectives and emotions. This aspect of drama education is of great importance in the development of emotional intelligence and social awareness. Emotional intelligence represents a pivotal aspect of both individual and social development, encompassing the capacity to recognize, comprehend, and regulate one's own emotions, as well as the ability to empathize with the emotional states of others. The value of drama education as a means of fostering essential emotional and social skills is becoming increasingly recognized (Eckersley, 2016; Grewal & Salovey, 2005; Wee, 2009). Drama allows students to engage with complex human experiences, thereby facilitating the development of their emotional intelligence and capacity for personal growth (Batdı & Elaldı, 2020; Mardas & Măyoc, 2020). Research has demonstrated that those who engage in drama education demonstrate enhanced abilities for problem-solving, more effective coping mechanisms, and a greater sense of confidence in communication and public participation (Batdı & Elaldı, 2020). The inherently interactive nature of drama encourages students to engage in collaborative and negotiated interactions, which in turn facilitate their ability to navigate complex social dynamics. This, in turn, serves to hone their interpersonal skills and enhance their emotional intelligence (Boggs et al., 2007; Mardas & Măyoc, 2020; Wee, 2009). Furthermore, drama provides an environment that is conducive to the expression and exploration of students' emotional experiences. This can facilitate the development of emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Negeri Manado. Participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity. Data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

The incorporation of CTL strategies into Drama Analysis classes led to a notable enhancement in student engagement, encompassing behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement. By rendering learning experiences pertinent, interactive, and collaborative, CTL strategies address the key elements of efficacious educational practice. Nevertheless, the obstacles that have been identified, such as the necessity for a balanced structure and the difficulty that some students experience with open-ended tasks, must be overcome in order to achieve the full potential of this approach.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the influence of Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategies on student engagement in a Drama Analysis class at

the English Education department of UNIMA. It gained an understanding of the effects of these strategies on student learning by capturing students' voices and experiences through a series of interviews. The findings highlight the considerable advantages of CTL in cultivating a more engaging, pertinent, and vibrant educational milieu. The integration of CTL strategies in Drama Analysis classes has demonstrated a significant impact on student engagement, behaviour, cognition and emotion. By making learning more relevant, interactive and collaborative, CTL strategies address key aspects of effective education. Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered, particularly in reconciling structure and creativity, the comprehensive beneficial effect of CTL on student engagement indicates that it is a valuable approach in drama learning and beyond. The knowledge gained from this study provides a basis for enhancing pedagogical techniques to increase student engagement, which in turn improves the learning experience and the attainment of learning goals.■

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