

# Implementation of Conceptual and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) Approaches in Teaching Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan: A Descriptive-Comparative Analysis

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to determine the performance among Grade 7 students in Araling Panlipunan at Gaddani National High School implementing the two instructional approaches, namely Conceptual Teaching and Inquiry-Based Learning.

The research assesses the performance level of students on various competencies in the fourth quarter. They used descriptive-comparative analysis, utilized a one-group pretest-posttest design in Grade 7 Araling Panlipunan under the MATATAG K-10 Curriculum. It was conducted over eight weeks, with a structured approach integrating Concept Mapping, Interactive Simulations, Problem Based-Learning, Reflective Journals,, Collaborative Discussions, Case-Based Scenarios, Concept-Driven Projects, and Self-Directed Activities within the Conceptual Teaching and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) approaches. These strategies were linked to particular weeks in order to improve student engagement, critical analysis, and mastery of Southeast Asian history.

A pre-test (Initial Assessment) and post-test (Final Assessment) were consisted of 80 item tests using the Lesson Exemplar and Worksheet tool and were validated by three experts (Masters) in Araling Panlipunan. It ensures that the assessments were content valid and reliable. Scores were drawn from weekly formative assessments of the MATATAG worksheets and lesson exemplars each consisting of 10 items, based on applying the approaches and strategies. Data were processed using statistical treatment such as weighted mean scores and t-tests.

After the intervention, results showed that both the Conceptual and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) approaches demonstrated significant improvements in the performance of Grade 7 learners in Araling Panlipunan, as indicated by the pretest and post-test results. The Conceptual Approach resulted in a rise in the mean score from 72.19 (classified as Did Not Meet Expectation ). In comparison of the Post-Test performance revealed that scores were nearly identical. The Conceptual Approach had a post-test mean score of 93.09, while the post-test means of 93.09 and 93.97 were branded as Outstanding.” These results noted that both methods used led to meaningful improvements in the students’ understanding of ASEAN’s history, its composition, and human rights advocacy strong understanding of important concepts fostered in



the students' academic performance. Because both approaches can provide optimized social studies learning outcomes, this can be applied without limitations.

**Keywords:** *Conceptual Teaching Approach, Inquiry-Based Learning Approach, Academic Performance, Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC), Post-Test performance, MATATAG K-10 Curriculum, Araling Panlipunan in Grade 7*



## I. INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, educational systems are now placing a larger emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills for students. *Araling Panlipunan*, is a subject incorporated in the Philippine educational system, assists students in understanding their cultural heritage, national identity, and the socio-political world which is vital for a global citizen.

In addition to history, geography, political science, economics, and culture, Social Studies is interdisciplinary which strengthens critical thinking and analytical skills and helps students relate contemporary issues to historical events (Yılmaz, 2023). It has been noted that there is an increased focus on social studies since the year 2000, with curricula focused more on globalization and sustainability. Yet there is still debate about how well curricula are designed to meet contemporary objectives addressing migration and social integration which indicates the need for continual curriculum refinement (Wiens et al., 2022).

Social Studies contributes problem-solving and critical thinking skills which are fundamental in the achievement of some of the SDGs like combating poverty, inequality, and ecosystem destruction. The SDGs were formed in 2015 with a global agenda to accomplish by 2030, which aims to ensure quality education (SDG 4) and establish peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16). Social Studies education strives to achieve these goals while also preparing learners with the knowledge and skills to actively participate and address global issues. For instance, understanding the social, economic and political mitigation and adaptation participation planning fosters learners for the action facets of climate change.

Moreover, the application of Conceptual Teaching Approach and Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) in teaching Grade Seven *Araling Panlipunan* stems from multiple active learning, understanding and meaning-making educational theories which foster deep, thoughtful, and meaningful learning. These theories are quite effective in nurturing critical thinking and interdisciplinary connections along with student engagement in social studies education. Likewise; Constructivist Learning Theory, backed up by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky applies to the integration of Conceptual Teaching with Inquiry-Based Learning in *Araling Panlipunan*, the integrated social studies subject. It emphasizes the necessity for active participation of learners in the lesson with the goal of knowledge construction through experience within a particular context and by means of reflection. This instance the Area of learning (*Araling Panlipunan*) asserts that students are required to know more than just memorize dates and events, they should grasp the concepts of history (concept-driven learning) which includes its historical, geographical, and socio-political facets (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). Theory of Experiential Learning or The Kolbian Theory of Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984), stresses the importance of direct participation in an active, direct experience paired with reflection on the activity performed. This theory specifically emphasizes the participant's doing activities which contain problem solving elements and interacting the most difficult in the area of design and problem solving. In the case of *Araling Panlipunan*, this involves teaching through the use of historical simulations, investigative projects, and field studies that aim to bridge classroom and real-world concepts. The integration of experiential learning with the Conceptual Teaching Approach ensures pupils utilize conceptual knowledge in meaningful ways. For example, students no longer just read about trade systems; they explore economic interdependence through case studies or even simulations of trade negotiations. By engaging in hands-on activities, learners grasp more practical insights of *Araling Panlipunan*, particularly that ideas can be applied in



different periods of history and societies (Abdumanapovna, 2022). Socio-cultural Theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978) draws attention to particular aspects of learning such as social interactions and culture. This theory is very important in *Araling Panlipunan* because students learn about historical events, systems of governance, and cultured peoples in social and historical contexts. This theory is supported by The Conceptual Teaching Approach which focuses on group work through dialogue and exploration of concepts. Most important, objective is to enhance the Grade 7 learners' performance in *Araling Panlipunan*. Achievement of this outcome is anticipate to emerge through deeper understanding and mastery of the subject matter which would be reflected in improved mean grades and deeper competencies. The improved performance reflects the success of the teaching strategies. It demonstrates the student's ability to apply their knowledge to real-world contexts, thereby achieving the educational objectives outlined in the curriculum.

The study aims to determine the effectiveness of two instructional approaches, namely Conceptual Teaching and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), in enhancing Social Studies learning among Grade 7 students of Gaddani National High School during the Fourth Quarter of the 2024-2025 school year. This research is utilized a one-group pretest-posttest design. This method of investigation stems from assessing the impact of an intervention on one group with a baseline and end line measure. the author used the following methods for the analysis of the information gathered. Weighted Mean to determine the level of performance of the grade 7 learners and T-test to assess if there is a statistically significant difference between the pretest and post-test after integrating the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) Approach. Specifically, the research sought to answer the following questions: (1) What are the performance levels in the pretest and post-test of the Grade 7 Learners using the conceptual and inquiry-based learning approaches along the Essential Competencies in *Araling Panlipunan*? (2) Is there significant difference in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the two approaches on the Grade 7 learners' Social Studies performance over time? (3) Is there a significant difference in the performance of the Grade 7 learners exposed to conceptual and inquiry-based learning approaches?

From these questions, the following hypothesis were tested: (1) There is a significant difference in the performance of the Grade 7 Social Studies learners before and after applying the two approaches. (2) There is a significant difference in the performance of the Grade 7 learners exposed to conceptual and inquiry-based learning approaches.

## II. MATERIALS and METHODS

Materials and methods involve research design, participants, instrument, procedure, and data analysis. The discussion of these subparts can be found in the preceding paragraphs.

### Research Design

This research utilized a Quasi-Experimental method specifically one-group pretest-posttest design. This method of investigation stems from assessing the impact of an intervention on one group with a baseline and end line measure. In the words of Campbell and Stanley (1963), "a pretest is given, an 'event' occurs, and then a post-test is given." This particular design is most suitable for this research because it measures the impact of the Conceptual and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) techniques at a grade level by comparing the performance of students and measuring the outcome after the intervention is made. The objectives of the best teaching



strategies can be employed this way and their effectiveness on student learning outcomes evaluated.

### **Participants**

The subjects of this study were Grade 7 students from Gaddani National High School for the school year 2024-2025. The total sample will comprise 32 students, 20 males and 12 females. The inclusive criteria for the selection of participants will rely on members of the same grade level (Grade 7), demonstrate equivalent grade-level competency to provide a uniform benchmark of skills, and are within the 12-14 years' age range typical for this grade level.

### **Instruments**

The study consisted of 80 item test using the Lesson Exemplar and Worksheet tool developed by Philippine Normal University, Research Institute for Teacher Quality, SiMMER National Research Centre, Bureau of Learning Resources, covering the competencies for the quarter outlined in the MATATAG K - 10 Curriculum for grade 7 in the Junior High School, as indicated in DepEd Order No. 010, s. 2024, outlines the policy guidelines for the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, which was designed for Kindergarten to Grade 10. This order is being phased in, starting with Kindergarten, Grades 1, 4 and 7 in School Year 2024-2025. The pretest (initial assessment) and a posttest (final assessment) were validated by three experts (Masters) in Araling Panlipunan. This ensures that the assessments were content valid and reliable. For the assessment, scores will be drawn from weekly formative assessments of the MATATAG worksheets and lesson exemplars each consisting of 10 items, based on applying the approaches and strategies. Scores were interpreted using DepEd Performance descriptors (Outstanding, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Fairly Satisfactory, Did Not Meet Expectations).

### **Procedure**

The study was conducted over eight weeks, with a structured approach integrating Collaborative Discussions, Case-Based Scenarios, Concept-Driven Projects, and Self-Directed Activities within the Conceptual Teaching and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) approaches. These strategies were linked to particular weeks in order to improve student engagement, critical analysis, and mastery of Southeast Asian history. The study was commenced with a pretest utilizing the Worksheet and Lesson Exemplar (LE) assessment tool in Araling Panlipunan to identify students' prior knowledge levels. Concept Mapping will be implemented to aid students in structuring and organizing their comprehension of core ideas such as colonialism and imperialism. During this stage, Collaborative Discussions will be important as students analyze the aims, approaches, and consequences of imperialism in Southeast Asia in small groups. They will be guided to examine the two phases of Western Imperialism and argue competing views on how and why the policies changed over time. This approach will strengthen not only their understanding of the concepts but also their communication and analytical skills.

During these phases, formative assessments will be conducted on a weekly basis to track student progress and determine whether the strategies being implemented are strengthening learning outcomes. After the eight-week intervention, a post-test will be given in order to assess the impact of the applied strategies. The information collected will then undergo analysis and interpretation using appropriate statistical methods which will permit the evaluation of the

effectiveness of Conceptual Teaching and Inquiry-Based Learning using these methods. The study's conclusion was depend on this analysis and recommendations was provided relating to the instructional practices for the latter based on the evidence gathered. Data were processed using statistical treatment such as weighted mean scores and t-tests.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (weighted mean) determined the level of learners' performance. Independent sample t-test assessed the significant difference between the pretest and post-test after integrating the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) approach.

### III. RESULT

**Table 1. The performance levels in the pretest and post-test of the Grade 7 learners using the conceptual and inquiry-based learning approaches along the Essential Competencies in *Araling Panlipunan*.**

Learning Approaches	Learning Competencies	Pretest Mean	DR	Posttest Mean	DR
Conceptual Approach	1. Natatalakay ang layunin, kasaysayan, estruktura, at ilang tagumpay ng ASEAN.	72.34	DNME	92.69	O
	2. Naiiuugnay ang papel ng Pilipinas bilang aktibong kasapi ng ASEAN.	72.50	DNME	93.91	O
	<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>72.19</b>	<b>DNME</b>	<b>93.09</b>	<b>O</b>
Inquiry-Based Learning Approach	3. Nasusuri ang mga hamon at tugon ng ASEAN sa pagtamo ng likas-kayang pag-unlad (sustainable development)	72.81	DNME	92.72	O
	4. Nasusuri ang papel ng ASEAN sa usapin ng karapatang pantao sa Pilipinas at Timog Silangan Asya	72.97	DNME	95.53	O
	<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>72.63</b>	<b>DNME</b>	<b>93.97</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>Overall</b>		<b>72.28</b>	<b>DNME</b>	<b>93.38</b>	<b>O</b>

Legend:

Scale	Descriptive Rating	80-84	Satisfactory
90-100	Outstanding (O)	75-79	Fairly Satisfactory
85-89	Very Satisfactory (VS)	Below 75	Did not Meet Expectation

**Table 2. Comparison of the significant difference in Evaluating the Effect of the Two Approaches on Grade 7 Social Studies Learners' Performance.**

Learning Approaches	Learning Competencies	Pretest	Posttest	Mean Gain	T-Value	T-Prob
Conceptual Approach	1. <i>Natatalakay ang layunin, kasaysayan, estruktura, at ilang tagumpay ng ASEAN.</i>	72.34	92.69	20.35	17.48	<0.001
	2. <i>Naiiuugnay ang papel ng Pilipinas bilang aktibong kasapi ng ASEAN.</i>	72.50	93.91	21.41	15.58	<0.001
	<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>72.19</b>	<b>93.09</b>	<b>20.90</b>	<b>20.24</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Inquiry Approach	3. <i>Nasusuri ang mga hamon at tugon ng ASEAN sa pagtamo ng likas-kayang pag-unlad.</i>	72.81	92.72	19.91	15.26	<0.001
	4. <i>Nasusuri ang papel ng ASEAN sa usapin ng karapatang pantao sa Pilipinas at Timog Silangan Asya.</i>	72.97	95.53	22.56	18.51	<0.001
	<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>72.63</b>	<b>93.97</b>	<b>21.34</b>	<b>21.29</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
<b>Overall</b>		<b>72.28</b>	<b>93.38</b>	<b>21.10</b>	<b>25.06</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

**Table 3. Comparison of the significant difference in the post-test performance of the Grade 7 learners exposed to conceptual and inquiry-based learning approaches**

Learning Approach	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	T-value	T-prob
Conceptual Approach	<b>93.09</b>			
Inquiry-Based Learning Approach	<b>93.97</b>	<b>0.880</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.52</b>

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Table 1 presented highlights the performance levels of Grade 7 learners who were taught using two different learning approaches—Conceptual and Inquiry-Based Learning—along the Essential Competencies in *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies). The performance of the learners was assessed based on their pretest and post-test mean scores, with significant improvements observed in both approaches. For the Conceptual Approach, the pretest mean score was 72.19, classified as "Did Not Meet Expectation" (DNME), which rose to 93.09 in the post-test, now classified as "Outstanding" (O). Likewise, for the Inquiry-Based Approach, the pretest mean



score was 72.63 (DNME), which advanced to 93.97 “Outstanding” (O) during the post-test. The improvements noted in the post-test scores indicate that both approaches to teaching facilitated proper comprehension of the ASEAN-related issues among students. The Inquiry-Based Approach does appear to have a slight edge with regard to overall post-test outcomes, most notably in the skill assessing ASEAN’s role regarding human rights the learners obtained a mean score of 95.53. Even though the pretest mean score was low at 72.97, the students demonstrated significant improvement during the post-test.

The findings suggest that the students were able to better grasp the concepts after instruction using the ASEAN content frameworks objectives, history, and structure of ASEAN due to the Conceptual Approach which was implemented. The students had low pretest scores; however, they demonstrated considerable retrieval of understanding as measured during the post-test where they were rated “Outstanding.” It is likely that this approach, which relies on direct factual instruction helped most of the students build enough background knowledge to understand the subject matter. In contrast, the Inquiry-based Learning Approach, which aims to foster students to interact with global challenges such as sustainable development and human rights the application of investigation methods and critical thinking processes sharpened discipline and focus, which led to further enhancement of student performance. The post-test score obtained in the tests for the inquiry approach confirm that this method which utilizes the problem-solving technique to enhance learning tends to be more applicable because it helps students realize the importance of learning and use knowledge in practical situations.

This evidence, together with the findings of the current study, indicates that instructional design which includes both conceptual and inquiry-based strategies are very effective, with the latter providing added advantages in promoting critical thinking skills and understanding.

The information in Table 2 compares Grade 7 Social Studies learners' results from the pre- and post-tests with the application of two teaching strategies, Conceptual Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning. The overall performance of students across the two approaches demonstrate considerable improvement as indicated by the pretest and post-test scores, mean gains, t-values and t probabilities. In the case of Conceptual Approach, the pretest mean score of 72.19 increased to 93.09 in the post-test, yielding a mean gain of 20.90. Also, a t-value of 20.24 shows that probability of  $<0.001$  indicates an extremely significant difference in performance compared to the previous results. Both approaches saw a pretest mean score of 72.63, rising to a 93.97 on the posttest, with a mean gain of 21.34. t-value of 21.29 along with t-probability of  $<0.001$  suggests comparable enhancement. Overall results indicate post-test mean of 93.38 and mean gain of 21.10, t-value 25.06 and t-probability of  $<0.001$ , confirming both approaches were significantly contributing to students learning outcomes.

Findings above exemplify Conceptual Inquiry Learning Approaches as extremely effective improving student’s performance in Social Studies. The high t-values, and low t-probabilities across all competencies suggest that these enhancements on the post-test were significant at the  $p < .05$  level. The students' understanding the ASEAN was aided by The Conceptual Approach which emphasizes presentation of logically sequenced information and clear knowledge. Active engagement and critical thinking featured in The Inquiry-based



Approach worked well for other topics such as Sustainable Development and Human Rights. Even though both approaches made a difference, the gains in competencies by the Inquiry Approach were somewhat higher. Such results greatly affect teaching approaches and development of a learning program.

Both methods improve student learning, but using a mixture of these approaches could prove more advantageous. While the conceptual approach equips students with knowledge, the inquiry-based approach sharpens their understanding and promotes higher-level thinking skills. Educators might want to try a blend of both approaches in order to provide students with an all-inclusive educational experience in which they grasp essential concepts and acquire the necessary skills to apply their knowledge in practice. Various studies have been conducted to confirm the effectiveness of these approaches. Reyes and Abad (2019) and Cruz and Garcia (2020) studies show that students comprehensively understand historical and social studies concepts taught using teaching concepts. On the contrary, De Guzman and Francisco (2020) as well as Ramos et al. (2021) acknowledged the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning on improving critical thinking and overall student participation.

In relation to foreign research, Hattie with Yates (2019) and Pellegrino et al. (2023) also justify the foreign research and the studies done by Garcia and Cruz (2020) suggest that both teaching strategies are progressively influencing students learning worldwide. These researches confirm that inquiry-based approaches are most effective for teaching complex subjects and problem-solving skills. Also, Wang et al. (2020) and Lee et al. (2021) supported the notion that inquiry-based learning enhances thinking, engagement, and learning especially in social studies. Furthermore, Smith et al. (2022) stressed that with the use of inquiry-based approaches there is stronger engagement and knowledge retention in social studies and history.

Table 3 illustrates the difference in the post-test results for grade 7 students who learned using the Conceptual Learning Approach and those who used the Inquiry-Based Learning Approach. It can be seen from the data that learners in the Conceptual Approach group scored a post-test mean of 93.09, as opposed to the learners in the Inquiry Approach group who had a post-test mean of 93.97. The mean difference between the two groups turned out to be 0.88, with a t-value of 0.64 and t probability of 0.52. These statistics seem to indicate that although the learners of both groups did well on the post-test, the overall difference in their performance is practically insignificant since the t-value is not much and t probability is greater than 0.05.

The results indicate that both the Conceptual and Inquiry-based Learning Approaches appeared to have the same impact on the learners' performance as all learners performed highly in the post-test. This reflects that both methodologies are useful in improving students' performance and understanding of the subject, *Araling Panlipunan*. The lack of a notable difference between the two methods may indicate that both teaching strategies yield comparably effective results on student learning, at least in regard to the post-test performance focused on in this study. Furthermore, it suggests that the assessment employed in the study captured the essential competencies taught in both approaches equally.



From these results, it is reasonable for educators to adopt either the Conceptual or the Inquiry-based Learning Approach because both have been demonstrated to result in comparable student performance outcomes. More recent studies affirm the effectiveness of both approaches.” however some research studies propose that particular contexts or competencies tend to favor one approach over another. To illustrate, Anderson et al. (2021) demonstrated that students gained working understanding of foundational knowledge through the use of conceptual learning strategies. On the other hand, Smith and Jones (2022) emphasized the effectiveness of inquiry-based methods in developing students’ critical thinking abilities. It has also been shown by Lee et al. (2020) that even if in some situations even though both approaches can be effective, more inquiry-based learning strategies may yield better results in social studies as they engage with real world issues. Kirkpatrick & O’Connell (2019) likewise showed that not only did inquiry-based learning improved students’ factual knowledge, it also increased their ability to use the knowledge in practice.

In addition, the effectiveness of both teaching strategies supports Dela Cruz and Aquino’s (2020) study which found both the Conceptual and Inquiry-based methods resulted in better student comprehension of history and social studies, though inquiry-based learning fostered more actively engaged and critical thinking students. Santos and Rivera (2021) noted that students’ performance in *Araling Panlipunan* improved significantly when taught through a combination of inquiry and conceptual techniques, particularly in applying the concepts to real-world situations. Furthermore, Gonzales et al. (2022) demonstrated that learning social studies through inquiry enhanced students’ problem-solving skills and understanding of the topics, a pattern that was observed when students were taught through conceptual method.

This evidence, together with the findings of the current study, indicates that instructional design which includes both conceptual and inquiry-based strategies are very effective, with the latter providing added advantages in promoting critical thinking skills and understanding.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is indicative the application of either the Conceptual or Inquiry-Based Learning approaches positively impacted the social studies performance of Grade 7 students. Students mastered important concepts through both instructional strategies, indicating that both strategies have the capacity to foster enhanced academic achievement. Despite both strategies proving useful, there were stronger learning gains associated with the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) strategy, in particular, engagement with real-world issues. Therefore, IBL is likely to be more effective in developing critical thinking skills and deeper understanding for subjects requiring problem-solving and application of knowledge. Students’ receiving instruction through the Conceptual and Inquiry-Based Learning approaches had the same level of post-test achievement. These methods can be perceived as effective ways to foster meaningful learning in social studies.

Based on the findings, the study hereby recommends by that teachers merge the benefits of both the Conceptual Approach and the Inquiry-Based Learning Approach. While the Conceptual Approach offers prerequisite factual knowledge, the Inquiry-Based Approach motivates deeper critical engagement with actual world problems. The curriculum should



provide room for more active, problem-solving inquiry learning, particularly concerning the development and advocacy of human rights. Teachers create learning materials guided by the integration of the two approaches for teaching *Araling Panlipunan*. The learners will gain real-world skills with grounded rigorous knowledge. Schools must initiate investment in professional training to enable effective teaching using the two approaches so that every educator can apply strategies tailored to their students' needs.

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