Differentiated Instruction Strategy and Learners' Performance

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the level of implementation of differentiated instruction by the English teachers and its impact on the performance of the learners. A total of ten (10) teachers and selected three hundred (300) students of Alubijid National Comprehensive High School were utilized as respondents of this study. The scores of both the pretest and the posttest were taken and these data were coded, tallied, and were statistically treated using the mean, standard deviation, and t-test of significant difference. The mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to determine the level of performance of control and experimental groups and to answer the research questions of this study. The findings revealed the overall level of teachers' implementation of differentiated instruction is very high. Moreover, the overall learners' academic performance shows an improvement in the groupings of learners both in the control and experimental group but shows significant improvement or higher increased of performance was observed on learners taught using Differentiated Instructions compare to the control group. Finally, significant difference was established using the learners' pretest and posttest scores. Based on the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested by the researcher that the Differentiated Instruction should be used in teaching the learners regardless the level in English especially in heterogeneous classes because it will help improve their academic performance. Teachers should be given in-service trainings on Differentiated Instructions for them to gain more knowledge and a clear understanding of the approach.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, Academic Performance

1. Introduction

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is not a novel idea in education, however it is unclear if instructors are actually implementing DI in ordinary classes. Without a doubt, differentiated instruction (DI) involves teaching all kids, not only bright students. As meeting each student's unique needs is the main objective of differentiated instruction (DI), decisions about how to adapt the curriculum for DI should be made solely on the basis of those needs. Additionally, employing DI gives teachers a range of teaching methods that support academic success for all children—gifted and special needs students included—while also enabling the majority of students to perform at their own levels.

According to Altintas and Ozdemir (2015), teachers believe that differentiated instruction (DI) is a very useful and relevant tool for meeting the requirements of students. There is an increase in student activity, social and intellectual skills, and the effectiveness of the sessions is higher. Students will be able to assume more accountability and ownership for their own education through DI.

This study's primary goal is to investigate whether and how teachers differentiate instruction for talented students in a traditional classroom setting, as well as how they gauge their development. This study looks at if and how teachers differentiate instruction. It also answers questions about whether teachers believe they should receive professional development on DI and how they gauge the growth of their gifted pupils. Measuring pupils' progress is crucial because it allows teachers to differentiate instruction and determine whether or not talented

children are improving (Robinson et al, 2016).

Teachers in all subject areas are required to fulfill the different needs of their students in the regular classroom with increasing degrees of accountability due to the rapidly changing global educational environment and the awareness of student diversity. Given that students differ in their origins, skills, and interests, it stands to reason that they do not all learn in the same way. Teachers may discover that their pupils are all unique, with a range of skill levels, interests, learning preferences, and life experiences, in a typical, diverse classroom. As a result, even though they are receiving the same instruction from the same teacher in the same classroom, they can learn in different ways.

Whether teaching at the elementary, secondary, or tertiary level, DI is essential to fulfilling the various requirements of each student in today's inclusive classrooms. By selecting appropriate DI tactics and implementing them correctly, DI gives all students in the same class access to the same curriculum by offering various learning resources, learning activities, and assessments that are catered to each student's learning requirements, interests, and learning styles. Differentiated education helps students learn more effectively and succeed at a higher level. It also significantly increases their motivation to study compared to standard learning environments.

As a Department Head of the school and as a Researcher, the proponent encouraged all teachers to share about Differentiated Instructions during the SLAC sessions and present a demonstration teaching on the execution of the varied Differentiated Instructions or strategies, sharing to colleagues is the best option to beat the crisis on teaching and learning in the classroom. Like Science and Math, English is a difficult and an important core subject because the curriculum considers it as a basic tool to understand the different content of the subjects. Basically, it is concerned with developing competencies in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. Speaking includes skills in using the language expressions and grammatical structures correctly in oral communication while writing skill includes readiness skills, mechanics in guided writing, functional and creative writing.

The K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum aims to help learners understand that English language involved in the dynamic social process which responds to and reflects changing social conditions. It is also inextricably involved with values, beliefs, and ways of thinking about the person and where the world people dwell. The curriculum aims that learners are given an opportunity to build upon their prior knowledge while utilizing their own skills, interests, styles, and talents. These varied skills should presumably be attained by the learners.

However, teachers find challenges in teaching different kinds of learners with different intellectual capacities, talent or skills, interest, and learning styles especially in heterogeneous groupings of learners. This situation calls for teachers to create lessons for all learners based upon their readiness, interests, and background knowledge. Anderson (2016) noted that it is imperative not to exclude any child in a classroom, so a differentiated learning environment must be provided by a teacher either in distance learning or online learning.

2. Methodology

This study used descriptive research utilizing the descriptive correlation design because it involves respondents, analysis, and interpretation of data to be gathered. This study involves the interpretation of numerical data and focuses on testing theories and hypotheses in which variables are controlled and manipulated. The respondents of this study were the ten (10) junior high school teachers at ANCHS teachers and the selected three hundred (300) learner-respondents that will take part of this study for the school year 2023-2024

Through a written request, the researcher asked the approval from the school principal to conduct a study among Junior High School students of Alubijid National Comprehensive High School. Upon the approval of the request, the researcher will then proceed to the orientation of the respondents along with their parents or guardians. Next, the researcher will explain to the students, parents, and guardians the contents of the questionnaires and how they would be answered. It will also explain that their participation is voluntary; therefore, they can say no or not

participate in the conduct of the study. Finally, the collection of data will be conducted. Collected data will then be analyzed and interpreted to provide evidence for the research questions of this study.

The researcher assured the students, parents, and guardians that their identity and the data gathered be kept confidential. For data analysis purposes, the students' names will be replaced with code or set of numbers to ensure that their identity and integrity are kept confidential. Moreover, all provisions of the data privacy act will be observed during the whole conduct of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

Problem 1. What is the teachers' level of implementation of Differentiated Instruction in their teaching and learning activities?

Table 1
Teachers' Level if Implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The teacher designs curriculum based on major concepts, themes, and generalizations and uses these major concepts and themes as a basis for planning differentiated lessons/activities.	4.45	0.88	Very High
2. The teacher clearly articulates what he/she wants students to know, understand, and be able to do.	4.47	0.90	Very High
3. The teacher varies curriculum and instruction from simple to complex, and from concrete to abstract.	4.36	0.83	Very High
4. Teacher varies learning tasks according to student interest.	4.41	0.91	Very High
5. Teacher varies learning tasks based on learning profile (learning style, intelligence).	4.45	0.80	Very High
6. Students work in a variety of group configurations. Flexible grouping is evident.	4.39	0.84	Very High
7. Teacher allows for students to engage in independent study.	4.45	0.90	Very High
8. Teacher uses interest centers/groups.	4.48	0.80	Very High
9. Teacher uses learning centers/groups.	4.34	0.90	Very High
10. The teacher gives product assignments that balance structure and choice (Student choice is maximized within teacher-generated parameters).	4.52	0.99	Very High
11. Teacher allows for a wide range of product alternatives (e.g., oral visual, kinesthetic, musical, written, spatial, creative, practical, etc.)	4.43	0.89	Very High
12. Teacher provides opportunities for student product to be based upon the solving of real and relevant problems.	4.51	0.87	Very High
Overall Mean	**4.43**	**0.88**	**Very High**

Note: 4.20 – 5.00= Very High; 3.40 – 4.19= High; 2.60 – 3.39= Moderate; 1.80 – 2.59= Low; 1.00- 1.79= Very Low

Table 1 presents the Teachers' Level if Implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI). It registered an overall mean of 4.43 with SD of 0.88 and interpreted as Very High Level. This means that the teachers have very high level of implementation and utilization of the concepts of differentiated instructions to ensure that learners needs and potentials are catered as they learn new ideas, knowledge, and skills. This is an essential aspect of learning both to the teachers and the learners because for the teachers they are able to make sure that all types of learners with their capacities, strengths and weaknesses are being considered while in the part of the learners they are given the chance to have equal chances and opportunities to learn and acquire necessary skills for their growth and development.

Moreover, highest rated indicator is "Teacher uses interest centers/groups" with the mean score of 4.48

and SD=0.80 interpreted as very high level of implementation while the lowest rated indicator is "Teacher uses learning centers/groups" with the mean score of 4.34 and SD of 0.90 interpreted also as very high level of implementation. This implies that the teachers are aware that group activities as well as individual activities are of equal importance. Therefore, learners should learn and master both concepts as it will help them in dealing with challenges in either with groupmates or in individual manner. In this way the learners will learn to work with different individuals as well as working alone independently.

Problem 2. What is the level of performance of the respondents in the pretest as they were under differentiated instruction strategy?

Table 2
Pretest Results of the Control and the Experimental Groups

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation
Control Group	11.76	4.06
Experimental Group	12.07	3.56

The variance results of 4.06 and 3.56 are not that big which signifies that both classes are heterogeneous; meaning the learners of ANCHS were of differing level of intelligence. This is indeed a good baseline since the results suggest that the two sets included in the study are almost the same in the manner that the scores are scattered. This means that the learner's grouping are mixed as to their abilities. Tomlinson (2016) claimed that learner's differences should be addressed, and the two groups became an ideal grouping for which the experiment was conducted concerning Differentiated Instructions.

Problem 3. What is the performance of the two groups of respondents in the posttest as they were under differentiated instruction?

Table 3
Posttest Results of the Control and the Experimental Groups

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation
Control Group	13.82	3.53
Experimental Group	16.45	2.34

The level of performance of the two groups in the posttest is presented in Table 3. The experimental group of learners who were exposed to Differentiated Instruction obtains a mean score of 16.45 (Sd=2.34) while the control group who were taught using the traditional method obtains a mean score of 13.82 (Sd=3.53). The result showed that the posttest scores of the experimental groups taught with Differentiated Instruction is remarkably **better** as compared to those which were taught the traditional approach. Looking at the standard deviation scores, it signifies that the variance of the experimental group was smaller than that of the control group which suggests that the learners' intellectual ability were not scattered unlike in the pretest result. The finding is supported by Stravroula's (2016) study on Differentiated Instruction where was able to prove that Differentiated Instruction is effective as it positively affects the diverse learners characteristics. Stronge's (2017) contention that Differentiated Instruction can enhance motivation and performance also supports the result. It depends on the manner on how the teachers handle their classes during assignment and activities.

Problem 4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest scores of the control and experimental group?

Table 4
Significant Difference Between the Control Group and Experimental Group

Groups	Computed t	Tabular Value at 0.05 Level of Significance	Decision
Control Experimental	3.429	1.9845	Reject Ho

Table 4 presents the significant difference in the pretest scores of the two groups. The computed t-ratio of 3.429 is greater than the tabular of 1.9845 at 98 degrees of freedom. Hence the hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. There is a significant difference in the pretest scores of the class groups. This result is good since the baseline data prior to the use of Differentiated Instruction suggest that the learners have similar intellectual abilities which will be very crucial for trying out the experiment in the teaching approach. The data suggest that the groups are very ideal for the experiment since they possess similarities prior to the experiment.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

It was concluded that the overall level of teachers' implementation of differentiated instruction is very high. Moreover, the overall learners' academic performance shows an improvement in the groupings of learners both in the control and experimental group but shows significant improvement or higher increased of performance was observed on learners taught using Differentiated Instructions compare to the control group. Finally, significant difference was established using the learners' pretest and posttest scores. Based on the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested by the researcher that the Differentiated Instruction should be used in teaching the learners regardless the level in English especially in heterogeneous classes because it will help improve their academic performance. Teachers should be given in-service trainings on Differentiated Instructions for them to gain more knowledge and a clear understanding of the approach.

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