

Teachers' Perspectives on the Use of Differentiated Instruction for English Language Teaching

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Abstract This study aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions on the use of differentiated instruction for English language teaching. A concurrent triangulation design that involved 160 elementary school teachers from Catanauan I and II Districts, Schools Division of Quezon Province, who were chosen through a complete enumeration, was used. Data were gathered using a validated survey questionnaire and an FGD protocol. Meanwhile, weighted mean, multiple regression analysis, and interpretive phenomenological analysis were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that the respondents practiced differentiated instruction along the dimensions of content, process, product, and environment to a great extent. Accordingly, they perceived differentiated instruction as a potent approach designed to employ strategies suited to the needs of English language learners (ELLs). Meanwhile, results affirmed that the content, process, product, and environment as dimensions of differentiated instruction practices are significantly related to the public elementary school English language teachers' perception.

Keywords: differentiated instruction, English language teaching, English language learners

Introduction

Diversity is common, specifically in classrooms, characterized by learners' uniqueness as they project a wide array of differences. Moreover, they learn and process information in various ways. Some learners prefer specific learning methods (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). This explains why the one-size-fits-all method is no longer acceptable, particularly in English language teaching.

Based on the researchers' personal experiences as English language teachers, using a 'one-size-fits-all' approach negatively affects the learning outcomes, posing a challenge in learning acquisition. In conjunction with this, it becomes a must for teachers to differentiate their instruction. Differentiation is related to addressing learners' different phases of learning (Pozas et al., 2020; Sharp et al., 2020). It provides a classroom where learners may take different paths to content acquisition, grasping ideas, processing them, and developing products. In connection, teachers must customize instructions to cater to advanced learning aligned with achieving educational objectives (Chamberlin, 2011; Chapman & King, 2014; Watts-Taff et al., 2013).

Accordingly, teachers can differentiate through the following components: (a) content, (b) process, (c) product, and (d) environment concerning the learners' interests and profile. Differentiating instruction through content can be executed by giving different topics or subtopics for the learners to achieve the learning goals. Also, teachers can differentiate through the process by preparing various activities to learn. Demonstrating learning by developing different products is the key to differentiating the instruction through the product.

On the other hand, based on the researchers' experiences, even though differentiated instruction

accommodates learners' learning differences, ensuring that it is received well and carried out competently by the teachers requires attention to several aspects. In connection to this, in the international context, even though the English language teachers in the school district in Kentucky, USA, are implementing differentiated instruction in English language teaching, approximately 610 English language learners fail to acquire the standard competency based on the data gathered through the Kentucky Performance Rating for Exceptional Progress (K-PREP). The results suggest that their academic performance does not parallel their grade levels (Pegram, 2019).

Additionally, the results of the study by Mavroudi (2016) suggest that teachers demonstrate an understanding of the heterogeneity in classroom setup and perceive differentiated instruction from a highly optimistic perspective. Results revealed that teachers' characteristics, including the following: age, experiences, and formal qualifications, affect their attitudes towards differentiated instruction as well as their choice of differentiated strategies.

Taking the national perspective into account, based on the results of the National Achievement Test (NAT) and Early Language Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (ELLNA), there is an emerging challenge with the performance of ELLs, specifically in English. Accordingly, based on the EF Standard English Test (EF SET) results, the Philippines' English Proficiency Index (EPI) ranking has dropped from 20th to 27th place. In this regard, Villanca (2016) explored the learners' learning styles and the teachers' differentiated instruction practices in English. The undertaking was conducted at Sankan Elementary School, Manolo Fortch 1, Division of Bukidnon. Findings revealed that learners in grades one to six often preferred visual learning styles, auditory learning styles, and kinesthetic learning styles. Moreover, the results suggest that teachers often provide

differentiated instruction as an instructional practice with respect to content, process, product, and environment. This study addressed the research gap about the challenges encountered in the implementation of differentiated instruction for English language teaching as it utilized the four key elements of differentiation, which include content, process, product, and environment as parameters to determine the perceptions and practices of the respondents. Addressing the research gap provides opportunities for English language teachers in Catanauan I and II Districts, for it (a) produces competent and competitive public elementary school English language teachers through integrating innovation in training in terms of professional growth and development; (b) enhances elementary English language teachers' competency in facilitating learning among ELLs using differentiated instruction as an instructional practice; and (c) improved ELLs' academic achievement considering the fact that they are the prime recipients of the instructional practices.

Meanwhile, in Catanauan I and II Districts, the public elementary school English language teachers are utilizing differentiated instruction to primarily enhance English language teaching. However, according to the District Monitoring Evaluation and Plan Adjustment (DsMEPA) report, most Grades 4-6 ELLs did not meet the required DepEd standard of Mean Percentage Score (MPS) in English for the AY 2020-2021, which demonstrated a poor English language learning performance which poses a challenge for teachers. Certainly, this is an alarming concern that needs to be urgently addressed. The problems of the declining English language learning performance from the perspective of global to local contexts describe what the teachers have in place to assist ELLs in improving their academic achievement in English; for, to be skillful in language and literacy, the learners must comprehend a defined set of skills,

which are the requisite towards achieving academic success and lifelong learning.

For these reasons, the researchers conducted this study to explore public elementary school teachers' perceptions of the utilization of differentiation for English language teaching. The findings served as a basis for crafting a capacity enhancement program, which can guide administrators and trainers to provide an effective series of professional development activities on differentiated instruction.

Framework of the Study

The study is anchored on the work of Tomlinson (1999), which employed the constructs of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory. The construct of the sociocultural theory of cognitive development, as explained through Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), is parallel to the notion that diversity is common in the classroom. This theory is aligned with the concept of differentiated instruction, which supports a classroom that accommodates differences and sameness (Brimijoin et al., 2003; Lawrence-Brown, 2004; Tomlinson, 2003). Hence, allowing a learning environment conducive to all students' success is necessary (Lawrence-Brown, 2004; Tomlinson, 2003). With its emphasis on social interaction, Vygotsky's theory sees the learner-teacher relationship as collaborative, with the learning experience becoming reciprocal (Riddle & Dabbagh, 1999).

In addition, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) served as another foundation for differentiated instruction, which this study is grounded in Gardner (2011) who believed that every individual possesses any of the following intelligence: (a) visual-spatial, (b) verbal-

linguistic, (c) interpersonal, (d) intrapersonal, (e) bodily-kinesthetic, (f) naturalistic, (g) existentialistic, (h) logical, and (i) musical. Gardner (2011) concurred that most learners may learn something through any pedagogical approach.

In other words, based on the constructs of the above-mentioned theoretical underpinnings, there is a need to acknowledge the diverse backgrounds, readiness levels, languages, learning styles, interests, and learning profiles of the learners. Furthermore, in differentiation, learning experiences are seen as social and collaborative (Tomlinson, 2004). In other words, differentiated instruction emerged within the context of diverse learners in the classroom setup. This learning environment creates an optimal learning experience for learners. Also, learners' unique capabilities and abilities are valued in this environment. Hence, they are offered opportunities and challenges to demonstrate their skills using varied assessment strategies (Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998).

As Tomlinson and Kalbfleisch (1998) assert, the use of differentiated instruction encourages teachers to address the learning demands of diverse learners. Based on the above constructs, teachers can differentiate instruction using the following elements: (a) content, which pertains to what the learners need to learn; (b) process, which refers to how the learners engage in mastering the content; (c) product, which pertains to the assessment of learners' progress to determine whether they achieved the designed goals or not; and (d) environment, which has something to do with the way the classroom is situated based on learners' readiness, preferences, and styles (Tomlinson, 2010).

Within these frameworks, this study investigated teachers' perspectives on the use of differentiated instruction for English language teaching as it employed the following parameters, which are rooted in the above-mentioned

theoretical foundations: (a) content that refers to providing learners with tasks taking into consideration the set of skills they need to gain access to; (b) process, which includes learning tasks related to making sense of the learning; (c) product that has something to do with giving learners the freedom to be part in the decision-making process; and (d) environment, which refers to providing learners with the educational milieu that meets various learning needs. This undertaking is in connection with the Department of Education's (DepEd) thrust, which suggests that teachers must adopt a pedagogical approach that will respond to the strengths and needs of diverse learners. This includes familiarizing learners with when and how differentiation should be employed accordingly, using strategies that enable learners to learn effectively and efficiently (Department for Education [DepEd], 2011).

Purposes of the Research

The study generally aimed to explore the teachers' perceptions of using differentiation for English language teaching.

Specifically, the study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the differentiated instruction practices of public elementary school English language teachers on the utilization of differentiated instruction for English language teaching in terms of:
 - 1.1. content;
 - 1.2. process;
 - 1.3. product; and
 - 1.4. environment?
2. What are the perceptions of public elementary school English language teachers on the

utilization of differentiated instruction for English language teaching in terms of:

- 2.1. content;
 - 2.2. process;
 - 2.3. product; and
 - 2.4. environment?
3. What is the level of engagement of public elementary school English language teachers on the utilization of differentiated instruction?
 4. What are the challenges encountered by public elementary school English language on the utilization of differentiated instruction?
 5. Is there a significant relationship between public elementary school English language teachers' level of practice and the perception of the use of differentiated instruction for English language teaching?

Methodology

Research Design

In an attempt to investigate the perceptions of public elementary school English language teachers regarding the utilization of differentiated instruction for English language teaching, this study employed a concurrent triangulation design applying quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Participants and Sampling of the Study

A complete enumeration was employed in selecting 160 grade four to six public elementary school English language teachers in Catanauan I and II Districts as respondents who participated in the survey. Meanwhile, the eight public elementary school English language teachers who participated in the FGD were chosen through purposive sampling. These

participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) must be Grades four to six teachers; (b) they handle English language subjects; (c) they utilize differentiated instruction as an approach for English language teaching; (d) they participated in the survey; and (e) they are willing to discuss what they have answered in the survey.

Instruments

A five-part survey questionnaire was used as the research instrument for this study. The first part contains items that aim to determine the differentiated instruction practices of public elementary school teachers in relation to the following components: content, process, product, and environment. The second part of the survey questionnaire is intended to identify public elementary school English language teachers' perceptions about differentiation in relation to the components. The first and second portions of the questionnaire were modified from the instruments developed and validated by Lockey et al. (2017) and Santangelo and Tomlinson (2012), which were gathered from an open source. The third and fourth portions of the questionnaire, developed after reviewing the literature, are intended to find out public elementary school English language teachers' level of engagement with the utilization of differentiated instruction containing, and the challenges encountered in the utilization of differentiated instruction. The FGD guide gathered qualitative data to verify the responses on the features of the respondents' perceptions, practices, level of engagement, and challenges encountered in the utilization of differentiated instruction,

To establish the validity and reliability of the instruments of data collection, the survey questionnaire and FGD guide were validated by four master teachers with a degree in Master of Arts in Education (MAED). Meanwhile, the results of Cronbach's Alpha, which is .98, suggest an

excellent internal consistency. Hence, the survey instrument is reliable.

Data Collection

The researchers contacted the target respondents via an online messaging platform. The links of the online data-gathering instrument were sent to the target respondents. After the survey, FGD was administered, which was also done through an online platform. The gathered qualitative from the FGD was used to corroborate and validate the survey results.

To safeguard the rights of the respondents, this research work observed specific measures. First, it considered the principle of voluntary participation. No one was coerced into participating in this undertaking. Informed consent was required relative to this . Second, this study guaranteed confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The researchers used weighted mean to determine the following: (a) differentiation practices; (b) perceptions of using differentiation; (c) level of engagement with the use of differentiation; and (d) challenges encountered on the use of differentiation . Meanwhile, multiple regression analysis was utilized to test the significant relationship between public elementary school teachers' level of practice and the perceptions of the use of differentiation for English language teaching. The survey results were corroborated by the qualitative data from the FGD and cross-referenced by the review of available literature on the topic being explored. Meanwhile, the data collected from FGD were transcribed, coded, and interpreted using interpretive phenomenological analysis .

Results and Discussion

This segment presents the gathered data, organized and processed statistically and carefully interpreted to obtain information that would answer the problems in this study. The tables are sequenced according to the objectives of the study, each followed by the analysis, interpretation, and discussion based on the concepts and principles.

Differentiated Instruction Practices

Table 1

Summary of Differentiated Instruction Practices

Differentiated Instruction Practices with respect to:	General Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating
Content	4.13	Practiced to Large Extent
Process	4.04	Practiced to Large Extent
Product	4.06	Practice to Large Extent
Environment	4.10	Practice to Large Extent

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.79 Not Practiced at All
1.80 – 2.59 Practiced to a Less Extent
2.60 – 3.39 Practiced to a Moderate Extent
3.40 – 4.19 Practiced to Large Extent
4.20 – 5.00 Practiced to a Great Extent*

Table 1 depicts the overall rating of differentiated instruction practices along the dimensions of content, process, product, and environment. As gleaned from Table 1, all these dimensions are being practiced by the respondents to a large extent. This implies that in English language teaching, teachers consider the need for ELLs to experience differentiation that caters to invaluable knowledge and skills aligned to demonstrate their potential and capabilities.

In this regard, the results revealed further that differentiated instructional practices concerning content were rated highest, with a weighted mean of 4.13. The result indicates that teachers consider content the greatest regarding differentiated instruction practices. This result also shows that they adjust certain ways how learners access the instructional resources/materials. In other words, they can determine what their diverse learners should know, understand, and be able to do as congruent to the end goal of the curriculum. The findings can be supported by the study of Grana (2019) on English language teachers' differentiated instruction practices regarding the following: (a) content, (b) product, (c) process, and (d) environment concerning the learners' learning profiles, which also explored the different factors that affect the teachers' differentiated instruction practices. After the gathered data were analyzed in accordance with Tomlinson's (2017) framework for differentiated instruction, findings indicated that the respondents employ differentiation to some extent, particularly in the areas of content and process as well as showed that they all emphasize the importance of differentiating instruction in consideration with the learners' needs.

This is supported by the teachers' response from the focus group discussion (FGD):

"Learning resources English language teachers utilize in teaching a particular lesson play a crucial part in the teaching and learning process considering the fact that ELLs are diverse. Hence, I carefully choose them. I even employ localized materials because they suit my ELLs' interest of the subject content". (Participant 1)

"Since my ELLs demonstrate individual differences, for they have varied learning readiness, styles, and preferences, I make it a

point to consider such factors in differentiating the content”. (Participant 3)

“Posters, pictures, charts, illustrations, and graphic organizers play an integral role in the presentation of the lesson. That is why, in differentiating content, I utilize such visual aids, especially when the content has something to do with explaining or elaborating textual information”. (Participant 5)

The results show that the respondents modify or adapt how they provide learners access to the instructional resources/materials. The findings can be supported by the study of Santagelo and Tomlinson (2012), who concurred that differentiated instruction allows a teacher to be flexible with how content is delivered using varied learning resources.

Perceptions on the Use of Differentiation

Table 2

Summary of Teachers’ Perceptions on the Utilization of Differentiated Instruction

Utilization of Differentiated Instruction with respect to:	General Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating
Content	4.33	Strongly Agree
Process	4.31	Strongly Agree
Product	4.29	Strongly Agree
Environment	4.36	Strongly Agree

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.79 Strongly Disagree
1.80 – 2.59 Disagree
2.60 – 3.39 Neutral
3.40 – 4.19 Agree
4.20 – 5.00 Strongly Agree*

Table 2 reveals the overall rating based on the perceptions of the respondents on the utilization of differentiated instruction along the dimensions of content, process, product, and environment. In summary, the respondents strongly agree that these dimensions must be considered when employing differentiation for English language teaching.

In the same vein, the results revealed further that the perceived utilization of differentiated instruction with respect to environment was rated the highest. The results could indicate that, in differentiation, the respondents regard the environment as the most integral element. In addition, the results demonstrate that they consider ELLs' unique strengths while being offered opportunities to demonstrate skills through utilizing various instructional techniques, grouping formats, and assessment strategies.

The findings can be supported by Burkett (2013), who claimed that differentiated strategies can be intensified when teachers perceive that such an instructional approach is meaningful and significant in an efficient classroom. Indeed, researchers concur those teachers can differentiate instruction the greater the choice they provide to ELLs, indicating wider utilization of differentiation practices.

The responses of the teachers from the focus group discussion (FGD) confirm the above-stated results:

“Based on my understanding, differentiating environment is crucial because it impacts ELLs’ learning outcomes. Learning environment serves as an educational arena where ELLs learn the subject contents”. (Participant 2)

“In differentiating environment, I can say that the physical and psychological features of the learning climate must be prioritized. I have

noticed that ELLs learn best when they feel that they are accepted in the classroom. They are intrinsically motivated when their feelings and attitudes are considered". (Participant 6)

The results conform to the study of Subban and Round (2015), as explicated, to effectively differentiate environment, teachers should consider the learning profiles of the learners and their academic demands.

Engagement in Differentiated Instruction

Table 3

Level of Engagement on the Utilization of Differentiated Instruction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
I create a conducive learning environment to support and accelerate the acquisition of knowledge.	4.26	.70	Very High
I group English language learners based on their readiness, interest, profile, and preference in the teaching and learning.	4.18	.68	High
I adjust instructional methods, pacing, and scaffolding	4.17	.69	High
I utilize varied types of assessment in assessing the academic progress of English language learners.	4.16	.67	High
I adjust instructional methods, pacing, and scaffolding.	4.16	.71	High

I group English language learners based on their readiness, interest, and learning profile.	4.15	.72	High
I provide English language learners with learning resources in accordance with their level of comprehension.	4.14	.73	High
I carefully set the mood of learning climate to support diverse English language learners' need.	4.13	.70	High
I incorporate learning activities focusing on the sense making process in teaching diverse English language learners.	4.09	.67	High
I utilize authentic language learning materials/resources including brochures, movies, videos, sounds, pictures, and blogs in addition to adapted printed materials.	4.05	.72	High
General Weighted Mean	4.15		
	(High)		

Legend: 1.00 – 1.79 Very Low

1.80 – 2.59 Low

2.60 – 3.39 Moderate

3.40– 4.19 High

4.20 – 5.00 Very High

The level of engagement of public elementary school English language teachers in using differentiation is illustrated in Table 3. It garnered a general weighted mean of 4.13. This means that the respondents are highly engaged in employing differentiated instruction as an approach to teaching English.

Additionally, the results indicate that English language teachers give ELLs chances to unwrap their potential, employ instructional methods that are aligned with the ELLs' uniqueness, provide multiple possible ways to demonstrate learning outcomes and create a conducive learning climate.

As can be inferred from Table 3, the respondents are very highly engaged in creating a conducive learning environment to support and accelerate knowledge acquisition. The weighted mean and standard deviation indicate that the respondents are creating a learning climate responsive to the instructional needs of diverse ELLs.

The findings can be supported by the responses of the teachers from the focus group discussion (FGD):

“As an English language teacher who recognizes ELLs as the main objective of the teaching and learning process, I assure to cater a conducive learning environment”. (Participant 3)

“Differentiated instruction is an approach to teaching that mainly focuses on addressing ELLs' instructional needs. Hence, as an English language teacher who challenges learners to strive for academic success, I highly engaged in utilizing such a pedagogical approach”. (Participant 4)

As explained in the study of Tomlinson and Moon (2013), environment pertains to the learning climate, which is important to facilitate learning. In contrast, they rated least on utilizing authentic language learning materials/resources, including brochures, movies, videos, sounds, pictures, blogs, and adapted printed materials. The result clearly demonstrates a need for English language teachers to continuously enhance their knowledge of how to employ a stretch of real language that can make the learning process more engaging and

motivating for ELLs. As affirmed by McCarthy (2014), in the differentiating process, the teachers may use the following strategies: (a) lectures, (b) audio and video recording, (c) designated workstations, (b) engaging collaborative learning tasks, including reading buddies, jigsaw, reciprocal teaching, and dialogue journals, (d) first language medium of instruction (e) pantomime or role play, (f) using gestures, (g) facial expressions, and (h) body language.

Challenges Encountered on the Differentiated Instruction

Table 4

Challenges Encountered on the Utilization of Differentiated Instruction

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
English language teachers are loaded with administrative responsibilities		3.90	1.01	Agree
English language teachers have limited time in catering to the diverse needs of English language learners.		3.89	.72	Agree
There is lack of available learning resources/ materials which are a necessity in facilitating learning.		3.81	.95	Agree
English language teachers experience difficulty identifying the strengths and weaknesses of English language learners on large class size.		3.73	.94	Agree

There is a range of diversity of classroom activities associated with differentiated strategy that affect English language learners' performance.	3.73	.96	Agree
There is a barrier with the alignment of the nature of the curriculum, which are dense with topics and differentiated instruction.	3.72	.94	Agree
English language teachers have insufficient knowledge of differentiated instruction as an instructional approach, which affects the efficiency of its implementation.	3.65	1.02	Agree
English language learners have weak motivation for learning.	3.40	1.02	Neutral
Teachers' personal teaching beliefs/styles is not suitable for the implementation of differentiation practices.	3.39	1.02	Neutral
The assessment technique does not fit the use of differentiated instruction strategy.	3.33	1.03	Neutral
Classrooms are not suitable for the implementation of differentiated instruction strategy.		3.30	
		1.06	
		Neutral	

School administrators	3.18	1.06	Neutral
have lack of interest in the need to use differentiated instruction.			
General Weighted Mean	3.59		
	(Agree)		

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.79 Strongly Disagree
1.80 – 2.59 Disagree
2.60 – 3.39 Neutral
3.40 – 4.19 Agree
4.20 – 5.00 Strongly Agree*

Table 4 shows the challenges encountered by public elementary school English language teachers in the utilization of differentiated instruction. The general weighted mean implies that the respondents agree that they experience challenges implementing differentiation practices for English language teaching. The result could indicate that even though the policy of differentiation is commendable, there is no assurance that it can be effectively employed, for there are various factors to consider.

As demonstrated in Table 4, the respondents agree that English language teachers are loaded with administrative obligations that restrict them from spending more time on lesson preparation and that the ancillary works assigned to the English language teachers adversely affect the practices they employ to utilize differentiated instruction for English language teaching competently.

The findings can be confirmed by the responses of teachers from the focus group discussion (FGD):

“Differentiated instruction requires time preparation because such approach has components, which must be carefully planned in order to improve learning outcomes successfully”. (Participant 4)

“Since our school belongs to a small category, we are tasked to handle more than 3 ancillary works. More often, we spend more time accomplishing the reports related to our extraneous works”.
(Participant 8)

Conversely, rated least is the challenge that school administrators have a lack of interest in the need to employ differentiated instruction, which implies that somehow the respondents do not receive support from their school head, for they are not interested in the potential of differentiated instruction for ELL’s academic advancement. In line with this, Aldossari (2018) and Avgousti (2017) concurred that teachers who do not receive sufficient support from the administration experience difficulties in carrying out the approach.

Relationship between the Level of Practice of and the Perception of the Utilization of Differentiation for English Language Teaching

Table 5
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Practice of Differentiated Instruction with respect to ...	Perception on the utilization of differentiated instruction with respect to ...	β	p-value
Content	Content	.139	.088
	Process	.004	.961
	Product	.162	.059
	Environment	.203	.012*
Process	Content	.288	.000*
	Process	.039	.637
	Product	.157	.059
	Environment	.096	.217

Product	Content	.334	.000*
	Process	.026	.750
	Product	.075	.359
	Environment	.153	.047*
Environment	Content	.049	.554
	Process	-.112	.197
	Product	.311	.000*
	Environment	.054	.507

**Rejected null hypothesis that denotes a significant relationship*

Legend: The β column (i.e. standardized beta values) amplifies the regression weights of the variable pairings, while the p-value column amplifies the value to be compared with the 0.05 level of significance (i.e. if the p-value is less than 0.05 then reject H_0 , or otherwise).

The results of the multiple regression analysis are shown in Table 5. These results signify that there is a significant relationship between the practice of differentiation regarding content and the perception of the utilization of differentiated instruction regarding the environment. Also, there is a significant relationship between the practice of differentiation regarding the process and the perception of the utilization of differentiated instruction regarding content. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between the practice of differentiation regarding products and the perception of the utilization of differentiated instruction regarding content. In connection, there is a significant relationship between the practice of differentiation regarding products and the perception of the utilization of differentiated instruction regarding the environment. Meanwhile, there is a significant relationship between the practice of differentiation regarding the environment and the perception of the utilization of differentiated instruction regarding products .

These findings may imply that content, process, product, and environment as dimensions of differentiated instruction practices impact the respondents' perceptions regarding using differentiation for English language

teaching. This was established since the p-values of their β -coefficients are all less than 0.05 significance level. This could indicate that to meet the requirements of effective and efficient differentiated instruction processes, English language teachers' understanding must be congruent with their practices.

The results can be supported by the study of Wan (2016) on the presumable teachers' teaching beliefs toward differentiated instruction and teaching efficacy. The changes in teaching beliefs regarding differentiated instruction and teaching efficacy levels were found, and more positive attitudes toward differentiated teaching were noted. Along the same line, the study of Davis (2013) agrees with the findings that the dimension of differentiated instruction impacts the perception of its utilization.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study explored the perceptions of public elementary school English language teachers on utilizing differentiation for English language teaching. The findings provide new insights, confirm existing theories, and present different perspectives. In regard, it contributes to the existing body of literature by providing depth and clarity to an area that might have been underexplored.

The present study concurred that public elementary school English language teachers practiced differentiated instruction for English language teaching to a large extent in relation to its four dimensions and they perceived differentiated instruction along its four dimensions as a potent approach designed to employ strategies for English language teaching suited to the needs of ELLs. These findings offer an extension of Tomlinson's differentiation, which employed the constructs of Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, which suggests that learners are diverse in three important ways as follows : readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Hence, in a differentiated classroom, teachers must be obliged to respond positively to these differences in relation to established theories regarding differentiation to maximize academic achievement in the classroom.

Relative to the level of engagement of public elementary school English language teachers, it was revealed that they are highly engaged in employing differentiated instruction as an approach to English language teaching. The result is anchored with the fundamental variable in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development that teachers must consider, for learning is interactive in the sense that learners must interact with a source of ideas/knowledge. Meanwhile, teachers experience challenges related to differentiation, such as the following: (a) lack of available instructional resources, (b) loaded administrative responsibilities, and (c) insufficient time catering to the various needs of diverse ELLs. On the other hand, teachers must always conform to the thrust of the DepEd, which promotes adapting differentiated instruction to respond to the strengths and needs of diverse learners.

Furthermore, the findings provide insights into the work of Tomlinson (1999), which employed the constructs of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory. The construct of sociocultural theory of cognitive development as explained through Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is parallel to the notion that diversity is common in the classroom. That is why, there is a need to strengthen the knowledge, abilities, and skills that the public elementary school English language teachers possess to comprehensively utilize differentiated instruction practices considering content, process, product, and environment as its dimensions. Thus, equipping them with a capacity enhancement program that

is designed to meet the requirements of differentiation processes competently allows them to cater to the learning demands of varied ELLs.

Meanwhile, the study's limitations can include factors like small sample size, potential biases in data collection, time constraints, and reliance on self-reported data, which may be subjected. There may also be limitations on the generalizability of findings to broader contexts. These limitations highlight variables where further research may be required to fortify the validity and reliability of the findings. In regard to addressing the weaknesses, a similar study may be conducted focusing on acquiring the generalizability of the framework. As such, the survey questionnaire may also be administered using a larger sample, including the private and public elementary school English language teachers in the Schools Division of Quezon Province.

Though the study was able to generate the perceptions and practices of public elementary grade teachers regarding the utilization of differentiation, the undertaking failed to determine the impact of differentiated instruction in enhancing the academic performance of the English language learners. Replication of this study using the experimental method is further recommended to investigate the causality between the intervention and an outcome.



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