

Evaluation of Differentiated Instruction Practice among Teachers: It's Implication for Professional Development

Jeneve P. Nieves

Digos City National High School, Digos City, Philippines

Abstract: This study aimed to determine the assessment of teacher differentiated instruction practice. This study utilized the non-experimental quantitative research design using descriptive-correlational technique involving teachers in Sarangani District, Davao Occidental Division, Philippines. The study was conducted on the second semester of school year 2019-2020. Research instrument on teacher differentiated instruction practice was used as sources of data. The study showed the following results: level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of student interest is high, the level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of assessment is high, the level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of lesson planning is high, in terms of content is high, in terms of process is high, in terms of product is high and overall level of teacher differentiated instruction practice is high.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, Educational Management, Quantitative Research, Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

Differentiated instruction is used to accommodate and better prepare students of all learning types and ability levels to succeed in his/her own classroom. The core of differentiated instruction is flexibility in content, process, and product based on student strengths, needs, and learning styles. However, despite its importance in the classroom, teachers hardly perform differentiation in class activities as manifested in having a single task for all types of learners (Pierre, 2014).

School heads noted that teachers lack the skill to differentiate class activities as oftentimes teachers require all the learners to perform the same task during the activity. This hampers the learners' chance to advance their skills and develop their talents due to the limitations of activities they perform in the classroom (Goddard & Kim, 2018).

On the other hand, even trainings on differentiated instruction which aim to improve learning performance of the learners, still there are many teachers who lack the necessary skill to design learning activities, process, and product in differentiated scheme. As a result, the learners with varied perceptual learning style, multiple intelligences and interest are deemed to respond to the same activities which do not help the learners (Alonge, Obadare & Obateru, 2017; Little, McCoach & Reis, M2014).

It is in this context that the researcher would like to conduct this study with a hope to address the issues on the poor practice of differentiated instruction in most classrooms in the district. Similarly, the researcher has rarely come across with the same study in the local context, thus this research is proposed to add to the body of knowledge on the topic.

II. BODY OF ARTICLE

This study utilized the non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing descriptive technique. This study employed the descriptive method to determine the level of differentiated instruction competence of the teachers. Descriptive method research is a measure of variable with varying level of measurement. According to Johnson (2012) this research is appropriate when researcher would like to describe the variable of the study.

III. RESULTS

Level of Teacher Differentiated Instruction Practice in Terms of Student Interest

The level of *teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of student interest* with an overall mean of 3.58 with a descriptive equivalent of high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which was appended in this study.

The descriptors of the questionnaire are as follows: relating individual student interest to instruction, relating individual student culture and expectations to instruction, relating individual student life situations and how it may impact their learning, and addressing student's learning disabilities and handicaps in the lessons so as not to impair their learning.

Level of Teacher Differentiated Instruction Practice in Terms of Assessment

The level of *teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of assessment* with an overall mean of 3.46 with a descriptive equivalent of high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which was appended in this study.

The descriptors of the questionnaire are as follows: determine student's learning styles, conducting pre-assessment readiness to adjust the lesson, assessing during the unit to gauge understanding, assessing at the end of the lesson to determine knowledge acquisition.

Level of Teacher Differentiated Instruction Practice in terms of Lesson Planning

The level of *teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of lesson planning* with an overall mean of 3.72 with a descriptive equivalent of high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which was appended in this study.

The descriptors of the questionnaire are as follows: teaching up by assuring each student works towards their highest potential, using materials that are varied to adjust to students' reading/interest abilities, adjusting for diverse learner needs with scaffolding, tiering instruction and provide student choice in learning activities, and providing tasks that require students to apply and extend understanding.

Level of Teacher Differentiated Instruction Practice in terms of Content

The level of *teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of content* with an overall mean of 3.60 with a descriptive equivalent of high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which was appended in this study. The descriptors of the questionnaire are as follows: basing the curriculum on major concepts and generalizations, teachers clearly, articulating what they want students to know, understand and be able to do, the teachers using variety of materials other than the standard text, and the teachers providing a variety of support strategies (organizers, study guides, study buddies).

Level of Teacher Differentiated Instruction Practice in terms of Process

The level of *teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of process* with an overall mean of 3.58 with a descriptive equivalent of high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which was appended in this study. The descriptors of the questionnaire are as follows: pacing of instruction varies based on individual learner needs, using learner preference groups and/or learning preference centers, grouping students for learning activities based on readiness, interests, and/or learning preferences, and structuring classroom environment to support a variety of activities including group and/or individual work.

Level of Teacher Differentiated Instruction Practice in terms of Product

The level of *teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of product* with an overall mean of 3.58 with a descriptive equivalent of high indicating that all enumerated indicators were oftentimes observed. The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which was appended in this study. The descriptors of the questionnaire are as follows: providing multiple modes of expression in the final product, providing students with the choice to work alone, in pairs or small group, requiring products that connect with student interest, and providing variety of assessment tasks.

Summary Level of Teacher Differentiated Instruction Practice

The level of differentiated instruction of teachers with the overall mean of 3.59 and standard deviation of 0.343 with a descriptive equivalent of *high* indicating that all enumerated indicators were often observed. The overall mean was the results obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which is appended in this study.

Among the enumerated indicators, *Lesson Planning* obtained the highest mean of 3.72 with a descriptive level of *high*. As presented in the appended Table, the mean ratings of the following items under this indicator from highest to lowest are as follows: *using materials that are varied to adjust to students' reading/interest abilities*, 3.95; *adjusting for diverse learner needs with scaffolding, tiering instruction and provide student choice in learning activities*, 3.84; *teaching up by assuring each student works towards their highest potential*; 3.65, and *providing tasks that require students to apply and extend understanding*, 3.45.

Content obtained a mean score of 3.6. The *high* level of this indicator suggests that in schools are *basing the curriculum on major concepts and generalizations*, 3.71; *teachers clearly articulating what they want students to know, understand and be able to do*, 3.68; *the teachers providing a variety of support strategies (organizers, study guides, study buddies)*, 3.52, and *the teachers using variety of materials other than the standard text*, 3.50

Product obtained a mean score of 3.59 or *high*. The level of this indicator suggests that *teachers were requiring products that connect with student interest*, 3.81; *providing students with the choice to work alone, in pairs or small group*, 3.63; *providing variety of assessment tasks*, 3.53, and *providing multiple modes of expression in the final product*, 3.37.

Student Interest had a mean score of 3.58 or *high*. The level of this indicator suggests that *teachers were relating individual student life situations and how it may impact their learning*, 3.91; *teachers were relating individual student culture and expectations to instruction*, 3.65; *teachers were relating individual student interest to instruction*, 3.65; and *teachers were addressing student's learning disabilities and handicaps in the lessons so as not to impair their learning*, 3.12.

Process had a mean score of 3.58 or *high*. The level of this indicator suggests that *teachers were grouping students for learning activities based on readiness, interests, and/or learning preferences*, 3.83; *teachers were using learner preference groups and/or learning preference centers*, 3.60; *teachers were pacing of instruction varies based on individual learner needs*, 3.54; and *teachers were structuring classroom environment to support a variety of activities including group and/or individual work*, 3.32.

Assessment had a mean score of 3.46 or *high*. The level of this indicator suggests that *teachers were assessing during the unit to gauge understanding*, 3.71; *teachers were assessing during the unit to gauge understanding*, 3.55, *teachers were conducting pre-assessment readiness to adjust the lesson*, 3.34 and *teachers were determine student's learning styles*, 3.26.

IV. CONCLUSION

The level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of student interest is high, the level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of assessment is high, the level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of lesson planning is high, the level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of content is high, the level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of process is high, the level of teacher differentiated instruction practice in terms of product is high and overall level of teacher differentiated instruction practice is high.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study revealed that the level of all indicators of teacher differentiated instruction practice is high and the overall level of teacher differentiated instruction practice is high. The researcher recommends that teachers may integrate the following into the classroom practice:

Teachers who practice differentiation in the classroom may design lessons based on students' learning styles, group students by shared interest, topic, or ability for assignments, assess students' learning using formative assessment, manage the classroom to create a safe and supportive environment, continually assess and adjust lesson content to meet students' needs.

Similarly, teacher may also create learning stations by providing different types of content by setting up learning stations by dividing sections of classroom through which groups of students rotate. You can facilitate this with a flexible seating plan. Each station should use a unique method of teaching a skill or concept related to the lesson.

Use Task Cards. Like learning stations, task cards allow teachers to give students a range of content. Answering task cards can also be a small-group activity, adding variety to classes that normally focus on solo or large-group learning. Interview Students. Asking questions about learning and studying styles can help teachers pinpoint the kinds of content that will meet your class's needs.

Target Different Senses Within Lessons. A lesson should resonate with more students if it targets visual, tactile, auditory and kinesthetic senses, instead of only one. When applicable, appeal to a range of learning styles by: playing videos, using infographics, providing audiobooks, getting students to act out a scene, incorporating charts and illustrations within texts, giving both spoken and written directions to tasks, using relevant physical objects, such as money when teaching math skills, allotting time for students to create artistic reflections and interpretations of lessons. Not only will these tactics help more students grasp the core concepts of lessons but make class more engaging.

On the other hand, teachers may also utilize the following recommendations in the classroom: create a differentiated learning environment – The first differentiation technique changes up the physical layout of the classroom. Organize your classroom into flexible workstations. This will require you to move furniture around to support both individual and group work. For example, you can create a teaching table where teacher-led instruction will take place. This workstation would be focused on teaching new, challenging material.

Prepare thoughtful lessons backed by data . Before the teacher even begin teaching each lesson, the teacher should examine past assessments, collected data, work samples and student observations to identify specific instructional strengths for each student. Then the teacher can change the process of the learning experience by assigning different tasks to different learners. A good way to differentiate the learning process is to have a series of tiered assignments for each of your lessons. By creating a variety of related tasks at varying difficulty, the teacher be able to give specific tasks to certain groups or individual students based on their skill level. The teacher can then work their way up to the highest assignment. The teacher might want to make sure that you're continually assessing students' progress with class time and providing them with relevant feedback that will help them work towards their educational goals.

Tailor assignments based on students' learning goals. Using differentiation strategies to shake up the end product that students turn in for assignments can also help you reach different learners. Some students are visual learners, while others may be auditory learners or readers. You can offer students different avenues to present their understanding of the lesson based on how they learn the material. For example, some visual learners may want to create a poster to show their understanding of Newton's first law of motion (inertia), while readers may prefer to write a paper or auditory learners may want to give an oral presentation.

Adjust the lesson content based on student needs. The most apparent way of differentiating the learning process is to change the type of content the teacher use in your lessons. Switch the content up by using computer programs, audio recordings, videos or even making it an interactive lesson by having students act out scenes from the play. It is important for teachers to keep eyes and ears open when using differentiated instruction. The teacher needs to constantly assess how the efforts are affecting the students while keeping the discussion open and engagement high. Differentiated instruction takes a lot of planning, but with continuous assessment and varying strategies, the teacher will be able to accommodate all of students' learning styles.

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