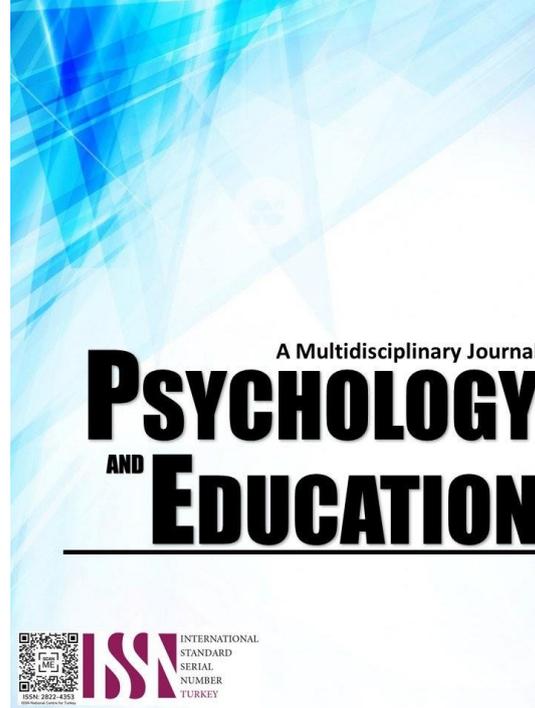


DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION AMIDST NEW NORMAL: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY



PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

Volume: 14

Pages: 935-963

Document ID: 2023PEMJ1305

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10039732

Manuscript Accepted: 2023-25-10

Differentiated Instruction Amidst New Normal: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

An important concern in identifying points of leverage in improving students' academic performance in the new normal is determining how and to what degree parental involvement affects student performance. Recent researches suggested that parental involvement has significant relationship to the academic performance of the students. However, there has been little investigation of the mechanisms that explain this association and parental involvement has delivered great challenges to education practitioners in the new normal. This paper attempted to examine teachers' understanding and implementation of differentiated instruction among public and private elementary and high school teachers in Compostela, Davao de Oro. This study will employ a qualitative research method, specifically the phenomenological research design and conducted in public and private elementary and secondary schools in Compostela, Davao de Oro, namely: San Jose Elementary School, Compostela National High School, and Assumption Academy of Compostela where the participants of the study were the 12 public and private elementary and secondary school teachers in three different schools in Compostela, Davao de Oro which were selected through purposive random sampling. It was found out in the study that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement in modular learning and student academic performance. The level of parental involvement in modular learning as evaluated by the students is moderate and the level of student performance in Mathematics is 74.26% which means that students did not meet the expectations of the school. Thus, the researcher recommends the school, teachers and the administrator to re-evaluate the curriculum implementation especially with the integration and collaboration of parents in crafting the curriculum for students and to revisit the curriculum and evaluate students' performance in other set of competencies. The researcher also recommends to investigate further factors that influences student performance in modular learning and suggests to reiterate the study in a larger sample to gather more significant findings.

Keywords: *differentiated instruction, modular distance learning, descriptive-correlational*

Introduction

To meet the needs of diverse learners in the new normal and to continually provide quality education through modular learning, many teachers differentiate instruction in which most classrooms, students struggle with learning and performing well beyond expectations or even misunderstood everything in between. However, the gradual shift of the traditional face-to-face classroom into a blended online and modular approach to teaching has brought changes, especially in the delivery of instruction and with students' differences in personal background, readiness, and interest to learn, teachers simply can no longer ignore the need for differentiation (Nicolae, 2014) and evidence supports that achievement gap increases.

Globally, the modern educational systems are facing core problem regarding educational effectiveness; they are failing in delivering quality and equity among different groups of students, which leads to an achievement gap between them (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; De Civita, Pagani, Vitaro, & Tremblay, 2004; Strand, 1999; as cited by Kotob & Arnouss, 2019). The current trends of the educational sectors across the globe recorded significant changes in terms

of methodologies, strategies, and even assessments. The diversity of the students has unbolted the idea of, however, in many contexts, teachers do not appear to have adjusted their methods in teaching to keep abreast of these trends, and several studies have been conducted to create a good picture of the implementation of differentiated instruction in the academe.

In the national arena, Magayon and Tan (2020) also observes that most of the teachers in especially in grade 7 has not embedded nor fully implemented differentiated instruction in the classroom. This, for them, still a manifestation of a gap between the differentiated instruction practiced and the new normal.

However, in Compostela, Davao de Oro, where the researcher handled pre-service teachers of Compostela Valley State College, he observed that most of the teachers were not implementing or might not even have the idea how to differentiate instructions inside the classroom. The implementation of differentiated instruction had long been suggested by the Department of Education to be used in classroom settings to cater the different needs of the students. Surprisingly, this is not isolated in the local, which boosted the interest of

the researcher to investigate the phenomena.

These concerns and issues had brought the researcher to conduct a study on identifying perceived teachers' understanding and challenges in the implementation of differentiated instruction in both public and private elementary and secondary schools of Compostela, Davao de Oro. The researcher was also interested in how teachers implemented differentiated instruction in the new normal.

Research Questions

The study aimed to explore the teachers' perception on implementation and their understanding of differentiated instruction and identify their lived experiences and challenges in the implementation of differentiated instruction in the classroom and the new normal. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do teachers understand the concepts in implementing differentiated instruction?
2. How do general classroom teachers employ differentiation strategies to meet the needs of learners?
3. What are the challenges experienced by the teachers in implementing differentiated instruction to students?
4. What are the perceived factors that affect these challenges?
5. How do teachers cope with the challenges in implementing differentiated instruction?

Literature Review

Differentiated Instruction

Fox and Hoffman (2011) defined differentiated instruction as a flexible, equitable, and intelligent way to approach teaching and learning. This only signifies that there is no single best strategy to fit all students in a classroom (Levine, 2002, as cited by Suprayogi, Valcke, & Godwin, 2017), which is supported by Fogarty and Pete (2011) that differentiated instruction starts from the premise that learners learn differently. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to present varying learning activities and different content, as well as adopt varying modes of assessment to meet the needs of each child (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2007 as cited by Suprayogi et al. 2017). In other words, teachers are expected to make explicit choices as to the nature of the learning content, process, and product for each learner from prekindergarten to college (Algozzinea & Anderson, 2007 as cited by Suprayogi

et al. 2017). Differentiated instruction comes to different names and terms such as 'personalized learning (Waxman, Alford, & Brown, 2013), 'response to intervention' (Dalhouse et al., 2009; Fox & Hoffman, 2011), and Universal Design of Learning (UDL) (Hall, Strangman and Meyer, (2014). Even though that differentiation comes to different terms and names still, those terms share the same purpose and meaning, and that is to cope with the diversity of students, adopt specific teaching strategies, invoke variety in learning activities, monitor individual student needs, and pursue optimal learning outcome (Suprayogi et al. 2017).

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a student-centered educational approach that tailors teaching methods, content, and assessment to accommodate individual learning needs and styles, aiming to maximize student potential. This approach recognizes that students learn differently and have varying strengths and challenges, requiring flexibility in the instructional process (Tomlinson, 2017). The key principles of Differentiated Instruction include individualization, flexibility, ongoing assessment, and student-centered learning (Tomlinson, 2017). Implementing DI in elementary schools offers benefits such as creating an inclusive learning environment, enhancing student engagement, and improving academic performance (Tomlinson, 2017; Tomlinson & Allan, 2015). However, its practical implementation may present challenges, including time constraints for teachers and the need for effective classroom management strategies (Robinson & Schaible, 2015). To successfully apply Differentiated Instruction in elementary classrooms, educators can use pre-assessment to identify students' needs, utilize flexible grouping, offer tiered assignments, use varied instructional materials, and develop individual learning plans for specific students (Tomlinson & Allan, 2015). The use of differentiated instruction to some academic institution is timely and relevant to address some of the concerns, such as an opportunity for learning and issues concerning adult learners (Marzano & Pickering, 2010)

Equity of Opportunity for Learning. Equity in education should ensure that important aspects of education, such as equal opportunities, should be manifested regardless of gender, social origin, or ethnic origin (de Los Santos et al., 2020). By ensuring equity of opportunity for learning in our education system, we can help all students achieve excellence (Marzano & Pickering, 2014). There are numerous measures to promote equity in education, such as educational resources, financial aids, and most of all,

the differentiation of instruction and assessments to address diversity (Barrios et al., 2019). In this sense, teachers, as the implementor and facilitator of learning, should bring this principle into an effective and efficient enactment.

The effectiveness of equity among students depends on the skills and ability of the teacher. Teachers must be conscious of the different needs, strength, weakness, and gaps of the students and made aware of the need to implement strategies and actions (Philip et al., 2018), should also promote equity among students (Billingsley et al., 2017) actively participate in encouraging equalities in schools (Kinloch et al., 2019).

Adult Learners. On the other hand, adult learners vary in stages of development in terms of physical, emotional, cognitive, and social, as they move from childhood to adulthood (Marzano & Pickering, 2012). In the elementary grades, students are required to meet the wide range of learning competencies set by the Department of Education, which cater from 4 to 6 disciplines. Educators play a key role in designing learning experiences should be responsive to student's development, strengths, and needs (Marzano & Pickering, 2012) and proactively adjust to what students learn, how they learn it, and they show what they learn (Hockett, 2018). In general, differentiated instruction is comprised of the content, process, and product of learning explained by Tomlinson's (2014) Model for Differentiation of Instruction. Tomlinson's Model for Differentiation of Instruction (2014) involves three chunks – the content, process, and product. When teachers differentiate instructions, Tomlinson (2014) believes that they proactively make changes in terms of information, ideas, and skills of the students, activities concerning students' prior knowledge and interest, and how the learning behavior should be demonstrated. In this sense, differentiating instruction follows students' readiness, interest, and learning profile. Instructional strategies such as graphic organizers, tiered tasks, think dots, learning stations, tri-mind, and thinking minds are a few of the different ways and strategies that teachers can employ to promote differentiation of instructions among students (Tomlinson, 2014).

Several studies show the positive influence of differentiated instruction, such as the study of Tulbure (2011), which shows that the implementation of differentiated instruction resulted in higher student academic performances. It also helps students maximizing their potential (Wilujeng, 2012). In a recent study by Valiandes (2015), it was found out that

students made better progress in classrooms where differentiated instruction methods were systematically employed compared to students in classrooms where differentiated instruction methods were not employed. George (2005) argues that heterogeneous classrooms and differentiated instruction must form the core of the classroom experience for students in a democracy that works. Ocampo (2011) also examine the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in the reading comprehension level of senior high school students and found out that differentiated instruction was more effective than the conventional approach in improving the reading comprehension of the students. Differentiated instruction also influenced the self-confidence, goal-orientedness, and metacognitive awareness of learners (McQuarrie & McRae, 2010). There is also evidences that differentiated instruction has a significant positive influence on reading fluency and comprehension (Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011). It also has a positive impact on student literacy and numeracy (Tobin & McInnes, 2008; Chamberlin & Power, 2010; Tieso, 2005; Grimes and Stevens, 2009).

In general, Suprayogi et al. (2017) see differentiated instruction as an instructional approach that accommodates the diversity of students by coping with student diversity, adopting specific teaching strategies, invoking a variety in learning activities, monitoring individual student needs, and pursuing optimum learning outcomes. To differentiate teaching practices and learning experiences means to make adjustments to what is being taught, how it is being taught, or what the resultant expectations are (Clohesy, 2020), and Tomlinson (2000) defined differentiated instruction as tailoring instruction to meet individual needs.

Advantages of Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an educational approach that tailors teaching methods, content, and assessment to meet the diverse learning needs of students. This pedagogical strategy aims to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment, enabling students to reach their full potential. The advantages of Differentiated Instruction are manifold and have been extensively studied and documented.

Enhance Student Engagement. One of the primary advantages of Differentiated Instruction is its ability to increase student engagement in the learning process. By catering to individual learning preferences, interests, and readiness levels, DI makes the learning experience more meaningful and relevant to each student (Tomlinson, 2017). Engaged students are more

likely to actively participate in class activities, retain information better, and develop a positive attitude towards learning (Allan & Tomlinson, 2000).

Improve Academic Performance. Numerous studies have shown that Differentiated Instruction positively impacts students' academic performance. When instruction is personalized to suit individual strengths and weaknesses, students are better equipped to grasp complex concepts and demonstrate higher levels of achievement (Tomlinson, 2017; Hall, Strangman, & Meyer, 2003). By providing appropriate scaffolding and enrichment, DI empowers students to excel academically.

Increase Student Confidence. With Differentiated Instruction, students experience success at their own levels, leading to increased self-confidence and a positive self-concept as learners (Tomlinson, 2017). This boost in self-esteem can have long-term benefits, encouraging students to take risks, persist in challenging tasks, and develop a growth mindset (Allan & Tomlinson, 2000).

Support for Diverse Learning Styles. Each student has unique learning preferences and styles. Differentiated Instruction accommodates these differences by offering varied instructional methods, materials, and assessment options (Tomlinson, 2017). Visual learners may benefit from diagrams and charts, while kinesthetic learners may engage better through hands-on activities. By catering to diverse learning styles, DI fosters a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Disadvantages of Differentiated Instruction

While Differentiated Instruction (DI) offers numerous benefits, it is not without its challenges and limitations. Educators implementing DI in the classroom may encounter various obstacles that require careful consideration and strategic planning. This discussion explores some of the disadvantages associated with Differentiated Instruction, drawing from research and scholarly works.

Time Intensive Preparation. One of the primary disadvantages of Differentiated Instruction is the substantial time and effort required for lesson planning and resource development. Creating individualized or tailored instructional materials for diverse groups of students demands more preparation time than traditional one-size-fits-all approaches (Robinson & Schaible, 2015). As a result, educators may find it challenging to balance the demands of differentiated

teaching with other administrative responsibilities.

Classroom Management Complexity. Implementing Differentiated Instruction often involves organizing and managing diverse learning activities simultaneously. Teachers must skillfully navigate the use of flexible grouping, individualized tasks, and various instructional materials, which can be challenging to manage effectively in a classroom setting (Tomlinson, 2017). Maintaining discipline and ensuring that all students are engaged and on-task requires careful planning and skillful execution.

Assessment and Grading Challenges. Assessing and grading students in a differentiated classroom can be complex. Traditional assessments may not accurately measure individual progress and learning growth (Tomlinson & Allan, 2015). Differentiated tasks and assignments may not align neatly with standardized grading systems, making it difficult to evaluate student performance consistently. Educators must carefully design assessment strategies that consider individual learning goals while ensuring fairness and comparability (Robinson & Schaible, 2015).

Resource Constraints. Implementing Differentiated Instruction effectively may require access to a wide range of instructional resources and materials that cater to diverse learning styles and abilities (Tomlinson, 2017). However, not all schools or districts may have the necessary resources, technology, or funding to support such an approach comprehensively. Resource constraints can limit the extent to which educators can differentiate instruction effectively.

Teacher Professional Development. Effectively implementing Differentiated Instruction requires educators to have a deep understanding of their students' diverse needs and to be skilled in employing a variety of instructional strategies (Tomlinson & Allan, 2015). Professional development opportunities to support teachers in mastering DI techniques and addressing potential challenges are crucial for successful implementation. Lack of adequate training and support may hinder the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in the classroom.

In general, Differentiated Instruction offers a multitude of advantages that contribute to a more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environment in the classroom. By recognizing and accommodating diverse learning needs, this approach empowers students to become active participants in their education, leading to improved academic performance

and increased self-confidence. The research-supported benefits of Differentiated Instruction underscore its significance as a vital pedagogical strategy to foster the success of all students. Differentiated Instruction, while offering numerous advantages, is not without its challenges. Time-intensive preparation, classroom management complexity, assessment and grading difficulties, resource constraints, and the need for robust teacher professional development are some of the key disadvantages to consider. Despite these challenges, with careful planning, training, and dedication, educators can effectively address diverse learning needs and create inclusive learning environments, thus harnessing the potential of Differentiated Instruction to support the success of all students.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

The success of the practice of differentiated instruction can be linked to teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers' self-efficacy refers to the teacher's belief in his or her capabilities to plan and implement the action required to carry out complex and specific teaching tasks (Moran et al. 1998 as cited by Ramli et al. 2020).

Teacher self-efficacy is a crucial factor in educators' professional development and teaching performance, with significant implications for student outcomes. Defined as teachers' beliefs in their capabilities to positively influence student learning and employ effective instructional practices (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2016), self-efficacy has been consistently linked to improved instructional performance (Klassen & Chiu, 2010) and enhanced student achievement (Caprara et al., 2006). Additionally, teachers with higher self-efficacy levels demonstrate greater resilience in the face of challenges and maintain a positive classroom climate, leading to improved teacher-student interactions and overall learning experiences (Henson, 2001; Riggs & Enochs, 1990). Supporting and enhancing teacher self-efficacy can be achieved through continuous professional development opportunities that focus on pedagogy and instructional strategies (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2016) and fostering supportive leadership that acknowledges and encourages teachers' efforts (Hoy & Spero, 2005).

Studies have proven that there is a positive relationship between the practice of differentiated instruction and teachers' self-efficacy (Ramli, Rosidah & Mohd. Yusoff, Nurahimah, 2020; Dixon et al., 2014). Ramli et al. (2020) proved that teachers' self-efficacy has a major influence and can predict teachers' practice of differentiated instruction in the classroom. This only

suggests that despite the knowledge of the teacher in terms of theoretical and conceptual knowledge on differentiated instruction, they may not apply this knowledge into their teaching practices in the classroom, lack confidence in their knowledge and skills, giving them difficulties in tailoring their teaching according to students' needs. Tomlinson (2005) interpreted this idea that when teachers ignore the different needs of students, they would be likely to teach concepts or skills that have already been mastered by the gifted students, and thus no learning would occur. On the other hand, if the learning is too difficult, students would be disadvantaged and may begin to have learning difficulties and demotivated.

Recent studies have revealed a noteworthy positive relationship between the practice of differentiated instruction and teachers' self-efficacy (Ramli, Rosidah & Mohd. Yusoff, Nurahimah, 2020; Dixon et al., 2014). This indicates that when teachers engage in differentiated instruction, tailoring their teaching to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of their students, their confidence in their abilities to effectively support student learning increases. Ramli et al. (2020) further emphasized that teachers' self-efficacy significantly influences their adoption of differentiated instruction in the classroom, suggesting that confident teachers are more likely to implement student-centered teaching strategies. This finding is significant because it indicates that teachers who feel capable of adapting their instruction to accommodate individual student needs are more likely to create a positive and inclusive learning environment. As a result, students may feel more engaged and supported in their learning process, leading to improved academic performance and overall motivation. Thus, investing in professional development and support systems that enhance teachers' self-efficacy in differentiated instruction is crucial to fostering effective, student-centered teaching practices and promoting positive learning outcomes.

Recent research has highlighted the predictive power of teacher self-efficacy in relation to differentiated instruction. Studies have found that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs significantly influence their likelihood of employing differentiated instruction strategies in the classroom (Ramli, Rosidah & Mohd. Yusoff, Nurahimah, 2020; Dixon et al., 2014). When teachers have higher levels of self-efficacy, they are more confident in their ability to meet the diverse needs of their students and are thus more inclined to implement differentiated instructional practices effectively.

Ramli et al. (2020) demonstrated that teachers' self-

efficacy plays a major role in predicting their practice of differentiated instruction. This suggests that teachers who perceive themselves as capable and competent in adapting their instruction to accommodate individual student differences are more likely to utilize differentiated strategies in their teaching approach. As a result, students in such classrooms may experience a more personalized and supportive learning environment, leading to improved academic performance and engagement.

It is essential for schools and educational institutions to recognize the significance of teacher self-efficacy in shaping instructional practices. Providing targeted professional development and support to enhance teachers' self-efficacy can contribute to a higher adoption rate of differentiated instruction and ultimately lead to more effective and inclusive teaching practices in diverse classrooms. Further research in this area can shed more light on the specific mechanisms through which teacher self-efficacy influences the implementation of differentiated instruction and its subsequent impact on student outcomes.

De Neve, Devos, & Tuytens (2015) also revealed that teachers' self-efficacy is a predictor of beginning teachers reporting changes in implementing differentiated instruction in the classroom. This suggests that beginning teachers can easily adapt differentiated instruction in their methods and persistent in finding the right differentiated instruction approach for students. The concept of self-efficacy can also be explained to its relationship to teacher's attitude (Çubukçu, Zühal & Çeliker, gülçin. 2016).

Teacher belief in Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a pedagogical approach that recognizes the diverse needs and learning styles of students, aiming to create an inclusive and effective learning environment. At the core of DI lies the teacher's belief in its potential to foster student success. Educators who embrace DI acknowledge that students possess varying abilities, interests, and backgrounds, and they adapt their instructional practices accordingly. According to Tomlinson (1999), DI empowers teachers to tailor content, process, and product to accommodate students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. By understanding the significance of differentiated practices, teachers can enhance student engagement, motivation, and achievement.

Beliefs refer to psychological understandings,

premises, or propositions that are felt to be true (Richardson, 1996 as cited by Suprayogi et al., 2017). As the teachers start their teaching practices, their firmly established beliefs prevail over the situation without consideration of how much experience they have gained and how professionally groomed they are (Torff, 2011).

The beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards DI play a crucial role in its successful implementation. If teachers hold a positive outlook on DI and its ability to address individual student needs, they are more likely to invest time and effort into refining their instructional strategies (Kuzgun & Kuzu, 2015). Conversely, teachers with skepticism or misconceptions about DI may lack the motivation to fully embrace its principles and may inadvertently revert to traditional one-size-fits-all approaches. Therefore, teacher professional development programs should prioritize fostering a growth mindset and promoting the value of DI to strengthen its integration in classrooms.

Numerous studies have highlighted the positive impact of teacher belief in DI on student outcomes. For instance, a meta-analysis by Hattie (2009) found that differentiated instruction positively influences student achievement, with the greatest effects observed when teachers adopt a growth mindset towards their students. Furthermore, a longitudinal study conducted by Tomlinson and Allan (2000) demonstrated that teachers who embraced DI reported higher levels of job satisfaction and a greater sense of efficacy in meeting the diverse needs of their students. These findings underscore the importance of teacher belief as a catalyst for effective DI implementation and improved student learning experiences.

Teaching beliefs guide educators' actions (He & Levin, 2008) and pedagogical decisions (Cross, 2009). As such, it is seen as a significant determinant of teaching approaches (Author et al., 2008). In specific school subjects, studies underpin how teaching beliefs are significantly and positively related to instructional outcomes; i.e., the teaching of grammar (Phipps & Borg, 2009), literacy (Johnson, 1992), science (Hashweh, 1996; Tosun, 2000), and mathematics (Cross, 2009). Teaching beliefs were also found to be related to the adoption of educational computer use in classes (Author et al., 2008) and in technology integration practices (Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Sadik, Sendurur, & Sendurur, 2012). Also, the quantitative inquiry analysis of Aftab (2016) revealed that there is a positive association between teachers' beliefs about their intentions and stakeholders'

expectations to implement differentiated instruction.

Thus, teacher belief in Differentiated Instruction is a fundamental factor that shapes the success and impact of this instructional approach. Educators who genuinely embrace DI recognize the unique strengths and challenges of each student, leading to personalized learning experiences that cater to diverse needs. Although challenges may arise, fostering a growth mindset and establishing a support network can empower teachers to overcome barriers to DI implementation. Research consistently supports the positive outcomes associated with teacher belief in DI, highlighting its potential to enhance student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement. As educational practices continue to evolve, cultivating a shared belief in Differentiated Instruction among educators remains essential for promoting inclusivity and facilitating meaningful learning experiences for all students.

Teachers' Experiences on the Implementation of Differentiated Instruction

The implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in the classroom is a dynamic process that necessitates thoughtful planning, ongoing reflection, and responsive teaching practices. Teachers play a critical role in the successful adoption of DI, as they are responsible for designing and executing personalized learning experiences that accommodate the diverse needs of their students. This discussion delves into the experiences of teachers as they navigate the challenges and celebrate the triumphs of implementing DI. By examining these experiences, we can gain insights into the impact of DI on students' learning outcomes and the factors that contribute to effective DI integration.

Differentiated instruction is designed to adapt instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, provide each student with the appropriate level of challenge, and furnish support to help students reach their learning goals (Valiandes, 2015). Differentiation in instruction requires teachers to adjust, selecting different teaching strategies and methods to meet the unique needs of the students and to experience successful academic achievement. However, many challenges hinder the teachers in implementing effectively the differentiated instruction.

Teachers encounter various challenges when attempting to implement DI. One common difficulty is managing classroom time effectively to meet the individual needs of each student (Tomlinson, 2001). Crafting differentiated lesson plans, assessing student

progress, and providing targeted feedback can be time-consuming. Additionally, adapting instructional materials to cater to diverse learning styles, readiness levels, and interests can prove demanding, especially for teachers with large class sizes and limited resources. Moreover, some educators may face resistance from students who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and prefer a more uniform approach to instruction (Dogan, 2019). Overcoming these challenges requires a commitment to professional growth, collaboration with colleagues, and ongoing support from school administrators and parents.

Despite the challenges, teachers have developed effective strategies to implement DI successfully. One approach is to conduct a thorough assessment of students' individual strengths and needs at the beginning of the school year (Katz et al., 2019). This data-driven approach allows teachers to create targeted learning pathways for each student and adapt their instruction accordingly. Moreover, peer collaboration and professional learning communities (PLCs) provide opportunities for teachers to share best practices, exchange ideas, and offer support to one another (Ford, 2017). Engaging in ongoing professional development specific to DI enables educators to refine their skills and deepen their understanding of student-centered instructional practices.

Tomlinson (2001), as cited by Pelgram (2019), explained that differentiated instruction is grounded in an understanding of how students learn. Teachers should consider different learning styles, preferences, strengths, and abilities which they need varying opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge based on teaching. He also added that one of the contributing factors to the problem of implementing differentiated instruction might be that primary teachers in this school do not have the training or adequate preparation time to develop lesson plans and activities that focus on activities that differentiate instruction.

Shareefa et al. (2019) also added that the barriers which hinder to implementation of differentiated instruction are lack of resources, time, support, knowledge, and class size. Also, Dipirro (2017) and James (2009) also mentioned in their separate studies that most teachers are familiar with differentiated instruction theoretically and conceptually, but many teachers do not differentiate nor do not implementing differentiated instruction regularly.

Teachers who embrace DI often report a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment as they witness the



growth and success of their students (Dogan, 2019). They experience a deeper connection with their students, as DI encourages individualized interactions that consider students' unique needs and interests. Furthermore, the implementation of DI fosters a positive and inclusive classroom culture, where students feel valued and respected for their individuality. As a result, students are more engaged, motivated, and invested in their learning process, leading to improved academic achievement and increased self-efficacy (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). The success of DI is not solely measured by academic progress; students' social-emotional well-being and self-confidence also benefit from personalized learning experiences.

Thus, in the context of this research, the researcher is interested in identifying the different challenges and experiences of teachers in implementing differentiated instruction and understand the barrier in improving instructional pedagogies that helps students maximize their learning. Teachers' experiences on the implementation of Differentiated Instruction are shaped by a myriad of challenges and rewards. The challenges of managing time, adapting materials, and addressing resistance from students can be significant barriers to overcome. However, by employing data-driven strategies, collaborating with peers, and engaging in ongoing professional development, teachers can successfully navigate these challenges. The positive impact of DI on both teachers and students is evident through the sense of fulfillment, improved student engagement, and increased academic achievement. As educators continue to refine their practices and embrace the principles of DI, personalized learning experiences will become increasingly ingrained in the fabric of modern education, fostering an inclusive and empowering learning environment for all students.

Schools and educators continue to be challenged by the ever-changing educational curriculum, especially in the new normal, and strive to close the academic gap between both teachers and students. The implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in schools requires the collective commitment and support of administrators, teachers, and stakeholders. While DI offers numerous benefits, its successful integration presents unique challenges for educational institutions. By understanding these obstacles, schools can develop targeted strategies to overcome them and create an inclusive and effective learning environment.

One significant challenge for schools and administrators is the allocation of sufficient time and

resources to support DI implementation. Developing differentiated lesson plans, tailoring assessments, and providing ongoing feedback to meet individual student needs can be time-intensive for educators (Tomlinson, 2001). Additionally, schools may lack adequate funding and access to professional development opportunities specific to DI, hindering teacher preparedness and confidence in employing differentiated practices (Gentile & Shery, 2016). Addressing these constraints requires a commitment to prioritizing DI within the school's curriculum and budgetary considerations.

Further, ensuring that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement DI effectively is another key challenge for administrators. Many educators may be unfamiliar with the principles and strategies of DI, requiring targeted professional development programs to build their capacity (Dogan, 2019). Providing ongoing support and coaching during the implementation process can foster teacher confidence and commitment to DI practices (Chen & Liu, 2017). Administrators must invest in comprehensive training opportunities that align with the school's vision and goals for differentiated instruction.

Moreover, transforming the organizational culture and mindset to embrace DI can be a daunting challenge for administrators. Some educators and staff members may be resistant to change or hold misconceptions about the efficacy of DI in addressing diverse student needs (Tomlinson, 2000). Creating a culture of collaboration and openness to innovation is crucial to overcoming these barriers. Administrators can lead by example, promoting a growth mindset and emphasizing the positive impact of DI on student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Encouraging shared decision-making and seeking input from teachers can foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for DI integration.

Finally, effectively monitoring and evaluating the implementation of DI presents a challenge for schools and administrators. Regular assessment of the impact of differentiated practices on student achievement and engagement is essential to identify areas of success and areas that need improvement (Dogan, 2019). Administrators must establish clear metrics and data collection processes to gauge the effectiveness of DI and provide timely feedback to teachers. Using data-driven insights, schools can refine their strategies and make informed decisions to enhance DI implementation over time.

Generally, schools and administrators face multifaceted challenges in implementing Differentiated Instruction. Addressing time and resource constraints, providing comprehensive professional development, fostering a positive organizational culture, and establishing effective monitoring and evaluation processes are crucial steps to surmount these obstacles. By investing in teacher support and creating a conducive environment for DI, schools can enhance student engagement, motivation, and achievement, thus fulfilling the goal of providing equitable and personalized learning experiences for all students.

This qualitative research identified teachers' understanding and implementation of the level of Differentiated Instruction and areas of support in which they require training to effectively implement it in the classroom. To bridge the achievement gap, administrators have overall responsibility for working with their teachers to provide instruction that is appropriate for each student and training educators in ways to help monitor the students' learning. With these protocols in place, teachers may feel supported to make the necessary changes in their classrooms.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research method, specifically the phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research emphasizes the study of conscious experiences as a way of understanding the reality around us. Mauldin (2020) added that phenomenology is concerned with the systematic reflection and analysis of phenomena associated with conscious experiences, such as human judgment, perceptions, and actions, with the goal of first, appreciating and describing social reality from the diverse subjective perspectives of the participants involved, and second, understanding the symbolic meanings ("deep structure") underlying these subjective experiences.

The purpose of this research was to carefully examine the perceived teachers' understanding, challenges, factors that affect these challenges, and the strategies use on implementing differentiated instruction in the classroom. The researcher would need rich data from the participants through analyzing and understanding their experiences in using differentiated instruction. With these aims and purposes, a phenomenological research design was used in this study.

Participants

The participants of this study were composed of 12 public and private elementary and secondary school teachers in three different schools in Compostela, Davao de Oro, namely: San Jose Elementary School, Compostela National High School, and Assumption Academy of Compostela. The participants were selected through purposive random sampling. This means that the researcher only selected those participants that the researcher considered that could provide appropriate responses to the questions. For this research, there were 12 participants: three participants from San Jose Elementary School, three participants from Compostela National High School, and six participants from Assumption Academy of Compostela since the school offers both elementary and secondary courses.

Instruments of the Study

The collection of qualitative data to explain the result of the survey was done through an interview. In the form of an interview, the reading of the questions and the response of the participants was recorded with the permission of the participants; meanwhile, the observer used field notes to record the events and the observable aspects while conducting the interview. All the data gathered from the participants was put under pseudonyms to respect and protect their privacy. The data collected from the observations selectively transcribed, scrutinized, and carefully analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher closely examined the data to identify common themes that are similar to the data provided by the participants.

Thematic Analysis was used in analyzing the collected data from the participants. TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset (Braun, Virginia, and Clarke, Victoria. 2012). In this study, the researcher collected the data and found the common and diverging ideas of the participants, which evaluated their importance in the context of this study through summarizing the result using different themes to explain the phenomenon.

Procedure

The researcher conducted a qualitative collection of data through in-depth interviews. The researcher selected twelve (12) samples from the participants, of which six elementary teachers and six high school teachers were selected from the identified schools. Using a semi-structured interview, the researcher gathered information to deepen the knowledge and provide an explanation of the results from quantitative



data. Furthermore, the researcher considered the following steps in collecting the data.

Ethical protocol. The researcher sought approval from the office of the Schools Division Superintendent, allowing him to conduct the study at respective schools indicated for the school year 2020-2021. Once the office approved the request to conduct the study, a letter was sent along with the approval letter from the Schools Division Superintendent and a sample of the interview questions to the District Supervisor informing them of this endeavor which was then forwarded to the principal of each school to request for participants of the research. Informed Consent was provided to the teachers and retrieved by the researcher before the conduct of the study.

Interview Session. Once the respective offices approved the conduct of the study, the researcher interviewed the participants using an in-depth interview. The researcher acknowledged the necessity to conduct interviews to provide richer information and responses from the participants and to cross-examine their similar and different perspectives. The researcher also acknowledged the safety and precautionary measures to avoid the danger of the current global pandemic; thus, strict health compliance and ordinance was followed during the interview. During the interview, the respondents were encouraged to use pseudonyms to maintain the privacy of the information and identity.

The researcher himself conducted the interview. The researcher asked permission from the participants to record the interview for review purposes. For the teachers to understand all items in the interview, the common dialect used by the majority was utilized. All the data collected was encoded and analyzed by the researcher. Thematic Analysis was used to interpret the data

Ethical Considerations

This study considers the principle behind the participants being addressed and all individuals relevant to the success of this study. This study used the qualitative approach, which required the researcher to interact with the participants. In other words, the researcher understood the consideration of the principles, strengths, weaknesses, individual abilities, and the like of the participants in collecting the data.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings to the research questions on the utilization of differentiated instruction in the new normal. The primary focus of the investigation was to examine teachers' understanding and implementation of differentiated instruction among public and private elementary and high school teachers in Compostela, Davao de Oro. The participants were selected through purposive random sampling. This means that the researcher selected those participants that the researcher thought could provide appropriate responses to the questions. For this research, there were 12 participants: three (3) participants from San Jose Elementary School, three (3) participants from Compostela National High School, and six (6) participants from Assumption Academy of Compostela since the school offers both elementary and secondary courses.

The responses were subjected to content analysis where the themes across all responses were drawn. In keeping with the research ethics for qualitative research, codes were used in order to conceal the identities of the research participants. The presentation of the result was done according to the order of specific research questions used in this study.

How do teachers understand the concepts in implementing differentiated instruction?

This section presents the results to the 1st major research question; 'How do teachers understand the concepts in implementing differentiated instruction?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were intended to gather information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the concepts in implementing differentiated instruction.

Concepts of Differentiated Instruction

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'How do teachers understand the concepts in implementing differentiated instruction?' The responses generated two themes: uses variety of methods and addresses various learning needs.

Uses Variety of Methods. This theme constituted the understanding of the participants in the utilization of differentiated instruction in teaching. It meant that the teachers have been differentiating instruction in the classroom based on how they perceived its use. Informant 1 provided an operational definition of

differentiated instruction. She pointed out;

Differentiated instruction is using variety of methods to teach to match my learners' learning styles such as engaging them to different activities.

This was supported by informant 2, who contended; Differentiated instruction refers to the varied strategies for different students.

Similarly, informant 5 stressed;

Differentiated instruction for me is about giving diverse approaches/activities to cater to the different learning styles of the students.

In addition, informant 9 said;

When we say differentiated instructions those are the teachers teaching techniques, styles or the teaching strategies that would suit to the different learning needs of diverse learners.

Informant 11 substantiated the idea of differentiated instruction by saying;

For me, this is a teaching strategy/style sa teacher to make effective teaching to his/her students on how they can learn despite of their difference.

(For me, this is a teaching strategy/style of a teacher to make effective teaching to his/her students on how they can learn despite of their difference.)

Addresses Various Learning Needs. Another definition of differentiated instruction emerged is on addressing various needs of the learners. This means that the use of differentiated instruction is on addressing the different needs of the learners and providing appropriate strategies in order to provide the learning needs of the students. In fact, informant 3 narrated;

Differentiated instruction refers to differentiated learning activities that would address the different learning needs, the different learning styles or the different multiple intelligences of the students.

For his part, informant 4 shared;

The concept of differentiated instruction is finding a way of teaching that matches a variety of learning styles. In differentiated instruction, teaching approach varies depending on how students prefer to learn.

One such responsibility, according to informant 6, Differentiated instruction is tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs of the students. This was supported by informant 7, who said;

An art of teacher's instruction in order to meet or to reach according to his/her learning style.

This was supported by informant 8, who said;

Para sa akosa ang differentiated instruction is a way of teaching to our learners. It asks teachers para makabala sila sa ilang individual differences sa ilahang mga bata and learning capabilities sa ilahang mga bata.

(For me differentiated instruction is a way of teaching to our learners. It asks teachers about their individual differences of their learners and learning capabilities also.)

This was supported by informant 10, who said; Differentiated instruction is about the use of different teaching strategies in the classroom to cater the different learning styles, interests, or even leanings of students based from the MI of Gardner so they can better learn the topic.

This was supported by informant 12, who said;

My concept of differentiated instruction is adapting something new strategies that can meet the students' needs.

Purpose of Differentiating Instruction for Students

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.2 'What is your purpose of differentiating instruction for students?' under the 1st major research question 'How do teachers understand the concepts in implementing differentiated instruction?' The following themes served as results, which were: provide learning opportunities for students, to easily understand the lesson, cater needs of students, to address learning styles, create engaging tasks for students, connect different learning experiences, to meet students' needs, and ensure acquisition of quality education.

Provide Learning Opportunities for Students. The purpose of differentiating instruction perceived by the participants is on providing learning opportunities for students. With the idea of providing unique strategies of learning on the different needs of the students, it is likely to understand that differentiated instruction help learners as well as teachers in maximizing learning student learning opportunities. Informant 5 relayed about the purpose of differentiated instruction.

Its purpose is to provide wider learning opportunities for students, addressing their diversities. It enables the learners to perform based on their own pace, without stressing themselves to adhere a single instruction.

Likewise, informant 8 said;

Ang purpose sa differentiated instruction is to make the students learning grows in all their skills and



knowledge areas. Example by making a small group and a big group para didto sila mahibaw-an kung ilang capabilities as a student.

(The purpose of differentiated instruction is to make the students learning grows in all their skills and knowledge areas. Example by making a small group and a big group to know their learning capabilities as a student.)

This is also supported by informant 9 who cited; First and foremost, when we say differentiated instruction is to ensure the development and enhance of the learning capacities of each student regardless of their knowledge and skills levels.

Informant 10 also said that; The purpose is to illicit learnings or understanding from the students about a particular topic based on their interests or learning style.

To Easily Understand the Lesson. Another purpose of differentiated instruction is understanding the lesson easily.

Stressing the purpose of the differentiated instruction, informant 1 emphasized; My purpose of differentiating instruction for learners is for them to easily understand the concept or lesson that if possible, every single learner learned.

Cater Needs of Students. Addressing the needs of students is one of the purposes of differentiated instruction. Informant 1 narrated about it while pointing out the main purpose of differentiated instruction. She said; (he main purpose of differentiated instruction is to cater the need of individual. Different students need varied strategies to help them absorb and understand things easily.

To Address Learning Styles. Another purpose of differentiated instruction is to address learning styles of students. This means considering all the learning styles of the students and avoid of concentrating on one learning style on teaching. Informant 3 contended;

The most important purpose of differentiated instruction is to address the different learning styles and to tap the multiple intelligences (MI) of the learners. As experienced, learning process becomes more effective and interesting if students are given the avenues to be at home with their own giftedness while they are learning.

Create Engaging Tasks for Students. Another purpose of differentiated instruction is to create an engaging task for students. This means providing tasks which fit to the interest of the learners.

Informant 4 cited; The main purpose of differentiated instruction is to create an engaging task for students that challenge and enhance their learning. Instructional activities are flexible and based and evaluated on content, process, product, and learning environment.

Likewise, informant 6 cited; The main purpose of differentiating instruction is to ensure that all students are engaged in the teaching process by providing tasks that match each individual's needs.

Connect Different Learning Experiences. Connecting different learning experiences is another purpose of differentiated instruction is to connect different learning experiences of the students. Through identifying the appropriate strategies to use, teachers can use their experiences in the learning process.

Informant 7 said; The name purpose of differentiating instruction as a Junior High Math teacher is to help students to connect different learning experiences just like solving in real life problems and also by engaging and creating context learning.

To Meet Students' Needs. It is the purpose of the differentiated instruction to meet the needs of the students' needs. The main purpose of teaching is to fill in the learning needs of the students.

Informant 11 also said that; The main purpose for is of course to meet the student's needs. In this way, we can show students a variety of resources from which to learn this includes showing videos, games, reading, and etc. in order to meet learning effectively.

Ensure Acquisition of Quality Education. Another purpose of differentiated instruction is to ensure the acquisition of quality education. This means that the different needs of the students must be identified and must be provided attention for resolution.

Informant 12 cited; My purpose on it is to ensure that my students can still acquire quality education in spite of our situation right now.

Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 1.3 'What are your perceived advantages and disadvantages of Differentiated Instruction?' are presented in this section. The themes were: active engagement of learners; takes time to prepare, addresses learners' differences; time consuming, students cope with own style; takes time to prepare, time consuming, individualized learning for students; time consuming, and accommodates diversity of learners; takes time to prepare.

Active Engagement of Learners; Takes Time to Prepare. The advantages of differentiated instruction are the engagement of learners. This means that using the differentiated instruction, students are more active and interested. On the other hand, the disadvantage of differentiated instruction is the limited time to prepare the activities for the student. With the limited time of preparation, teachers find it a challenge to provide differentiated instruction to students. As informant 3 narrated;

Some of its advantages are as follows: potentials and giftedness of the students are tapped and developed, learners are actively engaged, and on my part, I only have to facilitate them. One of the disadvantages that I have encountered is that it takes too much time in designing the learning plan. In language subjects, it implies audio-visual materials. Good if the school can provide this.

This is also supported by informant 4 who said that; The advantage for me of differentiated instruction is that it promotes engagement in learning because it addresses the children as equal individual with diverse needs, learning and capabilities. The disadvantage of it is that it is heavy for the part of teachers because it requires much more lesson-planning time for teachers.

On the other hand, disadvantages of differentiated instruction were also supported by informants 7 recounted that;

Gives students' choice. Time consuming.

And informant 9 who also said that;

The advantages are the learners would be given a chance to learn and develop to its full potential and different ways. For the disadvantages is for the teachers sa side amoa nga mga teacher kasi you need more time to prepare different lesson plan and then more instructional materials, so you need money, more

funds then also, big space for varied activities since you have differentiated instruction it means you different group of pupils so you need big space for the different group.

(The advantages are the learners would be given a chance to learn and develop to its full potential and different ways. For the disadvantages is for the teachers side you need more time to prepare different lesson plan and then more instructional materials, so you need money, more funds then also, big space for varied activities since you have differentiated instruction it means you different group of pupils so you need big space for the different group.)

Even the response of informant 11 and 12 confirms the generalizability of other's responses when he narrate that;

The advantages for me are student-centered, so children take more on of the responsibility for learning most effective siguro for both high-ability students and for those with disability. Engagement in learning tends to be stronger specially kung napukaw ilang interest. The disadvantages are its time consuming of course it cannot be done dayon.x its resource intensive an hago sa part sa teacher.

(The advantages for me are student-centered, so children take more on of the responsibility for learning most effective for both high-ability students and for those with disability. Engagement in learning tends to be stronger especially if you arouse their interest. The disadvantages are its time consuming of course it cannot be done immediately its resource intensivelaborious in the part of the teacher.)

Addresses Learners' Differences; Time Consuming. Another advantage of differentiated instruction is being able to address learner's differences in terms of their learning preferences and needs. On the other hand, time constraints made it impossible to do differentiated instruction at all times. In fact, informant 1 made it more concrete when he said that;

For me, the advantages of differentiated instruction are, it addresses learners' differences and multiple intelligences, they would learn best with the activities that matches their styles, promotes active learning. They would surely participate actively. But then, there are also disadvantages especially to the part of the teachers: requires more planning time, they need to prepare variety of activities it is time consuming. One hour is not enough. It is always impossible to be done to every learner teachers cannot assist every learner requires more resources.

This is also supported by the response of informant 8

who also said;

So ang advantage para sa akong sa differentiated instruction is matudluan ang mga bata sa ilang learning style then each child would have their individualize learning plan and this differentiated instruction would have no child left behind and it shows teachers creativity and flexibility. And disadvantages ana maybe is really time consuming and resource intensive and it has more planning lessons each day so it's very hard for the teachers and learning style unproven the students need to learn in all different ways.

(So the advantage for me is differentiated instruction is to know the child learning style then each child would have their individualize learning plan and this differentiated instruction would have no child left behind and it shows teachers creativity and flexibility. And disadvantages maybe is really time consuming and resource intensive and it has more planning lessons each day so it's very hard for the teachers and learning style unproven the students need to learn in all different ways.)

And also with the response of informant 6 who said;

Time consuming and resource intensive, unrealistic

Students Cope with Own Style; Takes Time to Prepare. Related to addressing learner's needs and preferences, it also an advantage for the students to cope learning through their preferred learning styles. With the response of informant 2, the challenges on students own learning style and time of preparation has been highlighted. He said that;

Advantages are students with different level of capabilities can cope in his/her own way or style student can bring out his/her potentials if the instruction hits his/her style or way of learning disadvantages long preparation, tedious in terms of time frame, and availability of resources and materials for differentiated activities.

Accommodates Diversity of Learners; Takes Time to Prepare

Informant 10 cited;

One of the advantages is it accommodates the diversity of learners in the classroom. However, one of the disadvantages could be the pressure and time constraint during the preparation and the time consuming during the conduct.

How do general classroom teachers employ differentiation strategies to meet the needs of learners?

This section presents the results to the 2nd major research question 'How do general classroom teachers employ differentiation strategies to meet the needs of learners?' Four specific research questions were used to collect data for this question highlighting the ways how they employ differentiation strategies in meeting the learner's needs.

Differentiation of Instruction to Meet Needs of Students

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research 2.1 'How do you differentiate your instruction in the classroom to meet every need of the students?' are presented in this section. The themes were: prepare activities, meet needs and abilities of students, determine learning style of students, designing of lessons, and diagnose learning needs of students.

Prepare Activities. One of the ways that participants employ differentiated strategies is through preparing activities for students. Teachers can easily provide different strategies to students in terms on how they can learn it best in an activity.

Informant 1 had this to say;

From my experience, in the actual situation in the general section, it is hard to apply differentiated instruction in every class because 1 hour is not solely for instruction. But then there were also times that I tried to prepare and applied different activities that matches their interests.

Having said of providing different activities to students, informant 4 and 5 said that;

I think of various activities. Plan of activities that caters to learners' multiple intelligences is the best thing to do.

Informant 5;

Sometimes, I give various types of activities in class where students can choose the task, they are able to perform. Moreover, these different tasks should of course be in line with the lesson objectives.

Meet Needs and Abilities of Students. Another way is through the needs and abilities of the students as reference on what activities, strategies and assessment task best suit to their learning styles. In meeting the needs and considering the abilities of students, informant 2, 6 and 7 retorted that;

According to the need and ability of the students, referring to their MIs.



Informant 6;
According to their mental ability.

Informant 7;
According to their mental ability and based to their learning style.

Determine Learning Style of Students. Through identifying their learning style, teachers can employ differentiated strategies through utilizing strategies and methods suit to the preference of the students. This can help teachers in selecting the appropriate strategies and activities to the learners. In relation to that, informant 3 said that;

In the classroom setting, differentiated instruction is applied by determining the learning styles or multiple intelligences of the students, and then by designing differentiated learning activities. The class would be divided into groups and then each group would have a different task to perform.

Moreover, this is supported by informant 10 who narrated;

I assess first the different learning styles or the interests of the learners then I group them according to it, then use strategies that would fit to these learning styles or interests of students.

Designing of Lessons. As teacher, it is included in their routine to prepare and design lesson plans and activities which they employ differentiating strategies, activities and methods. Informant 8 narrated how she employ differentiated instruction and strategies in her lessons;

So, teachers who practice differentiated instruction in their classroom. I would design lesson based on my students learning styles then I would make a group wherein they can share their interest, topics or ability for their assignments and I would also assess my students using formative assessment and then I would manage my classroom to create a safe and supportive environment.

Informant 11 also said that;
Creating different lessons and activities to meet each student's interest can be terrifying, but of course we need, as teachers, to help students learn. For me. I usually have groupings and giving individual tasks. When students or learners work in group, teacher can work one-on-one with each group and can give direct instruction.

In designing the lessons, informant 12 also believes that teachers should need to consider students'

learning style to be able to come up with an effective and efficient differentiated instruction in the class. He said that;

For me as teacher, I think that we should assess first out students to know their learning styles and needs and make or design a lesson befitting them.

Diagnose Learning Needs of Students. Through identifying and diagnosing learner's needs, teachers can employ appropriate strategies for specific students and provide adequate learning materials for them. Informant 9 said that;

Okay first, is you have to diagnose the learning needs of the pupils by conducting an assessment then after that you can design or prepare a lesson that would address their learning needs and then you have to group the learners according to their needs, interest, and abilities and then in a classroom you have to set the classroom that is conducive to them.

(Okay first, is you have to diagnose the learning needs of the pupils by conducting an assessment then after that you can design or prepare a lesson that would address their learning needs and then you have to group the learners according to their needs, interest, and abilities and then in the classroom you have to set the classroom that is conducive to them.)

Differentiation of Instruction with Number of Students

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.2 'How do you differentiate instruction with a large number of students? With a small number of students? How do you differentiate instruction in the new normal?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: activities depending on group size, more effective to small groups, activities according to learning styles, separate tasks for online and modular students, grouping according to interests, and based on shared needs

Activities Depending on Group Size. For large classes, teachers design differentiated activities through clustering students with similar learning styles. Through clustering the students, teachers lessen the number of activities to prepare and provide maximum time to produce effective and efficient activities to the learners. This is what Informant 3 do and as he narrated;

In a large section, I usually divide them into 6 – 7 groups; while in a section with a small number of students, I usually divide them into 5 – 6 groups, depending on the designed differentiated learning activities. Sometimes, I employ by-pair, but it



consumes too much time.

Moreover, informant 4 narrated;

Group activity with small numbers of members is the best way to deliver a lesson in many classes. I do believe that the effect of collaborative learning is the new normal.

Flexibility is also what informant 5 focused on designing differentiated instruction to students. She said that;

Applying differentiated instruction should be flexible according to the number of students. However, during the new normal set-up, the approach is “flexible” in terms of the means of instruction. With the limited resources available in the locality, students would only get to choose between through modular or online. In modular, students are limited with learning on their own and doing mostly paper-and-pen assessments. Online, however, may give more avenues in instruction. But with the intermittent internet access, we always go to what is available and has easy access such as using social media platforms.

This is supported by informant 6 who said that;

(n a large number of students, differentiated instruction is done by group and peer teaching while in the new normal activity sheets of different types are given to every student.

On the other hand, informant 7 highlighted that it depends on the topic how teachers should group the learners. She said;

(n a large number of students, it depends upon the topic, usually I conducted a peer group or tutorial by different activities, while in the new normal I gave problem set to them.

This is supported by informant 8 when she added that Okay, para sa big groups siguro makahatag ko ug teaching styles through dramatizations, role playing and through audio-visual presentation wherein it can arouse their interest para makuha nila daun ilang lesson. For the small groups maybe, muhatag ko ug strategies just like oral recitation, ug quiz and unsaon nako ni siya pag apply in a new normal for the large group tougher loads maghatag ko ug performance tasks for the students in order for them to assess and for the small group maghatag ko ug performance task para ma assess nako ilahang capabilities.

(Okay, for me big groups I can give teaching styles through dramatizations, role playing and through audio-visual presentation wherein it can arouse their interest to quickly learn the lesson. For the small groups maybe, I can give strategies just like oral recitation, quiz and how can I apply in a new normal

for the large group tougher loads I would give performance tasks for the students in order for them to assess and for the small group I would give performance task to assess their capabilities.)

Informant 9 also said that;

Okay if we talk about the large number of students’ maybe they have 50 or 60 students per class. Since, it is a big class you have to divide it into 2 or 3 only because you have to consider the space and the time and their number then if is a small group of number group then into 4 or 5. Now in the new normal its very different lahi rajud because we cannot see the pupils face to face so in the new normal you can differentiate them by providing them different supplementary instructional materials that would address their learning needs.

(Okay if we talk about the large number of students’ maybe they have 50 or 60 students per class. Since, it is a big class you have to divide it into 2 or 3 only because you have to consider the space and the time and their number then if is a small group of number group then into 4 or 5. Now in the new normal it’s very different because we cannot see the pupils face to face so in the new normal you can differentiate them by providing them different supplementary instructional materials that would address their learning needs.)

More Effective to Small Groups. In opposite to the previous strategy, participants also consider employing differentiated strategies into smaller group of students for it is easy to facilitate and manage for learning. Aside from that, small groups can act individually than the larger group. Smaller groups are more active in doing the tasks and activities. As what informant 1 responded;

In my teaching experience, I had not been to a small number of learners. But I guess, differentiated instruction is more effective to a small group than the large group. In a small group, you can cater each learning style by giving them different activities. You can also monitor them throughout the instruction. In a large number of learners, it's the same thing with grouping them according to their interests/styles and given them activities that matched to them also. But then, it’s kind of hard to control a large number of learners. Some group members would not anymore participate even how many times you reminded them to help in the task because there was already somebody in the group to complete the task. Another hard part was on the presentation of each group in each activity. It took time to finish them all. In the new normal situation, all of my learners chosen printed

modular modality. Therefore, they would just follow what's in the module. And I have the initiative to send video lessons in their group chats for further instruction/explanation. It's hard to achieve differentiated instruction in this kind of modality. But then, there are lots of activities in the SLM that would cater their different learning styles, to help them learn in their way. It's just that, I can't answer the question of do they really learn from it.

Activities According to Learning Styles. Teachers also employ differentiated strategies and activities according to their learning styles. Through considering their preference on learning, it promotes interest and motivation in learning which then leads into learning engagement. Informant 2 had said that;

In large number group activities according to their style and MIs, in new normal worksheets with varied activities

Separate Tasks for Online and Modular Students.

In addition to the consideration of students' learning style, informant 3 added;

In the new normal, honestly, it is really hard to employ differentiated instruction. I am silently battling the challenges in the new normal. So, I just do differentiated instruction by giving a separate task for my online students and a separate task for my students in printed modular distance learning. Besides, I am hesitant to maximize the application of differentiated learning activities due to COVID19 risks. I am afraid students would gather themselves in a particular place which would make them at risk with COVID19.

Grouping According to Interests. Teachers also employ differentiated strategies through grouping them according to their interest. Students' interest boost active participation to activities included in the modules. Informant 10 narrated that;

You group them according to their interests or leanings. This differentiation is based from the multiple intelligences.

Based on Shared Needs. Another way of employing differentiated strategies is by identifying the shared needs of the students and provide activities that would cater their needs.

As what Informant 11 narrated;

For large group- group learners strategically to differentiate instruction based on shared needs.

For small group- I usually create stories and asks students stories or their experiences based on the

videos that I played.

In the new normal- in school, we only have modular mode of teaching. Sad to say but we don't even know our students.

Informant 12 also said;

I think that whether it is large or small group of students the technique should be grouping them according to their style and needs. In the new normal I think we should make a different assessment per learning style of the students.

Execution of Differentiated Instruction

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.3 'How do you execute differentiated instruction in the classroom? How does it differ during the new normal?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: easy in the normal classroom, teacher-initiated and student-initiated activities, giving different learning tasks, group learners based on intelligence, flexible learning modalities, more challenging in the face to face, through group activities, provide supplementary materials, and more interaction in face to face class.

Easy in the Normal Classroom. Comparing the implementation of differentiated instruction in traditional classroom, teachers find it difficult to employ it in the blended learning. Aside from students do their task at home, teachers can no longer observe them thoroughly.

As what Informant 1 said in the interview;

It's so easy to execute differentiated instruction in the normal classroom because I can communicate well with my learner's face to face. I can give the instruction comprehensively to them. I can answer directly their questions throughout the activity or throughout the process, I can monitor them one by one or by group. Unlike to the new normal which there is no physical appearance, I cannot communicate well to them because of internet hindrances, I cannot monitor them during the process/activity, I cannot facilitate well the learning. Therefore, it's hard to execute differentiated instruction in the new normal set up.

Teacher-initiated and Student-initiated Activities.

Another difference of employing differentiated strategies in the new normal is the presence of student-initiated activities used to understand the lesson further. This is what Informant 2 said;

Different task in classroom activities in face to face like role playing, compositions and creating outputs



and collaboration with their classmates while in new normal students most of them do the activity by their own, though they would also collaborate to others, still there are limitations because of the situation.

Giving Different Learning Tasks. Teachers also find it hard to provide different learning tasks in the new normal since most of the student only do modular learning which disables them to check, monitor and follow up their learning progress. Informant 3 narrated that;

In the new normal, honestly, I find it hard to design differentiated instruction. In this school year, I usually do it by giving different learning tasks to my online students and another different task for my printed modular distance learning students. In the classroom setting, I have 2 ways of employing differentiated learning instruction/ activities. There are times that I design differentiated learning activities intended for groupings with similar MI's. My purpose is to make them at home with their own giftedness while doing their task. Students can give more and perform their best when they are doing it using their own potentials. Additionally, it is also an avenue for them to have self-expression. There are also times that I design differentiated learning instruction/activities intended for heterogeneous groupings. This is to help them enhance their social skills, to make them realize that in life, it is always important to collaborate with people whose inclinations, interests, status, or culture are different from them. A classroom is a home for learners coming from different walks of life.

Group Learners Based on Intelligence. Another way to execute differentiated strategies is through identifying their learning capacity and capability and design differentiated activities in order to boost their interest to learning.

In fact, Informant 4 said;

Think of differentiated activities. Think of activities that would boast learners' best. Ex. If the learner is good at singing. Give an activity about singing that related to your subject matter in new normal, just group the learners according to their intelligence.

Flexible Learning Modalities. Another way is through incorporating differentiated instruction and strategies in the module/s provided.

This is supported by Informant 5 who said;
Through the available flexible learning modalities that we can use.

More challenging in the Face to Face. Teachers find it difficult to employ differentiated instruction and strategies in the new normal.

Informant 6 supported this idea when he narrated that; Face to face instruction is more challenging than the new normal.

Through Group Activities. They also employ differentiated instruction and strategies through group activities. In fact, informant 7 said that

In math, by just giving group activity but different content's work. And honestly, face to face instruction is authentic than new normal.

In relation to authenticity, informant 8 emphasized the use of performance based task. She said that;

Grouping through giving their activities and reporting by groups. In the new normal I would give them performance task based from their modules.

Informant 11 also narrated;

Before, we can have a lot of activities, games, showing videos in class, reading and etc. But today, in the new normal, we really have a big change. Students can listen to radio and can watch and learn to tv-skwela based on assigned schedule by subject, grade level every day in our Province. But in school we only have modular and most teachers, don't know their students. Sad reality.

Provide Supplementary Materials. To be able to differentiate their strategies and instruction, teachers provide additional materials or supplemental materials use for learning. This way, students can choose which activities they can answer which suit to their learning preferences. In fact, informant 9 said that

So, it's different when we say the execution of the differentiated instruction because, in the new normal there is no face to face like what I have said before is you have to provide different supplementary materials that would address their learning needs.

More Interaction in Face to Face Class. Another difference of implementing differentiated instruction in the new normal is the absence of interaction with the students. This provide difficulty for them to initiate differentiated instruction in their lessons. Relative to this theme, Informant 10 narrated;

In the classroom, activities are physically conducted with more interaction. In online learning, it's quite limited to only a few activities to be done.

This is also supported by informant 12 when he retorted;

It is kind of easy in a classroom setup because, you know your students better while in the new normal it can be a hassle because you don't even know who your students are.

Planning the Instruction

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.4 'How do you consider students in planning your instruction?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: know students' interest and learning styles, know students' capabilities, consider several options, consider students' strengths, and evaluating performance tasks.

Know Students' Interest and Learning Styles.

Teachers consider students in the planning of instruction through identifying student interest and learning styles. This way, they can provide the appropriate materials and maximize the available materials for learning. This is strengthened by the response of informant 2 who said that;

Considering their interest and their own learning styles. We would consider also the availability of the materials.

This is even supported by the response of informant 5 who said;

I always consider the learning styles of my students in planning for my instruction. The same with public speaking, I always try to assess and get to know first my target audience so that I can plan well my instruction.

Even informant 9, 10, 11 and 12 did mention of the importance of students' interest in planning the instruction. They said that;

Informant 9;

Okay in planning the instruction you would really need to consider the interest of the pupils because its lisud kayo nga ma capture nimu ilang interest. Nowadays, the learners are very mahilig sa computer sa mga games so you can prepare or design a learning materials that is parang laro they would enjoy while they are studying they are playing so they would enjoy the learning process.

(Okay in planning the instruction you would really need to consider the interest of the pupils because it's very hard to capture their interest. Nowadays, the learners are very fond of using computer games so you can prepare or design a learning material that is like a

game they would enjoy while they are studying they are playing so they would enjoy the learning process.)

Informant 10;

I consider their learnings or interests, so the lesson won't be boring for them.

Informant 11;

Through the learner's interest, how ready they are in the lesson and through their learning preferences.

Informant 12;

By their learning styles, and needs for them to have interest in learning.

Know Students' Capabilities. Another way to consider students is to identify their capability, their strength, weaknesses, what they know, and what they want to know. informant 1 said that;

How would I give the best instruction if I don't know them? Of course, from the day one I met them, I have to know them according to what their strengths/interests were, weaknesses, learning styles and multiple intelligences. I can give a sort of tests or activities to identify those. It is for me to plan well, to come up with the activities that would surely boost their activeness. Learners must always be considered in planning the lesson.

Informant 8 also provided ways in assessing student capabilities. She mention that;

Sa akoo gi consider nako akong students through assessing their individual learning capabilities as well as their interest para ma assist pud nako ang mga students nga nanginahanglan ug tabang.

(For me, I consider my students through assessing their individual learning capabilities as well as their interest to assist my students who really needs help.)

Consider Several Options. Another way is to consider the holistic factors of student learning which includes multiple intelligences, skills, materials available, etc. This way, a wider implementation of differentiated instruction can be done. Informant 3 provided several options to consider when she said that;

In the classroom setting, I have always considered the time, the multiple intelligences of my students, the life-long skills that my students would learn and develop, the instructional materials, the alignment of the learning outcomes, the learning activities and the application/assessment that I have specified in my learning plan. If I want the learning process of my students more effective and interesting. If I want to



promote collaboration/teamwork among my students, and if I want to develop their multiple intelligences, then I have to employ differentiated learning instruction. But in the new normal, I really find it hard to have differentiated instruction.

Supported by Informant 4 who also said that; In lesson planning, always consider you learners' strength. Knowing your learner's interest can lead to a meaningful learning experience.

Evaluating Performance Tasks. In the times where the students do their task at home, teachers utilize the assessment results of the students in planning for differentiated strategies and instruction. . Informant 6 had to say;

By evaluating their performance tasks and activity sheets. I can have analysis or can create another step to what the next activity is to give in this kind of student.

Moreover, this is supported by informant 7 when he said that;

By assessing and evaluating their performance tasks and outputs and their problem sets.

What are the challenges experienced by the teachers in implementing differentiated instruction to students?

This section presents the results to the 3rd major research question; 'What are the challenges experienced by the teachers in implementing differentiated instruction to students?' One specific research questions was used to gather data and information for this major research question.

Challenges Experienced in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

This section presents the results to the specific question 3.1 'What are the challenges you experienced in implementing differentiated instruction in the new normal?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: failure of teachers to facilitate learning, poor internet connectivity, unable to utilize technology to its maximum, limited resources, uncooperative students, identifying students' learning capabilities, keeping in touch with parents, time constraint, and differentiated instruction not observed.

Failure of Teachers to Facilitate Learning. One of the challenges of teachers in the implementation of differentiated instruction is the failure of teachers to

facilitate learning. Teachers can no longer facilitate the learning of the students due to the threat brought by the pandemic. Informant 1 said that;

First thing was the kind of modality they've chosen. All of my learners chose Printed Self Learning Module Modality. In the SLM itself, it already provided different activities that considered different learning styles. The challenge was, I was not there to give the instruction, and to facilitate the learning. Yes, I sent videos but its more on further explanation, and not the concept of differentiated instruction.

Poor Internet Connectivity. Another concern of the teachers is the issue concerning the intermittent or poor internet connection. Informant 2 said;

The poor internet connectivity and the availability of the materials.

Informant 5 also said;

The greatest challenge is the scarcity of internet access. As much as I want to expose students in the beauty of distance learning through online, as well as letting them experience virtual activities, I cannot achieve it. Most of the students and even I have intermittent or worst, no internet connection. As a result, we always stick to using the modular learning which is not effective compared to face to face classes.

Unable to Utilize Technology to its Maximum.

Another challenge of the participants is the inability to maximize the use of technology. Students are oriented in the use of technology on socializing, leisure and games but limited on education. This become a challenge to change their orientation on the use of technology. Informant 3 said that;

The learners of today are described as digital natives. They were born with technology; they are surrounded with technology; they cannot live and learn without technology. The new normal requires maximum utilization of technology. But it is surprising that students tend to avoid the maximum utilization of technology for educational purposes.

On my part, even if I want to maximize the use of technology, internet connectivity is always a problem. Sometimes, even if the internet connection is good, students would give countless excuses why they could not join the scheduled virtual meetings or why they could not present their task.

I also found virtual interaction not effective. Or maybe, I just need enough training (new normal training) to make the process of learning interesting.

Limited Resources. Another constraint brought by the new normal in the utilization of differentiated strategies is the limited resources available for instruction. Teachers have limited materials used for the production of modules to be delivered to each student which makes it harder for them to produce supplemental activities.

Even informant 4 have also narrated that; In the new normal, we have limited resources. That is the main challenge I encounter.

Uncooperative Students. With the advent of studying without the presence of teachers, students can do anything such as taking breaks, leave modules unanswered and even are distracted. Hence, students are more uncooperative in the learning process. This is verified when informant 6 said;

Some students are not cooperative. Don't have enough time to discover student's individuality.

Supported by informant 7 who retorted that; Some students are not giving their efforts in answering the problem in problem set.

Identifying Students' Learning Capabilities. Another greatest challenge of teachers in the utilization of differentiated instruction in the new normal is on identifying students' learning capabilities as basis for differentiating the strategies. Without properly identifying them, it would be difficult for teachers to design instructions and activities. Informant 8 stated that;

Para sa akosa as a teacher usa gyud sakung challenge nga na experienced it is hard to identify my pupils learning capabilities tungod kay naa ta karun sa new normal. So maglisud kog himug assessment nga naka differentiated instruction.

(For me, as a teacher one of the challenges that I have experienced it is hard to identify my pupils learning capabilities because, we are now in the new normal. So I find it hard to make an assessment using differentiated instruction.)

Keeping in Touch with Parents. Parents as teachers of their children at home facilitates, monitors and guide their children in their lessons. However, teachers find difficulty in keeping in touch with the parents due to several factors involved. Informant 9 narrated her experience;

Challenges is first is the time kasi sa panahon ngayon in the new normal ang mga bata hindi natin makita

only the parents so kailangan maglaan ka ng maraming panahon para makontak mo ang mga parents mo para malamon ang kung ano ang mga problema ng mga bata and then you can plan what you are going to do. (Challenges is first is the time because, in the time of new normal we don't know who our students are only the parents so we need to provide more time to contact the parents to know the problems of the students and then you can plan what you are going to do.)

Time Constraint. Time also contribute to the limited observation and monitor of teachers to the students which in turn restricts teachers to provide appropriate tasks and activities. To do so, teachers need to contact the students through online and even call them by phone. As experienced by Informant 10;

The time constraint and the accommodation of other learners as online learning is quite limited.

Informant 12 also said; I think time constraints and resources.

Differentiated Instruction not observed. Other participants also did not observe the use of differentiated instruction. They have experienced pre-determined activities just to provide learning materials to the students. As what informant 11 narrated;

First and foremost, DI is not observed I guess because, in this time of pandemic as long as the parents claim and bring back the modules to the advisers (with answers), they already have grades. Sad reality worst experience as a teacher and as a student so far.

What are the perceived factors that affect these challenges?

This section presents the results to the 4th major research question; 'What are the perceived factors that affect these challenges?' Two specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question.

Factors Affecting the Challenges Teachers Faced

This section presents the results to the specific question 4.1 'What are the factors that affects the challenges of teachers in differentiating instruction?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: problem with preparations, time frame, adjusting in the new normal, availability of devices and gadgets, motivation to teach and learn, and lack of resources.

Problem with Preparations. One of the factors that

affect challenges encountered by the participants is with the preparation of the lessons. Preparing it and considering the students ability, activities and other factors is a difficult task. Teachers experiences time constraints, materials and resources in preparation of the lessons. Related to this, informant 5 narrated;

I think the most challenging part of having differentiated instruction is the preparation itself.

Informant 6 also said;
Lack of time to prepare.

Moreover, informant 7 highlighted the predicament in relation to time when she said;
Lack of time.

Also, informant 10 supported the statement when she made mentioned;
The time, the lack of materials to be used for teaching, training in terms of the strategies to be used for DI.

Time Frame. As mentioned, time constrains have been the greatest threat of the teachers in the utilization of differentiated instruction. Differentiating the strategies sometimes needs time to prepare for students. . As what informant 2 responded;

Informant 8 also supported informant 2 response when she mentioned that;
Mga factors nga nakaapekto ato is of course time consuming, lack of budget, and pupils discrimination kay lahon man nato ang bata nga slow learners.
(The factors that affects is of course it is time consuming, lack of budget, and pupils' discrimination because we need to separate slow learners.)

Informant 9 even said that;
The factors siguro yong panahon. Number 1 yung panahon tapos mga kagamitan, money yung pera kasi pag wala kang pera paano ka makapunta marami mga bata ang malayo sa school kailangan maglaag ka ng panahon, sapat na pera para makapunta ka doon at mag provide ng kanilang mga materials na kailangan.
(The factors I think is number 1 the time then the materials, money. If you don't have money/budget you can't to go the far-flanged situated students, you need to allocate enough money to go to their place and provide them materials needed.)

Adjusting in the New Normal. It is challenging for the participants to adjust in the new normal. With several constrains, adjusting to the new way of learning can be as tiring as working day long and not to mention the different preparations needed for instruction. informant 3 narrated that;

Some of the factors that can be attributed to those challenges are as follows: Students and teachers are still in the period of adjustment. I need enough training on facilitating learning in the new normal. In the new normal, I have anxiety that I need to resolve. I need to learn more strategies/techniques to make MDL and ODL effective and interesting for the students.

This is also strengthen with the response of informant 11;
(Time of pandemic? Modular only and no online class.)

Availability of Devices and Gadgets. In terms of technological aspects, teachers also experienced greatest challenge for teachers not only with its use for learning but also for communicating the students. Without gadgets and devices, it is difficult for the teachers to fast track student performance and learning progress.

Informant 1;
The "new normal" situation itself. Though we gave our role as a teacher even in these difficult times, the big factor that really affects the challenges was the new normal set up itself. Yes, we have options but there are still hindrances like availability of gadgets, internet connection, etc. In the normal set up, the factors that affects the challenges of teachers in differentiating instruction are class size, time allotment, resources, and the commitment itself of the teacher. Differentiated instruction cannot be achieved daily in every lesson but doing this most of the times could be a great help to learners' meaningful learning.

Motivation to Teach and Learn. Motivation serves as the driving force of the teachers to teach and provide adequate learning experiences to students. Related to motivation to teach and learn, informant 4;

Aside from material resources, the teacher attitude, such as self-motivation towards the teaching-learning process the primary factor.

Lack of Resources. Another factor that affects teachers challenges in implementing differentiated instruction is the availability of necessary materials for learning and designing strategies to be used for instruction. Without the materials, it would be difficult for the teachers to produce the additional learning materials that can be used to provide differentiated strategies to the students. As what informant 12 shared;
Lack or resources and time, better understanding of differentiated instruction.

Effect of Barriers in Differentiated Instruction

This section presents the results to the specific question 4.2 ‘How do these barriers affect differentiated instruction?’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: affecting learning outcome, problem with materials, affecting entire process, and not observed.

Affecting Learning Outcome. Barriers to differentiated instruction affects student learning outcome. Without the aid of instructional differentiation, it would be difficult for the learners to gain appropriate understanding on the lesson especially now that teachers are no longer the facilitator of their learning process. As what Informant 1 experienced;

These barriers really affects differentiated instruction in a result that it cannot be achieved daily or in every lesson because of these limited resources.

This is supported with the statement of informant 4 who said;

It would result in weak learning outcomes.

Moreover, related to preparation, informant 5 said that; The lack of preparation time would affect how the differentiated instructions would be applied.

Elaborated by informant 9 who said that;

It really affects because, pag hindi ka makapunta doon hindi mo na maagapan ang pangangailangan ng bata tapos yung bata din parang mawawala na rin ang interest lalo na syempre ngayon kailangan nila ng assistance ng parent and then hindi naman lahat ng parent marunong so kailangan ikaw talaga na teacher ikaw talaga yung from time to time dapat may contact pag hindi ka makapunta doon kasi nga wala kang sapat na panahon wla kang sapat na pera so ang learning ng bata hindi talaga mag succeed.

It really affects because, if you can’t go to their place and provide their needs and the students would lose interest where they need their parents assistance because not all parents are capable to do so then as a teacher you should contact the parents from time to time if you can’t go to their place because of lack of time and money then the learning of the students would not succeed.

In addition, Informant 10 said;

It affects the entire conduct of DI, however, it would also depend on the teacher’s eagerness and involvement towards the instruction.

Problem with Materials. Aside from the issue

concerning the availability of the materials, some issues on the available materials also affects differentiation of instruction. Problems related to materials were narrated informant 6, 7 and 8 who said that;

Informant 6;
Less production of materials

Informant 7;
Less production of materials in teaching.

Informant 8;
Through that barriers number 1 the parents felt that their child would be discriminated of course. Number 2 additional workloads for the teachers and number 3 lack of budget for the teaching materials para gamitin sa paghimu sa assessment sa mga bata.

(Through that barriers number 1 the parents felt that their child would be discriminated of course. Number 2 additional workloads for the teachers and number 3 lack of budget for the teaching materials to be used for making the assessment tools.)

Affecting Entire Process. Barriers of differentiated instruction affects not only on the production and utilization of differentiated instruction but also affects the whole process of learning. It affects the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the materials. Informant 3 reported that;

It affects the entire process of DI as we still need time to adjust and have trainings and workshop about the topic.

Similarly, Informant 12 also have experienced this when he mentioned that;

It affects the effectiveness and purpose of differentiated instruction as it is one of the programs of DepEd.

Assessing the Output. Another aspect affected by these barriers is the quality of the assessing student output. Teachers experienced difficulty in evaluating and assessing the output in terms of its authenticity of their answers since teachers can no longer monitor them. Informant 2 said that;

The difficulty of assessing the output the difficulty on monitoring the progress.

How do teachers cope with the challenges in implementing differentiated instruction?

This section presents the results to the 5th major research question; ‘How do teachers cope with the



challenges in implementing differentiated instruction?' one specific research question was used to gather data and information for this major research question.

Ways in Resolving Challenges

This section presents the results to the specific question 5.1 'How teachers do resolve the issues/challenges mentioned in implementing differentiated instruction?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: commitment of teachers, attendance to seminars, do part as teacher, close monitoring of progress, review and evaluate the modules, go back to lesson objectives, need for flexibility of teachers, and provide supplementary materials.

Commitment of Teachers. To resolve the challenges in the implementation of differentiated instruction, teacher's commitment and dedication to work and help students is an important factor in order to continue helping students despite the challenges experienced in the new normal.

Informant 1 even said that;
Teachers must be committed enough. If so, then they could be resourceful just to achieve the differentiated instruction in their lessons.

Informant 7 also said;
We should teach the way they learn.

Attendance to Seminars. It is also important for teachers to attend seminars and orientation to improve ways in providing effective and efficient instruction even in the new normal. Attending to seminar gives them additional ideas and recent teaching techniques in the new normal.

As Informant 4 said;
Teachers should engage themselves in seminars and other work motivational activities.

Informant 10 also cited;
They read on teachers' forums published, attend online webinars, and become creative in crafting lessons using DI.

Even Informant 12 reported that;
As a teacher, I think more trainings and seminar with regards to differentiated instruction are needed. Also, the plan and resources needed for it to be well implemented.

Do Part as Teacher. Doing your part as a teacher resolve issues and challenges in the implementation of

differentiated instruction. Teachers are responsible for planning, designing and implementing differentiated instruction.

Just what Informant 6 said;
Just support the DepEd program, do your part as a teacher.

Informant 11 also said:
We, as teachers, have nothing to do with this since modular mode of teaching is the only mode of teaching that is being implemented in school.

Close Monitoring of Progress. Teachers need also to monitor the progress of the students closely, coordinate with the parents and other teachers in order to provide a sound solution to the challenges and issues brought by the new normal in implementing differentiated instruction.

Informant 2;
Give enough time to explore their ideas, coordinate with their parents and guardians, close monitoring of the progress with the help of the parents.

Review and Evaluate the Modules. There is a need to review and evaluate the modules in terms of the integration of differentiating instruction to ensure that students learning preferences are integrated and considered in the evaluation and review of the modules. With this, Informant 3 said;

I could not make any rewind for the 1st school year of emergency remote teaching. But I can review and evaluate the modules that I have provided to my students. By the next school year of ERT, I would redesign those lessons, so I can improve those learning activities for differentiated instruction. If trainings would be available, I would take the chance. If I want to give more for my students, I have to learn more.

Go Back to Lesson Objectives. There is also a need to review the lesson objectives in the lesson modules and assess how they can integrate differentiated instruction. Connected to this, Informant 5 responded that;

Teachers should always go back to the lesson objectives.

Need for Flexibility of Teachers. The main role of the teachers in the new normal is to ensure flexibility over providing instruction to different learners. It is difficult to sustain such with the new set up they have in the new normal. Informant 8 have said;

As a teacher we should be flexible and have time management. Of course, as a teacher we should be also resourceful and tap all linkages and stakeholders para makatabang satua for the additional materials na gamitun as a resources para makatabang sa learning sa atong mga bata.

(As a teacher we should be flexible and have time management. Of course, as a teacher we should be also resourceful and tap all linkages and stakeholders to help us for the additional materials to be used as a resources to help the learning of the students.)

Provide Supplementary Materials. In order to continuously implement and integrate differentiated instruction to students, it is also important for the teachers to provide supplementary learning materials. In fact, Informant 9 narrated that;

We open this problem to our school head and the school head conduct a conference among us and then we have agree that the school head would give us more materials so that we can make supplementary materials for the students and we also asks help from the barangay to deliver this materials to the pupils.

Discussion

The structured themes and the emerging themes were used as bases in broadening the discussion of the findings in this study. As each theme was linked to related literature and studies, substantial discussion was made in order to find their alignment with the theme.

In the concepts of differentiated instruction, the themes in this section were coming from the specific research question ‘How do teachers understand the concepts in implementing differentiated instruction?’ The responses generated two themes were use of variety of methods and addresses various learning needs. In general, the implementation of differentiated instruction was not as easy everyone can think of. It needs the teachers to understand the concept, its purpose and salient features of differentiated instruction

The immediate transition of the traditional face-to-face classes into flexible blended learning where students learn with the help of learning modules provided by the school and guided and facilitated by their parents became a hindrance to overcome the difficulty of implementing differentiated instruction.

This finding was supported by Shand (2018) who

concluded that time management and self-discipline were the major challenges on the implementation of blended learning. She added that teachers need to be mindful of the support they include in the online portion of the course to help keep students on track. Email reminders, planned pacing of activities, and scheduled deadlines all help.

In purpose of differentiating instruction for students the following themes served as results, which were: provide learning opportunities for students, to easily understand the lesson, cater needs of students, to address learning styles, create engaging tasks for students, connect different learning experiences, to meet students’ needs, and ensure acquisition of quality education.

Shan (2018) supported the importance of a more freedom over doing different task included. She added that the online component benefits students by affording increased flexibility in when and where they complete their work, freedom of pace over how long they spend on the course activities, and continuous access to course resources, examples, and content.

In the context of perceived advantages and disadvantages the themes were: active engagement of learners; takes time to prepare, addresses learners’ differences; time consuming, students cope with own style; takes time to prepare, time consuming, individualized learning for students; time consuming, and accommodates diversity of learners; takes time to prepare.

Burkett (2013) also found the same emerging themes in her study on differentiated instruction among intermediate elementary teachers which highlights the idea that differentiated instruction is essential in an effective classroom and supports the claim on differentiated instruction as an approach to learning while highlighting the association of teacher’s utilization experiences in the differentiated instruction.

Differentiation of instruction to meet needs of students of the many purposes of differentiated instruction, meeting the needs of the learners is one of the highlights of this study. Students have different and unique needs and demands on learning which also needs a unique and individualized interference.

Differentiated instruction is regarded as an effective teaching tool to meet the diverse academic needs of learners (Anderson, 2007; Tomlinson, 2004a). Research demonstrates that when students are in responsive classrooms where they are viewed as

individuals and their learning is supported, their attitudes and academic success improves (Ryan & Cooper, 2007).

Differentiation of instruction with number of students, teachers need to consider the number of students before planning. This means that activities differ according to the number of students involved in an activity. Teachers of the traditional classroom setting have the same problems with teachers in the new normal. They have experienced difficulty in bringing differentiated instruction at home and of the number of students they need to attend to.

This is supported by Miller (2016) which emphasizes strategies for differentiated instructions. One of them is to differentiate instruction according to formative assessments and collaboration in a project, oral conference, a series of written responses, and other learning activities. This allows the learners to collaborate with one another to come up with an output.

Execution of differentiated instruction or learning involves the different ways to execute differentiated instruction in the classroom. The emerging themes are easy in the normal classroom, teacher-initiated and student-initiated activities, giving different learning tasks, group learners based on intelligence, flexible learning modalities, more challenging in the face to face, through group activities, provide supplementary materials, and more interaction in face to face class.

This is also similar to the findings of Kaur (2013) that one of the challenges in the blended learning is concerning on technological, organizational and instructional challenges. He added that technological challenges focus on the success of the use of the different platforms of learning. They are more of the use than the availability of the technology thus making it impossible to execute differentiated instruction in the new normal.

In planning for instruction, the following emerging them were developed: know students' interest and learning styles, know students' capabilities, consider several options, consider students' strengths, and evaluating performance tasks.

This means that teachers consider the essence of students' capabilities, interests, learning styles, strengths and weakness in planning for differentiated instruction. Burkett (2013) emphasizes the role of learner's multiple intelligences. Learners differ in many ways, such as appearance, learning styles, multiple intelligence, previous experience, individual

preference and social/emotional development (Gregory & Chapman, 2004 as cited by Burkett, 2013).

Challenges experienced in implementing differentiated instruction by the teachers are failure of teachers to facilitate learning, poor internet connectivity, unable to utilize technology to its maximum, limited resources, uncooperative students, identifying students' learning capabilities, keeping in touch with parents, time constraint, and differentiated instruction not observed.

Lunsford (2017) also found several challenges of teachers in the implementation of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Some of them are teachers needed professional development that defined what differentiated instruction is, how to implement it, and how to get to know their students better, as well as time to observe other teachers implementing differentiated instruction.

He also added that a professional development plan was developed to help meet these needs for teachers. Implications for social change include an improved understanding of differentiated instruction and how to support teachers to overcome the challenges of implementing differentiated instruction. This may lead to better instruction and more academic success for all students which may lead to better assessment scores.

In the context of factors affecting the challenges teachers faced the following themes were drawn: problem with preparations, time frame, adjusting in the new normal, availability of devices and gadgets, motivation to teach and learn, and lack of resources. This is also similar to the findings of Lavania and nor (2020) who revealed that challenges of teachers in implementing differentiated instruction is time and lack of knowledge on differentiated instruction.

This was also supported with several studies that time constrains have become the major threat of the implementation of differentiated instruction (Wan; 2016, Maddox; 2015, Chien; 2015, Lunsford; 2017, Tobin; 2014, Avgousti; 2017, Boston; 2017, Robinson; 2014, Mariyam Shareefa; 2019, Siam; 2016).

On the effect of barriers in differentiated instructions are affecting learning outcome, problem with materials, affecting entire process, and not observed. This is also felt by parents who acts as teachers at home. Their difficulty in utilizing differentiated instructions are brought by accessibility concerns in terms of providing special needs of the learners, lack of access to technology, online resources, and parent lack of pedagogical content knowledge and teacher communication (Garbe et al., 2020). This is an



indication that parents and teachers should maintain a constant communication regarding the development of the learners.

In terms of ways to resolve the mentioned challenges it is also important to commitment of teachers, attendance to seminars, do part as teacher, close monitoring of progress, review and evaluate the modules, go back to lesson objectives, need for flexibility of teachers, and provide supplementary materials as ways in order to provide solution.

The use of differentiated instruction in the traditional classroom has been regarded to be effective in meeting the unique needs of the learners efficiently. However, the shift from the traditional face-to-face classes into flexible blended learning opened several pros and cons in the field of teaching and learning endeavors of student, parents and teachers most especially in securing the implementation of differentiated instruction. The findings of this study, after all, can serve as the first step in embracing the new way of learning and in widening teachers' knowledge in the use of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Despite the trials and difficulties came across by the teachers, they are all united in one common goal – that is to provide quality education to students.

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