

# Competence of Teachers in Using Differentiated Instruction in Teaching English: Self - Assessment

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**Abstract**—This quantitative-descriptive study was conducted to determine the competence of teachers using differentiated instruction in teaching English. The subjects of the study were teachers in ten (10) public elementary schools under Isabela Island District who are teaching English during the school year 2018-2019. A questionnaire was adapted and used in this study, and the findings were: (1) Teachers when grouped according to age, the overall level of competence, are moderately high level of competence in all age groups. In terms of ethnicity, teachers' competences of any ethnic groups are all moderately high level of competence. According to the teachers' length of service, the only average level of competence are those teachers with 16 to 20 years in service while those below 16 or above 20 years of service are moderately high level of competence. According to teachers' highest educational attainment, both teachers with baccalaureate degree or with masters units are of moderately high level of competence; (2) Teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items all elements of differentiated instruction; and (3) There is no significant differences in the competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English in terms of age, ethnicity, length of service and educational attainment. Hence, if teachers are realistically considering giving their students the opportunity to learn based on their individual needs, teachers need to differentiate instruction. Teachers who differentiate instruction understand that skillful instruction is an imperative in order to bring curriculum to life for young learners, and flexible instruction is necessary to make curriculum work for academically diverse student populations.

**Keywords**— Competence of Teachers, Differentiated Instructions, Self-Assessment

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Assessing teacher's competence in using differentiated instruction in the classroom with students of diverse cultural background is of significant issue to determine teacher's need to make them fully-equipped with the necessary pedagogical knowledge in using differentiated instruction. Teachers need a constant assessment of their knowledge and skills about teaching and learning processes. They should motivate their students and show the willingness to design teaching and learning strategies to achieve learner's academic excellence.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms are busy and crowded places where students of different interests and abilities assemble to accomplish a wide variety of tasks. A large number of events may occur simultaneously which are unpredictable. To manage all these events, teacher requires teaching competencies in using differentiated instruction (Tomlinson

2005). He added, today's educational systems are experiencing greater diversity in the classrooms because they are comprised of students with many different needs. Whatever these different needs might be, the goal for all students is that they achieve high standards. For this reason, Lawrence-Brown as cited in Demos & Foshay, (2009) confirmed that providing students with equal and varied opportunities to reach their potential is very much necessary. Subsequently, Tomlinson, (2000) added that there is ample evidence that students in the elementary grades are more successful in school when they are challenged at their readiness level, encouraged to develop their interests, and taught according to their learning profile. Therefore, in order to accomplish the objectives of the students in their day to day learning, differentiated instruction should be adopted in the classroom by the teachers.

Differentiated instruction Tomlinson (2003) says, is an instructional method that allows teachers to develop a detailed understanding of each student's readiness, interests, and modes of learning through a range of instructional and management strategies. Teaching with student variance in mind allows teachers to plan varied approaches to what students need to learn, how they will learn it, and how the students can express what they have learned in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as he or she can as efficiently as possible.

Although differentiated instruction is no longer new in the field of teaching profession, but then, Isabela City Division particularly Isabela Island District has just given differentiated instruction to be of significant instructional method to be used in the classroom since many classes nowadays are of diverse learner's. Additionally, differentiated instruction is one of the major components of the English Language Literacy and Numeracy, otherwise known as ELLN Program of the Department of Education. The Department of Education of the Philippines issued a DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2015 or known as Guidelines on the Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Program: Professional Development Component. It is a program that aims to attain and contribute to the lifelong and effective learning of the learner's. Stated and discussed thoroughly as well in the said DepEd Order the different approaches and strategies to achieve more effective learning and one of those is differentiated instruction.

Even if, the said DepEd Order was disseminated throughout the Philippines, only the Regional and Division ELLN Focal persons attended the national and regional training. Correspondingly, a division-wide training was

conducted for the school ELLN Coordinators; consequently, school ELLN Coordinator conducts mentoring sessions with his/ her colleagues in line with the said DepEd Order, thus, requiring all public school teachers to use differentiated instruction as one of their teaching method in English. However, there was no assessment made to assess the level of competence of the teachers in using differentiated instruction.

Hence, it is therefore high time for all teachers who were tasked to use differentiated instruction in their classrooms to assess their level of competence in the use of differentiated instruction in order to establish a basis for professional development for teachers to increase their knowledge in using differentiated instruction strategies, provide professional development to increase the use of differentiation in all subject areas, and to provide support in what teachers identify as factors that help or barriers that hinder the implementation of differentiated instruction because some teachers may have some knowledge of what differentiated instruction is and how to plan it, but some may not despite their attendance to the seminar.

Thus, this study aims to assess and determine the competence of English teachers in using differentiated instruction as strategy in teaching English through self-assessment.

*Statement of the Problem*

This study sought to determine the competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English of Isabela Island District. Specifically, this study sought to answers the following questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the teachers in terms of:
  - a. age;
  - b. ethnicity;
  - c. length of service; and
  - d. educational attainment?
2. What is the overall level of competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English in terms of:
  - a. student learner characteristics;
  - b. clarity;
  - c. pre-assessment;
  - d. effective instructional strategies;
  - e. individual student supports;
  - f. flexible grouping; and
  - g. learning environment?
3. What is the level of competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English when they are grouped according to:
  - a. age;
  - b. ethnicity;
  - c. length of service; and
  - d. educational attainment?
4. Are there significant differences between the competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English when data are grouped according to teachers' age, ethnicity, length of service, and highest educational attainment?

*Hypothesis:*

The researcher advance the hypothesis as:

1. There are no significant differences between the competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English when data are grouped according to age, ethnicity, length of service, and educational attainment.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

Quantitative-descriptive design was used in this study. Descriptive research designed to Gay et al. (2009) described as the process by which researcher decides what to study, answers specific questions, collects data from respondents, analyzes the data using statistics, and conducts inquiry in an unbiased and objective manner.

B. Research Respondents

The subjects of this study were the teachers teaching English of Isabela Island District, Isabela City Division, school year 2018-2019. Stratified random sampling was used to determine the teacher-respondents. The respondents of this study were the teachers teaching English in the Island District which comprises 10 elementary schools.

According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970) in “Determining Sample Size for Research Activities”, with a desired margin of error of 5%, the population of 91 teachers, 73 respondents will be appropriate as shown In Table 1.

TABLE 1. The proportionate number of respondents

School	No. of Teachers Teaching English	No. of Teacher-Respondents
Badjao Floating Elementary School	17	13
Diki Elementary School	9	7
Hji. Amilhamja Lahaba Memorial Elementary School	6	5
Lampinigan Elementary School	5	4
Lukbuton Elementary School	4	3
Malamawi Central Elementary School	10	7
Marang – Marang Elementary School	8	7
MS. Bernardo Elementary School	8	7
Panigayan Elementary School	12	10
Tampalan Elementary School	12	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>73</b>

C. Data Analysis

*The validity and reliability of the instruments*

Since the instrument adapted in this study is standardized questionnaire which was developed by Frances Stetson (2006), and its validity and reliability had already been established, then there is no need to subject it to the validity and reliability process.

*Data gathering procedure*

After the research instrument is prepared, permission to conduct the study was asked from the School Division Superintendent and subsequently from the District Supervisor, then from the Ten School Heads where the respondents are employed. After approval, the researcher distributed the research instrument to the respondents. They were asked to answer each item in the instrument. Then the data gathered

from the two instruments were tabulated, coded, analyzed and interpreted.

#### *Statistical treatment of the data*

For the socio-demographic profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age, ethnicity, length of service, and educational attainment, frequency count and percentage were used.

To determine the level of competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English in terms of the student's learner characteristics, clarity, pre-assessment, effective instructional strategies, individual student supports, flexible grouping, and learning environment, weighted mean and standard deviation were used.

To determine the level of competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English when they are grouped in terms of age, ethnicity, length of service, and educational attainment, weighted mean was used.

To determine the significant difference between competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English when data are grouped according to age, ethnicity, and length of service, the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used.

To determine the significant difference between competences of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English when data are grouped according highest educational attainment, the *t*-Test for Two Independent Samples was used.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to determine the competence of English teachers in using differentiated instruction as strategy in teaching English through self-assessment.

#### *A. Socio-demographic Profile of Teacher-Respondents*

More than half of the respondents were aged 26 to 35 years old (56.00%) while one eighth of them were aged 36 to 45 years old (21.30%). Few respondents aged 25 years old and below (12.00%) and aged 46 years old and above (10.60%). Almost half of the respondents were Tausog (49.30%) which has the highest number followed by in descending order by Bisaya (21.90%), Chavacano (16.40%) and Sama Bangingih (12.30%). Majority (58.90%) of the teachers aged at most five (5) years in teaching while 19.20% of them have six to ten years of experience in teaching. The rest of the respondents have at least eleven (11) years in service. Most of the teachers have Masters units (80.80%) and the rest with Baccalaureate Degree (19.20%).

#### *B. The Overall Level of Competence of Teachers in Using Differentiated Instruction in Teaching English in Terms of Components*

On all items, teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items. Under student learner's characteristics component, teachers also responded with moderately high level of competence. Under clarity component, teachers responded with moderately high level of competence. Teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items for

this component. Teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items of the pre-assessment component. Teachers also responded with moderately high level of competence.

On all items, teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items. Under the effective instructional strategies component, teachers also responded with moderately high level of competence. Under individual student supports component, teachers responded with moderately high level of competence. Teachers also responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items. With the mean of 3.72, teachers responded with moderately high level of competence. Thus, teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items of the flexing grouping component. On all items, teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in accomplishing particular task as specified in each items. Under learning environment component, teachers also responded with moderately high level of competence (mean=3.85).

#### *C. The Level of Competence of Teachers in Using Differentiated Instruction in Teaching English When Data are Grouped According to Their Profile*

Teachers aged at most 25 years old have moderately high level of competence on student learner's characteristics, clarity, flexible grouping, and learning environment while they have average level of competence on pre-assessment, effective instructional strategies, individual student supports. In general, teachers have moderately high level of competence on using differentiated instruction in teaching English. In general according to the teacher's ethnicity, in all components such as students learner's characteristic, clarity, pre-assessment, effective instructional strategies, individual student supports, flexible grouping and learning environment, the teachers of any ethnic groups have moderately high level of competence except those under those Sama Bangingih teachers particularly on individual student supports, they only have average level of competence. On overall, regardless of teacher's ethnicity, they have moderately high level of competence in using differentiated instruction in teaching English.

In general according to the teacher's length of service, in all components such as students learner's characteristic, clarity, pre-assessment, effective instructional strategies, individual student supports, flexible grouping and learning environment, the teachers of any number of years in service have moderately high level of competence except those teachers with 11 to 15 years in service particularly on learning environment have highly level of competence and those teachers with 16 to 20 years in service have average level of competence particularly on individual student support, flexible grouping and learning environment. On overall, only those teachers with 16 to 20 years in service have average level of competence while the rest of any years in service have moderately high level of competence in using differentiated

instruction in teaching English. In general, in every component and as a whole on the differentiated instruction, teachers with or without masters units have moderately high level of competence.

#### *D. The Significant Differences Between the Competence of Teachers in Using Differentiated Instruction in Teaching English*

Using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with confidence level of  $\alpha=0.05$ , statistically, the only significant is on effective instructional strategies component of the differentiated instruction. That is, age group of the teachers statistically significant on the level of their competence under effective instructional strategies component. Overall as differentiated instruction with  $F=0.954$  and  $p=0.193$ , there is no significant difference according to the teacher's age group. Hence, teacher's competence cannot be determined by teacher's age group. Statistically, there are no significant differences according to the teacher's ethnicity on all components. Thus, ethnicity does not determine competence of teachers in each components. Generally, with  $F=0.389$  and  $p=0.761$ , there is no significant difference according to teacher's ethnicity in using differentiated instruction in teaching English. Using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with confidence level of  $\alpha=0.05$ , statistically, the only significant is on learning environment component while there are no significant differences on other components. That is, teacher's length of service determined the competence of teachers on learning environment component of the differentiated instruction. Generally, with  $F=1.162$  and  $p=0.335$ , there is no significant difference according to teacher's length of service in using differentiated instruction in teaching English.

Using t-Test for Two Independent Samples with confidence level of  $\alpha=0.05$ , statistically, there are no significant differences on all components of differentiated instruction. Generally, with  $t=-0.924$  and  $p=0.358$ , significant difference does not exist. Thus, teacher's educational attainment does not determine the competence of teachers in using differentiated in teaching English.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

##### *Conclusion*

Based on the findings enumerated in this study with the corresponding hypothesis, the following were concluded:

1. The overall level of competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English when they are grouped according to age are of moderately high level of competence in all age groups. According to ethnicity, teachers' competences of any ethnic groups are all moderately high level of competence. According to the teachers' length of service, the only average level of competence are those teachers with 16 to 20 years in service while those below 16 or above 20 years of service are moderately high level of competence. According to teachers' highest educational attainment, both teachers with baccalaureate degree or with masters units are of moderately high level of competence.
2. The overall level of competence of teachers in using

differentiated instruction in teaching English when data are classified according to learner's characteristics are of moderately high level of competence, on clarity is of moderately high level of competence, on pre-assessment is of moderately high level of competence, on effective instructional strategies is of moderately high level of competence, on individual student supports is of moderately high level of competence, on flexible grouping is of moderately high level of competence, and on learning environment is of moderately high level of competence.

3. Not enough evidenced has been established to reject the hypothesis. Thus, there are no significant differences on the competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction in teaching English according to teacher's age, ethnicity, length of service, and highest educational attainment.

4. Addressing the needs of today's academically diverse students can be overwhelming. However, if teachers are realistically considering giving their students the opportunity to learn based on their individual needs, teachers need to differentiate instruction. Teachers who differentiate instruction understand that skillful instruction is an imperative in order to bring curriculum to life for young learners, and flexible instruction is necessary to make curriculum work for academically diverse student populations.

##### *Recommendation*

1. Based from the findings and conclusion of this study, the following has been recommended:

Having no significant difference on the use of differentiated instruction in teaching English and with moderately high level of teacher's competence in using differentiated instruction, it is hereby recommended teachers should continuously apply the differentiated instruction in teaching English regardless of their age, ethnicity, length of service and highest educational attainment.

2. Teachers responded with moderately high level of competence in this study and hereby recommended that principals, supervisors and other administrators should continue to include differentiated instruction in designing of their trainings for professional development of teachers.

3. Gender and school of other districts in the division were not considered in this study and hereby recommended that the future researchers should conduct studies that determine differences on these particular variables.

4. Relationship between the learner's' achievements and competence of teachers in using differentiated instruction were not included in this study and hereby recommended to use correlational studies for this particular relationships.

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