THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLISH CLASS

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In today's schooling and achievement landscape, meeting students' varied requirements has become a top priority, making customized educational opportunities essential. Differentiated instruction, a widely acknowledged teaching model, successfully meets these diverse student needs. The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of individualized instruction and its effects on the involvement of pupils in English learning at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh. All English educators and eighth-grade students participated. The subjects were chosen using an approach known as purposeful sampling to ensure that they were actively involved in English classes and were familiar with the individualized instruction model. Data were collected using qualitative and quantitative methods, with observation sheets and interview guides serving as research resources. The qualitative data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's procedures, which included data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. In addition, quantitative data were collected through surveys that assessed students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement levels. According to the findings, 75% of students felt more motivated and engaged in English learning after differentiated instruction was implemented. Overall, the findings show that the above strategy successfully dealt with students' growth levels, learning styles, and interests, resulting in significant increases in emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement in the English classroom.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction; English Learning; Student Engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational discourse, addressing the diverse needs of students is paramount. Differentiated instruction has emerged as a vital teaching model aimed at accommodating these varied needs, distinguishing itself from conventional methods by tailoring educational experiences to individual learning styles, interests, and developmental levels. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which posits that effective learning occurs when students engage with content that lies just beyond their current capabilities, facilitated by guidance from more knowledgeable individuals.

Vygotsky emphasizes the significance of social interaction in learning, where children acquire social norms and problem-solving techniques through collaborative dialogue. This mediation process is crucial in understanding students' learning journeys, particularly within multicultural environments where sociocultural backgrounds significantly influence their educational experiences. Wang (2022) highlights the necessity for language teachers to recognize individual student development, enabling them to tailor instructional approaches that consider personality, aptitude, and interest. This recognition of diversity is essential, as students in a single classroom may exhibit varying motivations, learning styles, and levels of competence, necessitating differentiated instruction to meet their distinct needs.

Tomlinson (2003) defines differentiated instruction as a pedagogical approach that encompasses differentiation in content, process, product, and learning environment to effectively address these diverse needs. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) advocate for using students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles as the foundation for differentiation, while Roy, Guay, and Valois (2013) focus on grouping, learning goals, and teaching strategies based on performance and motivation. Each educator must adapt their approach to fit their

unique classroom dynamics.

This study aims to explore the implementation of differentiated instruction and its effects on student engagement in English learning at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh, a school characterized by a diverse student body. The research will address the following questions: What strategies do teachers employ to implement differentiated instruction? How does differentiated instruction impact students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement in learning? Furthermore, the study aims to highlight how differentiated instruction can enhance active participation and enjoyment in the learning process.

Although previous research, such as Saleh (2021) and Satyarini (2022), indicates that differentiated instruction can improve learning outcomes, it is essential to investigate its potential role in fostering student engagement. Engagement encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Emotional engagement is evidenced by students' feelings of interest and motivation; cognitive engagement involves their analytical and problem-solving capabilities; and behavioral engagement reflects their participation and effort during learning activities. Given the context of this study, it will analyze the specific practices of differentiated instruction employed in English classes and their impact on student engagement at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative design with a descriptive approach to examine two main research problems: 1) How is differentiated instruction used in English classes at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh? 2) How does differentiated instruction affect student engagement in terms of emotion, cognition, and behavior? The research subjects were all three English teachers and thirty-eight eighth-grade students from SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh, chosen using intentional sampling to guarantee that those who participated had personal involvement with customized instruction in their English classes. The requirements for selection require teachers to take ownership of specific approaches and students to attend such classes for less than one semester. Data were gathered through two qualitative methods: structured observations and semi-structured interviews. An observation sheet was carefully prepared to keep track of the particular approaches of individualized instruction used in the classroom, with a focus on content, process, and product differentiation. The interview guide included ten open-ended questions based on Tomlinson's (2003) framework of differentiated teaching and Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris's (2004) theory regarding student engagement, to make sure the questions dealt with both the teaching techniques and their effects on engagement among learners. To confirm the accuracy of the interview questions, three educators reviewed and refined the guide, providing feedback on its relevance and thoroughness. During data collection, the researcher observed multiple English class sessions and interviewed every educator and an appropriate number of students to get various points of view. The information obtained was processed using Miles and Huberman's qualitative data analysis framework, which includes data collection, data decrease via coding as well as categorization, data display via thematic matrices, and conclusion drawing for analyzing the results. This demanding methodical strategy ensured a thorough understanding of how individualized instruction is executed and how it affects how students participate in the English language instructional setting at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
The Implementation of Differentiated Instruction in English Learning

Based on the observation results, differentiated instruction was applied in the English learning process at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh by differentiating the content, process, and product of learning. The teacher differentiated the learning content by adapting it to the students' development levels. At the beginning of the lesson, a cognitive diagnostic assessment was conducted to determine students' development levels and their English vocabulary mastery. This assessment served as the foundation for selecting the teaching materials, which included reading materials and videos. Students with higher levels of understanding were provided with more complex and challenging materials, which motivated

them to engage more in the learning process. Meanwhile, students who required additional support were given simplified materials and vocabulary guidelines, helping them comprehend more complex concepts.

Differentiation was also applied in the learning process. The teacher gave students flexibility to learn according to their preferred learning styles. The observation showed that most students enjoyed watching educational videos to enhance their understanding, while others preferred taking notes and re-reading material. These students sought out articles or books and then wrote down important information in their notebooks. The results indicated that the teacher gave students the freedom to choose their learning methods, enabling them to enjoy and appreciate their learning experiences more.

Moreover, the teacher allowed students to demonstrate their understanding in various ways. Some students chose to perform role plays in class or create video presentations, while others who preferred visual learning opted to showcase their work through infographics, mind maps, or PowerPoint slides. Some students also preferred presenting their knowledge verbally in front of the class. The flexibility in selecting learning outcomes was tailored to each student's interests and abilities.

The Impact of Differentiated Instruction on Student Engagement

The impact of differentiated instruction on student engagement was gathered through interviews with several students. The interview results revealed that giving students the freedom to choose their own learning methods increased their motivation. Most students felt more enthusiastic about learning when they could engage with content relevant to their interests. This approach prevented boredom and allowed students to connect with learning activities they enjoyed.

Furthermore, the differentiated learning model positively influenced students' performance. Students demonstrated better focus during lessons because the content aligned with their interests and learning styles. Additionally, observations supported this finding, revealing that students actively participated in class discussions and collaborative activities. Students also put significant effort into their work, as evidenced by the quality of their class performances and assignments.

By tailoring the learning content to students' initial knowledge and development levels, differentiated instruction successfully engaged students cognitively. Students reported that learning materials that were neither too easy nor too difficult helped them develop critical thinking and decision-making skills. Differentiated learning also enabled students to connect the concepts they were learning to real-life situations, fostering deeper understanding and cognitive growth.

Differentiating Instruction: Content, Process, and Product

Differentiating the content, process, and product of instruction was essential for the success of English learning at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh. Differentiation in content was achieved by providing varied learning materials based on students' developmental levels, ensuring that all students were appropriately challenged. For instance, students with higher proficiency levels received more complex materials, while those requiring extra support were given simpler materials and vocabulary guidance.

The process of differentiation was customized to students' learning styles, allowing them to engage with content in ways that suited them best. Some students preferred visual learning through videos, while others favored more traditional methods such as reading and note-taking. This flexibility contributed to greater student engagement and a more positive learning experience.

Product differentiation was achieved by offering students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning outcomes in various formats, according to their preferences and abilities. Students could choose to create role plays, presentations, infographics, or other visual aids. This flexibility encouraged creativity and allowed students to showcase their strengths, further enhancing their engagement in the learning process.

Positive Impact on Student Engagement: Emotional, Cognitive, and Behavioral

The implementation of differentiated instruction in English learning had a significant impact on students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. Emotionally, students expressed increased motivation and interest in the lessons, as they were given the freedom to explore topics in ways that matched their interests and learning preferences. This aligns with Newmann's (1992) theory, which emphasizes that students' emotional engagement can be identified through feelings such as motivation and interest.

Cognitively, students benefited from lessons that were appropriately challenging for their development levels, which improved their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The findings align with research by Lee, Song, and Hong (2019), which found that differentiated instruction enhances students' cognitive engagement by helping them make connections between classroom knowledge and real-world applications.

Behaviorally, students demonstrated increased participation in class activities and group discussions. They exerted more effort in their work and displayed greater involvement in the learning process. This finding is consistent with Marks' (2000) assertion that students' behavioral engagement is reflected in the effort they invest in their learning tasks.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the positive findings, this study had several limitations. The sample size was limited to one school, with participants comprising only the English teachers and students at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other schools or regions. Additionally, the qualitative approach used in this study may introduce subjectivity in data interpretation. Future research could address these limitations by including a larger, more diverse sample and employing a mixed-method approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of differentiated instruction.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study focuses on two critical aspects: the implementation of differentiated instruction and its impact on student engagement in English learning at SMPN Hindu 3 Blahbatuh. The differentiated instruction model was executed by tailoring the content, processes, and products of learning. Content differentiation involved adjusting the learning materials to align with the students' developmental levels and prior knowledge. For example, students with a stronger grasp of English vocabulary were provided with more complex texts and challenging tasks, whereas those needing additional support received simpler materials with vocabulary aids to enhance their understanding of intricate concepts.

Differentiation in the learning process was facilitated by allowing students to engage with the content in ways that suited their individual learning styles. Observations revealed that many students preferred learning through visual means, such as videos, which helped them grasp concepts more quickly. Others favored traditional methods like note-taking and reading. This flexibility in approach not only fostered a more enjoyable learning environment but also promoted deeper appreciation for the material among students.

Furthermore, product differentiation was evident in the diverse ways students demonstrated their understanding of the content. They were allowed to select how they presented their learning outcomes, whether through role-play, infographics, mind maps, or presentations. This autonomy catered to their interests and abilities, encouraging creativity and personal investment in their learning.

The study found that the implementation of differentiated instruction positively influenced student engagement across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Data collected from interviews indicated that students felt more motivated and enthusiastic about learning when they were given the freedom to choose how to engage with the material. They reported that the lessons felt more relevant and aligned with their interests, which contributed to increased participation and effort during class activities.

In addition to emotional engagement, the findings highlighted improvements in cognitive engagement, as evidenced by students' enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students expressed that the challenges presented in lessons that matched their ability levels

encouraged them to think critically and connect the content to real-world situations.

While this study primarily investigated the impact of differentiated instruction on student engagement, it did not assess the influence on academic achievement. Future research should explore how differentiated instruction affects students' academic performance to gain a comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness in promoting cognitive engagement. Subsequent studies could examine the long-term effects of personalized instruction on learners' academic success and overall educational experience, contributing valuable insights into the benefits of differentiated teaching strategies.

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