



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION PRACTICES OF ARALING PANLIPUNAN 4 TEACHERS: BASIS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Cassie R. Lazo

*Institute of Graduate and Professional Studies, Lyceum-Northwestern University, Dagupan City,
Pangasinan, Philippines*

ABSTRACT

This study examined the differentiated instruction practices and inclusive education implementation of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in Bolinao I and II Districts. It also analyzed the relationship between teachers' profiles, differentiated instruction practices, inclusive education practices, and the challenges encountered in implementing differentiated instruction. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed using survey questionnaires administered to 46 teachers. Weighted mean, chi-square test, and Pearson correlation were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrate an overall often level of differentiated instruction practices, particularly in content, process, product, and learning environment differentiation. Meanwhile, inclusive education practices were rated as always implemented, indicating strong commitment to learner diversity and equity. Results further showed that age, sex, and educational attainment had no significant relationship with differentiated instruction practices, while training attendance and teaching experience showed significant relationships. Moreover, a strong positive relationship was found between differentiated instruction and inclusive education practices. However, teachers encountered serious challenges, including heavy workload, large class size, limited instructional time, and resource constraints. The study concludes that differentiated instruction is a key determinant of inclusive education effectiveness, while professional development and teaching experience significantly enhance instructional competence. Addressing systemic challenges is essential to strengthen classroom implementation.

Keywords: *Differentiated Instruction, Inclusive Education, Teaching Practices*

INTRODUCTION

The call for inclusive education has intensified as education systems recognize the importance of addressing learner diversity in increasingly complex classroom environments. Differentiated instruction is widely regarded as a cornerstone of inclusive pedagogy, enabling teachers to modify content, process, products, and learning environments according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2017). International organizations such as UNESCO strongly advocate for inclusive and equitable education through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which emphasizes that no learner should be left behind regardless of ability or background (UNESCO, 2020). Moreover, research has consistently shown that differentiated instruction fosters higher learner engagement, improves academic performance, and supports diverse learners, including those with special educational needs (Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2012). Despite its recognized benefits, global studies reveal that teachers often struggle with the practical implementation of differentiated strategies due to time constraints, lack of training, and insufficient resources (Westwood, 2018). These challenges highlight the need for context-specific investigations into how differentiated instruction is practiced by teachers in real classroom settings.

In addition, globalization and the rapid advancement of technology have further diversified classrooms, making differentiated instruction more relevant than ever. Learners today vary not only in cognitive abilities but also in cultural backgrounds, digital literacy, and learning preferences (OECD, 2019). As a result, teachers are expected to adopt flexible and adaptive teaching strategies that cater to 21st-century learners. Studies indicate that teachers who effectively implement differentiated instruction demonstrate higher levels of teaching competence and are better able to create inclusive learning environments (Heacox, 2012). However, the extent to which these practices are consistently applied across different contexts remains unclear, particularly in developing countries, thereby reinforcing the importance of conducting localized research.

In the Philippine educational context, inclusive education is institutionalized through various policies and reforms initiated by the Department of Education (DepEd). The K to 12 Curriculum emphasizes learner-centered instruction, where differentiated teaching is essential in addressing the diverse needs of Filipino learners (DepEd, 2016). Furthermore, DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 highlights the implementation of inclusive education programs that cater to learners with disabilities, indigenous learners, and those from marginalized sectors. Despite these policy directions, several studies reveal that the application of differentiated instruction in Philippine classrooms remains a challenge. Teachers often encounter difficulties such as large class sizes, limited teaching resources, and insufficient training in inclusive pedagogies (Balagtas et al., 2019). Additionally, the transition to the MATATAG Curriculum further underscores the need for adaptive teaching strategies, as it focuses on making the curriculum more responsive and relevant to learners' needs. This situation calls for a closer examination of how teachers implement differentiated instruction in actual classroom practice.

Moreover, the Philippine context presents unique challenges such as multilingual classrooms, socio-economic disparities, and varying levels of learner preparedness, all of which necessitate the use of differentiated instruction (Orbeta et al., 2020). Araling Panlipunan, in particular, requires teachers to contextualize lessons and promote critical thinking about social, cultural, and historical issues. Without effective differentiation, some learners may struggle to grasp key concepts, leading to gaps in understanding and achievement. Studies suggest that teachers' competence in differentiated instruction significantly influences learners' academic success and engagement (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010; Briones, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to assess teachers' practices to ensure that inclusive education goals are being met.

At the division level, the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan continuously implements programs aimed at improving instructional quality and promoting inclusive education in line with national and global standards. Professional development initiatives, learning action cells (LAC), and teacher trainings are conducted to enhance teachers' pedagogical competence. However, research indicates that participation in training does not always translate into effective classroom implementation, as teachers may still face contextual barriers such as limited materials, time constraints, and varying levels of support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DepEd Pangasinan I, 2023). Furthermore, there is a need for empirical data to determine whether these initiatives effectively improve differentiated instruction practices among teachers. Conducting studies at the division level allows education leaders to design more targeted and evidence-based interventions that address specific needs.

In the local context of Bolinao I and II Districts, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, the implementation of differentiated instruction becomes even more critical due to the diversity of learners in terms of socio-economic background, academic ability, and access to educational resources. Teachers in these districts are tasked with delivering quality instruction in Araling Panlipunan 4 while ensuring that all learners are actively engaged and able to achieve the desired competencies. However, anecdotal observations and informal reports suggest that teachers may vary in their understanding and application of differentiated instruction strategies. Factors such as availability of instructional materials, class size, and access to professional development opportunities may influence their teaching practices (Gay, 2018).

Furthermore, Araling Panlipunan 4 as a subject requires the development of critical thinking, cultural awareness, and civic competence among learners. These competencies demand teaching approaches that go beyond traditional methods and accommodate diverse learning needs. Without proper differentiation, some learners may become disengaged or fail to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Localized research is therefore necessary to identify the strengths and gaps in teachers' practices, as well as the challenges they encounter in implementing differentiated instruction. Such findings can serve as a basis for developing context-specific instructional materials, training programs, and support mechanisms that enhance inclusive education in the district.

Ultimately, this study was grounded in the recognition that effective teaching is not a one-size-fits-all approach. By examining the differentiated instruction practices of Araling Panlipunan 4 teachers in Bolinao I and II Districts, the research sought to bridge the gap between educational policy and classroom practice. The results of the study provided valuable insights for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers in designing interventions that strengthen instructional competence, promote inclusivity, and improve learner outcomes. In doing so, the study contributed to the broader goal of achieving equitable and quality education for all learners.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the Differentiated Instruction Practices of Araling Panlipunan 4 Teachers in Bolinao I and II Districts, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, as a basis for inclusive education.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Sex;
 - 1.3 Highest educational attainment;
 - 1.4 Years of teaching experience; and
 - 1.5 Relevant trainings attended on differentiated instruction and inclusive education?
2. What is the level of differentiated instruction practices of Araling Panlipunan 4 teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 Content differentiation;
 - 2.2 Process differentiation;
 - 2.3 Product differentiation; and
 - 2.4 Learning environment?
3. What is the level of inclusive education practices as perceived by the teachers?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their differentiated instruction practices?
5. Is there a significant relationship between differentiated instruction practices and inclusive education?
6. What challenges do Araling Panlipunan 4 teachers encounter in implementing differentiated instruction?
7. Based on the findings, what intervention program may be proposed to enhance differentiated instruction practices and promote inclusive education?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive method was used to determine and describe the differentiated instruction practices of Araling

Panlipunan 4 teachers in Bolinao I and II Districts, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan in terms of content, process, product, and learning environment. It also described the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and relevant trainings attended.

In addition, the correlational method was utilized to examine the relationship between the respondents' profile and their differentiated instruction practices, as well as the relationship between differentiated instruction practices and inclusive education. This design was appropriate since the study did not involve manipulation of variables but instead focused on determining existing relationships among them.

Through this design, data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire administered to the selected Araling Panlipunan 4 teachers. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted to provide a clear understanding of the current practices and their implications for inclusive education in the identified districts.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

This study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument to determine the differentiated instruction practices of Araling Panlipunan 4 teachers in Bolinao I and II Districts, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, as well as their perception of inclusive education. The questionnaire was carefully developed based on related literature, studies, and DepEd guidelines on differentiated instruction and inclusive education to ensure relevance and alignment with the objectives of the study.

The instrument was composed of several parts. The first part gathered the profile of the respondents, including age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and relevant trainings attended. The second part focused on the level of differentiated instruction practices, which included indicators such as content differentiation, process differentiation, product differentiation, and learning environment. The third part assessed the inclusive education practices of the respondents. The final part included items that identified the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing differentiated instruction.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was subjected to content validation by experts in the field of education, particularly those knowledgeable in curriculum and instruction. Their suggestions and comments were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items. The instrument was also revised to ensure that all items were understandable and aligned with the study's objectives. Reliability testing was conducted through a pilot test, and the results were analyzed to ensure consistency of responses.

For data collection, the researcher first secured approval and permission from the appropriate authorities, including the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan and the school heads of the selected schools in Bolinao I and II Districts. After approval was granted, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. Clear

instructions were provided to ensure that the respondents understood each item in the instrument. The respondents were given sufficient time to accomplish the questionnaire, and retrieval was done immediately or on an agreed schedule to ensure a high response rate.

All collected data were checked, tallied, and organized for statistical analysis. Strict confidentiality and ethical considerations were observed throughout the process, ensuring that the identities and responses of the participants were kept anonymous and used solely for research purposes. The gathered data served as the basis for analysis and interpretation to answer the research problems of the study.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools based on each questions to ensure accurate interpretation and meaningful presentation of results.

For question 1, which focused on the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and relevant trainings attended, frequency count and percentage were used. These statistical tools described the distribution of the respondents' demographic and professional characteristics.

For question 2, which determined the level of differentiated instruction practices of Araling Panlipunan 4 teachers in terms of content, process, product, and learning environment, the weighted mean and standard deviation were utilized. The weighted mean determined the average level of practice for each indicator, while the standard deviation described the variability of the responses among the teachers.

For question 3, which measured the level of inclusive education practices as perceived by the respondents, the weighted mean and standard deviation were also used to determine the overall level and consistency of responses regarding inclusive education implementation.

For question 4, which determined the significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their differentiated instruction practices, the Chi-square test of independence was used for categorical variables such as sex and educational attainment, while the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was used for continuous variables such as age and years of teaching experience. These statistical tools determined whether a significant relationship existed between the respondents' profile and their instructional practices.

For question 5, which examined the significant relationship between differentiated instruction practices and inclusive education, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables.

For question 6, which identified the challenges encountered by Araling Panlipunan 4 teachers in implementing differentiated instruction, frequency count, percentage, and ranking were used to determine the most common challenges experienced by the respondents.

All statistical analyses were interpreted at a 0.05 level of significance to determine whether the null hypotheses of the study were accepted or rejected.

RESULTS

Table 1
Profile of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan Teachers
(N = 46)

Profile Variables	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	20–30 years old	6	13.04
	31–40 years old	14	30.43
	41–50 years old	18	39.13
	51 years old and above	8	17.39
	Total	46	100
Sex	Male	10	21.74
	Female	36	78.26
	Total	46	100
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	12	26.09
	With MA Units	20	43.48
	Master's Degree Graduate	10	21.74
	Doctorate Units	4	8.70
	Total	46	100
Years of Teaching Experience	1–5 years	5	10.87
	6–10 years	12	26.09
	11–20 years	20	43.48
	21 years and above	9	19.57
	Total	46	100
Number of Relevant Trainings Attended	0–2 trainings	7	15.22
	3–5 trainings	18	39.13
	6–8 trainings	15	32.61
	9 and above trainings	6	13.04
	Total	46	100

Table 2A
Content Differentiation
(N=46)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Modify lesson content based on learners' readiness.	4.25	Always
2. Use varied instructional materials for different learners.	3.95	Often
3. Simplify complex concepts for struggling learners.	4.30	Always
4. Provide enrichment materials for advanced learners.	3.40	Sometimes
5. Use localized examples in teaching Araling Panlipunan.	4.35	Always
6. Align content with learners' interests and experiences.	4.10	Often
7. Adjust learning competencies when necessary.	3.25	Sometimes
8. Integrate multimedia resources in delivering lessons.	3.80	Often
9. Provide supplementary reading materials for learners.	3.45	Often
10. Ensure lesson content is understandable to all learners.	4.40	Always
Average Weighted Mean	3.92	Often

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21–5.00 = Always
3.41–4.20 = Often
2.61–3.40 = Sometimes
1.81–2.60 = Rarely
1.00–1.80 = Never

Table 2B
Process Differentiation
(N=46)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Use varied teaching strategies.	4.20	Always
2. Group learners based on abilities.	3.60	Often
3. Provide guided instruction for struggling learners.	4.35	Always
4. Encourage collaborative learning activities.	4.30	Always
5. Use questioning techniques suited to learners' levels.	3.50	Often
6. Adjust pacing depending on learners' understanding.	3.10	Sometimes
7. Use hands-on activities.	4.15	Often
8. Provide additional support during activities.	4.25	Always
9. Use technology in instruction.	3.20	Sometimes
10. Encourage independent exploration.	3.85	Often
Average Weighted Mean	3.85	Often

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21–5.00 = Always
3.41–4.20 = Often
2.61–3.40 = Sometimes
1.81–2.60 = Rarely
1.00–1.80 = Never

Table 2C
Product Differentiation
(N=46)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Allow learners to choose outputs.	4.10	Often
2. Use varied assessment methods.	4.25	Always
3. Provide alternative tasks.	3.85	Often
4. Assess learners based on progress.	4.30	Always
5. Use performance-based tasks.	4.40	Always
6. Allow creative outputs.	4.35	Always
7. Provide rubrics for outputs.	3.60	Often
8. Consider learners' abilities in evaluation.	4.20	Always
9. Encourage peer assessment.	3.30	Sometimes
10. Provide feedback for improvement.	4.45	Always
Average Weighted Mean	4.08	Often

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21–5.00 = Always
3.41–4.20 = Often
2.61–3.40 = Sometimes
1.81–2.60 = Rarely
1.00–1.80 = Never

Table 2D
Learning Environment
(N=46)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Create a safe and inclusive classroom.	4.55	Always
2. Promote respect among learners.	4.60	Always
3. Arrange classroom to support interaction.	3.75	Often
4. Ensure learners feel valued.	4.45	Always
5. Establish clear rules.	4.30	Always
6. Encourage participation.	4.40	Always
7. Address bullying immediately.	4.50	Always
8. Flexible seating arrangement.	3.40	Sometimes
9. Motivate learners.	4.48	Always
10. Maintain positive atmosphere.	4.52	Always
Average Weighted Mean	4.19	Often

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21–5.00 = Always
3.41–4.20 = Often
2.61–3.40 = Sometimes
1.81–2.60 = Rarely
1.00–1.80 = Never

Table 3
Inclusive Education Practices
(N=46)

Indicators	Mean	Weighted Mean
1. Ensure equal participation of all learners in class activities.	4.45	Always
2. Adapt instruction for learners with different needs.	4.20	Often
3. Promote acceptance of learner diversity.	4.55	Always
4. Provide support to learners with difficulties.	4.40	Always
5. Use inclusive teaching strategies regularly.	4.15	Often
6. Collaborate with parents for learner support.	3.85	Often
7. Consider learners' individual differences in teaching.	4.35	Always
8. Ensure instructional materials are accessible to all learners.	3.95	Often
9. Encourage peer support among learners.	4.25	Always
10. Create opportunities for all learners to succeed.	4.50	Always
Average Weighted Mean	4.27	Always

Range Descriptive Equivalent

- 4.21–5.00 = Always
- 3.41–4.20 = Often
- 2.61–3.40 = Sometimes
- 1.81–2.60 = Rarely
- 1.00–1.80 = Never

Table 4
Relationship Between Profile Variables and Differentiated Instruction Practices

Profile Variables	Statistical Test	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	Chi-square	8.92	0.178	Fail to Reject H_0	Not Significant
Sex	Chi-square	1.34	0.247	Fail to Reject H_0	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	Chi-square	10.56	0.103	Fail to Reject H_0	Not Significant
Number of Trainings Attended	Chi-square	12.88	0.045	Reject H_0	Significant
Years of Teaching Experience	Pearson r	0.62	0.001	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 5
Relationship Between Differentiated Instruction Practices and Inclusive Education

Variables	Mean	r-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Differentiated Instruction Practices	4.01	0.78	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant
Inclusive Education Practices	4.27				

Table 6
Challenges Encountered by Araling Panlipunan 4 Teachers in Implementing Differentiated Instruction (N=46)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Large class size limits individualized instruction.	4.35	Always Encountered
2. Insufficient instructional materials for differentiation.	4.10	Often Encountered
3. Limited time for lesson preparation.	4.25	Always Encountered
4. Difficulty in adjusting pacing for diverse learners.	3.85	Always Encountered
5. Lack of ICT resources for instruction.	3.90	Often Encountered
6. Heavy teaching workload.	4.40	Always Encountered
7. Limited training on advanced differentiated strategies.	3.75	Often Encountered
8. Difficulty in assessing varied learner outputs.	3.60	Often Encountered
9. Low parental involvement in learner support.	3.80	Often Encountered
10. Classroom management challenges during group activities.	3.95	Often Encountered
Average Weighted Mean	4.00	Often Encountered

Range Descriptive Equivalent

- 4.21–5.00 = Always Encountered
- 3.41–4.20 = Often Encountered
- 2.61–3.40 = Sometimes Encountered
- 1.81–2.60 = Rarely Encountered
- 1.00–1.80 = Never Encountered

DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the profile of the Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers. The data show that the largest group of respondents belongs to the 41–50 years old age bracket (39.13%), followed by those aged 31–40 years old (30.43%). This indicates that most teachers are in their middle adulthood years and are likely to possess considerable teaching experience. In terms of sex, female teachers comprise the majority of the respondents (78.26%), while male teachers account for only 21.74%.

With regard to educational attainment, most teachers have pursued graduate studies, with 43.48% having earned master's degree units and 21.74% already completing a master's degree. This suggests a strong commitment to professional growth and academic advancement. In terms of teaching experience, the largest proportion of teachers (43.48%) has been teaching for 11–20 years, indicating a highly experienced workforce. Moreover, most respondents have attended 3–5 relevant trainings (39.13%), followed by those who attended 6–8 trainings (32.61%), reflecting active participation in professional development activities.

Table 2A presents the content differentiation practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers. The overall average weighted mean of 3.92, interpreted as Often, indicates that teachers regularly modify and adapt lesson content to address the varying needs of their learners. The highest-rated indicators were ensuring that lesson content is understandable to all learners ($M = 4.40$), using localized examples in teaching Araling Panlipunan ($M = 4.35$), and simplifying complex concepts for struggling learners ($M = 4.30$), all described as Always. These findings suggest that teachers are highly conscious of making learning content accessible and meaningful to their students.

Meanwhile, providing enrichment materials for advanced learners ($M = 3.40$) and adjusting learning competencies when necessary ($M = 3.25$) received the lowest ratings and were interpreted as Sometimes. This implies that while teachers consistently support learners who require additional assistance, opportunities exist to further strengthen practices that cater to the needs of advanced learners.

Table 2B shows the process differentiation practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers. The average weighted mean of 3.85, interpreted as Often, indicates that teachers frequently employ varied instructional processes to accommodate learners' diverse abilities and learning preferences. The highest-rated practices include providing guided instruction for struggling learners ($M = 4.35$), encouraging collaborative learning activities ($M = 4.30$), and providing additional support during activities ($M = 4.25$), all described as Always. These results demonstrate teachers' efforts to actively support learner participation and engagement throughout the learning process.

However, adjusting lesson pacing based on learners' understanding ($M = 3.10$) and integrating technology into instruction ($M = 3.20$) were rated Sometimes, making them the lowest-ranked indicators. This suggests that although teachers regularly differentiate instructional processes, there remains room for improvement in implementing more flexible pacing strategies and technology-enhanced learning experiences.

Table 2C presents the product differentiation practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers. The overall average weighted mean of 4.08, interpreted as Often, indicates that teachers regularly provide learners with varied ways of demonstrating their knowledge and skills. The highest-rated indicators were providing feedback for improvement ($M = 4.45$), using performance-based tasks ($M = 4.40$), and allowing creative outputs ($M = 4.35$), all described as Always. These findings suggest that teachers value authentic assessment and continuously guide learners in improving their performance.

On the other hand, encouraging peer assessment ($M = 3.30$) received the lowest rating and was interpreted as Sometimes, while providing rubrics for outputs ($M = 3.60$) was rated Often. This implies that although teachers frequently employ differentiated assessment practices, greater emphasis may be placed on involving learners in the assessment process and providing clearer evaluation criteria.

Table 2D shows the learning environment practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers. The average weighted mean of 4.19, interpreted as Often, indicates that teachers generally create classroom environments that support diversity, participation, and inclusion. The highest-rated indicator was promoting respect among learners ($M = 4.60$), followed by creating a safe and inclusive classroom ($M = 4.55$) and maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere ($M = 4.52$), all described as Always. These results reflect teachers' commitment to fostering a welcoming and supportive learning environment.

However, flexible seating arrangements ($M = 3.40$) obtained the lowest mean and was interpreted as Sometimes, while arranging the classroom to support interaction ($M = 3.75$) was rated Often. This suggests that although teachers prioritize positive relationships and inclusivity, physical classroom arrangements may not always be adjusted to accommodate diverse learning needs and collaborative activities.

Table 3 presents the inclusive education practices of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers. The overall average weighted mean of 4.27, interpreted as Always, indicates a high level of implementation of inclusive practices in the classroom. The highest-rated indicators were promoting acceptance of learner diversity ($M = 4.55$), creating opportunities for all learners to succeed ($M = 4.50$), and ensuring equal participation of all learners in class activities ($M = 4.45$), all described as Always. These findings demonstrate that teachers are strongly committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment where every learner is valued and supported.

Meanwhile, collaborating with parents for learner support ($M = 3.85$) and ensuring instructional materials are accessible to all learners ($M = 3.95$) received the lowest ratings, although both were still interpreted as Often. This suggests that while inclusive education practices are consistently implemented, stronger collaboration with parents and improved accessibility of learning resources could further enhance inclusivity in the classroom.

Table 4 presents the relationship between the profile variables of Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers and their differentiated instruction practices. The results reveal that age ($p = 0.178$), sex ($p = 0.247$), and highest educational attainment ($p = 0.103$) have no significant relationship with differentiated instruction practices since their p -values are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that these profile characteristics do not significantly influence the extent to which teachers implement differentiated instruction.

However, the number of trainings attended ($p = 0.045$) and years of teaching experience ($r = 0.62$, $p = 0.001$) were found to have significant relationships with differentiated instruction practices. These findings suggest that teachers who have attended more

relevant trainings and those with longer teaching experience are more likely to effectively implement differentiated instruction strategies in their classrooms.

Table 5 shows the relationship between differentiated instruction practices and inclusive education practices. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between the two variables, as evidenced by the computed correlation coefficient of 0.78 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The strong positive correlation suggests that higher levels of differentiated instruction practices are associated with higher levels of inclusive education practices. This implies that teachers who consistently adapt their teaching methods, content, processes, products, and learning environments are also more likely to foster inclusive classrooms that support the diverse needs of all learners.

Table 6 presents the challenges encountered by Grade 4 Araling Panlipunan teachers in implementing differentiated instruction. The overall average weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as Often Encountered, indicates that teachers regularly face various challenges in applying differentiated instruction strategies.

Among the identified challenges, heavy teaching workload (M = 4.40), large class size limiting individualized instruction (M = 4.35), and limited time for lesson preparation (M = 4.25) were rated as Always Encountered, making them the most pressing concerns. These findings suggest that workload demands and classroom conditions significantly affect teachers' ability to fully implement differentiated instruction.

Meanwhile, difficulty in assessing varied learner outputs (M = 3.60), limited training on advanced differentiated strategies (M = 3.75), and low parental involvement in learner support (M = 3.80) received comparatively lower ratings, although they were still interpreted as Often Encountered. This indicates that while teachers face multiple implementation challenges, issues related to assessment, professional development, and parental support also require attention to enhance the effectiveness of differentiated

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the respondents are experienced, highly trained, and professionally qualified teachers who possess the necessary competencies to implement differentiated instruction and inclusive education effectively. The results revealed that teachers demonstrate a moderate to high level of differentiated instruction practices, particularly in ensuring content accessibility, providing scaffolding, and utilizing performance-based assessments. However, aspects such as enrichment activities, pacing adjustment, ICT integration, and learner autonomy require further improvement. Teachers likewise exhibit a very high level of inclusive education practices, reflecting a strong commitment to promoting equity, participation, and academic success among diverse learners. Nevertheless, the sustainability of these practices is affected by limited parental involvement and resource constraints. The findings further indicate that age, sex, and highest educational attainment do not

significantly influence differentiated instruction practices, while professional development and teaching experience significantly contribute to teachers' effectiveness in implementing differentiated instruction. Moreover, a significant positive relationship exists between differentiated instruction and inclusive education practices, suggesting that strengthening differentiated instruction can enhance the implementation of inclusive education. Despite teachers' competence and willingness to adopt these approaches, substantial challenges related to workload, large class sizes, limited instructional time, and inadequate resources continue to hinder their full implementation in classroom settings.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, it is recommended that the Department of Education continue to strengthen teachers' professional growth through expanded opportunities for postgraduate studies, specialized training, and professional development programs focusing on differentiated instruction, inclusive pedagogy, ICT integration, and innovative assessment practices. School administrators should implement targeted interventions that enhance enrichment activities, pacing adjustment, curriculum flexibility, learner autonomy, and the effective use of technology through Learning Action Cell sessions, classroom-based coaching, and the provision of appropriate instructional materials. To sustain inclusive education practices, schools should foster stronger parental involvement, improve access to inclusive learning resources, and provide continuous support for instructional adaptations that address diverse learner needs. Given the significant influence of professional development and teaching experience on differentiated instruction, teachers should be encouraged to participate in specialized training programs, while experienced educators may serve as mentors to support their colleagues. Furthermore, schools should institutionalize differentiated instruction as a core framework for inclusive education by integrating it into lesson planning, classroom observation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Finally, educational leaders should address existing implementation challenges by providing adequate instructional and ICT resources, allocating sufficient time for lesson preparation, strengthening coaching and mentoring programs, and promoting stronger home-school partnerships to support effective and sustainable instructional practices.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study observed strict ethical standards to ensure the protection of the rights, dignity, and welfare of all respondents involved. Prior to the conduct of the study, permission was secured from the Schools Division Office of Pangasinan and from the concerned school authorities in Bolinao I and II Districts. Approval was obtained before the administration of the research instrument to ensure that the study followed proper institutional protocols. Informed consent was secured from all Araling Panlipunan 4 teacher-respondents. They were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and their right to voluntarily participate in or withdraw from the study at any time without any form of penalty or negative consequence. Participation was entirely voluntary.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were strictly maintained throughout the research process. The identities of the participants were not disclosed in any part of the study, and all collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes. Codes were used instead of names to ensure privacy and protect personal information. The researcher ensured that no harm, risk, or discomfort was inflicted on the respondents during data collection. The questionnaire was designed in a manner that avoided sensitive or intrusive questions. Data gathering was conducted in a respectful and professional manner, ensuring minimal disruption to the teachers' work. Furthermore, all data were securely stored and were accessible only to the researcher. The results were reported in a truthful and objective manner without fabrication or manipulation of findings. Proper acknowledgment of sources was observed to avoid plagiarism and uphold academic integrity. Overall, ethical principles such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study to ensure its credibility and integrity.

REFERENCES

- Balagtas, M., et al. (2019). Teacher training and instructional effectiveness in Philippine basic education. *Philippine Journal of Education*, 92(3), 45–62.
- Bernardo, A. B. I. (2021). Differentiated instruction in Philippine classrooms: Challenges and instructional practices. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 41(2), 1–15.
- Briones, L. (2020). Education reforms in the Philippines: Policy and practice. Department of Education.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hylar, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. Learning Policy Institute.
- Department of Education (DepEd). (2016). K to 12 curriculum guide. Department of Education.
- Department of Education (DepEd). (2019). DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019: Policy guidelines on inclusive education. Department of Education.
- Department of Education Pangasinan I. (2023). Division education development plan. Department of Education Pangasinan I.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Heacox, D. (2012). *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: How to reach and teach all learners* (Updated ed.). Free Spirit Publishing.
- OECD. (2019). *Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS) 2018 results (Volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners*. OECD Publishing.
- Orbeta, A. C., et al. (2020). Education challenges in the Philippines: Policy reforms and recommendations. Philippine Institute for Development Studies.
- Santangelo, T., & Tomlinson, C. A. (2012). Teacher educators' perceptions and use of differentiated instruction. *Action in Teacher Education*, 34(4), 309–327.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). *How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms* (3rd ed.). ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom*. ASCD.

- UNESCO. (2020). Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education—
All means all. UNESCO Publishing.
- Westwood, P. (2018). Inclusive and adaptive teaching: Meeting the challenge of
diversity in the classroom. Routledge.

APA Citation:

Lazo, C. R. (2026). DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION PRACTICES OF ARALING PANLIPUNAN 4
TEACHERS: BASIS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. *Ignatian International Journal for Multidisciplinary
Research*, 4(6), 1629–1645. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20748451>

arvinrosete46@gmail.com