

Nilufar JAMOLIDDINOVA,
 Senior EFL Lecturer, English Language Faculty Namangan State University
 E-mail: nilufar.jamaliddinova@gmail.com
 Tel.: (91) 3436410

Based on review by A.Iplina, Doctor of Philological Sciences (PhD)

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONS: UTILISING TIERED ACTIVITIES IN EFL CLASSES

Annotation

The article focuses on the importance of differentiating instructions as well as tiering the tasks in EFL classes appropriately. The empirical research shows that there is a gap in implementing the elements of differentiated instructions (DI) in practice and many educators have a lack of knowledge or experience to utilize tiering activities in their classes. The article provides key information and elements of tiered activities based on empirical research and literature reviews.

Key words: Differentiation, differentiated instructions, EFL classes, tiering, tiered activities

ДИФФЕРЕНЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ИНСТРУКЦИИ: ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ МНОГОУРОВНЕВЫХ ЗАДАНИЙ НА ЗАНЯТИЯХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК ИНОСТРАННЫЙ ЯЗЫК

Аннотация

В статье основное внимание уделяется важности дифференциации инструкций, а также правильному распределению задач на занятиях английского языка. Эмпирические исследования показывают, что существует проблема в реализации элементов дифференцированных инструкций (ДИ) на практике, и многим преподавателям не хватает знаний или опыта для использования многоуровневых заданий на уроках английского языка. В статье изложена ключевая информация и элементы разработки многоуровневых заданий, основанные на эмпирических исследованиях и обзорах литературы.

Ключевые слова: Дифференциация, дифференцированные инструкции, занятия английского языка, многоуровневость, многоуровневое задание.

DIFFERENTIAL KO'RSATMALAR: CHET TIL SIFATIDAGI INGLIZ TILI DARSLARIDA KO'P BOSQICHLI VAZIFALARNI QO'LLASH

Аннотация

Maqolada ingliz tili darslarida turli darajadagi ko'rsatmalar berish, shuningdek, vazifalarni to'g'ri taqsimlash muhimligiga e'tibor qaratilgan. Ilmiy tadqiqotlar shuni ko'rsatadiki, tabaqalashtirilgan o'qitish elementlarini amaliyotga tatbiq etishda muammo mavjud va ko'plab o'qituvchilar ingliz tili darslarida ko'p bosqichli vazifalarni qo'llash uchun bilim yoki tajribaga ega emaslar. Ushbu maqolada ilmiy tadqiqotlar va adabiyotlarni tahlili asosida ko'p bosqichli vazifalarni ishlab chiqish bo'yicha ma'lumotlar va elementlar keltirilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Differentsiatsiya, tabaqalashtirilgan ko'rsatmalar, ingliz tili darslari, ko'p bosqichli, ko'p bosqichli vazifa.

Introduction. In the decree of the President of the republic of Uzbekistan on the Development Strategy for 2022 – 2026 years as part of the tasks to improve the quality of education, special attention is paid to radically improving the quality of education in schools, the study of foreign languages, information support and other important subjects are identified as one of the priority goals and defines the task of introducing modern methods and technologies into the educational environment in developing students' competence in the process of learning languages [1].

According to modern requirements of education a school graduate must possess necessary competencies to carry out various activities, thinking critically and gaining an experience in creativity. Furthermore a language learner must be able to use new information and communication technologies not only for personal benefits, but also in professional interests, be ready for interpersonal and intercultural cooperation both within his community and at the international level [2].

Many teachers in EFL classes use the strategy of a differentiated instruction in order to increase the efficiency of the educational process and overcome failure. Differentiated tasks can be used at various stages of the lesson, as well as when teaching different language skills (reading, speaking, listening, and writing) or when teaching the grammatical and lexical aspects of speech. Differentiation is not new. Effective teachers have always taught in ways that acknowledge and respond to their students' shared and individual needs. At the same time, research reveals that differentiation is not well-understood or consistently and thoughtfully applied, regardless of grade level, subject area, or teaching context. In other words, many teachers recognize the need for differentiation; fewer teachers feel equipped with a clear understanding of how to do it well. Differentiation is a journey for the teaching life. Most teachers practice some form of differentiation as proactive planning for students' varied needs. At the same time, fully realized, differentiation is a complex endeavor that requires a range of sophisticated skills that are developed over time and with practice [3].

Literature review. Jamoliddinova indicates that one of the most pressing problems of teaching a foreign language is a differentiated approach to teaching. Each teacher, along with the use of this method, faces difficulties, such as: inability to find the optimal combination of individual, group and frontal forms [4]. Empirical research shows that there is an urgent need for differentiated instruction [5; 6; 7], emphasizing that teachers develop classroom routines that attend to learner variance in readiness, interest, and learning profile, rather than 'one-size-fits-all' [6].

Some studies revealed that evaluating tiered activities and all differentiated tasks with the key criteria to make sure they are respectfully differentiated [3]. The activities should:

- be aligned with the same learning goals and with one another;
- be equally interesting, appealing, and engaging from the students' perspectives;
- ask all students to work at high levels of thought;
- mimic what people and professionals in the real world do or how they think;
- represent a wise use of students' time;
- be comparable in terms of workload and time required for completion.

Research methodology. The chronological scope of the study covers empirical research studies within the last ten years in the field of education. The methodological basis of the study was the approach to defining the concept of differentiated instruction. The work used general scientific research methods, such as analysis, synthesis, systematization, generalization, deduction and induction, and schematization.

Data analysis and results. Differentiation is subject to a range of definitions and beliefs, including misconceptions about what it is and what it is not. Below is a list of these misconceptions along with some corrective answers [3].

Table 1

Definition of differentiated instruction

Misconceptions	Truth
Differentiation is new, or the latest educational fad.	Differentiation is as old as the craft of teaching and will never go out of style.
Differentiation is a set of strategies, tools, or teaching tricks.	Differentiation is a philosophy of and model for effective teaching and learning that goes beyond strategies.
Differentiation requires writing individualized lesson plans for every student.	Differentiation calls for instructional adjustments that respond to patterns in student needs.
Differentiation is giving some students low-level tasks and other students' high-level tasks.	Differentiation calls for respectful tasks that respond to students' readiness, interest, and learning preferences.
Differentiation is just another name for good teaching.	Differentiation is rooted in good teaching, but good teaching is not always differentiated.

Tiered tasks are activities that are aligned with the same learning goals but vary by level of complexity, abstractness, open-endedness, or degree of independence [7]. They can include tiered questions, prompts, organizers, or complex tasks. Tiered tasks give all students access to important learning goals, honor all students' need for challenging and engaging tasks, and help equalize the time it takes students to complete tasks.

As a general rule, tiered tasks and tasks that are differentiated for student readiness should be assigned by the teacher rather than left to student choice. The rationale is simple; differentiation for readiness is aimed at helping students grow in language skill from where they are. What it takes for one student to grow is different from what it takes for another student to grow. But, that growth should not be left to chance which is what giving students a choice between tasks differentiated for readiness can do. There may be times when the teacher gives a choice between or among tiered tasks in order to see what students will choose. In those cases, the teacher should make sure that no student ends up with a task that is below his/her readiness level. Tiered tasks are extracted from the same material or skills, and personalized according to students' readiness, interest and preferred modes of learning. Tying involves teaching the same material to the whole class participants but present them with different (tiered) tasks according to their individual needs.

The tiering is based on selecting similar materials to a mixed-ability class of students but presenting them with layered or tiered tasks which are roughly matched to different individual needs [8]. Tiered instruction integrates assessment and classroom instruction. As a requisite to every session of instruction, the teacher completes a pre-assessment to determine what students know; so that he prescribes content materials and tasks that promote continued learning for individual students.

It is very important to understand and utilize appropriately key features of tiering while designing the lessons (Table 2):

Table 2

Key features of tiering

Key features	Definition	Explanation
Flexible Learning Groups	Provide students with opportunities to work in a variety of groups that vary over time based on student readiness, interests and learning preferences	Students are grouped and regrouped, frequently and flexibly based on their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness to learn a concept • Interest in a concept • Learning preferences in working with or thinking about a concept; • Environmental or social sensitivities.
Choice	Provides students with personalized opportunities to connect with their prior knowledge, interests and learning preferences, allowing for a sense of ownership, self-motivation and a commitment to their own learning	Give students choice in their learning because choice, as brain researchers confirm, is a great motivator. Choice provides students with personalized opportunities to connect with their prior knowledge, interests and learning preferences. When students, particularly adolescents, have some choice, they feel a sense of ownership for and commitment to their learning that is not possible when it is being directed by teachers.
Respectful Tasks	Are equally engaging, promote high expectations and optimal achievement for all students and are assessed using the same assessment criteria	All students focus on their learning goals and learn in ways that are motivating and challenging. Tasks are respectful when students are engaged in learning opportunities that are just as interesting and appealing as those of other students. Respectful tasks support risk-taking in students at a time when they may be reluctant to take chances in learning for fear of appearing foolish in front of their friends.

Shared Responsibility for Learning	Develops when students are supported in developing the knowledge and skills required for them to self-assess and learn independently	Students who are aware of how they learn best and who know how they are progressing towards a particular learning goal can inform our next steps as teachers. It makes sense, especially in a differentiated classroom that is based on responding to student learning needs.
------------------------------------	--	---

The tiering of lessons allows required skills to be gained at a learning rate better matched to the students' instructional level. Tiered instruction is based on the existing skills and knowledge of the learners. Learner placement within a tiered level is based on a preassessment (formative assessment) score that measures the learners' background knowledge and the level of the required skills for the content application. Tiering supports learners with low skills and minimal prior knowledge in gaining meaningful academic growth. It provides learners with high skills and above-average background knowledge the opportunity to go beyond the basics and add depth, complexity, and universal connections to the content [9].

Discussion and conclusion. Table 1 revealed some misconceptions and truth concerning differentiation in teaching field. It can be noted that differentiation is one of the key concepts to meet students' diversity in abilities, needs, interests and language proficiency.

The use of a differentiated instructions in English lessons allows to diversify the forms and methods of working with students, increase their interest in learning, and make such a complex subject as English accessible to all students with varying degrees of abilities. Tiered tasks are highly motivating as they encourage the students to accomplish tasks at their individual levels of readiness; they are all winners. Like a stairway, a tiered task provides safe and swift access within a large building called learning; the bottom represents the prepared learning tasks for challenging students with less degree of readiness and skills. The stairway is gradually turning in to the appropriate challenge for advanced students with more skills and deeper understanding. In this way, in a heterogeneous classroom, a teacher adopts tiered tasks to ensure that students can explore ideas to their own intellectual level and to prompt continued growth and optimum satisfaction [10].

Table 2 defines important key features with concise explanation and definition of key terms concerning tiering the activities which all educators should take into the consideration.

Given that teaching efficacy and teaching beliefs are crucial to student achievement and desirable teaching effectiveness, it is important to be aware of the prospective teachers' learning needs and develop suitable teacher education programs while their concerns are well addressed [11].

To deal with the challenges, teachers usually focus on the average students or teach in the middle and use a single strategy with tasks of the same level of difficulty or abstractedness, thinking that it would be the best way to handle the situations but results are still frustrating and disgusting. The struggling learners continue to face the hurdle in acquiring mathematical skills, while advanced learners are underdeveloped [12].

The academe and education sectors worldwide had never stop searching solutions to best address the students' mathematical ability and diversities of today's classroom. Hence, they have tried different approaches in teaching and learning, including differentiating the instruction. Moreover, it is recommended to include differentiated instruction as approach in the In-Service Training of the teachers and conduct a series of seminars on the different elements of this approach to have a deeper understanding and have a better idea of how to use it to determine its effectiveness actual effect on students' achievement.

REFERENCES

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan № PF-60 "ON THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF NEW UZBEKISTAN FOR 2022 - 2026" dated January 28, 2022. lex.uz/docs/5841077#5843303
2. Nilufar Akramjonovna Jamoliddinova & Sherzod Abdug'ani o'g'li Valijonov. THE CONCEPTS OF "COMPETENCE" AND "COMPETENT" AND THEIR ANALYSIS BASED ON SCIENTIFIC AND METHODOLOGICAL LITERATURE REVIEWS. *Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal*, 1(01), 2021, 148–156. Retrieved from <http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/article/view/62>
3. Jessica Hockett. *Differentiation Handbook: Strategies and Examples: Grades 6–12*. Tennessee Department of Education. 2018
4. Jamoliddinova, N. APPLICATION OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH CLASSES. *Western European Journal of Linguistics and Education*, 2(2), 2024, 14-20.
5. <https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/2/article/view/315>
6. Gregory, G. H. *Differentiated instructional strategies in practice: Training, implementation, and supervision*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. 2008.
7. Tomlinson, C. A. *Fulfilling the promise of the differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 2003.
8. Tomlinson, C. A., & Allan, S. D. *Leadership for differentiating schools and classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 2000.
9. Robinson, P. (2003). Attention and memory during SLA. In C. J. Doughty, & M. H. Long (Eds.). *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. p. 631-678.
10. Richards, M. R. E. & Omdal, S. N. Effects of tiered instruction on academic performance in a secondary science course. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 18, 2007, p. 424–453.
11. Natasha Pourdana & Mehdi Shahpouri Rad. Differentiated Instructions: Implementing Tiered Listening Tasks in Mixed-Ability EFL Context. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2017.p.69-87.
12. Sally Wai-Yan Wan. Differentiated instruction: Hong Kong prospective teachers' teaching efficacy and beliefs, *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, 2015. DOI: 10.1080/ 13540602.2015.1055435
13. Marvin S. Canquea, Glenn A. Trinidadb, Mary Jane P. Cortesc. Differentiated Instruction through Tiered Activities in Teaching Geometry to the Junior High School students. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education* Vol.12 No.6, 2021, p. 5373-5380.