

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN MIXED-ABILITY CLASSROOMS

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: November 2024 Revised: February 2025 Published: April 2025	<i>Differentiated instruction is a critical educational strategy for addressing the diverse needs of students in mixed-ability classrooms. However, its consistent application remains a challenge due to teachers' comprehension of differentiated instruction, which led to various challenges in DI-based practice. This paper aims to delve deep into English language teachers' practices of differentiated instruction in mixed-ability classrooms using qualitative research design to reveal instructional approaches and learning enhancements in promoting inclusivity and diversity with emphasis on in-depth interviews in gathering data to document four Nepali teachers' narratives of their DI practices and the problems they face in implementing it in Rupandehi, Nepal public secondary school classrooms. The study reveals three themes, namely: the promotion of a student-centered approach, personalized learning, and classroom diversity and collaboration. It was found that differentiated instruction enhances students' classroom engagement and fosters inclusion by promoting personalized instruction, collaboration, and diversity. Constraints in DI practice include large class sizes, and issues of teacher training and support, which suggest that teacher education programmes should highlight differentiated instruction as a key pedagogic component of the curriculum to better equip future teachers with strategies to achieve the needs and interests of students with mixed-abilities.</i>
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### INTRODUCTION

The increasing diversity within classrooms today requires improved instructional methods that cater to a wide range of needs, abilities, and learning styles of learners, however, most of the teaching and learning practices are still conventional teacher-centered (Abdullah et al., 2024; Sumardi et al., 2020). Differentiated instruction is a methodical approach that addresses the varied needs, interests, and skills of students in a single classroom, enhancing their involvement and success (Thakur, 2014). Differentiated instruction seeks to create optimal learning opportunities by adjusting instruction in terms of content, process, and product based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2017). This approach is grounded in Vygotsky's social constructivism and is aimed at enhancing classroom equity through flexible and practical teaching strategies (Elmore, 2022). DI provides a framework for educators to modify their pedagogical practices to meet individual student needs, growth, and development (Langelaan et al., 2024). Learning involves three key elements: flexible content tailored to students' needs, processes that adapt to individual learning styles, and varied

products or assessments that reflect diverse abilities and achievements (Gualbertus et al., 2013; Suryati & Ratih, 2024). This ensures individual student's engagement in learning based on their abilities. Differentiated instruction recognizes that every student has a distinct set of strengths, weaknesses, interests, and needs in the learning process (Pasira, 2022). It encompasses offering targeted support for students who face challenges while providing advanced tasks for those who excel in learning. By customizing instruction to align with students' distinct learning styles, interests, and abilities, this approach promotes an inclusive and productive learning environment. The principle of the 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not adequately meet the individual needs of every student in the classroom (Tomlinson, 2001) which DI does. It fosters student engagement, improves academic outcomes, and cultivates a sense of belonging by accommodating different learning speeds and preferences (Qorib, 2024).

In today's educational landscape, ensuring equity in classrooms has emphasized the significance of mixed-ability learners, differentiated instruction being a pertinent method to meet students' diverse readiness levels, interests, and learning styles and foster their learning. It promotes a diverse learning environment through strategies like tiered assignments, flexible grouping, choice menus, and scaffolding (Alhomairi, 2024). Tiered assignments enable students to choose tasks of varying complexity, while flexible grouping encourages collaboration among peers with different abilities. In addition, differentiated instruction incorporates Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) to meet specific student needs and ensure assessments accommodate diverse learning styles. Maruf (2023) concluded that differentiated instruction serves as a practical embodiment of inclusive and diverse educational principles. The study emphasizes that diversity should be viewed as a strength rather than a challenge, and through differentiated practices, educators can celebrate and leverage this diversity in their teaching.

Despite its potential, a significant gap exists between the theoretical ideals of differentiated instruction and its practical implementation. Differentiated instruction has been advocated as a framework for creating more inclusive classrooms by meeting individual learning needs and enhancing learning opportunities (Gheyssens et al., 2020). However, there is limited literature that has explored how teachers implement differentiated instruction in their classrooms and the challenges they experience during instructional delivery.

In modern educational environments, classrooms reflect the societal diversity that can create obstacles to effective learning. Traditional teaching methods, which tend to adopt a standardized approach, often impede educational success by neglecting the diverse needs of learners (Tomlinson, 2014). Similarly, the rigid structures of the current educational system frequently hinder the development of critical thinking skills (Freire, 2020). Despite some research emerging in Nepal, there remain notable gaps in understanding how differentiated instructional practices are applied to impactful learning. While teachers acknowledge the existence of diverse learning needs, they often struggle to implement effective strategies, leading to a preference for a uniform instructional approach (Obrovská et al., 2024). Differentiated instruction, which views diverse classrooms as having a strong implication for teaching and learning represents an educational principle to embrace mixed-abilities of students toward curricular review and further programme revision. The present study was conducted to explore secondary school teachers' practices of differentiated instruction in mixed-ability classrooms to address the following research questions:

1. How do English language teachers practice differentiated instruction in their mixed-ability classrooms?
2. What challenges do they encounter in implementing these practices and how do they tackle them?

## RESEARCH METHODS

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing a narrative inquiry research design to explore the lived experiences of English language teachers implementing differentiated instruction in mixed-ability classrooms. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), narrative inquiry is a powerful method for examining the social and cultural contexts in which teaching and learning occur, particularly as these contexts are connected to the personal and professional experiences of the participants. This design enabled the researchers to investigate how teachers interpret, reflect on, and make sense of their instructional practices over time. As emphasized by Barkhuizen (2019), narratives are not merely stories; they are expressions of how individuals construct meaning and shape their evolving professional identities within specific educational settings. The narrative inquiry framework thus allowed for a deeper engagement with the teachers' voices, values, and contexts, providing rich qualitative insights into their understanding and application of differentiated instruction.

### Participants

The study involved four trained, permanent English language teachers working in public schools within the Rupandehi district of Nepal. These participants were purposively selected based on their experience in teaching mixed-ability classrooms and their willingness to share their instructional stories. The selection criteria ensured that the participants could offer detailed and reflective narratives relevant to the focus of the study. Prolonged engagement with the teachers allowed the researchers to build rapport and trust, which in turn enabled the collection of rich, saturated data. Importantly, the participants preferred to communicate in their native language, Nepali, which facilitated more authentic and in-depth storytelling during the interview sessions.

### Data Collection Technique

To gather the teachers' narratives, the researchers employed a combination of unstructured and semi-structured interviews. These methods were chosen for their flexibility and effectiveness in eliciting in-depth, participant-centered data (Dahal et al., 2024). The unstructured interviews allowed participants to narrate their stories freely, offering spontaneous and detailed insights into their teaching practices, challenges, and reflections. Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, provided a loose framework to ensure that relevant topics, particularly those related to differentiated instruction, were thoroughly explored. All interviews were conducted in Nepali, the participants' mother tongue, which not only respected their linguistic preferences but also enhanced the depth and authenticity of the responses (Morris, 2015). The interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

### Data Analysis

Following data collection, the interview transcripts were translated from Nepali to English to facilitate analysis and reporting. The data were then systematically analyzed using the thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method involved several stages: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for patterns, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the report. The analysis focused on identifying recurring themes that captured how the teachers understood, adapted, and implemented differentiated instruction in their classroom settings. Through thematic coding and interpretation, the researchers constructed meaningful insights into the contextual and pedagogical dimensions of differentiated instruction as narrated by the participants. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent, were strictly observed throughout the study to ensure the integrity and respect of the participants' contributions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The findings have been discussed in light of the relevant literature under the following three themes: promotion of a student-centered approach, enhancement of personalized learning, and improved collaboration by embracing diversity in the classroom as gleaned in Table 1.

Table 1  
Relevant Literature

Key Themes	Characters/Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of student-centered approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The classroom induces a more student-centered and democratic atmosphere</li> <li>Teachers are efficient facilitators of learning providing a more conducive environment for positive student-teacher interaction.</li> <li>Task-based language teaching accommodates students of diverse linguistic, socio-cultural, and economic profiles.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancement of personalized learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students learn at their own pace while valuing their diverse abilities and backgrounds</li> <li>Teachers handling large classes with minimal resources maintain engagement by pairing and grouping students based on their individual backgrounds.</li> <li>Understanding students' uniqueness and psychological needs is relevant before adopting effective teaching strategies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved collaboration by embracing diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students of different abilities assist each other in achieving proficiently their academic tasks</li> <li>Teachers encourage open communication in discussing classroom-devised topics thereby developing critical thinking among students</li> <li>Students build support for each other's learning during group activities by exchanging ideas and problem-resolution.</li> <li>Teachers cultivate a student-friendly atmosphere within and among students by promoting interactive conversations and nurturing praise</li> </ul>

### Promotion of Student-Centred Approach

The relationship between teachers and students has transformed from a teacher-centered model, where teachers are supposed to be the source of knowledge and the students are the passive recipients of it, to a more student-centered and democratic classroom atmosphere. Regarding this, Nitesh stated,

*Earlier, my students were not able to ask any questions and share their interests. I used to be very strict. However, now, I allow them to speak, read, write, present, and ask questions in the class. And I provide additional support to less proficient students.*

Students were afraid of their teachers and were hesitant to express themselves in traditional modes of teaching. However, differentiated instruction enables students to freely ask questions, share personal experiences, and actively engage in discussions (Abendschein et al., 2018). Nitesh further claimed, "I assign less challenging language activities to slow learners and ask brighter students to support them with their tasks." Teachers now act as facilitators and guides who honor the needs, interests, and levels of their students. This shift has fostered a more positive and supportive learning environment.

In a similar vein, Puja stated, "I use games, role-plays, and project work rather than providing them content to memorize. However, some students are still reluctant to speak due to fear of making mistakes." This shows that simply applying student-centered approaches does not improve learning, but they need to consider the learners' interests, levels, and contexts.

Teachers must consider students' readiness, interests, and learning styles when planning lessons to effectively engage them in the learning process (Kamarulzaman et al., 2017). Puja also added, "Since I took a teacher training session two years ago, I have tried to avoid rote memorization and recitation, as well as physical punishment, and engage my students in activities based on their capacity." Capacitating teachers with advanced and relevant studies provides a finer understanding of pedagogy to succeed in dealing with mixed-abilities in the classroom domain.

Diverse socio-cultural contexts have been a major challenge for English language teachers in multicultural classrooms (Jabeen, 2019). In this line, both Nitesh and Puja stated, "We haven't been able to address the diverse needs of our large classrooms. Our students come from Nepali, Bhojpuri, Maithili, and Tharu backgrounds. Sometimes we encourage stronger students overpowering slower ones." Teachers face challenges in addressing the diverse needs of large classes that comprise students from various linguistic, socio-cultural, and economic backgrounds. This necessitates the implementation of student-centered approaches, such as differentiated instruction or task-based language teaching, that engage students in learning according to their learning ability, needs, and interests.

### **Personalized Learning**

Differentiated instruction recognizes and adapts to the varied learning needs and styles of students, values personalized learning, fosters greater independence, and acknowledges individual strengths (Tomlinson, 2017). In this context, Dipesh stated, "Since my students come from different backgrounds, I have learnt to value their uniqueness. I encourage and support them to complete the tasks at their own pace and space, and work with fellow learners to complete the task." By recognizing the uniqueness of learners and adapting teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learning abilities, Dipesh fosters collaboration, provides personalized support, and ensures their learning under a differentiated instruction approach. He supported his students to learn at their own pace while also addressing issues of social justice by valuing their diverse abilities and backgrounds.

Embracing individual learning is crucial in today's classrooms, where students have diverse backgrounds and distinct learning needs. Teachers need to recognize these differences to create a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters each student's personal development (Irshad et al., 2024; Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). However, Dipesh asserted, "I face problems in teaching students with different abilities and backgrounds in the large class with little resources." His remarks indicate that the increasing number of students from diverse backgrounds has emerged as a more substantial issue in the learning process. Teachers encounter challenges in large-size classes with fewer resources that hinder the effective application of differentiated instruction (Kanapathy, 2024). However, Kabita and Nitesh shared a common strategy that they treat their students to some extent by engaging them in activities of their interests, abilities, and difficulty level of the tasks. Similarly, Dipesh said, "I take help from the administration to divide the class into pairs and groups based on their talent and facilitate their learning". By concentrating on targeted differentiation, leveraging available resources, promoting collaboration, and seeking support from the administration, educators can create a more individualized and inclusive learning experience for students, even in large classroom settings (Vygotsky, 1978). Despite several benefits of differentiated instruction in language teaching, the participants shared their inability to implement this approach fully in their contexts. In their regard, Kabita and Dipesh shared a common difficulty such as uncontextualized texts, insufficient classroom space, and short classroom periods have affected the proper implementation of it. To optimize learning opportunities for all students, it is essential to vary groupings. Coubergs et al. (2017) confirmed that employing diverse forms of flexible grouping improves adaptive teaching practices.

The participants believed that employing a singular method in a mixed-ability classroom is inadequate for effectively engaging learners at all levels (Msimbe & Mwila, 2023). Kabita added, “I haven’t got any training opportunity in implementing differentiated instruction. We face difficulty in getting necessary teaching resources and learning technology skills. However, I am trying to use different strategies to address students’ diverse needs and interests in the classroom.” Implementing differentiated instruction requires access to various materials, resources including technology, and specialized learning tools and training. However, most schools promote the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach which is often inadequate to address the ability of learners (Tomlinson, 2001). Illuminating the challenges faced in employing differentiated instruction, Puja stated that even the school administration fails to support her in engaging students in different activities, while Dipesh highlighted the importance of understanding each student's individuality and psychological needs to adopt effective teaching strategies. Their experiences align with (Merawi, 2018) who found out that while teachers generally view differentiated instruction positively, they lack adequate knowledge of it due to insufficient training in its effective implementation.

### **Classroom Diversity and Collaboration**

Differentiated instruction as a current language teaching approach emphasizes cooperation over competition. It embraces diverse forms of knowledge for learners, expands their perspectives, and deepens their understanding of the phenomenon (Tomlinson, 2014). In this line, Puja asserted, “My students work in pairs and groups where they assist one another with the learning activities; more talented learners help slower ones and accomplish tasks. I also support them if any pair or group falls behind in the classroom.” Other participants Dipesh and Kabita also shared similar experiences of using differentiated instruction in the classroom. They claimed that students from diverse backgrounds should be encouraged to learn collaboratively for more effective learning outcomes. “Working in pairs and groups helps students learn without hesitation”(Bhandari, 2020, p. 182). The participants reported that they promoted collaborative learning by encouraging their students to work in pairs and groups, facilitating activities where more proficient students assist their less proficient peers. Through meaningful interactions, students bring multiple perspectives from diverse backgrounds in order to solve a single problem, thereby enhancing their language competency. Their experience is consistent with Unal et al. (2022) who found that adequate collaboration and practical applications address the learners’ diverse needs and interests in the classroom. In a similar line, Vygotsky (1978) also believes that scaffolding plays a crucial role in language development.

Differentiated instruction employs collaboration and cascading strategies in the classroom (Harris et al., 2009). By promoting the sharing of ideas between fast and slower learners, teachers effectively addressed the differences among students based on their needs, interests, and learning abilities. In this regard, Dipesh asserted, “I engage my students in learning by inspiring them to ask questions. I also involve them in discussion activities using group and pair works.” However, differentiated instruction requires significant planning and preparation, which means teachers should create multiple lesson plans, adapt materials for various learning levels, and develop diverse activities to meet students' individual needs (Trisnani et al., 2023). Bringing up the issue of creativity and critical thinking skills, Nitesh shared, “I’ve recently started encouraging my students to ask questions and even challenge my assumptions.” Purposeful engagement in pair or group work and interactions in supportive environments enhanced the students’ creative and critical thinking skills. This resonates with the study of Bhandari and Bhusal (2020) which revealed that language teachers need to be aware of enabling learners to communicate and interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Acknowledging that learners possess unique abilities and experiences, differentiated instruction enables the provision of tailored support, such as pairing less skilled students with more skilled peers, promotes participatory interaction, and values each member's perspectives in decision-making. Kabita shared, "My students exchange ideas, face problems through group discussions, and build support for each other in learning. Her ideas are consistent with Pishghadam et al. (2023) who focused on cooperation as a collaborative learning process where participants not only exchange ideas but also assist one another in problem-solving. This approach is grounded in the principle that two heads are better than one (Su et al., 2024). Differentiated instruction empowers students to engage actively in their learning, thereby promoting confidence and a sense of achievement.

The teachers' practices revealed that despite the lack of formal training on differentiated instruction, they have been working on promoting interactive group activities and cultivating a friendly classroom atmosphere among students from diverse backgrounds and learning abilities. Their efforts have been to some extent successful in encouraging active involvement and enhancing critical and creative thinking abilities in students. This is in harmony with (Pishghadam et al., 2023) who suggest that differentiated instruction enables students to praise each other's strengths and ideas, fostering an engaging and nurturing environment.

## Discussion

This study revealed that the transition from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach has significantly transformed classroom dynamics, placing students at the heart of the learning process. In the traditional teaching paradigm, the teacher assumed full control of the classroom, delivering content with minimal student interaction. Such an approach often led to passive learning, where students hesitated to participate or ask questions, thereby limiting their engagement and critical thinking development. However, the shift to a student-centered model has redefined the teacher's role into that of a facilitator—someone who guides, supports, and adapts instruction based on the individual needs and interests of students. This pedagogical shift fosters a more interactive, collaborative, and supportive learning environment, where learners are empowered to actively participate, collaborate, and take ownership of their educational journeys.

A fundamental component of this transformation is the implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI), which has proven to be an effective strategy for addressing the diversity of student abilities, learning styles, backgrounds, and interests within a single classroom. Aziz et al. (2019) emphasize that DI helps teachers accommodate varying talents and intelligences while aligning instructional content, resources, and methodologies with student needs. Unlike traditional one-size-fits-all methods, DI promotes flexibility and responsiveness, allowing teachers to adapt their approaches based on classroom realities. This is particularly important in heterogeneous classrooms where learners differ not only in their academic performance but also in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The use of interactive teaching strategies such as role plays, games, and project-based learning represents a departure from rote memorization and passive reception of knowledge. These practices actively engage students and encourage collaborative meaning-making processes.

However, despite its potential, implementing differentiated instruction in classrooms—especially those with large student populations—presents significant challenges. The presence of students with varying levels of readiness, cultural norms, and language proficiencies complicates the task of tailoring instruction to individual learning needs. Nevertheless, effective differentiation can promote inclusive practices by using strategies such as flexible grouping, peer-assisted learning, and scaffolding. For instance, pairing higher-achieving students with peers who need additional support creates a collaborative learning culture in which students can learn from one another, build confidence, and develop mutual respect.



Elmore (2022) supports this by asserting that classroom equity is fostered when instruction is designed to reflect students' diverse backgrounds while maintaining high expectations for all learners. Langelaan et al. (2024) further stress that optimized instructional opportunities rooted in student diversity lead to more equitable and effective educational outcomes.

To address the practical challenges of implementing DI, teachers often utilize collaborative strategies that not only promote inclusivity but also reinforce student agency. Peer collaboration allows students to articulate their understanding, exchange perspectives, and engage in problem-solving. This approach is validated by Unal et al. (2022), who argue that collaboration and hands-on learning activities play a crucial role in addressing diverse needs in the classroom. Similarly, Pishghadam et al. (2023) found that cooperation among students enhanced their capacity to process new information and navigate complex learning tasks more effectively. These findings support the notion that learning is inherently social and that the classroom should be a dynamic space for dialogue and shared inquiry.

Central to differentiated instruction is the idea of personalized learning—an approach that acknowledges and nurtures individual strengths, interests, and learning paces. In diverse classrooms, personalized learning enables educators to move beyond the limitations of standardized instruction by creating multiple entry points for understanding. This approach ensures that students are not only included but also empowered to succeed on their own terms. Tomlinson (2001) critiques the inefficiency of rigid, standardized teaching, advocating instead for responsive instruction that meets learners where they are. As classrooms become more heterogeneous, it is essential for educators to consider various learning profiles and adapt their instructional practices accordingly.

However, despite the pedagogical merits of personalized learning, its practical implementation in large, under-resourced classrooms remains a significant hurdle. Teachers may struggle to individualize instruction when faced with high student-teacher ratios, limited access to materials, and pressure to meet curriculum standards. Tomlinson (2017) reiterates that while personalized instruction is ideal, it requires deliberate planning, resource allocation, and teacher expertise to be sustainable and effective. Flexible grouping, in which students are organized based on shared learning needs or preferences, is one way to make DI more manageable. This method allows teachers to rotate groups and offer targeted instruction to different clusters of students without overwhelming their instructional capacity.

The successful implementation of DI also hinges on teacher preparedness and professional development. Dixon et al. (2014) emphasize the need for ongoing training, pedagogical support, and access to instructional resources to help teachers navigate the complexities of differentiated instruction. Moreover, teachers require an enabling environment where they feel supported by school leadership and have the autonomy to experiment with innovative methods. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory suggests that learning is most effective when scaffolding is provided within a learner's zone of proximal development. This aligns with the principles of DI, which emphasizes instructional adjustments based on learners' current abilities and potential for growth. According to Coubergs et al. (2017), the use of flexible grouping enhances adaptive teaching strategies and fosters a more personalized and effective learning environment, especially in large classrooms.

Nonetheless, several systemic barriers continue to hinder the widespread adoption of DI. These include time constraints, curriculum rigidity, insufficient teaching materials, inadequate teacher preparation programs, and a lack of institutional support. Furthermore, classroom management challenges, difficulties in assessing diverse learning outcomes, and student resistance to non-traditional instruction can further complicate implementation efforts. Teacher burnout is another pressing concern, especially when educators are expected to consistently modify content, process, and product without sufficient support. These challenges highlight the



urgent need for holistic solutions that encompass policy reform, school leadership commitment, teacher training, and stakeholder collaboration.

Overcoming these obstacles requires a multifaceted strategy. Schools must provide teachers with adequate time for planning and collaboration, invest in professional development programs that focus on differentiation techniques, and ensure access to culturally relevant materials. Additionally, education policymakers must revisit curriculum frameworks to allow for greater flexibility in instructional delivery. Collaboration among educators—both within and across schools—can also foster communities of practice that share strategies, troubleshoot challenges, and support ongoing innovation. By establishing a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement, schools can create the conditions necessary for effective differentiated instruction.

This study underscores the transformative potential of shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogy, particularly through the implementation of differentiated instruction. When teachers embrace their role as facilitators, and when instruction is tailored to diverse student needs, classroom environments become more inclusive, equitable, and responsive. Although the journey toward effective differentiation is fraught with challenges—particularly in large and under-resourced classrooms—the benefits for student engagement, collaboration, and achievement are substantial. As highlighted by scholars such as Tomlinson (2001, 2017), Vygotsky (1978), and Elmore (2022), meaningful learning occurs when instruction respects the diversity of learners and seeks to empower every student. By addressing the structural and pedagogical barriers to DI, educators and stakeholders can collectively advance toward more inclusive and effective education systems that prepare all learners for success.

## CONCLUSION

This study was undertaken to explore in depth the practices and challenges experienced by secondary school teachers in implementing differentiated instruction within mixed-ability classrooms. It reveals that differentiated instruction serves as a vital pedagogical strategy that enhances student engagement by shifting the focus from traditional teacher-centered lecture methods to learner-centered, personalized, and collaborative approaches. By fostering activities such as group work and pair work, differentiated instruction not only promotes cooperation among learners but also enables them to engage in meaningful language learning experiences through shared knowledge and mutual support. This collaborative dynamic enriches the learning process, allowing students to construct understanding together and respond to the diversity present in their classrooms. Moreover, the study highlights that differentiated instruction is instrumental in advancing English language teaching by encouraging student agency, inclusivity, and recognition of individual learner needs. Students are empowered to take more active roles in their educational journeys, resulting in a more engaging, responsive, and inclusive classroom environment where diversity is embraced and individual growth is fostered. Additionally, the extension of learning beyond the boundaries of traditional classrooms—through task-based, interactive, and contextualized methods—enhances the relevance of education and contributes to improved academic and personal outcomes for all learners.

Despite its pedagogical value, the implementation of differentiated instruction in English language classrooms faces several significant challenges. The study found that insufficient infrastructure, including a lack of trained teachers, large class sizes, inadequate access to professional development, constrained instructional time, and limited teaching resources, continues to hinder its successful application. Many educators also struggle with understanding the core principles of differentiation or feel overwhelmed by the demands of adapting their lessons to meet varied student needs. Addressing these systemic and pedagogical obstacles is essential to realizing the full potential of differentiated instruction. There is a critical need for

structured and ongoing professional development opportunities tailored specifically to equipping teachers with effective differentiation strategies. Moreover, the study calls for institutional support through the creation of inclusive school policies, resource allocation, and curriculum planning that integrates differentiated instruction as a fundamental pedagogic approach. Future research should consider longitudinal and observational studies, including intervention-based methods, to better understand how teachers implement and internalize differentiated instruction in practice. At the policy level, it is essential for the Nepali government and local school administrators to provide continuous, high-quality training programs, form specialized teams to oversee the consistent application of differentiation strategies, and ensure access to essential teaching resources. Furthermore, integrating differentiated instruction into curriculum development can significantly strengthen English language education in classrooms where students display a wide range of learning abilities and needs.

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