



POSTGRADUATE STUDIES – SECOND CYCLE

THESIS:

“The Implementation and the
Effectiveness of the Differentiated
Instruction Approach” A case study at
private and public elementary schools in
Gjilan

CANDIDATE:

Anisa Isufi

MENTOR:

Assoc.Prof. Dr. Maja Muhic

November, 2019

Statement of originality

This is to certify that the content of this thesis is the product of my own work submitted for a MA degree at SEEU and that all assistance received and used sources in this thesis have been acknowledged.

Name

Signature

Date

Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to my mentor Assoc.Prof.Dr. Maja Muhic for her immense professional guidance, advices, and recommendations that helped me complete this MA thesis. I would like to thank the participants of this survey, who have willingly shared their precious time and be part of this process.

This journey would not be possible without the encouragement from my family. I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents whose support was immense, and to my fiancé for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without you. Thank you.

List of abbreviations

DI	Differentiated instruction
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learners
CC	Core Curriculum
MI	Multiple Intelligence
I.Q.	Intelligence Quotient

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1 What differentiation is and isn't (Tomlinson, 2001).....	15
Table 2 EFL teachers' background information.....	36
Table 3 General questions findings from public elementary school students' responses	48
Table 4 General questions findings from private elementary school students' responses	49

Figures

Figure 1: How would you implement the differentiated instruction approach in your teaching? Private elementary school teachers' responses.....	42
Figure 2: How would you implement the differentiated instruction approach in your teaching? Public elementary school teachers' responses.....	43
Figure 3: Do you think that all students in your classroom learn in the same way? Public elementary school students' responses	50
Figure 4: Do you think that all students in your classroom learn in the same way? Private elementary school students' responses	50
Figure 5: Challenges that a student may face in classes with mixed-ability students? Public elementary school students' responses	51
Figure 6: Challenges that a student may face in classes with mixed-ability students? Private elementary school students' responses.....	52
Figure 7: Does your EFL teacher employ activities that are appropriate for each student level participating? Public elementary school students' responses.....	53
Figure 8: Does your EFL teacher employ activities that are appropriate for each student level participating? Private elementary school students' responses.....	54
Figure 9: When EFL teachers include activities, allow students to learn based on their learning style, and allows students to choose what is best for their learning, he/she is using the differentiated instruction approach? Public elementary school students' responses.....	55
Figure 10: When EFL teachers include activities, allow students to learn based on their learning style, and allows students to choose what is best for their learning, he/she is using the differentiated instruction approach? Private elementary school students' responses.....	55
Figure 11: Does this approach has to do with increasing learning quality? Public elementary school students'.....	56
Figure 12: Does this approach has to do with increasing learning quality? Private elementary school students' responses.....	56
Figure 13: Does your EFL teacher pre-assess you to determine what you already know prior to	

introducing any new subject area? Public elementary school students' responses.....	57
Figure 14: Does your EFL teacher pre-assess you to determine what you already know prior to introducing any new subject area? Private elementary school students' responses.....	58
Figure 15: Does your EFL teacher provide you options for completing any assignment or project in the way you feel more comfortable? Public elementary school students' responses.....	59
Figure 16: Does your EFL teacher provide you options for completing any assignment or project in the way you feel more comfortable? Private elementary school students' responses.....	59
Figure 17: Does your EFL teacher let you demonstrate what have understood in the way you feel more comfortable? Public elementary school students' responses.	60
Figure 18: Does your EFL teacher let you demonstrate what have understood in the way you feel more comfortable? Private elementary school students' responses.	61
Figure 19: EFL teachers provide additional learning materials/resources for a certain lesson when the information from the current learning materials are not enough? Public elementary school students' responses.....	61
Figure 20: EFL teachers provide additional learning materials/resources for a certain lesson when the information from the current learning materials are not enough? Private elementary school students' responses.....	62
Figure 21: Do you choose whether you want to work alone, with peers, or in groups for a certain assignment? Public elementary school students' responses.....	63
Figure 22: Do you choose whether you want to work alone, with peers, or in groups for a certain assignment? Private elementary school students' responses.....	64
Figure 23: Based on what criteria does your EFL teacher divide you in groups? Public elementary school students' responses.	65
Figure 24: Based on what criteria does your EFL teacher divide you in groups? Private elementary school students' responses.	65
Figure 25: Does your EFL teacher encourage different learning styles in the class? Public elementary school students' responses.	66
Figure 26: Does your EFL teacher encourage different learning styles in the class? Private elementary school students' responses.	67
Figure 27: Which learning style is best appropriate to you? Public elementary school students' responses.	68
Figure 28: Which learning style is best appropriate to you? Private elementary school students' responses.	69
Figure 29: Do you work based on your preferred learning style to complete as assignment? Public elementary school students' responses.	69
Figure 30: Do you work based on your preferred learning style to complete as assignment?	

Private elementary school students' responses.	70
Figure 31: Do you feel challenged from your EFL teachers? Public elementary school students' responses.	71
Figure 32: Do you feel challenged from your EFL teachers? Private elementary school students' responses.	71
Figure 33: If yes, in what way? Public elementary school students' responses.	72
Figure 34: If yes, in what way? Private elementary school students' responses.	72
Figure 35: Does your English language teacher assess what students have learned at the end of the lesson? Public elementary school students' responses.	73
Figure 36: Does your English language teacher assess what students have learned at the end of the lesson? Private elementary school students' responses.	74

Abstract

Students enter the classroom having different beliefs and individual preferences of different kinds thus making the process of learning different and unique. In a mixed-ability classroom where students have different skills, are not equal and are of different cognitive levels, this phenomenon is inevitable. Mentioning that teaching is a process that requires dedication and unstoppable work from teachers, the fact that the students have different individual needs and requirements make this process even more complex. This phenomenon affects learning which makes the understanding of instruction and their implementation more difficult from students in English language classes. Consequently, there is a necessity to implement different teaching strategies and methods through which teaching would be facilitated, whereas students would find learning easier. Among the teaching methods that would be more appropriate and that would fulfill students' learning requests would be worth to consider the differentiated instruction approach. This method tends to adjust instruction from teachers, by incorporating students' individual learning needs, providing appropriate tasks of varying levels, observing and assessing students regularly, and allowing them to choose and express what they want with a view to a successful learning. This way, the teacher would strengthen students' learning, engage each student, as well as increase their motivation to learn.

The aim of this study is to investigate the implementation and the effectiveness that this method has in classes where the English language is learned as a second language, in private and public elementary schools in Gjilan. This study sought to obtain information that has to do with this method including implementation, challenges that the EFL teachers and students face, the effectiveness of this method, as well as investigate the problems that this approach may have in order to find solutions for possible difficulties. Simultaneously, this study strives to reveal the differences that there may be on the way that the implementation of this approach occurs in private and public elementary school classes. As a means to gather information about this approach, the used research instruments are interviews (with EFL teachers) and questionnaires (with EFL learners). All the evidence collected from the investigation will be shown and analyzed in detail in an effort to present more accurate results. The study includes both qualitative and quantitative research methods using information from teachers' interviews and students' questionnaires. The

population of the research is 241 students (two-hundred and forty-one) and 11 EFL teachers (eleven). Through this thesis, EFL teachers of elementary level are encouraged to implement the differentiated instruction approach due to its effectiveness as shown from the literature review and the study results. As a matter of fact, each student should receive a decent education, while EFL teachers should pay more attention when it comes to selecting befitting teaching approaches.

Key words: *differentiated learning, students of different proficiencies, multi-ability classes, teaching approach, differentiated instruction strategies, English language classes.*

Parathënie

Nxënësit vijnë në klasë duke pasur bindje të ndryshme dhe preferenca individuale të llojllojshme, duke bërë që të nxëniet e tyre si proces të ketë dallime. Në një klasë të përbërë me nxënës të cilët kanë aftësi të përziera, jo të barabarta, dhe të niveleve të ndryshme të zhvillimit, ky fenomen është i pashmangshëm. Duke qenë se mësimdhënia është një proces që kërkon përkushtim dhe punë të pandalshme nga mësimdhënësit, fakti se nxënësit kanë nevoja të veçanta individuale e bën këtë proces edhe më të vështirë dhe të komplikuar. Ky fenomen ndikon tek të mësuarit dhe e bën më të vështirë pranimin e instruksioneve dhe zbatimin e tyre nga ana e nxënësve në mësimnxënien e gjuhës angleze. Për këtë shkak lind dhe nevoja për të implementuar strategji dhe teknika të ndryshme të mësimdhënies, përmes së cilave mësimdhënësi do t'a kishte më të lehtë mësimdhënien ndërsa të nxëniet nga nxënësit do të lehtësohej. Si metodë e cila do të ishte e përshtatshme dhe që do të plotësonte nevojat e nxënësve konsiderohet metoda e mësimit të diferencuar. Kjo metodë tenton të përshtat instruksionet nga mësimdhënësi me përfshirjen e nevojave individuale të nxënësve për të mësuar, ofrojë detyra adekuate për nivele të ndryshme të nxënësve, mbikëqyr dhe vlerësoj nxënësit rregullisht, dhe të lejojë nxënësit të zgjedhin dhe shprehin çfarë ata duan me qëllim që të realizohet mësim i suksesshëm. Në këtë mënyrë, mësimdhënësi përforcon të nxëniet nga nxënësit, angazhon secilin nxënës si dhe rrit motivimin e tyre.

Qëllimi i këtij studimi është të zbulojë zbatimin dhe efektivitetin që kjo metodë mund të ketë në klasa ku mësohet gjuha angleze si gjuhë e huaj në disa shkolla fillore private dhe publike në qytetin e Gjilanit. Përmes këtij studimi tentohet të arrihet marrja e informacioneve që kanë të bëjnë me këtë metodë si zbatimi, vështirësitë që hasen nga ana e mësimdhënësve dhe nxënësve, ndikimi i kësaj metode, si dhe të hetohen problemet në lidhje me këtë metodë që të arrihet një zgjidhje për probleme të mundshme. Gjithashtu, ky studim synon të nxjerrë në pah dallimet që mund të egzistojnë në zbatimin e kësaj metode ndërmjet shkollave fillore private dhe publike. Me qëllim që të arrihet marrja e rezultateve të duhura në lidhje me këtë metodë të mësimdhënies, janë përdorur instrumente kërkimore që ndihmojnë në mbledhjen e të dhënave si intervista (me mësimdhënësit të gjuhës angleze), si dhe pyetësorë (për nxënës). Të gjitha të dhënat e fituara nga ky studim do të analizohen me kujdes në mënyrë që rezultatet të dalin sa më të sakta. Ky studim përfshinë dy metodat

kërkimore, atë kualitative dhe kuantitative, duke përdorur informatat e fituara nga intervistat me mësuesit dhe nga pyetësit për nxënës. Popullsia e këtij hulumtimi përfshin 241 nxënës (dyqindë e katërdhjetë e një) dhe 11 (njëmbëdhjetë) mësues të gjuhës Angleze. Përmes këtij punimi inkurajohen mësuesit e gjuhës Angleze t'a zbatojnë këtë metodë për shkak të efektivitetit që ka siç vërteton dhe rishikimi i literaturës dhe rezultatet e hulumtimit. Duke qenë i rëndësishëm fakti se secili nxënës ka të drejtën e shkollimit të denjë, mësuesit duhet të jenë sa më të përgjegjshëm dhe të kenë kujdes në mënyrë që të zgjedhin metoda të përshtatshme.

Fjalët kyçe: *mësimi i diferencuar, nxënës të niveleve të ndryshme, klasa me aftësi të përzier, metodologji e mësimdhënies, strategji të mësimi të diferencuar, klasa ku mësohet gjuha angleze.*

Contents

Statement of originality.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of abbreviations.....	iii
List of Tables and Figures	iv
Tables.....	iv
Figures.....	iv
Abstract.....	vii
Parathënie.....	ix
CHAPTER I.....	1
Introduction.....	1
I.2 Key characteristics of mixed-ability classrooms.....	2
I.3 An overview on the differentiated instruction approach.....	3
I.4 Statement of the problem	4
I.5 Purpose of the study	5
I. 6 Research questions.....	6
1.7 Research hypotheses	7
I.8 Importance of the thesis.....	7
I.9 Significance of the study.....	8
I.10 The outline of the thesis.....	8
CHAPTER II.....	10
Literature Review	10
II.1 What is the topic of the study?	10
II.2 Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence.....	16
II.3 The benefits of the differentiated instruction approach	18
II.4 The drawbacks of differentiated instruction.....	20
II.5 What to differentiate?	21
II.6 Content, Process, and Product Differentiation	23
II.7 Differentiating in response to students’ needs: Key elements.....	26
II.7.1 Readiness.....	27
II.7.2 Interests	28
II.7.3 Learning profiles	29
II.8 Summary of the findings of literature review.....	29
CHAPTER III.....	31
Research Methodology	31
III.1 Objectives	31
III.2 Research hypotheses	31
III.3 Research questions.....	32
III.4 Research instruments.....	32

III.5 Participants.....	33
III.6 Research methods.....	34
III.7 Methodology for data gathering.....	34
CHAPTER IV	35
RESEARCH FINDINGS	35
IV.1 Findings of teachers’ interviews	35
IV.2 Findings from students’ questionnaires	48
IV.2.1 Findings of the public and private elementary school students’ questionnaire.....	48
CHAPTER V	75
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS	75
V.1 Plot summary of EFL teachers’ interviews.....	75
V.2 Plot summary of students’ questionnaires.....	81
CHAPTER VI.....	87
CONCLUSIONS.....	87
VI.2 Limitations	90
VI.3 Recommendations	91
Bibliography	93
Appendices	96
Appendix 1: Student questionnaire in English.....	96
Appendix 2: Teacher interview questions.....	98

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The empowerment through education is believed to be every person's most significant life aspect. As an inseparable part of humans worldwide, it brings a myriad of advantages to people and this may justify the reason why every person requires to receive proper education. Education is considered to be a life journey, meaning that once it commences it never ceases, and it continually follows us throughout our lives. It serves to shape the modern world, to cherish the comforts and luxuries of today's world. "Through education, people gain knowledge about the real world and helps to make life improvements" (Bhardwaj, 2016, p.25). Related to the importance of education is considered learning a second language as a prerequisite for social and professional global contacts of different kinds. Additionally, the ability to communicate in different languages has become growingly important in the current increasingly diverse society. The English language is considered to be an example that shows the importance of learning a foreign language. The necessity of acquiring English as a tool of communication has become increasingly apparent. "The social skills of the 21st century as creativity, problem-solving, and the skill to communicate effectively are the ultimate language skills" (Stein-Smith, 2017, p.48). In English, one can communicate and interact with people around the world. Due to the importance it has, the English language is part of mandatory and elective subjects in every level of education.

Even though each student has been exposed to the English language from the elementary school, yet there may be found differences in their aptitude and achievement in the English language. Some students are more knowledgeable and speak English fluently, while some other students show a lack of knowledge in this aspect. Regardless of this, there are students whose vocabulary is rich with different words and definitions, who at the same time may have less knowledge and information regarding the English grammar, including morphology, syntax and different grammar rules. On the other hand, some students express willingness to learn the English language and grammar, but they lack communication skills. This indicates that students of the same age, come into classrooms having different language level, knowledge, experience, and skills. In education, students are the most

crucial element, and they are not alike as they possess different aptitudes, abilities, and capabilities. This actuality suggests that EFL teachers are challenged to teach in classes with mixed-ability students, which apparently may be seen as delicate situations.

I.2 Key characteristics of mixed-ability classrooms

The evident struggle with how to properly teach and learn has always been present in each typical classroom, while each EFL teacher may have experienced such a complex issue. As teachers may naturally have particular teaching style, similarly, each student has his/her learning style as well. They may notice that students learn differently, and if their differences and preferences are not supported, then the risk of causing disinterest and passiveness to students is increased. According to Bremner (2008), “each pupil will show his/her strengths at different points depending on the topic being covered and the learning style” (p.2). Teachers should provide learning opportunities by identifying each student’s learning preferences. Adjustments in the teaching style should be made to reflect and respond to students’ needs (Levy, 2008, p.162).

Students have different strengths and weaknesses and develop at different rates. Classrooms include students with different backgrounds, needs, requirements, learning styles, individual preferences, and different language proficiency. Le and Renandya (2016) denote that the term “mixed-ability” class means a class that demonstrates a mixture of proficiency of the target language in EFL classes (p.74). Since students do not come in equal and undifferentiated form, lessons provided by teachers should be tailored to the way that these differences are supported through suitable methods, techniques, and activities incorporated in the classroom. According to Faleiros (2009) “teachers should recognize students’ varied needs so they could be able to employ several teaching approaches and include challenging activities that fulfill these needs” (p.115). Teachers cannot teach all students in the same way since they do not all learn in the same way. They should try to offer different opportunities that would stimulate and encourage students’ learning. Perhaps understanding how students learn and their learning preferences are the most challenging tasks that a teacher may undergo. Except for the fact of the indispensable requisite of identifying students’ learning preferences, no student should be exposed only to one specific learning style. It is fundamental to encourage various learning styles in order to expand and increase their abilities. Students should be assisted to succeed in each aspect,

not depending on the way they learn but on teaching them a variety of ways they would be able to learn, thus giving more value in fostering their abilities and what they can do when exposed to different factors. To determine the differences is crucial to maximizing students' learning. It is essential to observe the students, listen to their ideas, interests and the things they want, consider the advantages and the disadvantages of how they learn when exposed to different learning styles and observe their interest in working individually or in groups, how they interact and participate while learning in a group.

Levy (2008) considers "differentiated instruction as a set of strategies that help the teacher respond to each student and what they are when they enter the class and move them forward on their educational path" (p.162). Each student is able to learn and reach their full potential if teachers offer to them opportunities to learn, provide effective teaching, and uses the appropriate resources. Knowing, understanding how students learn, and supporting their needs is the key to a successful education and progressive students. Hence, while teaching we should be prepared and ready to include students' preferred learning styles especially when teaching new lessons and providing information that has been not known previously, promote distinct learning styles and endeavor to enrich different learning styles to students even those that they do not primarily prefer.

I.3 An overview on the differentiated instruction approach

"As a term, DI has been debated for quite a while in the field of education" (Levy, 2008, p.161). Due to students' diverse needs, implementing different approaches in the teaching and learning process is increasing every day, including the differentiated instruction approach. "Differentiated instruction incorporates acknowledging the differences that may exist between learners in a classroom" (Strogilos, 2018, p.3). This insinuates that DI represents an approach that takes into account students' differences at the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities, experiences, interests, cognitive abilities, understanding, style and pace of learning, and students' motivation. "Differentiated instruction is a way to recognize and teach based on students' various talents and learning preferences/styles" (Morgan, 2014, p.34). Each student comprehends differently a content including the transmitted information and other elements being delivered by the teacher. "When students are provided with more time to finish an assignment, are allowed to select what they desire to read, the teacher employs numerous types of assessment and myriad

other things, it means that the teacher is differentiating” (Levy, 2008, p.162).

Differentiated instruction may be considered a significant theory through which teachers changed their way of teaching based on their students’ needs. According to Tomlinson (2008), “differentiation calls on aspects such as vigilantly student monitoring, adapting teaching plans to attend to learner readiness, interest, and preferred modes of learning, and achieving the goal of content acquisition” (p.1). Each student, despite the differences he/she may have, deserves to receive appropriate set of instruction. Students learn in the way they acquire information easier and the differentiated instruction approach eliminates uninspiring and monotonous teaching routines. Morgan (2014) “interprets that many times students comprehend little or lose focus of classroom instruction when their teachers are unsuccessful in adapting instructional strategies that complement their learning styles” (p.34). If students constantly fail to grasp the content, they will not progress. Therefore, teachers who do not acknowledge student learning styles will prevent students reach their maximum, while DI tries to eliminate this disengagement.

Differentiation demands from teachers to have clear learning goals and objectives that are crafted to ensure student engagement and understanding (Tomlinson, 2008, p.26). Since a teacher’s objective is students’ achievement, it is the teacher’s responsibility to make sure that lesson and course objectives are set, are understandable to each student, and should be focused on engaging students as much as is possible. All learners should be offered continual opportunities to learn and achieve the highest levels (Roberts and Inman 2013 p.4). “DI would increase the chances that the students will seek to reach their maximum potential. The reasons why teachers should differentiate instruction are to meet learners’ requirements in a classroom and maximize all students’ achievement” (Roberts and Inman 2013 p.8). Every student has the right to pursue their goals by exploring the ways that make them more comfortable to learn. As a quintessential approach, DI may assure that mostly every student’s requirements would be fulfilled. Thus, it can be stated that DI, being student-centered, where students’ learning characteristics are involved, make the classroom heterogeneous, interesting, challenging, and successful.

I.4 Statement of the problem

Classrooms are crowded with diverse students who have diverse learning requirements. They may differ in their cognitive aptitudes, experience, or background knowledge. Almost

every school, classroom, or teacher is challenged with such diversity. Unfortunately, in classrooms, many times the same strategies are used every time. Students have unique learning types and abilities; thus, it would be illogical if a teacher expects that students will learn effectively by only presenting information in one way only. Some of them would consider a certain strategy as helpful, but some other students would have problems fitting owing to the fact that a different style would suit to their learning preferences. Being an inevitable aspect, the diversities present in classrooms should be respected and supported so learning can take place. However, some teachers may be unaware of students' requests or what may facilitate their learning. Overly complex or unchallenging tasks will not make improvements in students' academic growth. Indisputably, the phenomenon of teaching mixed-ability students who express diverse necessities is relatively common in nowadays classrooms. Teaching approaches that assume that all students learn the same way should be avoided. Each student has his/her own preferences that should be encouraged and incorporated in their education.

Another issue that teachers should be aware of is that some strategies or activities that may work with a student of a group of students may be inappropriate to the other student of other groups of students. Similarly, is considered the lack of differentiating tasks. This leads to an unsuccessful class, where students are not independent to express themselves, nor include what and how they can perform best but only stick to the most traditional teaching and learning methods. As a result, most of the students will lose their interest and motivation to learn and participate in the class.

The lack of knowledge on DI should be unjustified with the fact that teachers should work continuously in detecting the best teaching methods to meet students' needs. Therefore, teachers should take into consideration that not all students learn effectively merely by implementing a particular teaching method. Actually, this may lead to a lack of interest, and as a result, a student will see no value on the course or its content. When teachers focus on DI, they will be more open to incorporate students' diversities, recommend different learning styles, and allow the students to establish an environment where learning is under their control.

I.5 Purpose of the study

The idea and the interest in DI have been raised from the necessity to find a solution to

the challenges that EFL teachers and students face when dealing with mixed-ability classes. Teachers recognize that some students are more gifted and grasp information easier, while some others need extra assistance to learn English. Every teacher aims to be successful in their teaching by trying to facilitate their students' learning. Therefore, to understand the differences and differentiating instruction may be dominant in the aspirations of being successful and productive. Thereupon, the aim of this research study is to investigate the implementation and the effectiveness of the differentiated instruction approach on students' learning and educational achievement. Furthermore, it will try to find out how teachers of elementary schools implement the differentiated instruction approach. Also, it is crucial to collect students' opinions on this issue. Collecting opinions from both teachers and students' perspectives through this study will be gained in-depth data. This study aims to contribute to the field of education, by providing insight into the importance of DI, how this approach contributes to students' success and the effects it has on their learning. The survey will try to show how DI influences students' achievement in English language classes.

I. 6 Research questions

For this survey, the following research questions have been raised:

1. Are teachers of private and public elementary schools in Gjilan informed about the differentiated instruction approach?
2. What are teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the differentiated instruction approach?
3. To what extent do teachers of elementary schools differentiate instruction and what strategies do they use or would use to differentiate classroom instruction?
4. Do students acknowledge the differentiated instruction approach?

The first raised research question focuses on investigating if teachers who teach in private and public elementary schools in Gjilan are informed about the differentiated instruction approach. The author will endeavor to assemble evidence concerning the differentiated instruction approach. The target with the second question is to find out the impressions of teachers who teach in private and public elementary schools, their views on this approach, and if they already are familiar with it. Moving on to the third question, the author of the survey aims to investigate to what extent teachers of private and public elementary schools

differentiated instruction and what differentiated instruction strategies do they use/would use in their classrooms to facilitate their students' learning. Finally, the intention with the last question is to understand how students experience and what do they know about DI.

1.7 Research hypotheses

The most convenient research hypotheses are:

1. Since differentiated instruction approach is an effective and productive method that is responsive to students' learning needs, it can be presupposed that this approach would bring a considerable increase in students' academic and educational growth.
2. Differentiated instruction will lead students to a higher educational achievement compared to other more traditional learning approaches.
3. Differentiated instruction promotes positive learning in a classroom and enables students of all levels to be successful which improves students' self-efficacy and increases their motivation. As a result, students will experience more productive ways of learning, will engage in class and home assignments, and they will continually be successful.

1.8 Importance of the thesis

Due to the diverse classrooms, the diversity of students' needs and requirements have also been increased, but the goal of maximizing the understanding of the materials taught has remained. The traditional approaches like the inclusion of one strategy which fits all students with whom teachers have been dealing with for a long time, does not anymore fit the needs, styles, and students' preferences. Students come into classrooms with a variety of learning styles, experiences, interests, motivation ways, and level of knowledge. Due to this, traditional strategies where all the students are considered to be of the same level might face problems. Therefore, in order to increase and maximize students' learning, it is very important to employ DI which provides students with different avenues of learning. "Differentiated instruction is an approach that can be done when teachers offer different opportunities to diverse learners to acquire certain content" (Khan and Asif, 2017, p.125).

Being a combination of many theories, practices, and strategies, DI is crucial in students' learning, their success, development, and achievement. Even though differentiated

instruction is an approach through which teachers try to respond to students' variance of needs, yet this approach is not completely present in the classrooms. Indisputably, measures should be taken to either implement it in every school or train teachers professionally to differentiate their instruction. The differentiated instruction approach might not be an easy task, but the issues may be overcome with the participation of the whole education system, whose primary purpose is to provide qualitative education for all.

I.9 Significance of the study

This study is influential on the grounds that it recommends the inclusion of the differentiated instruction in the school curriculum by providing a range of different avenues for learning class materials, regardless of the diversities between students of the same age and grade. Furthermore, the study was carried out with the hope that the findings and data collected from this research would be useful to teachers in order to comprehend the significance of DI due to the fact that this survey argues about differentiation as a method that allows students to obtain at their maximum potential. The findings of this study will redound to the benefit of EFL teachers considering that a method such as the differentiated instruction fulfils a vital role in education. The increasingly ever-lasting varieties between students justify the need for more effective and productive techniques and methods to be used in the teaching and learning process. Teachers will be guided to a more successful strategy in an effort to improve students' performance in EFL classes. This survey will tend to raise awareness of EFL teachers at private and public elementary schools that by implementing DI as an approach will increase learning.

I.10 The outline of the thesis

The remainder of this study is divided into six major chapters. As perceived so far, the first chapter (I) of the study provides an overview of the differentiated instruction approach and some of its characteristics. Furthermore, a presentation on the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the importance of the thesis, the research hypothesis raised, and the research questions through which the study is based on may also be found.

Chapter two (II) consists of the literature review of what has already been said from previously from other researchers concerning the differentiated instruction approach, its

effectiveness, and importance in EFL learning improvement. Thereupon, this section will reveal interpretations from other authors about the differentiated instruction approach in general. The focus of this chapter will be mainly on scholarly works available, which highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the differentiated instruction approach in classrooms.

Chapter three (III) of this study is dedicated to the research methodology of this study. Additionally, detailed explanations of the methods and the instruments used in this survey will be provided. Definite description and procedures of the methods used, instruments, and participants are marked out and explained in this chapter.

Chapter four (IV) is a presentation of each method of data finding. Each and every finding will be shown in this chapter as well as recaps the instruments used when assembling data. The obtained recorded data from interviews will be transcribed, and findings from questionnaires will be shown in figures with a brief explanation, and participants' answers will be converted into a percentage.

Chapter five (V) will show a summary of the findings. An analysis of all the data collected will be presented. More specifically, teachers' interviews data analysis and questionnaire data analysis will be provided in this section. The obtained interview data will be summarized, and questionnaire data will be analyzed.

Chapter six (VI) of this research mainly focuses on the conclusion based on the research findings. Furthermore, it entails the limitations of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter represents an overview of previous research studies on this topic. Opinions and comments of different authors from previous treatment concerning the differentiated instruction approach and its crucial elements will be further discussed.

II.1 What is the topic of the study?

The implementation and the effectiveness of the differentiated instruction approach in English language classes in private and public elementary schools is the main area under discussion of this research. Unquestionably, the application of this approach is more than a requisite for other subjects simultaneously. However, the focus of this thesis is only on the application on the DI in EFL in private and public elementary schools. Differentiating in the elementary grades is crucial for each student's success.

Tomlinson (2000) states that "A simple answer is that students in the elementary grades vary greatly, and if teachers want to maximize their students' individual potential, they will have to attend to the differences" (p.1).

Based on Tomlinson (2000a) differentiation is the effort to respond to the variances among the students in a classroom. Ernest et al. (2011) say that "by definition, differentiated instruction applies a range of strategies to answer students' individual needs" (p.192). They additionally elaborate that despite the composition of classrooms, students will vary in their interests, learning preferences, or academic and social skills. According to Tomlinson and Allan (2000, p.4), "differentiation is defined as a teacher's reacting responsively to a learner's needs". Valiande and Tarman (2011) define differentiated teaching and learning as a "multiphase and multi-faced approach through which teachers try to achieve learning for all students in mixed-ability classrooms" (p.172). They further add that practically differentiated teaching is a flexible and responsive procedure that requires skillful teachers who have an overall knowledge about their students and their progress. Singh (2014) notes that differentiated instruction is a teaching approach which tends to vary the same instructional strategies to diverse students' needs in a classroom by adapting them to their level and learning style (p.59). Students would be more successful when their English language teachers serve a set of learning ways to obtain information. This approach

assists EFL teachers to design their teaching with the intention that each student, regardless of their abilities, could be capable and efficient in learning the classroom material. Theisen (2002) defines differentiated instruction as “a teaching and learning philosophy that acknowledges each learner as unique” (p.2). Every schoolteacher should be appreciative of this method, know what DI means, and what the real meaning of differentiating instruction is.

Watkins and Lindahl (2010) imply:

“Teachers need to determine the most pressing needs of their ELL and identify the areas of a lesson that will best allow them to actively participate and have opportunities to develop content knowledge and language skills” (p. 29).

Although we expect that students of the same classroom be of the same level of English language proficiency, ultimately it is a common dilemma that certain classrooms are comprised of manifold and diverse groups of students. DI derives from the belief that differences between students exist, as for instance in the way they learn, their learning styles, preferences, and individual interests. Đorđević (1981) in his work discusses that “the most essential differences among students can be classified: differences in the level of knowledge, skills, experiences, and habits; differences in cognitive capabilities and processes of cognition; differences in interests and differences in the pace of learning, motivation and students’ development” (as cited in Kadum-Bošnjak and Buršić-Križanac, 2012, p.16). It is a prerequisite for teachers to know the differences of each individual student while teachers who differentiate acknowledge that every student is unique, with various learning styles. “By its nature, differentiation indicates that the aim of schools should be to maximize all students’ potential” (Anderson, 2007, p.50). This insinuates that students should be addressed as unique individuals, having differentiated and individualistic requisites and it is more than necessary for a teacher to plan teaching and learning by considering student differences. Appropriate activities suitable to students’ level should be selected and matching teaching methods should be employed to improve students’ performance.

The differentiated instruction approach is also supported by the Core Curriculum for pre-primary grade and primary education in Kosovo (2012). According to this curriculum, the differentiated teaching and learning represent an approach according to which the main aim of it is the development of all students’ capacities, based on planning, application, control, support, and assessment (p.104). Furthermore, as cited in CC of Kosovo,

differentiated instruction approach takes into consideration the differences that exist among pupils. Through this approach, time and speed adjustments are equally made based on pupils' individual characteristics and the difficulty level and tasks are also adjusted. In order to implement successfully the differentiated instruction approach, teachers should be focused on students' motives, abilities, interests, and learning styles. Based on the CC of Kosovo, teachers of the primary level of education should:

- Apply forms of organizational learning that promote and support the development of internal motivation of pupils and learning's self-control mechanisms;
- Efficiently use activities with pupils that promote organized learning;
- Organize teaching process through various approaches that enable and facilitate the researching and the identification of existing pupil experiences, knowledge, viewpoints, that enable the active involvement of pupils in correcting possible mistakes as well as to back up pupils in the reorganization of their factual and procedural knowledge to achieve pupil's learning competence;
 - Use diverse cooperative learning techniques and forms in the teaching process; practice various forms of organizing teaching and learning (activities in the classroom, group work, work in pairs, individual learning) that focuses on activities which develop pupils' self-confidence, initiative, problem solving and creativity;
 - organize teaching and learning through differentiation by task, their completion, control, assessment and level of teacher support are adjusted to each pupil;
 - apply techniques of organizing learning that fit certain tasks through which develop special abilities of talented pupils;
 - Use various forms of organizing learning for pupils who require special treatment or have special education needs, by involving those pupils with difficulties or behavior problems in learning;
 - organize teaching through which backs up cooperation and use of organizational forms (e.g., inclusion) that promote equal opportunities for learning, as in the sphere of cooperation among pupils in the activities within as well outside the classroom and school;
 - use various teaching technologies that provide better opportunities for the advanced organization of teaching and learning, through which they make the teaching/learning process more attractive to pupils (p.104).

Thus, classroom environments do not involve uniform personalities and individuals.

Consequently, the classroom is an environment that comprises many individual differences. Diverse types of students suggest that differentiation should be frequently incorporated, considering that the same learning-teaching process to all students, despite their differences, would be meaningless and lead to negative results rather than progressive ones. On the ground of this, a suggested teaching method to EFL teachers would be DI. Tomlinson (2000b) expresses that “differentiation is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that is based on a set of beliefs”. According to her, these beliefs include:

- Even though students are the same age, they differ in their readiness, interest, learning styles, and experiences.
- These differences are consequential sufficiently to have an impact on what they need to learn, the pace they need to learn a certain material and teacher’s support to learn properly.
- It is more likely that students will learn best when there are supportive people who encourage them to work without any assistance.
- Students will learn best when they are able to make connections between the curriculum, their interest, and life experiences.
- Students will learn best and be more effective learners when a sense of community in which they feel supported and respected is created by schools and classroom teachers.
- The predominant aim of schools is to maximize the potential of each student (p.1).

Pham (2012) suggests that students have various learning ways which make them unique and dissimilar from other students. Teachers should carefully select different teaching methods aiming to respond to student needs. He further adds that identifying the ways in which students learn best and design their instructional strategies correspondingly to the students’ needs would lead to an effective teaching approach (p.14). “To differentiate instruction implies adjusting the pace, level, or the type of instruction provided by the teachers, acknowledging individual learner’s needs, styles, or interests (Heacox, 2014 p.5)”. Parsons, Dodman, and Burrowbridge (2013) emphasize that teachers who successfully differentiate their instruction, carefully plan and organize their differentiated instruction that would meet the various needs of the students as well as continuously adapt them to answer their specific needs would lead to a progressive class (p.41). According to Baecher et al. (2012) the principles for differentiating include setting the objectives and differentiating them, knowing students’ strengths and weaknesses, providing tiered assignments appropriate to higher level students and lower-level students, using flexible grouping and offer activity choices and allowing time for a differentiated task despite the level (p.16).

Predominantly, good teachers usually recognize and respond to the diversities in their classrooms referring to it as an inseparable aspect. “Teachers must target ELL needs, considering both language skills and those skills contributing to content area literacy, as they plan content lessons “(Watkins and Lindahl 2010, p.24).

“Good teachers identify that they have content and skills to teach to students, determine the differences among them, and prove that one-size-fits-all approaches are ineffective”. Essentially, this is differentiation (Doubet and Hockett, 2018 p.1). The goals of differentiated instruction are cited by Heacox (2014 p.1). Therefore, according to these goals, in the center of teaching and learning are students. These goals include employing challenging and engaging tasks for each student; providing multiple ways to display learning; providing flexible approaches to content, instruction, and product; responding to students’ readiness, interests, instructional needs, and learning preferences; and establishing learner-responsive, teacher-facilitated classrooms. So, a teacher has the obligation to do whatever is necessary to make a productive classroom and successful for each student present in the class. Tomlinson’s 2014 work (as cited in Doubet and Hockett, 2018) claims that what teachers do in classrooms is conducted by their own teaching and learning philosophy. Four principles regarding students’ abilities and potential and about teachers’ role and responsibility characterize teachers of differentiated classroom assumptions.

1. Diversity is normal and appreciated. A teacher who employs differentiated instruction in their classrooms understands and embraces the fact that each student embodies diverse characteristics. Differences should be accepted or tried to be fixed. A responsible teacher respects equally each student for what they are and their unique traits.
2. Students have a hidden potential to learn. A teacher who employs differentiated instruction in their classrooms knows how to measure students’ abilities and does not show to the whole class about what one student can or cannot do. A responsible teacher expects that each student can learn, has his/her strengths that require from the teacher to uncover them and help students progress.
3. The teacher is the responsible engineer of students’ success. A teacher who employs differentiated instruction in their classrooms defines students’ success and academic growth.

4. Teachers should be every student’s champion. A teacher who employs differentiated instruction in their classroom is a champion for each student and is an advocate of each student in his/her charge.

Teachers of differentiated instruction classrooms understand their responsibilities, limits, and obligations. They believe in diversity; they acknowledge that being a teacher in a mixed-ability classroom means that some students can learn class materials while some others cannot; they know that it is hard to teach some students who have special needs and that those needs should be considered and not ignored; they are aware that they are responsible to find appropriate methods and strategies to meet students’ needs; they are conscious of the fact that students’ success is under their control.

Tomlinson (2001 p.1) listed what differentiation is and is not:

What differentiated instruction is NOT	What differentiated instruction is
Differentiated instruction is NOT the “Individualized Instruction” of the 1970s.	Differentiated instruction is PROACTIVE.
Differentiated instruction is NOT chaotic.	Differentiated instruction is more QUALITATIVE than quantitative.
Differentiated instruction is NOT just another way to provide homogeneous grouping.	Differentiated Instruction is ROOTED IN ASSESSMENT.
Differentiated instruction is NOT just “tailoring the same suit of clothes.”	Differentiated instruction provides MULTIPLE APPROACHES to content, process, and product. Differentiated instruction is STUDENT CENTERED. Differentiated instruction is A BLEND of whole-class, group, and individual instruction.

Table 1 What differentiation is and isn’t (Tomlinson, 2001).

According to Tomlinson and Allan (2000), “the principles that govern differentiated instruction are:

- A differentiated classroom is flexible. Teachers and students acknowledge that time, materials, modes of teaching, ways of grouping students, ways of expressing learning, ways of assessing learning, and other classroom elements may be used in to promote the individual and whole-class success.
- Differentiation of instruction derives from the effective and continuous assessment of learners’ needs. In a differentiated classroom, students’ differences are expected, appreciated, and serve as a basis for instructional planning.

- Flexible student grouping assists in ensuring students access to various learning opportunities. Flexible groups in classrooms include whole-class, small group, and individual working.
- All students are involved in appropriate activities and learning arrangements. This principle is quite important since each student must have tasks equally interesting and engaging. In a differentiated classroom, a teacher's aim is to give each student the opportunity to feel challenged.
- Students and teachers are collaborators in learning. In a differentiated, classroom teachers continually involve students in decision making about the classroom. As a result of this, students become more independent "(p.5).

Clearly, adhering to these principles facilitates teachers' work and students' success simultaneously. Furthermore, Tomlinson (2005) suggests that "effective differentiation includes multiple routes for students to succeed rather than the one-size-fits-all lesson plan are planned by teachers, uses small, flexible learning groups for instruction, uses multiple teaching modes, pre-assesses the students and encourages learning in different ways" (p.14). Based on the variety of needs, teachers plan to meet with different student groupings; uses different materials to address students' needs, including reading materials of different levels; uses flexible pacing to address learner variance. In differentiated classrooms, teachers acknowledge that not every student will finish the tasks at the same time and base their lesson on what is essential in the study unit and is learner centered. They study their students' traits in order to understand how each has done a task, what they need to succeed with the task and what support students' needs to succeed in his/her task. Considerably, all these elements suggest that the differentiated instruction approach is of great importance in the teaching and learning process, simultaneously it makes them easier and more productive as DI gives students a range of ways to comprehend and assess the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

II.2 Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence

Humans have various individual ways of comprehending things or processing information. Every individual has his/her strengths and weaknesses in each area; they vary from the others and have unique abilities. A student can be enormously successful when teachers vary the lesson using music, cooperative learning, various art activities, role play

and many more. Not every human possesses the same level of intelligence, nor material comprehension is grasped in the same manner and each individual is intelligent in different ways. "Intelligence may be defined as the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products" (Gardner and Hatch, 1989 p.5). This suggests that people excel with different types of intelligence. The theory of MI was found in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner. This theory alluded that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing is limited. Instead, Gardner proposed nine different intelligences that determine human potential. The nine identified intelligences include:

- **Linguistic intelligence** ("word smart")
- **Logical-mathematical intelligence** ("number/reasoning smart")
- **Spatial intelligence** ("picture smart")
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence** ("body smart")
- **Musical intelligence** ("music smart")
- **Interpersonal intelligence** ("people smart")
- **Intrapersonal intelligence** ("self-smart")
- **Naturalist intelligence** ("nature smart")
- **Existential Intelligence** ("life smart")

According to Armstrong (2009, p.6), Sreenidhi and Tay Chinyi (2017, p.205) characteristics of Gardner's nine types of intelligences are:

- 1) Linguistic: The capacity of manipulating words effectively, whether orally (i.e. as a storyteller, orator, or politician) or in writing (as a poet, playwright, editor, or journalist).
- 2) Logical-mathematical intelligence: The capacity to manage numbers effectively (e.g. as a mathematician, tax accountant, or statistician), or to reason well (i.e. as a scientist or logician).
- 3) Spatial intelligence: The ability of accurately perceive the visual-spatial world (i.e. as a hunter, scout, guide) and perform transformations based on these perceptions (i.e. as an interior decorator, architect, or artist).
- 4) Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: The ability to expertise in using the whole body to express ideas and feelings (i.e. as an actor, mime, or athlete) or the capacity in using hands to transform things (i.e. as a craftsperson, sculptor, mechanic, or surgeon).
- 5) Musical intelligence: The ability to include sensitivities to the rhythm, pitch or melody (i.e. as a music aficionado, music critic, music composer, or performer).
- 6) Interpersonal intelligence: The ability to include sensitivities to facial expressions,

voice, or gestures and the ability to perceive or make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivation, or feelings (i.e. to influence a group of people to follow an action).

- 7) Cognitive intelligence: self-knowledge and the skill to act on the basis of that knowledge.
- 8) Naturalist intelligence: The ability to be an expert in recognition and classification of numerous species of the flora and fauna, and the sensitivity to natural phenomena (i.e. cloud formations or mountains).
- 9) Existential intelligence: Gardner considered this intelligence as the type of ability to locate oneself with existential features such as the significance of life or the meaning of death and fate.

In order for a teacher to implement DI in their classes, he/she must first understand each type of multiple intelligences. Once they do that, the next step is identifying the students' intelligence strengths. With the collection of such information, the teacher is able to teach new materials targeting them on the specific students' intelligences. Acquainted with the opinion that students have different strengths, teaching those students using MI has many benefits since when teachers identify students' strengths, they will meet their learning needs thus they engage them actively.

II.3 The benefits of the differentiated instruction approach

"DI is one of the most productive ways in EFL classes that English language teachers could use to meet students' needs in mixed-ability classes" (Chien, 2012, p.281). Generally, appropriate classroom learning environments should be carefully set by teachers. A constitutive obligation and responsibility by teachers is to arrange a positive class learning environment and foster a safe learning environment. "One of the utmost significances to the teachers who differentiate is creating a learning environment and possibilities that do not exclude any student" (Anderson, 2007, p.50). Maintaining a positive learning environment allows students to feel comfortable and confident. It is important to create a learning environment that allows students to choose and have control of their learning. DI is a key factor in shaping students' success and progress. Heacox (2014) says that differentiated instruction is: a) Rigorous: the teacher provides challenging instruction in order to motivate students; recognizes students' individual differences and set goals based

on their abilities; provides not a too hard nor too easy assignment that would make student effort beyond their capabilities, feel defeated or failed; b) Relevant: Differentiating focuses on essential learning; it does not mean to set fun activities that do not focus on learning; c) Flexible and varied: Students decide how they learn a certain material and the way how they show it; they have more opportunities in selecting a topic; they decide to work independently or in a group; the teacher employs different instructional strategies. Instruction is not one size fits all; d) Complex: Teachers challenge students' thinking and actively engage them (p.5). More specifically, differentiated instruction responds to the best possible ways for learning as well as empowers them to express what they have learned in the way they feel comfortable. Kamarulzaman, Azman, and Zahidi (2017, p.79) claim that "teachers inaccurately assume that differentiation functions like a dinner buffet, employing in their teaching at least three different ways" which is not true if the appropriate instruction are not provided. They further add that a classroom where teaching is edited to students' individual needs is different from a one-size-fits-all classroom. Thakur (2014) pointed out that the advantages of differentiated instruction are immense if the teacher reconstructs the classroom and curriculum and organizes teaching and learning framework (p.10). In EFL classes students may struggle if not assisted with extra support. Through differentiated instruction, it is possible to meet students' diverse needs by imparting different choices to them so that they could be able to demonstrate their learning in different ways (Chien, 2012, p.281).

Essential for a successful differentiated classroom is to have in mind some aspects. A supportive classroom environment is key crucial in differentiating instruction. According to Heacox (2014), a supportive classroom environment is vital, and such an environment includes: acceptance of differences; assert that all students have learning strengths; appreciate that students learn differently, in rates and ways; allow students to work with different people for any reason; recognize that all students have different interests; value each students' effort; support each student; and encourage each students' interests, strengths, and learning style (p.14). Furthermore, as claimed by Turner, Solis, and Kincade (2017), differentiating instruction has benefits both to the students, and the teacher. When employed by teachers, this teaching strategy enhances engagement, increases motivation, and helps students make relevance between what is being taught in the class to the things they value outside the class. When such relevance is made, it is most likely that students will

improve their skills in comprehending information (p.491).

II.4 The drawbacks of differentiated instruction

The diversity of students in their language skills and the other differences between students within the same class which make the classroom more complex indicate that there are drawbacks of the differentiated instruction approach. Despite the benefits, the drawbacks should also be taken into consideration if a teacher decides to differentiate. Dixon et al. (2014) remark that teaching in a classroom with students of different levels and mixed abilities is a complex and challenging process for educators (p.112). According to Khan, Jahan, and Asif (2017), DI is more time consuming when working on lesson plans, while this fact suggests that teachers struggle to find extra time in their schedule to realize the intended lesson plans (p.278). Joseph (2013, p.35) claims that differentiated instruction is very time-consuming, which means extended hours of planning, organizing and scheduling are necessary exclusively when teaching in a large class setting. Hence, differentiated instruction may be a tiring approach which means that the teachers must design different lesson plans to meet the diverse needs of students, need to be professionally trained and dealing with overcrowded classes simultaneously.

Assessing students may be an issue, especially when dealing with large classes. De Graaf, Westbroek and Janssen (2019) point out that it is very time-consuming and challenging to design appropriate formative assessment tests and interpret the results of each student to determine individual learning issues (p.7). Such issues make this approach more challenging, but since students' education is primary, changes in the educational system should be made to support each student's needs in a classroom.

The idea of differentiating instruction may seem daunting. It may require long hours of planning, organizing, grading, and some teachers may associate differentiating instruction with numerous lesson plans, which may be true, but requires a shift in the mindset as well. However, according to Valiandes's 2010 study (as cited in Valiande and Tarman, 2011), "differentiation and differentiated teaching are misinterpreted by many teachers who believe that differentiated teaching means using different methods and materials in everyday teaching". This may be partially true but is too far from the main theory and practice of differentiation since DI does not require tremendous work and effort (p.171).

Undoubtedly, continuous preparation is required by the teacher in order to make it successfully happen.

II.5 What to differentiate?

The learning potential in a classroom can be maximized despite different and various demands from students. To achieve this, teachers need to consider their students' skills level, strengths, and weaknesses, interests and preferences, their needs and requests. It is important to establish the fact that the needs and varieties of each student are equally supported and valued. By applying the differentiated instruction approach, teachers would be able to avoid their EFL students' discouragement by implementing effective teaching, observe students' progress, and assess their teaching. Tomlinson (2000b) claimed that DI is when teachers make a continuous assessment of instruction/learning, learning activities interesting suitable to each student and individual or group work that empowers each student to experience different roles and settings (p.7). One way to reach the goals is teacher's endeavor to know his/her students, accept and acknowledge their interests and needs, and foster a learning environment that would encourage students to learn.

Tomlinson (2000a) provides a helpful guideline that would serve to many teachers who tent to differentiate. This guideline includes:

- a) Reflect on the match between your teaching in the classroom and the philosophy of teaching and learning you want to practice.
- b) Create an image of how would you like your classroom to look like and use it to plan changes.
- c) Involve students and parent in a differentiated classroom to make them your partners.
- d) Improve pace. Try differentiating classroom elements one by one.
- e) Develop a support system. Allow other professionals to support you when necessary.

Similarly, a planning model for differentiated instruction is also proposed by Gregory and Chapman (2002, p.8). This model planning includes: 1) Establish and make clear what the students should know or be able to do after the learning experience; 2) Determine what assessment strategy will be used to collect data; 3) Identify the course content, as for instance knowledge, understandings, and essential skills; 4) Activate: get information about what your students know and what they need to learn; 5) Acquire: Determine what new

knowledge and skills students need to learn and how will they acquire; 6) Apply and adjust: Give students the opportunity to practice and become actively engaged. Differentiation in classroom supports all students' capabilities and the best chances of learning in any condition. Additionally, another three-step guideline to follow when teachers decide to differentiate is suggested by Dahlman, Hoffman, and Brauhn (2008). They state that this three-step guideline includes: 1) Identify meaningful goals and objectives (know exactly what you are going to teach); 2) Monitor student learning (know exactly what your students need; 3) Design meaningful activities (being aware of student readiness, interests, and learning profile, the teacher will plan meaningful activities that focus on students' knowledge, abilities, and interests) (p.3). Hence, this implies that the teacher is the organizer of learning opportunities in a classroom, which at the same time increases student engagement and understanding. The differentiated instruction approach focuses on the highlighted students' differences and is student-centered where teacher prepare lessons to fit his/her students' needs.

The first and foremost duty of a teacher is teaching according to students' educational needs, their abilities and potential, especially when they have to deal with mixed-ability classes. Teaching as a profession should be strengthened to ensure that every individual would receive a worthy education that would prepare them for a successful future. According to Tomlinson (2003), principles for fostering excellence and equity in academically diverse learners include:

1. Teacher's job is to ensure a coherent, inviting, and important curriculum.
2. Every student deserves work that is focused on the essential knowledge and skills targeted for the lesson.
3. Challenge students in different tasks. The best tasks are those that require more work for students and make them challenged. Thus, each student will believe that his/her assignment is interesting and powerful.
4. Use flexible groupings. Find time to engage students in whole-class groups, small groups, or individual work.
5. Assess students continually.
6. Guide and support students for their endeavor (p.10).

II.6 Content, Process, and Product Differentiation

Teachers aspire and expect every student to succeed, but yet this might be an issue that they might overcome if the appropriate strategies are incorporated. Basically, differentiation means a teacher's effort to respond to student differences in the classroom. Whenever a teacher tries to create the best learning environment by reaching out individual or small groups' needs, that teacher is differentiating (Tomlinson, 2000a). Sometimes, teachers are confident that their teaching, lesson plans, and planned strategies would have a significantly positive effect on their students. Students have a great matter in the equation of teaching and learning. The more we know their strengths, involve them in the planning process, and are determined to help students succeed, they will be better equipped to academically progress. Theisen (2002) notes that when designing and organizing instruction, a teacher must be clear on what the students need to know, understand, and able to do at the end of the unit. The teacher acknowledges student differences that impact learning, builds, adjust the content of the unit, and expects various products from students as well as different demonstrations of what they have learned (p.2).

In a differentiated classroom, a teacher's responsibility is to differentiate areas such as content, process, and product. According to Tomlinson (2000a), based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile, a teacher can differentiate at least these four areas: (1) content: the material that students need to know or how to access the information; (2) process: activities in which students undergo to master the content; (3) products: projects that ask students to review, apply, and extend what he/she has learned in a unity; and (4) learning environment: how the classroom works. Heacox (2014, p.10); Theisen (2002, p.2); Taylor (2015, p.14), express that differentiated instruction involves adjustments in one or more of the following areas: content, process, and product.

1. Content is the "what" of teaching that includes the curricular topics, concepts or themes. To differentiate content means to concentrate on essential concepts, processes, and skills. Clearly, some students need supplemental instruction while some others need less. Heacox (2014, p.10) stated that teachers differentiate content a) when pre-assessing students' skills and knowledge and then design appropriate activities to students' readiness; b) when a range of choices to explore

topics in depth is provided; c) when providing basic and advanced resources that match their level of understanding.

“Differentiating content can be thought of in two ways: first, in differentiating content, we can adapt what we teach and second, we can adapt or modify how the students are allowed to access to what we want them to learn” (Tomlinson, 2001, p.72).

2. Process is the “how” of teaching. The process can be modified by adding greater complexity to tasks, by engaging students in critical and creative thinking, or by expanding the variety of ways that students may learn.

Tomlinson (2001) suggests that:

“Students process and make sense of ideas and information most easily when their classroom activities; are interesting to the students; call on the students to think at a high level; and cause the students to use a key skill(s) to understand a key idea(s)” (p.79).

3. Products are the outcomes of learning. Products reflect what students have learned and understood and may reveal new thinking or ideas. Students choose how to demonstrate or represent what they have learned in the way they feel comfortable. Teachers differentiate products when they plan units that reflect many ways to represent learning. By differentiating products, we encourage students, challenge them to come up with their unique ideas and ways to show what they know.

Briefly, Tomlinson (2000a) and Ernest et al. (2011, p.197) state that content refers to the overall learning outcome; the process refers to differentiating how the content is taught, for example, differentiated/individualized tasks; the use of different modalities; time schedules; resources; various groups/roles; the products refers to students’ decision if they want to work individually or in a group to demonstrate their product; Learning environments: means changing the physical environment to support students’ individual learning, for example, individual or group work space or available technology. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) emphasize that:

“A teacher might make adjustments in the classroom environment itself in response to a student’s affective or cognitive needs. For example, some students work more comfortably with peers than alone. Some students need support and to help them with organization. Some students need more structure in their day while other students would benefit from

greater autonomy in decision-making. Some students might benefit from working in an area of the classroom where there are no visual stimuli that could be distracting. Learning environment adjustments can include time, space, materials, and room arrangement as well” (p.20).

Chien (2012) indicates that the process, content, and product are linked to each other and should be taken into consideration when planning and communicating instruction rather than focus on other classroom elements (p.283). Similarly, in their work, Tomlinson and Allan (2000, p. 7) provided explanations for these areas that could be differentiated in a classroom. They explain what and how each of these areas can be differentiated. As attested by them, **content** includes facts, principles, attitudes, and skills related to a subject. Based on Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) perception:

“Content refers both to what students are expected to learn—what they should come to know, understand, and be able to do—and how students access the essential knowledge, understanding, and skill” (p.18).

Differentiating content requires teachers to adjust and adapt how they give access to students to the material they want their students to learn (Joseph, 2013, p.34).

Process is how the student comes to make sense of or understand the key facts, concepts, generalizations, and skills of the subject. A synonym for process is activity. A teacher can differentiate process or activities by providing a variety of options that differ in the level of difficulty or based on students’ interests. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) argue that:

“When students process information, skills, or understandings, they make those things their own. Processing should be the centerpiece of what takes place in the classroom because of its importance in learning” (p.19).

Product is the term used to refer to the items that a student can use to demonstrate what he/she has come to know and understand as a result of the study. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) state that:

“The term product suggests student output, or student demonstration of mastery of the essential knowledge, understanding, and skill specified for a period of weeks or even months” (p.19).

Correspondingly to the literature reviewed so far, Taylor (2015) as well states that the meaning of differentiating content is that teachers can modify the level of complexity; the meaning of differentiating process is that teachers can modify the learning activities based on students’ interests and learning styles; the meaning of differentiating product is that

students have the chance to choose how they will demonstrate what they have learned (p.14). Product differentiation assignments should provide appropriate criteria for success; real-world relevance; encourage creative and critical thinking and allow varying ways for expressing (Joseph, 2013, p.35). Obviously, students should be allowed to work at different degrees of difficulty, time, and be challenged while teachers should provide them with the necessary facilities to achieve success. EFL teachers should be flexible in finding the appropriate course materials suitable to all students whether they are of lower-level, middle level or advanced level in the English language.

II.7 Differentiating in response to students' needs: Key elements

The previous examples of differentiation dealt with the ways that teachers can differentiate instruction by varying the way how they teach, the inclusion of a range of activities to fulfill an assignment, and various ways students may be allowed to show what they have learned from a unit. However, except these ways of differentiation the curriculum it can also be differentiated according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Theisen (2002) claims that when arranging a differentiated lesson, one should reflect on these questions: What are the key concepts that every student must know, understand, and be able to do? Is the content, the process, or the product being differentiated? How readiness, interests, and learning profile in this lesson is being differentiated? Why this lesson that may include students' motivation, access, and efficiency is being differentiated? (p.7). Tomlinson and Kalbfleisch (1998) list three interrelated principles that point out clearly that it is necessary to differentiate based on the student varying readiness, student varying interests, and student varying learning profiles. These principles are: "for learning to take place the learning environment must feel emotionally safe and for a successful learning, students must experience appropriate levels of challenge, and each individual needs to make its meaning of ideas and skills" (p.54).

Differentiating for student traits is also a key crucial and important aspect of differentiation. Students reflect better when their readiness level, interests, and learning profiles have been respected. They bring into the classroom their personal experience, interests, preferences, and needs. All these elements should be valued and respected by each teacher. According to Gregory and Chapman (2002 p.2), the mindset of teachers who

differentiate in their classrooms embrace these ideas: all students have strong points; all students have areas who need to be strengthened; each student is unique; it is never too late to learn; each student brings their prior knowledge when beginning a new topic; learning is affected by emotions, feelings, and attitudes; each student has the ability to learn and each student learns in different ways. All these listed elements are primarily acknowledged by teachers who differentiate instruction in their classrooms; these responsible teachers who understand, allow and support whatever different need or requirement his/her students might have. “When teachers identify students’ levels of readiness, interests, and learning profiles characteristics, it facilitates effective content, process, and product differentiation” (Santangelo and Tomlinson, 2009). Students’ differences should be respected, and that is why a teacher should be willing to involve them when planning instruction or designing lesson plans. Kamarulzaman, Azman, and Zahidi (2017) concluded that learner differences (readiness, interest, and learning profile) are the main catalysts of differentiation that determine how the components content, process, and product are planned. If learner differences match these components, it enhances learner engagement throughout the learning process (p.80). Possibly students will reach their highest potential if the teacher gives attention to their readiness.

II.7.1 Readiness

If teachers are to differentiate instruction effectively, they must understand the essential concept of it and the ways to differentiate. Student readiness is a factor which affects learning. Sometimes, a student may be ready and have a great amount of knowledge in one subject, but difficulties may be found in other subjects. One way to initiate this process is by focusing on student readiness. Rasheed and Wahid (2018) say that students’ readiness means how ready is he/she to learn and able to comprehend the subject (p.195). Teachers can differentiate for readiness by employing tiered assignment which eventually may differ in the degrees of difficulty, or by adjusting tasks based on student’s ability level (Theisen, 2002, p.6). According to Tomlinson and Allan (2000) when teachers want to differentiate by responding to student readiness, he/she plans assignments or arranges learning choices at varying levels of difficulty. Some ways that teachers can follow to adjust for readiness include: 1) Adjust the levels of difficulty of assignment in order to provide

suitable level of challenge; 2) Understand differentiated instruction; 3) Make tasks more or less familiar based on student's level of proficiency, experience, or skills for the task; and 4) Vary instruction based on student needs (p.9). From Santangelo and Tomlinson's (2009) perspective "readiness is not a synonym for intellectual ability; it is a broader and deeper construct, shaped by prior learning, life experience, attitude and school, as well as cognitive and meta-cognitive proficiencies". "Readiness refers to the student's current proximity to learning goals, targets, and outcomes" (Tomlinson and Imbeau, 2010, p.20). Therefore, readiness is understood as the students' current level of knowledge which may affect students' ability to fulfill assigned tasks.

II.7.2 Interests

Student interest is another essential element to take in consideration when differentiating. Interest-based differentiation can be quite successful especially for unmotivated and struggling students. Landrum and McDuffie (2010) write that adjusting instruction to students' interest has always been part of working with struggling learners (p.10). It is a teacher's responsibility to engage students in varying activities, try to spark their curiosity, design instruction based on their current interests, and employ interesting activities and strategies that would grab their attention. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) state that "there are some ways that teachers can tap into students' interest and one of the ways is to make lessons interesting and to show students how required content links to their interests" (p.21). Therefore, when teachers design and employ various interesting activities, they will enhance their students' motivation, and when students' motivation is at an adequate level, learning outcomes will be more favorable. Furthermore, differentiation based on student interest "can also be designed to motivate students to discover new interest" (Santangelo and Tomlinson, 2009). When students have an interest or are interested in learning a certain lesson or a course material, learning will become more productive and enjoyable. Differentiating instruction based on students' actual interests enhances engagement, motivation, and aids them to connect with what is being taught with the things they already evaluate.

II.7.3 Learning profiles

One of the main objectives of foreign language learning area is to be aware of students' learning styles which are influential factors in students' learning. Undoubtedly, students and teachers differ in many ways. Gaining knowledge of students' learning style can be quite beneficial. Pashler et al. (2009) claim that "as a term, "learning styles" refers to the concept that individuals differ in regard to what way of providing instruction is most effective for them" (p.106). If the EFL teachers stimulate different ways of learning or different learning styles students will learn best, whereas, being aware of students' learning styles can not only help students in their learning but help teachers to be more effective in the classroom.

Learning profile-based differentiation means that teachers need to base the assignments according to students' differing rates of learning. "Learning profiles indicate the ways in which students as individuals learn best" (Tomlinson, 2001, p.60). Differentiation based on learning profile allows students to learn in efficient and natural ways (Santangelo and Tomlinson, 2009). Each student needs time to work on their pace, and when they are allowed to work in the way they feel more comfortable, the outcomes of their learning will be more satisfying. Tomlinson et al. (2003) report that: "The goal of effective instruction is appropriate flexibility in a teacher's mode of presentation and in a student's options for learning and expressing learning so they can find a match for his or her learning-profile preferences" (p.131). One simple way to consider when differentiating learning profile includes providing students with the choice of working alone, with a partner, or in groups. Each student has their preferred learning style and should be allowed to choose. However, a teacher who differentiates the learning profile should encourage preferred and less-preferred ways of learning.

II.8 Summary of the findings of literature review

As the literature review shows, the differentiated instruction approach is not new and is quite an important topic to be taken into consideration in the field of education. Being a valuable tool for successful teaching and learning, almost every EFL teacher should attempt or at least tries to implement it in their classrooms. As the research shows, differentiation is accommodating multiple and varied learning needs, be it social or

cognitive. The central goal of differentiation is a successful student comprehension of information, ideas, or skills being transmitted in the classroom. Teachers cannot expect each student to learn the same learning materials in the same way, at the same pace, and transmit the learning outcomes in the same way. Differentiation, as a suggested solution to this issue, has great advantages in student learning and being so, it should be implemented in each English language classroom.

As differentiated instruction makes the lessons relevant to each student present in the classroom, regardless of their preferred learning styles, educational background, their level of language, abilities, or interests, it aims to reach every student so they could be able to understand new materials or grasp concepts faster. For some teachers, getting through each student's needs may be a difficult demand especially in large-size classes. As some scholars claim, mixed-ability classes can be quite challenging and difficult to manage. They believe that DI is more time-consuming which means teachers need extra time for lesson planning, organizing, scheduling, and differentiating tasks. Thus, the lack of preparation time is considered as an issue from them. As differentiated instruction requires more planning time, more analysis time, as well as re-teaching time, teachers seem to have not enough time for all this stuff. As the authors of the cited materials suggest, EFL teachers should make efforts to change their ways and methods of teaching and be informed about DI due to the fact that the focus of this approach is to maximize students' academic growth, by taking into account students' learning needs and demands which help them to succeed, rather than be strict to typical patterns of teaching.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the scientific research methods used for this study. Therefore, details about the research method used, participants, research methods, and the methodology for data collection will be systematically presented in this chapter. Additionally, the data gathering procedures and the processes will be elaborated in this section. Also, this chapter will represent the objectives of the survey, the raised hypotheses and the research questions. It was challenging and time-consuming for the researcher who conducted the study to organize, plan and compile the methods and instruments used for data collection, including arrangements of interviews, questions and questionnaires. However, despite these difficulties, the benefits of this survey outweigh all the efforts.

III.1 Objectives

1. To study the differentiated instruction approach (DI) in the English classrooms in private and public elementary schools
2. To explore teachers' understanding of the DI, if they differentiate tasks, and how do they differentiate in their classrooms.
3. To find out what EFL learners think of the differentiated instruction approach (DI), what are the challenges they undergo in mixed-ability classes, what do they think about their EFL teachers, and whether they support their needs.

III.2 Research hypotheses

The most convenient research hypotheses regarding the differentiated instruction approach are:

1. Since the differentiated instruction approach is an effective and productive method that is responsive to students' learning needs, it can be presupposed that this approach would bring a considerable increase in students' academic and educational growth.
2. Differentiated instruction will lead students to a higher educational achievement compared to other more traditional learning approaches.

3. Differentiated instruction promotes positive learning in a classroom and enables students of all levels to be successful which improves students' self-efficacy and increases their motivation. As a result of these, students will experience more productive ways of learning, will engage in class and home assignments, and they will continually be successful.

III.3 Research questions

For this survey, the following research questions have been raised:

1. Are teachers in private and public elementary schools in Gjilan informed about the differentiated instruction approach?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers that teach in elementary schools and attitudes towards the differentiated instruction approach?
3. To what extent do teachers of elementary schools differentiate instruction and what strategies do they use or would use to differentiate classroom instruction?
4. Do students acknowledge the differentiated instruction approach?

III.4 Research instruments

Used instruments for data collection are as follows:

- Interviews with EFL teachers

Interview questions for EFL teachers were primarily structured by the researcher, where included were general and specific questions. Responses by EFL teachers were written down by the researcher during the entire interviewing process where each detail was carefully written. During the interviews, each EFL teacher was asked the same questions where initially included were questions about background information such as if the EFL teachers teach in private or public elementary schools, the school name they were teaching, gender, current certification, and their teaching experiences. Moreover, the interview run questions regarding their current method of teaching, how do they manage to find students' needs and requirements, their perception on the differentiated instruction approach, their definition on this approach, the way how they differentiate and what tasks do they differentiate, how do they implement the DI approach, and their opinions on how their students experience the DI approach.

- Questionnaires for EFL students

The questionnaire for EFL students consists 4 (four) general questions where included were if they attend private or public elementary school, students' gender, their English language proficiency level, grade, and 17 (seventeen) specific questions. Options were offered to each question including the "other" option where the opportunity to write an answer from their own was offered in case they would not find appropriate the provided options by the researcher. Each question was a closed-ended type of questions where they had to mark only one answer, whereas in three questions they were allowed to choose more than one option.

III.5 Participants

The subjects of this study were EFL teachers and EFL learners. EFL teachers were currently teaching in private and public schools. 11 (eleven) EFL teachers who participated in this survey were academically professionals who had different teaching experiences. Their participation was voluntary which means that no teacher was obliged to participate in this survey. Participants were informed that all information provided for them would solely be used by the researcher and would be part of her MA thesis work. Furthermore, they were notified that they will remain anonymous and no name will be revealed in any document. The EFL teachers who were part of this survey were teaching in private and public schools such as "ECO- Education Center Oxford", "Selami Hallaqi", "Avni Rrustemi", and "Abaz Ajeti".

Alongside with the EFL teachers were also EFL learners. EFL learners as participants of this survey were students of primary and public elementary schools. They had different backgrounds, including their level in English language, grades, and gender. Primarily, they were informed about the intentions of the research and the objectives that the researcher would try to achieve. Their participation was voluntary, meaning that they participated only if they felt comfortable to do so. They were informed about the use of the collected information and that they would remain anonymous. 241 EFL learners were part of the survey who were students at "Selami Hallaqi", "Avni Rrustemi", "Abaz Ajeti", "Mulla Idriz Gjilani", and "Musa Zajmi".

III.6 Research methods

Quantitative and quantitative research methods have been used in this survey. Quantitative method is used to obtain findings from student questionnaire while the qualitative method is employed to report and provide details teachers' interviews and students' questionnaires.

III.7 Methodology for data gathering

Engaged in the data collection process was the author of this research, who received enormous assistance in distributing and collecting questionnaires from an EFL teacher who teaches at ECO- Education Center Oxford in Gjilan. The whole process of data collection was executed during the summer semester of the academic year 2018-2019, more specifically during April – May 2019. Interest on this topic was expressed from some English language teachers from private and public schools who supported it. Expressed opinions from the EFL teachers on the implementation and the effectiveness of the differentiated instruction approach from the interviews were quite beneficial and more than necessary to gather information. The EFL teachers were invited to participate and be interviewed about the survey topic from the research conductor. Mostly, each EFL teacher who participated in this survey was content with the topic, although some of them believed this approach is not implemented to the extent that it should normally be. During the interviews with the EFL teachers, their opinions from their perspective on this method, the implementation of this method, and the effectiveness of the DI were required from them. Teacher interviews lasted 30-40 minutes, whereas their responses were written, and notes were taken by the researcher. Similarly, EFL learners expressed willingness to be part of this survey. EFL learners who participated in this survey were also thoroughly inquisitive about the topic. They were part of this survey and filled the questionnaires. The questions on the questionnaire were prepared in the Albanian language since the researcher considered that students of this level may have different English language proficiency. Before distributing the questionnaires to EFL students, they were primarily informed about the essence of the questionnaire and were encouraged to be sincere in their responses. Approximately, the procedure of filling the questionnaire lasted 5-8 minutes.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to explore how elementary teachers of private and public schools in Gjilan define, perceive, and if they implement or not the differentiated instruction approach in EFL classes. Similarly, EFL learners were part of the whole investigation, and the author sought to find out their opinions on the differentiated instruction approach in EFL classes. It was conducted because as seen in the literature review (Chapter 2), many scholars considered it as having a great importance in the field of education and fundamental for students' success. The presentation of all the information will be stated in the textual form whereas included will also be tables and figures. Statistical analysis will be provided for students' questionnaires.

The beginning of this chapter shows findings from teachers' interviews. Background information for EFL teachers will be presented as well as their responses to 12 (twelve) questions of this interview. A number of 11 (eleven) private and public elementary school EFL teachers revealed their opinions through the prepared questions that supported the researcher to analyze and provide an explanation for each answer. Moreover, in this chapter are presented findings from 241 students' questionnaires. After they provided answers for their background information, they answered 17 closed-ended questions. Presented will be their responses to the prepared questions from the author.

IV.1 Findings from teachers' interviews

Important data were obtained through interviews with 11 (eleven) EFL teachers of elementary schools. The interview questions were designed to get briefly clarification from them for each question.

Teacher at:	<i>Private elementary school: 5 (five)</i> <i>Public elementary school: 6 (six)</i>
Gender:	<i>Female: 7 (seven)</i> <i>Male: 4 (four)</i>
Teaching experience	<i>Less than 1 year: 1 (one)</i> <i>1-5 years: 2 (two)</i>

	5-10 years: 3 (three) Other: 5 (five) (15 years, 19 years, 16 years, 19 years, 11 years)
Current certification	BA: 6 (six) MA: 5 (five)
Total	11 (eleven)

Table 2 EFL teachers' background information

Table 2. EFL teachers' background information

Question 1: Approximately, how many students do you have in your classroom(s)?

Private elementary school teachers' responses	Public elementary school teachers' responses
Teacher 1: 13-15 students	Teacher 1: 27-29 students
Teacher 2: 12-15 students	Teacher 2: 20 students
Teacher 3: 10-15 students	Teacher 3: 20-25 students
Teacher 4: 15-25 students	Teacher 4: 20-30 students
Teacher 5: 10-15 students	Teacher 5: 25-30 students
	Teacher 6: 20-25 students

Question 2: How do you find managing each student's needs and requirements? How do you achieve the aimed results?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Well, even though we know it is extremely hard and challenging to identify each student's needs, I still try to do my best. Usually, I strive to do it by monitoring my students continually, such as in the cases when I provide homework, classroom exercises and activities, as well as through tests. Different activities and extra working hours help me achieve better results.

Teacher 2: Usually, I use a wide range of methods and techniques to reach and teach all students/pupils. I need to plan, monitor, and respond to each student no matter what! To identify individual differences that include classroom observation, work samples and achievements in tests.

Teacher 3: Students are all different. This is what makes teaching more challenging than it actually is. Some differences may not be so obvious that affect learning. Usually, I try to be very communicative, thus allowing them to know that they are free to say whatever they want. Talking with them helps me understand what their demands are. Sometimes I prepare surveys that ask students about themselves. In this way I see what students are interested in, their background, and other factors that I can manage to incorporate into lessons.

Teacher 4: Well, I believe that understanding students' needs is a bit difficult to manage but not impossible. In order to reach each student, apart from the usual work I usually prepare tests or anonymous questionnaires that help me get information about each of them.

Teacher 5: Because students differ in their learning styles, needs, and abilities, I try on adapting classroom activities in order to meet these differences and engage all students in activities.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: I think that understanding students is very important. In order to have a successful teaching and learning we need to know what motivates our students, what is their background, interests, and preferred learning styles. To meet each student, I usually use other materials apart from their classroom books and give them the opportunity to choose their most acceptable way they find that would be the right one that fulfills their needs.

Teacher 2: It is very beneficial to know as much as possible for our students including their cognitive abilities, interests, and learning profiles. It may be a difficult process but is worth for a successful teaching and learning. To get information for my students, usually I collaborate with my colleagues, cultivate consistency, develop a student-centered mindset, use multiple forms of assessment, and set aside time to focus on study skills and extra support.

Teacher 3: I usually find it easy, however, at certain times it is problematic to achieve the aimed results since some students may be shy. I try to be friendly with them and have private conversations which help me to understand what they want, need, request, and what they need to grasp information easily. Thus, I can adjust course materials and everything. I examine their skills and abilities so I can make instructional adjustments to meet the identified needs.

Teacher 4: Every student is different, and every student needs inspiring models and modeling so the more I make my classes creative, authentic, and support diversities the better the chances to reach my goals.

Teacher 5: It is quite hard but when we set manageable targets everything is possible. Considering students' interests in learning a foreign language, it makes the work easier.

Teacher 6: It is very hard to manage each student's needs and requirements but working hard and being persistent in your goals, it is possible. I usually make observations, encourage them to be curious and organize interviews with my students.

Question 3: What teaching approach are you currently using? Is it effective? How?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: I use different approaches; it depends from students' age and their level of speaking. I find communicative approach and task-based to be very effective.

Teacher 2: I prefer interactive approach and student-centered approach where students have more time to talk and can interact with other students and the teacher.

Teacher 3: I use teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. They are effective since my students receive knowledge from their teacher through lectures and direct instruction, with an end goal of positive results from testing. When using student-centered approaches students can be in the center of the classroom.

Teacher 4: I try on selecting techniques from various approaches according to the different needs of my learners. However, I try incorporating the communicative approach and task-based learning and teaching because I consider them to be very effective.

Teacher 5: I usually use mixed methods of teaching. For instance, when I present a new lesson, I stick to teacher-centered approach. This way I lecture and give instruction to my students. I incorporate student-centered approach in my classes as well. I always allow my students to actively participate during the lesson hours, where they can speak more. I use the differentiated instruction as well. Usually I tailor instruction to meet individual needs of each student present in my classroom. This way, each student is offered with a variety of ways to learn.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Well, I always try to implement various methods of teaching. I prefer teacher and learner centered approach, and interactive approach. They bring positive results in most of the cases.

Teacher 2: As many teachers, when introducing new materials, I prefer teacher-centered approach. When it comes to engaging students, I incorporate student-centered approach, inquiry-based instruction and cooperative learning which I believe are very effective and progressive for students.

Teacher 3: Currently I am using project-based learning since it involves collaborative skills, critical thinking skills, and students can explore real-world problems and acquire deeper knowledge.

Teacher 4: Student-centered instruction is my favorite. Each student is included in the process and everyone has its time to participate in the class through different activities which keeps them busy. In most of the cases is very effective because most of my students get 85% on their written and oral exams.

Teacher 5: I prefer learner-centered, interactive, and direct approaches. I consider them to be very effective since by giving opportunities to students sharing their knowledge with each other and learning together so they can interact with the teacher and their peers.

Teacher 6: I incorporate a variety of approaches as for instance student-centered approach, communicative approach; inquiry-based learning, game-based learning, and differentiated instruction. Each of these approaches has a great effect on student learning. When students are in the center of the class there is more productive learning.

Question 4: Do you allow your students to use their preferred learning style? In what occasion?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Yes sure, in every occasion. I allow them to use whatever learning style they feel most comfortable with as for instance they prefer to use visual, verbal, and physical learning styles. When teaching new vocabulary words, I use visual and audio recordings.

Teacher 2: Only in the cases when I consider that their method is more appropriate to them than mine. That is because sometime students know easy ways to reach the goals.

Teacher 3: Sometimes, depending on the level of lesson difficulty.

Teacher 4: Mostly every time I allow my students to learn based on their preferred learning style. The reason I said 'mostly every time' is because sometimes students do not choose the appropriate learning style for a certain lesson even if it is their preferred learning style. Usually, I want them to get familiar with every type of learning style in order to prepare them for every situation.

Teacher 5: Even though I try on adapting classroom activities based on my students' interest, there are always situations that I allow them to use their preferred learning style, most commonly when I assign homework or extra projects.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Yes, they are allowed to use their preferred learning style, especially in the cases when something new is being covered and it is harder to be learnt. I encourage other learning styles when I see that they get bored.

Teacher 2: Yes, I allow my students to use their favorite learning style in mostly every case since I believe they grasp information faster when they choose how to learn it.

Teacher 3: Usually no. I proceed in accordance to the school curriculum and they use the learning style I allow.

Teacher 4: I am aware that students' preferred learning styles influence their learning and that is why I try to encourage them to use their preferred learning style in every case. Despite their learning style, I usually challenge my students to use learning styles that are not in their preferences.

Teacher 5: Yes, in mostly every case my students have the right to use their preferred learning style. I believe it is more productive and students learn best.

Teacher 6: Yes, I always do. My students have the right to teach a certain topic in the way they feel more comfortable.

Question 5: Have you ever heard about the differentiated instruction approach?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Yes, I have.

Teacher 2: Yes, I have.

Teacher 3: Yes, I have.

Teacher 4: Yes.

Teacher 5: Yes. I have heard about this approach during my studies.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Yes.

Teacher 2: Yes, I have.

Teacher 3: Yes, I have.

Teacher 4: Not directly, but from the title I believe I can guess.

Teacher 5: Yes, I have.

Teacher 6: Yes.

Question 6: What is your definition of the term differentiated instruction?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: It is a way of teaching that requires from teachers to study and analyze their students' needs, so they could provide to each student the right tasks and improve their learning.

Teacher 2: DI is a teaching approach where the teacher provides different tasks of different levels based on their students' abilities and intends to teach all the same material.

Teacher 3: Differentiated instruction is a way of teaching. Knowing students well, their needs, requests, and abilities in order to provide appropriate tasks that would improve learning.

Teacher 4: Well, I believe the differentiated instruction approach deals with tailoring instruction to meet every student's needs and requirements. DI supports incorporation of different tasks, class materials, flexible grouping, and on-going assessment.

Teacher 5: DI means adapting and creating suitable assignments and tasks depending on students' needs and requirements.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Differentiated instruction is a teaching approach where the teacher designs lessons based on students' needs, learning styles, and interests.

Teacher 2: DI is a teaching approach that involves tailoring instruction to meet individual needs.

Teacher 3: Differentiated instruction means when a teacher tailors instruction in order to meet students' individual needs and interests that affect learning.

Teacher 4: Differentiated instruction is a teaching approach based on application, planning, control, support, and assessment.

Teacher 5: As far as I am informed, differentiated instruction involves the incorporation of students' needs and demands on their learning and the adjustments in curriculum based on students' level of proficiency. For example, inside the classroom we have different students with different levels of knowledge and the teacher adapts the materials based on their needs.

Teacher 6: DI is a teaching approach which accepts, treats, and involves students' individual needs in learning.

Question 7: Have you ever practiced the differentiated instruction approach? If yes, please explain briefly how.

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: No, I have not practiced DI. Not yet.

Teacher 2: Yes, I have. To teach the same thing to all students, I use tiered assignments where I provide tasks of different levels of difficulty and every student can find the appropriate level. Sometimes I use flashcards for some students and for the others I assign writing sentences, translate, make questions, tell a story, write essays, describe pictures etc.

Teacher 3: Yes, I have. I design lessons based on students' learning styles and provide a variety of tasks where they can choose how to do it.

Teacher 4: Yes, I usually incorporate DI in my classes, and I prefer differentiating tasks. Usually, I use tiered assignments meaning that I provide assignments of different levels of difficulty. This way, students with poor performance will be able to work and grasp the intended information by providing them less complex assignment, while students who have good performances are able to work more difficult assignments. Hence, each student is included in the learning process and the learning outcomes are satisfying.

Teacher 5: Yes, I have done it numerous times. Usually I use multilevel assignments and group students into 3 groups. For instance, once I assigned students to read a book and then provide a summary. Assignment varied in difficulty. For instance: beginner students had to provide visual summary, intermediate students had to give an oral presentation, while advanced students had to write a two-page essay. This was a great way to bring students together and make sure that collaboration is working.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Yes, I have. Usually, I prefer flexible grouping, having ongoing tasks where students have cooperative learning based on students' individual needs and skills.

Teacher 2: Occasionally. Usually by using flexible grouping, multi-leveled questions, and using reading materials at varying readability levels.

Teacher 3: Yes, I have done it several occasions. Usually tiered assignments.

Teacher 4: As DI focuses on students' motivation, abilities, interests, and learning style of course that is crucial to implement. I have done it too usually though cooperative learning, presenting ideas through verbal, visual, and kinesthetic means, or tiered activities.

Teacher 5: No, I have not practiced DI.

Teacher 6: Not very often but at least I tried. I did it using different activities through which all students learnt the same material but having different levels of support or challenge.

Question 8: How would you implement the differentiated instruction approach in your teaching?

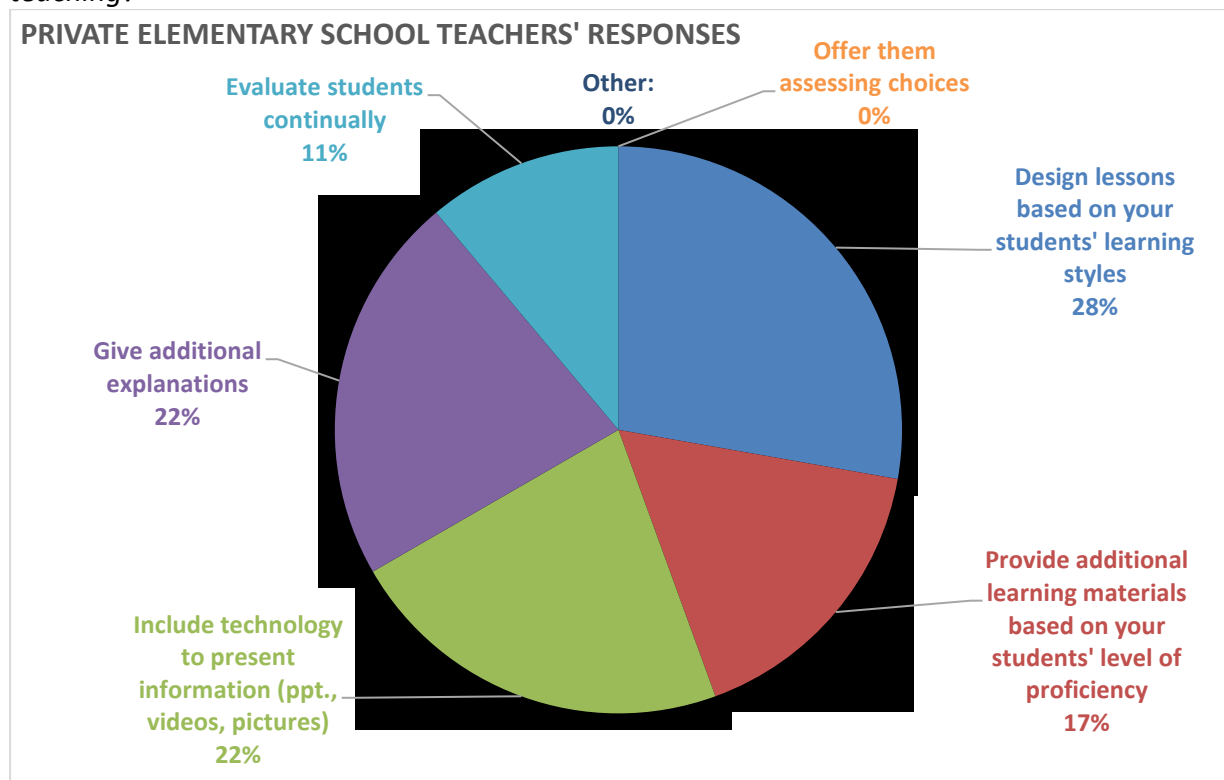


Figure 1: How would you implement the differentiated instruction approach in your teaching? Private elementary school teachers' responses

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' RESPONSES

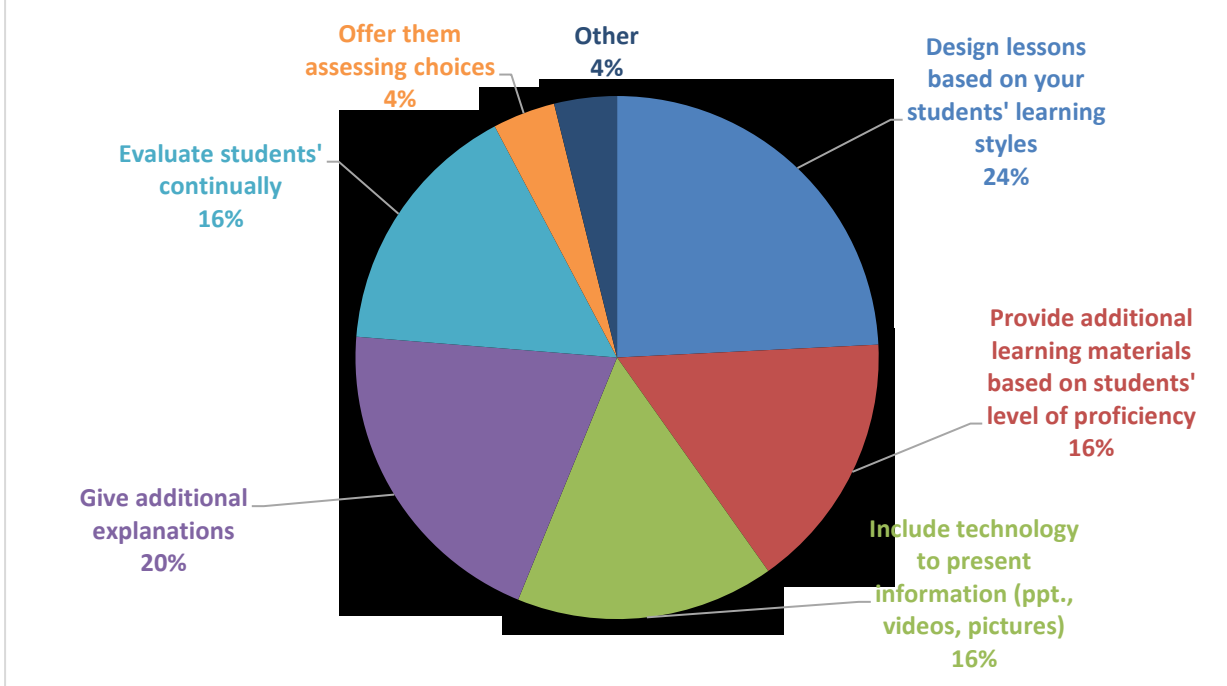


Figure 2: How would you implement the differentiated instruction approach in your teaching? Public elementary school teachers' responses

Question 9: From your perspective, how your students would or already experience the differentiated instruction approach?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: As I have still not used the differentiated instruction approach, I cannot say how they would experience it. Anyway, I believe that it would really support their learning.

Teacher 2: Well, I believe that there are many ways that students would benefit if their EFL teacher, implement DI. When students' needs, interests, learning styles, and preferences are supported, it is most likely that they would be more successful, they'd be able to demonstrate what they have learnt in their preferred way, engage in class activities, and develop higher thinking skills.

Teacher 3: I think that they would find it easier to learn and grasp information when their individual needs are acknowledged. I believe it is an effective approach that supports everything that affects learning.

Teacher 4: I believe that they would be content and pleased when this approach is implemented in EFL classes; they would feel motivated and encouraged and as a result a progressive learning would take place.

Teacher 5: I believe they would feel more facilitated to learn, would have more opportunities to be creative and maintain an important role in the teaching and learning process.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: I think they would find it more interesting, productive, acceptable, and easier.

Teacher 2: Well, as this approach meets students' needs, clearly, they would experience it very positively.

Teacher 3: If different paths to learn are provided, obviously it would enhance their skills and their learning would be more productive.

Teacher 4: I believe that they would feel very motivated and encouraged, as well as would be more creative in mostly every aspect. As a result, the learning process would become more attractive.

Teacher 5: I have not any experience in any situation with this approach, but I think that it would be beneficial since they could learn content effectively, according to their needs. Due to this, I will start to implement this approach.

Teacher 6: I consider it as an interesting and supportive approach that students would welcome. For instance, students would have better chances to show what they learn in the way they want, or when they have choices to complete an assignment. So yes, I think it is quite advantageous.

Question 10: What kind of challenges may occur by employing the differentiated instruction approach? What kind of challenges may occur by not employing the differentiated instruction approach?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: As for the first case, it may happen that students would not like nor find interesting how the content is differentiated, the activities, or materials. As for the second case, the risk that students would become uninterested in lessons and bored may be raised.

Teacher 2: By employing DI I think that would be challenging in a way since when teachers use a variety of methods and strategies would have chances to lead students into difficulties or cause distraction, while challenging by not employing DI would be the fact that students would not be successful in their learning if their individual necessities would not be acknowledged.

Teacher 3: Challenging by employing DI would be the fact that it requires more time to plan and design multiple assignments and extra lesson plans having in mind students' learning styles, multiple intelligence, and interests. Whereas, challenging by not employing DI would cause students to be less successful in their learning.

Teacher 4: Maybe, by using DI more time and more working hours on lesson planning and adjusting materials is necessary. On the other hand, if DI is not implemented the risk of students' failure to learn would increase.

Teacher 5: Teachers should be careful when applying this approach. Students should not be

divided according to their proficiency level or abilities. Contrary to that, they should be group by combining students of different abilities and proficiencies. Furthermore, sometimes when this method is being applied, a chaotic classroom environment is created. On the other hand, challenging of not employing DI would be the fact that students' individual success would not be in the required way.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Obviously challenging by employing DI would be the density of students per classroom that would make difficult to manage. Since differentiation recognizes individual differences, challenging by not employing DI would make teachers risk of not acknowledging each student and that would lead to an unsuccessful teaching and learning process.

Teacher 2: I believe that the number per classroom is quite high to implement this approach, whereas by not employing it would lead to unsuccessful and not academically progressive students.

Teacher 3: Challenging by employing DI would be the fact that it requires more time and effort to prepare lesson as well as class density. On the other hand, not implementing DI would risk students' academic development.

Teacher 4: Employing DI would be a challenge for teachers who have less knowledge or awareness about this approach as well as overcrowded classes would be an issue. As for the second one, if teachers do not implement DI, students would not receive what they need to learn and that would cause un-interest and de-motivation.

Teacher 5: I think that by employing DI challenging would be class sizes and maybe students' weak motivation to participate, whereas not implementation of DI would cause un-interest to learn for low achievers whereas lessons would be unchallenging for gifted students.

Teacher 6: Sometimes the nature of lesson content is difficult to teach and by employing DI would increase the level of complexity. By not employing DI would cause learning problems since if teachers do not acknowledge students' needs as factors that affect learning, then a productive learning is less likely to occur.

Question 11: Do you think that the differentiated instruction strategies would meet your students' needs? In what way?

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Yeah, I completely agree with this. For instance, dividing students into flexible seating plan, give different sets of activities, assign projects, or encourage them to propose project ideas and so on, would be great ways to promote learning based on students' individual needs.

Teacher 2: Yes, of course. Especially when the lesson is designed based on students' learning styles, it is more likely that students will show interest.

Teacher 3: Absolutely yes. They become more flexible, gain confidence, and there are chances to review and remediate students themselves as they consider comfortable the strategies employed.

Teacher 4: Yes, I believe that DI strategies would meet my students' needs. They all benefit by being exposed to the appropriate instruction and level of difficulty.

Teacher 5: It depends. Sometimes students need to think out of the box and work like that, thus teachers should give students that opportunity that leads to an efficient learning.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Yes, they would since not everyone has the same needs, abilities or skill to express things they know in the same way. Thus, when they are exposed to different strategies, productive learning is more likely to occur.

Teacher 2: In one way or another they would. My students' diverse needs and varied interests would be met by providing a range of assignments and strategies.

Teacher 3: It depends on many factors, but mostly yes. When different strategies are involved, it is possible that students will feel comfortable to work with any of them. When they choose how to learn a material, they would remember information longer.

Teacher 4: I think they would because DI is about giving more opportunities for students to grow their highest potential. Every student needs to be offered a variety of strategies to enhance their learning no matter their academic achievement.

Teacher 5: Maybe yes, but it has negative effects too. Sometimes, the selected strategies would not be considered interesting from the students.

Teacher 6: Yes, it can be effective for both, motivated and unmotivated students, advanced and low achievers. Giving the opportunity to learn as they want and include their needs is beneficial.

Question 12: If you attempt to differentiate, what tasks would you give in different ways? Please, provide an example.

Private elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: For instance, when it comes to reading books or short stories, I would assign different tasks based on different levels of difficulty. Included would be summarizing the text, role-play, write a short-story based on the topic of the story read, write a three-page essay etc.

Teacher 2: Some students prefer to speak out loud while some other prefer to write. Hence, I would assign tasks and they would have the opportunity to complete based on their preferences. For instance, for a certain topic, I would assign tasks such as watching a video, reading an article, listening others what say about the topic and them summarize and so on.

Teacher 3: I would create multi-level assignments. For example, I would assign students to read a book and then a group provides a summary of the book, the other group may write a four-page essay, and another group may prepare a presentation.

Teacher 4: I would set different tasks from easy to difficult ones; I would differentiate learning resources, using varying texts of different difficulty, use tiered assignments and so on.

Teacher 5: For a specific topic I would provide different materials and activities. For instance, if the topic of the lesson is 'Classroom Objects' I would use more than one activity or game as for instance letter scramble, board race, chalkboard Pictionary, charades, window game etc.

Public elementary school teachers' responses

Teacher 1: Of course, before starting to differentiate anything in the classroom, first I would like to be sure of what are my students' strengths and weaknesses. After that, I would try to change the process by assigning different tasks to different students. I would employ series of tiered assignments of varying difficulty. Students would start working from the easy tasks to the hard ones, thus allowing each of them to participate and be exposed to the appropriate assignments.

Teacher 2: I would adjust the lesson content based on students' needs. The most apparent way of differentiating the learning process is to change the type of content you use in the lesson.

Teacher 3: I would use tiered assignments since they would respond to specific needs of different groups according to ability or learning preferences.

Teacher 4: DI is about providing choices for students and that is what I would do. Giving students choices allows them to take ownership of their learning and create a product that feels authentic to them. To provide various choices to my students I usually use tic-tac-toe. I find it very effective whereas students see it as interesting and enjoyable.

Teacher 5: Obviously, I would adapt tasks and activities based on my students' level of proficiency, and group them based on their learning preferences, and then provide them with suitable materials corresponding to their needs. I would also use varied questions adjusting them based on students' readiness, interests, and comprehension. I would differentiate questions based on the levels of complexity.

Teacher 6: I would use choice boards based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. For instance, I would provide students with a list of possible writing activities, including different learning styles such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Examples of activities would be for example: 1) cutting letters from magazine to create meaningful sentences; 2) listen to an audio and then write a story based on it; 3) the teacher provides some words/word phrases and students write essays based on these words/word phrases.

IV.2 Findings from students' questionnaires

As expected, substantial evidence was assembled through students' questionnaires as instrument for data gathering. Each question of the questionnaire was comprehensible and easy to follow. The questions were written in the Albanian language since it was expected that they have different levels of English language proficiency. Students' responses in the questionnaire provided findings of a great importance which regards to students' experience with DI approach and its key elements. 22 (twenty-two) closed-ended questions will be presented in detail through tables and figures. It is essential to note that the findings of both private and public elementary school student responses will be presented in this section. Information and findings from questionnaires of both sectors will be given in separate tables and figures.

IV.2.1 Findings from the public and private elementary school students' questionnaire

1. Students at:	Public elementary schools
2. Gender:	Male: 51 (fifty-one)
	Female: 80 (eighty)
3. English Language Level:	Advanced: 15 (fifteen)
	Intermediate: 45 (forty-five)
	Pre-intermediate: 31 (thirty-one)
	Elementary: 40 (forty)
4. Grade:	IX (9 TH grade): 31 (thirty-one)
	VIII (8 TH grade): 38 (thirty-eight)
	VII (7 TH grade): 23 (twenty-three)
	VI (6 TH grade): 20 (twenty)
	V (5 TH grade): 19 (nineteen)
Total:	131 (one hundred and thirty-one)

Table 3 General questions findings from public elementary school students' responses

1. Students at:	Private elementary school	
2. Gender:	Male:	53 (fifty-three)
	Female:	57 (fifty-seven)
3. English Language Level:	Advanced:	36 (thirty-six)
	Intermediate:	30 (thirty)
	Pre-intermediate:	30 (thirty)
	Elementary:	14 (fourteen)
4. Grade:	IX (9 TH grade):	32 (thirty-two)
	VIII (8 TH grade):	24 (twenty-four)
	VII (7 TH grade):	21 (twenty-one)
	VI (6 TH grade):	16 (sixteen)
	V (5 TH grade):	17 (seventeen)
Total	110 (one hundred and ten)	

Table 4 General questions findings from private elementary school students' responses

As seen from the tables 3 (three) and 4 (four), there are 131 students (one hundred and thirty-one students) from the public elementary schools who participated in this research, whereas 110 students (one-hundred and ten) from the private elementary school. The respondents had different backgrounds. Out of 131 students (one hundred and thirty-one) of public elementary schools, 51 (fifty-one) were male whereas 80 (eighty) were female. On the other hand, out of 110 students (one-hundred and ten) of the private elementary school, 53 students (fifty-three) were male whereas 57 students (fifty-seven) were female. There are differences between the respondents regarding their level of EFL proficiency as well. As the data in the above tables show, the participants of the research may be classified into four categories and as noted, ciphers are contrasting. The two broader categories of the participants from the public elementary schools are the elementary and intermediate level of the English language. 45 (forty-five) students out of 131 (one-hundred and thirty-one) declared to be of the intermediate level whereas 40 (forty) students declared to be of the elementary level. A lower number of students declared to be of the advanced and pre-intermediate levels. 15 (fifteen) out of 131 (one-hundred and thirty-one) students claimed to be of the advanced level whereas the last 31 (thirty-one) students belong to the pre-intermediate level. On the other hand, among the fourth categories, participating students from the private elementary school are divided into 36 students (thirty-six) belonging to the

advanced level, 30 (thirty) intermediate level students, 30 (thirty) pre-intermediate level students, and 14 (fourteen) elementary level students. As presumed, this result illustrates that students of the same level are different in their English language proficiency. Each category expresses huge differences between them and as shown in the tables it may be said that students of the private elementary school are far more proficient in the English language than those of the public elementary schools. All the participants of the survey were attending 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades.

Specific question findings

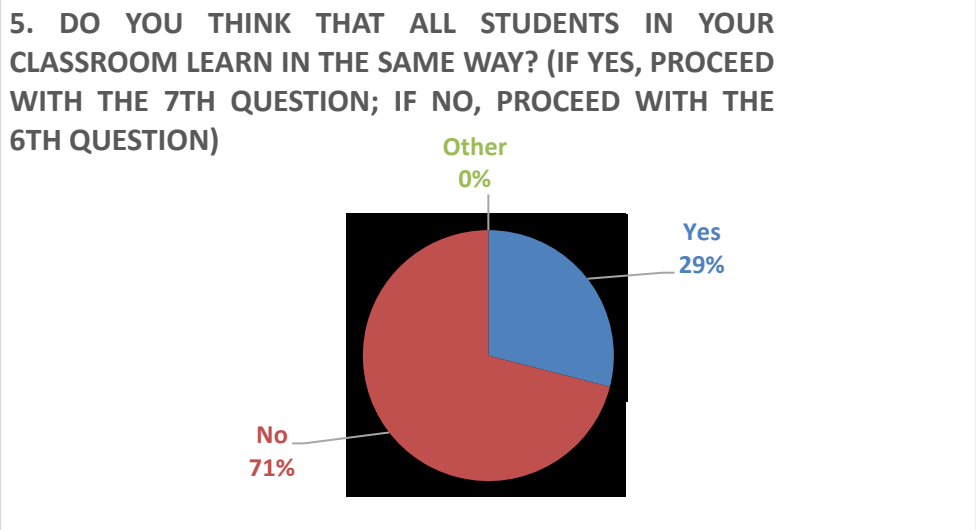


Figure 3: Do you think that all students in your classroom learn in the same way? Public elementary school students' responses

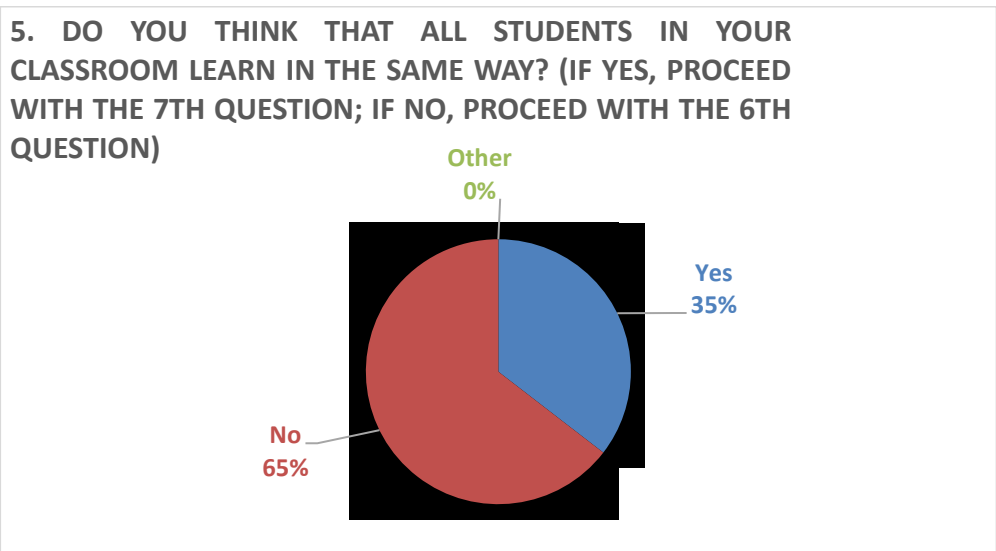


Figure 4: Do you think that all students in your classroom learn in the same way? Private elementary school students' responses

As seen from the figures (Figure 3 and Figure 4) the result shows that 71% (seventy-one percent) of the participants from the public elementary schools shared the opinion that EFL students do not learn in the same way whereas 29% (twenty-nine percent) of the students

said the EFL learners learn the same way. Similarly, the majority from the private elementary school, a number of 65% (sixty-five percent), declared that EFL students do not learn similarly which means that they believe that individual students have unique characteristics. 35% (thirty-five percent) of the students from the private elementary school expressed that the EFL learners learn in the same way. Unquestionably, there is no right or wrong since the respondents provided answers based on their opinions and beliefs. According to Brown (2004) “students learn with different degrees of success, though reading, remembering, thinking, writing, speaking, taking notes, observing, and having conversations with others” (p.8). This occurs due to the considerable individual differences as motivation, attitude, interest, and aptitude.

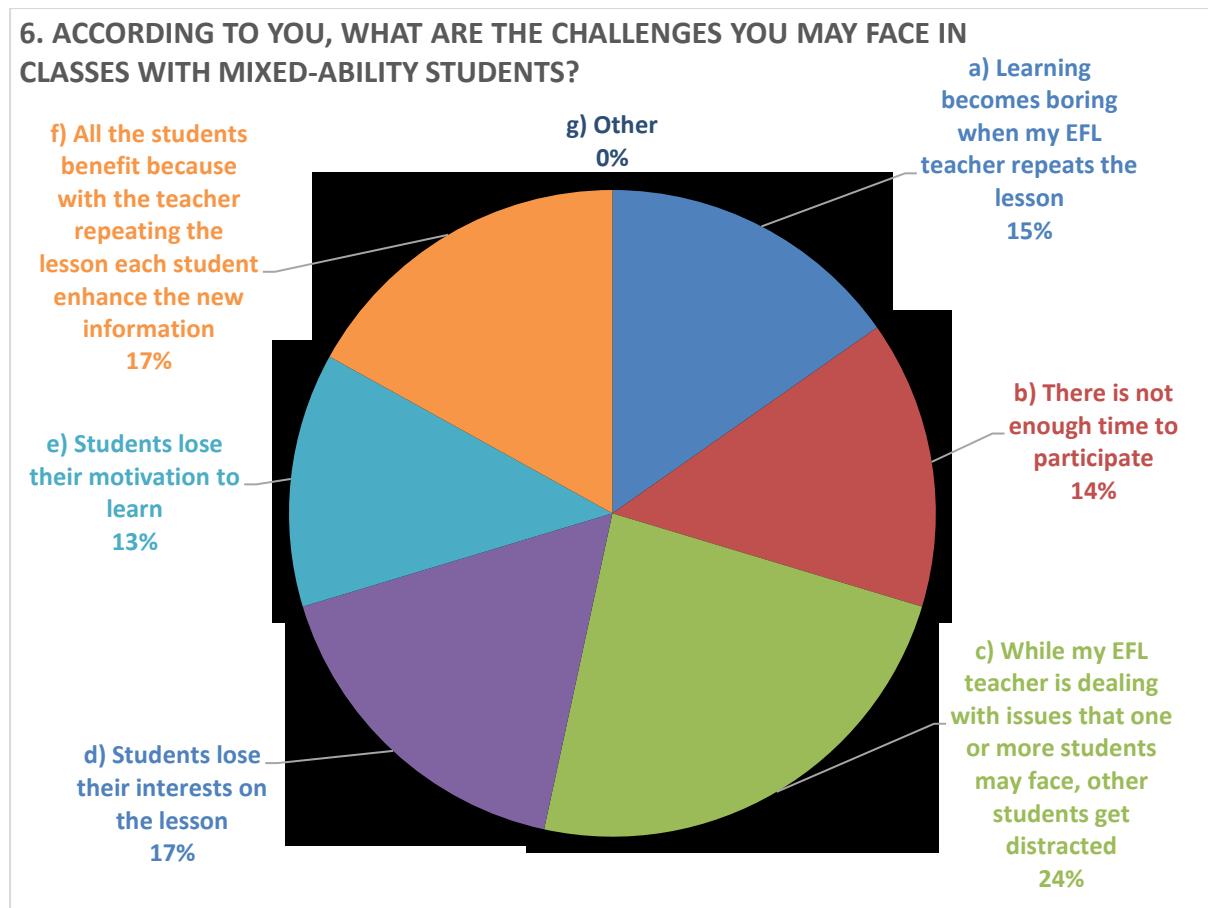


Figure 5: Challenges that a student may face in classes with mixed-ability students. Public elementary school students' responses

Based on the findings as shown in the figure above (Figure 5), it may be seen that the students provided different opinions on the challenges that they may face in mixed-ability classes. 24% (twenty-four percent) from the public elementary schools shared the opinion that one of the most challenging things is that while their EFL teacher treats potential problems that some learners may have, other students who have already understood the

material being covered get distracted. Similarly, 17% (seventeen percent) of the students expressed that in such cases students lose their interest on the lesson. 17% (seventeen percent) of the students thought that it is beneficial for them when the lesson is reviewed since they believe the material covered will be most likely remembered longer or learned faster. 15% (fifteen percent) of the students claimed that learning in a mixed-ability class causes boredom to them especially when the EFL teacher occupies with the students who have learning difficulties. 14% (fourteen percent) of the students claimed that there is not enough time to participate in class activities because if the EFL teacher spends more time with the students who face difficulties then there would not be enough time to engage in class activities. Finally, 13% (thirteen percent) of the students believe that in mixed-ability classes students lose their motivation to learn which may cause passiveness to students.

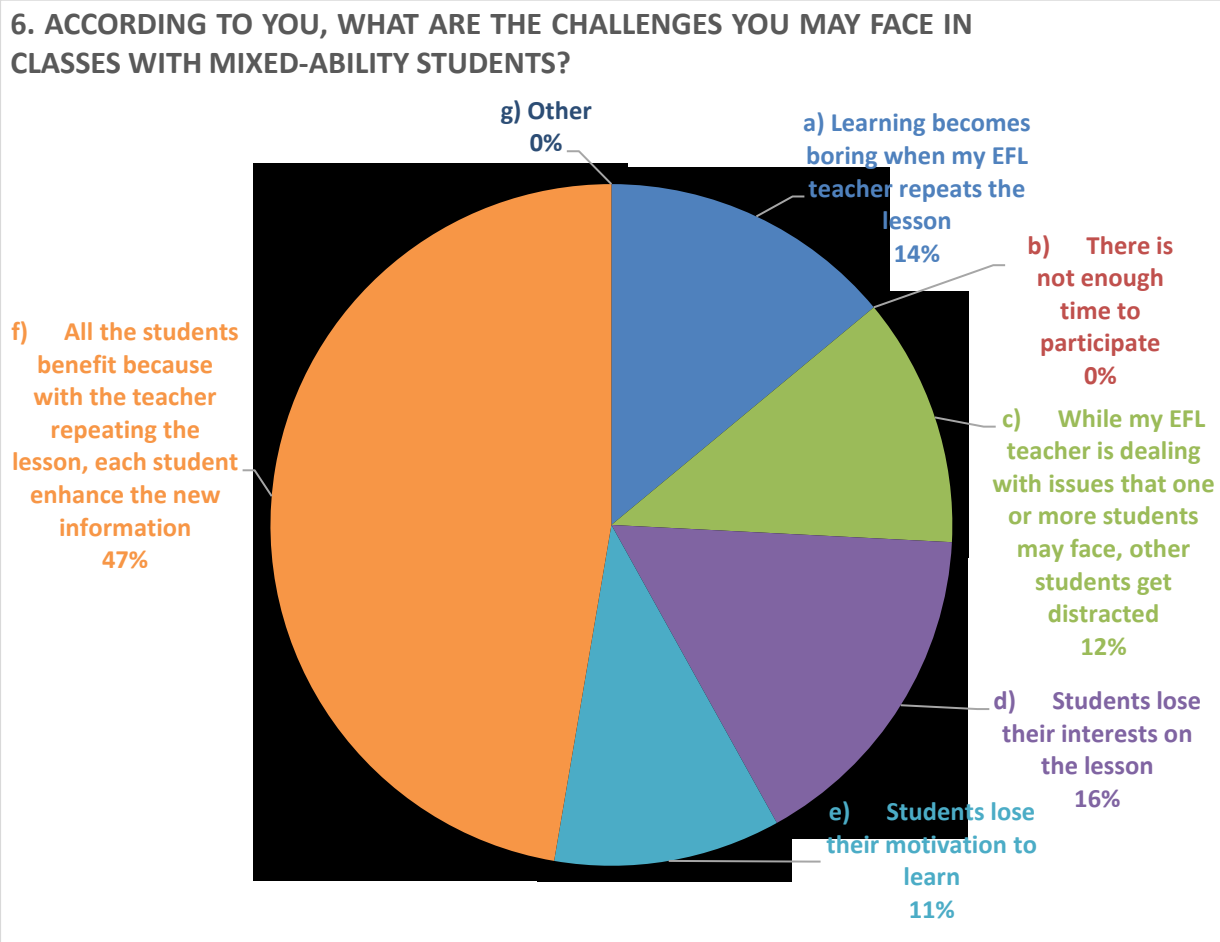


Figure 6: Challenges that a student may face in classes with mixed-ability students. Private elementary school students' responses.

Compared to the public elementary schools, 47% (forty-seven percent) of students from the private elementary school claimed that when the teacher repeats information or the lesson for students who face difficulties in learning, the other students benefit because they

enhance the new information. 16% (sixteen percent) of the students claimed that in mixed-ability classes some students may lose their interest on the lesson. 14% (fourteen percent) of the students claimed that in mixed-ability classes learning becomes boring with the teacher repeating the same things. 12% (twelve percent) of the students claimed that the students may get distracted in mixed-ability classes and finally 11% (eleven percent) of the students claimed that students lose their motivation to learn. As EFL learners declared that is challenging to learn in mixed-ability classes, EFL teachers should be aware of such problems, deal with the accordingly, and try to find solutions to such matters.

7. DO YOU THINK THAT THAT THE CLASS ACTIVITIES THAT YOUR EFL TEACHER EMPLOYS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR EACH STUDENT LEVEL PARTICIPATING IN THE CLASSROOM?

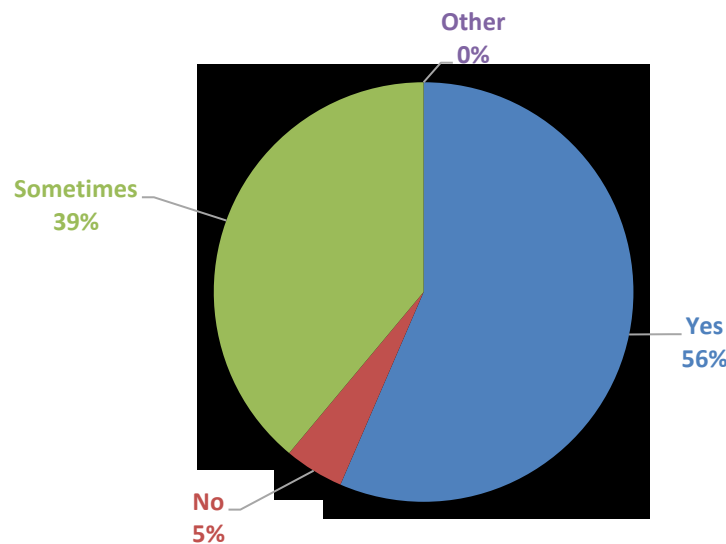


Figure 7: Does your EFL teacher employ activities that are appropriate for each student level participating? Public elementary school students' responses

According to the results shown in the figure 7 above, 56% (fifty-six percent) of the respondents from the public elementary schools revealed that the activities employed by their EFL teacher are appropriate to each student present in the classroom. On the other hand, 39% (thirty-nine percent) said that the class activities are only sometimes appropriate to each student. Finally, 5% (five percent) claimed that the class activities are not appropriate to them.

7. DO YOU THINK THAT THAT THE CLASS ACTIVITIES THAT YOUR EFL TEACHER EMPLOYS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR EACH STUDENT LEVEL PARTICIPATING IN THE CLASSROOM?

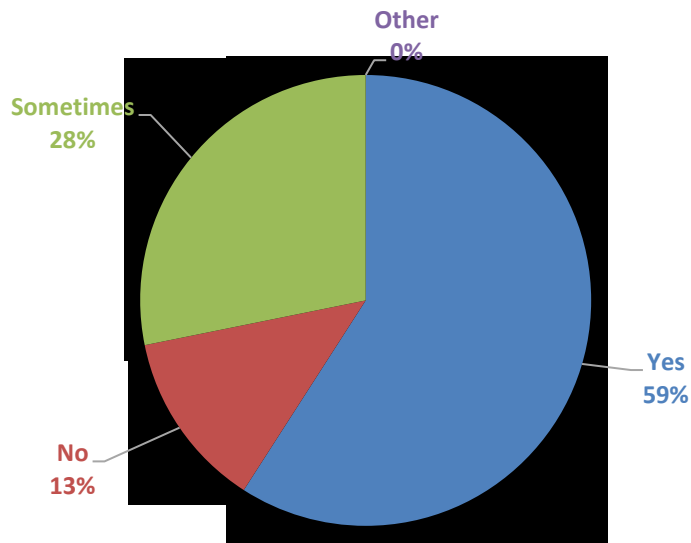


Figure 8: Does your EFL teacher employ activities that are appropriate for each student level participating? Private elementary school students' responses

Similarly, the students from the private elementary school approximately claimed the same (Figure 8). 59% (forty-nine percent) of the students from the private elementary school claimed that the activities employed by their EFL teacher are appropriate to each level of students in the classroom. 28% (twenty-eight percent) of the students responded that their EFL teacher sometimes employs activities that support each level and only 13% (thirteen percent) of the students from the private school claimed that the class activities are not appropriate to each student. EFL teachers must be cautious since a multi-level class poses many challenges. To prevent such issues and employ adequate class activities they may for instance combine students of different levels where students can help each other, provide multiple levels of a certain activity from the beginner level to the advanced one, allow them to finish a task based on their learning style, and challenge your students every time.

8. DO YOU KNOW THAT WHEN YOUR EFL TEACHER INCLUDES DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES, ALLOWS STUDENTS TO LEARN BASED ON THEIR LEARNING STYLE AND TO CHOOSE WHAT IS BEST FOR THEIR LEARNING, HE/SHE IS USING THE DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION APPROACH?

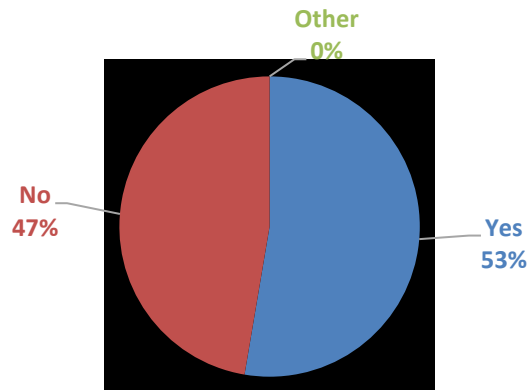


Figure 9: When EFL teachers include activities, allow students to learn based on their learning style, and allows students to choose what is best for their learning, he/she is using the differentiated instruction approach? Public elementary school students' responses.

8. DO YOU KNOW THAT WHEN YOUR EFL TEACHER INCLUDES DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES, ALLOWS STUDENTS TO LEARN BASED ON THEIR LEARNING STYLE, AND CHOOSE WHAT IS BEST FOR THEIR LEARNING, HE/SHE IS USING THE DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION APPROACH?

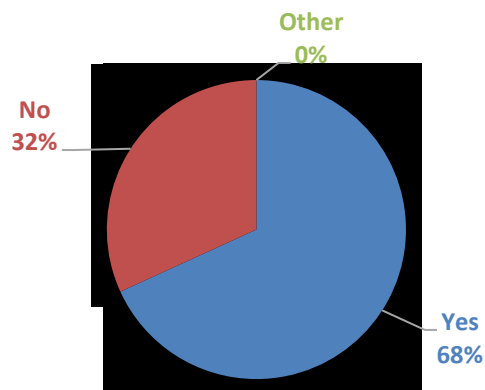


Figure 10: When EFL teachers include activities, allow students to learn based on their learning style, and allows students to choose what is best for their learning, he/she is using the differentiated instruction approach? Private elementary school students' responses.

Regarding if students are aware of the implementation of DI by teachers, the result shows that 53% (fifty-three percent) of the students from the public elementary schools are informed about it whereas 47% (forty-seven percent) are not familiar with whether this approach is being implemented or not. It is important to mention that even though these answers were provided from the EFL learners of public schools, yet there are notable differences between them and their EFL teachers simultaneously. On the other hand, it can

be noticed that students of the private elementary school are more informed about DI. 68% (sixty-eight percent) of the students from the private elementary school claimed that they are aware of the implementation of this approach in the classroom whereas only 32% (thirty-two percent) of the students declared that they are not informed about the DI. As the results of both sectors are shown it may be noted that private school teachers address a bit more individual differences of the students in comparison to public school teachers.

9. DO YOU THINK THAT THIS APPROACH HAS TO DO WITH INCREASING LEARNING QUALITY WHERE THE EFL TEACHER ADJUST LESSON BASED ON STUDENTS NEEDS AND REQUESTS, AND PROVIDES APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENTS THAT FOSTER STUDENTS' SKILLS?

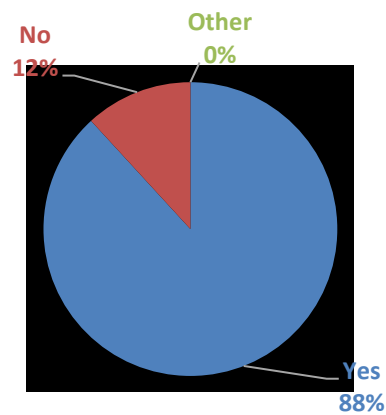


Figure 11: Does this approach has to do with increasing learning quality? Public elementary school students' responses.

9. DO YOU THINK THAT THIS APPROACH HAS TO DO WITH INCREASING LEARNING QUALITY WHERE THE EFL TEACHER ADJUST LESSON BASED ON STUDENTS NEEDS AND REQUESTS, AND PROVIDES APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENTS THAT FOSTER STUDENTS' SKILLS?

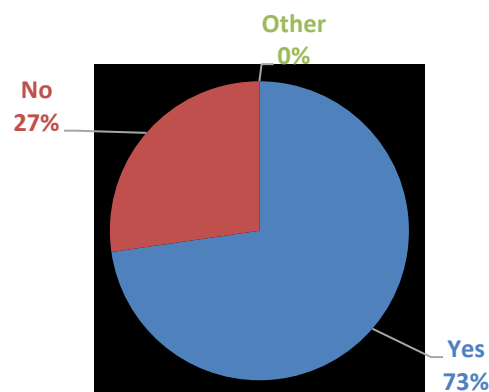


Figure 12: Does this approach has to do with increasing learning quality? Private elementary school students' responses.

Based on the findings in the figures above (Figure 11 and Figure 12), 88% (eighty-eight percent) of the EFL learners of public elementary schools believe that this approach tends to increase the learning quality whereas 12% (twelve percent) of the students provided a negative answer. On the other hand, 73% (seventy-three percent) of the students from the private school declared that they agree with the opinion that DI fosters students' skills whereas 27% (twenty-seven percent) of the students claimed a negative answer. However, the majority of both private and public schools' students are of the same mind that when EFL teachers adjust lessons based on students' needs and requests and provide appropriate multilevel assignments EFL students will improve their skills and their English language proficiency. Doubtlessly, the formulation of the question may have provided enough information that may have led students to presuppose that DI is an advantageous approach which is good since it makes each student aware of this approach.

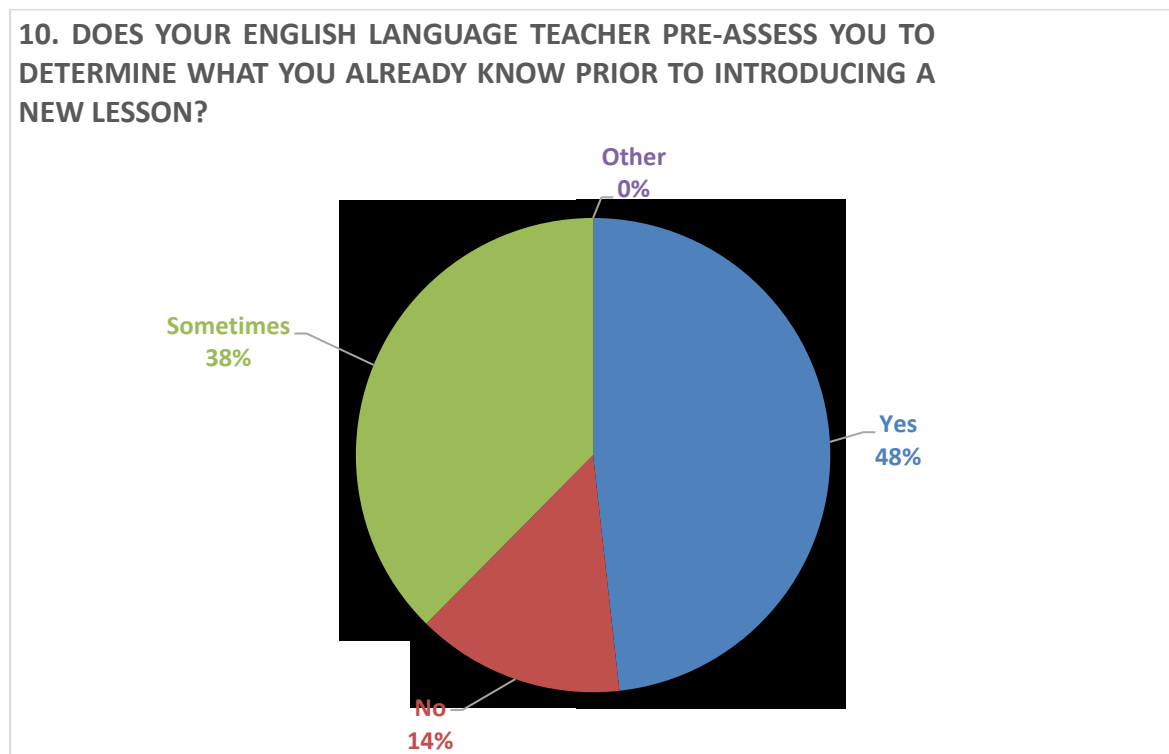


Figure 13: Does your EFL teacher pre-assess you to determine what you already know prior to introducing a new lesson? Public elementary school students' responses.

Regarding the issue of whether the EFL teachers of public elementary schools pre-assess their students to determine what they already know before introducing the lesson, 48% (forty-eight percent) claimed that their EFL teacher pre-assesses them, 38% (thirty-eight percent) said that sometimes their EFL teacher pre-assesses them, and 14% (fourteen percent) revealed that their EFL teacher does not pre-assesses them. Obviously, there are

notable differences between these three categories. Pre-assessment can be used to collect data about students' strengths or weaknesses. It is an important part of DI as a diagnostic tool for measuring students learning students before introducing a new lesson is crucial since it can provide teacher opportunities to observe and track students' academic growth.

10. DOES YOUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER PRE-ASSESS YOU TO DETERMINE WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW PRIOR TO INTRODUCING A NEW LESSON?

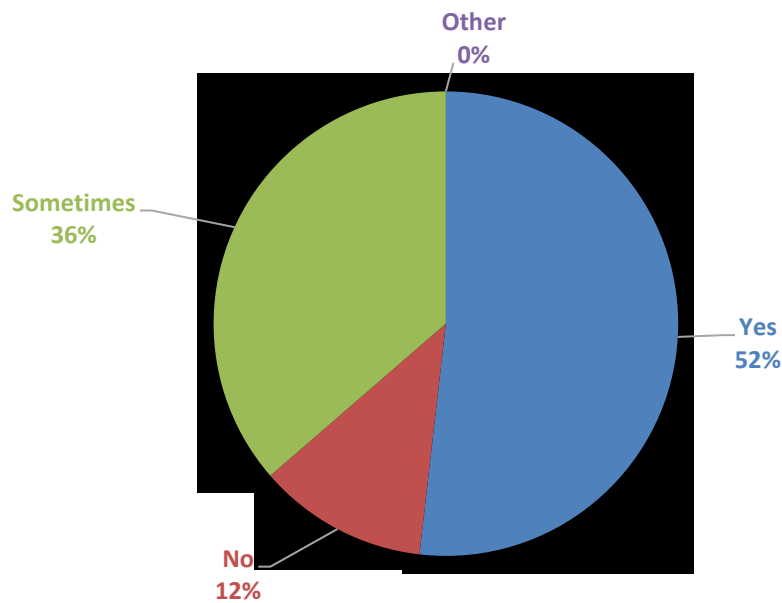


Figure 14: Does your EFL teacher pre-assess you to determine what you already know prior to introducing a new lesson? Private elementary school students' responses.

Likewise, the percentage of the students from the private school was approximately equal. 52% (fifty-two percent) of the students asserted that their EFL teacher pre-assesses them to measure their knowledge on a certain topic. 36% (thirty-six percent) of the students asserted that sometimes their EFL teacher pre-assesses them, whereas 12% (twelve percent) said that their EFL teacher does not pre-assesses them at all. EFL teachers who pre-assess their students prior to the material being covered help them for measuring students' knowledge or their skills and their strengths and weaknesses.

11. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER PROVIDE YOU OPTIONS TO COMPLETE ANY ASSIGNMENT OR PROJECT IN THE WAY YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE?

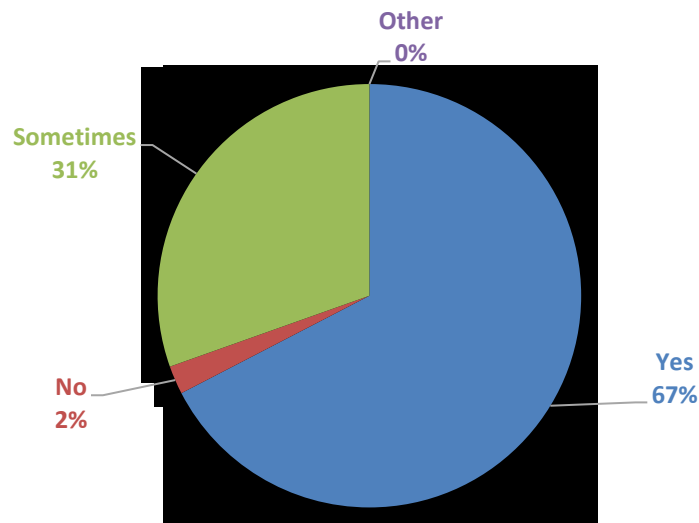


Figure 15: Does your EFL teacher provide you options to complete any assignment or project in the way you feel more comfortable? Public elementary school students' responses.

11. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER PROVIDE YOU OPTIONS TO COMPLETE ANY ASSIGNMENT OR PROJECT IN THE WAY YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE?

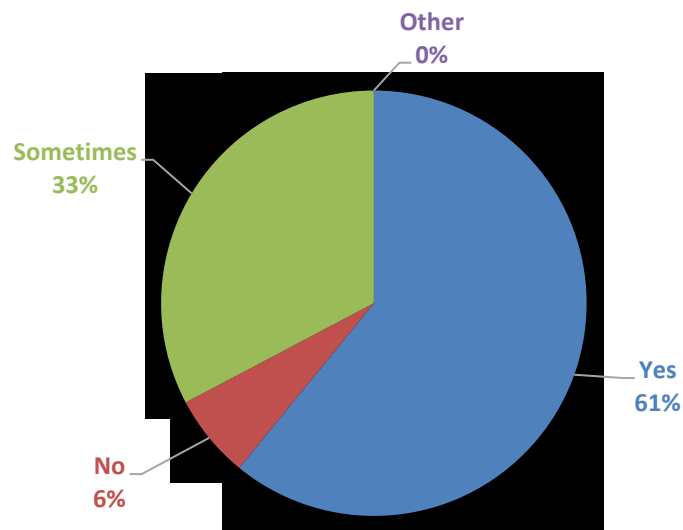


Figure 16: Does your EFL teacher provide you options to complete any assignment or project in the way you feel more comfortable? Private elementary school students' responses.

67% (sixty-seven percent) of the students from public elementary schools claimed that their EFL teachers offer them options to complete a certain assignment. 31% (thirty-three percent) of the students claimed that their EFL teachers sometimes offer choices to execute a certain assignment whereas only 2% (two percent) claimed that their EFL teachers does not offer options at all. Equivalently, as seen in figure 16, students of the private school

indicated that their EFL teachers provide options to complete tasks. 61% (sixty-one percent) stated that they are allowed to choose to complete a task, 33% (thirty-three percent) stated that their EFL teachers sometimes allow them to choose options on how to complete a task whereas only 6% (six percent) claimed that their EFL teachers do not offer them choices to complete a task. However, offering different possibilities to complete a task is quite advantageous. Students tend to be more motivated to complete a task successfully which leads them to a greater engagement. When students are offered to choose how they want to complete or present a task, they are more likely to be independent, take responsibility and ownership of their own production.

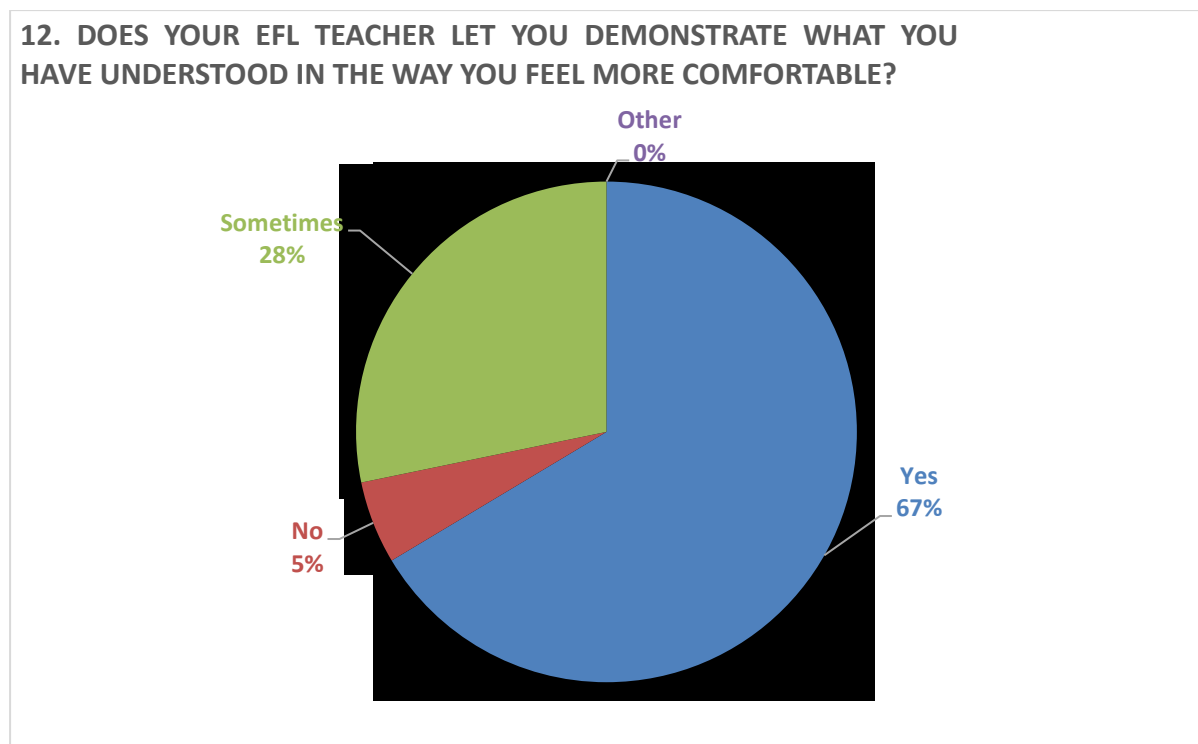


Figure 17: Does your EFL teacher let you demonstrate what have understood in the way you feel more comfortable? Public elementary school students' responses.

According to the public elementary school students' answers, EFL teachers permit the students to choose how they want to demonstrate a learned material. 67% (sixty-seven percent) declared that their EFL teachers allow them to demonstration what they have learned in the preferred way. 28% (twenty-eight percent) said that this happens occasionally whereas only 5% (five percent) said that this is not allowed from the EFL teachers.

12. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER LET YOU DEMONSTRATE WHAT YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD IN THE WAY YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE?

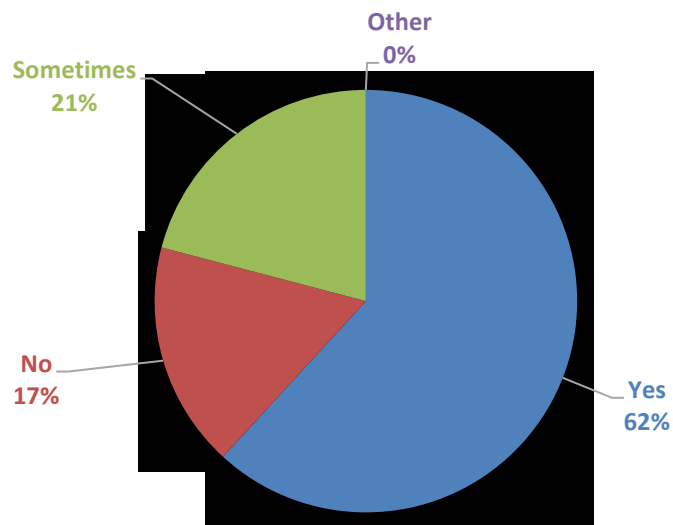


Figure 18: Does your EFL teacher let you demonstrate what have understood in the way you feel more comfortable? Private elementary school students' responses.

Likewise, the respondents from the private school shared the same opinion. 62% (sixty-two percent) of them claimed that they can choose how to demonstrate the learned information. 21% (twenty-one percent) said that this occurs on occasions whereas 17% (seventeen percent) claimed that this is not what their EFL teacher allows. Private and public elementary students are considerably similar in this aspect except the fact that the number of students who responded negatively is larger in the private school.

13. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER PROVIDE YOU WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING MATERIALS/SOURCES FOR A CERTAIN LESSON WHEN THE INFORMATION FROM THE CURRENT LEARNING MATERIALS ARE NOT ENOUGH?

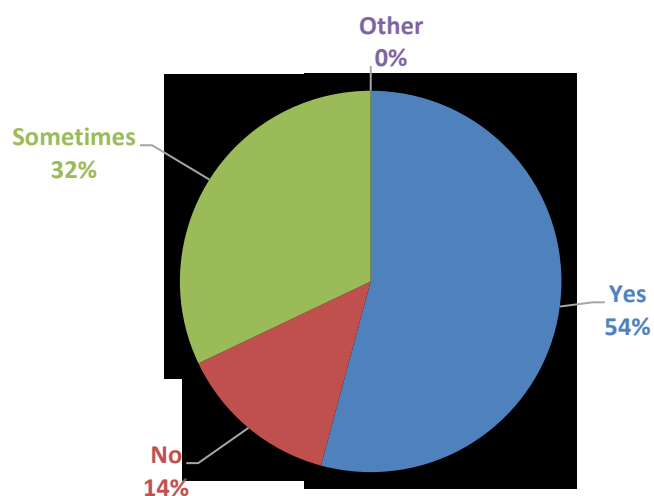


Figure 19: EFL teachers provide additional learning materials/resources for a certain lesson when the information from the current learning materials are not enough? Public elementary school students' responses.

13. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER PROVIDE YOU WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING MATERIALS/SOURCES FOR A CERTAIN LESSON WHEN THE INFORMATION FROM THE CURRENT LEARNING MATERIALS ARE NOT ENOUGH?

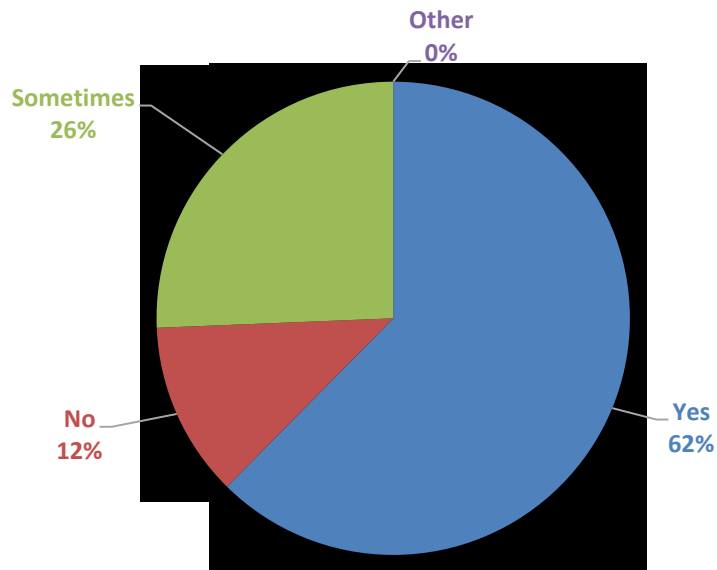


Figure 20: EFL teachers provide additional learning materials/resources for a certain lesson when the information from the current learning materials are not enough? Private elementary school students' responses.

Class materials should be designed to help students develop their own skills and make learning motivating and enjoyable synchronously. Those materials should have impact on how the teacher teaches and how learners learn to improve students' learning outcomes, increase engagement and provide to learners several ways to demonstrate their knowledge. Therefore, teaching materials are important since they can significantly increase student achievement. Teachers may go under a lot of pressure if the course books do not fulfill students' needs. In these cases, the need for supplementary materials increases. Regarding of whether the EFL teachers provide additional learning materials, 54% (fifty-four percent) of the students from the public elementary school stated that their EFL teachers provide them extra materials when necessary; 32% (thirty-two percent) stated that only sometimes their EFL teachers provide extra materials for a certain lesson whereas 14% (fourteen percent) claimed that their EFL teachers does not provide them such materials at all. When it comes to private school EFL teachers it can be noticed that the number is higher. This may appear due to the availability of myriad materials that usually are not that present in public schools. 62% (sixty-two percent) claimed that their EFL teachers provide supplementary materials; 26% (twenty-six percent) said that only sometimes their EFL teachers provide

supplementary materials whereas 12% (twelve percent) declared that their EFL teachers do not provide supplementary materials at all.

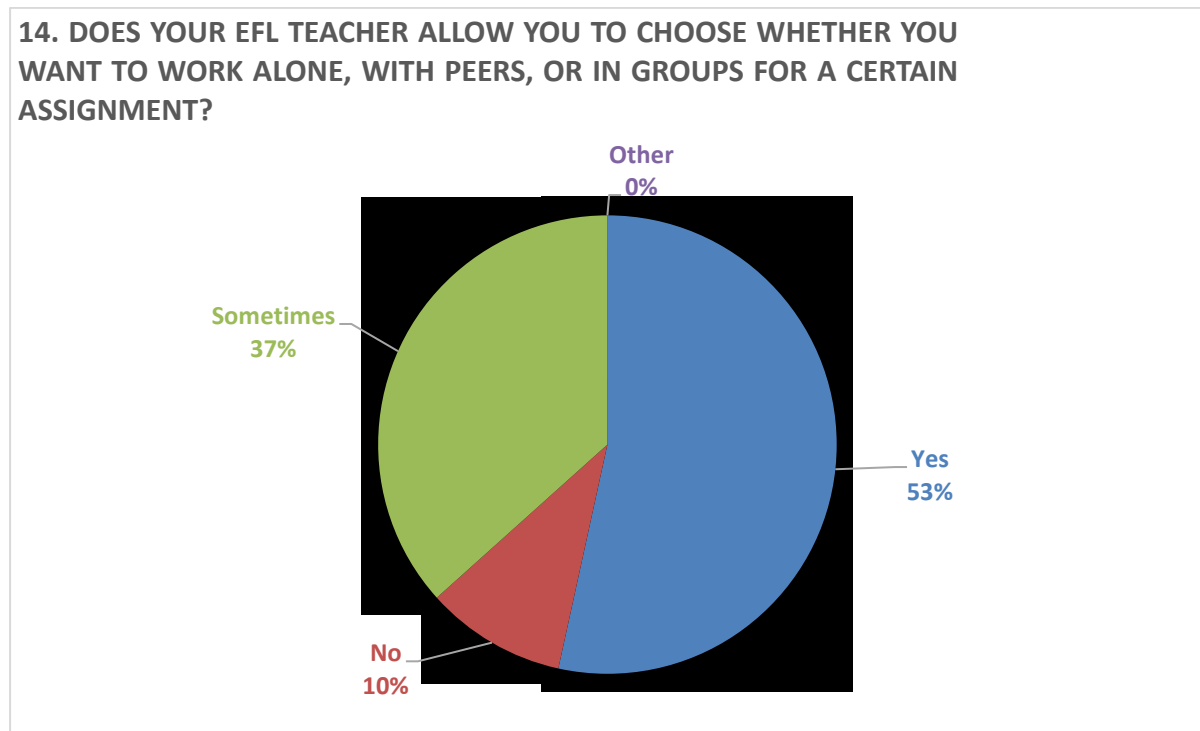


Figure 21: Do you choose whether you want to work alone, with peers, or in groups for a certain assignment? Public elementary school students' responses.

As seen in figure 21, students of the public schools are more independent to choose whether they want to work independently, with peers, or in groups. 53% (fifty-three percent) claimed that they have their EFL teachers' consent to decide between working on their own, in pairs or in groups; 37% (thirty-seven percent) claimed that this occurs simply sometimes whereas 10% (ten percent) claimed that they are not allowed to decide how to work in class activities.

14. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER ALLOW YOU TO CHOOSE WHETHER YOU WANT TO WORK ALONE, WITH PEERS, OR IN GROUPS FOR A CERTAIN ASSIGNMENT?

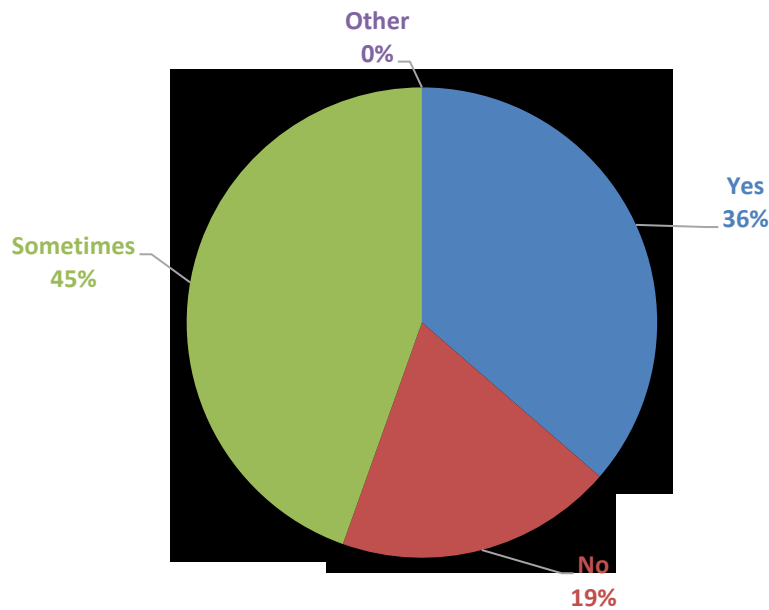


Figure 22: Do you choose whether you want to work alone, with peers, or in groups for a certain assignment? Private elementary school students' responses.

On the other hand, a different percentage has emerged from private school students' questionnaires. 45% (forty-five percent) claimed that sometimes their EFL teachers permit them to choose how to work. 36% (thirty-six percent) alleged that their EFL teachers allow them to choose between working independently, with peers, or in groups; whereas 19% (nineteen percent) responded negatively. The result between the private and public school is surprising. Clearly, one would expect that private school teachers tolerate more things including students' decision on working independently, in pairs or in groups. However, this statement seems to be untrue in this case. Apparently, public EFL teachers consider more important to enable students decide for themselves.

15. BASED ON WHAT CRITERIA DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER DIVIDE YOU IN GROUPS?

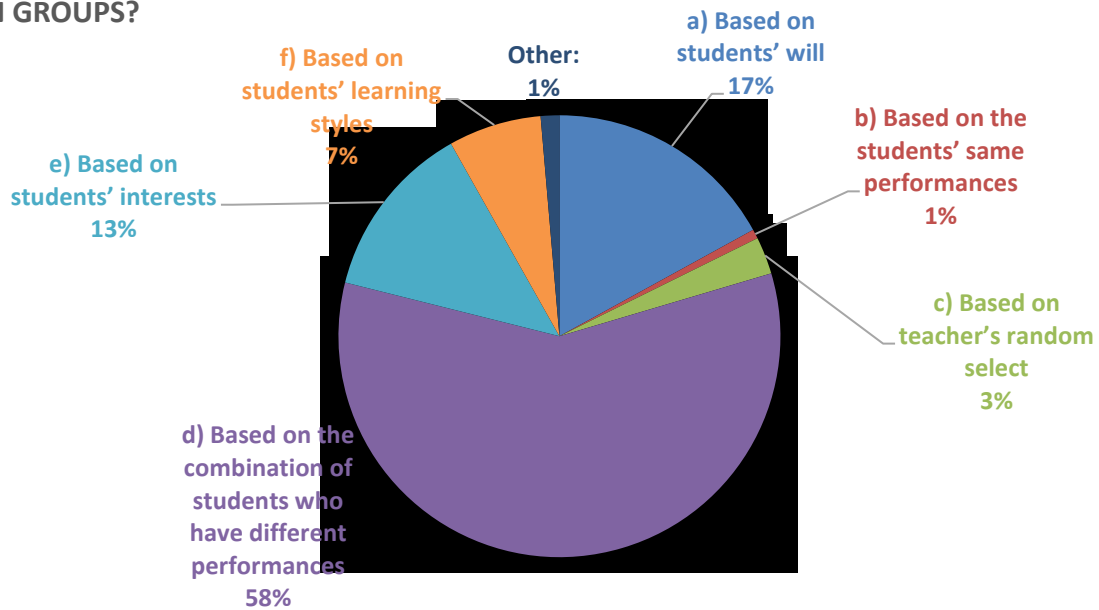


Figure 23: Based on what criteria does your EFL teacher divide you in groups? Public elementary school students' responses.

15. BASED ON WHAT CRITERIA DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER DIVIDE YOU IN GROUPS?

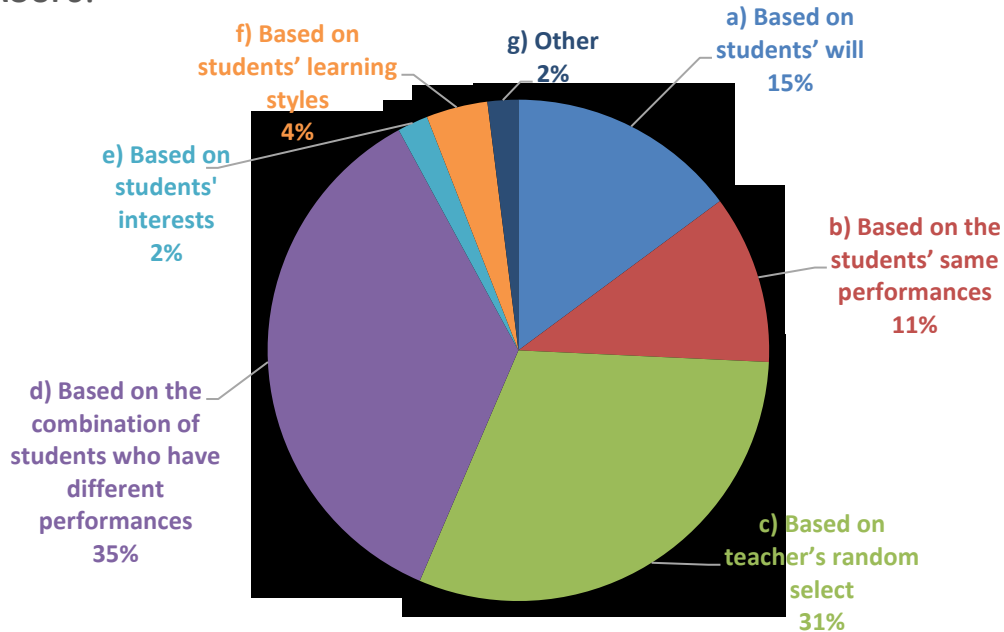


Figure 24: Based on what criteria does your EFL teacher divide you in groups? Private elementary school students' responses.

Teachers are constantly on the lookout for new and unique ideas to get students engaged in the class. While they assign group projects or collaborative tasks, it requires from the students to participate. Group works essentially create a positive environment and have impact on learning. However, many problems arise if the groups undergo a weak formation process. If the formations are not appropriate students will face problems, otherwise if

appropriately formed, students will achieve high performance. Based on what criteria EFL teachers divide students in groups, as seen from the figures above (Figure 23 and 24), the result is diverse. 58% (fifty-eight percent) of the students from the public school said that their EFL teacher divides them in groups based on the criteria of the combination of students who have different performances, whereas 35% (thirty-five percent) of the students from the private school said the same. Based on students' preferences group criteria is 17% (seventeen percent) from the students of the public schools whereas 15% (fifteen percent) of students from the private school. Based on students' interest group criteria the percentage from the students of public schools is 13% (thirteen percent), whereas from the students of the private school is only 2% (two percent). The percentage for the criteria of based on students' learning style is 7% (seven percent) from the students of the public schools whereas 4% (four percent) from the students of the private school. The percentage for the criteria of based on teachers' random select is 3% (three percent) from the students of the public schools, whereas 31% (thirty-one percent) from the students of the private school. The percentage for the criteria for based on the students' same performance is 1% (one percent) from the students of the public schools, whereas 11% (eleven percent) from the students of the private school. 1% (one percent) of the students from the public schools and 2% (two percent) of the students from the private school choose the option 'other'. They claimed that the group formations depend on the students' sitting places.

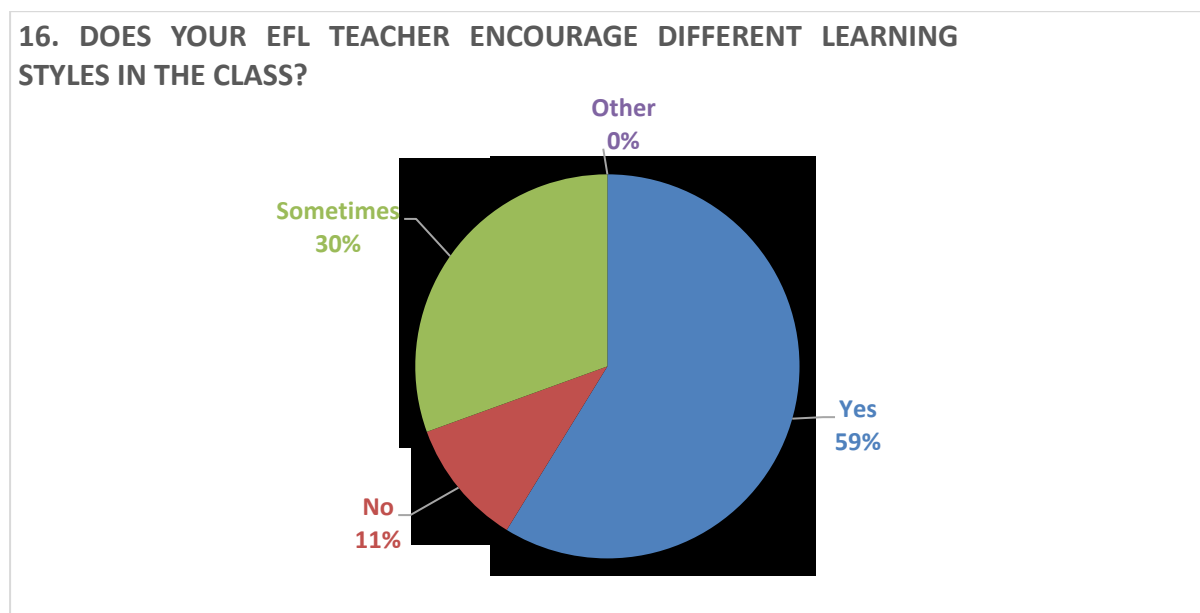


Figure 25: Does your EFL teacher encourage different learning styles in the class? Public elementary school students' responses.

16. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER ENCOURAGE DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES IN THE CLASS?

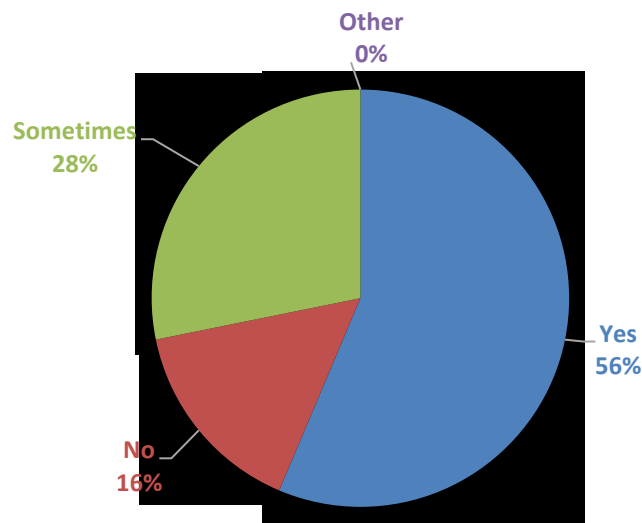


Figure 26: Does your EFL teacher encourage different learning styles in the class? Private elementary school students' responses

Acknowledging students' learning style is an important element if one teacher decides to differentiate. Each student has a preferred mode of learning and learning is enhanced if the teacher recognizes and varies instruction based on students' learning styles. When it comes to EFL teachers encouraging different learning styles, the public and private school EFL teachers are quite similar and there are no notable differences between them. 59% (fifty-nine percent) of the students agreed that their EFL teachers encourage different learning styles; 30% (thirty percent) claimed that their EFL teachers only sometimes encourage different learning styles, whereas 11% (eleven percent) responded negatively. Similarly, 56% (fifty-six percent) of the students from the private school declared that their EFL teachers encourage different learning styles; 28% (twenty-eight percent) said that this happens only sometimes whereas 16% (sixteen percent) gave a negative response.

17. WHICH LEARNING STYLE IS BEST APPROPRIATE TO YOU?

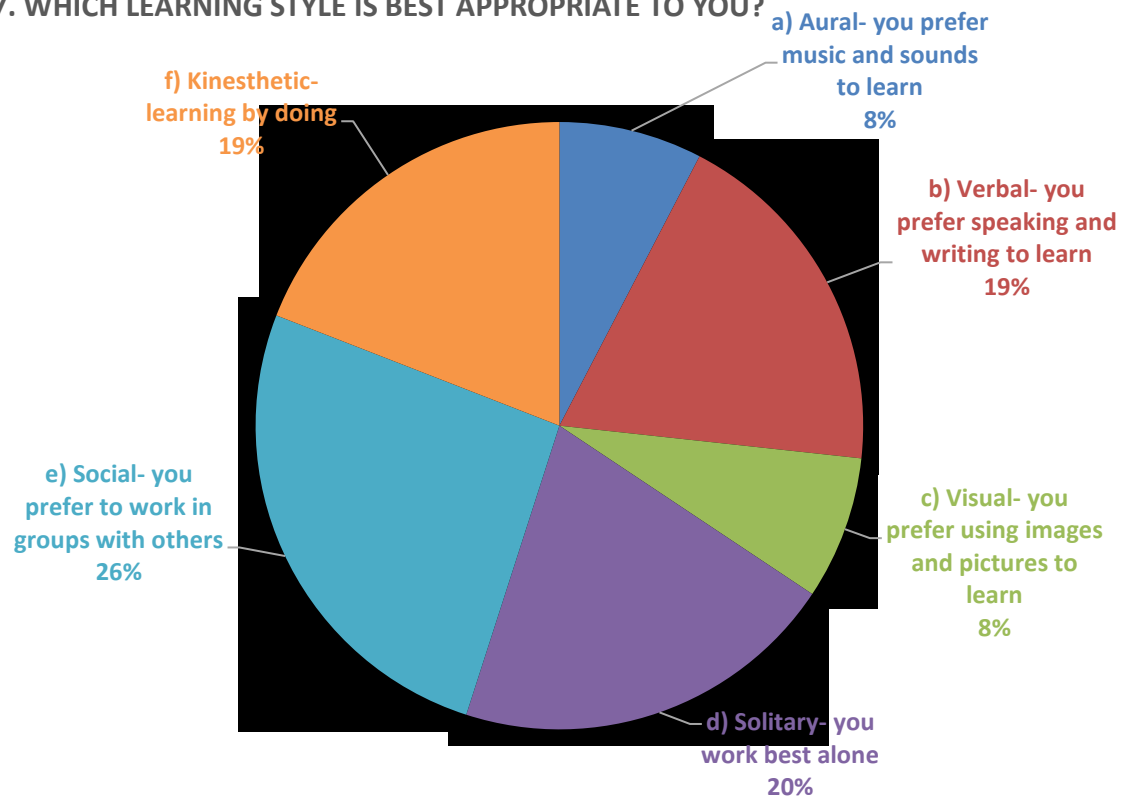


Figure 27: Which learning style is best appropriate to you? Public elementary school students' responses.

Students experience things in unique ways and with that comes variation. Acknowledging different types of learning styles can drastically impact student learning. Basically, there are several types of learning styles that include aural, verbal, visual, solitary, and social learning styles. From the figure 27 (twenty-seven) above it can be noticed that the students of the public elementary schools have various learning styles. 26% (twenty-six percent) declared that they prefer working in groups with other students; 20% (twenty percent) claimed that they work best when they work independently; 19% (nineteen percent) claimed that their preferred learning style is learning through speaking and writing (verbal); 19% (nineteen percent) claimed that they prefer learning by doing (kinesthetic); 8% (eight percent) said that they are visual learners and prefer to learn by using images and pictures to learn; 8% (eight percent) claimed that they prefer to learn by listening. However, it should be noted that just because a student falls in a certain category does not mean that he/she cannot be successful in another. It may be their preferred way of learning, but it does not limit their capabilities.

17. WHICH LEARNING STYLE IS BEST APPROPRIATE TO YOU?

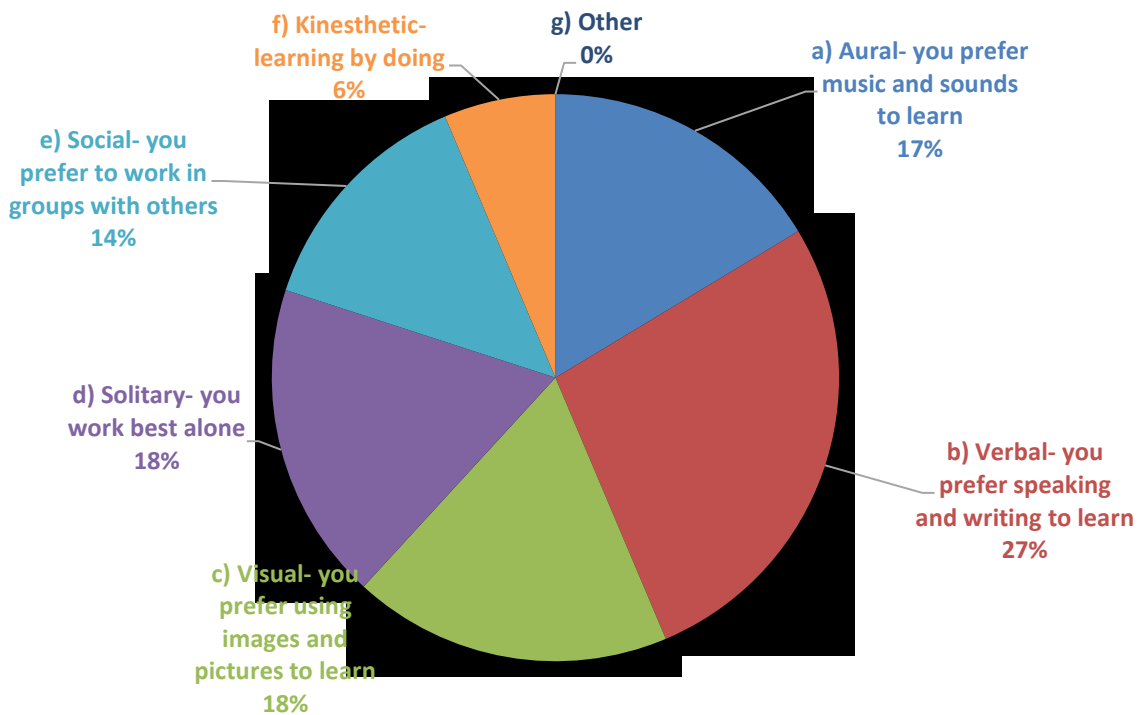


Figure 28: Which learning style is best appropriate to you? Private elementary school students' responses.

Similarly, the students of the private school also vary in this aspect. 27% (twenty-seven percent) are verbal learners; 18% (eighteen percent) are visual learners; 18% (eighteen percent) prefer working independently; 17% (seventeen percent) prefer music and sounds to learn; 14% (fourteen percent) prefer working in groups; and 6% (six percent) are kinesthetic learners who prefer learning by doing themselves.

18. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER ALLOW YOU TO WORK BASED ON YOUR PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE TO COMPLETE AN ASSIGNMENT?

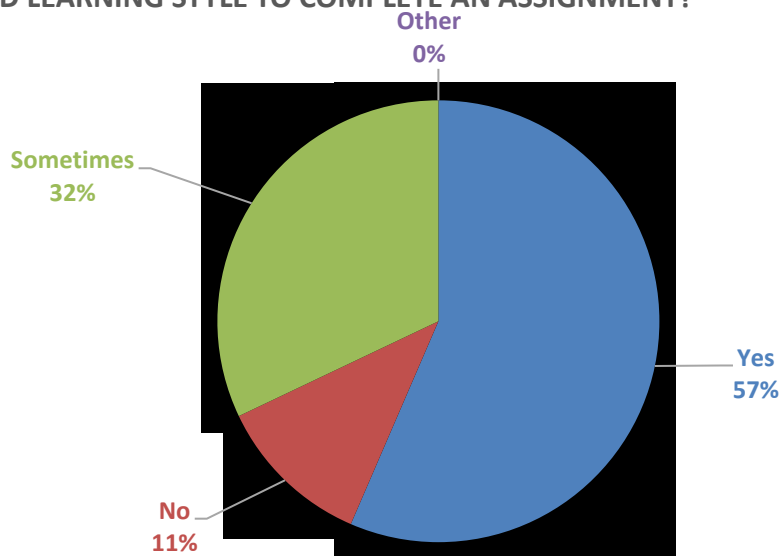


Figure 29: Do you work based on your preferred learning style to complete as assignment? Public elementary school students' responses.

18. DOES YOUR EFL TEACHER ALLOWS YOU TO WORK BASED ON YOUR PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE TO COMPLETE AN ASSIGNMENT?

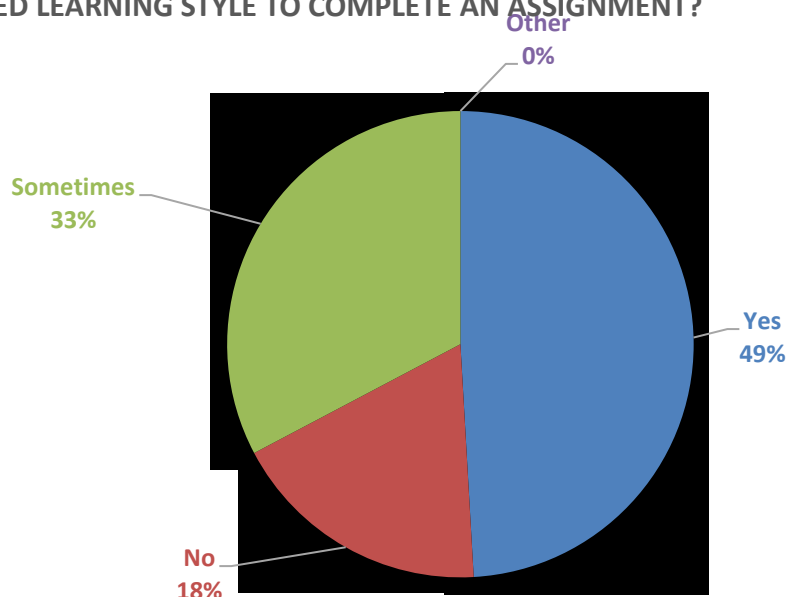


Figure 30: Do you work based on your preferred learning style to complete as assignment? Private elementary school students' responses.

According to the students' answers, EFL teachers mainly allow them to follow whatever learning style they feel most comfortable with. The majority of the public-schools' students, about 57% (fifty-seven percent), stated that their EFL teachers allow them to complete an assignment as they prefer. This is considerably a satisfying result especially being that the result emerged from the public elementary school students. Approximately the same result appears from the private school students. 49% (forty-nine percent) of these students admitted the same which is good. 32% (thirty-two percent) of the students from the public schools claimed that they are permitted to work based on their learning style only in some occasions which may be of different natures whereas 33% (thirty-three percent) of the private elementary school students claimed the same. 11% (eleven percent) of the students from the public school and 18% (eighteen percent) of the students from the private school responded negatively.

19. DO YOU FEEL CHALLENGED BY YOUR EFL TEACHERS DURING ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES? (IF YES, PROCEED WITH THE 20TH QUESTION; IF NO, PROCEED WITH THE 21ST QUESTION)

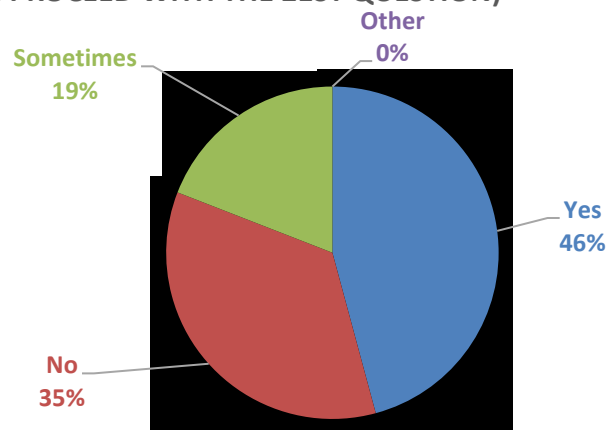


Figure 31: Do you feel challenged by your EFL teachers? Public elementary school students' responses.

19. DO YOU FEEL CHALLENGED BY YOUR EFL TEACHERS DURING ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES? (IF YES, PROCEED WITH THE 20TH QUESTION; IF NO, PROCEED WITH THE 21ST QUESTION)

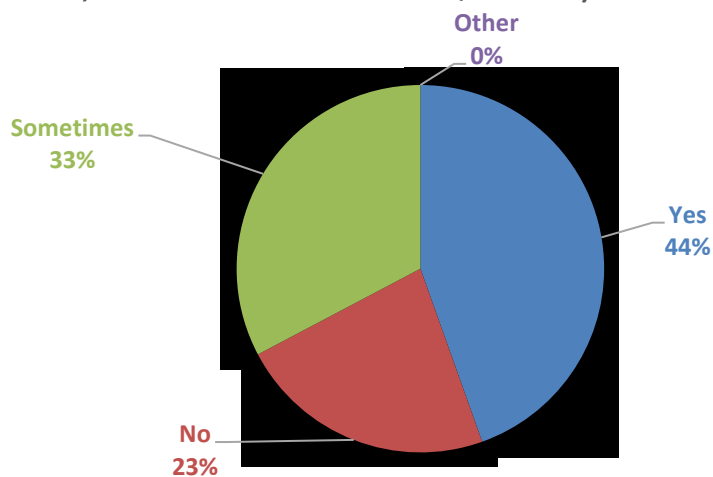


Figure 32: Do you feel challenged by your EFL teachers? Private elementary school students' responses.

Challenging students is a requisite because it helps them grow academically. If classes are not challenging it would be more complicated to encourage the students. Hence, challenges are important for students' achievement since through overcoming different obstacles students learn faster and progress more. Similarly, both public and private school students provided approximately the same responses. 46% (forty-six percent) of public school students and 44% (forty-four percent) claimed that their EFL teachers usually challenge them; 19% (nineteen percent) of public school students and 33% (thirty-three percent) of the private school students said that their EFL teachers challenge them occasionally, whereas 35% (thirty-five percent) of public school students and 23% (twenty-three percent)

of the private school students gave a negative response meaning that their EFL teachers do not challenge them in EFL classes.

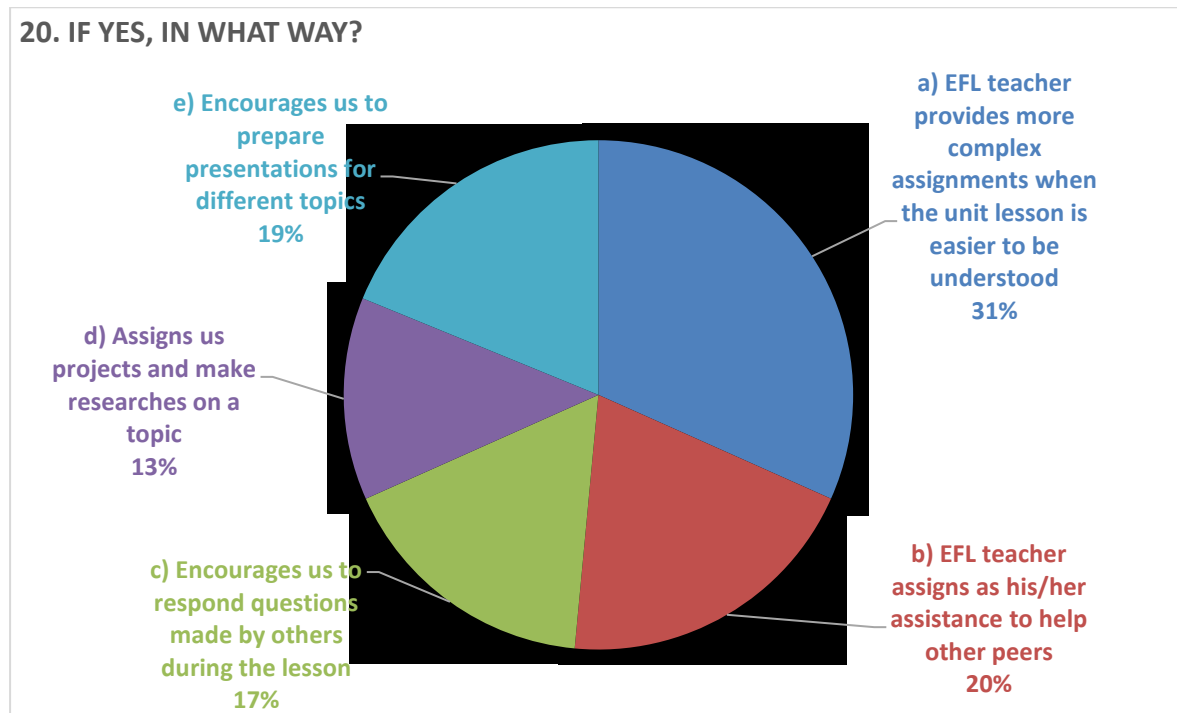


Figure 33: If yes, in what way? Public elementary school students' responses.

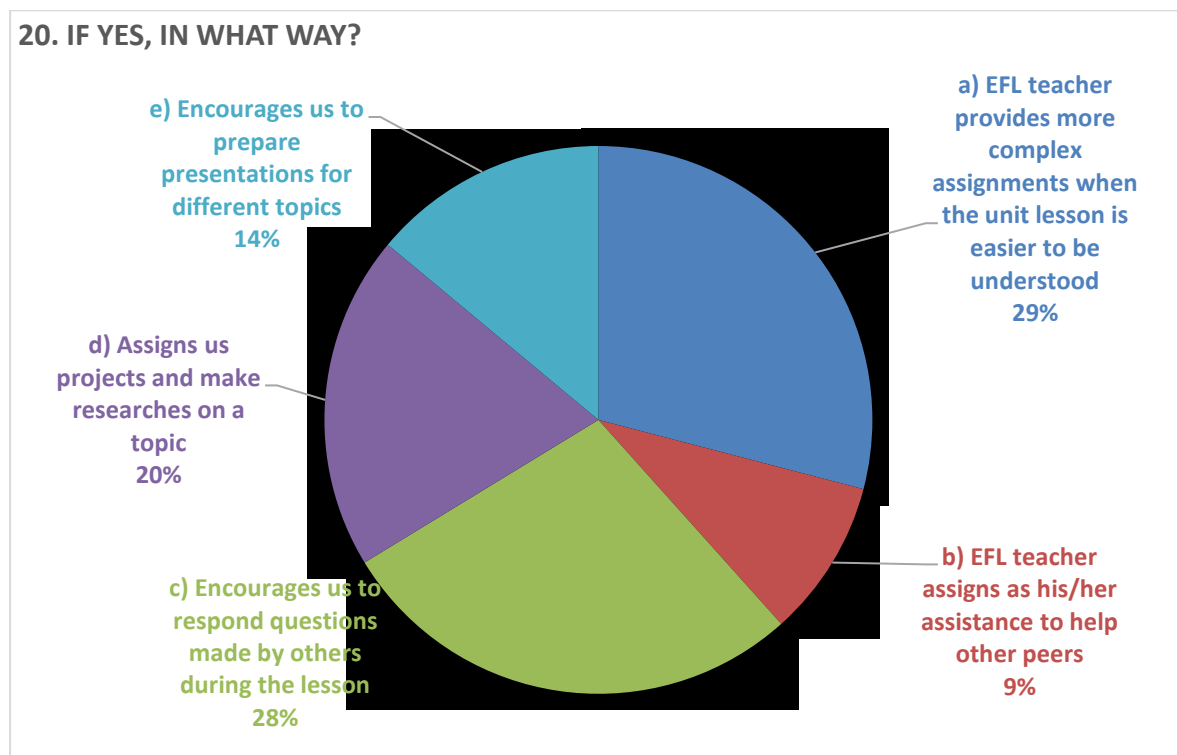


Figure 34: If yes, in what way? Private elementary school students' responses.

In the question number 20 (twenty) the students were asked to respond if their EFL teachers challenge them whereas in the question number 21 (twenty-one) they responded to how they are challenged. As seen from the figure 33 and 34 above, students of private and public

schools are challenged in different ways. Around 31% (thirty-one percent) of public school students and 29% (twenty-nine percent) of the private school students said that they are usually challenged by being provided with more complex assignments when the lesson is easier; 20% (twenty percent) of public schools students and 9% of the private school students claimed that their EFL teachers usually challenge them by requiring from them to be the assistants and help other peers; 17% (seventeen percent) of public schools students and 28% (twenty-eight percent) said that they are challenged by being asked to respond questions posed in the classroom; 13% (thirteen percent) of public schools students and 20% (twenty percent) of the private school students declared that they are challenged by working on projects and conducting a research, whereas 19% (nineteen percent) of public schools students and 14% (fourteen percent) of the private school students said they are challenged to prepare classroom presentations.

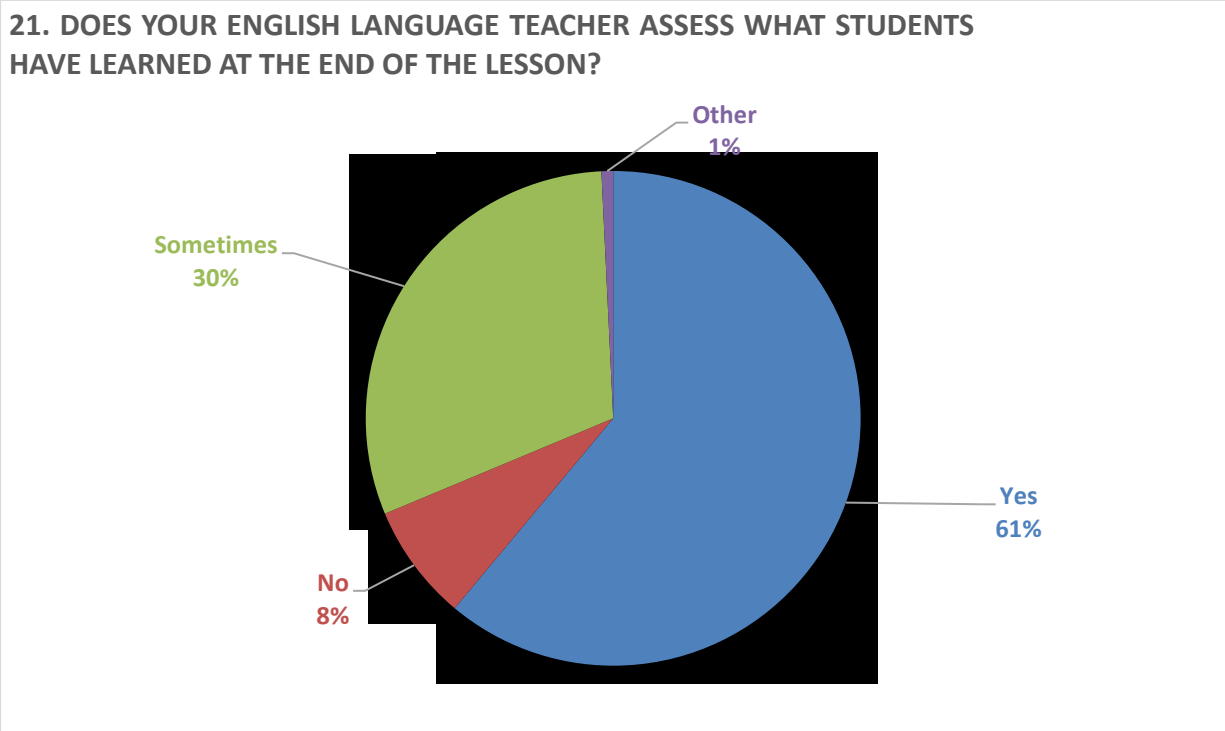


Figure 35: Does your English language teacher assess what students have learned at the end of the lesson? Public elementary school students' responses.

21. DOES YOUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER ASSESS WHAT STUDENTS HAVE LEARNED AT THE END OF THE LESSON?

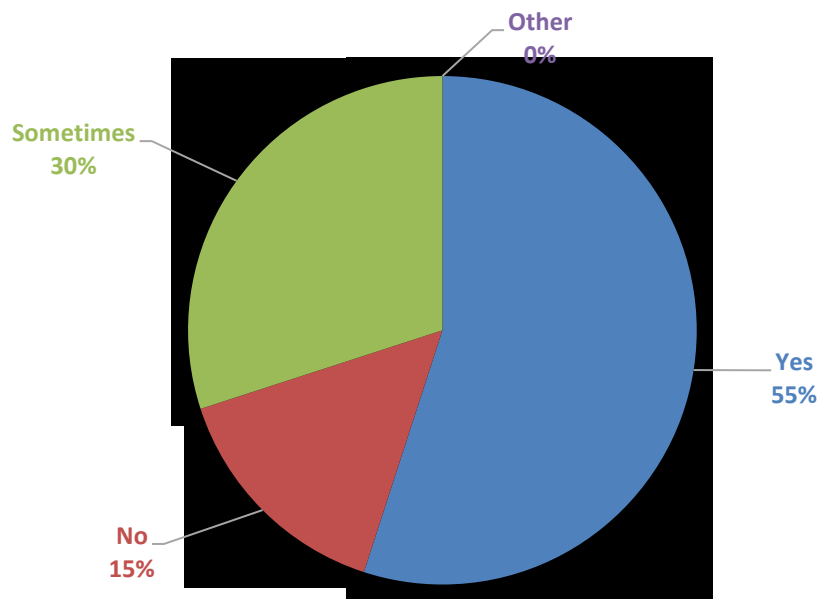


Figure 36: Does your English language teacher assess what students have learned at the end of the lesson? Private elementary school students' responses.

Asking the students to reflect at the end of the lesson should be taken into consideration from each EFL teachers. It is critical that the teachers assess students on a daily basis. Daily monitoring of the students is crucial in collecting data about student learning whereas they can use such information to adjust instruction. Each student's nature should be determined to plan differentiated assessment. Differentiated assessment may include different assessment routes by always considering individual students' needs, abilities, and interests. As noted in the results from the students, it seems that EFL teachers assess the students at the end of the lessons. 61% (sixty-one percent) and 55% (fifty-five percent) admitted that their EFL teachers assess them at the end of the lesson for gathering evidence for students' gain of knowledge. At the end of the lesson, teachers may collect information about the things their students learnt through in-class discussion, questions, quizzes, or surveys. 30% (thirty percent) of the students from the public schools and 30% (thirty percent) of the private school stated that their EFL teachers sometimes assess them at the end of the lesson. However, assessing sometimes does not provide enough assessment information. Finally, 8% (eight percent) of public elementary schools and 15% (fifteen percent) of the private school stated that their EFL teachers do not evaluate at all their knowledge at the end of the lesson.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

Data analysis is one of the most crucial parts of a research since it summarizes and analyses the collected data from each research instrument used. This whole study has extracted data from two research instruments that include findings from EFL teachers' interviews and findings from EFL students' questionnaires. The purpose of analyzing the data collected from this investigation is to present useful and usable information that emerged from the study. This section will include summarization of the whole data collected from the research. These summaries from the findings collected from this survey may be used from EFL teachers, EFL learners, trainers, curriculum designers, school administrators, or whoever related to the area of education. This survey may enrich interested people's knowledge on the differentiated instruction approach; use it as a guide, or to see a group of EFL teachers and EFL students' opinions and perceptives on DI. The results will be summarized below in detail.

V.1 Plot summary of EFL teachers' interviews

The respondents of this survey are EFL teachers who teach in different private and public elementary schools, are of both genders, are almost similarly certificated (BA, MA), have various experience years on teaching (1 year to 19 years), and their students per classroom vary from 10 (ten) to 35 (thirty-five). Having such differences, obviously differences among them and their responses are to be seen.

Regarding the number of students per class, it can be said that this number varies. In fact, this may not be seen as quite an extraordinary thing since we are all aware of this difference. However, what should be mentioned is the fact that there are noticeable differences between the number of students in the private and public elementary schools where the study was conducted. The highest number of students in the private elementary school varies from 10-25 whereas in public elementary schools from 30-35. One would probably think that this is not an issue to be mattered when implementing DI, but obviously yes, it does matter. Class size affects DI in order to meet students' needs. As Turner and Solis (2017) mention that instructional options for teachers who teach in large classes are

limited. Teaching in a large class can be quite daunting since a large number of students, having diverse learning needs, challenge an EFL teacher to face major difficulties when differentiating in those classes (p.65). In large classes, an EFL teacher may face difficulties in getting to know well each student due to the number of students, to recognize their learning preferences, to understand their strengths and weaknesses, there is limited time for student engagement, and there is risk in employing inappropriate tasks or assessment forms. Therefore, due to the class size, we may expect that teachers of private schools have more advantages to successfully differentiate.

EFL teachers are aware that students are unique individuals and have various needs, interests, and learning profiles. According to them, it is crucial to know the students and their characteristics. It can be said that the respondents are quite similar in this aspect. They all agree that it is sometimes difficult to reach each student, but it is worthy. To do this, each of them mentioned that they try many methods and strategies to meet these differences that are essential factors that affect students' learning. Most commonly techniques that these EFL teachers use to determine their students' differences include student observation, organize interviews, organize conversations with them, collaborate with colleagues to get information about a certain student, test them, or prepare anonymous questionnaires. Collecting such information through the mentioned tools, in a way they manage to adjust the lessons to facilitate learning. It is important to mention that each EFL teacher who participated in this survey acknowledges the importance of identifying their students' learning needs. Even though they see it as an effortful process, despite the challenges and difficulties that hold back this process, yet they try to achieve it successfully. Major differences between EFL teachers of private and public elementary schools regarding this issue have not been found.

The respondents of this survey claimed that they implement different teaching approaches and use what they believe it really works. The mostly used approaches include those that bring more productive outcomes where students are put in the center of the whole process. Teaching approaches have a crucial role to achieve the ideal results in the process of education and that may be the reason why these EFL teachers employ a variety of teaching approaches but always considering student-centered approaches. They believe that teaching approaches are important to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness and that is why they use such approaches. EFL teachers of private and public elementary schools

are similar in this aspect.

The respondents of this survey may be separated into groups when it comes to allowing students use their preferred learning style, however they are similar when it comes to understanding of the importance of students' learning styles. The first group, which in fact is larger than the others, claimed that they allow their students to learn based on their preferred learning style. They believe that it is important for students to learn in the way they feel more comfortable, encourage their students to use their favorite learning style especially when something new is being covered which is harder to be learnt, challenge them to use other different learning styles or less preferred except their favorite one, and think that it is more productive and students learn best. There is another group who primarily does not see it as crucial in the learning process. They consider that students should be allowed to learn based on their preferred learning styles only in special cases as for instance when their method is more convenient to learn a lesson and depending on the level of lesson difficulty. Finally, there is another opinion which strictly shows that students are prohibited to use their preferred learning style except the one allowed from the teacher. However, if students are not allowed to use their preferred learning style then learning will be difficult and frustrating. It is important that students receive education suitable for their learning styles and they learn in different ways. Some are visual learners, some others are auditory or kinesthetic learners, and others may be solitary or social learners. Due to this, it is important to incorporate strategies and activities that support different learning styles.

The respondents of this survey claimed that they have heard about DI. An exception of the mentioned teachers would be an EFL teacher who teaches in a public elementary school who emphasized that he/she did not hear directly about DI but can guess its meaning from the name. This is quite advantageous since each teacher who participated in this survey is already familiar with this approach, despite if they implement it or not. It can be presupposed that they already know that DI focuses on recognizing diverse learners, acknowledge their necessities, promote group work, encourage students to solve problems, and offer them task choices.

There was a question that explored the concept of differentiated instruction. The respondents provided their responses which clearly denotes that they were able to give a definition of this approach, its' components, and that they were already knowledgeable of this approach. In fact, this is quite a good way and improvement in order to start

differentiating. From their responses it is found that DI is an approach that requires from teachers to study, identify, and analyze their students' needs, provide different tasks of varied levels of difficulty, know students in order to provide appropriate tasks, tailor instruction to reach each student, provide suitable assignments, design appropriate lessons, assess students properly, adjust the curriculum, and accept students' individual needs as unique. This suggests that teachers make effort to increase learning, student motivation, improve study habits, promote greater involvement, promote group cooperation and collaboration, and include real life topic in the curriculum to make it more relatable to students. They know that through DI they try to maximize student learning of all students, be average learners, struggling learners or gifted learners. Differences between EFL teachers of private and public elementary schools have not been found which is good since no matter the differences between these schools, yet EFL teachers' efforts are immense.

Regarding the issue of practicing or implementing DI it is found that a group of the EFL teachers have already practiced it, another that at least has tried, and a group who has not done it yet. Anyway, the group of teachers who claimed that they have implemented DI said that they have differentiated through differentiating assignments/tasks. Mostly they have used tiered assignments, meaning that they have provided assignments of different levels of difficulty to reach the lesson objectives. Tiered assignments are a very helpful tactic to employ DI and is a fair way to differentiate learning since it allows teachers to meet the needs of all students by using varying levels of tasks. As Coil (2004) denotes, "tiered assignments address the needs of both lower and higher ability students by allowing students of varying abilities to work on the same content by providing different levels of activities" (p.116). For those who responded that differentiate occasionally or never it is suggested to start differentiating more often since it facilitates teaching and learning. Differences between private and public elementary school teachers have not been noticed and they are similar in this aspect which means that from both sectors we have teachers who differentiate and others who do not.

The respondents provided their answers on how they would differentiate. As the researcher provided a list with strategies, each of them chose whatever they considered more convenient. EFL teachers of private elementary school chose designing lessons based on students' learning styles as the most high-priority element. Following this were providing additional learning materials based on students' level of proficiencies, including technology

to present information, giving additional explanations, and finally evaluate students continually. On the other hand, public elementary school teachers chose approximately the same ones. Similarly, designing lessons based on students learning styles was of the utmost importance for them. Then, giving additional explanations, including technology to present information, evaluating students continually, providing additional learning materials based on students' level of proficiency, and offering student the chance to choose their preferred way to be assessed. Unquestionably each of the above-mentioned elements has a great importance and is a crucial component of DI. Anyway, the teachers chose what they believed was more convenient; therefore, all their responses are acceptable. It depends from the teacher's point of view of what he/she considers fundamental.

Regarding the EFL teachers' beliefs on how EFL learners experience or would experience DI, their responses were quite similar. When it comes to engaging all students, supporting their needs, interests, learning styles, learning preferences, acknowledging their individual needs, facilitating their learning, providing opportunities to be creative, fostering their skills, motivating and encouraging them, and allowing them to show what they have learnt in their preferred way, certainly that these are vital for each teacher and student. The teachers considered that when all these important elements are granted, student learning would be more successful, they would feel more comfortable and free to demonstrate their knowledge, a progressive learning would take place, lessons would be more interesting, and they would be able to learn content effectively. So generally, EFL teachers admit that DI would be beneficial and advantageous whereas students would have a good experience. DI is quite effective in classrooms with a wide range of intellectual capabilities. It is predominant that students' learning needs and requisites are adequately accommodated to assure that each student has guaranteed access to meaningful learning opportunities.

Undeniably, there would be challenges by both employing and not employing DI. As EFL teachers responded, the most common challenges by employing DI would be: there is a risk that students may not find interesting how differentiation occurs, the activities, and materials; students may be distracted when teachers include multiple different activities; it is more time consuming and more working hours are necessary to design multiple assignments; teachers should pay more attention when grouping students (they should not group students based on the same levels of knowledge and skills but by combining them); classroom density is an issue; would be challenging for teachers who have less knowledge

about this approach and may risk differentiating improperly; and sometimes the lessons covered are too difficult to be taught and learnt if DI is employed. On the other hand, by not employing DI it is more likely that students would become uninterested in learning if their learning needs are not supported, students would not be successful due to not including their learning needs, student failure would increase, they would not progress, their academic development would be at risk, and would cause boredom to low-achievers whereas would be unchallenging for gifted students. Considering these challenges, EFL teachers should be careful when implementing DI since more learning problems can be caused if differentiation is made inappropriately.

Concerning that if DI strategies would meet students' needs, EFL teachers provided their answers. Most of the respondents agreed that DI strategies would reach every student. According to this group of teachers, when flexible groups are made, different sets of activities are given, lessons are designed based on students' learning styles, when students are exposed to the appropriate instruction and level of difficulty, when different strategies are included, and when a range of assignments is provided, it is most likely that learning will be promoted, students will show interest, productive learning will occur, and students would remember information longer. However, there is another group who has doubts about DI. They believe that these strategies have risky negative effects on students. They conceive that sometimes the selected strategies would not be found interesting from students. Undisputedly, DI is student centered (that is based on students' needs and interests), is responsive (acknowledges a variety of students' abilities and expects each of them to reach their full potential), it is collaborative (students learn from each other), and is flexible (allows students to work on their own pace), so yes, DI strategies would work.

In regard to how EFL teachers would give differentiated tasks they responded that they would assign tasks of different levels of difficulty, assign tasks where students would have the opportunity to complete based on their preferred learning style, provide different materials and activities, assign tiered assignments, provide tasks based on students' level of proficiencies, their readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers recognize that differentiation is a vital part of a classroom and students are unique individuals who learn in different rates and ways. Giving small group lessons, providing students with a choice of activities, giving additional interesting challenging tasks, assessing students regularly, including technology, and using games and stimulations to engage students would create a

positive classroom climate which is essential for students to achieve their potential and is beneficial for students and teachers' wellbeing simultaneously. In order for assignments to work and assist students in their academic progress, they need to be able to complete them whereas in order to make this happen, the assignments need to be matched to their abilities. Different instruction and assignments will need to be assigned to groups of students who have different abilities so they can learn effectively.

V.2 Plot summary of students' questionnaires

The overall aim of this section is to communicate the survey findings, more specifically the findings from students' questionnaires. To refer back to the research questions, it was reported that through the survey, the author sought to collect evidence on how or if students of the private and public schools in Gjilan acknowledge DI approach and its elements as grouping, learning activities, assessment, learning styles, or course materials. Hence, the information in this section show the summarization of the result from the students' questionnaires. The samples of the present study are 131 (one-hundred and thirty-one) students from the public elementary schools and 110 (one-hundred and ten) students from the private elementary school, 241 (two-hundred and forty-one) respondents in total who provided responses to 22 (twenty-two) closed-ended questions. Based on the general questions the research has revealed that there are differences among the respondents regarding their school (private or public), gender and the English language proficiency they possess, and grade. In general, 104 (one-hundred and four) students were male whereas 137 (one-hundred and thirty-seven) were female; 51 (fifty-one) students declared their level as advanced, 75 (seventy-five) students declared their level as intermediate, 61 (sixty-one) declared their level as pre-intermediate, and 54 (fifty-four) students declared their level as elementary. Aside from these differences, the respondents provided dissimilar responses on the other questions.

Most of the students claimed that not all students learn and acquire information in the same way whereas the remaining part shared the opinion that the EFL students learn the same way. Indeed, not all the learners come to school and are ready to learn in the exact same way. Certainly, two or more students may share the same way of learning but that does not mean that all the others should do the same. All students have manners that prefer to use; some learn through listening, some others prefer to write, some others learn

though touch and doing so it is normal if students have particular learning types as long as they learn with enthusiasm and joyful curiosity.

Possibly, every classroom may be seen as a mixed-ability classroom whereas each EFL teacher and EFL learner as well may be familiar with the challenges that this carries. In helping students to obtain the necessary information, EFL teachers must be aware of students' particular learning needs and appreciate students' knowledge levels. Several strategies can be used to support students with mixed abilities as classroom activities, adjusting lessons, assignments, and assessment. However, the 'mixed-ability-ness' brings numerous challenges for both teachers and students. According to the results, the challenges that most of the students face in such classes is that the strongest students become boring when the EFL teacher repeats the lesson; students do not have enough time to participate and engage when their EFL teacher deals with possible issues with weaker students; students get distracted and lose the sense of learning when their EFL teacher deals with possible issues that one or more students may face; students lose interest on the lesson and they may lose their motivation to learn. While the challenges associated to mixed-ability classes may be overwhelming, there are also advantages. A group of students claimed that learning in a mixed-ability classroom may be beneficial rather than challenging. They considered that with the teacher repeating information or the lesson covered for the students who had issues in comprehension they enhance the new information and what has been already covered in the class. It may be considered as an activity and the students may be able to see their progress. Similarly, by being provided with plenty of opportunities EFL students will have more chances to enhance their learning and foster their skills.

Most of the respondents claimed that their EFL teachers usually support them with the appropriate class activities meaning that EFL teachers differentiate activities and tasks. According to them, class activities are both age appropriate and individual appropriate for their academic development. They may be considered as fundamental tasks since they may help students to remember and be active. Equal is the fact that the class activities should be meaningful and appropriate for each student. Class activities in mixed-ability classrooms should be supportive for struggling students and challenging activities should be offered to the strongest students.

EFL students can meet success if their EFL teachers enable them multiple paths to access information. Differentiated instruction means including the most important elements

in a classroom as multi-level activities, supports different learning styles, and allows students to decide for themselves and their learning. Regarding of students' knowledge of whether their EFL teacher is implementing this approach, many of the respondents from both private and public schools claimed that they are mostly aware of when this occurs. Usually, DI can be noticed when the teacher differentiates content, process, and product based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

The respondents of this survey declared themselves to be supporters of this approach as they think that this approach increases their learning quality. Teachers' job is to vary the learning strategies employed in the classroom to enable students reach their maximum potential. A variety of assessing forms or differentiated instruction, appropriate curriculum, flexible grouping, collecting facts about the students, differentiating the content, products, and process are some features to be taken into consideration when planning lessons. It seems that the EFL teachers successfully achieve this and the EFL students are content.

When EFL teachers want to measure their students' knowledge on a topic and how prepared they, many of them opt to use pre-assessment. It is important to understand students' proficiencies and deficiencies in English to make changes in the lesson plan, improve the instruction delivery and students' learning. As the result show, the respondents of the survey both private and public schools claimed that their EFL teachers pre-assess students' prior knowledge. They may have pre-existing knowledge and skills therefore it is important for the teacher to identify. Pre-assessment also helps to know their strongest and weakest points, where to focus on, or if students have mastered the lesson.

A crucial point is that EFL teachers should offer the students choices to complete assignments or projects that lead to creativity and motivation boost. Students become creatively motivated when they are allowed to choose what they think would make them successful to achieve the aimed results. Hence, providing students with choices to complete an assignment or project is an important aspect of differentiation. Most of the respondents claimed that they are offered with such opportunity which suggests that EFL teachers make available different paths to learning and consider it as a matter of a great consequence.

Undeniably, EFL students have better chances to be successful when they are allowed to demonstrate and decide how to show what they have learned. Students' ability levels in classrooms can range drastically but the point of differentiation is to offer options

for students so they can reach and grow to their highest potential. As students learn in various ways and have different learning styles, they should be permitted to transmit their learning or the information they acquired in various ways. Providing choices is worthwhile since it encourages students to learn, motivates them, and allows them to take responsibility and ownership of their own learning. According to the majority of the respondents, EFL teachers provide choices and allow students to demonstrate what they have learned in their preferred way. This process can be interesting since students may show themselves what they are good at and the talents they possess.

Learning resources are the materials that are used for teaching and learning a course. Even though in many cases learning materials are carefully chosen and evaluated there is yet space for the unexpected reality. Sometimes, textbooks are not enough to achieve the aimed purposes; they may be inadequate and may not cater all students' learning needs. This reality calls for the necessity to provide supplementary learning materials so the students would be able to perform and produce better. Integrating materials of different varieties can be fruitful and would motivate students to learn by using interesting and exciting materials. The majority of the respondents claimed that their EFL teachers already provide supplementary/additional learning materials when necessary. Such materials may be of different kinds including other books, scripts, newspaper articles, movies, short stories and so on. Maybe these materials are not designed for learning and teaching purposes but may facilitate students' work and learning experience by being exposed to such materials.

A considerable number of respondents claimed that their EFL teachers allow them to choose how they want to work which may be seen as an advantage. Offering choices to students that would be beneficial for their learning is one of the most powerful ways to stimulate students' learning. EFL teachers should offer the students choices on how they want to work, whether they prefer to work independently, in pairs, or in groups. Varying working options helps to reduce students' boredom. However, each option has its advantages. For instance, when working independently on a task they can produce their own work from their personal ideas and views which enables the teacher to evaluate each students' individual progress. On the other hand, when the students work in pairs or groups their interaction, participation, and discussion skills are increased and improved.

The goal of cooperative learning is to enhance students' performance which suggests

that students' group composition has a great affect in students' learning production and on achieving the learning objectives. Some criteria must be followed when deciding to group the students. The research shows that EFL learners are usually grouped based on the combination of students who have different performances. Therefore, diverse groups or mixed-ability groups may be seen as a strategy where students can learn from each other within a group having higher and lower skilled students.

Teaching is not always easy to manage and requires dedication. As each EFL teacher has his/her way of teaching so do EFL students; they have preferred ways of learning. Each student learns differently; some prefer listening, others prefer learning visually whereas some like to move around. It is wise to encourage and understand different learning styles. An EFL teacher can successfully combine visual activities, listening activities, speaking activities or moving around activities. Providing a learning environment that incorporates various learning styles will assist each individual student to be engaged, excited and ready to learn. Similarly, EFL teachers' awareness of their students various learning styles is essential to formulate the appropriate strategies to enhance students' learning. The respondents of the survey stated that their EFL teachers already encourage various learning styles which is a huge support. EFL students may have a dominant learning style or may prefer a mix of learning styles depending on the circumstances. There is no right or wrong learning style; EFL students can develop their abilities in less dominant learning styles and further develop the dominant ones with the assistance of their teacher.

The majority of the respondents claimed that their EFL teachers allow them to work based on their preferred learning style which may be quite advantageous and a significant influence on their behavior and learning. EFL students have different ways in which they prefer to perceive information. This leads to auditory learners as someone who prefers to learn by listening to the materials, to a verbal learner as someone who prefers using the spoken or written language, to a visual learner as someone who prefers learning in a visual format, to a solitary or social learner as someone who prefers to work independently or in collaborative groups, and kinesthetic learners as someone who learns effectively through hands-on experience. Such learning styles refer to the way how EFL students process information and as found from the survey, the respondents claimed to have the above-mentioned learning styles. It is crucial to develop various teaching strategies that inspire and motivate students. The basic idea of learning style is related to the concept that different

students process information in different ways and it is more likely that they will learn effectively when they are allowed to learn conform to their preferences.

EFL teachers should be encouraged to make sure that all the students of all levels are challenged. Students must experience challenges and struggles in order to develop their academic achievement. EFL teachers should create a supportive environment and provide activities for students that require from them to try until they achieve the objectives. Therefore, it is crucial to challenge all levels of students since this way they progress academically. The majority of the respondents declared that they are challenged by their EFL teachers. By challenging the students, EFL teachers may be demanding but supportive and advantageous. The respondents who claimed that they are challenged by their EFL students stated that their EFL teachers provide more complex assignments when the lesson is easier to be understood; EFL teachers may encourage students to play the role of a teaching assistant and help their classmates; EFL teachers challenge their students by encouraging them to answer question posed in the class or challenged to solve problems; EFL teachers challenge their students by requiring from them to do a research/surveys on a certain topic and then presenting the outcomes through classroom presentations. Hence, apart from the usual assignments and tasks provided, EFL students can also be challenged by providing them extra assignments or tasks in order to foster their skills in the English language.

According to the respondents, the majority of the EFL teachers measure students' understanding at the end of their teaching which suggests that they focus their attention to their students' learning progress and outcomes. Through assessment, EFL teachers and students may identify the gaps in learning and the information received and their academic progress or they can evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching by estimating what their students have learned, what information have they received and what needs further to be done. Of the same importance is assessing students at the end of the lesson. EFL teachers must measure their students' understanding continually including assessment at the end of their teaching. To measure students' progress and their performance is essential whereas the information collected may be used to make adjustments in teaching and learning as well as be shared to relevant people. Hence, designing carefully assessment plans aligned to learning goals have dominant potential to raise student achievement and reduce discrepancies.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research study was to explore teacher understanding of differentiated instruction and student perspective on this approach. In this chapter, it will be presented research findings from the literature review as well as the research findings of the current research study. On that account, from the whole findings extracted from the research, the most notable conclusions will be outlined and commented in this part of the research paper. The framework for guiding this research study involved soliciting data from EFL teachers of private and public elementary schools in Gjilan, including EFL learners' opinions on the aspects of differentiation. Furthermore, this research study may provide EFL teachers and learners a comprehensive definition of differentiated instruction and how to implement this approach in order to facilitate teaching and learning.

For EFL teachers, at first might be seen overwhelming the thought of individualizing the classroom to meet students' diverse needs and their learning styles. Nevertheless, once the teacher identifies the differences that affect learning, the differentiated instruction approach may be the method to fulfill the learning needs. DI may provide EFL teachers with a very facilitative framework in order to plan lessons appropriately and provide the best instruction for students. Thinking in terms of differentiating the content, (as for instance using a variety of texts and resource materials to handle differences, group students according to their interests, providing different tasks related to the topic under discussion, allow students to choose whether they want to work alone or with their peers), the process (as for instance using tiered activities or activities of varying complexity, use independent learning strategies, use different kinds of grouping, engage students, use different strategies to help students understand the concepts), or the product (as for instance provide students with choices of being assessed as writing, debating, presenting), allow teachers to provide successful lessons, based on the prepared frameworks that support the specific and varying needs of the English language learning students.

From the research study, it was extracted the fact that the aim of DI is to help students improve their personal and academic growth and not degradation. It may be considered as a theory which supports each teacher to reach their students, whereas each student would have the opportunity to be exposed to a decent education. Through the

whole work it is mentioned the fact that as each teacher may experience and deal with heterogeneous classrooms, he/she should consider the abilities that differ from student to student. However, a teacher's major priority is to teach each student despite the different abilities they may have in a very same class. Teachers should be able to make differentiation possible without separating the students from each other. Students should not be compared; each of them has his/her individual capacity to learn and comprehend information. The process of learning can be very demanding and difficult for some students whereas some other students learn in more advanced ways. By differentiating, lower-level students would be motivated by being provided with less complex tasks whereas higher-level students would be strongly interested in learning by being provided with more complex tasks. Differentiation can make learning more flexible taking into consideration students' needs, preferences, and requests. However, learning objectives should be the same for both categories and each of them should achieve the set objectives.

The results of this study show that the implementation of DI is supported by the majority of the EFL teachers who participated in this survey. Generally, they comprehend the concept of differentiated instruction and consider it as an approach that acknowledges students' varieties, needs, abilities; it tailors instruction and provides appropriate levels of assignments. Even though some of these teachers deal with crowded classes, especially in public schools, yet they try to differentiate. They are aware that their students have varied necessities and abilities. So, they tend to facilitate student learning by identifying what helps them to learn better. They prefer student-centered approaches that obviously affect positively student learning, their progress and academic achievement. Many of them claimed that allowing their students to learn based on their favorite learning style is a key element for a successful learning. So yes, they support their students in this aspect too. The most common ways that they differentiate is by varying levels of tasks, provide supplementary course materials, include technology and evaluate their students continually. Furthermore, they declared that their students consider this approach as motivating and encouraging and feel more comfortable in the classroom.

In addition, they believe that DI supports and have positive effect on their students' learning which in a way proves to be true the raised hypotheses. More specifically, DI is considered as an effective approach that considerably increases students' educational growth; it has a greater affect if compared to other traditional approach and improves

students' self-efficacy and increases their motivation to learn.

Opinions from EFL students are shared, regardless of their background which makes them different from each other. Most of the students were already aware that each of them has specific characteristics that affect them not to learn similarly. They know that they do not acquire information in the same way which suggests that they consider that their learning needs are essential from them to learn. Since they are aware of being part of mixed-ability classrooms, they already face challenges. The challenges include boredom in class, not enough participating time or even time to engage in classroom activities, they get distracted or lose sense of learning. However, despite this, being in a homogeneous class has advantages. With the teacher repeating the lesson for the students who had issues in understanding, students who already understood what was covered benefit by having the opportunity to enhance the new information. They also claimed that their EFL teachers provide suitable class activities. Furthermore, they declared that their EFL teachers offer them multiple paths to access information meaning that they are provided with multi-level activities. Generally, they said that they have good experiences with this approach that enable them to reach their maximum potential. They also claimed that their EFL teachers pre-assess them prior to introducing a new lesson in order to understand what they already know. Similarly, they are offered with choices to complete a certain assignment.

From the survey, it was found that the students are allowed by their EFL teachers to demonstrate what they know or have learned in the way they feel more comfortable. This way they are encouraged to learn and take ownership of their own learning. They also admitted that they are supported with supplemental learning materials which in a way facilitate the grasping of information. Similarly, they are offered with choices on how they want to work; independently, with peers or in groups. If they decide to cooperate or work in groups according to them the criteria for groupings that their EFL teachers follow is composing groups based on the combination of students who have different performances. The students also claimed that they know about the importance of learning styles and the role it has in learning. According to them, their EFL teachers already encourage different learning styles in the classroom. As extracted from the survey, the students have different learning styles that include auditory, verbal, visual, solitary, social and kinesthetic learners whereas most of them claimed that they are allowed to learn conform to their preferences. Furthermore, the majority claimed that they are challenged by their EFL teachers. Finally,

they admitted that their EFL teachers test them at the end of the lesson in order to measure their understanding.

All these data and information revealed that implementing the differentiated instruction approach has a noteworthy impact on students' learning enhancement since it can significantly improve students' performances at the elementary level. It is undeniable the fact that students in one classroom are not the same since they possess different intelligences, interests, understandings, and skills. With the EFL teachers differentiating the content, process, and product they can generate students' potentiality. If various techniques and strategies are implemented properly, students' major educational needs can be met and would help them in making progress.

VI.2 Limitations

Clearly, there were some limitations. Primarily, it should be mentioned that the author of this study first heard about the differentiated instruction approach during her MA studies. At the beginning, there were thoughts that this approach had to do with something else but that turned out to be something a bit different. The author considered to explore and investigate more about the essence and the meaning of this approach in order to understand each and every aspect of DI. It is not that it had a great effect on the writing of this thesis but took more time to realize and comprehend everything that had to do with DI.

Another limitation was that the student questionnaire had to be translated into Albanian language because when first discussed with some students who were family members, they had issues in understanding the questions because they were written in English and their level of English proficiency seemed to be a problem to get the meaning of each question and express their opinions. Therefore, they suggested that the questionnaire had to be translated into the Albanian language to make possible for the students of the elementary grades understand it which clearly took some extra time. As it is known, when translating from one language to another sometimes can lead to misconceptions and irrational meanings if the text is not translated appropriately and the same meaning expressed in both languages. So, this process was carried very carefully that required more working time.

There were limitations with the participants of this study both with the EFL teachers and the students. Some teachers showed no interest in this research and justified

themselves as too engaged to be part of this survey. The fact that some of them had not enough time to participate cannot be questioned. However, this survey was beneficial for the fact that it sought to find important data that would bring positive effects for each teacher and student then more excitement and participation from EFL teachers was expected from the researcher. It should be mentioned that the EFL teachers participating in this survey said that there were a lot of questions which obviously took their precious time. The same thing can be said about students as well. During the conduction of the survey, some students lacked interest in participating. However, the fact that all the questions were closed-ended made easier the realization of this survey.

Anyway, despite all these limitations, the results extracted from the survey are satisfying and it can be said that the objectives have been reached.

VI.3 Recommendations

Some recommendations based on the data gathered in this research study are:

1. Find time to identify students' level of ability, interest, needs, and requirements.

EFL teachers must understand that each student has future aspirations. In the light of this, it is crucial that a teacher identifies the needs of every student, their weaknesses and strengths, their skills, requirements, abilities and needs that affect their learning. Once the teacher identifies them, they may adjust teaching and differentiate instruction to meet the individual learning needs. Mostly every day we hear teachers saying that they lack time to prepare special lesson plans or find some interesting and engaging activities, but this cannot be considered as a justification. Obviously, more time is required to design lesson plans or frameworks to differentiate but teachers should be dedicated to their work and do best for their students. Therefore, a recommendation for EFL teachers and to every teacher would be to find spare time and do some extra work to stimulate their students' academic progress.

2. Seek ways to expand your knowledge and be informed about DI. Require special professional training to implement the differentiated instruction approach from the Ministry of Education.

It is important for EFL teachers to understand the component of DI and implementing this approach successfully. This can be achieved through professional training organized

especially focused on the area of differentiation. The teachers who participated in this survey were already informed about this approach but I would recommend further development in this aspect.

Bibliography

- Anderson, K. M. (2007). Differentiation Instruction to Include all Students. *Heldref Publications*, 51(3), 49-54.
- Armstrong, T. (2009). *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom 3rd Edition*. Virginia, VA: ASCD.
- Baecher, L., Artigliere, M., Patterson, M., & Spatzer, A. (2012). Differentiated Instruction for English Language Learners as Variations on a Theme. *Middle School Journal*, 43(3), 14-21.
- Bhardwaj, A. (2016). Importance of Education in Human Life: A Holistic Approach. *International Journal of Science and Consciousness*(2), 23-28.
- Bremner, S. (2008). Some Thoughts on Teaching a Mixed-Ability Class. *Scottish Language Review*(18), 1-10.
- Brown, G. (2004). A Supplemental to the Routledge Falmer Key Guides for Effective Teaching in Higher Education Series.
- Chien, C. (2012). Differentiated Instruction in an Elementary School EFL Classroom. *TESOL Journal*, 3(2), 280-291.
- Coil, C. (2004). Activities and Assessments for the Differentiated Classrooms.
- Dahlman, A., Hoffman, P., & Brauhn, S. (2008). Classroom Strategies and Tools for Differentiating in the ESL Classroom. *MinneWITESOL Journal*, 25.
- De Graf, A., Westbroek, H., & Janssen, F. (2019). A Practical Approach to Differentiated Instruction. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 30(1), 6-23.
- Dixon, F. A., Yssel, N., McConell, J. M., & Hardin, T. (2014). Differentiated Instruction, Professional Development, and Teacher Efficiency. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 37(2), 111-127. doi:DOI: 10.1177/0162353214529042
- Doubet, K. J., & Hockett, J. A. (2018). Differentiation in the Elementary Grades: Strategies to Engage and Equip all Learners. *ASCD*, 1-15.
- Ernest, J. A., Heckaman, K. A., Thompson, S. E., Hull, K. M., & Corter, S. W. (2011). Increasing the Teaching Efficacy of a Beginning Special Education Teacher Using Differentiated Instruction: A Case Study. *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(1), 191-201.
- Faleiros, M. V. (2009). Mixed-Ability: Problems, Strategies, and Practical Help. *Scientific Research Journal*, 5(5), 113-128.
- Gardner, H., & Hatch, T. (1989). Multiple Intelligences Go to School: Educational Implications of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. *American Educational Research Association*, 18(8), 4-10.
- Gregory, G. H., & Chapman, C. (2002). *Differentiated Instructional Strategies: One Size Doesn't Fit All Chapter 1*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Corwin Press.
- Heacox, D. (2014). Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach all Learners- Updated anniversary edition. *Free Spirit Publishing Minneapolis, MN*, 1-14.
- Hockett, J. A. (2018). *Differentiation Handbook: Strategies and Examples: Grades 6-12*. Tennessee Department of Education.
- Joseph, S. (2013). Differentiating Instruction: Experiences of Pre-Service and In-Service Trained Teachers. *Caribbean Curriculum*, 20, 31-51.
- Kadum-Bošnjak, S., & Buršić-Križanac, B. (2012). Impact of Differentiated Instruction on Achievement in Teaching to Lower-Stage Grades. *Metodički Obzori*, 7(2), 15-29.
- Kamarulzaman, M., Azman, H., & Zahidi, A. (2017). Differentiated Instruction Strategies in English Language Teaching for Gifted Students. *Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences*, 7(1), 78-90.

- Khan, I. A., & Asif, F. (2017). Relevance of Differentiated Instruction in Special Education for Anxiety Affected Learners: A Theoretical Analysis of Learning Problems and some Strategies. *European Journal of Special Education Research*, 2(4), 123-136.
- Khan, I., Jahan, A., & Asif, F. (2017). Relevance of Differentiated Instruction in English Classrooms: An Exploratory Study in the Saudi Context. *International Research Journal of Human Resources and Social Sciences*, 4(9), 274-294.
- Landrum, T. J., & McDuffie, K. A. (2010). Learning Styles in the Age of Differentiated Instruction. *Exceptionality*, 18(1), 6-17. doi:10.1080/0936830903462441
- Le, V. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2016). Teaching Listening in Mixed-Ability Classes. *EJALTEFL*, 5(2), 73-82.
- Levy, H. M. (2008). Meeting the Needs of all Students through Differentiated Instruction: Helping Every Child Reach and Exceed Standards. *Heldref Publications*, 161-164.
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology. (2012). *Core Curriculum for Pre-Primary Grade and Primary Education in Kosovo*. Prishtina.
- Morgan, H. (2014). Maximising Student Success with Differentiated Learning. *The Clearing House*, 87, 34-38. doi:10.1080/00098655.2013832130
- Parsons, S. A., Dodman, S. L., & Burrowidge, S. C. (2013). Broadening the View of Differentiated Instruction. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(1), 38-42.
- Pashler, H., McDaniel, M., Rohrer, D., & Bjork, R. (2009). Learning Styles: Concepts and Evidence. *Psychological Science of Public Interests*, 9(3), 105-119.
- Pham, H. (2012). Differentiated Instruction and the Need to Integrate Teaching and Practice. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*, 9(1), 13-20.
- Rasheed, F., & Wahid, A. (2018). The Theory of Differentiated Instruction and Its Applicability: An E-Learning Perspective. *International Journal of Technical and Non-Technical Research*, 9(4).
- Roberts, J. L., & Inman, T. F. (Eds.). (2013). *Teacher's Survival Guide: Differentiating Instruction in the Elementary Classroom*. Texas: Prufrock Press.
- Santangelo, T., & Tomlinson, C. A. (2009). The Application of Differentiated Instruction in Postsecondary Environments: Benefits, Challenges, and Future Directions. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 20(3), 307-323.
- Singh, H. (2014). Differentiating Classroom Instruction to Cater Learners of Different Styles. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 3(12), 58-60.
- Sreenidhi, S. K., & Chinyi, T. (2017). Multiple Intelligence Assessment: based on Howard Gardner's Research. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 7(4), 203-213.
- Stein-Smith, K. (2017). The Multilingual Advantage: Foreign Language as a Social Skills in a Globalized World. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 7(3), 48-56.
- Strogilos, V. (2018). The Value of Differentiated Instruction in the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs/Disabilities in Mainstream Classes. *EDP Sciences*, 42, 1-7.
- Taylor, B. K. (2015). Content, Process, and Product: Modeling Differentiated Instruction. *Kappan Delta Pi*, 51(1), 13-17.
- Thakur, K. (2014). Differentiated Instruction in the Inclusive Classroom. *Research Journal of Educational Sciences*, 2(7), 10-14.
- Theisen, T. (2002). Differentiated Instruction in the Foreign Language Classroom: Meeting the Diverse Needs of all Learners. *LOTE CED Communique*, 6, 1-8.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2000). *Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades*. Reston, VA: ERIC Digest.

- Tomlinson, C. A. (2000). Reconcilable Differences? Standards-Based Teaching and Differentiation. *ASCD*, 58(1), 6-11.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms 2nd edition*. ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). Traveling the Road to Differentiation in Staff Development. *JSD*, 26(4), 8-12.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2008). Goals of Differentiation. *Educational Leadership*, 26-30.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Allan, S. D. (2000). *Leadership for Differentiating: School and Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2011). *Managing a Differentiated Classroom: A Practical Guide*. Scholastic Inc.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Kalbfleisch, L. M. (1998). Teach me, Teach my Brain: A Call for Differentiated Classrooms. *Educational Leadership*, 56(3), 52-55.
- Tomlinson, C. A., Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Callahan, C. M., Moon, T. R., Brimijoin, K., . . . Reynolds, T. (2003). Differentiating Instruction in Response to Student Readiness, Interests, and Learning Profile in Academically Diverse Classrooms: A Review of Literature. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 27(2/3), 119-145.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). Deciding to Teach Them All. *Educational Leadership*, 61(2).
- Turner, W. D., & Solis, O. J. (2017). The Misnomers of Differentiating Instruction in Large Classes. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 17(3), 64-76.
- Turner, W. D., Solis, O. J., & Kincade, D. H. (2017). Differentiating Instruction for Large Classes in Higher Education. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 29(3), 490-500.
- Valiandes, S., & Tarman, B. (2011). Differentiated Teaching and Constructive Learning Approach by the Implementation of ICT in Mixed-Ability Classrooms. *Journal of Kirsehir Education Faculty*, 2(1), 169-184.
- Watkins, N., Schaub, K., & Lindahl, K. (2010). Targeting Content Area Literacy Instruction to Meet the Needs of Adolescent English Language Learners. *Middle School Journal*, 23-32.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Student questionnaire in English

Dear English language student,

Thank you for participating in this survey. This questionnaire intends to collect information from your perspective regarding the differentiated instruction approach. Considering that all students may not be similar because of their experience, interests, necessities, or skills, therefore it is necessary that the teacher acknowledges these individual differences inside the classroom, allow these to be part of student learning, and let students choose how they want to learn. As a result, these differences increase the need for implementing the differentiated instruction approach. Due to its importance, this questionnaire seeks to gather information from your side on this approach. The information collected from this survey will be only used for study purposes on this research study. Completing this questionnaire will take 5-8 minutes. The questionnaire is distributed to English language students in private and public elementary schools in Gjilan.

Background information

1. Student at: Private elementary school
Public elementary school
2. Gender: Male
Female
3. Your level of English language proficiency:
 - a) Advanced
 - b) Intermediate
 - c) Pre-intermediate
 - d) Elementary
4. Grade: _____

Specific questions

5. Do you think that all students in your classroom learn in the same way? (If yes, proceed with the 7th question; If no, proceed with the 6th question)
6. According to you, what are the challenges you may face in classes with mixed-ability students?
 - a) learning becomes boring when my English language teacher repeats the same things usually for students who face difficulties in understanding
 - b) There is not enough time for participating in class activities since my EFL teacher works more with students who face difficulties in understanding the lesson
 - c) While my EFL teacher is dealing with issues that one or more students may face, other students get distracted
 - d) Students lose their interest on the lesson
 - e) Students lose their motivation to learn
 - f) All the students benefit because with the teacher repeating the lesson each student enhance the new information
7. Do you think that the class activities that your EFL teacher employs are appropriate for each student level participating in the classroom?
8. Do you know that when your EFL teacher includes different activities, allows students to learn based on their learning style, and allows students to choose what is best for their learning, he/she is using the differentiated instruction approach?

9. Do you think that this approach has to do with increasing learning quality, where the EFL teacher adjusts lesson based on students' needs and requests, and provides appropriate assignments that foster students' skills?
10. Does your English language teacher pre-assess you to determine what you already know prior to introducing a new lesson?
11. Does your EFL teacher provide you options to complete any assignment or project in the way you feel more comfortable?
12. Does your EFL teacher let you demonstrate what you have understood in the way you feel more comfortable?
13. Does your EFL teacher provide you with additional learning materials/sources for a certain lesson when the information from the current learning materials are not enough?
14. Does your EFL teacher allow you to choose whether you want to work alone, with peers, or in groups for a certain assignment?
15. Based on what criteria does your EFL teacher divide you in groups?

- a) Based on students' will
- b) Based on the students' same performances
- c) Based on teacher's random select
- d) Based on the combination of students who have different performances
- e) Based on students' interests
- f) Based on students' learning styles
- g) Other: _____

16. Does your EFL teacher encourage different learning style in the class?

17. Which learning style is best appropriate to you?

- a) Aural- you prefer music and sounds to learn
- b) Verbal- you prefer speaking and writing to learn
- c) Visual- you prefer using images and pictures to learn
- d) Solitary- you work best alone
- e) Social- you prefer to work in groups with others
- f) Other: _____

18. Does your EFL teacher allow you to work based on your preferred learning style to complete an assignment?

19. Do you feel challenged by your EFL teacher during English language classes? (If yes, proceed with the 20th question; If no, proceed with the 21st question)

20. If yes, in what way?

- a) EFL teacher provides more complex assignments when the unit lesson is easier to be understood
- b) EFL teacher assigns as his/her assistance to help other peers
- c) Encourages us to respond questions made by others during the lesson
- d) Assigns us projects and make researches on a topic
- e) Encourages us to prepare presentations for different topics
- f) Other: _____

21. Does your English language teacher assess what students have learned at the end of the lesson?

Appendix 2: Teacher interview questions

Background information

You teach at: Private elementary school
Public elementary school

School name: _____

Gender: Female/ Male

Your current certification: BA/ MA/ PhD. / PhD. Candidate/ Other: _____

Your teaching experience: Less than 1 year/ 1-5 years/ 5-10 years/ Other: _____

Specific questions

1. Approximately, how many students do you have in your classroom(s)?
2. How do you find managing each student's needs and requirements? How do you achieve the aimed results?
3. What teaching approach are you currently using? Is it effective? How?
4. Do you allow your students to use their preferred learning style? In what occasion?
5. Have you heard about differentiated instruction approach?
6. What is your definition of the term differentiated instruction?
7. Have you ever practiced the differentiated instruction approach? If yes, please explain briefly how.
8. How would you implement the differentiated instruction approach in your teaching?
 - a) Design lesson based on your students' learning styles
 - b) Provide additional learning materials based on students' level of proficiency
 - c) Include technology to present information (ppt. videos, pictures)
 - d) Give additional explanations
 - e) Evaluate students continually
 - f) Offer them assessing choices
 - g) Other
9. From your perspective, how your students would or already experience the differentiated instruction approach?
10. What kind of challenges may occur by employing differentiated instruction? What kind of challenges may occur by not employing differentiated instruction?
11. Do you think the differentiated instruction strategies would meet your students' needs? In what way?
12. If you attempt to differentiate, what tasks would you give in different ways? Please, provide an example.