

Assessments Driving Differentiated Instruction To Senior High Schools

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Background of the Research

Differentiated Instruction is currently the subject of considerable conversation in contemporary Taiwan's senior schools about its importance today. Why does it arouse such controversy?

Differentiated instruction (DI), the idea of modifying teaching to meet to the diversity of learners with different learning abilities, interests, and a variety of individual profiles, is both new and challenging for secondary English education.

Middle school advocates advise that "classes should include students of diverse needs, achievement levels, interests, and learning styles, and instruction should be differentiated to take advantage of the diversity, not ignore it" (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 23). The lack of examples of such classrooms may well scare classroom teachers because educators tend to teach as they were taught. Furthermore, teachers have had little opportunity to study in depth the ways in which differentiation is supposed to enlighten and engender change in the classrooms of Taiwan's K-12 basic education, which may make them resistant to the idea.

Statement of the Problem. In the study of Young (2001), the five significant components of school capacity are: (a) the knowledge, skills and dispositions of

individual teachers, (b) the strength of the school's professional community, (c) program coherence, (d) administrative leadership, and (e) the quality of resources. Of these, it is teachers' knowledge, professional community, and program coherence which have been shown to exert the greatest effects on promoting sustainable change.

The lack of examples and having little opportunity to study in depth the need for differentiation are roadblocks to implementing DI and establishing a more positive environment for good instruction and student learning. To this end, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan has declared a collaborative professional development program to build school capacity for sustainable change and to improve professional knowledge for in-service teachers in senior high, which is critically important to fostering an educational environment suitable for DI.

Purpose Of the Study. The purpose of the study is to understand how cooperation and collaboration influence the success of differentiated instruction through professional learning communities, which have been suggested as a solution for the problem that "Ineffective routine conversations among teachers decrease the quality and equity of differentiated instruction and learning". In other words, Taiwan's schools lack reflective routine conversation among teachers on differentiated learning, leading to dysfunction in building up an innovative and successful cultural environment and good social climate for the coming twelve year basic education

program.

Research Question. The research is designed to get a more complete picture of the strengths and weaknesses that teachers might encounter when implementing English differentiated instruction in senior high schools and the survey is based on these six questions, divided into two main parts:

A. What are the obstacles and difficulties that are roadblocks to DI?

➤ What are some individually perceived internal factors that increase motivation for teachers to practice DI?

➤ What are some individually perceived external (non-classroom) factors that decrease motivation of teachers to practice DI?

B. How does team work/collaboration efficiently bond teachers together with each other to scaffold their practice of DI through professional development?

Positive Environments for Good Instruction and Student Learning

A collaborative cultural environment greatly influences the progress of a district, a school, or a state on education. Educators are concerned about these issues: (a) how schools can establish programs and provide help for students when needed, (b) how the administration can get the staff on the same page and (c) how the district can make something different. All of these points show the significance of the assessments in

schools.

Vision and Mission Statement. Visions can be seen as advanced perspectives of the future. The vision established by Bethel School District, High Point High School and Richland School Two in the United States are three examples of the ideals that we hope to see driving education: the desire to cultivate a student and to establish a multifaceted learning environment which is a driving force for discovery and innovation, or, in other words, ‘inquire, ignite and inspire’. Educators should not only focus on getting good accountability but also think holistically about the student as a human being. Students are motivated to be life-long learners through work that is personally meaningful.

The mission statement is how the educational environment sets up their concrete goals and objectives to reach the vision that has been conceived by schools, district, or the State. The three school districts mentioned here set out to provide meaningful, challenging, and engaging learning experiences and advance the achievement of its diverse student body through community engagement, sound policy governance, accountability, and fiscal responsibility.

Exemplary of Richland School Two. The stories of Richland School Two tell the vision and mission of the district. The four stories that follow draw a clear image of how the school district makes every effort to help each student, regardless of their

level or ability; advanced and struggling students are treated alike. Nor do they limit their vision to developing the potential of each individual learner. The administration and staff in the schools also put their hearts and minds into collaborating with co-workers and colleagues.

Richland Schools Two's Club Wave is a home-based homework center that uses design qualities of affiliation and affirmation to beef up student's relationship with school and celebrate their achievements. The programs RedHawk Helping Hands, Study Island, and Student Warriors Achieve Greatness (SWAG) play different roles in helping students get through difficult stretches — RedHawk Helping Hands provides their help when they (the students) encounter bullying; Study Island is where struggling students can fly over a low tide in their schoolwork and learning and Student Warriors Achieve Greatness (SWAG) teaches students:

- (a) How to organize their learning content,
- (b) How to set up good relationships with others and build up their confidence with the right attitude in dealing with tough periods.

What's more, Ridge View is another program provided by the district that helps students to identify strengths and weaknesses prior to entering the college of their choice.

All the programs, which are implemented in Richland School Two, show how

the district tries to realize their vision and mission.

Using technology is a need not a choice for 21st century education. Using technology in learning and instruction contributes to students finding the fun and interest of education. Listening to the voices of students, the administrators have even considered the use of iPads in the classroom. Not only that, the administration of Richland School II strides out their initiative step and drives some deep thinking about how teachers can maintain good quality, then they initiate follow-up professional development to ensure technology and facility can become effective tools in teaching and learning.

A positive cultural environment helps create an atmosphere of trust in the educational environment. The math teacher Nevermind Everlasting Chigoba's profile tells us at least one thing about the cultural environment of the school. After having got a master's degree, he was not allowed to stay in the United States unless he was hired by an institution. But, he did not have a work visa so that it was hard to get a job in the State. The school district graciously listened to his story and took the often dreaded step of filing the federal application for a professional work visa (H1B) for him. "At some point I thought I would not make it, but with encouragement from my mentor and professional development opportunities provided by the district, I became more and more confident. I love my students and try my best to help them be

successful citizens of this great nation.”

This is similar to the Mission Statement of Richland school District Two: “In partnership with our community, Richland School District Two prepares all students for success by providing meaningful, challenging, and engaging learning experiences and did their best to create a positive environment to have good teachers.”

Data Driven Decision to a Positive Environment for Good Instruction and Student Learning. The School Progress Index currently is a tool used for identifying the schools that need support and deserve recognition in every different district.

Figure 1 below tells the weakness and strengthens of various data collected from the website of Prince George County Schools (PGCS), which is perceived as exemplary for data driven based school improvement.

Figure 1

Data that are available	What do the data tell us?	To what extent do they inform us about instruction?
Graduation report	School progress in students learning	Administration and staff need to look more critically at the progress of the school.
SAT report	The data provide the proficiency achievement based on a core standard.	The report provides the teaching effect and learning results of each student.
HAS report	The data tell the achievement between subgroups in different levels on different subjects.	It will be beneficial to reflect on the weaknesses and strengths of students' learning in the school in each grade.
Data that are <i>not</i> available: Gaps in the data	What could the data tell us about?	To what extent would they inform us about instruction?
Classroom Formative	The data provide information	If the teacher sets up the right

Assessments	about the approaches and aids that the teacher uses to support their students' learning.	process and asks students to give feedback about their learning with an appropriate product to show their progressing each day.	
Term Summative Assessment	It is easier for the teacher to find out the placement of individual learning in a group.	Teachers will be better able to understand the range of the level among students.	
Data that are available		Data that are not currently available	
Less Important	Must-Have	Less Important	Must-Have
Teachers qualification	Teaching certifications they have got.	The demographic of teaching staff	The program on professional development
List the data you want to include in this district's Data Collage/Data Profile.			
Element of Data Collage/Data Profile		Describe what these data contribute to the Data Collage/Data Profile	
Demographic data of Parents Community		In many cases, the financial status and educational background of parents are indicators of students' achievement and school development.	

More impressively, the Maryland Education Department has set up an exemplary accountability system that senior high schools in Taiwan should follow because this system takes into account of all these core values: growth, gap reduction, and college readiness in one basket. Aside from the data of standard achievement, leaver rate gives a more accurate picture of a school's performance and progress. The graduation rate is also called Leaver Rate, which is the percentage of students who received a Maryland high school diploma during the reported school year. According to The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of the State, the graduation rate is defined as the "percentage of students who graduate from secondary school with a regular diploma in the standard number of years." On average, the performance standard for graduation rate for School Progress is 90%.

High School Assessments (HSA) are given in four content areas -- Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, Government, and English. Students must pass or achieve a total score of 1602 to meet the graduation requirements of Maryland. This is not yet the case in Taiwan for cohort graduation, although HAS is very significant data containing the percentage of each group/unity and pass rate status for all students.

Comparing the systems in Taiwan and Maryland, student performance on HAS in tests in Maryland allows colleges to determine student preparation for college. Taiwan obviously should not only hold SAT as a standardized accountability for college entrance; we educators also need a threshold like HAS to ensure the quality of our secondary education; particularly in light of the fact next year compulsory education will increase from K-10 to K-12. From that time, there will not be any entrance examination for senior high, and so senior high schools are likely to face a greater achievement gap than they currently encounter today.

To sum up, the results of Graduation report cards, HAS assessment tests and SAT reports will provide the State/the country with a clearer picture of which schools are making progress and focus attention on those schools in need of intervention. “Disaggregate student performance data to determine if teachers need to alter instruction methods to better serve certain student groups, providing teachers with

necessary training to help all groups of students meet high standards of learning (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2000, p.27).”

Depke (2006) made the statement that “subgroup breakdown of data are a must, whenever it comes to promote comparison between groups in a given population.”

The disaggregation can show various hidden information within the results of the

012 HSA Participation and Status All Grade 11 Students						
	% Taken All and Met	Number	% Taken All and Not Met	Number	% Not Taken All	Number
All Students	72.2	236	22.6	74	≤ 5.0	=
American Indian or Alaska Native	=	=	=	=	=	=
Asian	77.8	14	16.7	3	5.6	1
Black or African American	73.0	116	20.8	33	5.7	9
Hispanic/Latino of any race	71.2	94	28.0	33	≤ 5.0	=
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	=	=	=	=	=	=
White	71.4	10	21.4	3	7.1	1
Two or more races	=	=	=	=	=	=

whole group. Summative assessments such as state tests can be used as

effective measurement even for racial or ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, or students with a disability. “Creating a complete assessment picture for school evaluation purposes should include both standardized and district assessment data (Depke 2006, p. 10).”

Apart from the data based on the accountability and standard tests, Taiwan and Maryland both have done full analysis of disaggregated data for years. The data of demographics contain: (a) Enrollment, (b) Student Mobility, (c) Attendance Rate, (d)Teacher Qualifications; however, Students Receiving Special Services are not included in our senior high school system even though we educators understand this information is very beneficial to determine the scope of the placement of learners with different needs. Moreover, Taiwan is urgently required to implement professional

collaboration development in districts to the new and extended compulsory program, changing from K10 to K12.

Using Student Performance Data to Strengthen Assessment and Instruction.

Working as an instructional reading coordinator in Bethel School District, Rhonda Wolter emphasized program materials and classroom management. As a result, during the observation, she kept a detailed running record to get a complete picture of the activities used for reading instruction such as length and pacing of each activity to make sure that instruction and assessments of students' learning were balanced, because insufficient explanation of the task could result in students not being aware of how long they had to complete tasks/activities the instructor used in the target teaching. In addition, techniques for instruction greatly influenced teacher effectiveness, for example:

- How the teacher models new concepts
- How the teacher engages students in active participation and response
- How the teacher guides students to make reflections for/on/in learning

All the instructional skills mentioned above became significant components on the observation checklists, which also look at if the teacher explains the rules of the classroom and how diligently these are followed. According to Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J., & Wayman, J (2009), a

checklist is used for carrying out recommendations (p.9). Classroom Observation Assessment is a very beneficial tool which provides the data for explaining expectations and assessment criteria and defining critical teaching and the engagement of effect-learning because “classroom assessments can be valuable tools for assessing students’ readiness for large-scale assessments and preparing students to take these tests (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2000, p.27).”

Formative assessment, such as classroom assessments, is as important as summative assessment to school progress. Love (2009) noted, “Despite seemingly insurmountable barriers in limited resources, no common course or grade level assessments or historically low performance, these schools managed to solve one of the biggest problems educators face (p.7).”

Observers/coaches can constantly observe how students act, express behave and react to material taught in class. Observers can tell when students are bored, motivated or having difficulties with the lessons based on the student's expressions, posture or action.

Last but not least, though classroom assessment data is a crucial part of the balance when assessing individual and classroom performance, it is unfortunately not available on the websites for Taiwan and Maryland schools.

“Providing technology, training, and time is necessary for the effective

collection and use of data (Depke, 2006, p.17).” Therefore, professional development is the key for the successful of use of data to improve teaching and learning, and to improve schools. It is a pity that professional development data cannot be found as an assessment for the improvement. of schools in Taiwan.

Professional Collaboration. Many studies have stated that engagement in robust collaborative reflection can create a catalyst for change during group work.

Allington and Cunningham’s study (2002) noted that as teachers are able to extend their knowledge through professional collaboration, they would benefit from faculty comprised of teachers across this spectrum: being competent in practices, being able to expand instructional flexibility, being open to acquiring instructional expertise, and finally, willing to adopt a critical reflective stance about their teaching methods.

In order to find out which factors influence the ongoing effectiveness of teacher learning communities, Grierson (2011) cited the statement from Lyons and Pinnell’s study (2001) that small-group teacher learning communities should set up their itinerary and schedule to meet every 2 to 3 weeks to maintain momentum for change, while also affording participants sufficient time to work towards their proximal goals.

Importantly, those teachers who were engaged in critical inquiry through either school-based or outbound professional learning communities have been described as

feeling empowered, less isolated, more effective, and more confident when implementing new strategies. Many studies have indicated the importance of how professional collaboration enhances teachers' understandings on DI and how effective assessment had helped to develop instructional programming priorities. They have recommended inquiry-based small group sessions as a vehicle for positive instruction and student learning. (Taylor & Pearson, 2005).

To this end, Kise (2006) recommended that there must be individualized support and small group support through teaching, coaching and mentoring. However, there has been little research in Taiwan exploring the processes through which teachers'



professional knowledge is constructed during reading-focused initiatives and real practice that endeavors to support teachers' growth with concurrent coaching and mentoring focused on the practitioners'

Figure 7
<http://www.cln.org/clar/dddm.cfm>

design to instruction cycle.

Relationship between assessment, data, and instruction. As CIA leaders, educators such as ourselves must have the awareness that state content standards and assessments are not sufficient to improve student achievement. The relationship between assessment, data, and instruction should be a tight bond. They form a cycle.

A CIA leader should have these qualities:

Leading to identity. As a CIA, we need to help teachers identify opportunities

for students to demonstrate proficiency; we also need to help them understand how to interpret the student's performance.

Leading to monitor. As a CIA, we need to show the teachers how to monitor the progress of each student over time; at the same time, they need to learn to examine the monitoring data to determine who is getting it and who is not.

Leading to instruction. As a CIA, we also have a better understanding of the necessity in helping veteran teachers develop lesson plans and activities, showing them how to align classroom instruction and assessment with the state standards.

Data Collection Method

In the study of Hoffman and colleagues (1998), they worked with first grade teachers to develop a performance-based assessment plan and the participants in the research were encouraged to work together. Through cooperation and collaboration, they simultaneously provided data/assessment to one another that informed instructional decision-making.

Samples of Participants. The interviewees include 17 teachers, 3 parents and one principal. The samplings of teachers were selected non-randomly from two groups; one was an expert teacher from the EERC, the other ones were local-district-in-service teachers in the north of Taiwan. In total, 17 participants were

voluntarily involved in the qualitative study. 9 out of 23 were lead teachers from the English Education Resource Center (EERC), coming from 9 different senior schools in 5 districts: 3 from Taipei, 2 from New Taipei City, 2 from Tao Yuan County, 1 from Cha-I county and 1 from Tainan County. They had attended an intensive differentiated instruction workshop over three separate days, organized by the EERC and the Ministry of Education (MOE): one day held in Kaohsiung by Dr. Anne Walker from North Dakota University, United States, and a two-day workshop held by National Taiwan Normal University. The other 8 participants, all of whom are currently teaching in the Overseas Experimental Senior High School (NOESH) located in New Taipei County, in the northern part of Taiwan, did not get any training differentiated instruction. In this school, many of kids are from low-income families and are below-average achievers, based on their Basic Assessment Test (BAT) for placement in Senior High School. The three parents all have school-aged children who are studying in elementary and junior high school. The administrator is an experienced director who has been working as principal in a senior high for five years.

Instrument. Semi-structured questions were used as guidelines for an open-ended group interview of the 9 Lead teachers of EERC. In the initial stage, the researcher e-mailed questions to each participant. Then, the 8 participants from the NOESH were deliberately chosen for the second round group interview using

questions based on the response of the interviewee CYN, one of the EERC teachers interviewed in the electronic survey. Aside from the interviews with the 17 teachers, the study included 3 parents and one principal, trying to find a balance of opinions from different corners of the teachers-parent-administrator triangle.

A. Questions for the EERC teachers:

Q1: What have you learned from the experience of designing a DI lesson plan?

Q2: Which part do you think was the most difficult when you designed the DI lesson plan?

Q3: What are the possibilities for (increased) teacher collaboration in your school?

Q4: If you get a chance to lead a team on DI, what do you think should be provided?

B. Follow-up questions for the NOESH teachers:

Collaborating might be exciting but can also be inconvenient. Do you like to get involved in team work? Are there any conflicts, difficulties and pressure when working with your team members? What are the benefits?

C. Follow-up questions for parents with school-age children

Do you think it is possible to have Differentiated Instruction in the classroom?

What kind of factors do you think will influence the learning of your children? Also,

what factors do you think are important for establishing a positive learning environment for good instruction and student learning?

D. Follow-up questions for the administrator(s)

As a principal, do you welcome the idea of having Differentiated Instruction in the classroom? What kind of issues you think will influence student learning? Also, what elements do you think are important for establishing a positive learning environment for good instruction and student learning?

Triangulation. Reflective journaling, one to one interviews and responses from the involved parties were used to test the validity of the research.

Step 1. Group Interview with numbers check and personal profile

Step 2. Compare and Contrast between the two groups—EERC and NOESH

Step 3: Follow-up Query: three parents with school-age children

Step 4: Follow-up Query: A principal

Part One: EERC

<p>Q1: What have you learned from the experience of designing a DI lesson plan?</p> <p>Discussion: Teachers suggested DI would be team work for good instruction to meet the needs and learning styles of students</p>			
<p>TH</p>	<p>...a <i>professional learning community</i> in an attempt to lessen the burden of each individual and to stimulate more professional development among the community,</p> <p>...we tend to give more consideration to low achievers in an attempt to boost their confidence. I believe senior high students in Taiwan can be ensured more learning with less lecturing than being just a passive receiver.</p> <p>... it is <i>not only low achievers but high achievers</i> as well that we should take into full</p>	<p>HSIAO</p>	<p>Firstly, DI is not such a difficult concept but very workable. Secondly, it is joyous <i>to work with a team</i>. Thirdly, the better-prepared we are before we teach, the more time-saving the class will be. It took us two months to brainstorm, organize, and revise a lesson plan for a 100-minute class. If time were money, teaching would definitely be a non-profit job. (Hsiao)</p>

PG	DI can promote effective teaching/learning in class. ... <i>get every student involved</i> and gives each student reasonable tasks to complete. ...try DI for the first time, <i>working in groups</i> should be strongly recommended.	MG	It takes a lot of effort and experience to be able to come up with something meaningful and useful to <i>achieve the goal of suiting all students' need</i> . (MG)
SY	...not an easy job. ...full of challenge, yet <i>benefits students from various levels</i> the most. ...start off DI teaching with <i>supports from the team works</i> among peer teachers.	GH	Needs analysis: to be able to reexamine Ss' needs and proficiency level, and T's capability of implementing the lesson in limited time... <i>cooperation with other team members</i> the importance of effective communication within the team, initiative of the leader to organize the huddle and bring the whole team together... reexamining my own work from other's viewpoint ...
CTN	...to know what core concept to teach and have to keep learning objectives for each level of students in mind... scaffolding, flexible grouping, classroom management ... <i>one cannot independently work out a whole DI lesson plan</i> —that would exhaust teachers' energy...	JI	...something that I sometimes ignore or even reject to be faced with-- <i>divergent English proficiency</i> in one class. (JI)
HO	It reminds me... the core value of DI is taking care of the <i>different needs of different students</i> and the opportunity to choose.		

<p>Q2: Which part do you think was the most difficult when you designed the DI lesson plan?</p> <p>Discussion: It is pretty difficult to determine the levels of students and their prior knowledge (readiness) for learning.</p>			
TH	...students' <i>responses to the test</i> and the <i>activities</i> are all beyond our grasp.	HSIAO	The worksheet design is very challenging to me, because it is more difficult to <i>distinguish the three levels than expected</i> ...
PG	...need more <i>professional knowledge about testing</i> to design a valid pre-assessment and to properly use the result of it... ...fairness to avoid the complaints from the advanced learners...	MG	When you plan it, you may think the 3 levels of lesson plan/worksheets are good enough, but it is only after you use it in class will you realize that the <i>worksheets</i> you prepared are <i>not good</i> [right].
SY	The pre-assessment is <i>not easy</i> ... to <i>differentiate</i> students by their "readiness." Designing different worksheets (SY)	GH	...correctly <i>evaluate the proficiency level</i> of different groups of Ss and design the tasks of the right level for them. It's important for T to be aware that Ss of lower proficiency level do not necessarily have lower cognitive perception...
CTN	To <i>differentiate learning objectives</i> for different levels of students!!! (CYN)	JI	...how to <i>group students</i> . Though the ways of grouping can be in accordance with students' proficiency, interests, etc., it is still hard, or say "impractical", the class schedule is extremely tight. On the other hand, the students' parents preach the <i>fairness</i> of every aspect among students, <i>grouping somehow seems risky</i> .
HO	The preparation work is more time-consuming compared to other teaching approaches. Normally, we only need to design one activity,		

	but for station teaching, we usually need <i>two to three tasks at a time</i> .		
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<p>Q3: What are the possibilities of (increased) teacher collaboration in your school?</p> <p>Discussion: 1 of the 9 respondents said that collaboration is workable because her school had already set up a very effective collaboration. Another said it is possible to give a try. The others do not think collaboration is workable now because most teachers are unfamiliar with the concepts and full of doubts. In addition, the fixed schedule of school is pretty tight. Teachers, in fact, are overloaded with their daily teaching. Moreover, a team leader must have a strong teacher-belief in DI.</p>			
TH	...receive the same training of <i>DI instruction</i> , then it will be much easier to collaborate with them since <i>it won't take extra time to negotiate and reach an agreement</i> on what DI is or how DI should be implemented.	HSIAO	It is possible to collaborate with my colleagues in DI teaching in the future, but not now. ...my colleagues... <i>unfamiliar</i> ...full of <i>doubts</i> .
PG	...possible... a small school... only 4 English teachers, ... easy and convenient for us to discuss or communicate.... However, share all the English teaching and hold all the English-related activities and contests in school,... worn out all the time and can't afford time for extra workload.	MG	Yes, I would like to <i>give it a try</i> . DI especially needs team collaboration...
SY	I wouldn't say it is impossible, but still it is a <i>challenging</i> work. Most of teachers are used to work individually and have their own method of teaching. Thus, I believe the initial stage of <i>promoting the idea of DI teaching would be slow</i> .	GH	Yes. Quite a few colleagues are always willing to try new methods and design their own tasks. However, the <i>limits in time</i> and <i>effective collaboration</i> can be possible difficulties. (GH)
CTN	... <i>absolutely workable</i> because my colleagues and I now have the DI PLC... Because of the PLC, my colleagues now build up the atmosphere to discuss with each other about what/how to teach. And their creativity could thus be seen and I am also inspired by their creative works. ...takes time to make the scene come true. Hope our connection could further influence our students' performance in English subject and our colleagues of other subjects.	JI	It still takes time ... <i>unfamiliarity</i> and <i>uncertainty</i> ...
HO	...we are <i>overloaded</i> with huge amount of workload, making test question, handouts, assignments, etc. therefore, it would <i>be a blessing</i> to be able to collaborate with our colleagues.		

<p>Q4: If you get a chance to lead a team on DI, what do you think should be provided?</p> <p>Discussion: Being a team leader on DI requires learning theory and practice. Classroom observation is one of the effective ways to model leadership. Furthermore, understanding the background of students is another significant quality that leaders are required to have.</p>			
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TH	...how to actually <i>design a feasible DI lesson</i> plan and the theory behind it are definitely necessary, preferably with <i>some hands-on experiences</i> and <i>modification suggestions</i> ...	HSIAO	...There are two things I may need, <i>references on DI</i> for studying and someone I can consult. ...more <i>theories</i> about DI and successful <i>DI teaching examples</i> ...Secondly, having someone I can consult can make the teaching process more directed and specific.
PG	...understand the <i>rationale of DI</i> , to integrate four language skills with DI. If possible, I the <i>management in a DI classroom</i> and in <i>designing activities</i> of DI...	MG	...I need to have a lot of <i>background information</i> about the teaching materials as well as my <i>students' background knowledge</i> ...
SY	More <i>theoretical and practical experiences</i> sharing from other experienced teachers so that I can have better blue-print in the future. In <i>class observation</i> of other teachers' DI teaching.	GH	... <i>task design</i> : effective evaluation of Ss' proficiency level; skills in grouping
CTN	<i>Mentorship and leadership</i> . I'd like to know more about this so that I could feel easier to confront my team members and me. (CYN)	JI	...persuade myself and colleagues to <i>truly believe</i> the benefits of the DI...
HO	...see more or try <i>more models of DI</i> for the classroom teaching. The model that Ann Walker demonstrated to us is so useful and inspiring that it encourages a lot of English teachers to try DI. (HO)		

Part II: NOESH

Query 1: Collaborating might be exciting but can also be inconvenient. Do you like to get involved in team work? Are there any conflicts, difficulties and pressure when working with your team members? What are the benefits?

Discussion: Teachers in NOESH enjoyed their collaboration with their colleagues: they shared ideas, inspired and encouraged each other. Teachers benefit from one another on the subject of DI through routine conversations and collaboration creates a positive environment for good instruction and student learning. Professional collaboration unites teachers.

DY	I <i>enjoy getting involved</i> in team work. It takes <i>time to discuss with team members</i> . Arranging the time for meeting is not easy, and <i>communicating efficiently</i> is also the part I need to work on. There is always great idea when we <i>brainstorm together</i> . I can always ask my team members for help when I face some difficulties. Since it's a team, ideas from different perspectives are proposed and <i>my partners</i> can also <i>point out</i> some <i>key points</i> that I neglect.	MI	And as for the teamwork, I have to say it is a really fantastic experience for me. Partly because I don't have to solve every problem I encounter by myself and partly because when we discuss together, I can get new ideas from my partners or revise my previous views. Most of important of all, I feel so lucky to have Lily on the same team. She is an "IDEA QUEEN." She seems to have some special qualities that I lack—creative and reflective. Lisa is also inspiring. When I did the task of "Don't laugh at me," she gave me practical suggestions about how to enact our plan in a real classroom. And this week, we have a new teammate, Nancy. She is fantastic. When I read her previous homework
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			about “ Don’t laugh at me,” I was so fascinated by her work. She gave me a brand-new ideas about the relationship among God, the laughing and the laughed. And <i>this intrigues us to revise our lesson plan</i> . So far, I felt no negative pressure, but since my partners are so great, I have to spur myself to catch up with them. <i>Is it a kind of “ positive” pressure?</i>
NCY	Yes, I do <i>like to work in a team</i> . By doing that, I could acquire new information from other members that I had never thought of. What’s more, with others’ help, gradually I learned to design a lesson with multiple perspectives. However, there is also <i>pressure</i> with it. We do have “contact” problem. Two of our members are <i>not in workplace</i> , making the association and <i>communication quite difficult</i> . Most of the time, I have to make and design the content on my own. All of these inconvenience also influenced my <i>emotion</i> at that time.	WD	Collaborating really <i>benefits me a lot</i> ; however, it is also very time-consuming because all members have to spend particular time together discussing. I think working with members who share similar ideas is great and the difficulties can also be reduced.
FAN	In my group, I think we <i>don’t have conflicts</i> and pressure, though sometimes we may have problems creating activities and our lesson plans. Usually, we always collaborate with each other by brainstorming, discussing, and sharing opinions to figure out what we will do. During these processes, I earned that various viewpoints could stimulate my thoughts and make our project better. In addition, my group members are all nice and positive to attend our discussion, work assignment and so forth, so I like to work with them.	GR	It depends on different situations. Sometimes, team work is helpful in designing the lesson plan, but it can also be tedious for a senior teacher like me. Though I have taught English for 18 years, I seldom design my own lesson plans. I always follow the textbook to teach English. Now I’ll design them with my young, beautiful colleagues and some of them even have the MA degree from the USA or British; you know, <i>my pressure is as heavy as a mountain, for I am not as excellent as them</i> . I’ll share a secret with you—that is about “美秀”. She and I are at the same age and we sit together in the same office. She is older than me only by two months. <i>She was very nervous before her presentation</i> . I found her keeping reading the DI textbook at noon without any rest as usual. She has been a good wife, mom and teacher. Now it seems obviously that <i>she’d like to be a good student and bravely embrace the challenge</i> . I admire her courage and determination very much and she has become my role model. On the other hand, I still have to admit that I really earn a lot of benefits through team work because “two heads are better than one.” <i>I have become a little more creative and flexible in my teaching process</i> . With my colleagues’ help, I can deal with and solve my problems and obstacles as soon as possible. Besides, <i>I often discuss those teaching problems with For at home or share my thoughts with him while taking a walk in the park. Team work has really improved the relationship between me and my colleagues, even my husband</i> .
For	I like to get involved in team work. I would like to say “thank you” to my team members because they are so great on working the job. I really	WEN	Cooperating with team members is indeed exciting. During the discussion, the brainstorming part always impressed me so much. Everyone has her unique

	<p>appreciate them for <i>allowing me to be “a lazy bone” in the team</i>. When holding a meeting, my team members do have many ideas. We almost <i>don't have any conflicts or pressure</i>. When assigning the jobs, my team members do almost all of the work, and I am only responsible for the least and the easiest ones. I would like to say that Cynthia, Anny and George are the best. They are so young and so enthusiastic about the jobs.</p>	<p>way of thinking, concerns, and interests. However, we can't just put everything together. We need to figure out a core goal of the project. Something has to be deleted, and something has to be reorganized. It's really <i>time-consuming</i> and head-aching, but if we didn't spend time discussing the matter first, we couldn't move on to the next step. Surely there's pressure! I'm always afraid that I <i>couldn't come up with any brilliant or at least constructive idea</i> because my team members are just awesome. I wonder why they can always state their ideas so clearly! I am so lucky to be in their team.</p>
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Parents

<p>Questions: As a parent, do you think it is a good idea to implement Differentiated Instruction in the classroom? What kinds of factors do you think influence the learning of your children? Also, what elements do you think are important for establishing a positive learning environment for good instruction and student learning?</p> <p>Discussion: Although many parents agree favorably to the implementation of DI in classroom instruction, their concerns about classroom management, competition, pressure, anxiety and lack of time to internalize the knowledge and individual support still lead them to worry about student learning and suspect the effectiveness of DI. In other words, effective teaching means good classroom management, and a less competitive learning environment with less pressure and anxiety.</p>

<p>HP</p>	<p>Yes, it is <i>possible</i> to have DI in the classrooms. As parents, we all know that kids are all different, even among their own siblings. Since there are a variety of levels in a class, it is essential for teachers to cover all the bases and take care of all the different needs of our students. I think the concerns that will influence students' learning are many, such as <i>competition, pressure, anxiety, and lack of time to internalize the knowledge</i>. Therefore, it's teachers' responsibility to provide a good learning environment by arranging the activities that are good for different levels and that are meaningful, relevant to their learning.</p>	<p>CIA</p> <p>If we are to establish a positive learning environment for good instruction and students learning, <i>the classroom management</i> is another concern to be addressed. Especially when students are engaged in the group learning, <i>some students tend to chat</i> instead of learning or doing what teachers require. At this time, it is important for teachers to have a good classroom management so that a good instruction and student learning can be ensured.</p>
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<p>It is <i>possible</i> to have differentiated instruction in the classroom if some factors can be taken into consideration and problems are solved. For example, the number of students in a <i>class is quite large</i>, which might influence the learning time allotted for each student. In other words, it would be difficult for teachers to take good care of each student when they are about to <i>instruct or guide students individually or in a group</i>. It would be also difficult for teachers to know each student well, including their abilities and interest. What's more, if my children are <i>introverted</i> or <i>don't get along well with other classmates</i>, what would happen in the group interaction? Will they be ignored by other classmates? Is it possible for them to have information exchange or good interaction with other group members? These might be some factors needed to be taken into consideration.</p>
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Questions: As a principal, do you welcome the idea of having Differentiated Instruction in the classroom? What kind of issues do you think will influence student learning? Also, what elements do you think are important for establishing a positive learning environment for good instruction and student learning?

Differentiated Instruction is different from conventional teaching so that to have DI workably implemented in the classroom, the school administration needs to provide sufficient support to teachers. First, team meetings are required; then professional learning communities are the effective collaboration. Every teacher in the school should take the responsibility of student learning. Daily walk through provides administrators with immediate the support of safe environment and a running record of classroom management offer teachers valuable data to improve their delivery skills. Classroom observation is another good way to get close to real-practice. Interventions will be one of the most concerned issues. Facilities like computers, air-conditioners, projectors and so forth should not be under controlled based on school budget. Especially, computers should be easy for students to access to. Because of the range of the student levels become wider, data of student background are very important reference. Without understanding the learners, good instruction will not appear.

Findings and Conclusion

Just as Cohen and Geier (2010) noted in their study: “A positive school climate promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect and mutual trust”. Due to some teachers' passion and enthusiasm, there were occasional breakdowns in communication leading to some discomfort among participants. It has been shown that the breakdowns do not reduce the significant impact of routine conversations among teachers regardless of their being inbound or outbound professional collaborations. What teachers urgently need is to get sufficient support from the administration. The support can be divided into the following domains: collaboration among colleagues, routine conversations through professional learning communities, and being given sufficient data about a student’s learning background, including their prior knowledge, their learning styles, their proficiency on subject learning and their learning attitude as well as motivation. While parents do not have a strong opinion on differentiated learning, they still have been worrying about the fairness of DI, and

how a competitive learning environment might bring about more pressure and anxiety which would not increase positive learning.

It is not easy to have school improvement and to change the scope of education. On the basis of Sharkey and Murnaneand’s study (2012), they identified three types of challenges that schools face with differentiated instruction—technology, knowledge, and opportunity— especially when they attempt to use assessment results to improve instruction.

Therefore, an able administrator is required to understand the needs of students and teachers. First, user-friendly software is essential to ensure technology provides intuitive graphic summaries of assessment results for specific groups of students. Secondly, workshops are the most effective tool to help different subject-teachers describe their data-related work and receive feedback. Lastly, the tuning protocol and question formulation techniques are suggested and used for examining student assessment results that can help in gaining teachers' support.

Both positive and negative opinions are voiced in the school environments. When facing resistance, proponents of change should listen respectfully to the voices from various aspects because “Resistors often are informal opinion leaders who can undermine change efforts. Moreover, resistors can have valuable insights and reasons (Goodwin, B., J. E. 2007, p.1)”. If the administrator can help those who lack

confidence and belief work through initial resistance; then, it is most likely to create a positive environment for DI and allow good instruction and student learning.

Just as Jesus (2012) detailed in his study about the process of differentiated instruction from the perspectives of the three communities in a school:

Teachers. “The process of the differentiated instruction may seem overwhelming at first because the teacher has to take so much into consideration before planning; but once the teacher knows his/her students, their individual needs, has experience with the content and curriculum, and has the disposition to explore all learning opportunities for the students, differentiated instruction will be the simplified experience fo all involved (p.10).”

Parents. “Parents, whose children have experienced a differentiated instruction classroom, are parents who are proud of their children’s accomplishments and supportive of the school (p.10).”

Administrators. “whose schools have implemented the differentiated instruction model, are administrators that lead successful schools and who worry less about annual performance reviews (p.10).”

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