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## ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN USING DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENTS: GROUNDWORK FOR SEMINAR-WORKSHOP

**KRISHIEL P. AMOR**

**TEACHER I**

Oton National High School  
krishiel.amor@deped.gov.ph

### ABSTRACT

The study aimed at determining the experiences of Junior High School English teachers in using differentiated assessment as a groundwork for a seminar-workshop in Oton National High School, Oton, Iloilo during the school year 2023-2024. The results showed that English teachers viewed differentiated assessments as tests for individual needs, abilities, and interests and they also test for multiple intelligences of learners. Teachers use differentiated assessments to accomplish performance tasks and assess competencies learned. Teachers found differentiated assessments enjoyable. They were also used in discovering learners' strengths and weaknesses, boosting confidence, and evaluating teaching strategies. This type of test is time-consuming to prepare and administer, difficult to suit diverse learners, and difficult to manage due to the big class size. Teachers' coping strategies include researching, collaborating, providing a timeframe, and monitoring and facilitating learners' groupings. A seminar-workshop for teachers was proposed as a result of the study.

**Keywords:** *Experiences, Differentiated Assessment, English Teachers, Seminar-workshop*

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## INTRODUCTION

Assessment is done to evaluate the learning abilities and keep track of learners' progress. In giving assessments, the diversity of learners must be considered to pursue the goal of 21st-century education, which is to establish a learner-centered classroom. A student-centered classroom involves students in the learning process while also considering their interests and skills. Student learning is personalized, and students take control of their learning, which helps them develop essential skills or 21st-century skills (EduBorealis,2021).

Differentiated assessment is the key to meeting students' needs and learning preferences. Thus, it is achieved when the teacher provides various assessment activities inside the classroom. This would also allow learners to effectively demonstrate what they have learned and give the teachers an idea of what best teaching strategies can be applied or used.

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences is a key theory considered in this study. Educators should take into account students' various intelligences and strengths. Also, the theory of Multiple Intelligences will assist teachers in understanding that every learner is unique and will allow teachers to improve each learner's intelligence. Finally, teachers should use teaching, learning, and assessment approaches that address students' various intelligences (Gouws, 2007).

Differentiated assessment is employed when teachers alter and match assessment with the various qualities or profiles of students to fulfill the students' particular needs, hence strengthening their learning and increasing their ability to exhibit their learned knowledge.

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As an English teacher for 5 years, the researcher has observed that English teachers find some difficulties in preparing or giving assessments that correspond to the different learning levels, learning styles, needs, interests, and potentials of learners. Some problems arise, such as materials to be used, preparations, and checking of outputs. Perhaps, teachers would stick to giving paper-and-pencil tests, which are believed to be the easiest and fastest way of conducting an assessment.

In this connection, this study aimed at finding out the experiences of English teachers in giving differentiated assessments inside the classroom to explore the experiences of these teachers in preparing, giving, and checking differentiated assessments.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, respondents of the study, sampling design, research instrument, validity of the research instrument, data-gathering procedures, and data analyses.

### Research Method

This qualitative study used the narrative inquiry research method by Creswell (2003) which focuses on the former, and defines it as a study of experiences "as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals".

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Narrative inquiry research method under qualitative investigation was utilized in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of English teachers in using differentiated assessments as groundwork for seminar-workshop.

Creswell (2003) defines narrative inquiry as gathering responses from participants and retells the Participants' perspectives by combining the researcher's combining the participants' expertise to develop a A collaborative narrative.

The study aimed at interpreting the responses of the participants using the narrative inquiry approach. Narrative inquiry was needed to gather information on the experiences of English teachers in using differentiated assessment as groundwork for seminar-workshop.

## Research Design

This study utilized the qualitative research design using the phenomenological approach. According to Delve (2022), phenomenological research is a form of qualitative study used to understand and describe the fundamental characteristics of a phenomenon. The technique examines human everyday interactions while disregarding the researchers' prior beliefs about the subject.

This study employed phenomenological inquiry to learn more about how individuals feel and think in the most direct manner. It focused on what happens within the individual in order to attain and characterize lived experiences using varied assessments.

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The responses of the participants to the question through phenomenological inquiry were analyzed in the study. Inquiry was used to obtain information on the experiences in using differentiated assessments of Junior High School English teachers of Oton National High School.

### Participants of the Study

The participants in this study were the ten (10) purposely selected Junior High School English teachers who provided information about their experiences in using differentiated assessments. These participants were from Oton National High School, District of Oton, Schools Division of Iloilo.

### Sampling Design

The study's participants were selected using a process known as "purposeful selection" (Maxwell, 2005). It is described as a "selection approach in which specific environments, individuals, or activities are selected purposefully to supply information that cannot be obtained from other sources" .

### Research Instrument

The researcher's prepared questions were used as instruments for the study. The researcher employed a researcher-made interview guide as a method for conducting interviews. The questions were based on the statements of the problem.

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## Validity of the Research Instrument

The validity of the interview guide was determined as to the extent to which it measures what it is designed to measure (Robson, 2011). The researcher-made interview guide was submitted to the adviser for review and revision. After applying the corrections, the prepared interview guide was forwarded to the panel of experts for content-and-face validation. The guide was considered valid when checked by the panel of experts and all their suggestions were applied. The final interview guide was finalized and sent to the participants.

## Data-gathering Procedures

When the interview guide was validated and finalized, a letter of permission to conduct the study in actual was signed by the Director of the Graduate School (UI- Phinma), the thesis adviser, and the researcher. Upon the consent of the participants, it was given to them. With proper communication, the responses were given back to the researcher for analysis.

## Data Analyses

The data were analyzed and interpreted using the phenomenological approach. The purpose of the analysis is to explain people's experiences, perceptions, or views on a given topic. According to Delve (2022), phenomenology research is a qualitative research approach that explores human beings' daily interactions without suspending the researchers' previous notions about the topic.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study aimed at determining the experiences of Junior High School English teachers in using Differentiated Assessments as Groundwork for Seminar-workshop for teachers. The Participants in the study were the total population of 10 Junior High School English teachers in Oton National High School, Schools Division of Iloilo.

A researcher-made interview guide was used to obtain the data. The Instrument was subjected to a validity test and was found by the validators valid and appropriate to use. Thematic Analysis was used to interpret and analyse the responses on the experiences of English teachers in using differentiated assessment.

The following are the findings of the study:

As to how the English teachers view differentiated assessment, four themes were revealed:(1) Tests for Individual Needs,(2) Tests to Assess Multiple Intelligences,(3)Learner-centered Tests,(4)Tests that Consider Learners' Needs, Abilities, and Interests.

Differentiated Assessments were used by teachers:

(1) for the accomplishment of performance tasks,(2) to assess Competencies learned, and (3) to assess learners' needs, interests, and capabilities.

On the other hand, the experiences of English teachers were: (1)learners find differentiated assessment enjoyable, (2) teachers discover learners' strengths, and weaknesses,

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(4) differentiated assessment boosts learners' confidence, and helps teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching strategies.

The challenges that the English teachers encountered were: time-consuming to prepare and administer,(2) difficulty in suiting the test to diverse levels of learners, and (3) difficulty in managing big class sizes.

The coping strategies employed by English teachers to overcome the challenges were: (1) Researching Tests Online, (2) collaborating with co-teachers,(3)providing a timeframe for every test, and (4) monitoring and facilitating learners' groupings.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

There is a great demand for teachers to make assessments suited to the learners' unique capabilities.

In preparing Differentiated assessments, the foremost concern is to consider the varied learning styles which learners bring to the teaching-learning situation. The role of the teacher is to challenge the creativity of the learners by giving them tests suited to their individual learning needs.

Implementing differentiated assessments increases students' motivation to learn as their tasks or tests are in line with their interests and choices. Moreover, they feel comfortable in accomplishing tasks in which they are knowledgeable or skillful.

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Although there were various challenges experienced by teachers in conducting differentiated assessments, they were determined to adjust and enhance their teaching strategies or techniques just to address the learning gaps.

Differentiated assessments increase the coping skills of teachers, develop their sense of collaboration, enhance their capabilities to address individual differences of learners, and improve their creativity and ingenuity as experts in test preparation, administration, and evaluation.

Showing support by conducting seminar-workshop related to differentiated assessment is needed to upgrade the teachers' competencies and capabilities in the preparation and conduct of differentiated assessments. This seminar should be institutionalized in the different schools of the Municipality of Oton.

## CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights derived from the study, the following recommendations are made:

Considering the aforesated findings and insights, the following recommendations are made:

The experiences of English teachers in implementing differentiated assessment may be revisited and serve as ideas for school strategic planning or enhancing the teaching-learning process.

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The challenges encountered by English teachers in using differentiated assessments may be carefully assessed so that they would be given solutions and intervention measures to prevent their recurrence.

Three (3) seminar -workshops are recommended: (1) Seminar-workshop on Understanding Differentiated Assessment; (2) Seminar-workshop on Multiple Intelligences; and Seminar-workshop on Types of Assessment Methods. The seminar-workshop's titles were drawn out from the responses of the participants in the study and to be conducted in Oton National High School.

English teachers should reflect on their experiences in giving differentiated assessments in their classes. To help them improve their learning assessment capabilities, especially in preparing and conducting responsive tests, checking these tests, and evaluating learners' performances.

Curriculum planners should redesign the curriculum to include topics on differentiated assessment.

Department heads should be aware of the status of preparing, conducting, and evaluating differentiated assessments which could serve as the basis for formulating a responsive seminar-workshop to provide appropriate professional assistance to English teachers.

Department of Education (DepEd) Officials may reformulate policies and guidelines about assessments for implementation in the field of education.

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Parents should understand the importance of assessments that cater to the unique capabilities of their children so they can fully guide them in their learning at home through follow-up of assignments and projects.

Similar studies may be done in the province of Iloilo or may focus on teachers in other subject areas or teachers in secondary and private institutions.

The proposed training workshop formulated as a result of this study should be implemented in schools not only in Oton but also in the whole province of Iloilo.

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