Enhancing reading comprehension in Araling Panlipunan of Grade 5 learners through differentiated instruction

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ABSTRACT

The lack of instructional resources and reading comprehension skills in Araling Panlipunan education resulted in significant learning gaps among elementary-grade students. This study aimed to test the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in closing these gaps in Araling Panlipunan among fifth-grade students. The experimental sampling method research design was utilized through tutorial classes where the respondents received differentiated instruction based on multiple intelligences and learning styles. Aiken's V coefficient method and Cronbach's alpha were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The validation process achieved a result of 0.92, which signifies high validity. Additionally, the reliability test used Cronbach's alpha, obtaining a score of 0.60. The results indicated significant progress in the experimental group's performance in reading comprehension skills after implementing differentiated instruction. The experimental group's mean post-test score, 16.10, suggests an outstanding level of performance. This underscores the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in enhancing reading comprehension skills among Grade 5 pupils. Hence, educators are encouraged to utilize differentiated instruction to enhance the learners' reading comprehension.

Keywords: Differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences, learning style, Araling Panlipunan proficiency, reading comprehension skills.

INTRODUCTION

The process of identifying the unique learning styles of each learner and then customizing training to suit their requirements is known as differentiated instruction (Gregory and Chapman, 2017). According to author Tomlinson, differentiating instruction entails "shaking up" the way things are done in the classroom to give students more opportunities to process information, make sense of it, and express what they have learned (Bender, 2017). Stated differently, differentiated instruction offers distinct pathways for knowledge acquisition, concept processing or sense-making, and product development, optimizing learning outcomes for every learner (Sprenger, 2018).

In the meantime, Smale-Jacobse et al., (2019) posited that reading comprehension is crucial to a learner's general learning and academic success. On the other hand, endless reports indicate that reading comprehension issues are a global concern for the current generation. A UN News article in 2021 claims that the COVID-19 pandemic's disruptions have increased the 100 million learners' ability to acquire fundamental reading abilities, such as the capacity to identify coherent devices and text organization. It also demonstrates how learners having trouble understanding a book resort to using their native tongue when responding to reading comprehension questions (Chapman and King, 2015).

Moreover, reading comprehension is essential for academic success, particularly in subjects like Araling Panlipunan. Marvas et al., (2024) found that while tools like the Kiddie ReCom App improved students' comprehension in literal, inferential, and evaluative levels, challenges such as time constraints and limited access to devices hindered deeper engagement and mastery. These constraints led to rushed instruction and reduced opportunities for active digital participation, affecting higher-order comprehension skills. This study explores how differentiated instruction can address these gaps, enhancing Grade 5 learners' reading comprehension in Araling Panlipunan.

However, even when employing the mother tongue as a medium of instruction or the national language ina particular subject, like Araling Panlipunan, the Philippines needs help with learners' ability to translate what they read or their reading comprehension skills (De Guzman, 2018). Although learners' transition from elementary to intermediate school is crucial to their educational path because it exposes them to various challenging and diversified reading materials covering a wide range of disciplines, comprehension problems were still evident among the learners (Satriani, 2018). Based on the National Achievement Test results, the Department of Education revealed in 2019 that many learners struggle to understand and interpret written texts effectively (Saavedra, 2019). To close the noted gaps in the learners' reading comprehension, this situation requires quick attention and action, added by Saavedra (2019).

Paguyan and Taoc (2022) revealed that Grade 3 pupils are classified as "readers without comprehension" based on DepEd's monthly reading reports, highlighting insufficient background knowledge, teacher factor, reading fluency, and vocabulary knowledge. While parental involvement and student interest were established, these factors alone were not enough to address the pupils' lack of comprehension. The study identified teacher factor, parental involvement, background knowledge, and vocabulary knowledge as key predictors of reading performance. To address these issues, the researchers proposed interventions, including intensive reading approaches, teacher training seminars, and programs to enhance parental involvement. These findings underscore the importance of multifaceted strategies to improve reading comprehension, which is also a critical focus of this study on differentiated instruction in Araling Panlipunan for Grade 5 learners.

Introducing different genres and disciplinary texts is essential to addressing the present problems with learners' reading comprehension and academic progress. It facilitates learners' comprehension and interpretation of these writings. According to research, reading broadly and for enjoyment can greatly aid learners' academic achievement and advancement. Learners gain confidence in their academic abilities and feel more empowered. Reading comprehension also helps learners write better and exposes them to various writing styles. Reading comprehension is a critical component that makes learners successful in the classroom (Kendeou et al., 2016). This research aims to implement differentiated instruction, which adjusts teaching tactics to fit each learner's unique learning needs (Potot et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the significance of this research stems from the necessity of giving Grade 5 learners strong reading comprehension skills, as this will directly affect their academic achievement and future opportunities. In particular, learners who lack these skills will find it challenging to understand fundamental concepts, critically analyze information, and effectively communicate. This research will help identify the local learner population's distinctive qualities, requirements, and experiences.

Furthermore, although the topic of this paper is new to the research world, there is still a gap that needs to be addressed, particularly to determine the level of reading comprehension of the learners in Araling Panlipunan. Also, locally, this paper will be the first to be conducted to find out the learners' reading comprehension level and the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in Araling Panlipunan. As for this, the results of this study will shed light on how well-differentiated instruction works to improve reading comprehension, particularly for learners in Grade 5, and the information gathered from this paper will provide evidence-based knowledge that will help close the research gap in this area and encourage more research.

METHODS

Research locale

The study was conducted at Alegria Integrated School in Proper, Alegria, Cateel, Davao Oriental, where the researchers resided. This local connection provided the researchers with a deep understanding of the students' needs and preferences, allowing them to tailor the intervention more effectively. Learning styles and multiple intelligences tests were used to assess the students' strengths and preferences, ensuring that the tutorial sessions were customizeds to meet individual learning needs. The researchers' familiarity with the students also created a more engaging and supportive learning environment, contributing to the study's success.

Research design

This paper utilized an experimental research design. As a scientific research method, experimental research involves manipulating one or more independent variables while controlling other potentially affecting factors to observe and measure the effects on the outcomes of interest.

The research study focused exclusively on an experimental group composed of Grade 5 students from Alegria Integrated School. This design facilitated a thorough exploration of the effects of differentiated instruction on reading comprehension in the subject of Araling Panlipunan. By concentrating solely on this group, the study aimed to establish causal links between the independent variable (differentiated instruction) and the outcomes, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

This approach was advantageous as it allowed for careful control of the experimental setting and the variables involved, ensuring that the investigation adhered to practical and ethical standards. The capacity of experimental research to provide robust empirical evidence in
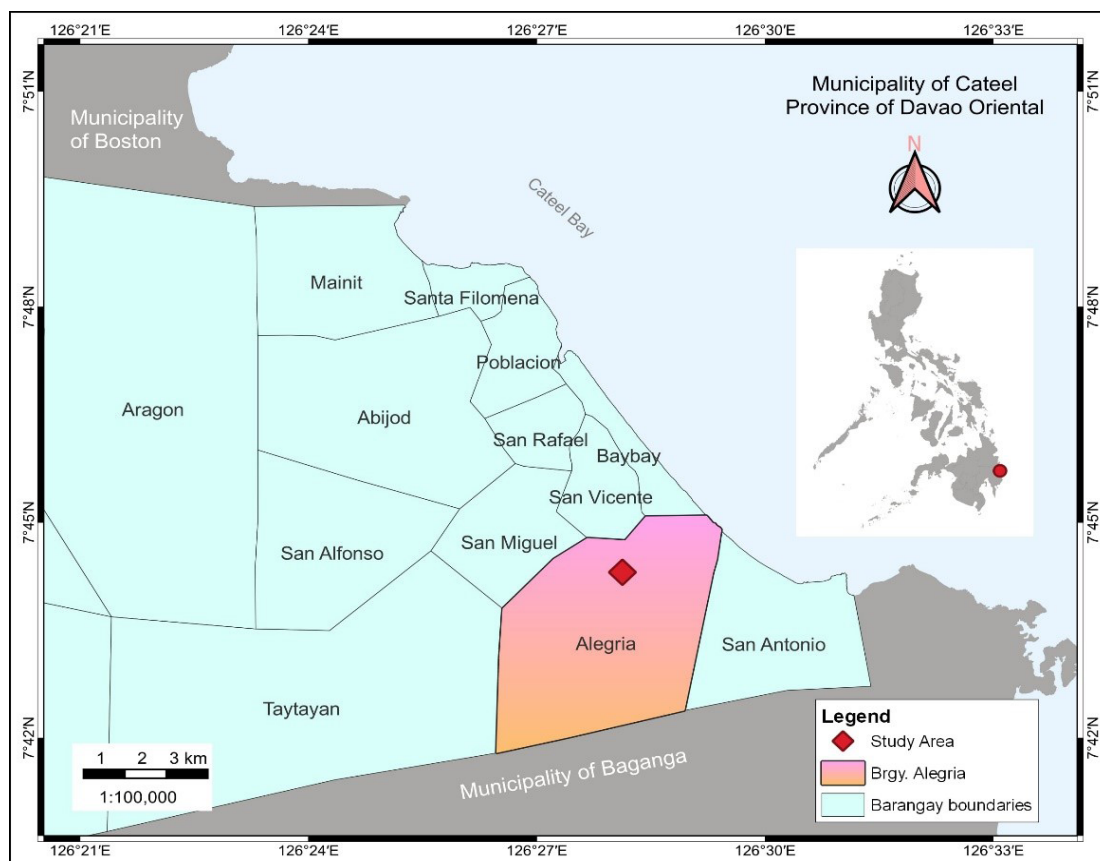
Figure 1. Map of Cateel highlighting Alegria Integrated School.

support of causal assertions is highly regarded, making it essential for scientific inquiry and the advancement of knowledge across various domains.

Research respondents

The study aimed to test the effectiveness of an intervention by working with ten (10) Grade 5 students. The respondents included three bodily-kinesthetic learners, two verbal-linguistic learners, three tactile learners, and two visual learners. These students were selected based on their primary learning styles and multiple intelligences identified through standardized assessments. Random sampling within each learning style and multiple intelligence categories ensured proportional representation. Inclusion criteria required students to be in Grade 5 and have parental consent.

The study employed an experimental research design focused solely on the experimental group, which received differentiated instruction as the intervention.

This intervention was delivered through tutorial classes structured to enhance reading comprehension skills. By systematically applying the intervention and comparing the students' reading comprehension performance before and after the intervention, the researchers aimed to observe the cause-and-effect differences attributable to the intervention.

All respondents were administered pre-test and post-test questionnaires, and only those who completed both tests were included in the final analysis. To ensure data validity, respondents who were absent during the post-test but completed the pre-test were excluded from the analysis.

Furthermore, future researchers could expand the study by incorporating a more diverse demographic, including students from different grade levels,

socio-economic backgrounds, and varying levels of reading proficiency. Additionally, they might consider integrating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into students' experiences with the intervention. Implementing a control group for comparison could also enhance the validity of the findings. Finally, researchers could explore longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of the intervention on reading comprehension skills.

Research instrument

To have appropriate data, the researchers administered a researcher-made pre-test and post-test 20-item test questionnaire. Moreover, the test questionnaires were anchored in the K to 12 Curriculum, specifically in the "Natatalakay ang mga lokal na mga pangyayari tungo sa pag-usbong ng pakikibaka ng bayan, 1.1 Reporma sa ekonomiya at pagtatatag ng monopolyang tabako, 1.2 Mga pag-aalsa sa loob ng estadong kolonyal, 1.3 Kilusang Agraryo ng 1745, 1.4 Pag-aalsa ng Kapatiran ng San Jose, 1.5 Okupasyon ng Ingles sa Maynila" with the learning code AP5PKBIVa-b-1. Also, the researchers rigorously assessed the instrument's precision and reliability. To ascertain its educational alignment, the researchers employed Aiken's V coefficient, achieving a result of 0.92, which signifies high validity (Sireci and Bond, 2014). Additionally, the researchers evaluated the instrument's reliability using Cronbach's alpha, obtaining a score of 0.60. This score indicates that the instrument is reliably consistent for our purposes (Ahdika, 2017). The comprehensive validation and reliability testing confirm that our instrument is effective and dependable for accurately gauging learning in educational research settings, establishing it as a significant and credible tool for academic investigations.

Data collection

The study aimed to test the effectiveness of an intervention designed to enhance reading comprehension skills among Grade 5 students. The sample comprised ten (10) students, including three bodily-kinesthetic learners, two verbal-linguistic learners, three tactile learners, and two visual learners. These students were selected based on their primary learning styles and multiple intelligences, which were identified through standardized assessments. Random sampling within each learning style and multiple intelligence categories ensured proportional representation. Inclusion criteria required students to be in Grade 5 and to have parental consent.

The researchers sought Ethical Clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (REC). They submitted the full research proposal, questionnaires, informed consent forms, curriculum vitae, and a list of potential risks and solutions for approval. To ensure the validity of the questionnaires, a Content Validity assessment was conducted. Expert review from three different specialists using an evaluation tool resulted in an Aiken V coefficient value of 0.92, indicating high validity (Sireci and Bond, 2014).

The next step involved pilot testing to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. This was carried out at Taytayan Integrated School, where learners' responses were analyzed, yielding a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.60. This score signifies that the instrument was reliably consistent for the study's purposes (Ahdika, 2017).

Following ethical and validity checks, parental permission was secured to involve their children in the study. Pre-test questionnaires were administered to assess the students' initial reading comprehension levels and learning gaps. After the pre-tests were completed and retrieved, the data were tallied, encoded, analyzed, and interpreted to identify the preferred learning modes of the respondents.

Subsequently, tests of different intelligences were administered to

determine the student's dominant intelligences and learning style tests were used to identify their preferred learning styles. The findings revealed that six students had bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, four had verbal-linguistic intelligence, and a majority preferred visual and tactile learning styles.

The intervention involved providing differentiated instruction tailored to the students' multiple intelligences and learning styles. This was delivered through tutorial classes aimed at improving reading comprehension. Post-test questionnaires were administered to measure any improvements in the students' reading comprehension skills.

Data from the post-tests were collected, tallied, encoded, analyzed, and interpreted to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Only those respondents who completed both pre-test and post-test questionnaires were included in the final analysis. Students who were absent during the post-test but completed the pre-test were excluded to ensure data validity.

Data analysis

After completing the pre-and post-test questionnaire responses from the respondents, the raw data was tabulated to encode the results. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the K–12 DepEd grading system were utilized to evaluate and arrive at a dependable, realistic, and accurate interpretation of the acquired data, as well as to interpret remarks of data outcomes and compare the performances of both the pre-test and post-test results of the respondents. Analysis of covariance, independent sample t-tests, and mean scores were used to interpret the findings.

Mean. This was used to determine (1) the level of respondents' pre-test scores and (2) the post-test scores.

Paired sample t-test. This was used to compare (3) the pre-test and post-test results. This statistical method is appropriate because it allows for assessing whether the intervention (differentiated instruction) led to a significant difference in reading comprehension scores within the same group of students.

Table 1. K to 12 grading system.

Grading scale	Interpretation
90-100	Outstanding
85-89	Very satisfactory
80-84	Satisfactory
75-79	Fairly satisfactory
Below 75	Did not meet expectations

RESULTS

Level of pre-test scores

This section presents the respondents' pre-test scores. Pre-testing was carried out to collect data for the learners' pre-test results for this paper. The purpose of the pre-test was to determine the learners' reading comprehension and prior knowledge and to ascertain their overall performance on the test.

The pre-test scores depicted in Table 2 reveal a concerning trend regarding the reading comprehension abilities of elementary learners in Araling Panlipunan. Most respondents, 60%, scored 5 or below, indicating a significant shortfall in meeting expected standards (Mirafuentes, 2024).

Level of post-test scores

Following the intervention, the respondents' post-test results were ascertained. The respondents received

Table 2. Level of pre-test scores.

Score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Standard deviation	Mean	Grade percentage	Remarks
5 and below	6	60.00	0.94	5.00	62.50	Did not meet expectations
6-10	4	40.00				
11-15	0	0.00				
16 and above	0	0.00				
Total	**10**	**100.0**				

instruction using differentiated instruction or teaching methodology.

The outstanding remarks in Table 3, with a grade percentage of 90.25, underscore the efficacy of differentiated instruction in enhancing reading comprehension skills among learners (Baliling, 2020).

Table 3. Level of post-test scores of participants.

Score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Standard deviation	Mean	Grade percentage	Remarks
5 and below	0	0.00	2.88	16.10	90.25	Outstanding
6-10	0	0.00				
11-15	6	60.00				
16 and above	4	40.00				
Total	**10**	**100.0**				

Difference between pre-test and post-test scores

The post-test and pre-test results of the respondents were computed and compared after the intervention. The mean comparison between the pre-test and post-test of the respondents is contrasted in Table 4.

Meaning that the participants improved compared to their skills before conducting the study. The data revealed that the learners' ability in reading comprehension in Araling Panlipunan increased with the use of differentiated instruction.

Table 4. Mean comparison between pre-test and post-test scores.

Group	Mean	Standard deviation	*t*-value	*p*-value	Interpretation
Pre-test	5.00	0.94	12.33	0.000	Pre-test scores and post-test scores differ significantly.
Post-test	16.10	2.88			

DISCUSSION

The pre-test scores depicted in Table 2 suggest that learners struggle to grasp historical narratives, likely due to various factors outlined in the literature. Macklem (2015), highlights the potential impact of lengthy and monotonous text passages, which can overwhelm learners' cognitive capacities, hindering their ability to retain and process information effectively. Additionally, complex vocabulary further

exacerbates comprehension difficulties, as learners may struggle to understand advanced or archaic terms (Mirafuentes, 2024). The absence of visual aids such as pictures, diagrams, and interactive elements contributes to comprehension challenges among young learners (Boufares, 2019). These tools facilitate understanding, particularly for topics as complex as historical narratives. Furthermore, a lack of relevance and contextualization in the presented content may contribute to learners' disengagement

and lack of motivation to learn (Macklem, 2015). Addressing these issues necessitates a multifaceted approach, as emphasized by Abdel Meguid and Collins (2017), which includes interactive and student-centered teaching methods to enhance comprehension and foster meaningful learning experiences.

According to Ebagat et al., (2016), the inability to deduce the text's central idea, unfamiliarity with the terms, ignorance of the words' functions, and lack of knowledge about when to use them are the issues that learners in Araling Panlipunan face and which have a significant impact on their reading comprehension. Additionally, the outcome shows that the language utilized is the primary source of the issue (Lorbis et al., 2019). The learners need to be proficient in using words and become familiar with their functions. Because they cannot decipher the text's meaning, the learners struggle to understand it (Vaughn et al., 2024).

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that participants' post-test scores were outstanding. This exceptional performance suggests that tailored teaching methods, materials, and assessments have effectively addressed participants' diverse needs and learning styles (Balaus and Salcedo, 2019). Furthermore, the distribution of scores across different intervals highlights the importance of recognizing and accommodating multiple intelligences and varied learning styles in instructional practices (Gentry et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2014).

The absence of participants scoring 5 and below in the post-test scores indicates a significant improvement in comprehension, particularly for learners who may have previously struggled with accessing and understanding complex historical content (Elmer, 2022). This improvement suggests that incorporating various teaching strategies aligned with multiple intelligences has facilitated a more inclusive and effective learning environment (Lindner and Schwab, 2020). Additionally, the distribution of scores across different intervals reflects

the success of differentiated instruction in catering to the students' diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences, thereby enhancing engagement and comprehension (Ojong, 2023; Clark and Mayer, 2023).

According to Almagro et al., (2024), implementing contextualized reading materials within school environments for non-reader students is essential for creating a learning environment that resonates with their lived experiences. This approach is directly relevant to our research on reading comprehension in Araling Panlipunan for Grade 5 learners through differentiated instruction. Tailoring reading materials to align with students' backgrounds, interests, and cultural contexts helps bridge the gap between unfamiliar content and the students' realities, making the learning process more engaging and accessible. As highlighted in Almagro et al., (2024), contextualization fosters confidence and motivation, particularly for non-readers, as it provides material that feels personally relevant and encourages a deeper understanding of concepts. Additionally, the study's emphasis on differentiated programs and alternative reading approaches underscores the importance of adapting materials and strategies to suit diverse learners, which is a key component of our research in ensuring inclusivity and enhancing reading comprehension outcomes in Araling Panlipunan.

Moreover, the distribution of post-test scores underscores the importance of providing learners with opportunities to showcase their strengths and preferences in demonstrating their understanding (Barkley and Major, 2020). By offering varied assessment methods aligned with multiple intelligences, teachers can motivate students to engage more deeply with the subject matter and demonstrate their learning meaningfully (Alhamuddin et al., 2023). This approach fosters a more comprehensive understanding of historical content and cultivates a sense of empowerment and ownership over their learning (Tomlinson, 2017; Hurst, 2013).

The data presented in Table 4 reveal a significant improvement in the post-test scores of the respondents after the implementation of differentiated instruction (DI). This outcome mirrors the assertions in existing literature, consistently emphasizing DI's effectiveness in augmenting learner achievement, particularly in enhancing comprehension skills across various academic disciplines (Halil et al., 2024; Connor, 2016). The substantial enhancement in post-test scores not only underscores the potency of DI but also accentuates its capability to cater to the diverse comprehension needs of learners, thereby fostering holistic learning experiences (Drilon et al., 2018; Hoover and Patton, 2015).

Moreover, the improvement in scores suggests that DI addresses individual differences in learning styles and multiple intelligences, facilitating personalized instruction tailored to learners' distinct profiles (Tomlinson, 2014; Gentry et al., 2013). By employing many instructional methodologies and resources, DI empowers educators to construct dynamic learning environments that resonate with learners' cognitive strengths and preferences, enhancing their comprehension abilities (Cavas and Cavas, 2020; Aries, 2020). This personalized pedagogical approach elevates academic performance and nurtures learners' confidence and self-efficacy in comprehending the complex subject matter.

Furthermore, the statistically significant disparity in pre-test scores and post-test data underscores DI's potential to foster comprehensive comprehension growth. Through DI principles, educators can establish inclusive classrooms where every learner feels valued and supported, irrespective of their background or learning profile (Lindner and Schwab, 2020; Tomlinson, 2014). This holistic educational approach drives academic success and cultivates a deeper understanding and appreciation of the subject, empowering learners to become proficient and critical readers.

In conclusion, the findings from Table 4 highlight DI's transformative impact on enhancing reading comprehension skills and cultivating inclusive learning environments. By addressing learners' diverse needs and preferences while embracing principles of multiple intelligences and learning styles, DI emerges as a potent pedagogical tool capable of unlocking every learner's full potential. As educators continue integrating DI strategies into their instructional repertoire, they play a pivotal role in shaping equitable and enriching educational experiences that prepare learners for success in an ever-evolving world.

Implication to Araling Panlipunan Education

The study's results have important implications for Araling Panlipunan Education. Firstly, the outstanding post-test scores obtained through implementing differentiated instruction (DI) underscore the potential of tailored teaching methodologies in enhancing learners' comprehension of Araling Panlipunan content. This suggests that educators in Araling Panlipunan can benefit significantly from adopting DI strategies to address their learners' diverse needs and learning styles (Baliling, 2020). By recognizing and accommodating the unique cognitive profiles of learners, teachers can create more engaging and effective learning experiences, ultimately improving outcomes in Araling Panlipunan education (Balaus and Salcedo, 2019).

Furthermore, the absence of participants scoring below 5 in the post-test scores highlights a significant improvement in comprehension, particularly for learners who may have previously struggled with accessing complex historical content (Elmer, 2022). This implies that DI has the potential to bridge gaps in understanding and facilitate greater inclusivity in Araling Panlipunan classrooms. Educators can leverage DI principles to support learners with diverse learning needs, ensuring all learners

succeed in Araling Panlipunan education (Lindner and Schwab, 2020).

Additionally, the distribution of post-test scores across different intervals reflects the success of DI in accommodating multiple intelligences and learning styles in Araling Panlipunan instruction (Gentry et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2014). This suggests that educators can enhance learners' engagement and comprehension by incorporating a variety of instructional methodologies and resources that appeal to diverse cognitive strengths and preferences. By embracing DI principles, Araling Panlipunan educators can create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that foster a more profound understanding and appreciation of the subject matter (Clark and Mayer, 2023).

In conclusion, the results' implications for Araling Panlipunan Education underscore the transformative potential of differentiated instruction in enhancing learners' comprehension and promoting inclusivity in the classroom. By adopting DI strategies, educators can create more personalized and engaging learning experiences that cater to their learners' diverse needs and learning styles, ultimately improving outcomes in Araling Panlipunan Education (Ojong, 2023; Aries, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of differentiated instruction (DI) in improving the reading comprehension of elementary learners in Araling Panlipunan. The significant improvement in post-test scores, as compared to pre-test results, clearly indicates the success of DI in addressing the diverse learning needs of students. By implementing instructional methods that account for multiple intelligences and varied learning styles, the intervention created a more inclusive learning environment that enhanced both comprehension and student engagement with the content. These findings validate the importance of personalized teaching

approaches in fostering academic success, especially in areas where comprehension of complex material is essential.

The results of this study have important implications for classroom practice. The demonstrated effectiveness of DI suggests that educators should integrate these strategies more extensively in their teaching, ensuring that instruction is tailored to meet the individual needs of all learners. The ability of DI to accommodate various learning preferences and intelligences can promote a more equitable learning environment, where each student has the opportunity to succeed. Moreover, the improvements in reading comprehension point to the value of adopting a flexible, student-centered approach that encourages active participation and engagement.

Based on the outcomes of this research, several recommendations can be made. Educators should prioritize the use of DI across subjects, particularly in content-heavy areas such as history and social studies, where learners may struggle with comprehension. Furthermore, visual aids, interactive elements, and multiple assessment methods should be integrated into teaching practices to cater to different learning styles and reinforce student understanding. Future research could explore the long-term effects of DI on academic performance across various disciplines and investigate how to optimize these strategies in diverse classroom settings.

In conclusion, this study highlights the transformative impact of differentiated instruction on student learning outcomes. The findings reinforce the need for educators to adopt inclusive and adaptive teaching methods that accommodate learners' unique strengths and challenges. As DI continues to be implemented in classrooms, it has the potential to elevate educational practices and enhance the overall learning experience, helping students reach their full academic potential.

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