



Exploring the Efficacy of Differentiated Assessment in UCSP: Perceptions of Senior High School Teachers and Students on Enhancing Learning Outcomes

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Abstract: Effective assessment is essential for supporting diverse learners in social studies, and assessing students' knowledge and skills is crucial for teachers. This qualitative study adopts a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach to explore the perceived efficacy of differentiated assessment in UCSP among senior high school teachers and students. Twelve participants, including nine students and three teachers, engage in the study using purposive sampling. This study employs interviews, focus group discussions, and observations to gather rich and diverse data. The researcher utilizes the Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis, consisting of three phases, to create a theory grounded in the data and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. The study also utilizes the Voyant tool for web-based text analysis to aid in identifying patterns and themes. In conclusion, using the Constructivist Grounded Theory and Voyant Tool, it has been found that differentiated assessment promotes self-efficacy, creates an inclusive classroom culture, and allows for personalized instruction and feedback. Challenges include limited resources and the need for clear instructions and support. Collaboration and communication, modern teaching methods, and technology tools that prepare students for future academic endeavors are crucial for improving the effectiveness of differentiated assessment. Recommendations include providing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding and implementation of differentiated assessment. This can focus on strategies for creating an inclusive classroom culture, utilizing technology effectively, and designing assessments. Efforts should be made to address limited resources, and conducting further research and evaluation can identify best practices in implementing differentiated assessment, informing future educational practices.

Keywords: Differentiated assessment, constructivist grounded theory, Voyant tool, UCSP, learning outcomes

1. Introduction

Social studies education is crucial for students' academic achievement and understanding of the world around them, and effective assessment is essential for supporting diverse learners in social studies (Oteng et al., 2023; Deliquiña & de Guzman, 2021; Reisdorfer, 2020; Supianto et al., 2020). Thus, to cater to diverse learners and ensure that all students are supported, effective assessment of social studies knowledge and skills is crucial for teachers (Reisdorfer, 2020).

Lesson planning with clear objectives, activities, and assessments is vital for promoting academic and social development (Reed, 2019). While a communicative approach model is beneficial for promoting classroom communication and interaction in social studies (Aksoy & Ceylan, 2021), differentiated assessment poses challenges for social studies teachers, despite considering individual differences among students (Oteng et al., 2023; Deliquiña & de Guzman, 2021; Supianto et al., 2020). Moreover, there is no consensus on the best practices for effective teaching and learning in social studies instruction (Asibey & Arhin, 2022).

Differentiated instruction and assessment can be effective in promoting student learning outcomes, but it requires careful planning and implementation (Zens, 2021; Devroy, 2020). Besides, assessment and differentiated instruction are crucial aspects of education that improve student learning outcomes (Callahan, 2022; Kosimov, 2022). Performance-based, interpretive tasks can help students develop skills and be effectively evaluated by teachers (Callahan, 2022); while

formative assessment provides personalized feedback to students and enhances teachers' understanding of their effectiveness (Kosimov, 2022).

Differentiated instruction is a crucial teaching approach that meets the unique needs and abilities of all students in the classroom, aiding teachers in assessing and addressing each student's individual needs (Llego, 2022; Magayon & Tan, 2020; Suson et al., 2020). By individualizing instruction to each student's unique needs, it leads to better academic performance (Balaus & Salcedo, 2019). Consequently, effective assessment practices and differentiated instructions are essential components of quality education (Peters et al., 2022). Comprehensive assessments create a meaningful learning experience for students and inspire them to enhance their academic achievement (Gafforov & Kosimov, 2022; Van Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017). Additionally, to effectively implement differentiated instruction and assessment, teachers need training and instructional materials (Peters et al., 2022). Accordingly, educators need to understand the importance of differentiated instruction and assessment to meet the diverse needs of students and improve their academic performance. Fig. 1, shows the conceptual framework of the study.

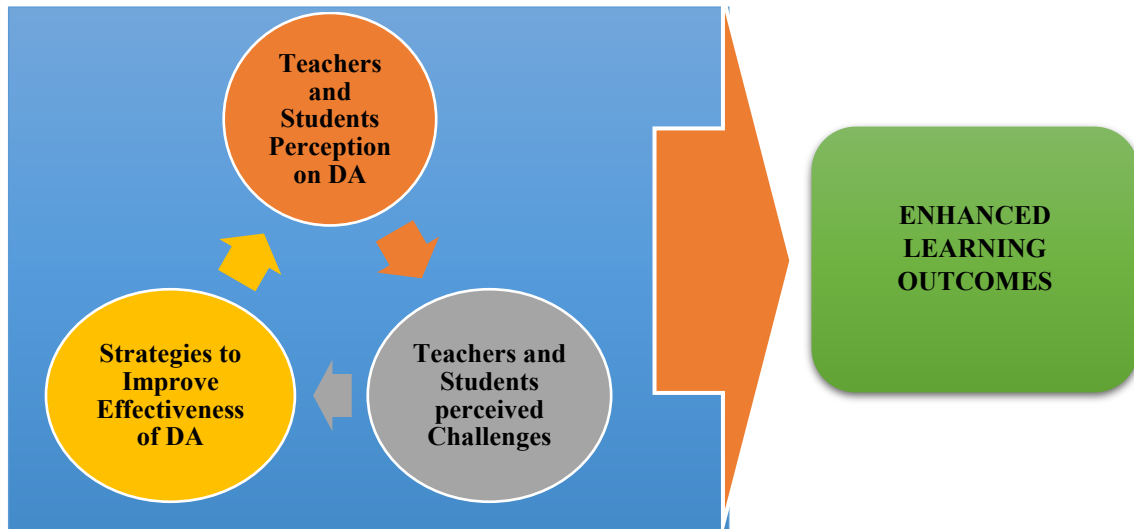


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework of the study

Differentiated instruction and assessment have become increasingly popular in the field of education. However, further research is necessary to determine their effectiveness in different disciplines and settings, particularly in the context of “Understanding Culture, Society and Politics (UCSP)” assessment and to explore the efficacy of differentiated assessment and its perceived impact on student learning outcomes by both teachers and students including differentiated assessment practices, teacher educators' knowledge and practices, and social skills assessment on students' academic performance. The study addresses the following questions: 1) how do teachers and students perceive the benefits of differentiated assessment practices in UCSP?; 2) how do teachers and students perceive the challenges of implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP?; and 3) why do teachers and students recommend specific strategies to improve the effectiveness of differentiated assessment practices in UCSP?

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined diverse features of assessment practices and instructional methods across various educational environments. Effective assessment practices, such as test item development, grading and scoring methods, feedback, and peer assessment, can be enhanced through workshops (Almossa & Alzahrani, 2022). Furthermore, a practical approach to assessment for learning and differentiated instruction involves the use of design and enactment heuristics to help teachers incorporate these methods into their lessons (Westbroek et al., 2020). In addition, teachers' interactive cognitions of differentiated instruction in regular and talent development lessons can be improved through various implementation strategies (Stollman et al., 2021). Likewise, pedagogical content knowledge influences social studies teachers' assessment, and alternative assessment methods can promote students' attitudes and values (Ghanney & Agyei, 2021). Finally, hiring only qualified teachers can improve instructional practices in senior high school social studies (Abudulai, 2020). Collectively, these studies provide valuable insights into enhancing assessment practices and instructional methods in different educational contexts, highlighting the need for continued research and improvement.

Assessment is an essential component of education, but there are issues associated with it that need to be addressed. While teachers in social studies education use child-centered teaching techniques and strategies, there is a need for frequent seminars and in-service training to familiarize them with modern teaching techniques and strategies (Kwarteng, 2022). Moreover, assessment practices in the context of Philippine education reform suffer from unclear learning objectives, limited use of appropriate assessment strategies, inconsistent and confusing assessment tasks, and a disconnect

between assessment practices and teaching and learning activities (Alonzo et al., 2023). Consequently, adherence to essential principles and established protocols in designing an assessment tool, including reliable testing procedures, objective scoring, and responsible disclosure of evaluation outcomes, is necessary to ensure effective and meaningful assessment practices (Gonzales, 2023). Likewise, contextualizing and localizing assessment in social studies education is crucial for promoting active participation, individualized instruction, and deeper learning experiences (Navalta, 2021). By addressing these issues, teachers can promote student learning and achievement through effective teaching and assessment practices.

In line with the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533), the Department of Education has adopted the Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program, also known as DepEd Order 08, series 2015. The policy guideline emphasizes the significance of classroom assessment as an essential element of curriculum implementation. Classroom assessment allows teachers to monitor and evaluate learners' progress, enabling them to make necessary adjustments to instruction. Additionally, it provides learners, parents, and guardians with valuable information on their progress, contributing to the development of competent and well-rounded learners who are equipped to face the challenges of the future with confidence.

Furthermore, DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2020 offers interim guidelines for assessment and grading during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the fair assessment of student's learning in a distance learning setup. The guidelines emphasize the importance of formative assessment and provide a framework for summative assessment, encouraging teachers to use various assessment strategies to monitor students' progress continuously. Moreover, the guidelines guide grading and promotion, suggesting that students' grades should be based on their performance in both formative and summative assessments, aligned with the learning objectives and outcomes of the curriculum. These guidelines ensure that students receive a fair and accurate assessment of their learning, even in challenging circumstances.

Based on the numerous literature and studies, differentiated instruction is pivotal in aiding teachers with students' needs and assessments (Llego, 2022; Magayon & Tan, 2020; Suson et al., 2020). This is also imperative in attaining quality education (Peters et al., 2022). Hence, differentiated instructions are directly relational to differentiated assessment as it identifies, support, and provide essential strategies for effective assessment. As presented in Fig. 1, the conceptual framework of the study shows that learning outcomes are derived from the perceptions of teachers and students about differentiated assessment. These perceptions are also explored in terms of perceived challenges among teachers and students. Moreover, strategies to improve the effectiveness of differentiated assessment used in teaching Understanding of Culture, Society, and Politics are explored. The interplay and interrelationships of these variables are cognizant of the learning outcomes in the subject.

The field of social studies education faces several research gaps that require further investigation. One such gap is the lack of consensus on the best characteristics, traits, and methods for effective teaching and learning in social studies instruction, as noted by Asibey and Arhin (2022). Moreover, there is a need for further research to determine the most effective strategies for implementing differentiated assessment in the classroom and the most effective training and instructional materials for teachers to effectively implement differentiated assessment (Callahan, 2022; Kosimov, 2022; Llego, 2022; Magayon & Tan, 2020; Balaus & Salcedo, 2019).

While Peters et al. (2022) suggest providing teachers with training and instructional materials to assist them in implementing these approaches, there is a lack of consensus on the most effective strategies for doing so. Consequently, further research is needed to determine the most effective assessment practices, grading, and scoring methods, feedback, and peer assessment methods to enhance assessment procedures. Kwarteng (2022) and Alonzo et al. (2023) highlighted this gap by, indicating the need for continued investigation to improve assessment practices in social studies education.

3. Methodology

This qualitative study adopted a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach (Charmaz, 2017; 2019; Mohajan & Mohajan, 2023) to explore the perceived efficacy of differentiated assessment in UCSP among senior high school teachers and students. Grounded theory is an inductive research method that explores a topic through data collection, analysis, and theory creation. The study aimed to expound on the elements, categories, context, and processes involved in the research topic (Davidson & DiGregorio, 2007).

Developing a valid theory requires empirical research under diverse conditions and a robust theoretical framework that captures the complexity of the research problem. The interrelation of different concepts is prioritized to identify patterns and create a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). This study utilized constructivist grounded theory to investigate the perceived efficacy of differentiated assessment in UCSP among senior high school teachers and students at San Pedro Relocation Center National High School for School Year 2022-2023. Twelve participants, including nine students and three teachers, participated in the study, providing a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and perspectives. Through this approach, effective assessment strategies can be developed to improve student learning outcomes in senior high school.

Purposive sampling was used in this study to select participants based on the researcher's judgment and expertise. Heterogeneous sampling was employed to ensure maximum variation within the primary data. The aim was to obtain comprehensive insights into the research problem and context (Black, 2019; Gentles & Vilches, 2018). The teacher participants and student participants were selected based on their diverse backgrounds and experiences to obtain valuable

insights and clarify the research problem. The interview questions were formulated by the researcher using information from various sources, and three questions were developed to address the general problem of the study.

This study employed interviews, focus group discussions, and observations to gather rich and diverse data for a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Using multiple methods can increase validity and reliability by triangulating data and capturing various aspects of the research phenomenon (Adlit, 2022; Van Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017; Prasad & Gracia, 2017; Fontana & Frey, 2005). The study also utilized the Voyant tool for web-based text analysis to aid in identifying patterns and themes. While the tool has limitations, it is a valuable addition to the CGT research toolkit when used in conjunction with other qualitative data analysis methods (Buragohain et al., 2023; Bischof & Freybe, 2022; Sinclair & Product, 2020; Given & Willson, 2018; Meyer, 2018; Miller, 2018; Rasid et al., 2017).

The researcher utilized the Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis, consisting of three phases, to create a theory grounded in the data and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon (Charmaz, 2017, 2019; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017; Adlit, 2022). The first phase involves open coding and selective coding, refining core codes, and defining significant higher-level codes. The second phase involves category building, grouping similar concepts to create categories, and labeling the links between them. The third phase involves constructing theories or themes and theoretical sampling to develop the emerging theory and elaborate the main categories.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 How do Teachers and Students Perceive the Benefits of Differentiated Assessment Practices in UCSP?

4.1.1 Teachers Perception: Promote Self-Efficacy, Values, and Diversity

Teachers perceive that differentiated assessment promotes self-efficacy, values, and diversity. They also recognize the unique characteristics of students in the subject and the use of technology in instruction affirmed by several studies (Asibey & Arhin, 2022; Navalta, 2021; Reisdorfer, 2020; Supianto et al., 2020).

Teacher-participant A said that *“This personalized approach to assessment can lead to increased self-efficacy among students. Additionally, differentiated assessment practices can promote a positive classroom culture that values diversity and inclusivity.”*

Teachers recognize the unique learning needs of each student and appreciate how differentiated assessment allows them to cater to these needs. Teacher-participant B said that *“We understand that every student has unique learning needs, and using differentiated assessment practices helps us address these needs.”*

They value identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, which enables them to tailor instruction and feedback accordingly. Additionally, the use of technology in differentiated assessment allows for personalized tasks and feedback, further supporting individualized learning experiences. Teacher-participant C expressed that *“We appreciate that we identify students' strengths and weaknesses, which helps us design instruction and feedback to meet the diverse needs of students. We also appreciate the use of technology to differentiate assessment tasks and provide personalized feedback to students.”*

Fig. 2 presents Teachers' Perceptions of DA using Voyant tool. The Voyant tool reveals based on the frequent words used in the corpus that differentiated assessment addresses students' personalized needs or diverse needs and diversity and that learning feedback from the teacher could be immediately and properly conducted and it also values the weaknesses and strengths of students as teachers emphasize this for continuous improvement and learning.



Fig. 2. Teachers' perception of DA using Voyant tool

The students perceived benefits of differentiated assessment practices in UCSP include the following; Development of Cognition Skills and Adaptation to Learning such as Progress, Struggles, and Areas for Improvement, Understanding

of Rights and Responsibilities and Expansion of Knowledge about Communities, Enhanced Collaboration among Students and Convenient Access to Learning Resources, Increased Motivation, Personalized feedback, and Improved understanding of concepts and connections in UCSP and Class Interaction which are also congruent to various studies (Callahan, 2022; Kosimov, 2022; Ghanney & Agyei, 2021; Suson et al., 2020)

4.1.2 Development of Cognition Skills and Adaptation to Learning such as Progress, Struggles, and Areas for Improvement

The participants in this study expressed positive views on the implementation of differentiated assessment as a valuable practice for the development of students' cognition skills and their ability to adapt to the learning process. Participants A, E, H, and I emphasized that through differentiated assessment, students can further enhance their cognitive abilities and adapt to different learning approaches, regardless of whether these approaches are new or have been previously used. They said that *“differentiated assessment is a good practice, our cognition skills get further developed and adaptation to learning grows every day and in many ways as teachers and students try this practice, may it be new or has been done before such as reflection essay, synthesizing tasks, posters, big books, narratives, and others.”*

On the other hand, participants B, C, D, F, and G reached a consensus, highlighting the advantages of incorporating diverse skills in the subject of UCSP (Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics). They noted that various learning modalities, such as presentations, recitations, group work, outputs, quizzes, and tests, allow teachers to assess student's performance and determine their level of understanding, progress, struggles, or difficulties in completing assigned tasks. Moreover, this assessment process helps identify specific skills or strategies that need improvement or emphasis, enabling students to quickly grasp the lessons in UCSP. They said that *“The benefits of having different skills in UCSP can be seen using various learning modalities. These include presentations, recitations, group work, outputs, quizzes, tests, and more. When teachers assign tasks to us, it helps determine if we can do it, if we are learning, if we are struggling, or if we are unable to do it. This also helps identify what skills or strategies that need to be improved or emphasized to quickly learn the lessons in UCSP.”*

4.1.3 Understanding of Rights and Responsibilities and Expansion of Knowledge about Communities

During the study, participants C, F, G, and I expressed their positive perceptions of differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject. They emphasized that these practices contribute to a better understanding of the rights of individuals within the community and how they can actively contribute to serving and improving their community through their knowledge and skills. They said that *“Teachers and students perceive the benefits of differentiated assessment practices in UCSP for everyone to understand our rights and how we can help, provide service to our community, and live through the knowledge and skills we learned inside the classroom.”*

Building upon this consensus, participants A, B, D, E, and H further highlighted the extensive benefits of the UCSP subject. They noted that it goes beyond understanding community rights and extends to comprehending the origins of diverse types of communities and fostering unity within each city. Additionally, the UCSP subject provided an opportunity for participants to develop critical thinking skills and implement solutions that bring about positive change within their community. This suggests that the UCSP subject has the potential for broader impact and growth. They said that *“the benefit of the UCSP subject does not stop here; it can also be expanded because of our understanding of how and where the several types of communities originate, as well as how important unity is in each city or country. We also experienced here how to provide solutions to every problem in our community and how to implement it to bring about change in our community.”*

4.1.4 Enhanced Collaboration among Students and Convenient Access to Learning Resources

As per the insights shared by Participants A, B, and C, the implementation of differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject has resulted in a more engaging, enjoyable, and collaborative learning experience for students. An example of this was observed when they created a PowerPoint presentation on Social Inequalities in San Pedro, which included impactful visuals. The use of technology, such as laptops, made the process more convenient and accessible. However, the true impact was felt when the presentation was shared in class, allowing for creativity and active participation. Additionally, the accessibility of the presentation allowed both students and teachers to access and refer to it at any time, further enhancing the learning experience. They shared that *“The differentiated assessment practices we had done in UCSP makes the learning more engaging, fun, and collaborative among us. We tried to make a PowerPoint about Social Inequalities here in San Pedro with photos in it, it's more convenient and accessible if you have a laptop yet it's more impactful when you present it in class, you can also become creative and, for this we and the teachers have an access at any time on our outputs.”*

4.1.5 Increased Motivation, Personalized feedback, and Improved Understanding of Concepts

All participants in the study acknowledged and concurred that the implementation of differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject has resulted in increased engagement among students. Furthermore, students reported that differentiated assessment has led to improvements in feedback provision. This can be attributed to the personalized nature

of differentiated assessments, which enables students to receive specific feedback tailored to their strengths and areas for improvement. They revealed that *“Differentiated assessment practices in UCSP increased our class engagement. It also improved feedback because comments were shared right away by our teachers and classmates. Differentiated assessments involve personalized feedback coming from our teachers, allowing us to gain specific insights on our strengths and areas for improvement especially in sharing our thoughts and understanding on the lesson we study.”*

All participants in the study expressed a collective agreement regarding the benefits of different skills in the UCSP subject. These benefits were observed through various assessment methods, including oral recitation, quizzes, presentations, concept papers, role play, and other activities. Engaging in these various aspects allowed participants to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts and connections within the UCSP subject. They revealed that *“The different skills in UCSP have benefits that can be seen through oral recitation, quizzes, presentations, making concept papers, role play, and others. Through these aspects, we understand the concepts and other connections that UCSP has.”*

Furthermore, participants C, D, E, and F unanimously highlighted the advantages of utilizing different assessment practices in UCSP. These practices, such as concept papers, illustrations, and diverse activities, provided opportunities for participants to demonstrate their abilities and understanding in unique ways. This allowed them to showcase their strengths and capabilities effectively. They stated that *“Different assessment practices in UCSP like concept paper, illustration, and some activities that showcase our abilities and understanding in diverse ways, which allows us to demonstrate our strengths and capabilities.”*

Consistently, participants A, B, F, and H emphasized that students found differentiated assessments and practices, such as quizzes, role play, and essays, to be more engaging and motivating. This positive response suggests that the use of differentiated assessments enhances student engagement and motivation within the UCSP subject. They consistently mentioned that *“We find it more engaging and feel motivated using differentiated assessments and practices like quizzes, roleplay, and essays.”*

Fig. 3 presents the Student’s Perception of DA using Voyant tool. The Voyant tool reveals that the students develop understanding and skills in UCSP. Quizzes and presentations are mentioned as part of the differentiated assessment. Feedback is shared in the class.



Fig. 3. Student’s perception of DA using Voyant tool

4.2 How do Teachers and Students Perceive the Challenges of Implementing Differentiated Assessment Practices in UCSP?

The teachers’ response regarding the perceived challenges of implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP includes the students’ progress through valid and reliable assessment. On the other hand, students’ response includes perspectives, resources, and adjustment as also evident from the numerous studies conducted (Alonzo et al., 2023; Gafforov & Kosimov, 2022; Navalta, 2021; Van Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017).

4.2.1 Teacher Challenges: Student Progress through Valid and Reliable Assessment

The challenges faced when implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP include ensuring student understanding and addressing their questions and concerns, monitoring and assessing student progress, and maintaining the validity and reliability of assessments. These challenges require patience, clear instruction, and active evaluation of student needs. However, overcoming these challenges allows for continuous learning and growth, as students develop their personalities and apply their learning in the future. Striking a balance between rigor and validity is essential in accurately assessing student progress while aligning with differentiated approaches in the classroom. The three teacher-participants shared the following.

“As a teacher, I may face challenges when implementing differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject. However, I strive to demonstrate patience and aid my students, addressing any questions or concerns

they may have. I make sure to present clear instructions for the practices, ensuring that my students understand them and feel comfortable sharing their diverse perspectives and inquiries."

“As a teacher, I also take an active role in monitoring and assessing the progress of my students. I constantly evaluate whether they need further familiarization with the subject or if adjustments need to be made to improve their learning. This ongoing process of assessment allows for continuous growth and learning, as I identify areas where my students can enhance their understanding. I recognize that it is through these challenges that my students can develop their personalities and apply their learning in the years to come.”

“As a teacher, I recognize that ensuring the validity and reliability of assessments can be a challenge when implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP. It requires me to strike a balance between maintaining the rigor of assessments and providing valid and reliable measures of student learning. I understand the importance of accurately assessing my students' progress and knowledge, while also ensuring that the assessments align with the differentiated approaches used in the classroom. Rubric tool is constantly used in the lesson so that students know what to perform in each task.”

Fig. 4 presents the Teachers' Challenges using Voyant tool. The Voyant tool reveals that teachers' challenges include assessing students' progress to make the necessary adjustments to improve learning. They also include the validity and reliability of the assessment.



Fig. 4. Teachers' challenges using Voyant tool

4.2.2 Students Challenges: Students' Perspectives, Resources, and Adjustment

This focuses on the perceptions and experiences of students regarding differentiated assessment practices in UCSP. It includes their views on the challenges they face, such as finding the practices hard or exciting, struggling with increased responsibility, and adjusting to the shift from traditional assessments, this is also opined by various authors (Oteng et al., 2023; Deliquiña & de Guzman, 2021; Reisdorfer, 2020; Supianto et al., 2020).

4.2.3 Perspectives

Participants discussed the challenges and excitement associated with differentiated assessment practices in UCSP. They found these practices to be both challenging and exciting, with the complexity of new methods being a source of difficulty but also a way to stimulate their passion for the subject. Participants A, B, and C shared their challenges and agreed that *“As a student, I have observed that differentiated assessment practices in UCSP can be perceived as both challenging and exciting. We may find it hard because these practices can be more complex than previous methods or activities we have encountered. However, there is also a sense of excitement because having different options in learning and studying can stimulate our minds and ignite our passion for the subject.”*

The participants also recognized the challenges faced by both teachers and students in implementing differentiated assessment practices. They emphasized that the knowledge gained in UCSP can be applied to find solutions to community problems, such as addressing flooding in their community of Landayan through coordination with local government, community service initiatives, and promoting proper waste disposal practices. All participants agreed that “*Teachers and students face challenges when implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP.*” They further said that “*We have come to realize that the solutions to community problems can be found by applying the knowledge we have gained in UCSP. For instance, in our community (Landayan), one perennial issue is the continuous flooding in certain areas. Drawing upon what we have learned, we can propose potential solutions. Firstly, we would coordinate with the barangay or city government. Secondly, we would advocate for community service initiatives to address the problem of excessive water rise due to scattered plastic bottles. Finally, we would promote the 5Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink, and Respect) and educate our fellow community members on proper waste disposal practices.*”

Additionally, they expressed their intention to use their understanding of differentiated assessment practices to contribute practical solutions for real-life challenges in their community. Participants D, F, G, and I mentioned that *“By leveraging our understanding of differentiated assessment practices in UCSP, we aim to contribute to the development of practical solutions for real-life challenges faced by our community.”*

4.2.4 Learning Resources

This challenge of limited availability of resources for implementing differentiated assessments includes the need for technology, materials, and access to external experts, and how the lack of these resources can hinder the effective implementation of differentiated assessment practices.

Participants reflected on the challenges of implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP. They identified the limited availability of resources as a significant challenge, particularly in terms of technology, materials, and additional learning sources. Participants C and F said that *“As we reflect on our experiences in the implementation of differentiated assessment practices in UCSP, we recognize that there are various challenges that both teachers and students face. One significant challenge that stands out is the availability of resources.”* While Participants B and D said that *“Differentiated assessment often requires a diverse range of resources, such as technology, and materials. However, the limited availability of these resources can hinder the effective implementation of differentiated assessment practices, especially in audio-visual presentations, PowerPoint, and other activities that require it.”*

Further, participants emphasized the reliance on personal resources at home due to the lack of access to textbooks, supplemental materials, video lessons, and Wi-Fi. Participants A, G, H, and I concurred that *“From our perspective, one of the challenges we have encountered in implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP is the lack of additional learning sources such as textbooks, supplement materials, and other sources such as video lessons and even Wi-Fi and so we resort to our resources at home.”*

Additionally, they highlighted the limitations of relying solely on online information and modules, stressing the need for alternative ways to access comprehensive and diverse information. Participants E and H said that *“Not all information is readily available online, making it difficult for both teachers and students to gather supplementary materials for teaching and learning. We heavily rely on online sources, which highlights the limitations of solely depending on modules and the information provided to us.”*

Overall, the participants agreed that addressing the challenge of limited resources is crucial for the effective implementation of differentiated assessment practices. Participants B, G, and I agreed that *“It becomes crucial to find alternative ways to access comprehensive and diverse information to support the differentiated assessment used by our teacher. For example, no local history is present in the library, no updated books on social inequalities, sources about different colleges and universities in the Philippines, and even a book on Philippine culture is not evident. No sufficient sources are currently available in the school library.”* They converged on the idea that *“Lack of sources and additional learning sources is a challenge and not all information is present online so it hard for both teachers and students to gather additional information for the lesson. Some students just rely online that is why we cannot just depend on modules, the information provided on it, sometimes information on it is even limited.”*

4.2.5 Adjustment

This challenge is about the requirements and expectations on the subject, responsibility, adaptation to various strategies for assessment, and things to consider in the UCSP assessment.

Participants shared their perspectives on the challenges of implementing differentiated assessment practices in UCSP. Challenges identified included understanding the requirements of differentiated assessments, designing assessments that cater to individual student needs, managing assessments and taking ownership of learning, adjusting to the shift from traditional assessments to tangible outputs or performances, and the overall implementation of differentiated assessment.

Participant A said that *“I sometimes find it challenging to understand the specific requirements and expectations of differentiated assessments, such as when tasked with creating a concept paper.”* While Participant B stated that *“I believe some teachers also find it difficult to design and provide assessments that effectively meet the needs of students because of individual differences.”*

In addition, participant C opined that *“One such challenge is the increased responsibility that comes with greater choice and autonomy in assessments.”* Participant D agreed and shared that *“We, as well as other students, struggle with the effective management of our assessments and taking ownership of our learning, especially during class presentations, debate, and cross-examination of other students’ presentations about the topic/ outputs.”*

Participants E, F, and G converged on the idea that *“Another challenge is student adjustment. Initially, students may find it challenging to adapt to the shift from traditional assessments such as quizzes, tests, or recitations to differentiated approaches that require tangible outputs/ performances such as essays, posters, PowerPoint, big books, concept papers, role plays, and other performances. But eventually, students adjust and become comfortable handling differentiated assessment practices in UCSP.”*

However, participants also expressed the belief that these challenges can be overcome through proper planning, clear instructions, and continuous support from teachers, leading to more effective and meaningful assessment practices in UCSP. Participants H and I agreed that *“Implementation of differentiated assessment is a challenge both for teachers and students. We think that with proper planning, clear instructions, and continuous support of teachers especially positive attitude, these challenges can be overcome, allowing for more effective and meaningful assessment practices in UCSP.”*

Fig. 5 presents the Students' Challenges using Voyant tool. The Voyant tool reveals that students' challenges include primarily sources and resources. It is also highlighted that there are limited sources for learning and information on the subject.



Fig. 5. Students' challenges using Voyant tool

4.3 Why do Teachers and Students Recommend Specific Strategies to Improve the Effectiveness of Differentiated Assessment Practices in UCSP?

The teacher-participants recommended enhancing their instructional practices and creating a positive learning environment, providing individualized feedback, and helping students through goal setting which is supported by Almossa and Alzahrani (2022).

4.3.1 Teachers

Teacher-participants emphasized clear instructions and practice time to help students meet the required outputs. They mentioned using strategies to prevent learning from becoming boring and enhance engagement and familiarity with different knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Participants highlighted that differentiated assessment fosters a positive learning environment where students feel supported and valued. They stressed the importance of recognizing individual differences and creating a classroom atmosphere that encourages collaboration, respect, and appreciation for diverse perspectives. They mentioned that assessments relevant to individual goals and interests increase motivation and engagement.

4.3.2 Enhancing Instructional Practices

Teacher-participants C reached a consensus that clear instructions and ample practice time are beneficial in enabling students to achieve the desired outcomes. Teacher-participants A, B, and C agreed and said that *“We think giving instructions more clearly or maybe adding time to practice will help students meet the required outputs.”* In addition, they converged and said that *“To further familiarize students with the different knowledge, skills, and attitudes and to keep them engaged while studying, we utilize various strategies to prevent learning from becoming boring.”*

4.3.3 Creating a Positive Learning Environment, Individualized Feedback, and Goal Setting

Additionally, participants stressed the importance of employing diverse strategies to prevent monotony and enhance student engagement during learning, thereby facilitating their familiarity with a range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Teacher-participants A, B, and C explained that *“To foster a positive learning environment. Differentiated assessment practices promote a positive learning environment where we feel supported and valued.”* Additionally, they justified that *“By using strategies that recognize individual differences, we create a classroom atmosphere that encourages collaboration, respect, and appreciation for diverse perspectives among our students. We believe that this positive environment can enhance learning outcomes and overall well-being.”*

Teacher-participant A described that *“Differentiated assessment strategies recognize that students have diverse learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. In terms of motivation and engagement, when students feel that assessments*

are relevant and meaningful to their individual goals and interests, they become more motivated and engaged in the learning process. And lastly, through differentiated assessment, we can identify specific areas where we may need additional support or challenge.”

Further, teacher-participant B agreed and said that “We highly recommend the implementation and continuation of effective differentiated assessment strategies. This approach has been demonstrated to significantly improve learning outcomes and provide students platform for a more profound exploration of their abilities. By using assessment methods based on student’s individual needs and strengths, we can better support students’ growth and development.”

Finally, teacher-participant C said that “*We recommend improving the differentiated assessment to make it more effective because it enhances students’ outputs (learning outcomes) and explores their abilities. It could be improved further by allowing students to write self-reflection. We can also allow students to select from varied options and choose the best one for them based on their interests. We also hope that there is a technology or even Wi-Fi connection so that they can search for diverse sources of information with ease and autonomy.*”

Fig. 6 presents the Teachers’ Recommended Strategies to Improve DA using Voyant tool. The Voyant tool reveals that teachers’ strategies to improve DA include a positive learning environment and using strategies that enhance skills and knowledge, using outputs and diverse outcomes through clear instructions, engagements, and participation.



Fig. 6. Teachers’ recommended strategies to improve DA using Voyant tool

4.3.4 Students

Participants highlight the importance of criticism, observations, and ideas in improving the effectiveness of any activity or practice. These elements not only indicate comprehension but also provide valuable insights for refinement and enhancement. It also includes feedback and practical application of concepts learned and facilitates the learning process but also prepares students for college which support the findings of myriad studies (Kosimov, 2022; Almosa & Alzahrani, 2022; Callahan, 2022; Aksoy & Ceylan, 2021).

4.3.5 Collaboration and Communication

Participants A, B, and C said that “*We understand the significance of criticism, observations, and ideas in improving the effectiveness of differentiated assessment. These elements serve as indicators that students are comprehending the lesson well and provide valuable insights for refinement and enhancement. By actively encouraging and considering feedback, we can continuously improve and optimize our needs.*”

Participants D, E, and F stated that “*We recognize the importance of teachers to enhance the effectiveness of differentiated assessment practices in UCSP. They ensure that everyone is aware of who can assist us with our problems and who will be our partners in addressing them. For example, in the case of the flooding issue in the Landayan Community, we must identify and communicate with the relevant agencies and individuals who can provide support. This may involve approaching our barangay leaders or local government officials to seek their assistance in addressing the problem. By explaining the issue and requesting help or necessary tools for cleaning and creating a canal to prevent flooding, we can engage everyone in the community and work towards a peaceful change.*”

4.3.6 Preparation for College and Future Academic Endeavors

Participants C, F, H, and I said that “*As students, we believe that it is essential for teachers to utilize various strategies to engage and capture our attention during lessons. By incorporating modernized teaching methods, such as utilizing PowerPoint or Microsoft Word for interactive and engaging presentations, it becomes easier for us to grasp and participate in learning tasks.*”

These strategies not only facilitate our learning process but also prepare us for college, where similar technological tools are commonly used."

Moreover, participants A, B, and G stated that *"These approaches serve to challenge us and equip us for college with the necessary skills and knowledge for our future academic endeavors."*

Fig. 7 presents the Students' Recommended Strategies to Improve DA using Voyant tool. The Voyant tool reveals that students' recommended strategies to improve DA include criticism in preparation for college life, using valuable tools, and improving and refinement of feedback and insights.



Fig. 7. Students' recommended strategies to improve DA using Voyant tool

4.3.7 Emerging Themes and Patterns

The emerging themes and patterns are encapsulated in Fig. 8. It is theorized that enhanced learning outcomes are possible with DA. However, challenges and strategies must be addressed to truly attain it. Differentiated assessment practices offer numerous benefits to students according to teachers. Firstly, they promote self-efficacy by providing personalized learning and assessment, allowing students to recognize their strengths and areas for improvement. Secondly, these practices create an inclusive classroom culture that values diversity. Teachers cater to the unique needs of each student, ensuring that everyone feels supported and included. Additionally, differentiated assessment allows teachers to tailor instruction and feedback to individual students, addressing their specific characteristics and learning preferences. Lastly, the use of technology in differentiated assessment enhances the learning experience, providing personalized tasks, convenient access to resources, and immediate feedback.

Differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject have a significant impact on students' cognitive development, adaptability to different learning approaches, and understanding of rights and responsibilities within their community. These practices enhance their learning experience by fostering engagement, collaboration, and personalized feedback. The integration of technology further enhances accessibility to learning resources and facilitates effective teaching practices. Overall, differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject promote motivation, a deeper understanding of concepts, and overall academic growth for students.

Teachers encounter various challenges in assessing student progress while maintaining the validity and reliability of assessments. They strive to find a balance between rigor and differentiation in the classroom. Students, on the other hand, perceive differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject as both challenging and exciting. They acknowledge the complexity of new methods but also find them stimulating. Students understand the difficulties faced by teachers and students in implementing differentiated assessments and emphasize the importance of applying UCSP knowledge to address community issues. However, limited resources, including technology and materials, pose a significant challenge. Students rely on personal resources at home due to the lack of access to textbooks, supplemental materials, and reliable internet connection. They express the need for alternative ways to access comprehensive and diverse information. Students also face challenges in understanding assessment requirements, designing assessments tailored to individual needs, and adjusting to a shift from traditional assessments to tangible outputs or performances. Despite these challenges, students believe that with proper planning, clear instructions, and continuous support from teachers, they can overcome these obstacles and thrive in differentiated assessment practices.

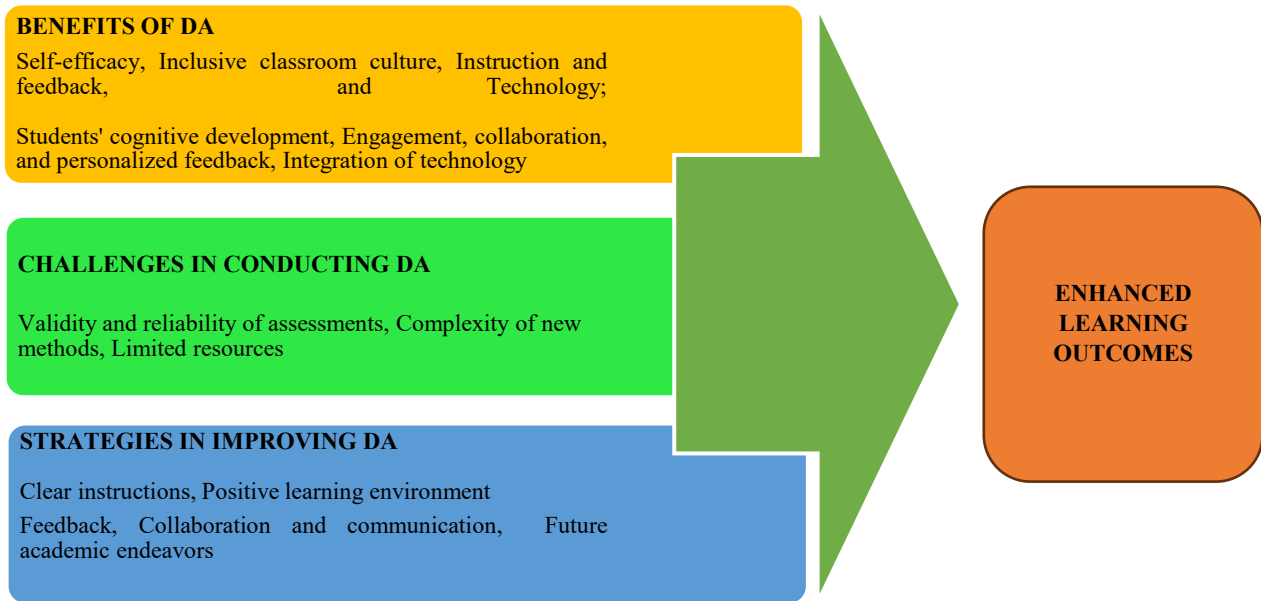


Fig. 8. The constructivist grounded theory framework on enhancing learning outcomes using differentiated assessment

Teachers recommend providing clear instructions and practice time to help students meet required outputs, while also emphasizing the importance of preventing learning from becoming boring and enhancing engagement. Creating a positive learning environment that recognizes individual differences, promotes collaboration, and uses relevant assessments is crucial for increasing motivation and engagement. Students emphasize the importance of receiving feedback and actively encouraging criticism to continuously improve their learning. Collaboration and communication are also highlighted as essential in addressing real-life challenges and seeking support from relevant agencies and individuals. Students believe that teachers should utilize modern teaching methods and technology tools to prepare them for college and future academic endeavors by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, using the Constructivist Grounded Theory and Voyant Tool it has been found that differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject have been found to have numerous benefits for students. They promote self-efficacy, create an inclusive classroom culture, and allow for personalized instruction and feedback. The use of technology further enhances the learning experience. However, implementing differentiated assessment practices comes with challenges, such as limited resources and the need for clear instructions and support. Collaboration and communication are crucial for improving the effectiveness of differentiated assessment, and teachers should utilize modern teaching methods and technology tools to prepare students for future academic endeavors. Overall, differentiated assessment practices have the potential to greatly enhance students' learning experience and academic growth in the UCSP subject.

Based on research on differentiated assessment practices in the UCSP subject, several recommendations can enhance educational practices and student outcomes. Firstly, providing professional development opportunities for teachers can enhance their understanding and implementation of differentiated assessment. This can focus on strategies for creating an inclusive classroom culture, utilizing technology effectively, and designing assessments that cater to individual student needs. Secondly, efforts should be made to address limited resources by allocating them equitably and collaborating with local communities, businesses, and organizations. Thirdly, promoting collaboration and communication among students, teachers, and stakeholders can be achieved through feedback sessions, peer observations, and opportunities for students to share their perspectives. Lastly, conducting further research and evaluation can identify best practices in implementing differentiated assessment, informing future educational practices. Implementing these recommendations can lead to improved student engagement, motivation, and academic growth, benefiting both students and the broader educational community.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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