

Impact of Differentiated Instruction on Improving Student's Engagement in Kindergarten

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Introduction

This research study comprised ten students, some of whom have been identified as having behavioural and academic concerns. The researcher has previously taught the same class, so there is a high level of familiarity, and the children's needs were identified from observation and assessment. Children who are not interested in the lesson or activities, having difficulty with a task or activity and are not meeting the expected learning outcome, and who display unacceptable behaviour are all issues that has already identified. These challenges have been identified by the teacher, who will address them through inquiry, action, analysis, and reflection and will act as researcher of this study (Capobianco and Feldman, 2010). The researcher's goal is to resolve existing problems at the same time accommodating various children's needs, as well as increasing student's engagement while reducing unwanted behaviour in the classroom.

The findings of this study are significant because they will assist the teacher in understanding how to use differentiated instruction in classroom and how it may be a useful tool in the planning and teaching process. Differentiation is important, since failure to engage children into the lessons could lead to more undesired behavior and eventually, a decline in learning ability (Ellis and Todd, 2015).t with your own

Literature review

Differentiated

The literature contains several definitions of differentiated instruction. When defining this term, differentiated education, one thing to consider is the aim and approach used. Differentiated instruction, according to Hall (2009), is a technique in which teachers use a variety of strategies (how information is delivered) to teach a specific activity without changing the lesson content.

Tomlinson, a known expert on this field, defined differentiated instruction as a teaching philosophy based on the notion that students learn best when their teachers accommodate variances in their readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. One of the fundamental goals of individualized education is to maximize each student's learning potential (Tomlinson, 2005). She also points out that distinguishing may be done in a variety of ways, and that if teachers are ready to use this idea in their classrooms, they will be choosing a more effective technique that caters to the different needs of students (Tomlinson, 2001).

Methodology and methods

Methods

Action research is a form of investigation designed for use by teachers to attempt to solve problems and improve professional practices in their own classrooms. It involves systematic observations and data collection which can be used by the practitioner-researcher in reflection, decision making, and the development of more effective classroom strategies (Parsons & Brown, 2002). Furthermore, it provides practitioners with new insights and understanding about how to resolve classroom related problems (Mills, 2011). This study followed the form of Lewin's Model of Action Research, an action-reflection, cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Lewin, 1946).

Different tools were used to collect relevant data from students during the three-week study. The researcher ensure that information were taken from multiple sources of data which includes; teacher's notes, observation notes, interview and feedback from parents and colleagues. The process is known as triangulation. Triangulation increase the reliability and validity of data collected (Patton, 2001). The level of students in the class were mixed; some were aged 2-3 years old while the rest were 4-5 years old. The first step was to determine the level of each child and to identify their readiness, learning styles, and interests. Data were obtained through feedback, interviews and teacher's observation.

Conclusion

1

The findings revealed that by customizing resources and instruction for less able students and taking into account the learner's ZPD, teachers were able to construct activities and tasks that pushed their learning forward. Although the results showed that using a differentiated approach (interests, readiness, and learning profile) helps with planning and teaching to some extent, there was little evidence to show increased student participation during classroom activities.

2

Despite the study's main focus on the impact of diverse teaching on student involvement, the results reveal that differentiated learning activities do not always improve student engagement. Instead, student participation was influenced by their freedom to choose whatever activity to investigate and variable grouping arrangements.

3

In terms of future study, determining the influence of flexible grouping arrangements or implementing open ended activity instead of structured task on enhancing student engagement in Kindergarten could be a worthwhile endeavour.

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Table 2. Triangulation of Data	Data Collection Instrument			
Research Question	Teacher's Journal	Observation Notes	Feedback from Parents and colleagues	Student Interview
MQ	Teacher's Journal	Observation Notes	Feedback from Parents and colleagues	Student Interview
SQ1	Student's Observation	Observation Notes		Student Interview
SQ2	Student's Observation,	Observation Notes		Student Interview

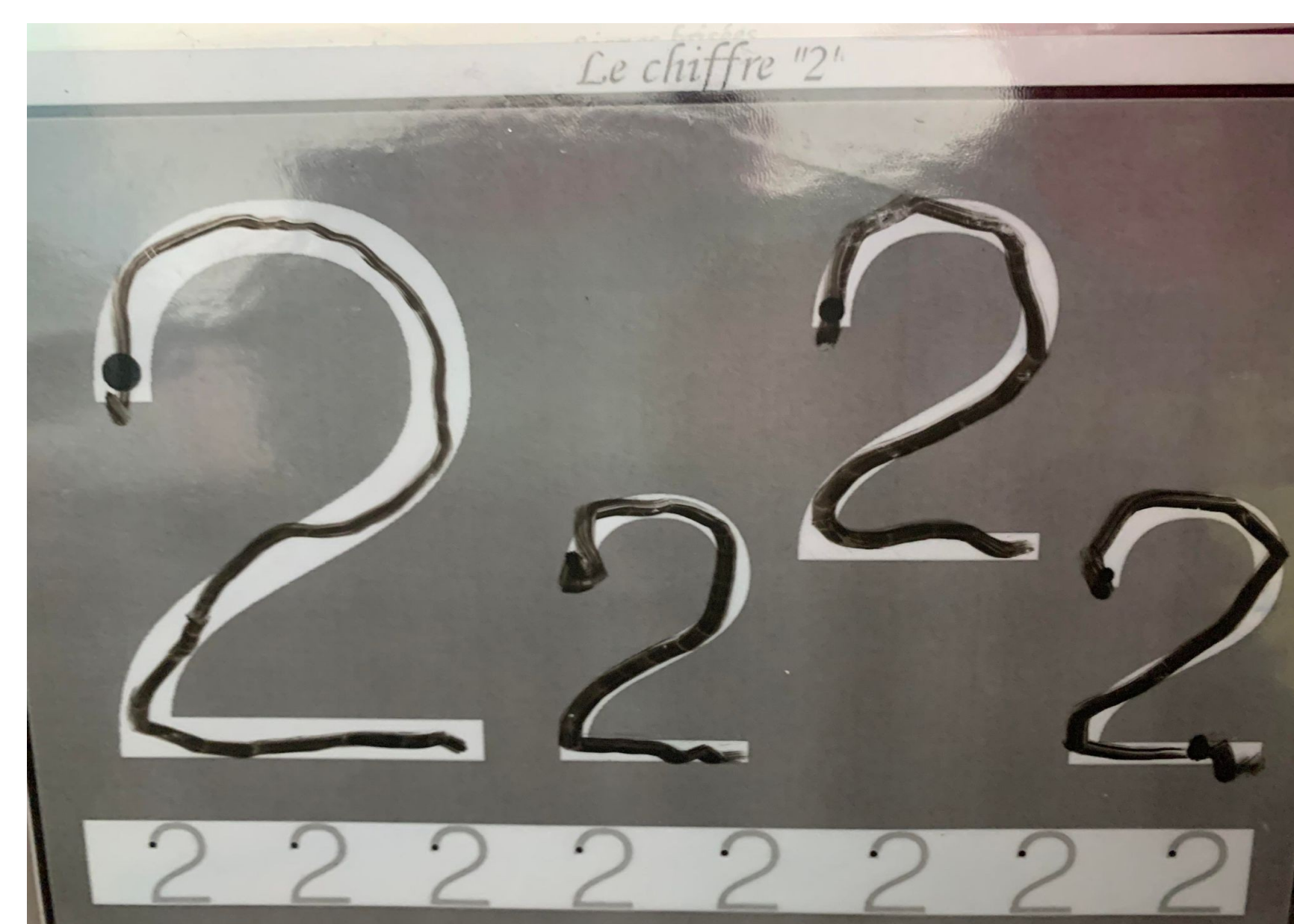


Image 1. Triangulation of Data. Different tools were used to collect data for this study. Image 2. Sample differentiated materials on pre-writing materials. Children were given options to choose their learning materials and teacher was there for further support on instruction and learning.

Data, analysis and discussion

At the end of this action research study, the teacher developed a better grasp of differentiation in kindergarten and how this strategy might assist children to have a positive learning experience. The following is a summary of the answers to the research questions that emerged from the collected data:

Main Question :

What is the impact of differentiated instruction delivered over three weeks on improving student's engagement?

One benefit that stems from differentiated instruction with the intent to increase student's engagement is that children are more independent in their learning. The classroom can become more student-centred and the teacher's role is to support them in their learning by incorporating their interest, learning style and readiness in learning tasks (Tomlinson et.al.,2003). One limitation of this study is that all three methods were considered during the lessons and that the results do not rely on each method independently.

Sub-question 1 :

Will differentiation by interests, readiness and learning profile helps in planning and teaching the content?

Knowing a student's interests, readiness, and learning profile aids in developing activities and teaching that are appropriate for their development and needs. Data from formative assessment (both formal and informal) can improve differentiated education by indicating where to begin instruction and where support is required and what resources are available that are suited to student needs.

Sub-question 2 :

Will differentiation by interests, readiness and learning profile helps minimize behavioural problems in classroom?

Students benefited in different ways when they were given different modalities of teaching that were tailored to their learning profiles and styles, such as providing material in both visual and auditory formats. Their overall participation in class activities and learning tasks improves, resulting in fewer undesirable behaviors (Suleyman, 2019).



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