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**TEACHERS' DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION AND LEARNERS'  
ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING ARALING PANLIPUNAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between teachers' use of differentiated instruction and learners' engagement in Araling Panlipunan during the 2025–2026 school year. The research was conducted among Grade 4, 5, and 6 learners and their teachers from six public elementary schools in District 9, Valencia City. The study employed a Weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson  $r$ ) to determine the level of implementation and to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between teachers' differentiated instruction and learners' engagement. The study revealed that teachers demonstrated a high level of differentiated instruction in teaching Araling Panlipunan across content, process, product, and learning environment. Learners demonstrated a high level of engagement, actively participating in activities and sustaining their interest throughout the lessons. A significant positive relationship was found between teachers' differentiated instruction and learners' engagement, indicating that intentional adaptation of materials, tasks, pacing, and classroom practices enhances student involvement. Among the components, product and learning environment differentiation had the strongest impact, highlighting the value of offering learners meaningful choices and creating a supportive, engaging classroom climate. The study recommends that school leaders embed differentiated instruction within institutional plans, ensure sustained professional development, and promote collaborative practices. Teachers are encouraged to diversify instructional strategies to enhance learner engagement, while schools should involve students, parents, and the community in designing authentic Social Studies learning experiences.

**KEYWORDS:** *Differentiated Instruction, Learners' Engagement, Content Differentiation, Process Differentiation, Product Differentiation, Learning Environment*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Differentiated instruction, defined as the thoughtful adjustment of content, process, product, and learning environment based on learners' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles, has become an important approach for creating meaningful and inclusive learning experiences.

Differentiation is crucial in Araling Panlipunan where students are not only supposed to know facts regarding history, geography, government, and economics but also learn to think critically, reason as a citizen and take a perspective. These objectives are based on long-term behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement. Nevertheless, it is still common practice in most Araling Panlipunan classrooms to use homogenous and lecture-based approaches that fail to consider the backgrounds, language and motivation differences of learners. This kind of mismatch will tend to result in poor turnout, poor understanding of complicated historical occurrences and unreliable success among groups of students. In Philippine education policies, responsiveness in the instructional approach is greatly advocated by national education policy frameworks such as the K to 12 program and the Quality Basic Education Development Plan (2025-2035) which place emphasis on the use of differentiated and learner-centered teaching as well as inclusive methodologies.

In the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), the specifications of the curriculum are learner-centered and developmentally appropriate, where the principles of flexibility and responsiveness to a variety of needs are prioritized and which are directly aligned with the principles of differentiated instruction. Similarly, DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 encourages the use of different assessment measures, which will advance product differentiation, and DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 strengthens adaptable learning environments that support diversity of learners. Differentiated instruction has engagement-related benefits that are supported by research literature.

Fredricks et al. (2016) believe that engagement has behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects that become better when the instructional experiences are both meaningful and challenging enough.

Research that applies the self-determination theory, like that by Reeve et al. (2016), also concludes that autonomy-supportive practices do increase cognitive engagement. Similarly, studies on culturally responsive pedagogy have shown that the association between the

content and the lived experiences of the learners enhances the emotional involvement and classroom conversation. Nevertheless, the sources narrowed down to Araling Panlipunan are minimal and contradictory in their thoughts. Others have found improvements in the quality of discussion, civic reasoning and source analysis with differentiated or inquiry based tasks, yet others have reported small and inconsistent effects depending on teacher expertise and resource limits. Based on this, the purpose of this study is to determine the connection between teachers differentiated instructional practices and the engagement of learners in Araling Panlipunan.

### ***Framework of the Study***

The research is based on the fact that modern classrooms require instructional methods that can be used to meet the diverse needs of learners. Differentiation instruction has its basis in universal design learning by (CAST 2018) which focuses on various means of engagement, representation, and action. These structures combined make the instruction relevant, inclusive and in touch with the real world needs.

The research is also informed by Contemporary Student Engagement Theory (Fredricks et al., 2016) which describes the engagement in the context of three dimensions; behavioral-engagement, emotional-engagement, and cognitive-engagement. Differentiation instruction is inherently a way that encourages such engagement because it provides learners with options, meaningful tasks, and the ability to make content meaningful to them and their needs in their own unique manner. Once learners get to feel that the lessons are conducted in a manner that suits them, they will get more involved and focused whenever they are in Araling Panlipunan classes.

The other applicable source is the idea of Personalized Learning Framework (Pane et al., 2017) which helps to focus the instruction on the profiles, progress, and preferences of the learners. This is very much in line with differentiated instruction since it enhances self paced education, non-linear and personalized assistance and differentiate learning.

Collectively, these modern theories emphasize the need of differentiated instruction to empower the interest of learners towards Araling Panlipunan. Basing their work on flexible, inclusive, and learner-responsive techniques that were revealed in the current educational studies, educators can create the environment that empowers students, supports them, and facilitates their active participation. This paper, thus, examines the effect of these teachers differentiated instructions on the degree of engagement of learners in Araling Panlipunan at the grade levels.

Building on these insights, it becomes clear that when teachers tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs, strengths, and interests of their students, learners feel more valued and motivated. A responsive approach not only makes lessons more meaningful but also encourages students to participate actively, think critically, and connect what they learn in Araling Panlipunan to their own experiences. By fostering this kind of supportive and engaging environment, educators can help students develop a deeper understanding of the subject while nurturing their curiosity and confidence.

The schematic figure shows the association between the independent variables, which are the elements of the differentiated instruction content, process, product and learning environment of teachers and the dependent variable that are the students participation in the araling Panlipunan. It indicates that the differences in the way teachers differentiate the instruction can effect the extent of active and meaningful learning among the learners in Araling Panlipunan learning.

### ***Significance of the Study***

This paper demonstrates that the use of differentiated instructional strategies (e.g. content, process, product) are effective in increasing the level of engagement in Araling Panlipunan among learners. It gives educators practical advice to personalize lessons, choose materials, and develop activities that will promote engagement, critical thinking, and active interest. These insights can help schools to emphasize differentiated instructions, enhance teaching methods, and enable students to achieve improved outcomes in education.

Learners. In this research, students were Grade 4, 5 and 6 students of the District 9 and who actively attend the lessons of Araling Panlipunan. They also enjoy the support of more differentiated instructions strategies that are based on their readiness, interests and learning preferences and contribute to their behavioral (e.g., participation, on-task behavior) and cognitive engagement (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, persistence). These measures create motivation, confidence, and the improved interpretation of civic and social ideas, which makes the learning process more significant and available to every student.

Teachers. The instructors of Araling Panlipunan who used differentiated instruction were teachers who applied it on content, process, product, and learning environment. The paper identifies some of the most effective, high-impact strategies that can direct the teachers to adapt their lessons to accommodate the needs of diverse learners and provides the teachers with the resources to increase their engagement to foster active learning by offering lesson templates, and observation frameworks that can ensure better learning results.

Principals. Principals are the school administrators that supervise the delivery of the curriculum and encourage the professional progress of teachers. The study supplies the principals with the information to help them promote effective differentiation instructions through professional development, coaching, collaborative planning, and classroom observation to maintain the consistency, equity and high quality teaching practices which may help to sustain the engagement of learners within Araling Panlipunan.

Community Partners, Parents and School Boards. This category consists of families, teaching governing authorities and local stakeholders who are concerned with the learning of the students. The results of the study will give them assurance that the practice in the classroom is evidence based and encourages participation and higher order thinking, which should be used to inform parent workshops, community activities, and policy making that facilitates inclusive, engaging, and significant Araling Panlipunan teaching.

Future Researchers. In this study, I will use the study as a reference frame to understand differentiated instruction and student engagement in araling panlipunan or any other subject. The research offers a baseline of the successful strategies, outlines the obstacles to implementation and shows the results of engagement which will allow the further research to adjust the practices and enhance the teaching and learning of diverse learners.

### ***Definition of Terms***

To understand the researcher and the readers better, the following terms introduced are the main keywords to be used in this study:

**Behavioral Engagement.** The observable behaviors that the students exhibit are attendance in class. This involves listening, doing homework, participating in discussion and attending classes regularly. It is assessed on basis of observation checklists and completion rates on assignments. Such actions demonstrate the level of student engagement in the learning process.

**Cognitive Engagement.** Means the level of thinking and effort that the students give to the learning tasks. It involves employing learning strategies, critical thinking, problem-solving and perseverance. The research took the student work outputs, observations in the classroom and self-report surveys as the measure of the research. The high level of cognitive engagement is a sign of profound knowledge and learning in Araling Panlipunan.

**Content Differentiation.** This is where the materials or the topics are altered to correspond to the abilities and interests of the students. As an illustration, the students can use simpler or more complicated texts or learn various subjects during the same lesson. In the given study,

teacher logs are used to measure content differentiation, as well as, student materials. This will make all students to have the ability to get the same learning goals at their own level.

**Differentiated Instruction.** It is an instructional approach that modifies the content taught, the learning process of the students, and the learning to suit the requirements, interests and learning orientations of the student. This research incorporates alterations in products, process and content. Classroom observations, teacher logs, and student work are used to measure the practices of teachers. In this way, all learners are likely to attend and achieve during lessons in Araling Panlipunan.

**Formative Assessment.** This is in reference to continuous practices that teachers employ in order to track student learning and make changes in the course of instruction. This can involve quizzes, performance activities, reflections and feedback. In the current investigation, the concepts of formative assessment will be applied to the differentiated instruction to enable a teacher to recognize the needs of learners and adjust the strategies to increase the engagement and comprehension.

**Learner Engagement.** It is the level of participation and attention of students in and on learning activities. It consists of behavioral engagement, such as attending classes, focusing on task, and doing homework and cognitive engagement, such as deep thinking, applying learning strategies as well as persevering through difficulties. The engagement will be assessed in this study using classroom observations, student work, and self-report surveys. Active learners are interested, working and thoughtful in the Araling Panlipunan classes.

**Learning Environment Differentiation.** This entails the establishment of an environment in a classroom that favors different learners. This can be flexible sitting, diverse grouping techniques, and good teacher student relationships as well as a secure environment where participation can take place. It is monitored by setting up and practices of teachers in classrooms.

**Process Differentiation.** This will entail altering the mode of teaching and activities performed by students. This can be by way of group work, step by step assistance, or various tasks to students of various abilities. It is determined by classroom observation checklists which monitor the implementation of these strategies by teachers. This will assist every learner to work with the lessons in a manner that is best to him/her.

**Product Differentiation.** This implies letting students show the way they have learned in various ways. This can be in the form of written reports, presentation, posters, role-plays or projects. In this research, the process of product differentiation is evaluated through analyzing

student work and teacher records. This method will enable students to demonstrate their knowledge in areas of their strength and interests.

## **The Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The research design used is a descriptive correlational research. The level of differentiated instruction by the teachers in the Learning of Araling Panlipunan in Content, Process, Product, and Learning environment was determined using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies as well as percentages. In addition, establish the extent of the Learners involvement in learning Araling Panlipunan.

The questionnaire was modified by Ferrer (2025) and used in the study. Differentiation in Elementary School Instruction (learning, product, process, content). To determine the degree of teachers differentiated instruction in learning Araling Panlipunan in terms of Content, Process, Product and Learning environment.

In order to determine the extent of the Learners involvement in learning araling panlipunan a questionnaire was based on Skinner et al. (2009) Engagement vs. Disaffection scales (behavioral engagement). The instrument has been adapted to suit local Araling Panlipunan curriculum and also highlight the major practices on teachers differentiated instruction and the learners participation in learning Araling Panlipunan.

### ***Research Locale***

It was done in the Division of Valencia City, Bukidnon. Valencia city consists of thirteen barangays, which form the present territory.

The first inhabitants in the region, and now forming one of the sections of the Poblacion, were Bukidnon natives who established a settlement on the banks of the Pulangi River, and at the confluence of the Dumanggas River.

One room barrio school was opened in 1911 and the first teacher was the late Leon Galorport. The school site is more or less where the Poblacion Barangay High School is located. The school was named Valencia School by Galorport who was a native of his native town, Valencia, Bohol. At the time when the sitio was developed into a barrio of Malaybalay, the locals settled on the name Valencia.

Lastly, the petitioners settled on the name of the municipality to be called Valencia when the southern part of the municipality of Malaybalay was split off as an independent municipality. But as early as 1893, or possibly earlier, the name Valencia already appears on Spanish

documents, a position which makes it subject to the jurisdiction of Linabo or Sevilla (now Mailag) in the Province of Misamis.

An abundance of natural resources in the land would later lure Christian settlers living in the densely populated coastal regions of the Mindanao region, Visayas, and the Luzon islands.

### ***Respondents of the Study***

This study used the respondents of Grades 4, 5, and 6 of the teachers who teach Araling Panlipunan as well as selected learners of the same grades in District 9. The teachers were also involved since they apply differentiated instruction in terms of content, process, and product thus they are the important sources of information on classroom practices.

The learners who were selected were those who were actively involved in lessons of Araling Panlipunan since it was necessary to identify their behavioral and cognitive involvement in the study. Each of the interviewees gave a critical input on the effect of differentiated instruction on student engagement and their learning outcomes in Araling Panlipunan.

### ***Sampling Procedure***

In this study, the authors used total enumeration sampling of teachers and random stratified sampling of learners in Grade 4, 5, and 6 in District 9. To obtain the full picture of differentiated instruction practices, all the teachers teaching Araling Panlipunan in these grades were included to cover the full picture of differentiated instruction practices.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}.$$

Slovin's formula was used to calculate the sample size of learners to proportionally allocate the sample across grade levels by using stratified sampling, expressed as:

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error

The engagement of the selected learners was measured on the five-point Likert scale, which is a validated tool that is used to measure behavioral and cognitive engagement in learning activities.

The schools were coordinated to provide the precise lists of teachers and learners, and only those who attended and had their parents or guardians give their consent, as well as their personal consent, were involved. This would reduce sampling bias and at the same time enable the study to have a wide scope of investigating the relationship between differentiated instruction and the engagement of learners in District 9.

### ***Research Instrument***

The questionnaire that was employed in this research was based on Ferrer (2025). To gather data to achieve this research, the researcher created the questionnaire where divided it into two parts. Part I was concerned with the differentiated instruction in the teachers in terms of Content, Process, Product and Learning environment. The questionnaire utilized was a 24 item questionnaire with 6 items under each sub-variable.

Part II was concerned with the engagement of the learners. This part had the degree of Learners involvement in learning Araling Panlipunan. The questionnaire was a 12 item questionnaire, which was founded on teaching Araling Panlipunan. The respondents marked the column with the answer that they had selected basing on the five-point Likert scale.

### ***Validity of the Study***

To make sure that the survey questionnaire was valid and able to measure differentiated instruction of teachers and engagement of learners in the Araling Panlipunan, the instrument was strongly validated through the content validation process. Even though the questionnaire was based on the pre-existing patterns of differentiated instruction and student engagement, one still had to ensure that the questions were right, understandable, and applicable in the context of Grades 4 6 learners and teachers at District 9.

The researcher enlisted the help of three validators who could help based on their excellent background in the areas of Social Studies education, differentiated instruction, and educational research. These professionals were chosen due to academic qualification and the work experience in curriculum and instruction. All the validators had to go through the questionnaire items in terms of four set domains of differentiated instruction content, process, product, and learning environment and indicators of engagement of the learners.

To assess the items, they checked them in terms of clarity, relevance, and compliance with the objectives of the study and with the theoretical backgrounds of the differentiated instruction. They recommended them and made some amendments to optimize the instrument in regard to its precision, its application in the context of the current study, and its validity.

### ***Data Gathering Procedures***

When carrying out a study at Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon) Inc., the researcher ensured that he followed the right protocol since it is a standard operating procedure. The Dean of Graduate Studies was first asked to give a letter of approval and support.

Upon gaining all the approvals, the researcher requested the permission of the Public Schools District Supervisors of Valencia District 9. The second process was to get the consent of the principals or heads of the selected schools where the research was carried out. The last thing involved sending the questionnaires to the respondents to respond to.

During the process, the researcher kept the communication channels open with all the concerned offices to ensure that there was transparency and good coordination. All the steps were well observed to observe the institutional policies and to ensure that a study was conducted easily. Such a systematic nature has contributed to the establishment of trust and made data gathering process to be systematic, ethical and efficient.

### ***Scoring Procedure***

The data were read through the rating scales provided below; these scales are the frequency, with which differentiated instruction is used by the teachers, and the degree, to which the learners are engaged in Araling Panlipunan. The increased ratings are associated with the increased consistency with which differentiated strategies are implemented, as well as the increased student participation and involvement in the learning activities.

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Qualitative Interpretation</b>	<b>Qualifying Statement</b>
5	Always	4.51– 5.00	Very High (VH)	4–5 times teachers consistently apply differentiated instruction.
4	Often	3.40– 4.19	High (H)	3–4 times teachers often apply differentiated instruction.
3	Sometimes	2.60– 3.39	Moderately High (MH)	2–3 times teachers sometimes apply differentiated instruction.
2	Rarely	1.80– 2.59	Low (L)	1–2 times teachers rarely apply differentiated instruction.
1	Seldom	1.00– 1.79	Very Low (VL)	0–1 time teacher seldom applies differentiated instruction,

In order to establish the extent to which learners were engaged in Araling Panlipunan lessons, a 5-point Likert scale was adopted in this study. With this approach, the selected learners in Grade 4, 5, and 6 in the District 9 had to identify how frequently they were exposed to or

observed, or were involved in learning activities in which teachers used differentiated instruction in terms of content, process, and product.

The scale was an effective and well-structured means through which the learners would indicate the level of their engagement, which can be described as very low, fair, high, and very high. The learners were asked to rate each of the items according to their degree of involvement, focus, and mental engagement in the Araling Panlipunan classes.

Scale	Description	Range	Qualitative Interpretation	Qualifying Statement
5	Always	4.51– 5.00	Very High (VH)	4-5 times learners show fully engaged
4	Often	3.40– 4.19	High (H)	3-4 times learners show good engagement.
3	Sometimes	2.60– 3.39	Moderately High (MH)	2–3 times learners show moderately engaged.
2	Rarely	1.80– 2.59	Low (L)	1–2 times learners show minimal engagement.
1	Seldom	1.00– 1.79	Very Low (VL)	0–1-time learners show mostly disengaged.

### ***FINDINGS***

The result indicates that teachers do always apply differentiated instructions on high level in all fields of Araling Panlipunan. Regarding the content, they offer graded materials and diverse resources to meet the differences in readiness and interest of the students. The use of process, flexible grouping, scaffolded supports, and tiered activities enables the learners to work at their own pace. The product differentiation manifests itself in differentiated forms of assessment, consistent rubrics and revision opportunities to assist mastery of the competencies. It is also notable that the learning environment got the highest mean and this reflects the efforts of teachers to establish supportive, culturally responsive, and flexible classroom environments that enhance meaningful participation and more profound learning.

The results showed that learners had high engagement in learning Araling Panlipunan. According to the survey results, the students were always attentive, participative, and

maintained effort throughout all lessons, which is indicative of both behavioral and cognitive engagement. They reacted positively to different teaching methods, engaged in activities in an intelligent manner, and used critical thinking to process information. On the whole, the findings revealed that learners are motivated, focused, and actively engaged in the classroom activities, which the responsive and supportive teaching practices have a good influence on their learning and engagement.

The findings showed that there is a positive correlation between Teachers Differentiated Instruction and Learners Engagement in Learning Araling Panlipunan. Even though the individual factors of differentiation, content, process, product, and learning environment were not significantly correlated in the research, the general engagement of the learners was considerably linked to the regular use of different teaching strategies. It implies that by designing lessons based on the readiness, interests, and learning needs of students, learners will be more eager to engage in the process, be motivated, and think critically, which is why responsive, student-centered teaching should be viewed as one of the most efficient ways to encourage meaningful engagement.

### ***CONCLUSIONS***

This paper has reached the conclusion that differentiated instruction is a necessary approach to increase the level of engagement among learners in Araling Panlipunan. The overall degree of differentiation in content, process, product and learning environment indicated that the teachers in the Valencia City are actively trying to differentiate lessons to address the needs of diverse students and that they are not using one-size-fits-all strategies anymore, rather more responsive and learner-centered methods.

Behavioral and cognitive engagement was very high consistently with learners showing attentiveness, persistence and higher levels of thinking when provided with the materials, activities and assessments that fit their readiness and interests. This indicates that student engagement is not merely based on student disposition but also student-centered and differentiated instructional design.

Another important positive correlation that was found in the study was between differentiated instruction and learner engagement with the focus that direct connections were made between active participation and meaningful learning through specific teaching practices. To expand on this, schools must enhance professional growth, joint planning and resource assistance, especially in product differentiation and learning environments that are flexible, so that differentiated instruction becomes a sustainable and embedded practice that promotes

inclusive and effective Araling Panlipunan education. Constant observation and review of the teaching plans would assist in sustaining the high engagement rates, and the exchange of the best practices between the teachers would also contribute to the improvement of the instructional quality in the classrooms.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a result of this study and its implications, the following practice and policy recommendations will be given to Araling Panlipunan education.

Schools ought to enhance the support of teachers to promote and sustain differentiated instructions in the content, process, products, and learning environments. Tiered lessons, flexible grouping, scaffolded supports and varied assessments are some of the practical strategies that should be offered in professional development programs.

The lessons and activities should be designed by the teachers in a way that they encourage both behavioral and cognitive engagement. Motivation, persistence and deeper thinking can be promoted by giving a choice, scaffolding activities, and culturally relevant resources to the learners. A classroom must facilitate secure, welcoming and stimulating settings within which students are given the strength to be involved actively and constructively in the learning process.

The learner centered practices should be institutionalized in schools in order to strengthen the positive correlation between differentiated instruction and engagement with the learners. Effective differentiated plans are maintained with collaborative planning, access to resources and constant monitoring. Schools ought to develop liaisons with community organizations, local libraries, and museums to deliver various and real-life materials that enhance differentiated lessons in Araling Panlipunan.

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