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Differentiated instructions with literary works to enhance students' engagement and reading comprehension

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Abstract

This study observes the implementation of differentiated instructions (DI) with literary works to enhance students' engagement and reading comprehension in eighth-grade EFL classroom settings. The investigation employed an exploratory sequential mixed-method design with quantitative data collection through pre-tests and post-tests to assess students' reading comprehension, and a questionnaire was used to measure engagement. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with the teacher to gain insights into DI with literary works implementation. The findings showed significant enhancement in students' engagement and reading comprehension after implementing DI with literary works. The questionnaire results indicated high levels of engagement, with mean scores of 3.32 for behavioral engagement, 3.34 for emotional engagement, and 3.10 for cognitive engagement, suggesting that students were actively involved in the learning process at multiple levels. Furthermore, the pre-test and post-test results showed a notable increase in reading comprehension, with the mean pre-test score at 66.17 and the mean post-test score at 77.46, reflecting an 11.29-point improvement. Moreover, the teacher's reflection highlighted its effectiveness in fostering a student-centered classroom, though the approach required considerable preparation and effort. This study implies that teachers need additional support and training to effectively design and implement DI in their classrooms. Furthermore, this research contributes to the integration of literary works as a medium for differentiated learning, so it provides a novel approach to enhance students' engagement and reading comprehension.

Keywords: Differentiated instructions; literary works, students' engagement; reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Low reading interest in Indonesia continues to be a concern in education. It refers to a learning crisis in which students are in school but are not really learning. The results of the National Assessment conducted by The Ministry's Educational Standards Curriculum and Assessment Agency (BSKAP) in 2021 confirmed that some students are still struggling even to understand the meaning of a passage that they are reading. In terms of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Indonesia ranks among the lowest in reading proficiency

among EFL countries, significantly trailing behind other countries like Vietnam and Thailand (OECD, 2019). This underperformance in reading comprehension highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve literacy skills in English. As a result, it triggers the government and educational stakeholders to keep enhancing Indonesian students' literacy through various efforts. One of the government's efforts is establishing *Kurikulum Merdeka*, or emancipated learning curriculum for schools (Zaim & Zakiyah, 2024).

The emancipated learning curriculum aims to develop the competence and character of all students so that they can become lifelong learners. It specifically focuses on enhancing students' competencies in literacy and numeracy. This goal can be achieved if students are exposed to good books and have an interest in reading (Bahrudin, 2016). In fact, the current problem is students are not interested in reading because of the reading passage and the reading process (Muhammad & Al Ghifari, 2021). Therefore, in 2024, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia created "*Sastra Masuk Kurikulum*", or literature in the curriculum program, as an implementation of an emancipated learning curriculum and an effort to foster students' interest in reading. It is considered that the love for reading is not a natural process but a feeling that must be cultivated as early as possible (Grøver et al., 2020).

Literary works that contain interesting stories are useful for shaping students' character, which, of course, cannot be felt from reading academic books (Wahyuni & Wahyuni, 2023; Nurhasanah et al., 2023). Literary works invite students to live in another world and to feel what the characters in the story feel so that students can take a different perspective. This is where the love for reading will grow. In addition, the ability to empathize when reading can shape character, such as being a mindful person and having a sense of belonging to the environment (Hsu et al., 2023).

However, it is not enough for a teacher to tell students to read. Literary works can be a transformative medium in education when a teacher is involved during the reading process, resulting in the expected competency (Fialho, 2019). The teacher needs to accompany the students during the reading process. One teaching method teachers can use to accompany students' reading process is differentiated instructions (Pozas et al., 2021; Kuhr, 2023).

Differentiated instructions can help students with different needs to achieve their learning goals and meet their ability level (Tomlinson, 2001). Differentiated instruction as a teaching strategy that addresses various students' needs by modifying and changing the teaching for each student in the classroom through organized procedures. It is for maximizing the learning opportunities of all students (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). Differentiated instruction is not new in the education system; it has been widely used in various levels of education and implemented in various subjects. During the implementation, it shows that this strategy positively influences students' academic accomplishment in secondary and high school (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019). Moreover, this strategy also fits to the university level (Moallemi, 2024). It has proven that differentiated instruction is helpful in teaching and learning English as a foreign language, specifically in areas like reading comprehension.

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It has provided vocabulary acquisition (Tanjung & Ashadi, 2019) and reading comprehension (Potot et al., 2023).

Differentiated instruction contradicts one-size-fits-all instructions. This is because DI is a pedagogical teaching strategy considering various learners' concerns, profiles, and learning pace in a class (Endeshaw, 2023). In addition, differentiated instruction aims to help students learn by considering differences. Students will learn using appropriate techniques based on their needs to maximize their potential in differentiated instruction (Kuhr, 2023). There are several points of concern for teachers regarding implementing differentiated instructions. The points are teachers' commitment, time, and resources (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023). Previous research mentioned two primary reasons for implementing differentiated instructions in EFL classrooms. First, through DI, students can make continuous improvements no matter their level of knowledge, skill, and age. Second, students become lifelong learners due to the impact of the teachers' instruction (Sofiana et al., 2024). Different instructions for students impact their ability to learn English as a foreign language, especially in reading areas (Azimah & Sujannah, 2024).

Collaboration between DI and literary works is an integrative step in making the emancipated learning curriculum a success (Sofiana et al., 2024). It takes into account students' developmental stages, levels of achievement, students' diverse characteristics and development (Marks et al., 2021). Through this study, it can be shown that basically there are no people who don't like reading, they just haven't found a suitable book and approach that makes them enjoy reading (Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, 2023). The use of literary works is already taking place in some classes in Indonesia, but it is limited to Indonesian language lessons and only briefly does not reach the depth that triggers critical thinking.

Thus, teachers can utilize literary works and accompany the students' reading process to explore the values contained in literary works. It is hoped that this will create discussion in class and critical thinking from students. Accordingly, education is not only about right or wrong but also about the beauty or literacy in literature in finding answers and initiating essential thinking. It makes collaboration between DI and literary works enhance students' reading comprehension and engagement (Rachmijati & Anggraeni, 2019).

The use of literary texts in class has been proven in numerous studies to enhance students' reading comprehension and engagement (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016). Hence, literature cannot be taken for granted because it improves students' attitudes towards the class. Literary texts can boost the students' ability to interpret, connect and explore what they read. It shows that literature can be a means for students to grow, such as enriching their vocabulary, having a deeper understanding of grammar structures, and critically responding to the passage (Azadkhan et al., 2021). Furthermore, the advantages of using literary texts, including developing higher language proficiency and creative skills (Ceylan, 2016). Nonetheless, heterogeneous students are not an avoidable situation. A class will typically consist of diverse individuals with diverse learning and needs (Kotob & Abadi, 2019). Therefore,

when a teacher wants to enhance students' reading comprehension and engagement for all students, differentiated instruction (DI) can be implemented to tackle the problem (Aliakbari & Haghighi, 2014; Magableh & Abdullah, 2020).

Students' literacy skills can be trained through collaborative literary works and the implementation of DI. The information and norms contained in a text can strengthen students' character with a creative and fun approach, thereby building self-confidence. This research proves that if books are a window to the world, then literature is a way to increase the nation's literacy (Triyanita & Mulyono, 2023). Much research is on enhancing students' reading comprehension (Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, 2023; Magableh & Abdullah, 2020), but only a few have identified the implementation of differentiated instructions to enhance students' reading comprehension and engagement through literary works. Therefore, this research must be realized. This research is expected to show the reality in class regarding DI implementation, so it addresses the current problems of students: low student engagement and reading comprehension.

Learning profiles based on VARK perspective

VARK model is derived from visual, auditory, read or write, and kinesthetic methods. Four learning styles show the learners' best style when corresponding with a lesson or thing. According to the VARK model (Fleming, 2011), students are classified based on their sensory modality and the way they collect information. Following is the details explanation of each model:

1. Visual (V): learners are classified as visual if they prefer to learn the material by looking at pictures, flowcharts, drawings, maps, or diagrams. They are frequently referred to as "loud thinkers," typically using hand gestures, and have a strong memory for visual instructions. In addition, learners with visual intelligence to be inventive and creative.

2. Auditory (A): learners belong to the auditory type if they like to repeat words from lectures and prefer to hear the information presented. During the class, they are recommended to discuss the content with other students and read notes or topics aloud into a record player. These learners are highly skilled in auditory memory retrieval. They typically learn by keeping their heads up and using their eyes to help them remember information.

3. Reading/Writing (R): when learners prefer to look at new material in writing through texts or tables, they are classified as read or write learners. The learner relies on the written word, so they learn by taking notes based on their interpretations or organizing lists and information tables. It goes without saying that in typical learning environments, conventional teachers use reading and writing styles the most. Textbooks, handouts, and circulation are typically the go-to resources for this kind of learner when gathering and disseminating information.

4. Kinesthetic (K): Learners in this type understand knowledge through practice and experience. It is advised that students learn through practical experience with physical activities since they heavily rely on contact, touch, and connection with their surroundings in an educational context, particularly with their bodies or physical actions.

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Literary Works

The challenges of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in non-English speaking countries, where the focus has traditionally been on linguistics and grammar, resulting in limited language proficiency among students. Literary works, according to (Babae & Yahya, 2014) encompass compositions that tell stories, dramatize situations, express emotions, and advocate ideas. Literary works have two fundamental genres, non-fiction, and fiction. Non-fiction is a genre of literature that presents information and accounts of actual events (Bloom & Hobby, 2009). On the other hand, fiction refers to literature created from the imagination rather than being based on actual events or facts. It is a narrative form that presents invented or imaginary stories, characters, and events (Hulwa & Ferdinal, 2022). Narrative text refers to any form of writing that tells a story or recounts a series of events. The primary purpose of a narrative is to entertain, engage, or inform the audience by presenting a series of connected events cohesively and engagingly. Narrative texts can take various forms, including short stories, novels, myths, legends, folktales, and personal anecdotes to convey its imaginative and invented stories, making narrative an essential component of fictional works (Mahdi, 2024). Narrative texts are often considered more accessible and comprehensible for students in EFL classrooms because the narrative format aligns with the natural processes of language acquisition, providing students in EFL classrooms with an enjoyable and context-rich approach to language learning (Hale, 2023).

Students' Engagement

Effective communication and interaction between teachers and students play a crucial role in shaping the classroom environment. It contributes to a conducive learning atmosphere, fostering satisfaction and effectiveness in learning (Conner, 2016). Students' engagement refers to students' active participation, psychological investment, and effort in the teaching and learning process. The dimensions of student engagement, as defined by (Fredricks et al., 2004) are first is behavioral engagement, which involves students' active participation and involvement in academic and social activities. Second, emotional engagement encompasses students' reactions and feelings towards academic activities. The last dimension is cognitive engagement, which refers to the psychological effort exerted by students to understand and master complex academic material.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability to understand and apply information contained in written material. This involves a cognitive process of interacting with print, monitoring comprehension to establish meaning, and making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction (Chandran & Shah, 2019). In EFL classroom, reading comprehension involves process where students decode and understand the passage. Reading comprehension is crucial when learning EFL because it enhances proficiency which covers vocabulary, grammar, and overall communication. A student demonstrates reading comprehension when they can actively engage with written text, interpret its meaning, and apply the knowledge gained from the reading experience (Sun, 2023). This involves the ability to think

critically, make inferences, understand the author's purpose, evaluate ideas presented, and apply the acquired knowledge to real-life situations.

METHOD

This research used a mixed-method approach, specifically employing an exploratory sequential design. This design involves initially collecting qualitative data to explore and understand the phenomenon, followed by quantitative data to investigate further and measure the insights gained from the qualitative phase (Creswell, 2009). This study collected quantitative data through tests; pre-tests, post-tests and questionnaire. The collected data then were analyzed using SPSS version 26. On the other hand, the author employed a semi-structured interview for the qualitative data. The research instruments are tests and questionnaires to collect qualitative and quantitative data as a mixed-method application. The questionnaire will then be investigated using descriptive statistics to get a more precise picture of the quantitative data. The qualitative data will provide a deeper understanding.

Research site and participants

This study used purposive sampling to select the research site and participants. It aims to choose participants who could give rich and insightful data regarding the implementation of differentiated instructions with literary works to enhance students' engagement and reading comprehension. The research site of this study is an SMPIT (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam Terpadu* or Integrated Islamic Junior High School), located in Demak. The SMPIT implements the Emancipated Curriculum. Thus, it offers a diverse and rich environment. Moreover, they also implement differentiated instructions with literary works in their English class. These factors make the SMPIT an ideal site to investigate modern teaching methods and how they affect students' growth.

This study involved an English teacher who teaches 39 eighth-grade students. The teacher is chosen because she is familiar with implementing emancipated learning and differentiated instructions with literary works. Meanwhile, eighth-grade students are chosen because narrative texts are taught in this grade.

As purposive sampling is employed in this study, the researcher selects one class, specifically the eighth-grade B (8-B) class in the 2024/2025 academic year, as the study sample. The class is chosen because the 8-B class exhibits more homogeneity in terms of student characteristics compared to the other classes. Moreover, this class was chosen to ensure that the sample would provide relevant and insightful data related to the study's focus on differentiated instruction with literary works. The selected class consists of 24 female students.

Research instruments

In order to collect the data, the researcher used several research instruments. To find out the students' learning profile, it used VARK questionnaire, which the result can be seen automatically through VARK's website, after completing all questions. In terms of students' engagement, the researcher gave students a questionnaire, comprises 18 questions with Likert scale to identify behavioral,

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cognitive and emotional engagement. It was adapted from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) based on Frederick's theory. Meanwhile, pre-test and post-test were conducted to measure the students' reading comprehension. Originally, the pre-test and post-test contained 40 questions. Then, it had been tried out and evaluated through validity and reliability tests, which resulted to 28 multiple-choice questions. All collected quantitative data including questionnaire, pre-test, post-test were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Meanwhile, to obtain the teacher's perspective on the implementation of DI with literary works, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews. The interview aims to find out the problems found during the implementation, and the advantages of implementing this strategy. It is to evaluate the implementation of DI with literary works and to address the students' engagement issue and reading comprehension. The interview was transcribed and adopted from (Cresswell, 2015).

Research procedures

The research was started by conducting pre-test for students. The teacher distributed a passage for students and let them read for 15 minutes. After that, they were asked to do the pre-test in 30 minutes. After completing the pre-test, the teacher instructed the students to visit <https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/> to determine their individual learning profiles. The teacher then grouped students according to their learning profiles. Each group was provided with a passage tailored to their learning preferences, all covering the same topic, and asked to comprehend the passage and complete a post-test. At the end of the class, the teacher explained the tasks assigned to each group, which were to be prepared for presentation in the following session, as explained in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores

No.	Name	Learning type	Project
1	AMF	Kinesthetic	Mini role play
2	ANAN	Visual	Storyboard
3	AS	Visual	Storyboard
4	ADA	Auditory	Storytelling
5	AAS	Visual	Storyboard
6	AGF	Visual	Storyboard
7	AAR	Auditory	Storytelling
8	AAK	Auditory	Storytelling
9	ANS	Auditory	Storytelling
10	ASNR	Auditory	Storytelling
11	BMRM	Auditory	Storytelling
12	EMN	Visual	Storyboard
13	FO	Visual	Storyboard
14	HMY	Visual	Storyboard
15	IC	Auditory	Storytelling
16	JP	Kinesthetic	Mini role play

17	LRE	Visual	Storyboard
18	NKR	Auditory	Storytelling
19	NDGA	Auditory	Storytelling
20	NFF	Auditory	Storytelling
21	NAMM	Auditory	Storytelling
22	PSHA	Auditory	Storytelling
23	RAR	Auditory	Storytelling
24	TAD	Visual	Storyboard

In the next meeting, each group presented their assigned tasks. Following the presentations, students completed a questionnaire to assess their engagement during the activity. At the end of the lesson, the teacher provided feedback to the students on their participation and involvement throughout the narrative text material. The researcher then interviewed the teacher to gain insights and perspectives regarding the implementation of differentiated instruction using literary works.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Pre-test and post-test results

The study was conducted at an SMPIT Demak, a private junior high school in Demak, Central Java, Indonesia. The participants were 24 students from the eighth grade. The pre-test and post-test scores of students were analyzed to evaluate the implementation of differentiated instructions with literary works. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the scores, analyzed using SPSS version 26:

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	24	65.9167	18.34907
Posttest	24	76.4583	14.77948
Valid N (listwise)	24		

The descriptive statistics analysis shows that the pre-test mean score was 65.92, while the post-test mean score was 76.46. It shows an increase in the average score from the pre-test to the post-test, which indicates an improvement in the students' performance. In addition to the mean score, the standard deviation for pre-test was 18.35 and for the post-test was 14.78. The lower standard deviation results in post-test shows that the scores in the post-test were more consistent, compared to the pre-test.

As there was a difference in the mean scores, a t-test was run to determine whether the implementation of DI with literary works is significant or not. Table 2 summarizes the results of the t-test.

Table 3. Results of t-test

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One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	24	65.9167	18.34907	3.74549
Posttest	24	76.4583	14.77948	3.01685

Table 3 shows that the pre-test mean score was 65.92 with a standard deviation of 18.35, indicating greater variability among students before the implementation of DI with literary works. On the contrary, the post-test mean score was 76.46 with a smaller standard deviation of 14.78, suggesting that students' scores improved. Moreover, the standard error of the mean was 3.74 for pre-test and 3.01 for post-test. It shows that the post-test mean is more reliable than the pre-test. In other words, the implementation of DI with literary works positively impacted students' learning outcomes, as reflected in the higher post-test mean.

In order to ensure the validity of statistical analysis above, normality test was conducted. Table 4 below presents the results of the normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for both pre-test and post-test scores to determine if the data meet the assumptions required for further statistical analysis:

Table 4. Normality test of pre-test and post-test scores

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
		Pretest	Posttest
N		24	24
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	65.9167	76.4583
	Std. Deviation	18.34907	14.77948
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.190	.123
	Positive	.123	.081
	Negative	-.190	-.123
Test Statistic		.190	.123
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.025 ^c	.200 ^{c,d}

The pre-test has significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.025, which is less than 0.05. This suggests that the data distribution for the pre-test scores deviates from a normal distribution. This deviation is due to the pre-test that was conducted before the teacher implemented DI with literary works. In contrast, the post-test shows a significance value of 0.200, which is above 0.005, indicating a normal distribution. This change suggests that after implementing DI with literary works, students performed more consistently as reflected in the normally distributed post-test scores.

Questionnaire results

The engagement questionnaire distributed to students after the teacher implementing DI with literary works. The questionnaire consists of 18 questions, covers behavioural, emotional and cognitive components, adopted from Fredrick's theory and NSSE. Question 1-6 was to identify the behavioural engagement, question 7-12 for emotional engagement, and question 13-18 for cognitive engagement. The questionnaire utilized a four-point Likert scale, in which, 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for agree, and 4 for strongly agree. This study only includes four choices in the questionnaire, excluding "Undecided" to prevent the participants' inclination to answer this category. The questionnaire results were processed using SPSS to find out mean, median and standard deviation. The details of the questionnaire results are presented below:

Table 5. Students' engagement questionnaire results

Type of Engagement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Behavioural	3.32	3	0.13
Emotional	3.34	3	0.15
Cognitive	3.10	3	1.2

In behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement, the mean value for each is 3.32, 3.34 and 3.10. The mean for each engagement is closer to strongly agree, which implies that they were behaviourally engaged. The engagement includes participating and following the teacher's instructions, feeling positive emotions about learning, and trying to understand the material. Although cognitive engagement is lower than behavioural and emotional engagement, the mean value of 3.10 still shows that students put in a good effort to understand and process material.

The median for all engagements is 3, which aligns closely with mean values and corresponds to "agree" on the scale. This suggests that most students consistently reported positive engagement across all categories. Meanwhile, in standard deviation results, the behavioural engagement is 0.13, and the emotional engagement is 0.15. Low standard deviation indicates that most students' responses were tightly clustered around the mean, reflecting consistent behavioural and emotional engagement. It is aligned with (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016) that the smaller the standard deviation, the more similar the values on the item or the more accurate the mean. Thus, the standard deviation for behavioural and emotional engagement is considered accurate because its small value indicates that the data distribution is well-clustered and closely aligned with the mean. On the other hand, the standard deviation for cognitive engagement is 1.2. This larger value compared to behavioural and emotional engagement is due to greater variability in students' responses. This implies that students had more diverse opinions or experiences regarding cognitive engagement. Nevertheless, this variability may even point to areas where differentiation in instruction could further support students.

Teacher's reflection

The teacher's reflection when implementing differentiated instructions with literary works in the reading class was obtained through semi-structured interviews. It was done with the teacher of the 8-B class at an SMPIT Demak. The interview explored five fundamental aspects of DI with literary works, including concept understanding, planning and preparation, assessment and feedback, challenges and reflection, support and professional development. The interview, originally conducted in Indonesian, was transcribed and translated into English to maintain the integrity of the research.

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Table 6. Interview results

No.	Questions	Answer
Understanding Differentiated Instructions		
1.	How do you define differentiated instruction in your teaching practice?	In my opinion, differentiated instruction (DI) is one of the learning techniques with concepts to adapt to students' strengths or learning profiles—such as kinesthetic, visual, etc. As teachers, we should be able to provide learning that is suitable for all of them. However, so far, teachers usually have only 1 learning method (one-size-fits-all), so students must understand the teacher's method. It makes learning inefficient. For example, some students are audiovisual, but the teacher gives the material in kinesthetic way or vice versa. That is what makes it less than optimal. Besides, the benefits of DI are that students can easily understand and learn with friends with the same learning profile. So, DI implementation is differentiated not only in the learning process but also in the student project. With the DI method, the results are different if I compare it with lessons that only use 1 method (one-size-fits-all). Differentiation is more optimal, although the teacher must put in more effort.
Planning and preparation		
2.	How do you plan for differentiated instruction with literary works to meet the diverse needs of your students?	The first is the preparation, namely the teaching module. The teaching module is differentiated according to the student's learning profile. From the application, I prepared a test to determine students' learning profiles. It is used to divide students into groups based on their learning profile. In terms of passage, I also differentiate it. For example, visual children use picture stories, while audio uses voice stories, so they listen to the story. For kinesthetic children, it is almost the same as visual, but the pattern uses games so that there is physical movement. Finally, regarding the project, I also differentiate based on learning styles regarding products or assignments.
Assessment and Feedback		
3.	How do you provide feedback to students based on their individual needs and progress?	I give feedback after they have completed the post-test. I check the students' post-tests and review their class activities and participation. So, the input is not only in the form of post-test scores; I also provide oral feedback to each student.
Challenges and Reflection		
4.	What challenges do you encounter when implementing differentiated instruction, and how do you address them?	The difficulty is in making the teaching module, which usually 1 type of module is enough, but when implementing DI, I have to make more than one, adjusting to their learning profile. Then, I have to learn more about learning styles. The text references must also be in more forms, both writing, images, and videos. The point is that it takes more preparation time than the one-size-fits-all method, but all of that is worth it with the students' results and their active participation. I overcame these difficulties by preparing well before the class to maximize my ability to implement DI with literary works.
5.	How do you reflect on the effectiveness of your differentiated instruction strategies? Have you made any adjustments based on feedback or outcomes?	It is effective for students because they learn according to their style and strengths. In reality, the classroom is teacher-centred; the teacher is the main and decisive. After experiencing DI, I realized it is a bit complicated but effective. Students find it easier to grasp and understand the material. The preparation takes time from the teacher's side, but DI becomes practical if you look at the student's learning outcomes. In terms of adjustment, yes, I adjusted here and there because previously, I evaluated that students get low scores in the material narrative text. After all, they are not interested in reading. Therefore, I implement DI, adjusting the passage and project based on their learning profile to enhance their comprehension and engagement.
Support and Professional Development		
6.	What support or resources do you find most helpful in enhancing your differentiated instruction practices?	I read a lot about emancipated curricula and books about differentiated learning. I also searched Google for examples, which I then adopted and adjusted to the conditions at school.

Discussions

The implementation of differentiated instructions with literary works to enhance students' engagement and reading comprehension

The study aims to determine the implementation of DI with literary works to enhance students' engagement and reading comprehension. Several steps were required to conduct this study. The first step was to give the students a pre-test. The teacher started the pre-test by asking them to read a passage in narrative text. All passages distributed to students have the same form: text only. After reading the text, the students were asked to answer 28 multiple-choice questions about the story. After the pre-test, the teacher identified students' learning profiles so that the teacher could differentiate the learning process, content, and product. As the DI strategy's main goal is to accommodate students' diverse needs, the elements of DI, which are content, process, and product, must be adjusted based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profiles. Therefore, after finishing the pre-test in the first week of the research period, the teacher asked students to identify their learning profiles through <https://vark-learn.com/kuesioner-vark/>.

The teacher divided students into visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning profiles and gave them passages based on their learning profiles. The teacher gave different narrative texts to the students based on their learning profiles, gave them clear instructions on what they must do for the task, and then reminded them of some language structures (tenses) that might be useful and notice new vocabulary. For the passage, the visual type was video, the audio type was text with audio, and the kinesthetic type was text in random order, so they had to arrange the text in the right order first. Meanwhile, the projects students must do were also different, adjusted to students' learning profiles. The project of visual was a storyboard, the auditory was storytelling, and the kinesthetic was a mini role play. The post-test, which contained 28 multiple-choice questions, was given after students finished reading. In the second week of the research period, the students presented their project and distributed questionnaires about students' engagement. After the teacher was done with the class, the researcher interviewed the teacher to obtain the teacher's testimony.

Enhancing students' engagement through DI with literary works

Since the study is conducted to find out whether DI with literary works can enhance students' engagement, the results can be seen through the questionnaire answered by students. In behavioural engagement, the mean is 3.32, with a median of 3, which means close to strongly agree. Whereas the standard deviation is 0.13, which shows consistent results with the mean and median. The questions related to students' behavioural engagement are related to students' active participation in the class, such as asking questions, being involved in group discussions, finishing all reading assignments, following the teacher's instructions, and submitting the task on time. From six questions, the 24 students' answers indicate that they are behaviorally engaged during the class as shown by the mean, median, and standard deviation. The findings support the study of Setiawan et al. (2019) that student's willingness to participate and contribute to the learning environment belongs to students' behavioral engagement. Students' active involvement in classroom activities,

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such as paying attention, participating in class discussions, and completing tasks and assignments, reflects students' obedience and participation in the learning process.

In terms of students' emotional engagement, it comprised six questions. The questions are about enjoying the reading activity, being interested in the story, being motivated to participate actively during the class, feeling connected to the story, feeling proud when understanding the story, and feeling a sense of accomplishment after completing the reading assignment. The value of the mean in this emotional engagement is 3.34, with a median of 3 and a low value of a standard deviation of 0.15. In other words, students are emotionally engaged during the class. The results of the study are supported by the study of Martin & Bolliger (2018). They believed that emotional engagement encompasses students' reactions and feelings towards academic activities. It includes their feelings toward the school, teachers, and peers, containing feelings of pleasure and satisfaction in academic activities. This dimension is significant as it influences students' emotional investment in the learning process, impacting their motivation and overall well-being in the classroom. These emotions are crucial in shaping students' overall engagement and learning experiences. Emotional engagement is an essential aspect of student involvement in the classroom and can significantly impact their academic performance and overall well-being.

The last engagement is related to cognitive engagement. The questions for this engagement were also six questions about the efforts made to understand the passage, efforts to connect the story with real-life situations, think critically about the messages of the story, reflect the characters in the literary works, applying reading strategies to understand the text and actively seek new vocabularies in the passage. The questionnaire results reveal that the mean value was 3.10, and the median was 3. It shows that students engage cognitively during reading class. Students in the study tried to understand the passage and were willing to do the assignments. Although the standard deviation was 1.2, which is larger compared to the standard deviation of other engagements, this only shows the variety of responses in the questionnaire. It means, the students have more varied answers in this dimension. The results are supported by Rahayu (2018) that cognitive engagement refers to the psychological effort exerted by students. It is an effort to understand and master complex academic material. This dimension is crucial as it reflects students' cognitive investment in learning, including their willingness to grapple with challenging concepts and their ability to comprehend complex subject matter deeply. Students' cognitive engagement occurs when there is a psychological investment in learning and using complex learning strategies to complete tasks. This type of engagement reflects students' active mental participation and effort in understanding and mastering academic knowledge and skills.

The improvement in students' engagement observed in Class 8-B during the study was closely linked to the implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) and literary works. Adjustments to the content, process, and product proved effective in fostering two-way interactions in the classroom, leading to a student-centered learning environment. The enhancement of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement indicates active two-way communication,

student effort in following instructions, and effective task presentations. Therefore, the analysis of the students' engagement questionnaire results confirms that DI with literary works successfully enhances students' engagement in reading class.

Enhancing students' reading comprehension through DI with literary works

The enhancement of students' reading comprehension can be seen through the increase of students' scores from pre-test to post-test. In the pre-test, the mean value of students' scores is 66; meanwhile, in the post-test, the mean value is 76. It shows an improvement after the teacher implemented DI with literary works.

Although the pre-test and post-test both used literary works in the form of narrative text, the students' post-test results were better than the pre-test. This is because, during the pre-test, the literary works used adhered to the one-size-fits-all method. All students were given narrative text in text-only form, without considering students' profiles. The results of this study prove that reading activities in the classroom are much more effective if the teacher is involved in it. Teachers are advised to engage and be involved during the reading process, including adjusting the reading with student profiles. These results are supported by research from Aldridge (2019) and Barber & Klauda (2020). So, literary works will have different impact if the method is different.

Basically, literary works help to increase students' interest in reading, according to studies conducted by (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014; Khan & Alasmari, 2018), because it provides authentic and meaningful language exposure, helping learners develop not only their vocabulary and language structures but also critical thinking and interpretative skills. Thus, this study promotes using literary text to enhance students' reading engagement and comprehension in EFL. However, from this study, it can be concluded that, DI with literary works can enhance students' engagement and reading comprehension, as seen in the results of pre-test and post-test scores as supported by previous studies (Khusniyah, 2022; Meinawati et al., 2024; Moallemi, 2024).

Teacher's reflection on DI with literary works

The teacher's reflection offers qualitative insights into the practical implementation of differentiated instruction (DI) using literary works. First, the teacher's understanding of DI was evident. The interview results indicated that the teacher comprehends the DI method and its classroom application. According to (Haron et al., 2021), teachers who possess knowledge of the methods they employ are proven to deliver material effectively, understand their students better, and implement more efficient teaching practices. Additionally, the teacher highlighted that DI accommodates diverse student needs more effectively than the "one-size-fits-all" approach, though it requires greater effort. This observation aligns with (Hu & Wang, 2023; Endeshaw, 2023; and Errabo et al., 2024) suggesting that DI is more effective in addressing individual learning needs and positively impacts students in EFL classroom.

In terms of planning and preparation, the teacher demonstrated thorough preparation by creating differentiated modules, conducting learning profile

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tests, and customizing the content, process, and product based on student profiles. Oral feedback was provided to encourage student reflection on their learning experiences. It is consistent with study by (Carless & Boud, 2018), emphasizing the importance of tailored feedback in promoting student growth.

The interview further revealed that DI was effective during narrative text lessons, as it shifted the focus to a student-centered approach. This finding is supported by research by (Moallemi, 2024) underscoring the benefits of student-centered learning in fostering engagement and comprehension. The teacher acknowledged that DI requires more time and complex preparation compared to traditional methods, which do not differentiate content, process, or product. However, the improved student outcomes, evident from pre-test and post-test results and increased engagement, justify the additional effort.

In conclusion, the teacher's perspective corroborates the quantitative findings, affirming the effectiveness of DI in enhancing student engagement and reading comprehension. Moreover, the teacher's testimony highlights the versatility and impact of literary works as a resource in differentiated instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of differentiated instructions (DI) with literary works on enhancing students' engagement and reading comprehension in the EFL classroom of eighth-grade students at an SMPIT Demak. The findings demonstrate that DI, which was adjusted to students' diverse learning profiles, effectively enhances active participation, emotional involvement, and cognitive engagement. By adjusting content, process, and product according to individual needs, DI shifts the classroom dynamic from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach, empowering students to engage more deeply with the material. The pre-test and post-test results imply a significant improvement in reading comprehension, affirming the effectiveness of DI in addressing the varied learning needs of students. Additionally, the teacher's testimony confirms these findings, highlighting the practicality and impact of literary works as a resource for DI. Even though DI requires extensive preparation and effort, the benefits—enhanced engagement and comprehension justify the long process and time.

The results of this study have several practical and theoretical implications. For educators, the findings emphasize the power of literary works with DI to create inclusive and student-centered classrooms. Theoretically, this research contributes to the growing evidence supporting DI as a pedagogical approach. However, this research has several limitations. The study was conducted in the eighth grade of an SMPIT Demak. Therefore, the sample size was relatively small, which affects the generalizability of the findings, as the results may not fully represent students in different educational settings, schools, or age groups. Future research could expand the scope to include a larger and more varied sample to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of differentiated instruction with literary works across different contexts.

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AUTHOR STATEMENT

Author 1 collected and analyzed the data and wrote the findings and discussion sections. Additionally, Author 1 formatted the manuscript according to the journal's guidelines and carefully proofread all drafts of the article. Author 2 and Author 3, assisted in analyzing the data, co-writing the findings, and ensuring the accuracy of both the data and the conclusions drawn from it.

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