

## TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER

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### Abstract

Teacher professional development (TPD) is crucial to prepare teachers in addressing classroom diversity and learning needs through differentiated teaching. This study aims to explore teachers' opinions of their TPD experience related to differentiated teaching. Using a descriptive quantitative research method, the data were collected through structured questionnaires focusing on Desimone's (2009) five domains of TPD: content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. A total of 24 respondents participated, discovering several variations of engagement level in TPD programs and differing points of view on their relevance and practicality. Results show that many teachers agreed the programs were moderately effective as the institution gave support for TPD; however, the participation was inconsistent. The study contributes to explaining how TPD prepares them to accommodate learners' needs by implementing differentiated teaching in class. This offers insights for curriculum developers, education policymakers, and institutional leaders who seek ways to improve teachers' capacity through targeted professional development, specifically in differentiated teaching.

**Keywords:** differentiated teaching, English language center, teacher professional development

### INTRODUCTION

The need for differentiating and personalizing language teaching has been drawing increasingly more attention over the past years, particularly within the framework of English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching. As students' linguistic backgrounds, learning styles, readiness levels, and interests have become diversified, the one-for-all teaching is no longer sufficient. Differentiated teaching, which has been described as adapting teaching to the needs of each learner (Tomlinson, 2014), is one of the favored instructional strategies that guarantee equity, engagement, and improved learning outcomes.

Therefore, teaching with the various needs, backgrounds, and learning styles of the students becomes increasingly difficult for EFL teachers (Religioni et al., 2024; Sianturi, 2025). Among the most significant instructional approaches to deal with the challenge is differentiated teaching, which differentiates the process, product, learning environment, and content according to the readiness, interest, and learning profile of the students (Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018; Religioni et al., 2024; Tomlinson, 2014). This is particularly commendable as it is equity-driven, placing human beings at the forefront of learning and allowing every student to

fulfill their full potential (Bushie, 2019; Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2012).

Several studies have shown that differentiated teaching improves learner motivation, participation, and learning in EFL learning classrooms (Asriadi et al., 2023; Religioni et al., 2024; Rifqi, 2024). Classroom action research in Indonesian EFL speaking classrooms, for instance, has shown how strategies such as tiered assignments, flexible grouping, and adapted materials actually improve learners' speaking ability and classroom communication (Mahardika et al., 2023; Sianturi, 2025). Moreover, it has been shown to assist students of all levels of education, from primary school to university, by providing differentiated teaching within the fields of language capacity (writing, speaking, and reading) and other more common capacities such as communication and cooperation (Chien, 2012; Naka, 2018; Ortega et al., 2018). Teachers can respond to the diversity of learners through access to a range of resources, instructional strategies, assessments, and open classroom environments through the accommodations provided by differentiated teaching (Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018; Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023).

Based on students' learning profiles, interests, and readiness, the four most important aspects of differentiated teaching; content, process, product, and learning environment are typically adjusted (Religioni et al., 2024; Tomlinson, 2014). While differentiation in process renders the activities adaptable to varied learning styles, content differentiation renders the form or the level of complexity of learning content adaptable. Differentiation is provided as inclusive and adaptive classrooms through environmental differentiation, and differentiated learning paths through product differentiation to provide opportunities for mastery expression through varied products (Bushie, 2019; Ortega et al., 2018). Both are based on

theories stressing group knowledge construction and differentiated learning paths, such as multiple intelligences and sociocultural learning (Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018; Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2012).

The benefits of differentiated teaching have been proven, but its implementation may be difficult nonetheless. Inadequate pre-service preparation in differentiation strategies, administrative tasks, time constraints, and scarce resources are among the problems EFL teachers often cite (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023; Religioni et al., 2024; Rifqi, 2024). These difficulties are due in part to the requirement of ongoing formative monitoring and teacher reflection in order to keep up with students' changing needs (Asriadi et al., 2023; Cahyono et al., 2023).

Differentiated teaching has been introduced to Indonesian education both in the form of curriculum reform and through teacher professional development courses. Its regular and effective application in informal institutions such as English language centers, however, remains the exception. Such institutions are beset by particular operational issues, such as limited official funding, staff turnover, and a lack of official professional development opportunities. They are generally not included in mainstream reform efforts for these reasons.

It is widely believed that TPD is the key to improving teaching competence and teaching quality. Effective professional development, as stated by Desimone (2009), must be content-focused, have active learning, promote collaboration, have follow-up support, and be of sustained duration. Through differentiated teaching, TPD assists teachers in reconceptualizing assumptions, building confidence, and creating pedagogical change along with introducing new pedagogical knowledge. Yet, the majority of professional development activities don't live up to these criteria because they are too brief,

too theoretical, or not connected to the classroom reality.

As attested by recent studies, Indonesian EFL teachers acknowledge the importance of professional development (PD) in rendering their students' language capacity, pedagogical content knowledge, and classroom management skill more vigorous. Their participation in PD, however, remains sporadic and largely inadequate to cope with the multifaceted needs of differentiation (Rifqi, 2024; Syahria et al., 2024; Wulyani, 2017). PD must be ongoing, culturally responsive, and include active learning, reflection, and collaboration opportunities to be effective (Desimone, 2009; Religioni et al., 2024).

There is increasing evidence that PD with a focus on differentiated teaching can have an actual impact on teacher learning. Coaching, learning communities, and workshops have been revealed to show promise in facilitating teachers' practical use and conceptual understanding (Cahyono et al., 2023; Syahria et al., 2024; Wulyani, 2017). Long-term implementation on a continuous basis is hindered by structural problems that persist, including inequitable access, time constraints, and the lack of institutional support. Teachers also mention that besides technical training, intrinsic motivation and team reflection are also needed in long-term development (Religioni et al., 2024; Syahria et al., 2024).

To date, there is no study directly exploring EFL teacher PD experiences with differentiated teaching in the context of English language centers, amidst the growing emphasis on individualized learning. (Religioni et al., 2024; Sianturi, 2025). Such non-formal centers inevitably lie beyond the scope of government-funded PD initiatives and are subject to alternative operational parameters and legal stipulations. Developing responsive and context-aware professional development frameworks that address the

challenges and concerns of the real world necessitates an exploration of teacher experiences across settings.

Despite an increasing number of studies have proven the effectiveness of differentiated teaching in formal educational settings (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023; Religioni et al., 2024; Tomlinson, 2014), little is known regarding the degree to which it can prove beneficial in non-formal English language centers. There are few studies that investigate the role of institutional and contextual factors in teachers' actual experience of professional development in such non-formal institutions, with the majority focusing on either classroom practices or teachers' general attitudes (Sianturi, 2025; Syahria et al., 2024). This leaves an important gap in knowledge about English language center teachers' application and utilization of differentiated teaching following professional development training. Although there have been a number of studies on the advantages and disadvantages of differentiated teaching in some depth, most utilize sources that are both conceptually and practically overlapping (e.g., Religioni et al., 2024). This requires more contextual and varied research, especially in non-formal education.

Thus, this research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how EFL teachers in an English language center professionalize in differentiated teaching, how they perceive the usefulness and practicability of such training, and the extent to which institutional support facilitates or impedes their implementation. The objective of this research is to promote a more contextually informed conceptualization of teacher professional development in differentiated teaching in non-formal learning settings.

This research is significant because it contributes to policy and literature in teacher education, more particularly by formulating inclusive pedagogies that are supported by

effective professional development models. It is expected that the findings will be useful to policymakers, institutional managers, and professional development providers in creating more effective, context-tailored training packages. The research also enlightens us about the way teachers view and react to professional development opportunities for differentiated teaching, a source of considerable concern for education advancement, student equity, and instructional innovation.

Thus, the research questions to be answered by this research are as follows: 1) To what extent do English language teachers in English language centers engage in professional development activities in differentiated teaching? 2) What do the teachers think about the quality, relevance, and applicability of the professional development programs? 3) In what ways is the practice of differentiated teaching by teachers in the classroom affected by institutional support?

Within the framework of differentiated teaching in EFL non-formal learning settings, the study will aim to explore the various nature of teacher learning and teaching change through these issues.

## METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive mixed-methods design to examine the professional development (PD) of EFL teachers with a focus on differentiated teaching. It combined qualitative data collected through open-ended answers and quantitative data (e.g., frequency of participation, satisfaction level, institutional support). This made it possible to quantitatively describe the qualitative experiences of teachers and to understand them thematically. To get a better picture of how professional learning of differentiated teaching is perceived and carried out in informal settings of learning, the mixed-

methods approach was employed. Studies were conducted to convey the complex nature of teacher learning without changing any variables by combining quantitative trends and qualitative remarks.

The research was conducted in one of the branches of the well-known private English language center in Malang, Indonesia. The school provides English lessons for children aged three to eighteen and has programs at various levels. Apart from the institution's willingness to participate in the research and its accessibility, the site was also chosen because it actively undertakes professional development programs for teachers, namely those on differentiated teaching. The internal training processes and structured curriculum of the English language center made it worth investigating how PD activities are received and implemented in EFL classrooms. Additionally, this school provided a rich environment for the investigation of the use of differentiated teaching at different developmental levels due to the range of age groups that it taught.

There were 24 EFL teachers who currently teach at the chosen center participating in the research. Purposive sampling was used in the study, with the aim of incorporating participants who have undergone professional training in differentiated teaching or who have some understanding of such instructional practices. Demographic data indicated that most of the respondents (87.5%) were female, just like gender trends in Indonesian language classes. Most of the participants were in the early to mid-stages of their careers, as represented by the highest age range of 31–40 years old (41.7%) and 26–30 years old (33.3%). The level of education among the participants ranged from bachelor's to master's in English language education or literature. In-depth knowledgeable feedback on professional development experience and pedagogical practice were also made possible due to the

broad teaching experience range, with most having more than five years' work.

To collect data, a "Teacher Professional Development in Differentiated Teaching Questionnaire" was created and distributed online through Google Forms by the researcher. Desimone's (2009) framework for professional development and Tomlinson's (2014) framework for differentiated teaching were utilized when developing the instrument. Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Teacher demographics, rates of participation in professional development, professional development quality and relevance ratings, active learning professional development experiences, levels of implementing differentiated instructional strategies, support from institutions, and professional development recommendations were seven topics covered by the questionnaire. Multiple-choice, open-ended, and Likert type questions were employed by the questionnaire to measure extensively teachers' professional development experiences and attitudes towards differentiated teaching.

Prior to data collection, pilot study for content-validation on three teachers of English as a foreign language outside of the final sample was performed. To elicit comments on the instrument's language, coherence, and applicability, these teachers were asked to fill and review it. Through moderation, the instrument was made understandable, unambiguous, and properly articulated with study objectives. Several questions were rewritten for their wording and order based on responses received.

Final questionnaires were distributed online once validated to all participants on time via Google Forms. There was an introduction before the form explaining study purpose, guaranteeing anonymity, and ensuring it was completely voluntary to

participate. There was a reminder sent midway through the week to ensure maximum return rates, and participants were given a week to fill out questionnaires at their own convenience. All responses were obtained anonymously and saved securely to be analyzed. Informed consent and requirements for data confidentiality were maintained at all times.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Teachers' Involvement in Professional Development Programs*

The findings indicated that teacher participation in differentiated teaching-based PD activities was differentiated. Among 24 respondents, 11 teachers (45.8%) indicated that they had experienced such activities, while the majority (54.2%) said that they had never done that. Most respondents who have engaged in professional development (PD) had done so through in-house activities organized by their institution (90.9%), followed by mentoring programs (45.5%) and conference workshops/seminars (27.3%) (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** *Professional Development Organizers (Multiple Responses Allowed)*

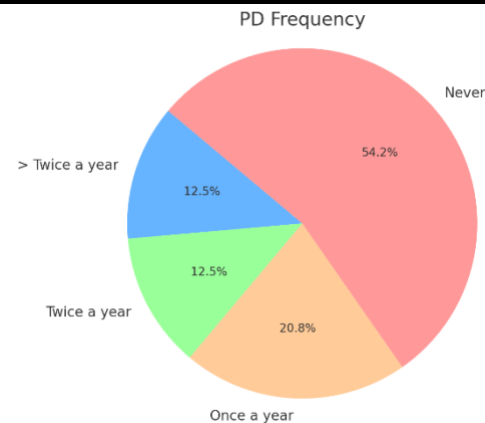
Organizer	N	Percent age of Attendees
Institution-organized	10	90.9%
Mentoring programs	5	45.5%
Workshops/seminars	3	27.3%
Peer Collaboration	3	27.3%
Online courses/webinars	2	18.2%
Private organizations	1	9.1%

This indicates that, despite the limited presence of externally or self-funded training, institutional initiatives continue to play the leading role in influencing teachers' participation in professional development.

Interestingly, as critically examined by years of experience, the more experienced teachers with over five years of experience were likely to engage in professional development (63.6%) than less experienced teachers. Experienced teachers attended fewer professional development meetings and fewer perceived that they were able to implement differentiation. This would suggest an association between teaching years and professional growth, either from increasing familiarity with school organization or increasing teacher independence with experience.

These findings confirm the three factors Desimone (2009) found most critical to PD participation: accessibility, institutional support, and relevance. The relatively low degree of PD participation is most probably attributed to systemic constraints like time, availability, or incentive shortages. It corroborates the findings of Astuti and Lammers' (2017) survey of EFL teachers in Indonesia that institutional dependency and agency constraints discourage ongoing professional development.

Only 12.5% of respondents indicated attending PD more than two times a year, and 20.8% indicated doing so on a yearly basis. The average satisfaction score for PD relevance and appropriateness was greater (3.5) in the smaller cohort of more regular attenders (over twice a year) than less regular or never-attenders (2.9). This would suggest that teachers' perceptions of the worth of the sessions, particularly classroom application, may be affected by having repeated contact with professional development. In light of the increasing demand of individualized education in classrooms of varying learners, this percentage is concerning (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1. Frequency of Differentiated Teaching Professional Development*

The frequency of teachers' active engagement in professional development activities was also variable. While the majority of the respondents indicated that they never or seldom engaged in formal professional development (as in Figure 1, where 54.2% said that they "never" did), what they responded to the other items was that they favored reflective and collaborative approaches to learning. This implies that teachers will automatically honor professional reflection and collaborative engagement if given the chance, though formal professional development may be absent. This result is in line with Syahria et al. (2024), whereby they discovered that reflective journal writing and peer discussion are highly valued by Indonesian EFL teachers as a means of their informal professional practice development. Cahyono et al. (2023) also said that the teachers still developed through peer observation and internal reflection, which naturally happens instead of taking place in organized programs, although such opportunities are not available in formal professional development in the provided context.

This also presents a contradiction: there is potential for professional development through reflective and collaborative practice but not yet realized

because of institutional support and limited access. The variations depict a systemic incoherence between dominant PD models and teacher motivation. Conversely, Wulyani (2017) found that teachers reported greater consistency between preferred learning styles and actual participation in school-based professional development environments where mentoring and structured cooperation were present. This contrast suggests that English language center circumstances, which are not generally infused with mentoring processes as part of their functioning, limit opportunities for long-term, reflective, and collaborative professional development.

Rather than being left to chance or individual initiative, the findings indicate that stimulating reflection and peer collaboration needs to be expressly built into the institutional PD system. Particularly in non-formal education contexts, such embedding can close the gap between teachers' positive attitudes towards professional learning and actual participation.

### ***Learning Satisfaction: Professional Development Quality and Applicability of Training***

Overall, the professional development was deemed relevant and useful by the teachers who participated in the professional development. They rated practicality 3.18 and relevance 3.36 on a 4-point Likert scale. The teachers perceived the professional development sessions as being somewhat to very useful in meeting their teaching needs, according to these ratings. Lesson planning (18.2%), classroom management (36.4%), and instructional strategies like scaffolding and flexible grouping were most useful. This research reinforces Tomlinson's (2014) argument that teachers will more readily accept and use professional development on a daily basis if it brings to them practical, usable concepts instead of theory (Table 2). Professional development (PD) facilitates

sustainable pedagogical change through spanning the gap between learning and practice and furnishing teachers with job-worthy teaching skills. This aligns with Desimone's (2009) model, which advocates for subject matter focus and active learning as integral facets of effective professional development designs.

**Table 2.** *Perceptions of PD Quality and Applicability (Likert Scale 1-4)*

Aspect	M i n	M a x	Mean	SD
Relevance to teaching needs	2	4	3.36	0.67
Practicality of strategies	2	4	3.18	0.75
Addressing classroom challenges	2	4	2.91	0.54

Syahria et al. (2024) also received the identical results, as they explained that Indonesian EFL teachers appreciated professional development workshops more if they were strongly connected to classroom practice, particularly classroom management and lesson differentiation. Cahyono et al. (2023) also found that teacher follow-up application levels were the highest for sessions that provided hands-on teaching materials like lesson differentiation templates and flexible grouping structures.

When asked whether the professional development tackled their actual classroom problems, the mean dropped to 2.91, in spite of the overall high marks for applicability and practicality. The discrepancy suggests that while the topics of professional development were appreciated theoretically, they were less effective at pragmatic problems such as managing overcrowded classrooms, coping with few instructional materials, and coping with time constraints. This divergence is

probably the result of a misalignment between localized class issues and overall professional development material. Teachers in this research, for example, most frequently identified insufficient class materials and planning time as specific obstacles; however, these matters were not directly discussed in professional development workshops. This is a response to criticisms by Hawanti (2014) and Hunzicker (2011) of not contextualized generalized PD models. It is commonly observed by the majority of researchers that inadequately contextualized PD programs have a fundamental shortcoming, and this is expressed by means of the disparity between theoretical content and its execution in practice.

In addition, only nine out of eleven teachers who reported having been involved in professional development activities were given follow-up or supplementary resources. Not following up after training is an instance of a gap within the professional development process whereby learning opportunities, application in practice, and skill consolidation in practice are not formulated subsequent to the initial introduction. Follow-up activities such as mentoring, coaching, and sharing of resources are key elements of successful professional learning, in line with Desimone's (2009) model centerpiece and supported by Hawanti (2014), who asserted that professional development (PD) needs to be continuous and interactive if it is to solve the range of problems Indonesian teachers face in classrooms.

In this case, teachers reported they desired context-dependent support, like mentorship, classroom demonstration, and hands-on modeling, rather than generic training courses. This supports research conducted by Syahria et al. (2024), which affirmed that teachers in non-formal learning settings appreciated professional development that included practical examples and real-time feedback. Likewise, Cahyono et al. (2023)

found that, particularly in differentiated teaching, peer observation and mentoring were more influential in pedagogical change than workshop-type seminars.

These results show some congruence with Desimone's (2009) model. Teachers' recognition of reflection and mentoring show some active learning, and high relevance rating shows high focus on the topics. Low classroom problem-solving and lack of follow-up show weaknesses in coherence and length, two of the most important features of effective professional development in Desimone's model.

Thus, even when the content of professional development workshops is highly valued, unless they are supported by systems of ongoing support, their longer-term effects will be limited. These kinds of conclusions imply that the delivery of professional development in English language centers must shift away from isolated training workshops toward more integrated models of professional development involving mentorship, sensitivity to local environments, and cooperative learning cycles. Without these factors, professional development can become instructional but, in the end, disconnected from teachers' daily working lives.

### ***Teacher Engagement and Active Learning***

During PD, there was variable level of engagement. Such a large majority of teachers participating in PD describing their experience as "Collaborative" (54.5%) or "Reflective" (27.3%) suggests active engagement and an intention to bring PD content back to their own teaching practice. This perspective underpins evidence demonstrating the value of teacher collaboration in professional development processes because active participation ensures greater insight and appreciation of new and successful pedagogical methods, enhancing the motivation of teachers and students



(Lofthouse & Thomas, 2015; Zulu & Bertram, 2019).

This is supported by other research focusing on the value of such professional learning communities. O'Dowd and Dooly (2021) argue that inter-professional cooperation between teachers in the workplace creates support for each other that enhances reflective practice capable of solving teaching problems successfully. As in my research, problem-based learning, experiential learning, and peer teaching are referenced in the literature as the cornerstones of designing effective teacher involvement in professional development programs, showing their essential role in constructing adaptive learning environments (Wang, 2024).

### ***Institutional Support and Implementation of Differentiated Teaching***

Institutional support was among the variables that significantly influenced the implementation of differentiated instructional strategies. Most respondents (54.2%) indicated their institution was "somewhat supportive," while 41.7% indicated it was "very supportive." The implication of this kind of support is manifested in the way schools have to put great emphasis on differentiated instruction that addresses various learner requirements, as Smets and Struyven (2018) observe. Textbooks, computer software, and periodic training were the most common resources provided. Ongoing institutional support is also indicated by the fact that relatively few teachers noted that they received regular coaching or mentoring after professional development. Only 45.5% of participants indicated they had taken part in mentoring programs, and even fewer pursue follow-up coaching, although 96% of participants indicated their institution was at least "somewhat supportive." External professional development programs supported by private organizations were effectively zero (9.1%). These findings refer

to an over-reliance on internal activities, which can be less diverse in content and delivery modalities despite being convenient. Kyeremeh et al.'s (2021) study also supports this phenomenon, noting that planning time in a differentiated setting tends to interfere with other important tasks such as administrative and assessment tasks.

Less than 1% of the teachers used differentiated teaching on a daily or weekly basis in the classroom. Brevik et al. (2018) asserted that to provide the proper stimulus for children with a lot of potential for learning, there has to be a range of pedagogical approaches, and this would necessitate a range of resources. Tiered assignments, instruction to individual needs, and technology integration were the most frequently used differentiation practices as reported by the respondents. Especially in the case of content and process differentiation, these align with Tomlinson's (2014) basic principles of differentiated education. For example, instruction to individual needs reflects process variation based on students' learning profiles, whereas tier assignments reflect attempts to address difficulty in subjects with students' readiness levels. Even fewer segmented their products or learning environments, showing that the entire concept was not yet being applied at all. This could be due to poor scaffolding by PD programs, fewer resources available, or not enough time. Teachers can half-effectively apply Tomlinson's system, focusing on those that are easiest to implement in small classroom environments, if they do not have support from their school. Strategy confidence was low at 2.83 on a scale of 4. Student resistance, lack of resources, and time constraints all limited use.

Hatmanto and Rahmawati (2023) say that teachers need to allow sufficient time for planning and adapting materials for the varying needs of learners. They also added that content differentiation may be challenging in terms of effective time

management. Classroom application can be hindered by pragmatic constraints, as illustrated by Otaiba et al. (2011), who advocated that despite teachers' best intentions towards the use of differentiated teaching, they often end up giving the same work to all learners despite their differing skill levels.

Typically, results show partial alignment with both Desimone's (2009) and Tomlinson's (2014) concepts, although PD activities discussed within this research showed potential in content implementation and collaborative teacher activities. Desimone says that five common features need to be incorporated in every efficient professional development program, including duration, coherence, active learning, subject matter focus, and collective participation. Although teachers felt comfortable and experienced peer mentoring advantages on co-taught activities, this research generates discontinuities in continuity of coherence and time due to missed follow-up, isolated hands-on exemplars, and hastened trainings. This rules out pedagogical change and longitudinal professional development which Desimone's program aims to initiate.

Practice also only partially adhered to Tomlinson's model of differentiated teaching, aiming at varying environment, process, product, and content in alignment with students' profile, interests, and readiness. Although product differentiation and environmental adaptation continued to be avoided, teachers implemented strategies associated with content and process differentiation (e.g., tiered activities, flexible grouping) on a "frequent" basis. Full implementation of differentiated teaching was hindered by structural factors, such as the absence of ongoing institutional support, material constraints, and planning time.

All of these findings imply systemic professional development design and delivery reform, particularly in such non-formal

learning settings as English language institutes. Institutional professional development initiatives need to be redesigned to more explicitly incorporate the elements outlined in both frameworks as part of an attempt to yield sustainable, equity-driven classroom change. This will involve giving teachers contextualized, frequent, and feedback-rich professional learning that not only informs them but also allows them to apply differentiated teaching in an integrated manner. The inclusion of theory-based design into professional learning will ensure that the "what" (Tomlinson) and "how" (Desimone) of instruction are both addressed in substantial, practical terms.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored EFL teachers' experience with their PD on differentiated teaching. Conclusions are that PD is widely seen to be valuable, worthwhile, and relatively helpful to most teachers, but that take-up is variable. With little take-up of externally provided or self-directed courses, institutional provision is found to be the greatest predictor of take-up of professional development. While teachers valued the interactional and reflective nature of development sessions, the long-term effects of the courses were limited by inadequate provision of materials to take into the classroom and to provide post-course supporting feedback.

However, there were some limitations on the research. Firstly, it was only carried out in a single English language center, and this would have limited the findings to other more extensive or less homogeneous institutional contexts. Secondly, as answers to a self-report questionnaire are the product of participants' perceptions rather than objective recordings of practice, bias can be transmitted. Third, in-class observations or one-on-one interviews would have added greater validity and context to the teachers' self-reported experience,

although some qualitative data were obtained from open-ended questions.

In order to see directly how differentiated teaching evolves over the course of extended professional development activities, future studies should try to employ longitudinal designs or multi-institution case studies. In addition, an investigation into how student learning is a function of teacher professional development would give a clearer measure of the effectiveness of differentiation strategies. Finally, an exploration of the ways in which institutional leadership can facilitate professional development and the consequences of this for teacher agency can provide realistic policy and practice suggestions.

Notably, teachers still indicated a modest degree of confidence with the implementation of differentiated strategies, though reporting that the content of the professional development was relevant to their classroom conditions. Time pressure, minimal numbers of available materials, and occasional student resistance were among the conditions that limited implementation. These results reflect more pervasively a problem with the design of professional development; whereby theoretical exposure is not subsequently followed by continuing scaffolding and hands-on support. Institutional support was widely supported by most teachers, but relatively few teachers were provided with continuing help, such as post-training coaching or mentoring, that is necessary to allow professional development skills to be translated to classroom practice.

In addition, findings indicate a stronger call for systemic reform in thinking about professional development and its alignment with the careers of teachers, as well as how it is built. Though PD sessions were widely praised, there was failure to integrate policy and practice due to the disconnect between theoretical approaches and classroom use. Teachers generally work in conditions

that are barely addressed in professional development activities, such as workload intensity, rigid timetables, or limited resources. To have future professional development succeed in reality, these actual classroom settings need to be considered.

Some suggestions can be derived from these results. First, with the addition of follow-through activities such as classroom coaching, peer mentoring, and feedback cycles, institutions should make a concerted effort to make professional development on differentiated teaching more embedded, more regular, and more sustainable. Second, to make professional development courses more practical and provide instructors with more practical strategies that teachers can use directly, more practical components such as lesson demonstrations, microteaching, and simulation exercises based on the context must be added. Third, to prevent teachers from getting bogged down with administrative work while attempting to practice inclusive teaching styles, school administration must acknowledge and provide time for lesson planning that takes differentiation into account and modification of materials.

Furthermore, policy intervention is necessary to provide equity of access to teacher learning at school and between schools, including nonformal contexts such as language centers. Professional learning communities (PLCs) have to be established and cultivated so that collaborative teaching and problem-solving at the classroom teacher's level take place. Teacher agency has to be supported so that teachers have the opportunity to experiment with various models of differentiation, make pedagogical choices, and adjust their teaching to meet the emerging learning requirements of students.

In summary, the successful professional growth of differentiated teaching is only possible if extended beyond basic teaching and becomes a part of the institution's culture, where leadership nurtures

it, situates it within teachers' reality, and maintains it in the long term. Of more than just policy relevance to educational policymakers, school leaders, and curriculum planners who hold equity-focused teaching pedagogy to be important, this study contributes to the literature on how specific professional development can help teachers handle classroom diversity and enhance learning outcomes.

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