



**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: INCLUSIVENESS OF
LEARNING STYLES IN A BUSINESS STUDIES CLASSROOM –
A CASE STUDY OF A SELECTED PUBLIC SENIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN BOTSWANA**

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Abstract:

The study is about differentiated instruction: the inclusivity of learning styles in a Business Studies classroom. The study is important because it creates awareness as to why learners are failing to understand business concepts in a Business Studies classroom and how teachers' current way of teaching influences learners' mental attitudes towards learning. The study used a qualitative method. Business studies teachers, students and the head of department of Business Studies formed the population. Purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used as sampling techniques. Data drawn from the study suggested that Business Studies teachers were currently teaching their students predominantly using the lecture method; secondly, the main obstacle, which prevented Business Studies teachers from teaching by using differentiated instruction in their classrooms, was lack of resources; finally, one of the main recommendations was that Information Communication Technology (ICT) be integrated in government schools.

Keywords: differentiated instruction, inclusivity, learning styles, business concepts

To differentiate instruction is to recognize students by modifying the basic information, the preparation, the dialect, the inclinations in learning, the interface and responding in a reactive way (Hall, 2012). Hall emphasizes that differentiated instruction is a development to address education and learning for students of conflicting skills in the same course. The expectation of differentiating instruction is to maximize the development of individual learners and ensure their success by helping with the management of their learning (Hall, 2012). Instructors should try to meet the diverse

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needs of children, being proactive in modifying approaches to learning, education and assessment (Vickerman, 2007). By tackling the complete continuum of children's needs, instructors work adaptively and imaginatively through a series of "differentiation" methodologies to plan situations that lead to learning for all.

Differentiation is a complex issue that requires instructors to think about the effect their learning, education, and evaluation techniques have on children. An indispensable corner of learning, education and assessment is the requirement that instructors modify and regulate their procedures to support all children (Algozzine and Anderson, 2007). It is possible to refer to differentiation as an instructive reasoning that requires instructors to adapt their learning, education and assessment when modifying teaching modules to meet the needs of their children or perhaps anticipating that students will fit into existing educational programs (Cole, 2008; Rogers, 2007).

Everest (2003) states: "*Distinctive individuals have a few distinctive learning styles like working with books, others prefer recordings and other things down to earth. We have to address them all right now, the 'experts' are asking me to tell that my resume should look like "differentiation."* The suggestion is that teachers should use a variety of teaching methods if they want the learners to achieve better academic results.

1.1 Learning styles

Learning styles can be defined in various ways, depending on each person's point of view. Brown (2000), as cited in Gilakjani (2012), defines learning styles as the way people see and manage information in learning circumstances. Learning styles involve choosing one condition of learning or conditions over another. Murcia (2001) defines learning styles as outline common approaches found around the world which can be interpretative, sound-related or visual, that students use to fix an unused language or learn any topic as a student sees, hears and responds to a learning environment. Learning styles are sometimes viewed as characteristic cognitive behavior, full of feelings, and social and physiological in nature that serve as relentless pointers on how students see, relate and react to the learning environment (MacKeracher, 2004, p.5)

1.2 Critics of learning styles

Pashler et al. (2008) found no confirmation to support the truth that students who receive instructions adapted to their inclinations exceed those who have not received personalized instructions. These examiners found that giving different groups of students with unmistakable forms of instruction concurrent to their interface did not maximize their performance in a single test. In other words, the types of education currently being provided do not produce desired results in distinctive students. Furthermore, the results of the study showed that students may have different inclinations, but the alteration of these inclinations and individual qualities does not translate into academic improvement (Riener defends himself and Willingham, 2010; Scott, 2010). This is to say just because students are taught in their preferred method

does not guarantee that they would perform better if, for example, they are taught with methods that they do not like or prefer.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

A research was conducted by Sithole (2010) on the extent to which the teaching practices of Economic Science (another name for Business Studies) teachers in Botswana high schools conform to the pedagogical practices recommended by curriculum planners. The results of the study suggested that teachers and planners were “not singing from the same hymn”; therefore, the pedagogical practices of the teachers of Business Studies are in contrast with the expectations of the curriculum planners. The study also found that teacher-centered pedagogy was the dominant mode of teaching used to teach Business Studies in Botswana high schools.

During my teaching practice (co-author Onkabetse Sogo) in June, 2016 in Molepolole (a village in Botswana), Business Studies teachers at the school where I taught, deployed teacher-centered approaches/ methods of teaching. I observed that teachers read verbatim from textbooks and this practice disadvantaged those learners who were kinesthetic and visual learner in orientation. Only those who were auditory-orientated got something from the classroom. This study seeks to find out why teachers still use more teacher-centered methods of instruction and less student-centered teaching methods when teaching Business Studies in particular. The study was conducted at a public senior secondary school where I (co-author Onkabetse Sogo) where I did the second phase of my teaching practice (I will refer to this school as X for anonymity purposes).

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which senior secondary school’s Business Studies teachers allow for versatility in their classroom by taking the initiative to cater for diverse needs of their learners in a Business Studies classroom. The study also sought to find out the challenges faced by teachers in teaching Business Studies and the remedies that can be effected alleviate those challenges.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How are Business Studies teachers currently teaching their students?
2. What are the main obstacles which prevent business studies teachers from teaching by using differentiated instruction in their classrooms?
3. What could be the remedies that can be implemented to alleviate those obstacles?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to find out:

1. How Business Studies teachers are currently teaching their students.
2. The main obstacles which prevent business studies teachers from teaching by using differentiated instruction in their classroom.
3. The remedies that can be implemented to alleviate the identified obstacles.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study sought to bring awareness as to why learners were failing to understand the concepts in Business Studies classrooms. The study sought to find out if teachers differentiated their methods of teaching according to the learning styles of students. This was triggered by my visit to Dithejwane junior secondary school in 2016 where Business Studies the teachers at that school read verbatim from textbooks and used mostly the lecturer-centered methods in almost all the classes they taught. This study was done to address why teachers still adopt the lecture method even though it disadvantages some students. For example, during my teacher practice at Dithejwane in June 2016 the Business Studies teacher invited someone from outside to try and motivate the class. The problem was that the guest speaker predominately used the lecture method thus disadvantaging those who learn best by doing or seeing.

This study will benefit curriculum planners as they can use the information in this study to understand the challenges facing Business Studies teachers and how they can be tackled. This study will benefit teachers as they can use the findings of this study to understand learner's needs and adjust their teaching methods so that learners can get most out of every lesson taught.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

- Differentiated education: differentiated instruction is a point of reference for education and learning taking into account the different abilities of students in the same course (Algozzine and Anderson, 2007)
- Learning styles: the way people see and manage information in learning circumstances (Brown, 2000)
- Business studies: a field of reflection on business with the exercises that take place around the generation, dissemination and use of products and administrations (Kimocho, 2016)
- Pedagogical challenges: obstacles that hinder the achievement of learning objectives in learning, education and assessment and the related needs for competent progress (Kimocho, 2016).

2. Literature Review

The previous chapter had a brief overview of the topic differentiated instruction: the inclusive of learning styles in a Business Studies classroom. The following section will look at summarized results of other researchers and their findings on areas related to the three research questions, that is:

1. How are Business Studies teachers currently teaching their students?
2. What are the main obstacles which prevent Business Studies teachers from teaching by using differentiated instruction in their classroom? and
3. What could be the remedies that can be implemented to alleviate those obstacles?

A study was conducted by Ahmed (2013) to ascertain the form of instructional styles that instructors at a mid-sized, publicly sponsored Midwestern University used. The sample populace was 22 instructors. The study used a quantitative research approach.

The study had the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of educational instructors in terms of gender, age, position and years of teaching experience?
2. Is there a significant difference in average adult learning scale scores (PALS) among educators?
3. Is there a significant difference in the average scores between male and female education instructors on the Adult Learning Principles Scale (PALS)?
4. Is there a relationship between instructor teaching styles and their age?
5. Is there a relationship between instructor teaching styles and the general years of teaching experience and their experience at the University of the Midwest?

The results of the study indicated that there were two types of teaching styles among university education teachers at the University of the Midwest, the student-centered and the teacher-centered. However, the trend was that lecturers were more focused on student-centered teaching styles instead of being focused on lecturer-centred pedagogy. Furthermore, the study showed that no significant relationship was found between the teacher's age and his style of teaching. Furthermore, the study showed that no significant relationship was found between the instructor teaching style and the overall years of teaching or teaching experience at Midwestern University.

The study recommended that further research be conducted using a bigger sample to identify the teaching style of education at Arab universities.

Another research was conducted by Sithole (2010) on the extent to which the teaching practices of Economic Science teachers in Botswana high schools conformed to the pedagogical practices recommended by curriculum planners. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and used a questionnaire consisting of 28 lower level questions. The study used intentional sampling. The study had the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the professors of Business Studies on the professional relevance of the subject?
2. What are the pedagogical practices of Business Science teachers in Botswana high schools?
3. Do the professors of the Business Sciences use empirical and experimental pedagogies as established in the programs?
4. Do Business Science professors incorporate ICT into their classes?

The results of the study suggested that teachers and planners were not "*singing from the same hymn*", therefore, the pedagogical practices used by teachers of Business Studies were in contrast with the expectations of the curriculum planners. The study also found that teacher-centered pedagogy was the dominant mode of teaching used to teach Business Studies in Botswana high schools.

The study recommends, among other things, that for pedagogical practices of Business Studies teachers to be aligned with those prescribed by the curriculum planners, school authorities should establish support structures designed to monitor and ensure that Business Education is taught using suggested pedagogies. Sithole and Lumadi (2012) conducted a further investigation into the extent to which the pedagogical practices of Business Studies teachers in secondary schools in Botswana conform to pedagogical practices to impart business skills relevant to working practices. The study had the following research questions:

1. What are the pedagogical practices of teachers of economic subjects in Botswana high schools?
2. To what extent do teachers' current pedagogical practices conform to the aspirations of curriculum planners in commercial education?
3. What challenges and problems do teachers face when they employ experiential and entrepreneurial pedagogies in the teaching of professional business subjects?
4. To what extent do schools receive material resources for the effective delivery of business education?
5. What improvements could be made to improve the teaching of commercial subjects in schools?

The main results of the study were that professors of the Business Sciences/Studies mainly adopted the paradigm of the transmission of education. The fact that teachers did not use constructivist pedagogies prescribed in the curriculum has been attributed to a multiplicity of challenges they face in their daily practices. The challenges facing the pedagogy of Business Studies comes from a variety of sources such as the scarcity or unavailability of teaching materials and resources, a congested programme and problems related to the balance between the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Teachers indicated that the Business Studies programme was too long to be taught during regular school hours; it was not practical to expect teachers to complete the curriculum using pedagogically constructivist pedagogies as the curriculum was too burdensome.

The study concluded that a pedagogical model, based on results, to improve the delivery of the business curriculum was necessary. It was also recommended that support structures be set up and teachers be supervised to ensure that corporate education is conducted in accordance with established business curriculum standards.

Kimotho (2016) conducted a study on the pedagogical challenges facing the teaching of Business Studies and its impact on student achievement in the national examinations in Nyandarua County, Nigeria. The target population consisted of 27 secondary schools and 33 professors of Business Science who taught classes in national public days, extra County, County, Subcomark, Private and Subcomarcales. The sample size was obtained by random and intentional sampling. Data were collected from 10 professors out of 33 professors of Business Science. Data were collected through teacher questionnaires, head of departments' questionnaires, classroom observation checklist

and analysis of educational documents (Kimotho, 2016: 125). The study had the following research questions:

1. What are the pedagogical challenges that Economic Science teachers have to face in the process of teaching the subject?
2. Does the teaching environment determine the choice of teaching methods used by teachers of Business Studies in the classroom?
3. Do business science teachers have an adequate knowledge of the different teaching and learning methods available?
4. What are the factors behind the persistent performance below the average of commercial studies in national examinations established by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)?

The results of the study indicated that Business Studies is mainly in the hands of unqualified teachers. Most teachers used expository teaching methods and the apprentices were passive. Furthermore, most of the teachers were not trained and the internal examinations evaluated only the low levels of the cognitive domain which are knowledge and understanding, while the national examinations evaluated all levels of cognitive domain. Teachers did not prepare a marking scheme or test specification tables because they ignored or did not know how to prepare them. As a result of lack of adequate resources for teaching and learning, there was little integration between what was taught in the classroom and what was being taught.

3. Methodology

The previous section dealt with literature review on differential instruction. The following section describes the methods of collecting data, sample size and tools used to collect data from Kgosi Kgari Sechele Senior Secondary school.

The study used a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research methodology refers to the creation of clarifications on social marvels (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2009). The study used a subjective approach in data collection. The subjective level is able to accept feelings of character that cannot be felt, measured or moved because they lack physical substance.

3.1 Target Population

Borg and Gall (1989) define a target population as the individuals of a genuine or hypothetical set of individuals, occasions or objects the analyst wishes to generalize the comes out of the investigation. Business Studies teachers, students and one Business Studies head of the department formed part of the target population. The reason for including Business Studies teachers was that they were the ones imparting the knowledge to the learners; hence, it was imperative for them to be part of the study. The reason for including Business studies students was that they were the ones receiving the knowledge from the teacher; hence, it was imperative for them to be part of the study.

The total population for the study was twenty-five (35) study participants involving three (3) Business Studies teachers, twenty-one (31) Business Studies students and one (1) member of the management team. Form Five students were chosen because of their background knowledge of the subject matter as a result they should have a better understanding of the subject as compared to the Form Fours who were novel to the subject and had not really had any real experience such as writing an examination as such Form Fives were used as the sampling population.

3.2 Sampling Procedures

The study used simple random sampling to choose the students of the Business Studies to participate in the study. The reason for choosing a simple random sampling technique was because it allowed all students to have the same selection opportunities (Latham, 2007). Some of the advantages of simple random sampling include the ease of collection of the population sample and, due to the representativity of the sample obtained by simple random sampling, it is reasonable to generalize the results to the population. Purposive sampling was another sampling technique that was used in the study. The reason for choosing purposive sampling was to ensure that only teachers and students studying Business Studies were selected. Purposive sampling allows a fair way to select participants because the researcher will not waste time selecting a sample that does not help answering research questions, but will select those that have a purpose in their study (Teddlie, 2007).

Purposive sampling was preferred as the investigator specifically wanted Business Studies teachers and members of the management team to answer questions about the instructional methods they employ and their perspective regarding the extent to which the curriculum is differentiated or not.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

According to Godfred (2016), the tools of study are tools for data collection. These include questionnaires, interviews, observations and analysis of documents. The study used interviews, observations and analysis of documents for data collection.

3.3.1 Interviews

The study used interviews especially focus group interviews and direct interviews to collect data. The advantage of using interviews is that the researcher can follow ideas flexibly and probe responses by investigating motivations and feelings (Bell, 1999). The interviewer can also get more information, which the interviewee cannot tell by word of mouth when he observes social signals such as voice, body language and others (Opdenakker, 2006). The interviews are good because the way a response is articulated can mean a lot to a researcher; for example, the interviewer's tone or facial expression can give the researcher much information (Gray, 2004). The researcher developed a program in which the participants were interviewed during the course of the study.

3.3.2 Focus Group Discussion

The researcher had students in groups of five and then asked questions to the participants to express their opinions and thoughts. The reason for using discussion in the focus groups was that it gave the researcher the opportunity to verify his own opinion with respect to that of the participants (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003). Focus groups are good for students because one by one, they tend to intimidate them as such in a group situation, the members tend to be more open and the dynamics within the group and the interaction can enrich the quality and quantity of the necessary information (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003).

3.3.3 Document Analysis

Analysis of documents is studying literature or reading public documents, newspapers and private documents, such as minutes, diaries, letters and biographies. The reason for using the document analysis is that it provides personal information produced by an individual for personal use. It can be discovered that what a person said in an interview does not correspond to what the literature says, so the analysis of documents can serve to verify the validity of what was said in the interview. The study used documents such as class plans, the work plan, the Business Science teaching program and the student notebooks. Lesson plans helped to determine the extent to which teachers plan teaching materials that meet the needs of their students. Work patterns was used to determine if teachers planned activities that fit the needs of their students. The Business Sciences educational program was used to check if the teachers implemented the teaching methods recommended in class or if they did something else. Students' notebooks were used to determine if teachers differentiated content by learning ability or if they differed by process or by-product.

3.3.4 Observations

Observation is a previously planned study tool that is intentionally performed to answer research questions and objectives. Using this method, the researchers observed "*the interactions and events of the class, as they actually do*" (Burns, 1999, p.80). Flick (2006, p.219) also argues that observation "is an attempt to observe events as they naturally occur". More importantly, observation allows the researcher to combine it with questionnaires and interviews to gather "*relatively first-hand information*" (Johnson and Turner, 2003, page 314). It also allows the triangulation of data through the use of other strategies such as interviews (Holmes and Bloxham, 2007).

3.3.4.1 Observation Checklist

The study used a classroom observation checklist to assess how teachers used various teaching and learning methods, teacher pedagogy, and content-knowledge, student interaction with the teacher during the lesson and aids didactics used in the classroom

3.4 Rigor and Reliability

Burns and Grove (2001) defines triangulation as the collection of data from multiple sources that maintain the same focal points. The aim of using multiple methods in a study design according to Beitmayer, Ayres and Knafl (1998) is to counteract the limitations and distortions resulting from the use of a single method, thus increasing the reliability of the results (Duffy 1993).

The aim of the triangulation, as indicated by Burns and Grove (2001) is to achieve the results that the variance obtained reflects the evaluation of the character being studied.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The researchers applied to the Ministry of Basic Education for a research permit. The researcher used the research permit to apply for permission to use schools from the respective regional education offices since the study involved the use of minors. The regional office gave consent on behalf of parents or legal guardians. Participation was voluntary; that means that the respondents had the opportunity to withdraw at any point in time without punishment. The research data was confidential hence; the researcher did not disclose anything to third parties. The information was used strictly for academic purposes. The researchers used pseudo names to identify research sites and research participants. The researchers addressed the issue of risk by making sure that they used the language that respected learners as human beings. There were no monetary rewards attached to envisaged participation in the study by the research participants. However, the study findings are available to educators and teachers in general on request. In the study, ethical behavioral concerns are rules that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Resnik, 2015). This requires researchers to determine what is acceptable and unacceptable during the study. The Belmont Report (1974) summarizes three basic ethical principles relevant to the study of human subjects. This are in the question: What are respect for people, charity and justice? He goes on to say that, the researcher must make sure that the subject has received a full disclosure of the nature of the study, the risks, benefits, and alternatives, with an extended opportunity to ask questions.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

According to Simon and Goes (2013), limitations are events and issues that arise in a study and are beyond the control of an investigator. One of the limitations of the study was that the researcher focused on one high school in Molepolole; therefore, the results could not be generalized to all senior secondary schools in Botswana.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The previous section dealt with methods of collecting data, sample size and tools used to collect data from Kgosi Kgari Sechele Senior Secondary school. The following section will contain analysis of the data.

4.1 How Business Studies teachers currently teach their students

Evidence presented in this research suggests that the following were the most used teaching methods of business studies: lecture method, question and answer, group discussions, role plays, simulation, field trips, textbooks and experiential learning, that is, using real life examples to explain certain concepts.

The data shows that teachers use a variety of instructional methods to impact knowledge. The question becomes: How effective are they and do they mean that the teacher is catering for the diversity of his/her students? One student during a focus group session said that: *"I rarely understand the teacher during class I prefer to read on my own or read with a friend"*. When probed further the student explained: *"I wish the teacher could show us some pictures or videos instead of talking all the time."* "Talking all the time" means that the teacher uses lecturing most of the time and as such the method does not cater for these students hence her complaints. This means that although there are so many methods most teachers still prefer to use the lecture method.

When one teacher was asked why she used the lecture method more than any other method she said: *"The syllabus is long as such I do not have a choice but to use the lecture method"*. She further said: *"Even though I use the lecture method to try and cover the syllabus it is still not enough; I have to sacrifice my time and sometimes work in the holidays and sometimes on weekends and as such I do not have time to experiment with other teaching methods"*. What she is saying is that she would love to try other teaching methods like role plays and games but the syllabus is too long and curriculum planners should look into the matter in more details and try to design it in such a way that it does not take too long to finish. The teacher is also failing to understand that the lecture method assumes that all learners are the same and they learn in the same way. This was far from the truth because during a classroom observation the researchers observed that only a few students participated when the teacher used the lecture method and yet the teacher persisted even though a small number of students raised their hands. A study conducted by Sithole (2010) on the extent to which the teaching practices of business studies teachers in Botswana high schools conform to the pedagogical practices recommended by curriculum planners.

What has been discussed above is that teachers still believe in the traditional lecture method whereby the teacher stands and exposit information while learners sit passively and try to understand what is being articulated by the teacher. The problem here is that the method only favoured one group of students, that is, those who learn best by hearing. What about those who learn by doing or seeing? Do we neglect them and hope that soon they will understand the material?

The data shows that one of the most overly used teaching method after the lecture method is study groups, that is, grouping students into groups of five or ten and then they do a certain task after which they present their findings to the entire group. As with everything in life, it has its advantages and disadvantages. One of the biggest advantages is that group work benefits from peer to peer teaching as the old sage saying: *“Two heads are better than one”*. Teacher x said that: *“Group work simplified my life because for the first time I just marvel at my students during the presentations”*. She further said: *“Students are able to interact with each other and share ideas which they normally would not have especially if they are really shy”*. One student said that: *“I like to bounce ideas with my colleagues and find out how much I understand a topic and also I learn so much from others since each individual brings a different perspective to certain concepts and as such I really love group work”*. One student, still in the focus group, said that: *“Group work is a waste of time; these people are not as clever as I am as such I feel that they are slowing me down”*. One student also said that: *“Most of the time since my classmates know that I am the number one student in the school they tend to keep quiet and agree with anything I say without challenging me with anything; it is like they take my word as gospel.”*

The investigators found out that group work, especially group discussion, could be beneficial to students since it takes advantage of peer-to-peer learning. The disclaimer here is that for it to be effective it should be done systematically, that is, the teacher should be involved, that is, moving around to see if there is any work done and the teacher can use what is called mixed ability grouping whereby the teacher groups fast learners with medium learners and medium learners with slow learners. This is because during classroom observations, the investigators observed that the groups were picked randomly and there was no monitoring from the teachers point of view, in the end the groups preformed catastrophically in the presentations because it seemed like most of them misinterpreted the questions.

The investigators found out that some methods used in Business Studies included role plays, simulation and field trips. A disclaimer here is that they are used sparingly, one reason for them being done occasionally was explained by teacher one teacher when he said: *“Transport is our biggest problem since most of the time management takes a long time to approve the trips and funding and it also becomes a problem since the school normally does not fund such events, but we sometimes go and our students really appreciate it since they tend to be more lively in the field trips than in class”*. One student said that: *“I wish we can go to field trips every day since I love seeing things, meeting new people and the experience is always wonderful”*. One student also said: *“We feel more connected to nature and we tend to hear the teacher better”*. What the students are saying is that they learn better through experiential learning and field trips help them to relate concepts since they are directly engaged in the activity. Classroom observation showed that when the teacher asked questions about things that the students did in the field trips even though it was three weeks ago the students are able to recall better as compared to the information they just learned verbatim four minutes ago from the textbook when the teacher was dictating to them.

What has been discussed above is that experiential learning leads to more retention and better understanding as opposed to the traditional lecture method. This means that students learn better when they are actively involved in an activity and understanding tends to improve.

When going through lesson plans and other documents the investigators found out that in the student's column the word "listen" appeared more than any other words and under the teacher's column most of the objectives were of lower order in Bloom's Taxonomy. This explains why the lecture method is heavily overused and why methods like case studies are seldom used since they tend to test for high order cognitive skills.

After going through the documents, classroom observations, and interviews with students and teachers it was evident that the lecture method was the most preferred method and it was mainly because teachers had little to no understanding about individualized learning. When one teacher was asked about differentiated instruction she said: *"I just teach the same way I was taught by my teachers and it is the only teaching method that has worked with other past students; so why change a winning formula?"*. What the teacher failed to understand was that the "winning formula" works only on students whose learning style is primarily auditory, that is, those who learn by hearing and they greatly disadvantage those who learn by seeing and doing.

4.2 The main obstacles which prevent Business Studies teachers from teaching by using differentiated instruction in their classrooms

Sithole and Lumadi (2012) in their study about the extent to which the pedagogical practices of Business Studies teachers in secondary schools in Botswana conform to pedagogical practices to impart business skills relevant to working practices, found the results discussed here. The results showed that the challenges facing the pedagogy of Business Studies come from a variety of sources such as the scarcity or unavailability of teaching materials and resources, a congested programme and problems related to the balance between the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Teachers have indicated that the Business Studies programme is too long to be assigned only to teaching during school hours; it is not practical to expect teachers to complete the curriculum using pedagogically constructivist pedagogies as they are burdensome and very slow to execute.

Evidence presented in this research suggests the following were the main obstacles which prevented Business Studies teachers from teaching by using differentiated instruction in their classrooms: lack of resources, syllabus too long, language barrier and little to lack of knowledge about differentiated instruction.

Lack of resources was cited by far as the most challenging by all the teachers in the interviews. Classroom observations and document analysis showed that the recommended textbook for Business Studies was heavily used and it was the only method used both in the lesson plan and in classroom teaching. Transport was also cited. The problem with transport was that it was always delayed as such it took longer

for the students to go on field trips and sometimes they were cancelled since the transport took too long to arrive and sometimes it never arrived. Teacher G said: *“We always try to arrange things in time but nothing ever seems to work in our favour”*. What the teacher is saying is that they try by all means to cater for the needs of their learners but sometimes due to circumstances beyond human control they sometimes fall short of their objectives. A Study conducted Sithole and Lumadi (2012) on the extent that the pedagogical practices of Business Studies teachers in secondary schools in Botswana conform to pedagogical practices to impart business skills relevant to working practices found out that the challenges facing the pedagogy of Business Studies come from a variety of sources such as the scarcity or unavailability of teaching materials and resources. Kimotho (2016) conducted a study on the pedagogical challenges facing the teaching of Business Studies and its impact on student achievement in the national examinations in Nyandarua county and found out that one the challenges facing Business Studies teachers was lack of or inadequate resources.

Lack of internet access was a factor mentioned by teacher T during the interview. Teacher T said: *“Yes, we do have Wi-Fi but the students are restricted from coming to school with their phones or laptops and it is usually limited that is it is accessible in some places and not in all places.”* She further said: *“Internet could help us to download pictures and show to our students so as to cater for visual learners.”* The investigator probed teacher T and asked about the dangers of internet and teacher T said: *“Everything in life has a positive and a negative and as such we should change our attitudes and start to look at the internet more positively.”* She further said: *“We should encourage our students to be more responsible and we could also block some websites like Facebook so students can only focus on school related things.”* What the teacher is saying is that technology has its advantages and disadvantages as such it is our responsibility as individuals to show our students how to use it. We can use it to harm ourselves or to liberate ourselves; either way the choice is ours.

From classroom observations and during teacher interviews language was mentioned as a barrier to successful learning in a diverse classroom. The investigators observed that students participated less when the teacher used strictly English; it was mostly the A students and some B students that raised their hands but the rest of the class looked lost. The teacher then reiterated the same question, this time using Setswana and the result changed drastically; those whom initially did not raise their hands now raised their hands. Teacher G said: *“It is a challenge since I am obliged to code switch for the majority of the students to comprehend what am trying to articulate but the problem now becomes when they are supposed to sit for tests and examinations since they are in English”*. Teacher G further said: *“We try to convince them to translate on their own as you know students do what they know and these create extra work for us”*. What the teacher is articulating is that students in general tend to understand better when the information is presented to them in a language they understand in this case Setswana is their main language.

From the interviews with teachers, the syllabus was cited as one of the challenges that prevented teachers from teaching using differentiated instruction. Teacher G said: *“There are too many holidays and the syllabus is way too long; how do they expect us to finish it in a short period of time?”* By “they” the teacher was referring to curriculum planners; the argument here is that time is too little to cover the entire Business Studies syllabus and as such a revision should be made to the syllabus. A study conducted by Sithole and Lumadi (2012) on the extent to which the pedagogical practices of Business Studies teachers in secondary schools in Botswana conformed to pedagogical practices to impart business skills relevant to working practices found out that the Business Studies programme was too long to be completed during school hours, and it is not practical to expect to complete the curriculum using constructivist pedagogies as they are burdensome and too slow to use.

From classroom observations and teacher interviews it was evident that teachers lacked knowledge on differentiated instruction. One teacher on the interview asked: *“What is that? I never heard of such a thing?”* The investigators then further explained about the learning styles and the teacher showed some understanding but it was still limited. This proves that if the very people who are supposed to implement differentiated instruction have little knowledge about the subject matter, then how will students acquire this knowledge?

From the interviews with teachers, ill-discipline was one of the challenges faced by teachers in catering for the needs of the learners. Teacher X said: *“They hardly ever listen to anyone; we try to speak to them but it seems like the information goes from one ear to the other, these kids are impossible sometimes”*. What the teacher is saying is that some students have lost track of why they are in school and as such disturb the rest of the class leading to the teacher spending more time disciplining them and less time teaching.

4.3 Remedies to alleviate these obstacles

The evidence presented in this research suggests the following were the remedies that could alleviate those obstacles: to encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning and asking support from all stakeholders including management and various members of the community.

From the interviews with teachers, it was evident that learners were the key stakeholders in the learning process. Teacher G said: *“Learners need to know about delayed gratification, that is, doing something now and having the reward later.”* She further said: *“Most of our learners are into the “now”; they steal, they miss class and show bad manners towards adults.”* What the teacher is saying is that learners should change their attitude towards learning and the problem of ill-discipline would be alleviated.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that business studies is a vocational subject aimed at equipping learners with real world skills to enable them to compete successfully in the market place upon completion of their studies. Teachers are the driving force and as such should be equipped with the relevant pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to enable them to be up-to- date with current developments in the field of business studies. The duration of the business studies curriculum seems to hinder teachers to explore other teaching methods such as games and role plays and as such something need to be done about it.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. The curriculum should be revised so as teachers can be able to finish it in the time allowed;
2. Seminars to be conducted to teach teachers about differentiated instruction;
3. Parents should be encouraged to be engaged in their children's education.
4. Information communication technology should be integrated into government schools.

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