

Implementing differentiated instruction in the Greek state primary school: Teachers' attitudes and preferred differentiated strategies

Anastasia Mavroudi

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

mavana500@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper investigates the attitudes of Greek state school teachers of English towards differentiated instruction. A self-report questionnaire has served as a research instrument in this case. The questionnaire was completed by 149 teachers working in Greek state primary schools. The findings demonstrate that the respondents' overall attitude towards differentiated instruction is positive and that participants have adopted several differentiated strategies. Nevertheless, differentiated instruction cannot be said to have been fully implemented in the context of the Greek state school, due to teachers' misconceptions of its underlying principles, as well as practical considerations, such as lack of training and resources.

Keywords: differentiated instruction, differentiated strategies, English language teaching, Greek state schools, primary education

1. Introduction

In recent years, far-reaching changes in the socio-economic context worldwide have led to changes in the classroom populations of schools all over the world, including schools in Greece. Within the same classroom, there may be great diversity with regard to the students' native language, culture, socio-economic background, level of proficiency and other aspects. Consequently, teachers face the increasingly challenging task of designing lessons that meet the needs of all learners. The idea of differentiated instruction has emerged as a result of administrators', teachers', students' and parents' concerns with classroom heterogeneity.

2. Theoretical background

Differentiated instruction, henceforth referred to as DI, can be defined as "a broad framework that offers multiple approaches to meeting learners' needs" (Smith & Throne 2007: 6). Instead of ignoring differences in students' interests, learning styles, level of attainment, etc., as was the case in more traditional, teacher-centred methodologies, DI proponents encourage teachers to acknowledge individual learners'

characteristics and take them into account when preparing a lesson (Lawrence-Brown 2004; Tomlinson 1999). In this way, curricular objectives are met in a learning environment that is respectful of students' heterogeneity and uniqueness.

A small number of DI components will be briefly discussed here, due to their relevance to the findings presented in this paper. The list is by no means exhaustive, as many more DI principles and differentiated strategies could be added.

- (1) Educators are required to exhibit a degree of flexibility in their approach to teaching and to modify their instruction to accommodate learner differences, instead of expecting students to adjust themselves to the curriculum (Hall, Strangman & Meyer 2003)
- (2) Teachers are encouraged to discover what individual students already know (i.e. what is frequently referred to as "readiness") and to build on from there, along a learning continuum (Theisen 2003)
- (3) Emphasis is placed on developing learner autonomy and on instilling a sense of responsibility for the students' own learning e.g. through the use of learning contracts, simultaneous activities and flexible grouping. Students are provided with many options and their views are valued in the decision-making process (Βαστάκη 2010)
- (4) A change in teacher role ensues, since DI casts the teacher not in the traditional role of all-knowing provider of knowledge, but in that of facilitator of students' learning (Smith & Throne 2007)
- (5) DI relies heavily on group work, which should be combined with whole class and individualized instruction in order to cater for students with different learning profiles and background (Smith & Throne 2007)

As far as the impact of DI on students' learning outcomes is concerned, a number of studies indicate that DI can help both gifted students (Brighton et al. 2005; Tieso 2005) and children with learning difficulties (McAdamis 2001; McQuarrie, McRae & Stack-Cutler 2008) to improve their academic performance. Different age groups have also been found to benefit from DI e.g. primary school students (Bedee 2010; Valiandes 2015), middle and high school learners (Burns 2004; Rasmussen 2006). These studies attest to the effectiveness of DI and lend support to the claim that DI can maximise learning opportunities in an environment that embraces learner heterogeneity.

In the case of Greece, DI can be regarded as an innovative idea, given that it has been introduced relatively recently in the educational system. Up until September 2016, the teaching of English in Greek state schools was carried out according to the guidelines of the Cross-Thematic Curriculum (Presidential Decree Φ.Ε.Κ. 303/13-03-03). It was published in 2003 and constituted the first Greek curriculum to highlight the fact that each learner is different and that individual students' differences must be taken into consideration for the learning process to yield better results.

Moreover, in September 2011, a new curriculum for the teaching of all foreign languages in Greek state schools was published. The Integrated Foreign Languages Curriculum (IFLC) became the official curriculum in September 2016. It should be noted that the developers of the IFLC emphasise the importance of DI as an effective framework for highly diversified classrooms (Foreign Languages at School: Guide for the Foreign Languages Teacher 2011).

3. Methodology

Bearing the above in mind, it is important to examine the attitudes of Greek state school teachers towards DI and to discover whether they exhibit a clear understanding of its rationale and underlying principles. The matter of which differentiated strategies teachers adopt more frequently also merits attention.

A self-report questionnaire was therefore designed with the purpose of eliciting ample and easily analysable data on these issues. It was completed by 149 English teachers who worked in Greek state primary schools in the region of central Macedonia, in northern Greece. The particular region was selected due to its population size, geographical features and diversity. English language teachers in state schools in the region follow the same guidelines with regard to the curriculum, materials, hours of instruction, etc. as their colleagues throughout the country, since these guidelines are provided by the Greek educational authorities. Teachers in central Macedonia are also similar to their colleagues working in other parts of Greece in terms of age, educational background, formal qualifications and other characteristics. In this way, the conclusions drawn could be generalisable to all Greek state schools.

Participation in the study amounted to 23.5% of the target population (149 out of a total of 637 teachers). The sampling procedure used was area/ cluster/ stratified random sampling (Dörnyei 2003). This means that the population was divided into

groups according to the area they worked in and a random sample from each group was subsequently selected. Thus, all areas in the region were fairly represented.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The findings discussed in the present paper are drawn from the first and second parts. The aim of the first part was to determine the compatibility between participants' views and DI underlying principles. It was mostly designed as a Likert scale, requiring respondents to express their agreement or disagreement to a number of statements. A limited number of open-ended questions was included as well.

The purpose of the second part of the questionnaire was to elicit the frequency of use of various differentiated techniques in the participants' classrooms. A five-point scale was employed (5: always, 4: very often, 3: quite often, 2: seldom, 1: never). Information on the respondents' age, gender, educational background and teaching experience was also requested.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Teachers' attitudes towards DI

Participants are well aware of the diversity in classroom populations. They do not overlook learners' differences for the sake of establishing a homogeneous learning community. This can be seen in Table 1 below:

<i>Learners' individual differences</i>	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students can learn the same things, at the same time, in the same way	107	71.8	39	26.2	2	1.3	1	0.7

Table 1: Participants' perceptions of classroom heterogeneity

The overwhelming majority of participants (71.8%) strongly disagreed with the assumption that all students can learn the same things, at the same time and in the same way. Participants therefore acknowledge the heterogeneity of classroom populations.

Teachers were also asked to express their opinion on how best to deal with classroom heterogeneity. It was made clear that each participant could provide more

than one answer to this open-ended question, if he/she so wished. Interestingly enough, the majority stated that DI constitutes the most effective approach to teaching highly diversified classes. The following findings attest to the participants' overall positive attitudes towards DI. It should be noted here that answers are presented in the order of participants' preference.

<i>Best way to deal with learner heterogeneity</i>	N	%
Differentiated instruction	55	41.7
Grouping students according to level	30	22.7
Collaborative learning	30	22.7
Focus on weaker students	18	13.6
Use of various teaching methods and resources	15	11.4
Supplementary tuition	11	8.3
Individualised instruction	9	6.8
Teacher-centered approach	5	3.8
Assistant teacher in the classroom	4	3.0
Differentiated instruction, but need for more teaching hours and/or training	3	2.3
Positive classroom atmosphere	3	2.3
Designing lessons to cater for average learners' needs	2	1.5
Learner-centered approach and teacher flexibility	1	0.8
Students' taking more initiative	1	0.8
Total	187	141.7

Table 2: Participants' views on effective ways to deal with classroom heterogeneity

The percentage of participants opting for DI was nearly double the percentages of supporters of collaborative learning (22.7%) and of grouping students according to their level of attainment (22.7%), i.e. the second most popular answers. Other participants suggested that teachers should pay more attention to students facing difficulty (13.6%) or proposed the use of a variety of teaching methods and resources as a means of keeping all learners interested and motivated (11.4%). Some teachers proposed the introduction of methods currently unavailable in Greek state primary schools e.g. the employment of supplementary tuition in English for students facing

difficulty (8.3%) or having an assistant teacher in the classroom (3%). The practice of treating learners as a homogeneous group and preparing lessons that focus exclusively on the needs of average students was suggested by few participants (1.5%). This indicates that the majority of respondents do not consider this traditional form of instruction to be appropriate for today's highly diversified classrooms.

Furthermore, respondents' views on strategies to be used with heterogeneous groups of students appear to be compatible with DI tenets, as indicated in Table 3:

<i>Differentiated strategies for the teacher</i>	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Different questions based on students' level of attainment	2	1.4	8	5.4	84	56.8	54	36.4
Lesson designed according to students' profiles/needs	1	0.7	9	6.0	79	53.0	60	40.3
Variety of techniques for presentation of lesson	2	1.3	1	0.7	51	34.2	95	63.8

Table 3: Teachers' views on various strategies for the differentiated classroom

Thus, 93.2% (agree/strongly agree) of the participants believe that the teacher should address easier questions to students facing difficulty and harder ones to more proficient learners. When asked if they believe that a lesson is more effective when it is designed with the students' learning profiles and individual needs in mind, about half of the participants (53%) agreed and 40.3% expressed strong agreement. Lastly, when invited to give an opinion as to whether teachers should use a variety of techniques for the presentation of the lesson, participants almost unanimously agreed. 34.2% expressed their agreement and 63.8% strongly agreed with this statement. It can therefore be concluded that catering to the needs of students with different learning profiles is regarded as imperative by the participants.

Similarly, as far as differentiation of the materials used in the classroom is concerned, participants' attitudes again seem to be compatible with the principles of DI. This can be seen in Table 4:

<i>Activities selected in the classroom</i>	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Same degree of difficulty for all students	20	13.8	97	66.9	25	17.2	3	2.1
Different activities based on students' level of attainment	2	1.4	17	11.6	106	72.0	22	15.0
Same activities, additional support for students facing difficulty	1	0.7	10	6.7	91	61.5	46	31.1

Table 4: Participants' attitudes towards differentiation of activities

Participants were asked if they agree with the idea of having all students work on activities with the same degree of difficulty. The vast majority (80.7%) claimed to disagree or strongly disagree. In addition to this, 87% were positively predisposed towards the idea of their students being given different tasks to do depending on the learners' level of attainment. Finally, participants were invited to state if they agreed with having all students work on the same activities, while the teacher provided additional support to learners facing difficulty. An overwhelming 92.6% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this idea.

Although the findings so far lead to the conclusion that participants demonstrate a deep understanding of DI underlying principles, somewhat contradictory results can be found in Table 5 with regard to teacher roles:

<i>Teacher roles</i>	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Teacher acting as monitor	2	1.4	1	0.6	72	48.6	73	49.4
Whole class instruction	2	1.4	52	36.9	77	54.6	10	7.1

Table 5: Teacher roles in heterogeneous classrooms

Respondents were asked whether the teacher could assign tasks to the students to work on, while he/she could act as monitor and interfere only when necessary. 48.6% of participants agreed and 49.4% strongly agreed with this idea, which entails that the teacher relinquishes his/her role of classroom authority in order to promote the development of students' autonomy. Enabling students to assume more responsibility for their own learning constitutes an essential goal of DI (Smith & Throne 2007).

However, this view of the role of the teacher is in conflict with the findings related to whole class instruction. Participants were also asked to state whether they believed that it is better for the teacher to work with all the students at the same time, so as he/she can have more control over the class. The majority of respondents (61.7%) agreed with whole class instruction, whereby the embedded teacher role is that of an omniscient authority.

These contradictory findings could indicate that respondents believe it possible to assume different roles during the various activities carried out in the classroom, i.e. they can act as controllers of activities at times and as monitors at other times. It could also be the case that teachers agree with ceding a part of their authority in principle, but are constrained by practical considerations, e.g. lack of time or pressure to cover the subject matter. Thus, they may resort to well-established, teacher-centered modes of instruction.

Lastly, it is possible that some participants accept the change in teacher roles on the surface, but do not have a clear understanding of the rationale behind it (Gardner 2008). This could seriously impede DI implementation in Greek state primary schools. An incomplete or superficial grasp of the underlying principles of educational innovations is likely to result in misunderstandings, confusion and teacher disillusionment, and, finally, the new ideas may be altogether rejected for the sake of more familiar practices (Carless 2003; Karavas-Doukas 1995).

4.2 Teachers' use of differentiated strategies

The findings presented below lead to the conclusion that a number of differentiated techniques have been adopted by state school teachers of English. Others, however, have not been equally well-received, e.g. the preparation of lists with various homework options and the use of graded tests for students with different levels of attainment.

4.2.1 Creating lists of homework assignments

Information on the participants' reported use of homework lists can be seen in the following table:

<i>Homework setting</i>	Always		Usually		Often		Rarely		Never		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Providing a homework list	-	-	3	2.0	18	12.1	75	50.3	53	35.6	149	100.0
Teacher sets homework	79	53.4	51	34.5	16	10.8	-	-	2	1.3	148	100.0

Table 6: Setting homework for students

In accordance with DI tenets, providing a list, so that learners can choose homework assignments that match their level of attainment, interests and learning styles, could increase learner autonomy and motivation (Theisen 2003). Nevertheless, English teachers in Greek state schools appear unconvinced of the benefits of this strategy. 50.3% of the participants claimed that they seldom use homework lists and 35.6% stated that they never do so. Interestingly enough, no participant reported that he/she creates lists of homework activities on an everyday basis. On the other hand, more than half of the participants (53.4%) stated that they always decide on homework themselves, instead of letting the students choose. The percentage of those who usually do so is also high (34.5%). It is possible that participants consider the provision of homework lists to be time-consuming for the teacher to prepare and somewhat confusing for the students, who are not used to making such choices.

4.2.2 Group/Pair work

Contrary to homework lists, group work and pair work seem to be popular with state school teachers of English. With regard to the former, students can be grouped according to their level of attainment, with groups of students facing difficulty carrying out simpler tasks and more proficient learners tackling tasks of increased complexity. Learners could also be grouped according to shared interests. Each member could take on a different role, based on his/her abilities and talents (Βαστάκη

2010; Huebner 2010). Participants claimed to group their students according to shared interests rather than the learners' level of attainment, as illustrated in Table 7:

<i>Group work</i>		Always	Usually	Often	Rarely	Never	Total
Students grouped according to level of attainment	N	2	15	32	53	42	144
	%	1.4	10.4	22.2	36.8	29.2	100.0
Students grouped according to interests	N	21	59	49	10	5	144
	%	14.6	41.0	34.0	6.9	3.5	100.0

Table 7: Teachers' use of group work

Only 1.4% of the teachers claimed to always group students according to their level of attainment, whereas the majority of the participants opt for this technique either rarely (36.8%) or never (29.2%). Conversely, 14.6% reported that they always group learners according to shared interests, 41% stated that they usually do so and 34% often group students based on their interests.

Furthermore, participants were asked to reflect on how the learners' level of attainment influences the way they pair their students. The results are presented in Table 8:

<i>Pair work</i>		Always	Usually	Often	Rarely	Never	Total
Pairing students with the same level of attainment	N	2	23	57	33	6	121
	%	1.6	19.0	47.1	27.3	5.0	100.0
Pairing students with different levels of attainment	N	12	56	54	14	3	139
	%	8.6	40.3	38.8	10.1	2.2	100.0

Table 8: The influence of learners' level of attainment on pair work

47.1% stated that they often pair students with the same level of attainment, while 27.3% claimed to rarely do so. Moreover, Greek state school teachers showed a preference to pairing students with a different level of attainment, since the majority of participants claimed to use this strategy in most pair work activities (40.3%). 38.8% also stated that they often pair their students in this way. This strategy offers

students facing difficulty the opportunity to learn from their peers, whereas more proficient students can consolidate their knowledge and gain in self-confidence by helping a classmate (Βαστάκη 2010).

On the whole, the use of pair and group work appears to be well-established in Greek state schools and participants seem to foster clear ideas and preferences on how these techniques should be implemented. This can be attributed to the fact that teachers may be already familiar with pair/group-driven activities, which often featured in learner-centered methodologies e.g. the Communicative Approach (Richards & Rogers 2001). Attempts to implement the Communicative Approach in Greek state schools have been documented in research (e.g. Karavas-Doukas 1995).

The overlap between techniques that have already been incorporated in the participants' teaching repertoires and strategies consistent with DI tenets may guarantee the continued use of these techniques and may encourage teachers to experiment with other DI components as well.

4.2.3 Portfolio assessment

Although teachers generally viewed group work and pair work favorably, the same cannot be said about the use of portfolios in the English language classroom. Participants were asked to specify whether their students collect their work in a folder, adding their own comments to each item, and whether this folder is also used for the purpose of evaluating students' overall progress. The use of various assessment methods, including portfolio assessment, is consistent with DI principles, as it can help teachers to determine individual students' progress along the learning continuum (Βαλιαντή & Ιωαννίδου-Κουτσελίνη 2008). Results on the use of portfolios are presented in table form below (Table 9):

	Always		Usually		Often		Rarely		Never		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Use of portfolios</i>	23	15.6	22	15.0	36	24.5	31	21.1	35	23.8	147	100.0

Table 9: Teachers' reported use of portfolios

15.6% of the teachers claimed that portfolios are always used in their classes, 15% stated that they usually are and 24.5% that they are often used. However, 21.1% rarely use portfolios with their classes and 23.8% of participants never do so. These findings demonstrate that a large number of English teachers feel uncomfortable with the idea of portfolio assessment.

4.2.4 Written tests

Greek state school teachers of English invariably prepare their own pencil-and-paper tests for the purpose of assessing their students' learning. In response to the increasing heterogeneity of classroom populations, teachers may need to create graded tests. These materials can contain the same number of exercises for all learners but can be of varied difficulty for different groups of students. This would enable teachers to evaluate the progress of learners facing difficulty without reducing their sense of self-efficacy. Participants were asked to state how frequently they produce a single version of a written test for the whole class, as opposed to using multiple versions of a test. The results are illustrated in Table 10 below:

<i>Written tests</i>		Always	Usually	Often	Rarely	Never	Total
Using the same test for all students	N	90	34	16	4	2	146
	%	61.6	23.3	11.0	2.7	1.4	100.0
Using tests of varied difficulty	N	2	14	17	46	62	141
	%	1.4	9.9	12.1	32.6	44.0	100.0

Table 10: Teachers' use of written tests

The majority of participants (61.6%) claimed that they always use one test for all learners. In addition to this, 34.3% stated that they either usually or often administer the same test to all students in a class. Considerably fewer teachers claimed that they rarely or never produce a single test for all learners (2.7% and 1.4% respectively). Conversely, 32.6% rarely use graded tests and 44% of participants never differentiate tests. It may be the case that the preparation of one version of an effective and appropriately designed test is a demanding task for most teachers. Designing graded testing materials may therefore seem too challenging and time-consuming.

5. Conclusion

The aim of the present paper is to investigate the attitudes of Greek state schools teachers towards DI and to discover which differentiated strategies they prefer to use in the classroom. The research findings indicate that Greek state school teachers of English are well aware of the diversity in classroom populations. They are also positively predisposed towards DI and report the use of several differentiated strategies, e.g. flexible grouping. Nevertheless, the full implementation of DI in Greek state school classrooms has not yet been accomplished; participants seem largely unconvinced of the advantages of certain differentiated strategies, such as the provision of homework lists and the use of portfolios, perhaps due to these strategies placing more demands on teachers in terms of time, effort and resources. Moreover, misconceptions on the part of educators of DI underlying principles, e.g. regarding changes in teacher roles, could have a negative effect on the implementation process.

Taking the above into consideration, it would be useful to provide teachers with more opportunities for training in the underpinnings and techniques of DI. In this way, they can form a clear picture of what DI entails and become more familiar with differentiated strategies. The teachers' individual characteristics (e.g. their age and formal qualifications) need to be taken into account as well, in order to design programs that effectively meet their needs for professional development.

References

- Βαλιαντή, Σ. & Μ. Ιωαννίδου-Κουτσελίνη (2008). Εφαρμογή της διαφοροποίησης της διδασκαλίας στις τάξεις μικτής ικανότητας. Προϋποθέσεις και θέματα προς συζήτηση. Στο *10^ο Παγκόπριο Συνέδριο Παιδαγωγικής Εταιρείας Κύπρου*, Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου, Λευκωσία. Διαθέσιμο στο: http://www.diapolis.auth.gr/diapolis_files/drasi9/ypodراسi9.2b_2013/2 [23/2/2015].
- Βαστάκη, Μ.Σ. (2010). Η διαφοροποίηση στη διδασκαλία. *Επιστημονικό Βήμα* 12: 121-135.
- Bedee, S. (2010). *The impact of literature circles on reading motivation and comprehension for students in a second grade classroom*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Graduate College of Bowling Green State University.
- Brighton, C., H. Hertberg, T. Moon, C.A. Tomlinson & C. Callahan (2005). *The feasibility of high-end learning in a diverse middle school*. Research Monograph RM05210. Charlottesville: National Research Centre on the Gifted and Talented.
- Burns, J. (2004). *An analysis of the implementation of differentiated instruction in a middle school and high school and the effects of implementation on curriculum content and student achievement*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Seton Hall University.
- Carless, D.R. (2003). Factors in the implementation of task-based teaching in primary schools. *System* 31: 485-500.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Foreign languages at school: Guide for the foreign languages teacher* (2011). Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. Available: <http://rcel.enl.uoa.gr/xenesglosses/> [19/2/2013].
- Gardner, S. (2008). Changing approaches to teaching grammar. *ELTED* 11: 39-44.

- Hall, T., N. Strangman & A. Meyer (2003). *Differentiated instruction and implications for UDL implementation*. Report for the National Center for Accessing the General Curriculum (NCAC). Available: <http://www.cast.org/ncac/> [2/2/2010].
- Huebner, T. (2010). What research says about differentiated instruction. *Educational Leadership* 2: 79-81.
- Karavas-Doukas, E. (1995). Teacher identified factors affecting the implementation of an EFL innovation in Greek public secondary schools. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 8(1): 53-68.
- Lawrence-Brown, D. (2004). Differentiated instruction: Inclusive strategies for standards-based learning that benefit the whole class. *American Secondary Education* 32(3): 34-62.
- McAdamis, S. (2001). Teachers tailor their instruction to meet a variety of student needs. *Journal of Staff Development* 22(2): 1-5.
- McQuarrie, L., P. McRae & H. Stack-Cutler (2008). *Differentiated instruction provincial research review*. Edmonton: Alberta Initiative for School Improvement.
- Rasmussen, F. (2006). *Differentiated instruction as a means for improving achievement as measured by the American College Testing (ACT)*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago.
- Richards, J.C. & T.S. Rogers (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd edn.). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, G.E. & S. Throne (2007). *Differentiating instruction with technology for K-5 classrooms*. New York: ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education).
- Theisen, T. (2003). Differentiated instruction in the foreign language classroom: Meeting the diverse needs of all learners. *Communique* 6: 1-8.
- Tieso, C. (2005). The effects of grouping practices and curricular adjustments on achievement. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* 29(1): 60-89.
- Tomlinson, C.A. (1999). Mapping a route toward differentiated instruction. *Educational Leadership* 57(1): 12-16.
- Φ.Ε.Κ. Τεύχος Β' αρ. φύλλον 303/ 13-3-2003 Παράρτημα, Τόμος Α'. (2003). Αθήνα: Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων - Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο.
- Valiandes, S. (2015). Evaluating the impact of differentiated instruction on literacy and reading in mixed ability classrooms: Quality and equity dimensions of education effectiveness. *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 45: 17-26.