



Differentiated Instructions Towards Increased Awareness on Gender Issues Among Grade 10 Students, S.Y. 2025-2026

Jhen Mhae M. Dueñas¹, Dr. Esperanza B. Lusanta¹

1 – Graduate School, Golden Gate Colleges

jhenmhaeduenas@gmail.com/0009-0000-3116-9149

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in increasing the awareness of gender issues among Grade 10 students during the School Year 2025–2026. The study focused on how varied instructional strategies such as role play, debate, and interview projects contributed to students' understanding of gender concepts, respectful attitudes, and classroom participation. It also identified the difficulties encountered by students during the implementation of differentiated activities.

The study utilized a mixed-methods research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The participants consisted of 95 Grade 10 students from Pres. Jose P. Laurel National High School. Quantitative data were gathered through a teacher-made pre-test and post-test, as well as a researcher-made questionnaire. Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, composite mean, and ranking were used to analyze the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative responses.

Findings revealed that students initially demonstrated only moderate awareness of gender issues during the pre-test, with most learners falling under the Satisfactory and Fair levels. After the implementation of differentiated instruction, significant improvement was observed, as 57.89% of the students reached the Outstanding level and 36.84% achieved Very Satisfactory performance in the post-test. Results further showed that role play, debate, and interview projects effectively improved students' understanding of gender equality, empathy, critical thinking, respectful attitudes, and collaboration. However, students also experienced challenges such as communication apprehension, low self-confidence, spontaneous expression difficulties, and group collaboration issues.

The study concluded that differentiated instruction is an effective learner-centered approach in enhancing students' awareness of gender issues and promoting inclusive and respectful classroom interaction.

Keywords: *differentiated instruction, gender awareness, Grade 10 students, Araling Panlipunan, mixed-methods research*



INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role in shaping students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and morally. Schools are not only institutions for academic learning but also environments where students develop values, perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors that influence how they interact with society. In today's generation, social issues such as gender inequality, discrimination, and stereotyping continue to affect learners' understanding of themselves and others. Because of this, education must provide learning experiences that foster awareness, respect, and inclusivity among students.

In the Philippine educational system, gender issues are integrated in the Grade 10 Araling Panlipunan curriculum through topics related to Gender and Development (GAD). These lessons aim to deepen students' understanding of gender equality, social justice, discrimination, and the importance of respect for all genders. However, despite the integration of gender-responsive education in schools, many students still struggle to fully understand gender-related concepts due to the sensitive and complex nature of the topic.

Traditional teaching strategies often focus on lecture-based instruction, where students become passive recipients of information instead of active participants in learning. As a result, students may memorize concepts without fully understanding their relevance in real-life situations. In discussing gender issues, students sometimes become hesitant to express their opinions, participate in discussions, or challenge stereotypes due to fear of criticism or misunderstanding.

To address these concerns, differentiated instruction was introduced as an approach that recognizes students' diverse readiness levels, interests, learning profiles, and learning needs. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to modify teaching methods, classroom activities, and assessments to make learning more engaging, interactive, and meaningful. Through strategies such as role play, debate, and interview projects, students are provided with opportunities to actively participate, reflect, collaborate, and connect lessons to real-life experiences.

The implementation of gender-sensitive and inclusive education is strongly supported by international and national policies. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 promotes gender equality and empowerment for all genders. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women strengthens the promotion of gender-responsive education, while DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 institutionalizes Gender and Development (GAD) in the basic education curriculum.

As a Social Studies teacher, the researcher observed that many Grade 10 students displayed limited participation and understanding during discussions on gender issues. Students often hesitated to share opinions, lacked confidence in discussing sensitive topics, and



demonstrated limited awareness of gender discrimination and equality. These classroom observations motivated the researcher to explore differentiated instruction as a possible intervention to improve students' awareness and engagement.

Therefore, this study aimed to determine how differentiated instruction may increase awareness on gender issues among Grade 10 students. Specifically, the study examined students' awareness before and after the intervention, assessed the effectiveness of differentiated activities, and identified the challenges encountered during the implementation process.

Review of Related Literature

This section presents studies and literature related to differentiated instruction, gender awareness, and students' engagement in learning activities. The reviewed studies served as the foundation of the present research.

Recent studies emphasized the importance of differentiated instruction in improving students' understanding, participation, and academic performance, especially in socially relevant topics such as gender issues. Taş and Minaz (2024) found that differentiated instructional activities based on students' learning styles significantly improved academic achievement and long-term retention compared to traditional teaching methods. Their study highlighted that instruction tailored to students' diverse learning preferences promotes deeper understanding and meaningful learning.

Similarly, Alonzo and Cruz (2024) revealed that multimedia and interactive approaches in teaching gender issues increased students' engagement, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. The study emphasized that learner-centered activities are effective in discussing sensitive social topics such as gender equality and discrimination.

In addition, Martinez and Reyes (2022) discovered that although students are exposed to gender-related lessons in the curriculum, many still possess limited understanding of gender as a social construct. Their findings stressed the importance of meaningful and differentiated learning experiences to strengthen students' awareness and understanding of gender issues. Supporting these findings, Saguin, Inocian, and Un (2020) concluded that Contextualized Differentiated Instruction (CDI) significantly improved students' academic performance in Social Studies. Their study supported the idea that differentiated instruction enhances learners' understanding of complex social concepts.

Furthermore, Pozas et al. (2021) stated that differentiated instruction positively affects students' sense of inclusion, well-being, and academic self-concept. These outcomes are important in teaching gender issues because students' confidence and sense of belonging influence their willingness to participate in discussions.



Studies on active learning strategies also reinforced the effectiveness of differentiated instruction. Bond, Elias, and Nayman (2021) found that structured debates and collaborative activities improved students' reflective thinking, communication, and social awareness. These skills are essential in understanding and addressing gender-related issues respectfully.

Despite its effectiveness, several studies also identified challenges in implementing differentiated instruction. Aldossari (2020) explained that differences in students' learning abilities and interests make differentiated activities difficult to manage. Likewise, Wright (2023) emphasized that limited preparation time, classroom management concerns, and inconsistent assessment practices may affect the successful implementation of differentiated instruction. Research on role-playing and debate activities also identified challenges encountered by students. Cando et al. (2022) noted that students often experience performance anxiety and lack of confidence during role-playing activities. Similarly, Nathan and Lee (2021) explained that debate activities require proper facilitation to ensure respectful and inclusive participation among learners.

The reviewed literature was further supported by national educational policies promoting gender-responsive and inclusive education. The Department of Education through DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 emphasized the integration of gender equality, inclusivity, and human rights in classroom instruction.

Overall, the reviewed studies showed that differentiated instruction contributes positively to students' academic performance, engagement, critical thinking, and awareness of social issues. However, despite numerous studies on differentiated instruction and Social Studies education, limited research has specifically focused on its effect on gender awareness among Grade 10 students in the Philippine context. This gap strengthened the need for the present study.

Research Questions

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in increasing awareness on gender issues among Grade 10 students.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent may the performance of Grade 10 students on the teacher-made test reflect their awareness of the following gender issues:
 - 1.1 Gender in Different Societies;
 - 1.2 Gender and Social Issues;
 - 1.3 Government and Citizen Response to Issues of Violence and Discrimination;
 - and
 - 1.4 Acceptance and Respect for Gender Towards Equality?



2. How aware are the Grade 10 students in the integration of various differentiated instructions on gender issues relative to:
 - 2.1 role playing;
 - 2.2 debates; and
 - 2.3 interview project?
3. How may differentiated instruction contribute to the development of gender awareness and respectful attitudes among Grade 10 students in terms of:
 - 3.1 level of attitude;
 - 3.2 classroom activities; and
 - 3.3 social interaction and collaboration?
4. What are the difficulties encountered by the students in utilizing differentiated instruction?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what enhanced differentiated instructional activities may be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized the mixed-methods research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixed-methods research enabled the researcher to gather numerical data regarding students' awareness and performance while also obtaining in-depth insights into students' experiences and challenges encountered during the implementation of differentiated instruction.

The quantitative approach involved the use of a teacher-made test and a researcher-made questionnaire to determine students' level of awareness and the effectiveness of differentiated instruction. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach utilized focus group discussions to gather detailed responses regarding students' experiences and difficulties during the differentiated learning activities.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were ninety-five (95) Grade 10 students from Pres. Jose P. Laurel National High School during the School Year 2025–2026. The study was conducted during the third quarter of the academic year where lessons on gender issues were discussed in Araling Panlipunan.

The respondents were selected because they were directly involved in the discussion and activities related to gender issues. In addition, ten (10) students were randomly selected to participate in the focus group discussions.



Research Instruments

The researcher used the following instruments in gathering the necessary data:

Teacher-Made Test

A 40-item teacher-made test was developed to assess students' awareness and understanding of gender issues. The test consisted of multiple-choice and situational questions focusing on gender in different societies, gender and social issues, government responses to discrimination and violence, and acceptance and respect toward equality. The score range and the corresponding verbal interpretation were as follows:

| Score Range | Verbal Interpretation |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 33-40 | Outstanding |
| 25-32 | Very Satisfactory |
| 17-24 | Satisfactory |
| 9-16 | Fair |
| 0-8 | Poor |

Researcher-Made Questionnaire

The researcher-made questionnaire measured students' level of awareness regarding differentiated instruction through role play, debate, and interview project. The questionnaire also assessed how differentiated instruction contributed to students' gender awareness, respectful attitudes, classroom interaction, and collaboration.

The instrument utilized a four-point Likert scale with the following interpretations:

| Scale | Range | Verbal Interpretation |
|-------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 4 | 3.50–4.00 | Highly Aware |
| 3 | 2.50–3.49 | Aware |
| 2 | 1.50–2.49 | Moderately Aware |
| 1 | 1.00–1.49 | Unaware |

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions were conducted to gather qualitative data regarding students' experiences and challenges encountered during the implementation of differentiated instruction. Open-ended questions were used to encourage students to share their opinions and experiences freely.



Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first secured permission from the school principal of Pres. Jose P. Laurel National High School to conduct the study. After approval, parental consent and student assent forms were distributed.

The teacher-made pre-test was administered before the implementation of differentiated instruction. Afterwards, differentiated instructional activities such as role play, debate, and interview projects were conducted during the third quarter lessons on gender issues.

After the implementation of the activities, the post-test and questionnaire were administered to the students. Focus group discussions were also conducted among selected participants. The gathered data were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used:

- **Frequency and Percentage** – used to determine students' performance in the pre-test and post-test;
- **Weighted Mean** – used to determine students' level of awareness regarding differentiated instruction;
- **Composite Mean** – used to determine the overall average of responses;
- **Ranking** – used to identify the order of responses and indicators.

Qualitative data from focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1
Extent of Grade 10 Students' Awareness on Gender Issues Based on Pre-Test Scores

| Score Range | Descriptive Rating | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 33–40 | Outstanding | 0 | 0% |
| 25–32 | Very Satisfactory | 11 | 11.58% |
| 17–24 | Satisfactory | 43 | 45.26% |
| 9–16 | Fair | 34 | 35.79% |
| 0–8 | Poor | 7 | 7.37% |
| Total | | 95 | 100% |

Table 1 presents the distribution of Grade 10 students' pre-test scores measuring their awareness of gender issues, including gender in different societies, gender and social issues,

government and citizen responses to violence and discrimination, and acceptance and respect for gender towards equality.

The results revealed that most students were in the Satisfactory (45.23%) and Fair (35.79%) levels. This meant that although learners already had some basic ideas about gender concepts, their understanding was still limited and needed further development. Only a small number of students reached the Very Satisfactory level (11.58%), while 7.37% were under the Poor category. Notably, no student reached the Outstanding level during the pre-test.

These findings suggested that students' awareness of gender issues before the intervention was still at a surface level. During the initial discussions and activities, many students could define gender-related terms but had difficulty explaining how these issues appeared in real-life situations such as discrimination, unequal treatment, and social stereotypes. This showed the need for teaching strategies that would help them go beyond simple definitions toward deeper understanding and reflection.

Table 2
Extent of Grade 10 Students' Awareness on Gender Issues Based on Post-Test Scores

| Score Range | Descriptive Rating | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 33–40 | Outstanding | 55 | 57.89% |
| 25–32 | Very Satisfactory | 35 | 36.84% |
| 17–24 | Satisfactory | 5 | 5.27% |
| 9–16 | Fair | 0 | 0% |
| 0–8 | Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | | 95 | 100% |

Table 2 shows that after the implementation of differentiated instruction, most Grade 10 students demonstrated a very high level of awareness of gender issues in the post-test. Out of 95 learners, 55 students (57.89%) reached the Outstanding level, while 35 students (36.84%) obtained Very Satisfactory scores. Only 5 students (5.27%) remained in the Satisfactory range, and none fell under Fair or Poor.

These results clearly show a noticeable improvement in students' understanding of gender concepts such as gender roles in different societies, gender-related social issues, and appropriate responses to discrimination and violence. During the activities, students were able to express ideas about gender equality more confidently and showed greater respect toward diverse gender identities in class discussions and outputs.

The findings indicated that differentiated instruction helped learners engage more deeply with the topic. Because the lessons were adjusted according to their readiness, interests, and preferred ways of learning, students were able to process complex social concepts in ways that

were meaningful to them. This was evident not only in their test scores but also in how they participated in group tasks, reflections, and scenario analyses related to gender issues.

Table 3
Level of Awareness on Gender Issues in the Integration of Differentiated Instruction through Role Play

| Items | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Role play helped me understand the experiences of individuals facing gender inequality. | 3.32 | Aware | 3 |
| I was able to express my views freely during the role play activity. | 3.28 | Aware | 4 |
| Role play increased my awareness of the importance of gender respect and sensitivity. | 3.35 | Aware | 2 |
| I actively participated in the role play discussions | 3.19 | Aware | 5 |
| I understood better how gender roles affect individuals in real-life situations. | 3.45 | Aware | 1 |
| Composite Mean | 3.32 | Aware | |

The data in Table 3 show that the overall composite mean of 3.32, verbally interpreted as “Aware,” indicates that the respondents possess a moderate to high level of awareness of gender issues through the integration of differentiated instruction using role play. This implies that role-playing activities are effective in facilitating students’ understanding of gender-related concepts, particularly in promoting awareness, sensitivity, and reflection on real-life gender concerns. However, the findings also suggest that there is still a need to further enhance students’ level of awareness toward a higher level.

In terms of the individual indicators, the statement “I understood better how gender roles affect individuals in real-life situations” obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.45, interpreted as Aware. This showed that the role play activity helped students connect the lesson to situations they could relate to in real life. During the activity, many students were able to describe how gender roles influence people’s experiences in the family, school, and community. This observation supported the study of Domingo and Maneja (2022), who emphasized that experiential learning strategies improve students’ understanding by placing them in realistic situations.

The second highest item, “Role play increased my awareness of the importance of gender respect and sensitivity” (WM = 3.35), indicated that the activity helped develop values related to respect and gender sensitivity. This aligned with UNESCO (2021), which highlighted the role of education in promoting gender equality and inclusive values among learners.

Moreover, the item “Role play helped me understand the experiences of individuals facing gender inequality” (WM = 3.32) ranked third. This suggested that the activity allowed students to place themselves in the situation of others and see issues from different perspectives.

This finding was consistent with Alsubaie (2020), who noted that role play enhances social awareness and empathy among students.

Meanwhile, the item “I was able to express my views freely during the role play activity” (WM = 3.28) showed that role play provided opportunities for students to share their thoughts. However, some learners still appeared hesitant when expressing their ideas during the discussion. This observation was similar to the findings of Cruz (2023), who found that student engagement can vary depending on their confidence and the classroom environment.

On the other hand, the item “I actively participated in the role play discussions” obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.19, although still interpreted as Aware. This indicated that active participation was the least developed aspect among the indicators. This could have been influenced by factors such as shyness, lack of confidence, or differences in students’ willingness to participate. This aligned with the study of Calderón and Tuazon (2021), who emphasized that participation in gender-related discussions differs among learners depending on classroom dynamics.

Overall, the findings showed that differentiated instruction through role play was effective in increasing students’ awareness of gender issues, particularly in helping them understand real-life situations, develop empathy, and practice gender sensitivity. However, the results also indicated the need to strengthen strategies that would further encourage active participation and student expression to maximize the effectiveness of the activity.

Table 4
Level of Awareness on Gender Issues in the Integration of Differentiated Instruction through Debate

| Items | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Debate encouraged me to research and understand gender-related topics. | 3.34 | Aware | 1.5 |
| Debate helped me develop critical thinking skills about gender equality | 3.32 | Aware | 4 |
| I enjoyed the process of preparing for and participating in the debate. | 3.23 | Aware | 5 |
| Debate made me more aware of the different challenges faced by various genders. | 3.33 | Aware | 3 |
| Debate improved my ability to defend my opinion with facts. | 3.34 | Aware | 1.5 |
| Composite Mean | 3.31 | Aware | |

The data in Table 4 showed that the overall composite mean fell within the range of Aware, which indicated that students had a moderate to high level of awareness of gender issues when differentiated instruction was implemented through debate. This suggested that debate served as an effective strategy in helping students understand gender-related topics while developing their research skills, critical thinking, and ability to express informed opinions. This

observation was supported by recent discussions in *Frontiers in Education* (2023), which emphasized that critical thinking is best developed through active and participatory strategies such as debate.

Among the indicators, the statements “Debate encouraged me to research and understand gender-related topics” and “Debate improved my ability to defend my opinion with facts” both obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.34, interpreted as Aware. During the preparation phase, students were observed gathering information from different sources, comparing ideas, and organizing their arguments before presenting them. This showed that debate encouraged independent learning and evidence-based reasoning. This finding was consistent with the study of Dewangga et al. (2024), who found that debate activities enhance students’ ability to evaluate evidence, form logical arguments, and practice critical thinking.

The item “Debate made me more aware of the different challenges faced by various genders” (WM = 3.33) indicated that the activity helped students see issues from multiple perspectives. As students listened to opposing arguments, they became more open to understanding experiences different from their own. This aligned with the findings of Rahmawati et al. (2023), who concluded that debate helps learners develop openness and perspective-taking when discussing social issues. Similarly, the statement “Debate helped me develop critical thinking skills about gender equality” (WM = 3.32) showed that students practiced analyzing and evaluating complex societal issues during the activity.

On the other hand, the item “I enjoyed the process of preparing for and participating in the debate” obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.23, although still interpreted as Aware. This suggested that while debate was helpful in developing thinking skills, some students found the process challenging due to the need for preparation, argument construction, and speaking in front of others. This observation also reflected the findings of Dewangga et al. (2024), which noted that student engagement in debate can vary depending on confidence level and classroom dynamics.

Overall, the findings showed that differentiated instruction through debate was effective in increasing students’ awareness of gender issues, particularly in strengthening their research skills, critical thinking, and ability to support ideas with evidence. However, the slightly lower level of enjoyment indicated the need to provide more structured guidance and encouragement to help students feel more comfortable and engaged during the activity.

Table 5
Level of Awareness on Gender Issues in the Integration of Differentiated Instruction through Interview project

| Items | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Interview project gave me firsthand insight into real gender-related experiences. | 3.14 | Aware | 5 |
| I found the interview project meaningful and informative. | 3.25 | Aware | 3 |
| I learned a lot from the people I interviewed about gender roles and issues. | 3.23 | Aware | 4 |



| | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---|
| The activity made me realize the importance of listening to others' experiences. | 3.28 | Aware | 2 |
| The project helped me relate classroom concepts to real-life situations. | 3.34 | Aware | 1 |
| Composite Mean | 3.25 | Aware | |

The results in Table 5 showed that the overall level of awareness of gender issues through the interview project was high, as reflected by the composite mean of 3.25, verbally interpreted as Aware. This indicated that, in general, the students developed clearer understanding and sensitivity toward gender-related issues after participating in the differentiated instruction activity. The interview task allowed learners to hear real stories and perspectives, which helped them see how the concepts discussed in class appeared in actual situations. This observation supported the study of Alejo and Hermosa (2024), which found that integrative learning approaches improve students' gender equality competence by making learning more contextualized and meaningful.

The highest-rated item, "The project helped me relate classroom concepts to real-life situations," obtained a weighted mean of 3.34 (Rank 1). This showed that students appreciated the experiential nature of the task because it connected theoretical discussions on gender issues to lived experiences. This finding reflected the value of learner-centered and real-world activities, as supported by Guerrero and Guerrero (2023), who emphasized that contextualized and inclusive approaches make learning about gender issues more relevant and authentic.

The second highest item, "The activity made me realize the importance of listening to others' experiences," with a mean of 3.28 (Rank 2), indicated that the project helped develop empathy and active listening among the students. During sharing sessions, learners showed respect and openness while talking about what they learned from the people they interviewed. This aligned with the ideas of Sánchez-Cabrero et al. (2023), who highlighted that student voice and inclusive discussions are important in building gender awareness and reducing biases.

The items "I found the interview project meaningful and informative" (3.25, Rank 3) and "I learned a lot from the people I interviewed about gender roles and issues" (3.23, Rank 4) further showed that the activity was both educational and impactful. Students were able to share insights from their interviews that enriched class discussions and deepened their understanding of gender roles in society. This supported the findings of Doguiles and Rapsing (2024), which stated that participatory activities help learners challenge existing gender stereotypes.

Lastly, the item "Interview project gave me firsthand insight into real gender-related experiences" received the lowest mean of 3.14 (Rank 5), although still interpreted as Aware. This suggested that while students recognized the value of firsthand experiences, some needed more guidance in processing and reflecting on what they learned from the interviews. This idea was similar to the study of Gao (2024), which pointed out that experiential learning requires proper facilitation to lead to deeper critical understanding.

Overall, the findings showed that the interview project, as a differentiated instructional strategy, effectively increased students' awareness of gender issues by helping them connect lessons to real-life experiences, develop empathy, and engage in meaningful learning.

Table 6
**Contribution of Differentiated Instruction to Gender Awareness and Respectful Attitudes-
 Level of Attitude**

| Items | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| I developed a more respectful attitude toward people of different genders. | 3.47 | Aware | 1 |
| I feel responsible in promoting gender respect in school. | 3.26 | Aware | 5 |
| I became more open-minded about gender-related perspectives. | 3.41 | Aware | 2.5 |
| I respect opinions that are different from mine regarding gender issues. | 3.41 | Aware | 2.5 |
| I became more aware of how my words and actions affect others.] | 3.37 | Aware | 4 |
| Composite Mean | 3.38 | Aware | |

Table 6 showed the contribution of differentiated instruction to students' gender awareness and respectful attitudes in terms of their level of attitude. The composite mean of 3.38, verbally interpreted as Aware, indicated that the use of differentiated activities such as role play, debate, and interview projects positively influenced how students viewed and treated gender-related issues. The results suggested that students did not only gain knowledge but also developed attitudes marked by respect, sensitivity, and responsibility toward people of different genders.

Among the indicators, the statement "I developed a more respectful attitude toward people of different genders" obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.47 (Rank 1). This showed that the strongest effect of the activities was seen in how students expressed respect toward others. This was followed by items related to being open-minded about gender perspectives and respecting different opinions (both 3.41, Rank 2.5). During class interactions, students were observed listening more carefully to their classmates' ideas and responding more thoughtfully during discussions about gender issues.

Students also became more conscious of how their words and actions could affect others (3.37, Rank 4), which reflected increased sensitivity in their social interactions. Although still interpreted as Aware, the lowest ranked item (3.26, Rank 5) on feeling responsible for promoting gender respect in school suggested that while students developed personal awareness and respectful attitudes, turning this awareness into active responsibility still needed further reinforcement through continuous activities and real-life practice.

These observations supported the idea that differentiated instruction influenced not only students' cognitive learning but also their affective development, especially in shaping their attitudes toward social issues. This aligned with the principles of UNESCO (2020), which emphasized that gender-responsive pedagogy promotes respectful classroom environments through inclusive and participatory strategies. Similarly, UNICEF (2021) highlighted that learner-centered approaches help students internalize values such as respect, empathy, and social responsibility related to gender equality.

The ideas presented in *How Learning Happens* by Paul Kirschner and Carl Hendrick (2020) also supported this finding, explaining that meaningful and active learning experiences influence learners' beliefs and attitudes more effectively than passive instruction. In the same way, OECD (2022) noted that inclusive teaching strategies help cultivate respectful attitudes and social awareness when students engage in collaborative and reflective tasks connected to real-world issues.

Overall, the data confirmed that differentiated instructional strategies significantly contributed to improving students' awareness and respectful attitudes toward gender issues. The activities provided opportunities for students to express their perspectives, understand others' experiences, and reflect on their own behavior. However, the slightly lower result on promoting gender respect in school indicated the need for continuous reinforcement and more opportunities for students to practice responsibility and advocacy beyond classroom discussions.

Table 7
**Contribution of Differentiated Instruction to Gender Awareness and Respectful Attitudes-
 Classroom Activities**

| Items | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Differentiated activities helped me understand gender issues better. | 3.31 | Aware | 3.5 |
| The varied classroom activities helped me better understand gender roles and equality. | 3.31 | Aware | 3.5 |
| The activities gave me opportunities to express my thoughts about gender issues creatively and respectfully. | 3.33 | Aware | 2 |
| The classroom environment became more inclusive and gender-sensitive during these activities. | 3.20 | Aware | 5 |
| The lessons became more relatable as they reflected real-life situations about gender fairness and respect. | 3.45 | Aware | 1 |
| Composite Mean | 3.32 | Aware | |

Table 7 presented the contribution of differentiated instruction to gender awareness and respectful attitudes in terms of classroom activities. The composite mean of 3.32, verbally interpreted as Aware, showed that the differentiated activities used in the study such as role play, debate, and interview projects helped students better understand gender issues while encouraging

respectful interaction in the classroom. The varied and learner-centered tasks allowed students to connect lessons on gender awareness to meaningful learning experiences.

The statement “The lessons became more relatable as they reflected real-life situations about gender fairness and respect” obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.45 (Rank 1). This showed that students responded strongly to activities that connected the lesson to real situations they could recognize. This was followed by the item related to opportunities to express thoughts creatively and respectfully (3.33, Rank 2), indicating that students appreciated being given space to share their ideas while discussing gender issues.

Meanwhile, the indicators on understanding gender issues and understanding gender roles and equality both obtained a mean of 3.31 (Rank 3.5). This suggested that the differentiated tasks helped clarify important concepts about gender. The lowest mean (3.20, Rank 5) on the classroom environment becoming more inclusive and gender-sensitive showed that although the activities were effective, building a fully inclusive environment required longer exposure and consistent practice beyond selected lessons.

These findings affirmed that differentiated classroom activities enhanced not only students’ understanding but also their participation and respectful engagement. This aligned with the principles of UNESCO (2020), which emphasized the use of participatory, reflective, and context-based strategies in gender-responsive teaching. Similarly, UNICEF (2021) highlighted that interactive approaches help create safe spaces where learners can respectfully express ideas about gender equality.

In addition, OECD (2022) noted that real-life contextualization increases students’ engagement and social awareness, especially on issues related to fairness and respect. The ideas presented in *How Learning Happens* by Paul Kirschner and Carl Hendrick (2020) also explained that meaningful and active tasks improve both understanding and attitudes because learners are directly involved in the process.

Overall, the data suggested that classroom activities designed through differentiated instruction made lessons on gender more meaningful, expressive, and relatable for students. However, the lower rating on classroom inclusivity indicated the need for continuous integration of gender-sensitive practices so that respect and inclusivity would be consistently experienced throughout the learning process, not only during selected activities.

Table 8
**Contribution of Differentiated Instruction to Gender Awareness and Respectful Attitudes-
 Social Interaction and Collaboration**

| Items | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| I learned to collaborate respectfully with classmates who have different perspectives and gender identities. | 3.39 | Aware | 2 |
| The activities improved my communication skills in expressing ideas respectfully to everyone. | 3.35 | Aware | 3 |



| | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---|
| I became more confident in sharing my ideas in group discussions while respecting others' views. | 3.31 | Aware | 4 |
| The activities strengthened my sense of belonging in an inclusive and respectful classroom. | 3.29 | Aware | 5 |
| I listened more attentively and respectfully to my classmates' opinions regardless of gender. | 3.46 | Aware | 1 |
| Composite Mean | 3.36 | Aware | |

Table 8 showed that the composite mean of 3.36, verbally interpreted as Aware, indicated that the differentiated instructional activities positively influenced students' social interaction and collaboration in relation to gender awareness and respectful attitudes.

The highest result, listening attentively and respectfully to classmates' opinions regardless of gender (WM = 3.46), showed that students practiced more respectful listening during discussions and group activities. During these tasks, students were observed allowing their classmates to speak without interruption and responding more thoughtfully to different viewpoints. This was followed by respectful collaboration with classmates of different perspectives and gender identities (WM = 3.39), which reflected improved teamwork and openness to diversity within groups.

The indicators related to communication skills (WM = 3.35) and confidence in sharing ideas while respecting others' views (WM = 3.31) further showed that students became more comfortable engaging in respectful dialogue. They were more willing to share opinions while also being mindful of how they expressed themselves. On the other hand, the lowest indicator, sense of belonging in an inclusive classroom (WM = 3.29), suggested that while respectful interaction improved, building a deeply inclusive classroom environment required longer exposure and more consistent practice of gender-sensitive strategies.

These observations were supported by local studies in the Philippines. The study of Sarmiento and David (2021) noted that when teachers apply differentiated strategies, students demonstrate greater engagement and respect for peer diversity. Similarly, Garcia (2023) found that collaborative learning in Philippine high schools enhances students' communication skills and respect for varying opinions, which was evident in how students interacted during the activities in this study.

Overall, the data showed that differentiated instruction significantly contributed to improving students' respectful social interaction and collaboration regarding gender issues. Through group-based and discussion-centered activities, students learned to listen, communicate, and cooperate more respectfully.

Difficulties Encountered by Grade 10 Students in Utilizing Differentiated Instructions

This section presents the challenges experienced by Grade 10 students while engaging in differentiated activities such as role play, debate, and interview project in Araling Panlipunan. The themes were derived from the analysis of participants' responses during the Focus Group Discussion, highlighting the common difficulties that affected their performance.

Theme 1: Communication Apprehension and Fear of Public Performance

A prominent difficulty expressed by the participants is communication apprehension and fear of public performance. Many learners reported experiencing *hiya* (shyness), *kaba* (nervousness), and fear of being judged by peers during oral and performance tasks.

“Isa sa mga pangunahing hamon... hiya sa pakikipag-usap... matinding kaba...” (Participant 2)

“Takot na magkamali o mapahiya... kaya minsan hindi naipapakita nang maayos ang ideya.” (Participant 8)

These responses showed that emotional factors affected how students participated in activities that required speaking and performance. Some students held back their ideas not because they did not understand the lesson, but because they were anxious about making mistakes or being embarrassed in front of others.

This observation aligned with the findings of Zhang and Lee (2021), who described communication apprehension as a common barrier in classroom oral activities, especially in subjects that require expressive language, such as social sciences. In the same way, Morrison and Navarro (2022) concluded that fear of negative evaluation often reduces students’ participation and performance in speaking tasks.

Theme 2: Difficulty in Spontaneous Expression and Execution of Responses

Participants also shared that they experienced difficulty in expressing their thoughts spontaneously and in delivering their prepared responses during activities. This challenge became noticeable during tasks that required on-the-spot thinking, particularly in debates and interviews.

“Nakakalimutan kopo ang lines especially sa debate po, nahirapan po ako sumagot ng on the spot.” (Participant 3)

“Sobrang dami ko pong gustong sabihin... pero nahihirapan po akong gawin at sabihin yun ng maayos.” (Participant 5)

These responses showed that although students had ideas in mind, they struggled to organize and express them clearly when asked to speak immediately. Some learners mentioned forgetting their prepared lines, while others found it hard to translate their thoughts into clear spoken responses under pressure.

This observation aligned with the findings of Al-Zahrani (2021), who explained that students often experience cognitive overload during spontaneous speaking tasks, especially when they are not yet familiar with such activities. Similarly, Ramos and Bautista (2023) reported that Filipino learners commonly struggle in transitioning from internal preparation to actual verbal delivery, particularly when they are under time pressure or feel socially observed.

Theme 3: Low Self-Confidence and Negative Self-Perception

Another difficulty frequently expressed by the participants was low self-confidence. Several students shared that even though they understood the content of the lesson, their



performance was affected by negative self-thoughts and fear of making mistakes in front of others.

“Hindi po ako sanay magsalita sa harap ng maraming tao... nawawala lahat ang nasa isip ko.” (Participant 4)

“Nahihiya... paano ko ipipresent ng maayos yung role ko na hindi kinakabahan.” (Participant 6)

These responses showed that students’ hesitation was not always due to lack of knowledge but was strongly influenced by their level of confidence when speaking or performing in front of the class. Some learners mentioned that they forgot what they wanted to say once they stood in front, while others felt overwhelmed by nervousness.

This observation aligned with the findings of Lin and Chen (2021), who explained that students with low self-confidence tend to avoid participation in oral activities. In the same way, Gonzalez (2024) emphasized that fear of embarrassment among Filipino learners often limits their active engagement during class presentations.

Theme 4: Group Dynamics and Collaborative Difficulties

Some learners also faced challenges related to group collaboration and time management when completing tasks.

“Pressure kami... may mga kagroup na hindi nakikipagcooperate.” (Participant 7)

This response showed that not all group members participated equally, which created pressure for others to complete the task on time. In some groups, difficulties in coordination and cooperation affected how smoothly the activities were carried out.

This observation was similar to the findings of Smith and Nguyen (2022), who noted that unequal participation and weak coordination often affect the outcome of group projects. Likewise, Quiambao (2023) emphasized that collaboration skills are not always well developed among learners, which can make group-based differentiated activities more challenging to manage.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Grade 10 students initially demonstrated limited awareness and understanding of gender issues prior to the implementation of differentiated instruction.
2. The implementation of differentiated instruction significantly improved students’ awareness and understanding of gender issues, as reflected in the post-test results.
3. Role play, debate, and interview project were effective differentiated instructional strategies that enhanced students’ participation, empathy, critical thinking, and gender sensitivity.



4. Differentiated instruction positively contributed to the development of respectful attitudes, classroom interaction, and collaboration among students.
5. Students encountered challenges such as hesitation, lack of confidence, and difficulties in group participation during the implementation of differentiated instruction.
6. Enhanced differentiated instructional activities may further strengthen students' awareness and understanding of gender issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teachers may continue utilizing differentiated instruction strategies in teaching gender-related topics to increase students' awareness and engagement.
2. Schools may conduct seminars, workshops, and training programs on gender-responsive education and differentiated instruction.
3. Teachers may provide more opportunities for collaborative and experiential learning activities to strengthen students' confidence and participation.
4. Guidance and support may be provided to students who experience hesitation and anxiety during interactive classroom activities.
5. Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving other grade levels, subjects, or schools to further validate the effectiveness of differentiated instruction.
6. Enhanced differentiated instructional materials and learning activities may be developed to improve gender-responsive teaching practices in Araling Panlipunan.

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