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**Developing EFL Writing Skills and Self-Regulation Using Blended
Differentiated Instruction among Fourth Grade Primary Stage Pupils**

(Research from master thesis)

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المستخلص

هدف البحث الحالي إلى استقصاء أثر استخدام التعليم المتميز المدمج في تطوير مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية والتنظيم الذاتي لدى طلاب الصف الرابع من المرحلة الابتدائية. اعتمد البحث على المنهج شبه التجريبي، حيث شارك فيه خمسون طالباً من الصف الرابع الابتدائي، وتم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين: مجموعة تجريبية تلقت علاج التعليم المتميز المدمج، ومجموعة ضابطة تلقت الأنشطة الصفية الاعتيادية. تم تصميم الأدوات المستخدمة في البحث من قبل الباحث، وهي اختبار مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية، ومقياس تقييم مهارات الكتابة، واستبيان التنظيم الذاتي. أظهرت النتائج تفوق المجموعة التجريبية على المجموعة الضابطة في مهارات الكتابة والتنظيم الذاتي، بعد تلقي العلاج التجريبي. وتشير النتائج أيضاً إلى أن التعليم المتميز المدمج أسهم بشكل فعال في تطوير مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية والتنظيم الذاتي لدى التلاميذ. وقد أوصى البحث بضرورة تطبيق التعليم المتميز المدمج في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، بهدف تعزيز مهارات الكتابة والمهارات اللغوية الأخرى .

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم المتميز المدمج، مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية، التنظيم الذاتي، طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية.

Developing EFL Writing Skills and Self-Regulation Using Blended
Differentiated Instruction among Fourth Grade Primary Stage Pupils

Abstract

The present research aimed at investigating the effect of using blended differentiated instruction on developing EFL writing skills and self-regulation among fourth grade primary stage pupils. The research adopted the quasi-experimental design using fifty 4th grade primary stage pupils as the study participants. They were divided into two groups: an experimental group received the blended differentiated instruction treatment, and a control group received the regular classroom activities. Instruments designed by the researcher and used in the research were an EFL writing skills test, a writing skills rubric, and a self-regulation questionnaire. Results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group both in writing skills and self-regulation due to the experimental treatment. These results indicated that the blended differentiated instruction led to developing pupils' EFL writing skills and self-regulation. It was recommended that blended differentiated instruction should be used in EFL teaching to develop writing skills and other language skills.

Keywords: Blended Differentiated Instruction, EFL writing skills, Self-regulation, Primary stage pupils.

Introduction

Language serves as a tool for communication. To effectively use a language, learners must develop key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These abilities are essential for meaningful interaction. Language skills are generally categorized into oral and literacy skills. Listening and speaking are necessary for verbal communication, while reading and writing are fundamental for developing literacy.

Writing is a crucial aspect of early literacy and is seen as the most complex language skill, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The cognitive demands of writing, such as organizing ideas, applying grammar, and choosing appropriate vocabulary, often lead to negative attitudes that can hinder student performance (Şenel, 2018). Mastery in writing necessitates planning, research, creativity, and revision, highlighting the importance of early and ongoing writing instruction. To address modern educational needs, instruction should incorporate contemporary tools and strategies that align with the digital and globalized environment (Anda et al., 2020).

Differentiated instruction (DI) is an effective strategy for enhancing EFL writing instruction. As Adnan (2024) explains, DI enables educators to tailor their teaching to meet individual learners' needs, ensuring equitable access to quality education. This approach is particularly beneficial in diverse classrooms with students from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, allowing all students to receive instruction that caters to their specific learning requirements.

The integration of technology enhances differentiated instruction through blended instruction—a hybrid approach that combines online digital tools with traditional classroom methods. This model fosters flexible, student-centered learning environments, enabling educators to create virtual classrooms that cater to diverse learning styles and needs (Amalia, 2023). In modern educational settings, digital platforms are designed to align with students' technological habits, promoting more effective and comfortable learning experiences.

According to Wang (2023), SRL empowers students to take control of their learning by choosing appropriate writing strategies and actively managing their writing behaviors. These metacognitive skills are crucial for developing proficient, independent writers capable of navigating complex writing tasks.

Theoretical background

EFL Writing

Pupils must be able to write to succeed in school. Consequently, it is an essential ability for the development of educators, learners, and the organization that is highly instructive.

Arochman et al. (2024) highlighted that writing allows individuals to express their desires, which is especially challenging for EFL learners who must translate their thoughts into another language while considering grammar and coherence. Successful writing requires cognitive competence, memory recall, and knowledge of writing conventions.

Studies examining the importance of writing proficiency for students underscore its important impact across various domains. According to Asror et al. (2024),

writing skills are viewed as a catalyst for students' cognitive development, critical thinking, and linguistic analysis within their academic pursuits. Conversely, deficiencies in writing aptitude hinder learners' capacity to engage in innovative thinking and articulate their ideas persuasively. Given the importance of writing skills, scholarly research advocates for educators to address students' challenges effectively and assist them in refining their formal writing abilities, with a specific focus on mastering the nuances of crafting argumentative essays.

In addition, writing is recognized as an important instrument that can boost learners' academic performance. According to Tusino et al. (2024), individuals who demonstrate strong writing skills early on are more likely to cultivate effective language communication, critical thinking, and the ability to articulate ideas convincingly. Also, proficiency in writing is essential for both academic and professional achievements, as it facilitates successful communication and critical thinking. Hence, the instruction of writing skills incorporates various tasks and exercises that encourage interactive participation among learners.

Effective writing instruction employs various approaches to enhance students' skills and foster creativity, enabling clear and confident expression of thoughts. The Controlled to Free Approach gradually transitions students from structured writing tasks to more open-ended exercises. Initially, controlled activities focus on specific language forms, helping build confidence and accuracy. In contrast, the Free Writing Approach encourages spontaneous writing without formal constraints, promoting creativity and self-expression while reducing anxiety and boosting fluency (Alharthi, 2021& Elmansy et al, 2021).

Effective strategies for teaching EFL writing significantly enhance students' writing skills by providing clear instruction, encouraging active participation, and integrating reading and writing activities. Collaborative writing strategies improve writing abilities by allowing students to work together on assignments, fostering peer learning and enhancing text construction skills (Tiwari, 2023). The Reading-to-Learn (R2L) strategy further supports this development by combining reading and writing activities, exposing students to well-structured texts and encouraging them to emulate these structures in their writing while effectively using both their first and second languages (Kartika-Ningsih, 2023). In online Instruction, strategies like direct instruction via video conferencing, collaborative tasks, and self-directed learning have proven effective in improving writing skills while maintaining engagement (Rahma et al., 2023). A blend of explicit instruction and student-centered approaches also enhances writing competence, ensuring students understand writing mechanics and can apply them independently (Baxtiyarovna, 2023).

Writing skills include various criteria for assessing composition, including substance, vocabulary, organization, language usage, and mechanics. For EFL learners, understanding and correctly using grammar and syntax is fundamental, as explicit instruction in these areas significantly enhances writing quality, allowing students to produce more accurate and coherent texts (Bitchener & Knoch, 2020). EFL students must also learn to create cohesive texts using grammatical and lexical devices, along with coherent structures that logically present their ideas. Effective teaching strategies focused on these aspects are crucial for improving overall writing

proficiency (Yakhontova, 2020). A broad and varied vocabulary is essential for expressing ideas effectively, with instruction emphasizing vocabulary acquisition through context significantly improving writing outcomes (Schmitt, 2020). Moreover, understanding the writing process—including planning, drafting, revising, and editing—is vital, as scaffolding these stages leads to improved performance (McCutchen, 2020).

Additionally, developing critical thinking and argumentation skills is essential for producing persuasive writing, with instructional methods that encourage debate and discussion enhancing these abilities (Nussbaum, 2024). Learning to incorporate feedback effectively is also crucial for writing development, as timely and constructive feedback can significantly boost writing skills (Liu & Hansen, 2024). In today's digital age, EFL students must cultivate digital literacy skills to effectively use online tools for writing and collaboration (Godwin-Jones, 2024). Furthermore, Brown (2004) classifies writing into micro-skills and macro-skills, where micro-skills focus on grammatical structures and coherence, while macro-skills emphasize rhetorical forms and the communicative functions of written texts (Van der Steen et al., 2017; Selim, 2022).

Primary school writing poses significant challenges that affect students' ability to write effectively. Teachers often struggle to engage all students, whether they grasp writing concepts quickly or need more assistance. Differentiated instruction is essential but can be time-consuming. Many students also face difficulties in structuring their ideas, and the pressure to perform academically may lead teachers to prioritize test

preparation over fostering a genuine interest in writing (Myhill et al., 2023).

Additionally, effective instructional strategies must address the diverse learning needs within the classroom. Variability in students' prior literacy experiences results in differing levels of phonemic awareness and vocabulary, which can frustrate those with limited vocabulary. Young students may also struggle with the mechanical aspects of writing due to developing fine motor skills. Neurodevelopmental constraints during early writing development can hinder their ability to produce written language automatically, affecting their planning and revision skills as they progress through grades (Moses & Mohamad, 2019; Tosuncuoğlu, 2018).

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an educational approach designed to tailor teaching methods, materials, and assessments to meet the diverse needs of students in a classroom. This strategy recognizes that students have varying backgrounds, learning styles, interests, and readiness levels, providing multiple pathways for effective learning.

According to Göransson and Nilholm (2014), DI is a way of thinking for teachers, emphasizing the importance of viewing learning from the students' perspectives rather than merely classifying them by readiness or assigning more work to advanced students. This approach aligns with the ideology of inclusive education and reflects a broader educational philosophy.

Additionally, DI prioritizes the individuality of students, acknowledging their diverse abilities and fostering an inclusive environment that encourages equal

participation and growth in core competencies. By employing various strategies, DI adapts instructional methods and curricula to align with the distinct needs of each student, addressing the diversification of learners in the educational setting (Dixon et al., 2014).

Numerous studies have affirmed the importance of differentiated instruction in augmenting English language skills. Shea (2015) highlighted the importance of Differentiated writing instruction to address the unique needs of diverse students. The effectiveness of this approach depends on continuous evaluation, authentic tasks, active engagement, ample practice opportunities, and a supportive classroom environment. Tomlinson (2017) stressed the necessity of diversity in classrooms, as students come from various backgrounds and readiness levels, requiring teachers to address all their needs simultaneously.

Despite the push for inclusive education, many teachers harbor negative attitudes toward students with special needs, often due to uncertainty about how to manage inclusive classrooms. However, educators with a positive view of inclusive education tend to have higher self-efficacy in differentiating their curriculum, leading to more effective instructional strategies (Saloviita, 2018). This underscores the need for professional development to enhance teachers' confidence and skills in implementing differentiated instruction effectively.

According to Tomlinson (2014), there are four elements which can be differentiated during teaching and learning to meet students' interests, needs and learning preferences. These elements are differentiated content, differentiated process, differentiated product and differentiated environment. Understanding students'

readiness, interests, and learning preferences is crucial for effective differentiated instruction. Readiness refers to the level at which a student can engage with specific concepts, with some needing more practice with simpler ideas before tackling more challenging material. By tailoring tasks to align with each student's readiness, educators can provide appropriate challenges that match their skill levels and understanding, rather than assuming all students share the same foundational knowledge (Hill & Miller, 2013).

Interests play a vital role in student engagement and educational advancement, as activities that resonate with students foster a positive attitude toward learning and enhance creativity. By identifying and incorporating student interests into lessons, teachers can help students make connections between new content and their existing knowledge (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). Additionally, acknowledging the diversity in learning preferences—shaped by factors like gender, culture, and intelligence—allows educators to tailor their instructional methods to better meet individual needs (Bourini, 2015). This comprehensive approach to differentiation fosters a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Differentiated Instruction (DI) includes a range of strategies aimed at catering to the diverse learning needs of students within a classroom setting. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that enables educators to create flexible learning environments that cater to diverse student needs by providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. This approach emphasizes accessibility, equity, and inclusivity in education (Rose & Gravel, 2020). Complementing UDL, data-driven instruction uses student data to inform teaching decisions, helping educators identify individual strengths

and areas for growth (Boudett, City & Murnane, 2020). Collaborative learning communities foster the sharing of best practices among educators, enhancing the implementation of differentiated instruction (Achterberg & Dekker, 2020).

Additionally, personalized learning paths tailor instruction to meet individual goals and preferences, using technology to adapt experiences (Horn & Staker, 2020). Strategies like choice boards empower students to select tasks based on their interests, while learning stations provide varied activities to engage different learning styles (Hertz, 2020; Kagan, 2019). Techniques such as assessment for learning guide instructional decisions through formative assessments, and tiered assignments and flexible grouping ensure that all students are appropriately challenged and supported (Tomlinson, 2017; Black & Wiliam, 2018). Collectively, these strategies foster a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Differentiating instruction offers numerous benefits for both educators and learners. It provides educators with ways which combine several instructional modalities and take proactive, hands-on approaches to meet the requirements of their students. All students, from higher achievers to those classified as priority learners, may benefit equally from differentiation in the classroom. Additionally, a key component of individualized instruction is having high expectations for every student. Teachers cannot let their pupils fall behind, as fast cultural and technical advancements have an impact on what and how learning occurs (Zerai et al., 2021).

However, DI can be difficult to manage many groups or individual work, especially when teachers must simultaneously monitor and help each group and student.

To guarantee effective implementation, keeping the classroom environment structured and organized becomes essential. Students may react differently when varied learning is introduced. Some pupils struggle with increasing independence and accountability, while others might object to the difficulties of working independently or in various groups (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2021).

Blended Instruction

Scholars in EFL language teaching for many decades have used blended instruction strategies to maximize the learning process even though it is carried out without face-to-face meetings. This type of learning is an alternative to accommodating traditional forms of learning.

Blended instruction is considered to be quite effective because it helps the teachers to build virtual classrooms in accordance with the conditions of learning in the classroom. Typically, teachers in developed countries optimize their use of the current digital platforms to keep up with the platforms used by the students and to create comfortable learning spaces (Amalia, 2023).

Also, blended instruction is a novel approach to education that integrates traditional in-person instruction with online learning activities. It is emerging as one of the most promising teaching and learning strategies in higher education as a result of technological advancements (Yu et al., 2022).

The importance of blended instruction has grown since the COVID-19 pandemic. Blended learning's inherent flexibility helped to offset the effects of the suspension of in-class activities, providing students with ongoing learning opportunities and building resilience in the face of unforeseen obstacles. Ultimately, using blended

learning components appropriately creates a flexible and resilient educational framework that minimizes the environmental impact of traditional teaching models while preparing students for the challenges of the future. This is in line with the principles of sustainability (Versteijlen & Wals, 2023).

According to Lewohl (2023), Blended instruction includes various types, starting with face-to-face instructor-led learning, where students attend live classes and engage in interactive, hands-on experiences. This method effectively delivers information to large groups and allows teachers to adapt their teaching styles. However, challenges include maintaining student engagement and issues with long-term retention, as well as temporal and geographical constraints typical of traditional classroom settings. Another type is online collaboration, where students use virtual tools like whiteboards and discussion groups to complete assignments. While this method offers flexibility in time and location, it can pose difficulties in time management and coordination without adequate teacher guidance (Salarvand et al., 2023).

Additionally, face-to-face collaboration involves students working together in the classroom on projects such as group discussions and peer teaching. This approach can enhance engagement and critical thinking but may also present challenges, especially in larger classes, where some students might struggle to learn independently (Sjolie et al., 2022). The fourth component, online self-paced learning, allows students to access materials anytime and study at their own pace, accommodating individual schedules and learning preferences. However, this flexibility can lead to issues such as choosing ineffective learning environments, lack of motivation, and procrastination

(Moustakas & Robrade, 2022). Together, these diverse strategies illustrate the multifaceted nature of blended instruction in contemporary education.

Blended instruction has a good impact on students' learning attitudes, strengthening their willingness to research, giving them more flexibility and self-assurance, and enhancing their capacity for and attitude toward group work. Considering this, blended instruction raises student involvement and enriches their educational experience. Students that participate in blended instruction also benefit from increased communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy (Alsalhi, 2021).

On the other hand, adopting blended instruction strategy by educators showed some difficulties and challenges which might have some consequences on the quality of the learning process. The online learning experience under Covid-19 was examined by Bailey and Lee (2020), who noted several difficulties, including adjusting to new technology in the classroom, anxiety, and sharing content in TL. They also noted the significance of selecting the right Learning Management System (LMS) or platform to meet the needs of students.

Self-regulation

Self-regulatory learning is an innovative, self-directed process. It refers also to using ideas, feelings, and self-directed activities in an organized way to help students achieve their objectives.

Self-regulation describes learners who learn for their own purposes despite often adverse circumstances. The ability to plan and construct one's own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, then adjust them while acting to accomplish goals, is known as self-regulation. Similar to this, self-

generated learning refers to learning that is focused on students' own ideas and actions with an eye on their learning objectives. This involves controlling one's own motivation and emotions (Zhang, 2024).

Self-regulation is important as it involves controlling one's thoughts, feelings, and actions as well. One way to conceptualize self-regulation is as an umbrella word that includes a broad range of goal-relevant behaviors, such as choosing a goal to pursue, making plans for how to achieve it, carrying out these plans, defending objectives against conflicting concerns, and occasionally even giving up on goals. Self-regulation refers to the range of ways in which individuals alter their attitudes, ideas, and actions to further a specific objective, including exerting conscious self-control. Although not all forms of self-regulation involve self-control, self-control is one type of self-regulation (Ludwig et al., 2019).

There are various models that seek to explain various aspects(s) of the regulatory process. Self-control can be understood through various models, each offering unique insights into how individuals manage their behaviors and make decisions. The choice models suggest that self-control arises from a value-based decision-making process, where individuals weigh the benefits and costs of different options, emphasizing the importance of future outcomes over immediate rewards (Kronke et al., 2020). In contrast, the resource model posits that self-control relies on a limited central resource that diminishes with use, likening it to mental fuel that powers self-regulation. This model has faced criticism for its narrow focus but highlights the challenges of maintaining control over time (Friese et al., 2019). The process model shifts the focus from effortful inhibition to proactive strategies that minimize temptation,

advocating for anticipatory techniques like situation selection and modification to avoid conflict (Duckworth et al., 2016).

Further, dual systems models elucidate behavior regulation through two distinct systems: System I, which is impulsive and reflexive, and System II, which is deliberative and goal-oriented. System I responds quickly to immediate stimuli, often prioritizing short-term satisfaction, while System II engages in careful consideration of long-term goals (Berkman et al., 2011). Goal Systems Theory emphasizes the hierarchical organization of goals and their means, suggesting that behaviors are influenced by the strength of connections between goals and the methods to achieve them (Kruglanski et al., 2002). Additionally, trait models of impulsivity focus on individual differences, identifying factors like premeditation and urgency that affect impulsive behavior (Whiteside & Lynam, 2001). Finally, cybernetic control employs feedback loops involving goals, input on current states, and adjustment systems to maintain alignment between desired and actual outcomes, forming a foundational model for understanding self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 1998). Together, these models provide a comprehensive view of self-regulation and self-control mechanisms.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the review of literature, results of pilot study, the problem of this research is that primary stage pupils are weak in EFL writing skills. They lack good sentence structure, use of appropriate vocabulary and coherent writing. Therefore, the researcher presumes that a new method of teaching may help the pupils enjoy learning

and increase interaction between them and their teachers. Hence, the present research seeks to investigate how far using blended differentiated instruction strategies could possibly contribute to developing the EFL fourth grade primary stage pupils' writing skills and their self-regulation.

Questions

The present research attempts to answer the following main question:

"To what extent can Blended Differentiated Instruction develop primary stage pupils' writing skills and self-regulation?"

The main question leads to the following sub questions:

1. What is the effect of using blended differentiated instruction in developing EFL writing skills of the fourth-grade primary stage pupils?
2. What is the effect of using blended differentiated instruction in developing the EFL writing and self-regulation skills of the fourth-grade primary stage pupils?
3. What is the relationship between using blended differentiated instruction and the fourth-grade primary stage pupils' writing self-regulation?

Purpose

This research aims at:

- Using blended differentiated instruction strategies for developing EFL fourth grade primary stage pupils' writing skills and self-regulation.
- Investigating the effect of using blended differentiated instruction strategies on EFL fourth grade primary stage pupils' writing skills and self-regulation.

Significance

The present research may be significant in several ways:

- It promotes the use of blended differentiated instruction techniques in English language lessons as a potential strategy for resolving the writing challenges that EFL students have. It might offer a means of enhancing the writing abilities of EFL pupils. It supports pupils' growth in self-regulation and autonomous learning, assisting kids in overcoming their shyness and reluctance and allowing them the freedom to express them.
- It could give educators several suggestions for how to implement blended differentiated instruction techniques in their classes. It provides primary stage teachers with a teacher guide on how to use blended differentiated instruction to develop writing skills.

Delimitations of Research

The current research is delimited to:

- A sample of fourth year primary stage pupils from AL Razi Primary Boys' School in Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Blended DI strategies required for fourth year primary stage pupils such as cooperative learning, tiered activities and brainstorming etc.,
- Writing skills required for fourth grade primary stage pupils such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics.
- Self-regulation skills suitable for fourth grade primary stage pupils such as working memory, planning, and cognitive flexibility.

Hypotheses

For the purposes of this research, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference at $\leq (0.05)$ between the mean score of the experimental group and control group pupils in the EFL writing skills test in favor of the experimental group.
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference at $\leq (0.05)$ level between the mean score of the experimental group and the control group pupils in the post administration of the EFL self-regulation skills scale in favor of the experimental group.
- 3- There is a positive relationship between using blended differentiated instruction and pupils' self-regulation skills.

Method

Design of the research

This research adopted the quasi- experimental design using two groups to investigate the effectiveness of using the blended differentiated instruction strategies in developing fourth year primary stage pupils' writing skills and self-regulation. Both groups were taught by the researcher, but the experimental group was taught using the blended differentiated instruction strategy and the control group was taught using the regular way of teaching prescribed in the teachers' book. The pre/post-tests of writing skills and the pre/post self-regulation scale (SRS) were administered to the two groups.

Participants

A group of (50) fourth year primary school pupils were purposively selected from Al-Razi Primary Boys' School in Bahrain in the academic year 2024/2025. This number of participants was divided equally into two intact groups. The first group of (25) pupils comprised the experimental group and received the blended differentiated instruction strategy.

The other group of (25) pupils served as the control group and received only the regular teaching methods.

Instruments

To fulfill the purposes of the research, the following instruments were prepared by the researcher:

1- An EFL writing skills test (pre-post) including (4) WH and Yes/No questions and a rubric for scoring it to determine the level of the fourth-grade primary stage pupils before and after receiving the blended differentiated instruction treatment.

2- An EFL self-regulation skills questionnaire including (35) statements translated into Arabic to identify the writing self-regulation skills necessary for fourth grade primary stage pupils. All the participants respond to all the statements and most of their responses were positive.

3- An EFL self-regulation skills scale to measure fourth grade primary pupils' self-regulation levels before and after receiving the blended differentiated instruction treatment. Pupils' responses were different before and after the treatment.

Definitions of Terms

EFL Writing

According to Arochman, et al. (2024: p. 312), writing as a process of actualization means expressing the writer's desire. It is an active and demanding skill, especially for EFL learners. EFL learners should be able to accumulate their desires and meanings within their brain and transfer the ideas into another language before they are concerned with linguistics and grammatical convention.

The researcher defines writing operationally as the ability of fourth grade EFL pupils to produce a piece of writing including content, organization, grammar, syntax,

mechanics and word choice using the blended differentiated instruction.

Differentiated Instruction

Tomlinson (2014: p. 78) defined differentiated instruction as a way of thinking about teaching and learning that advocates beginning where individuals are rather than with a prescribed plan of action, which ignores student readiness, interest, and learning profile. It is a way of thinking that challenges how educators typically envision assessment, teaching, learning, classroom roles, use of time, and curriculum.

The researcher operationally defined DI as using different ways and strategies to cater for the DI needs of EFL primary stage pupils to develop their writing skills and self-regulation.

Blended Instruction

Blended instruction is a novel approach to education that integrates traditional in-person instruction with online learning activities. It is emerging as one of the most promising teaching and learning strategies in higher education as a result of technological advancements (Yu, et al., 2022: p. 1).

However, the researcher tends to define blended instruction operationally as a teaching method which blends the use of technology in the learning environment with the traditional learning setting and tools to maximize learning as it turns the setting from teacher centered class into student centered class.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation describes learners who learn for their own purposes despite often adverse circumstances. The ability to plan and construct one's own feelings, thoughts,

and behaviors, then adjust them while acting to accomplish goals, is known as self-regulation. Similar to this, self-generated learning refers to learning that is focused on students' own ideas and actions with an eye on their learning objectives. This involves controlling one's own motivation and emotions (Zhang, 2024: p. 3).

The researcher defines self-regulation operationally as a process that allows fourth primary stage pupils to be independent learners through choosing suitable strategies from differentiated instruction inside and outside classroom.

Results of the Research

Results of Testing Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis states that: “There is a statistically significant difference at $\leq (0.05)$ between the mean score of the experimental group and control group pupils in the EFL writing skills test in favor of the experimental group”. The results are shown in table (2) below:

Table 2:

Comparing the writing performance of the experimental and control groups on the post - EFL writing test.

Sub-skills	Research group	Mean	SD	Mann-Whitney Test	
				Z	p-Value
Content	Experimental group	6.64	0.95	- 6.13	Significant
	Control group	3.40	0.81		
Vocabulary	Experimental group	6.84	0.98	- 6.05	Significant
	Control group	3.20	0.86		
Grammar	Experimental group	6.64	0.99	- 6.07	Significant
	Control group	3.12	0.83		

Sub-skills	Research group	Mean	SD	Mann-Whitney Test	
				Z	p-Value
Mechanics	Experimental group	7	0.86	- 6.11	Significant
	Control group	3.00	0.91		
Organization	Experimental group	6.9	1.05	- 6.08	Significant
	Control group	3.08	0.95		
Total score	Experimental group	34.2	3.57	- 6.01	Significant
	Control group	15.8	2.06		

Table (2) shows Mann-Whitney test results for comparing the differences between the mean scores of experimental and control group participants in the post-test of writing skills. There is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the post-test of writing skills test in favor of the experimental group. Therefore, the mean of the experimental group equals (34.2) is greater than the mean of the control group (15.8).

Results of Testing Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two states that: "There is a statistically significant difference at $\leq (0.05)$ level between the mean score of the pre and post administration of the EFL writing skills test of the experimental group in favor of the post administration". The results are shown in table (3).

Table 3:

Comparing the writing performance of the experimental group in the pre-post administration of the EFL writing test.

Sub-skills	Test	Mean	SD	Wilcoxon Test	
				Z	p-Value
Content	post – test	6.64	0.95	- 4.40	Significant
	Pre- test	3.24	0.92		
Vocabulary	Post – test	6.84	0.98	- 4.41	Significant
	Pre - test	2.96	0.78		
Grammar	Post – test	6.64	0.99	- 4.39	Significant
	Pre - test	2.76	0.77		
Mechanics	Post – test	7	0.86	- 4.40	Significant
	Pre - test	2.88	0.88		
Organization	Post – test	6.9	1.05	- 4.40	Significant
	Pre - test	3.16	0.74		
Total score	Post - test	34.2	3.57	- 4.37	Significant
	Pre – test	15.0	1.93		

Table (3) shows Wilcoxon signed ranks test results used for comparing the mean scores of the experimental group in the pretest and posttest of writing skills.

Results of Testing Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three states that: " There is a statistically significant difference at $\leq (0.05)$ level between the mean score of the experimental group and the control group pupils in the post administration of the EFL self-regulation skills scale in favor of the experimental group". The results are shown in table (4) below.

Table 4:

Comparing the self-regulation level of the two groups in the post administration of the self-regulation scale.

Main skill domains	Research group	Mean	SD	Mann-Whitney Test	
				Z	p-Value
Motivation	Experimental group	59.0	2.91	- 6.08	Significant
	Control group	31.3	4.12		
Learning strategies	Experimental group	74.8	3.59	- 6.07	Significant
	Control group	44.3	4.91		
Total score	Experimental group	125	6.55	- 6.06	Significant
	Control group	75.6	7.31		

Table (4) shows Mann-Whitney test results for comparing the differences between the mean scores of experimental and control group participants in the post-test of writing skills. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the post-test of self-regulation skills scale in favor of the experimental group.

Results of Testing Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis two states that: " There is a statistically significance at $\leq (0.05)$ level between the mean score of the pre and post administration of the EFL Self-Regulation skills scale of the experimental group in favor of the post administration". The results are shown in table (5).

Table 5:

Significance of differences between the mean scores of the experimental group participants in the pretest of the EFL self-regulation skills scale.

Main skill domains	Test	Mean	SD	Wilcoxon Test	
				Z	p-Value
Motivation	Pre – test	33.0	5.27	- 4.40	Significant
	Post -test	59.0	2.91		
Learning strategies	Pre – test	51.4	4.66	- 4.41	Significant
	Post -test	74.8	3.59		
Total score	Pre – test	84.5	6.80	- 4.39	Significant
	Post -test	125	6.55		

Table (5) shows that the mean scores of the experimental group in the posttest of self – regulation sub-skills as well as in overall writing were higher than their mean scores in the pretest. All "Z" values were statistically significant at ≤ 0.05 .

Results of Testing Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five states that: “There is a positive relationship between using blended differentiated instruction and pupils’ self-regulation skills.” The researcher used the "Pearson" correlation coefficient to calculate the relationship, and it was calculated using the statistical analysis program SPSS (Version 23). The following table shows the results in this regard.

Table 6:

The correlation coefficient between the posttest of the experimental group students for both the blended differentiated instruction and Pupil' self-regulation skills.

Correlation coefficient	Number
0.75	25

Table (6) results reveal that there is a strong correlation between the blended differentiated instruction and pupils' self-regulation skills, with a value of (0.75).

The results of the research revealed the effectiveness of using blended differentiated instruction to improve EFL fourth grade primary stage pupils' EFL writing skills and self-regulation. The participants' writing skills were significantly improved. Besides, participants' self-regulation toward writing was highly increased. By the end of the implementation of the research program, the experimental group achieved a high level of writing skills.

Discussion

Using a blended differentiated instruction strategy appears very important to support pupils to carry out a task and gradually pulling back the support to work independently. In addition, the pupils are not able to identify their own abilities that help them to be independent and self-regulated learners.

The present research reached in the following findings:

- The use of blended differentiated instruction resulted in improving the pupils' writing skills and their self-regulation.
- The experimental group pupils outperformed their counterparts of the control group in the writing test. This was indicated by the significant differences between the mean score of the two groups.
- The experimental group outperforms the control group in their writing tasks and tired activities and blended differentiated instruction strategies.
- The blended differentiated instruction program was effective in developing the EFL writing skills of fourth

grade pupils. This was indicated through estimating the effect size of the treatment on students writing skills.

- The blended differentiated instruction program was effective in improving the EFL self-regulation level. This was indicated through estimating the effect size of the treatment on pupils' self-regulation.
- Results of this research are related to the results of other researchers and there are some similarities between the present research and the previous ones.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the present research, it can be concluded that:

- Using blended differentiated instruction has proved to be effective in developing EFL writing skills and self-regulation among fourth grade EFL primary stage pupils at Al- Razi Primary Boys' School in Bahrain.
- The experimental group outperforms the control group in their writing performance.
- The experimental group outperforms the control group in their level of Self-Regulation.
- The use of the blended differentiated instruction program made the difference in improving primary stage pupils' writing skills and self-regulation level.
- Various methods of assessment, immediate feedback, pair work and interactive groups provided a constructive support and a motivating environment that helped improve pupils' writing and self-regulation.

Recommendations

In the light of the results obtained, the researcher recommends that:

Blended differentiated instruction should be used to facilitate teaching and provide active opportunities for learners to learn English language. The responsibility is shared between schools' administration and teachers themselves to integrate the blended differentiated instruction into teaching and learning English language, and reduce the challenges when they occur:

- Teachers should upgrade their knowledge and skills of using blended differentiated instruction to minimize challenges when they occur inside the classroom.
- Course designers should pay more attention to blended differentiated instruction strategies and elements in designing EFL primary pupils' courses.
- Supervisors should give higher consideration to blended differentiated instruction effectiveness in developing EFL pupils' writing skills and self-regulation.
- Faculty of education should provide programs and workshops to train teachers on the effective blended differentiated instruction program.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the results of the present research, the following suggestions can be provided for further research:

- Using blended differentiated instruction for developing other EFL skills such as listening, reading and speaking among primary school pupils.
- Using blended differentiated instruction for developing EFL writing skills among various school levels.
- Searching for different strategies to increase students' motivation toward writing.

- Evaluating of Bahrain primary stage textbooks from the perspective of teachers and supervisors to identify how and what to differentiate.
- Evaluating the teachers' attitudes towards applying blended differentiated instruction and its impact on students' academic achievement.

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