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**Blended Differentiated Instruction for Inclusive Education during Post-COVID-19 Era:
The Need for Upgrading School Libraries in Nigeria**

By

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Abstract

With the socio-educational challenges posed by COVID-19, teaching-learning is gradually moving from face-to-face to digital and online distance learning across the world. This makes it generally challenging to meet the needs of all learners in the context of inclusive education. Increasing evidence tends to show that for effective inclusive learning, the hybrid blended approaches to learning should be differentiated. Further still is the fact that school libraries need to be upgraded with resources that meet the needs of diverse learners, and speak to the present hybridization in pedagogy and learning. A major impairing problem is the documented lack of expertise on the part of the teachers to facilitate online-based learning, which has exacerbated the challenges they face in differentiating learning for all learners in inclusive settings. Hence, a post-COVID-19 classroom is characterized by an increased need for the teachers to integrate approaches and tools for differentiated instruction in the context of a blended learning environment in order to carry all learners along, calling for a digitalized school library. This paper presents context-based perspectives on differentiating blended learning to meet the needs of all learners and advocates for upgraded libraries that will meet up with the current Education needs in the post-COVID education era in Nigeria. We discussed the need for differentiating instruction in post-COVID classrooms; trends of blended instruction in Nigeria; differentiating blended instruction for all learners; attending to learners with disabilities, inclusion, and equity in Nigerian schools, and the need for upgrading the school libraries. Further, recommendations and suggestions for future research were also made. It is expected that this paper will add to the growing knowledge on blended and digital learning and responses through library resources; add to teachers' expertise for effective teaching in a complicated post-COVID classroom using the available library tools, and speak to the long-trend of inclusive education challenges in Nigerian schools.

Key words: Blended learning, differentiated instruction, learners, disabilities, COVID-19, inclusive education, school library, digital library resources

Introduction

Libraries in the twenty-first century have improved their e-services and integrated the use of digital facilities into various library management and administration, such as material processing, on-line resource development, on-line resource access, off-line resource development, inter library co-operation, lending, and video conferencing in schools (Abubakar, 2011; Adebayo, Ahmed, & Adeniran, 2018 ; Mommoh, & Emmanuel, 2019). A school library is a central collection of diverse learning resources to support primary and secondary school curriculum, meet individual students' needs and interests, as well as ensure that young people develop information literacy skills within the school's curriculum (Abubakar, 2011; Anafo, Akpah, & Ofori, 2020). School libraries in the current digital era are information hubs that are fueled by data in all forms (Li, Jiao, Zhang, & Xu, 2019; Okere, & Evans, 2021). Blended library resources can enable people to work and learn from others who are time and location apart as curriculum implementation becomes more dynamic (Rajan, Esmail, & MusthafaK, 2022). Hence, school libraries' resources, space, and staff have the potential to make a significant impact on pupils' achievement, educational equity, and socioemotional well-being (Ayaz, Ali, Khan, Ullah, & Ullah, 2017; Afolabi, & Elaturoti, 2016; Ida, 2016).

The impact on educational equity is especially important given the complexity of teaching and learning in inclusive setting and due to the increasing diversity of learners in the present classrooms. Meeting the educational need of all learners irrespective of their abilities is the ultimate goal of the inclusive education perspective, which is intended to also implement educational support for learners with disabilities (Obi, & Ashi, 2016). A total of 65 million school-aged children are believed to have disabilities today, with over half of them excluded from schools (UNESCO, 2021). The exclusion of disabled children from education has a negative economic impact on the family, community, and the society. Over the years, Nigerian Education system has struggled with inclusion of persons with disabilities (Simbaya, Shakespeare, Nyariki, & Mugeere, 2019) which has been significantly hampered by stigmatization (Koszela, 2013). Though Nigeria is a multicultural and ethnically diverse country, her Education has been backward in addressing diversity issues in the classroom, especially providing resources to support all learners irrespective of their ability/disabilities, cultural background, gender, ethnicity, interests and other differences (Ololube, 2011).

Additionally, COVID-19 pandemic has left unprecedented and widespread change in education practices accentuating the existing problem of gaps in learning (UNICEF 2020; United Nations 2020).

According to Kauchak & Eggen (2011), diversity in today's classroom is greater than ever, consisting of learners who differ in terms of language, interests, culture, perspectives, abilities, and exceptionalities. Though students in the schools are grouped based on levels in classrooms, among learners in the same level or classroom, there are still diversities in spite of streaming procedures (Kamarulzaman, Azman, Zahidi, & Yunus, 2021). The challenges of attending to the current diversity in the modern classrooms for effective learning are compounded by the need to meet the learning needs of those with diverse disabilities. As a result, in today's globalised world, students are so varied that they require a variety of teaching and learning methodologies to accommodate learners' uniqueness. In this light, Levy (2008) noted that teachers should use tailored instruction that engage every learner from where they are with the goal of developing their educational growth.

Differentiated instruction offers teachers the impetus to teach learners together in a classroom, their differences notwithstanding (George 2005). Additionally, differentiation allows for curriculum modification and, also provides equity-based learning opportunities for all. Differentiation allows teachers to deliver personalized learning since each learner will have an equal opportunity to learn by embracing the concept of learning variety and attending to the various talents, interests, and needs of the learners. As a result, teachers need to prepare learning sessions that are suitable and relevant to their students, prepare them for standardized age-appropriate curriculum and tests, and ensure that the session is both educational and engaging for the students. Even though not all differentiation methods are responsive to every learner, Levy (2008) mentioned various differentiation tactics such as giving students additional time to finish an assignment, allowing students to choose books to read, and providing different sorts of tasks. The necessity of recognizing and understanding student diversity qualities helps teachers to use instructional tactics that best cater for each individual learner. Differentiated instruction, which is complementary to learner variety, is an honor to the learners' unique origins, as teachers get an awareness of who the learners are and how they differ from one another. Nonetheless, the requirement to understand and accommodate learner differences in

abilities, interests, and preferences is at the heart of individualized instruction as it is in blended or online learning.

For the foreseeable future, online distance learning will be an important component of education. The world will not return to pre-COVID-19 teaching, especially in blended learning contexts, but is gradually consolidating in the new normal (Ololube, 2011). Hence, blended learning is becoming more important as a result of the COVID-19 learning circumstances, even as schools return to face-to-face contact. Blended learning is a method of teaching and learning that combines face-to-face and online teaching and learning activities in order to reduce physical meetings while improving learning outcomes (Kumi-Yeboah, Young, & Boadu, 2014). The introduction of blended learning is an intriguing invention, but its uptake, particularly in developing countries (such as Africa), confronts hurdles if it is to be an effective teaching and learning innovation. The efficiency of blended learning is hampered by a number of underlying problems.

One major problem is determining how users can effectively use technology and assuring participants' commitment in light of unique learner characteristics and technology encounters (Hofmann, 2014). Users who have problems with technology, according to Hofmann, may forsake their learning and, as a result, technological applications may fail. According to a report by Oxford Group (2013), some learners (16%) had negative attitudes toward blended learning, while 26% were concerned that blended learning students would not complete their studies. Learners are vital participants in any learning process, and their backgrounds and traits influence their capacity to continue learning effectively. In blended learning, the designed tools employed may have an impact on their learning efficacy, which divides the learners in the same class. This brings out the need to extend inclusive practices to blended learning and as well questions blended instruction that is not based on differentiation.

Furthermore, while digital tools assist teachers in reaching students, they have also provided new ways of differentiating teaching that many teachers had not anticipated. Online sites and activities that may be adjusted to the success of individual learners have made their way into classrooms (Ferlazzo, 2021). As a result, in the online environment, differentiation and student involvement are critical to student learning outcomes. Teachers have traditionally created

classes that may be changed for students with varying degrees of material knowledge (Wyse, Stickney, Butz, Beckler, & Close, 2020). This would look like students moving ahead or getting direct teacher time in the in-person classroom based on their experience and grasp of the content. Students can spend a lot more time incorporating their interests into the lesson for deeper learning when they learn online.

In diversified teaching and learning, the most important consideration is that teachers should constantly be flexible in determining what is best for their pupils irrespective of whether the learning process is blended or not. However, the problem is that teachers do not have enough time to undertake research on differentiation tactics that will help their pupils; therefore most sessions are unplanned and spontaneous as they enter the classroom (White 2013). This is worsened by the global Covid-19 outbreak, which has made the already difficult task of differentiating lessons even more tasking for teachers. This difficulty is aggravated by the need for, and transition to online and blended instructions for all learners, and lack of library material to support teaching-learning in such differentiated blended experience. This paper discusses the need for differentiating instruction in post-COVID classrooms; trends of blended instruction in Africa; differentiating blended instruction for all learners; attending to learners with disabilities, and upgrading school libraries for inclusion and equity.

The need for differentiating instruction in post-COVID classrooms

The inclusion of gifted education and differentiated teaching approaches in the educational system helps to tackle the issue of diversity by ensuring that all students receive an equal and flexible education. According to (Chang 1999), the likelihood of learners participating in group learning with individuals from diverse backgrounds has risen, necessitating differentiation. Tomlinson (1995), defined differentiation as "shaking up" everything that happens inside the class such that learners have a variety of ways to take in information, make sense of ideas, and articulate what they learn. To put it another way, a differentiated classroom offers a variety of options for receiving knowledge, organizing or generating ideas, or creating products.

Differentiated instruction has been described in the literature as a set of tactics, a belief system, and a process of teaching and learning that is based on the needs and preferences of students (Tomlinson & Strickland 2005). This description is also represented in Carol Ann

Tomlinson's (1999) differentiated instruction paradigm, which includes various constructs such as content, process, product, preparedness, interest, and learning profile. Differentiated instruction has recently been referred to as "a teaching philosophy" (Knowles 2009; Loeser 2014). Five aspects of DI implementation deserve teachers' attention and consideration: content, process, product, affect, and learning environment (Tomlinson and Moon 2013). Three ideas underlie these five categories: preparedness, interest, and learning profile (Tomlinson 2001). To begin, the educational content should be engaging and appeal to a variety of students' needs (Tomlinson 2014). To be more explicit, the applicability of learning materials is determined by the various levels of competence, personal interests, and learning styles and tactics used by students. Second, the learning process, including knowledge and skill growth, is dependent on students' initial learning profiles, thus allowing for a variety of learning methodologies and study paces. Additionally, learning product, which is directly linked to summative assessment, legitimizes a variety of options in terms of learning result presentation styles.

Furthermore, dialogue, partnership, and engagement between teachers and learners are vital in meeting the diverse affective needs of students because these interpersonal processes contribute to sympathetic and dynamic connections as well as a supportive learning environment (Sun, 2021). Finally, the physical and social learning environment should be inclusive and learner-friendly to people with a variety of preferences and behavior patterns. Instead of being examined and implemented independently, these five areas, which are anchored by the three principles, require an integrated strategy to effectively implement DI (Tomlinson 2014).

Differentiated instruction has indeed been used in education for over a decade and has established itself for great effectiveness across contexts (Guay, Roy, & Valois 2017; Faber, Glas, & Visscher 2018; Förster, Kawohl, & Souvignier 2018). Diverse areas of differentiated education have been the subject of extensive investigation (Brevik, Gunnulfson, and Renzulli 2018; Suprayogi and Valcke 2016). Onyishi, and Sefotho,. (2021) investigated DI for learners' mathematics self-efficacy in inclusive classrooms, and found that DI was effective in helping all students, including those with dyscalculia. Further, several components of differentiated instruction have been examined and spelt out, with the rationales, difficulties, and findings from extensive study highlighted. For instance, Martin and Pickett (2013) discovered that diversified teaching tactics such as pre-assessment, flexible grouping, and learner interest improved

students' evaluations of their engagement and motivation among talented math and music students. Altintas & Zdemir (2015) discovered a substantial difference in arithmetic results for gifted students who received varied instruction, while Ann and Sizemore (2015) discovered that topic differentiation is important in satisfying the demands of gifted learners in a more recent study.

On the other hand, Teachers' competency is one of the primary difficulties to DI implementation for mainstream schools (Smale-Jacobse et al. 2019; Shareefa 2020), which is based on a gap in associated teacher training (Brevik, Gunnulfsen, & Renzulli 2018; Suprayogi & Valcke 2016). Another disadvantage is an unsupportive learning environment, which includes course material limits and a lack of instruction on DI tactics (Aldossari 2018), as well as disconnect between social context and teachers' own opinions (Aldossari 2018). (Bondie, Dahnke, & Zusho, 2019). DI has also raised the issue of time constraints in general (Merawi 2018). Hence, given that COVID-19 has posed restrictive learning situations, DI challenges need to be navigated and built into the current online and blended learning experiences (Kamarulzaman, Azman, Zahidi, & Yunus, 2021; Lachlan, Kimmel, Mizrav, & Holdheide, 2020; Lewis, Kuhfeld, Ruzek, & McEachin, 2021; Sun, 2021).

This is because, the pandemic has led to a widening gap between higher and lower achieving learners regarding engagement with academic activities due to differences in student autonomy and parental involvement during the post-COVID era (Eze, Sefotho, Onyishi, Onyishi, & Eseadi, 2021; Wyse, 2021). In exploring the potential impact of COVID-19 on student learning and how schools can respond Wyse, (2021) concluded that academic decline that occurred due to COVID-19 may be countered by increased use of practice tools, such as DI. Some of the emerging situations that necessitate differentiated instruction in the Post COVID classroom are: i) disparity in students' access to education materials during COVID-19; ii) differences in parental support among learners during the pandemic; iii) disparity in access to online facilities such as network and digital gadgets; iv) social experiences during the pandemic and v) learners with diverse disabilities who may have been left out during the pandemic. With this in mind, I advocate that DI is still very important in the blended approaches which are gradually taking over Education systems.

Blended Instruction in Nigerian Context

Blended learning has been described as learning environment that fosters both face-to-face and digital modalities of education (Cole, 2020). To effectively fulfill the different requirements of students, a blended learning paradigm combines in-person learning with technology-based training. While these methods of education can take many forms, teacher-led instruction, collaborative group work with peers, and classroom station work are all popular ways for students to engage in face-to-face, in-person learning experiences (Acree et al., 2017). Instructional videos, content on learning management systems, and the utilization of technology-based engagement platforms and tools are all ways for students to participate in digital learning (Cole, 2020). Some elements of blended learning as identified in Kumi-Yeboah, Young, & Boadu, 2014) Traditional classroom or lab settings (face-to-face instruction); Reading assignments (print-based workbooks); CD-ROM (self-paced content); Performance support tools (collaboration software, threaded discussions, online testing); Tele-training such as videoconferencing; Asynchronous Web-based training (email-based communication, e-learning platforms, discussion boards); and Synchronous Web-based training (chat rooms, computer conferencing).

The usage of blended learning has been proven in the literature to improve both students' academic understanding and engagement (Lozano-Lozano et al., 2020; Fazal & Bryant, 2019; Camahalan & Ruley, 2014; Kazu & Demirkol, 2014; Cole, 2020; Pierce, 2017; Siko, 2014). Research has proven that blended learning has progressed from a distant ideal to a very practical model in which teachers use a combination of classroom and online learning experiences to provide students control over where, how, and when they interact with classroom information (Acree, Gibson, Mangum, Wolf, Kellogg, & Branon, 2017; Kazakoff et al., 2018). Students made great development from pre-assessment to post-assessment regarding middle school writing activities (Camahalan & Ruley, 2014). In a similar study, it was found that blended learning was proven to contribute to students' engagement and positively contribute toward the material and course design (Akgunduz & Akinoglu, 2016).

Blended learning is a relatively new approach that found root since computers and tablets became more widely available in schools. Many educators understood the potential for technology to revolutionize the educational process as we know it. Before discussing how

blended learning has progressed in the educational context, it's necessary to understand the basic influence of technology on learners' learning (Basheka, Lubega, & Baguma, 2016). Learning is all about knowing the needs of the learners and being able to meet them (Naidoo 2012). Diverse paradigms, models, and approaches have been developed to support various learning criteria in order to provide highly effective blended learning. It is worthy of note that one size does not fit all, and this notion holds true for blended learning instructional techniques as well. As a result, over the course of blended learning's existence, a range of blended learning models have emerged. Two approaches to blended learning that are applicable in classrooms include: rotation model and flex model (Cole, 2020).

The rotation model is the first and most basic blended learning approach. The tutor moves respectively, between using face-to-face and online teaching, guiding the learners through a range of different channels in the classroom (Acree et al., 2017, Cole, 2020). In this model, the face-to-face practices may include small group teaching, a lab exercise, a flipped classroom video lesson, and a hands-on activity (Acree et al., 2017). The content for the learning stations is created in advance by the teacher, and learners progress through them at their own pace. The exercises at each station might be differentiated in an ideal rotation model to accommodate the students' varied learning needs, interests and wishes through personalized learning, which is one of the cornerstones of blended learning (Cole, 2020).

The flex model is another unique blended learning technique. Students in the flex model of blended learning access classroom content mostly through the internet (Cole, 2020). Students have the most flexibility in this style of blended learning since they can work through the videos and exercises prepared for them by their teacher at their own pace and in their own location (Acree et al., 2017). While the other students study through the accurate online curriculum, a teacher in this blended learning situation has the freedom to deal with specific pupils in small groups or on an individual basis (Cole, 2020). Technology is having a substantial impact within institutions, prompting changes in educational procedures and service delivery (Basheka, Lubega, & Baguma, 2016). Many professionals, however, are unaware of the potential ways that these technologies are fast evolving (Ololube, 2011).

According to Dabbagh (2005), online learning is a new paradigm that necessitates new theoretical frameworks that deviate from, or combine traditional learning paradigms. This means

that the traditional pedagogy is not entirely removed, but rather altered and applied in a new way. In impoverished nations, particularly in Africa, students and teachers are still lacking in the ability to employ blended learning to improve technology in learning (Ololube, 2011). Over the years, blended learning has experienced tremendous challenges in getting full implementation in schools (Kisubi, 2014). African countries are unable to meet the expectations of a rising student population in terms of educational technology, personnel, and training facilities (World Bank, 2010). Thus till date, blended learning is still constrained in Africa in spite of the established effectiveness. As the condition of COVID-19 has made blended learning almost compulsory in African countries, there is need to outline how such learning contexts can be adapted to accommodate diverse learners.

Towards Differentiating Blended Instruction for all Learners

The global Covid-19 outbreak has damaged every industry known to man. Almost every business in the economic sector has been forced to close. Meanwhile, the pandemic has forced governments around the world to close all schools and replace them with online teaching and learning. Online platforms have since supplanted traditional classroom teaching and learning. Although online teaching and learning has been present for a long time, it has become more important since the widespread dissemination of Covid-19. The World Wide Web has integrated education and technologies into one niche, allowing experts to study and present the wonders it offers both to instructors and pupils. Much has been written and learned about differentiated instruction and the effects it has on instructors and students thus far. Online differentiated education, in which teachers differentiate their online teachings while students study online, is less well-known (Kamarulzaman, Azman, Zahidi, & Yunus, 2021). For teacher to engage in online DI they differentiate their lessons and teach online, while students, learn online.

Hence, Differentiating blended instruction involving a combination of the two theoretical modalities (blended learning theory and DI theory). In this regards, Kamarulzaman, et al., (2021) sought to investigate the impact of online differentiated instruction on students' motivation and academic performance during the Covid-19 outbreak. The findings revealed that online differentiated instruction is feasible, and appropriate combination of differentiation constructs lead to achievement of higher motivation and better academic performance among the students. The following conceptual model explains the procedure for blended DI (Figure 1).

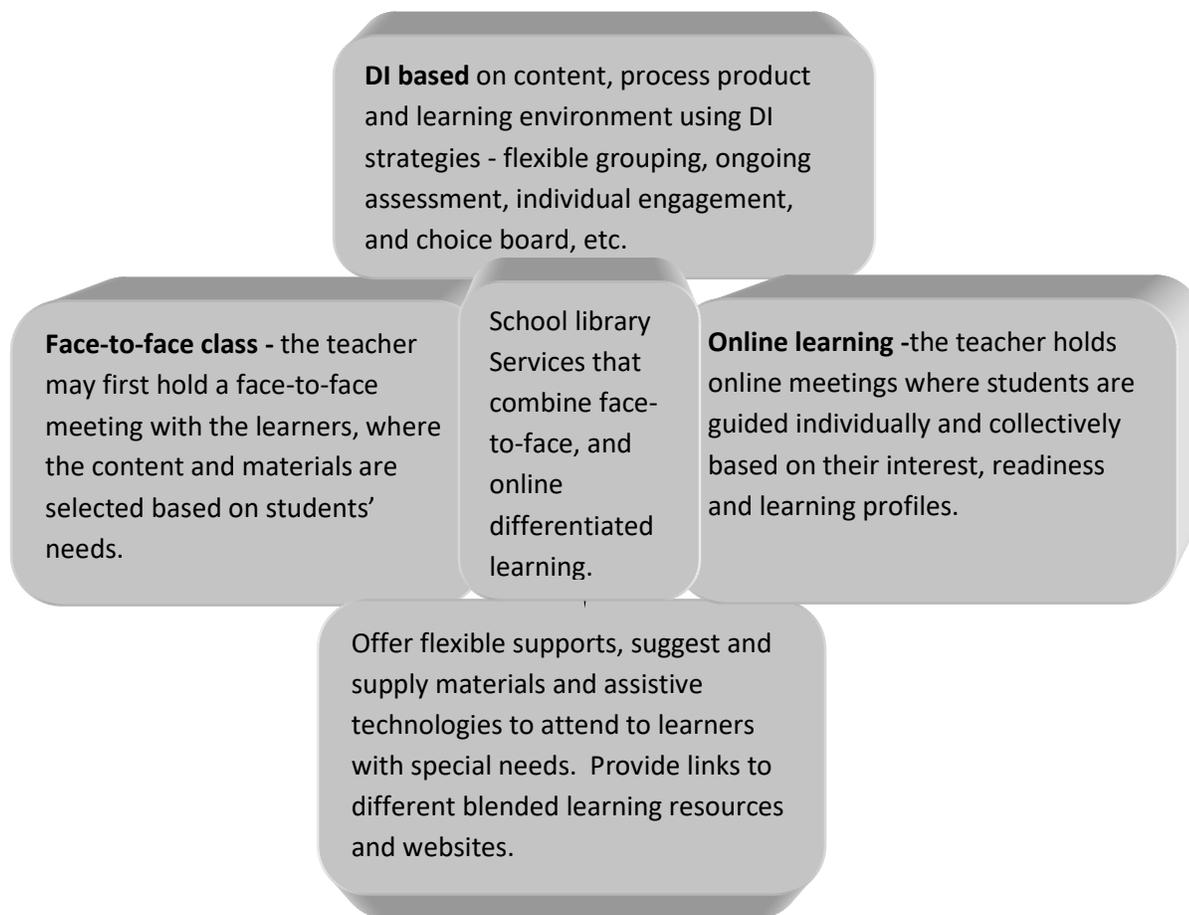


Figure 1: A model for blended differentiated Instruction for Inclusive Education and Library Services

As demonstrated in figure 1, the teacher differentiate both online and face-to-face instruction based on content, process product and learning environment provided by the school library. The teacher may first hold a face-to-face meeting with the learners, where the content and materials are selected based on students' needs, interests, and readiness. In this respect, the teacher collaborates with the learners to brainstorm on the lee-way towards the current problem. As such, the teacher draws from the curriculum to inform what content to be learnt and how best to learn it and, what are needed for goal accomplishments (all materials including online and concrete and text materials. As the teacher holds online meetings, students are guided individually and collectively to approach their goals in online environment based on their interest, readiness and learning profiles in the context of learning materials and supports. Some software that can assist online learning are:

1. Wizer – This website allows teachers to build interactive digital worksheets that may be personalized by including videos, audio files, and photographs. Teachers can use this tool to sprinkle extra re-teaching lessons or more difficult enrichment tasks throughout a worksheet, meeting students where they are in their study.
2. Edpuzzle – If a teacher wishes to present a third-party video to their students, Edpuzzle allows them to assure that students cannot jump ahead in the movie. The teacher can also pause the video at any time to check on the kids' understanding and conduct a quick conversation using this app.
3. Nearpod is a virtual presentation platform that allows teachers to integrate fast quizzes, games, and other interactive content in their virtual presentations. Teachers can make self-paced sessions so that learners can go at their own pace while learning.
4. Quizizz — Teachers can design a "gamified" review of each learning unit using Quizizz. Teachers don't even need to start from scratch when creating these review games because they can use other teachers' content as a starting point.

In addition to these platforms, teachers can select assistive technologies such as text to speech & literacy support tools; writing support tools; executive functioning tool; time/task management tools; accessible screen readers and open access textbooks and literature (Williams, 2020). Hence, Davila, (2021) itemized three step-wise strategies for differentiating blended learning that can guide teachers to prepare their lessons. These include:

1. Provide targeted education to pupils by deliberately arranging them into homogeneous and diverse groups. Targeted clustering helps the instructor to: i) assign specific groups differentiated task lists based on the needs defined by the pre-assessment data; ii) use leveled reading tools when grouping across skill levels so that all learners can fully benefit in the content; and iii) Divide students into groups for project-based learning (PBL), taking into account how they will co-operate with one another; iv) Hold interactive online conversations over written text. Allow students to capture video and audio conversations with you and one another.
2. Provide options for students: By providing a variety of options, teachers can give students a say in how they demonstrate their grasp of the material they've learned. ii) Allow students to

choose the sorts and order of learning activities they want to do by allowing them to choose the learning tasks they want to do; iii) Consider how you may shift learning offline to give students a break from technology by using student interest to construct an offline choice board; iv) Give students control over how they work – and with whom.

3. Differentiate content accessibility by presenting the same content in numerous ways. This can be accomplished by: i) providing a range of entry points, supports, and even time for your information can aid your learners' comprehension and mastery. ii) Ensuring that digital content complies with accessibility guidelines. Consider using accessibility features like text-to-speech, graphic captions, or bigger fonts to make your digital content more accessible for students. Record any live lessons and add captions to help students follow along with the content. iii) Provide captions for your recorded lectures. For synchronous learning sessions, provide notes. iv) Give students a copy of your notes for synchronous learning sessions where you'll be covering new or potentially difficult material.

Attending to Learners with Disabilities

To attend to learners with disabilities, there is additional need for providing clear support to instructors in terms of differentiating instruction to support SWDs. As long as the chosen techniques are connected to their particular demands, blended learning approaches have a positive impact on the academic performance of the student populations (Darrow, 2016). Although blended learning has the capacity to assist a diverse group of students, teachers must be trained in evidence-based methods which can be linked to mixed activities. Teachers can give extra supports as well as scaffolding for learners with disabilities in blended environments. Such may be in the forms of word banks, annotated diagrams, word frames, visual organizers, and the use of the students' home language. Some of the key benefits to using a blended learning to attend to diverse learners and those with disabilities include, access to immediate formative assessment data to drive instruction (Cieminski & Andrews, 2018); increased ability to engage in communication and collaboration through project-based learning (Bauer-Ramazani et al., 2016); and ability to differentiate instruction to match individualized cognitive and linguistic needs (Morgan, & Spies, 2020).

Teachers can use direct and explicit instruction to pre-teach SWDs, use a peer aided learning technique during blended learning, or pull small groups of students for extra

intervention and assistance. Teachers must deliver differentiated scaffold in accordance with the first two lessons. Blended learning can also attend to learners with disabilities if there are assistive technologies that are selected based on the learners; disabilities. For instance, audio books can be made available for learners with visual impairments.

Inclusion and Equity in Nigerian Schools

Inclusive education, according to Obi (2008), is considered as a right issue in which people with disabilities are not discriminated against because of their religion, color, ethnicity, tribe, or handicap. Obi stated that the Dakar World Education Forum recognized the rights of all children, including the disabled, at-risk, and vulnerable, to receive a high-quality education by 2015 by expanding educational opportunities for all children, including the disabled, vulnerable, and disadvantaged. In retrospect, inclusive education practices in African nations such as Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, , Kenya, and Liberia, to name a few, have been ongoing for many years, while some countries are now at the stage of evaluations and follow-up services in inclusive societies. Other African countries like Nigeria are behind the times when it comes to problems like inclusive education for special needs children.

The joint creation of an internationally acceptable framework was stage one of the global projects of Education for All (EFA, 1994). The Salamanca Statement proclaimed education as a right for everyone, not a privilege for a select few (Report on Inclusive Schools & Community Support, 1998-2001). Several African countries have legislative protection for people with disabilities at all levels of their inclusion programs (Obi, & Ashi, 2016). Preparation of teachers on information regarding misinformed elements of society, such as parents and some job agencies, who have negative attitudes about people with disabilities. Fear of rejection or not being accepted in inclusive education by people with disabilities and their parents is another limitation that is evident in African context.

Regular schools' inaccessibility to special needs students at all levels of education and non public areas throughout the state is a severe problem. Lack of specialized equipment is a problem, given that the cost of educating five non-disabled children in inclusive education is similar to the cost of educating one special needs child (Obi, & Ashi, 2016). Yet, there is need for ensuring that children with special learning needs and children with various disabilities have

access to inclusive settings (UNISEF, 2004). It's important to mention that exclusion has persisted in many countries' educational systems long before COVID-19. Approximately 258 million children and teens were unable to receive an education as of 2019, with poverty being the most commonly cited barrier. Aside from these, educational researchers are concerned that the current scenario presented by COVID-19 would exacerbate existing social disparities and deepen the educational gap (Letzel, Pozas, & Schneider, 2020).

Need for Upgrading School Libraries for Inclusive Blended Learning in Nigeria

Research on the role of school library programs for students with disabilities in the public schools in developed countries have addressed concepts of inclusive access to collections, services, and programs, and discussed collaboration between school librarians and special education teachers (Allen and Hughes-Hassell 2010; Ennis-Cole and Smith 2011; Perrault 2011a; Subramaniam, Oxley, & Kodama, 2013). With the increasing needs for blending instruction, there is also increased need to meet the diversity of learners through differentiated instruction (Boelens, Voet, & De Wever, 2018). Hence, there is need for all students' needs to be accommodated for them to achieve the 21st-century learning skills. Accordingly, Gibson (2006) grouped critical library services in four interwoven categories: policies and Procedures, access to facilities and equipment, specific services and Staff development.

In this regards, policies and procedures have to do with compliance with federal laws and regulations, as well as policies within the school library programs that ensure accountability and accommodation (Enang, & Okwu, 2021). Access to facilities and equipments talk about all physical, virtual and environmental accesses, together with access to assistive technologies for students with disabilities (Gibson, 2006). Specific services include a variety of information formats, collection, modes of instruction as is captured in differentiated instructional perspective (Enang, & Okwu, 2021; Gibson, 2006). Finally, staff development involves the general and needs-specific education and training support from for library staff, intended to accommodate all learners.

International Federation of Library Associations and institutions (IFLA, 2001) describes a school library as such that provides information and ideas that are very fundamental to successful functioning in society and gives students lifelong learning skills, develops the

imaginative thinking, citizenship critical thinking skills and ability to use information technologies in different media. According to Obi (2013), a library should be concerned with the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, studying and consultation. Nigeria is gradually moving to a situation she will use information technologies as the engine for sustainable development and global competitiveness, necessitating full implementation of technological resources early in school libraries. This could help education to use information technologies for creation of wealth, poverty eradication, job creation and global competitiveness (Enang, & Okwu, 2021). The impacts of information technologies make tremendous and revolutionary changes in the practice and services of libraries.

However, evidence shows that school libraries in Nigeria is presently limited in meeting learners' needs due to poor accommodation, unavailability of trained staff, inadequate of relevant materials and apathy on the part of the school administration and government (Daramola, 2013). Egesimba et al. (2011) confirms that inadequate staffing, inadequate materials, inadequate funding, obsolete library collections, poor infrastructures and poor reading environment for pupils and students as well as insufficient awareness of the role of school libraries in education are the challenges facing school library development in the country. Most of the school libraries in Nigeria could be regarded as warehouse for old books, some of the books in them which were covered with dust that had gathered overtime due to lack of library staff.

Similarly, libraries are becoming not only internet access points, but also places where people may receive help in using the Internet and other information sources. From this point, it becomes very important to note that the roles that school library play for any successful education cannot be overemphasized. In this regard, Quadri (2009) adds that the challenges that hinder effective performance of most school library services in Nigeria were that of personnel for library services and finance for acquisition of digital library materials. The findings of Daramola (2013) on the issues and options in selected secondary school libraries in Akure, Ondo found out that most secondary schools had libraries, but they enjoy very low patronage due to lack resources. Computers, electronic media as well as the internet facilities are also absent in most school libraries (Enang, & Okwu, 2021). In this era of blended learning and differentiated instruction for inclusive Education in Nigeria, it is advocated that school libraries be upgraded to

meet up with the technologically tasking and diversity-threatened situation of teaching and learning in schools.

Based on the forgoing, upgrading the school library will involve roadmap of developing new library policies and procedures that speak to blended learning and inclusive education. Provide access to facilities and equipments that assist learners to learn in their diverse ways. Create and utilize both online and face-to-face resources to facilitate optimum learning. Further, school libraries could be upgraded to offer specific services both online and face-to-face. Computers and assistive technologies should be available in school libraries. Since most librarians in school library lack the expertise to move into digitalized learning and manage digitalized resources (Enang, & Okwu, 2021), training of the school librarians is a major part of upgrading the libraries for inclusive blended learning.

Recommendations

The narrative review has enabled me to gain insight into the extent to which blended learning can be differentiated and how such can be employed for effective inclusive education. Based on these, inclusive education is considered as a right of the child irrespective of their disabilities. In this era of blended instruction, the needs of learners with disabilities should not be overlooked. A major problem is made evident in this study is that school library presently lack resources/facilities for blended differentiated learning. I therefore recommend that:

1. The Nigerian government should provide adequate financial backing to support the school libraries in the country.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to use innovative approaches such as differentiated blended learning to meet the needs of all learners by making diverse digital gadgets and software available in the school libraries.
3. There should be increased access to inclusive blended learning tools that attend to individual learning needs through provision of such tools in the school libraries.
4. Diverse online learning programs should be made available in school libraries for all learners irrespective of location, and, or individual differences.
5. Government and agencies should be committed to training teachers on the use of blended learning and how BL can be differentiated to meet the needs of all children.

6. Assistive technologies and diverse online materials should also define the adoption of blended learning.
7. Teachers should prepare all instructional materials ahead of time, improvising for limited materials.
8. An approved list of virtual differentiating resources be created and made available in the school library for instructors to use in their classrooms.

Suggestion for Future Research

This study was based on available literature and not based on primary data. Further study could explore teachers and learners' attitudes towards differentiating blended instruction and availability of resources in school libraries. Further studies could also investigate the extent to which blended learning is differentiated in Nigerian schools.

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