

# Beyond uniformity: Enhancing students' writing performance through differentiated instructions integrated with gallery photos

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## ABSTRACT

In teaching Writing, usually teachers give the same instructions to all students, that caused the students' low motivation and generic written output. Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of integration between differentiated Instructions (DI) and gallery photos (GP) on students' writing performance. Mixed methods used in this study with descriptive qualitative was used to find out how the implementation of integrated DI and GP as well as the teacher's reflection, while to find out the effect on students' writing, experimental design was used. This study was conducted in SMPN 1 Dampit, Indonesia, with 64 students of Eighth-grade students focused on recount text. The instruments used were tests, observation, interview, and the teacher's journal reflection. Observation was done to find out how the implementation of the integration of DI and GP, and an interview was conducted with six students from different readiness groups. Besides, to see the significant effect of DI and GP on students' writing performance, a t-test was calculated. The findings show that the integration of DI and GP effectively improve students' writing performance and raise students' engagement in the writing process. These findings can be applied to diverse students in a class that needs special treatment for each student without ignoring their proficiency levels, interests, and learning styles. It is suggested to future researchers to explore the effectiveness of this treatment to know further the effect of the integration of DI and Gallery Photo on different levels of the students.

**Keywords:** differentiated instructions; writing ability; recount text; gallery photos

## INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are a basic English skill that has always been a challenge for ESL and EFL students (Mafulah & Sholeh, 2025; van der Kleij, 2020). It seems the process of writing itself seems challenging for students; moreover, this challenge is not only faced by the students but also faced by teachers as the learning outcome in educational settings, especially in EFL (Conner et al., 2024). Students frequently feel difficulties in many aspects, namely when dealing with linguistic, mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary, as well as generating ideas and organizing the content (Febriani et al., 2022; Mafulah & Cahyono, 2023). Regarding those complexities in teaching and learning Writing, teachers should accommodate all students' diversities in a classroom. So that all students keep engaged and have high motivation in learning writing (Mafulah et al., 2023; Mafulah & Lutviana, 2021). The diversity of the students can be in the form of ages, ethnicity, gender, students' abilities, religious orientation, socio-economic status, family status, and other (Goyibova et al., 2025; Himmah & Nugraheni, 2023; Langelaan et al., 2024). Moreover, the different characteristics, needs, abilities, and ways of learning (Lunina & Minaeva, 2015; Nemati et al., 2017; Xing et al., 2019), and levels of knowledge development (Kalinowski et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2025).

Due to the students' diversity, some effort should be made by the teacher. Teachers should help the students expand their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional (Jiang et al., 2020; Kalinowski et al., 2024; Reddy, 2019). Different learning styles, desires, and levels of the students' ability may affect the success of the learning outcome (Goyibova et al., 2025). Teachers should choose the best strategies based on students' characteristics without discrimination. One of the most robust frameworks for heterogeneous students, Differentiated Instruction (DI), can be an alternative way to solve this problem. DI promotes the student-centered strategy that allows teachers to modify the content, what the students learn, how they learn, and how they demonstrate learning based on the students' individual interests, readiness, and profiles (Goyibova et al., 2025; Sugebo et al., 2025; Wahyuningsari et al., 2022). Moreover, some studies proved that DI engaged students and improved their academic performance (Naibaho, 2023; Salem, 2024). Especially in writing, studies have shown that DI can significantly improve students' ability, written fluency, and creativity by providing tailored support and choice, moving beyond the limitations of a one-size-fits-all approach (Goyibova et al., 2025; Mohamed et al., 2025).

Teachers hold the responsibility for the students' holistic development and play a crucial role in enhancing their writing development (Mafulah et al., 2025; McKellar et al., 2020). Moreover, teachers do not only act as facilitators, managers, and leaders. Besides, teachers are also responsible for the growth of students' physical, social, mental, and spiritual aspects in the learning process (Lauermann & Berger, 2021). Teachers also play an important role in changing the traditional learning process into a more suitable, student-centered learning process that focuses on improving capability and character development (Estrada-Vidal & Tójar-Hurtado, 2017; Usher & Barak, 2020; Velasco-Martínez et al., 2017). Especially in writing, teachers should consider the different abilities and needs of the students. Differentiated strategies can be used by teachers to reflect students' growth, abilities, interests, and

characteristics. Through differentiated strategies, students can be encouraged to follow the classroom activities. Within the framework of teaching writing, the application of DI is very important to emphasize the need for teachers to recognize and accommodate each student's differences, such as ability, interests, and preferences (Goyibova et al., 2025; Kahmann et al., 2022).

Regarding the development of writing components, DI can be applied in content, organization, the usage of vocabulary, language ability, and processes like spelling, paragraphs, and punctuation (Salem, 2024; Sari et al., 2023). It also involves collecting the thoughts of the students and composing the ideas into a coherent writing draft (Amalia et al., 2023; Jufrianto & Basri, 2025). Furthermore, the difficulties of students, such as aligning their interest topics, organizing ideas, and producing writing drafts, can be solved with DI (Mohamed et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2023; Tan & Manochphinyo, 2017).

Previous studies have been conducted about Differentiated Instruction. Sari et al., (2023) found that DI in the writing procedure had a positive impact on writing ability, rather than the traditional method, as the study cites the Gallery Walk Strategy as a related method to improve procedure text writing. The DI strategy was found to be effective in improving the students' identification of the student voice method as a practice used to gain feedback. It also notes that DI allows students to choose between photos or a storyboard as a tool to demonstrate their knowledge. Another study found a significant improvement in English and digital skills using the creation of multimodal stories using pictures, video, and graphics (Yu & Wang, 2025). Kalinowski et al. (2024) found that DI improved students' self-esteem, positive attitudes towards the teacher roles, and learning environment through comfortable space discussion. In addition, Goyibova et al. (2025) found that DI learning improves academic performance, motivation, and engagement, although not all differences bring different results, like different Gender shows insignificant effect on students' writing skill performance (Sugebo et al., 2025).

Based on the previous studies, it is found that most of the research focused on experimenting with DI without any integration with other media. There is only one study that integrated DI with Gallery Walk, yet it did not explore the teachers' reflections on its implementation. There is a limited study that explored the integration between DI and Photo Gallery, specifically in students' writing performance. Therefore, this research aimed to examine how the implementation of DI integrated with gallery photos enhances students' writing performance. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the effect of the implementation of DI Integrated with Gallery Photo on enhancing students' Writing Performance and teacher reflection on its implementation. By integrating DI and Gallery Photo and its reflection on its implementation, it is expected that the integration can be applied in the classroom effectively.

## METHODS

### Research design

A mixed method was used in this study to provide more understanding and comprehension of the problems, rather than using only a qualitative or quantitative method (Creswell, 2022). A descriptive qualitative study (Thorne, 2025), was used to find the implementation of integrated DI and GP, as well as the teacher's reflection on the implementation of Differentiated Instructions Integrated with Gallery Photo in Enhancing Students' Writing Performance. An experimental method applied in the study is used to determine the effectiveness of DI and GP in enhancing students' writing performance.

### Instruments and research setting

Tests, observation, interview, and the teacher's journal reflection were the instruments of this study. A t-test is used as a measurement of students' writing performance (Ebenezer & Lion, 2023). Further observation is required to examine the subject in a natural environment (Stroud & Ratcliff, 2024), which in this study, is to find out how the implementation of the integration of DI and GP. An interview is then conducted for a deeper perception from the six students with different levels of readiness in each group. Moreover, the teacher's journal reflects subjective insights to obtain information for deeper integration (Lama, 2023). This study was conducted in SMPN 1 Dampit, Malang, Indonesia. The population was 128 students, and the sample was divided into two classes: 64 eighth-grade students were struggling with recount text (one experimental and one control class), which were selected through purposive sampling.

### Data collection

The research procedure involved various activities such as pre-tests, grouping students based on learning styles and readiness, teaching language features of recount texts, and implementing differentiated instruction in content, process, and product. The procedure of collecting data is shown in Figure 1.

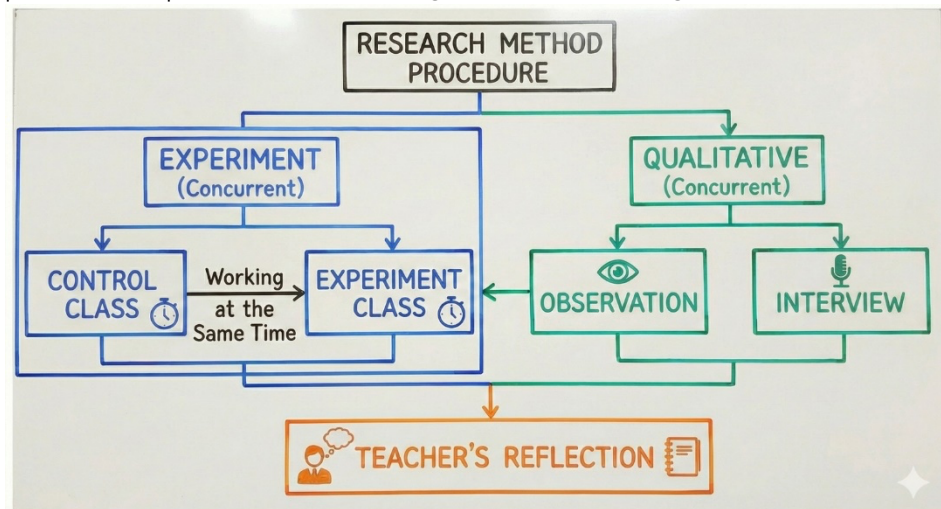


Figure 1. Research method procedure

As depicted in Figure 1, this study employs a Concurrent Mixed Methods design, and the procedural workflow is divided into two primary dimensions executed within the same timeframe. In this framework, quantitative and qualitative approaches simultaneously integrated to obtain a comprehensive understanding how the implementation of DI and GP integration, as well as to see the effectiveness on students' writing performance (Castro et al., 2012; Creswell, 2022).

Experimental Dimension, illustrated on the left side of the diagram: the procedure follows a quasi-experimental design. The research subjects are divided into two groups: the Control Class and the Experiment Class. The intervention is received by the Experiment Class, while the Control Class proceeds with the conventional method. Both classes operate in parallel to statistically measure the effectiveness of the treatment.

Qualitative Dimension, simultaneously, as shown on the right side of the diagram, qualitative data collection is conducted to capture the phenomena occurring during the experimental process. The instruments employed include Classroom Observation, to monitor the learning dynamics, and Interviews, to explore the subjects' perceptions in depth. This qualitative data provided a narrative context to the statistical results obtained from the experimental phase.

The findings from both data sets served as the insights for the final stage, which is the Teacher's Reflection. In this phase, all data are analyzed integratively to evaluate the efficacy of the applied method and to formulate relevant pedagogical implications.

### Data analysis

In analysing data, data was gathered through observation to answer how the implementation of DI and GP integration was. Observation results then classified into three levels of the students. Low proficiency levels, intermediate level students, and high proficiency levels. The result is then depicted in the narration form. Regarding the effectiveness of the DI and GP integration, t-test were measured. The effectiveness of the implementation of the treatment will be determined by t-count is higher than t-count. Besides, the improvement of students' writing was indicated by the increasing writing components such as content and ideas, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. In addition, to see teacher's reflection, the questionnaire and interview were delivered to the teacher after the class was over and the result was depicted in the form of narration.

## RESULTS

The implementation of Differentiated Instructions (DI) Integrated with Gallery Photo (GP) in the classroom setting, the teacher provided different instructions for different levels of the students. The teacher classified the students' level based on the previous test. The topic given for the writing assignment was a recount text about a vacation experience. The teacher asked the students to provide some of the photos that they had taken when they were on vacation. Different instructions were given to different

levels. For high-level proficiency students, they were asked to decorate five to eight photos from their own gallery on vacation, and they should be arranged in an attractive design. They can use Canva as an additional way to serve their writing. In addition, they have to write more than two sentences for each photo they have. Once finished, the file (Canva file/Word) should be sent to the teacher for printing. Then, the teacher provided feedback on their work, and they had to revise it. At the next meeting, students were asked to talk about their vacation for 3-5 minutes, then create a complete recount text in the Canva App.

For the intermediate level students, they could freely choose whether to use the Canva Application or not, and they can write 2-3 sentences for each photo. Besides, for the low-level students, the teacher asked them to write dialogues on the photo they have. The students were asked to write 2-3 sentences in the past tense under each photo, following this structure: orientation (when, with whom), events (activities), and reorientation (feelings at the end). The following steps, they have to read their text for 2-3 minutes. And the last is for the low Level, less than four photos should be chosen, and one simple question should be answered for each photo, such as "Where is this place?" or "What did you do here?". After they answer all of the teacher's guidance questions, they have to answer the teacher's question orally to check whether they understand what they have written or not.

The implementation of the integration of DI and GP in writing makes students enthusiastic about finishing their work. The integration of Di and GP eliminated the primary barrier of content generation, enhancing students' autonomy and raising intrinsic motivation. This finding is supported by all levels of the students' statements:

"I can finish my work without Canva, because I have difficulty using it" (LS 1)

"It is too difficult for me if I have to write paragraphs, but fortunately, my teacher asked me to write only 2-3 sentences on each photo, which makes me glad" (MS 2)

"I am happy when I can write a story in a good way, and the story is more beautiful because I use Canva"(HS 2)

Based on the students' statements above, it can be interpreted that giving different instructions based on their proficiency levels makes them enjoy and engage in the classroom and finish their task well without feeling stressed.

An example of the result of students' writing based on the integration between DI and GP can be seen in Table 1.



Detailed information about students' writing component measurements can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Detail writing component measurements result

Writing Component	Specific Metrics Measured	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Net Gain (%)	Sig. Level (p)
Content & Ideas	Clarity of thesis, depth of supporting details, relevance to the photo stimulus.	62%	85%	23%	< 0.01
Organization	Logical flow, use of transitions, introduction/conclusion strength.	65%	78%	13%	< 0.05
Vocabulary	Lexical variety, precision of word choice, use of sensory language.	58%	88%	30%	< 0.001
Grammar	Tense consistency, sentence structure variety (simple vs. complex).	70%	76%	6%	n.s.
Mechanics	Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and formatting.	68%	74%	6%	n.s.

Based on each writing component, most of the students gain their achievement in their content and ideas, organization, and vocabulary. It can be seen from the sig. level <0.05. It means that there is a significant difference between the pre-test mean and post-test mean scores. Unlike the two previous writing components, there is no significant impact on students' grammar and mechanics.

After providing the previous findings, here is presented table 4 that represents the t-test value regarding whether there is significance of the integration of DI and GP on students' writing performance.

Table 4. t- test result

Test	Characteristics Tcount		Result	Description
	t-Count	t-table		
T-Test	5.53	1.822	t-count > t-table	H0 Rejected

The results of the t-test led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating the treatment has a measurable impact on students' writing ability. The data analysis showed that the experimental group had higher scores in the post-test compared to the control group. These results have a positive effect on student performance. The analysis of maximum and minimum scores, total scores, and average scores further supported the notion that the treatment led to improved performance. These findings highlight the importance of differentiated instructional approaches. These findings also suggest that further research on the specific elements of the treatment would be valuable for enhancing students' performance.

### The teacher's reflection on the implementation of differentiated instructions integrated with gallery photo in enhancing students' writing performance

The teacher's reflection on the implementation of Differentiated Instructions Integrated with Gallery Photo in Enhancing Students' Writing Performance can be seen in the teacher's journal. The example of teacher journal can be seen in Table 5.

#### Meeting 1 reflection : 18/09/2024

No	Questions	Responses
1	What stood out from today's session?	I have practiced CLT using photos, almost of them still remember what they have done although only from one photo. Almost student interested in my learning activity. It's caused they bring Hand phone and using their own picture so they can re tell the story.
2	Which students stood out today? What captured my attention? Why?	Falexia, who categorizes advantage learners, was very fluent in talking about her experiences. She can tell her experiences better than explaining the story from students' books that are given by government.
3	What changes did I make for today's session from previous session?	I made this meeting more interactive by sending their photograph to me, and I printed out their photo. So, we can practice Blended learning by using CLT using their Gallery Photos.
4	What did not work or could have been more effective? What was missing or needed?	When we practiced CLT, we need more time to do, so we don't have enough time, but We can manage it with print out the photograph.
5	What worked really well today?	Their way to write Personal Recount Text, for student that belong to Low competency I just give a short question about their picture, and they will be present by reading their answer. Some students who have competence in the middle can present their short story by reading. Students at high level will present without reading their text in front of the class.
6	What should I change for the next meeting?	I manage my time in giving pre-activity, whole activity post- activity so all students can get more feedback from me.
7	What design principles I should use/ change tomorrow based on today's session?	Making in pair activity in my class so they will collaborate effectively and scaffolding will be given to students who categories in the beginner.

Table 5. Example of teacher journal day 1

Based on table 5, from the teacher's reflection, it can be inferred that the implementation made the students enjoy, enthusiasts, and motivated in joining the writing class, since they are able to express their own ideas based on personal experiences. Besides, it also builds courage and engagement among teachers and students through sending photos to their teacher. The implementation of the integration between DI and GP raises confidence of the students to write. By providing different activities to various students' proficiency levels, it gives space for students to

do their tasks based on their capability.

The session successfully tiered the Product (presentation style) based on student readiness: (1) Low Competency: Students answered short questions about their photo and read their answers. (2) Moderate level proficiency, students wrote and read a short story/recount text. (3) High Competency (e.g., Falexa): Students presented their experiences fluently without relying on written text, showing much higher performance than with traditional book-based tasks. Regarding Challenges & Adjustments, the teacher found two challenges. The first challenge is time Management: CLT approach and personal storytelling are time-consuming. Teachers should manage this by pre-printing the photos to save classroom setup time. The second challenge is scaffolding needs: while the activity worked, it can be identified that the need for more structured feedback and support during the pre-activity and post-activity phases.

## DISCUSSION

The investigation conducted on this study of implementing the integration between DI and GP on the ability of students to write recount in English language teaching. The result unveiled various preferences of students, and understanding these varieties can help teachers to form engaging learning experiences. Students favored hands-on demonstrations and guidance from others, indicating a need for explicit instruction and practical application. Teachers can incorporate modeling and step-by-step guidance to support comprehension and skill development (Goyibova et al., 2025). Students showed variations in preferences for individuals. Creating a calm classroom environment and providing self-paced activities can enhance concentration and engagement. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Mafulah & Cahyono (2023), which found that students' engagement helps them to gain the learning outcome. By adopting differentiation instruction strategies, teachers can address diverse needs and promote engagement, motivation, and writing proficiency. The study also implemented treatments involving differentiated instruction in content, readiness, and product, as well as reflective practices. This finding supports Himmah & Nugraheni (2023) that found different learning styles of the students made different levels of readiness of the students in receiving the lesson. Moreover, reflective practice motivates students to do self-awareness (Yin et al., 2024)

The findings also found that differentiated instruction has the potential to reduce disparities among students in terms of their writing abilities, addressing the diverse strengths and challenges that learners bring to the classroom. This finding similar to Goyibova et al. (2025); Kalinowski et al. (2024); Tan & Manochphinyo (2017) that shows how students engage and gain learning achievement in the classroom. By recognizing and accommodating individual differences, teachers can create a personalized learning experience that promotes engagement, motivation, and academic success (Bastola & Hu, 2021; Mafulah et al., 2025). However, it is notably important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, such as the constraints related to time. This study found that the implementation of integration of DI and DP needs more time, this can be because of the process of the steps in giving instructions. These findings suggest the teacher should prepare well before the implementation, as in Kalinowski et al. (2024) research report that teacher self-efficacy is needed.

Regarding the effectiveness of the integration of DI and DP on students' writing performance, it has a significant effect on students' writing skills. This is in line with [Sari et al. \(2023\)](#)'s finding shows that it has a significant impact on students' writing ability. Further detailed findings regarding the improvement of the writing component. It gains improvement in content and ideas, organization, and vocabulary. This can be because the content and ideas are freely chosen by the students based on their experience. This finding aligns with [\(Mohamed et al., 2025\)](#)'s study that DI helps students improve their writing. This study suggests a pedagogical model for the instruction of writing, integrating the flexible framework of DI with the engaging, multi-sensory prompts of a Photo Gallery. By tailoring instruction to individual learning needs, preferences, and readiness, differentiation creates a more inclusive and equitable learning environment, allowing students to make significant improvements in their writing performance. It supports [Mafulah et al. \(2025\)](#)'s finding that show students behavior engagement affects the writing results of the students. Different from those findings in terms of grammar and mechanics. This is the opposite of [Tan & Manochphinyo \(2017\)](#)'s study that found DI can improve students' accuracy in the grammatical aspect in writing.

In addition, reflection can be a tool to help students and teachers improve their self-efficacy. This can be seen from the results of the study, which show students engage in writing class through implementing DI and PG since the variety of activities in the classroom, such as the transition from digital (sending photos to the teacher) to physical (printing them out), bridged the gap between technology and classroom interaction. The interaction between the teacher and students also brings positive impact on students' achievement ([Kriewaldt et al., 2021](#); [Mafulah et al., 2023](#); [Ortega et al., 2020](#)). Moreover, different instructions given to the students based on their level of capability make the students enjoy the lesson and finish their tasks well. This finding is in line with ([Goyibova et al., 2025](#); [Jufrianto & Basri, 2025](#); [Kahmann et al., 2022](#)) that by knowing their capability, make them easier for them to do their tasks.

In a nutshell, this study provides valuable insights into the benefits of differentiated instruction in English language teaching and how the implementation of integrating DI and PG in writing class especially on recount text. Educators and curriculum developers can consider incorporating differentiated strategies and approaches to cater to the diverse needs of learners, ultimately fostering more effective and inclusive language learning environments.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of Differentiated Instruction (DI) and the Gallery Photo (GP) technique represent a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered writing pedagogy. The results lead to three primary conclusions: (1) Visual Scaffolding Works: Using "Gallery Photos" provides a concrete mental anchor for abstract writing tasks. This is particularly effective for students who struggle with creative inspiration. (2) Movement Stimulates Cognition: The kinesthetic nature of the Gallery Walk keeps students physically engaged, which reduces the fatigue typically associated with long-form writing sessions. (3) Equity in the Classroom: Differentiated Instruction

ensures that all students, regardless of their initial writing ability, have a pathway to success. By providing tiered prompts at different gallery stations, no student is left behind or left unchallenged.

Based on successful implementation and positive results, the following are recommended for educators and researchers: Teachers can use various photos or use a mix of literal images (for lower-readiness students) and abstract or conceptual art (for higher-readiness students) to ensure effective differentiation. (2) Standardize Feedback: Provide students with specific thing for their gallery photos comments to ensure the peer feedback is high-quality. (3) Time Management. Set clear timers for each station during the walk to prevent students from lingering too long without gathering the necessary data for their writing. Ultimately, this implementation proves that writing is not just a sedentary, individual task. When transformed into a social, visual, and tiered experience, student performance improves across all key metrics: Content, Organization, and Fluency.

Additionally, the study primarily focuses on short-term effects, and longitudinal research is needed to assess the long-term impact of differentiated instruction. Furthermore, the study primarily considered students' perspectives, and future research should incorporate teachers' insights to gain a more comprehensive understanding. By addressing these limitations, researchers can improve the design and execution of studies on differentiated instruction and enhance our understanding of its benefits and limitations in diverse educational contexts.

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## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

Mafulah, S.: Conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), writing –original draft (lead), review (lead), and securing funding (lead), Istayani, Y.: Conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), writing –original draft (lead), review (supporting). Wahyuningsih, Y.: Conceptualization (supporting), methodology (supporting), writing –original draft (supporting), review (lead). Jawas, U.: writing –original draft (supporting), review (lead) and editing (lead).

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