

Implementing Differentiated Instruction Strategies to Develop EFL Learners' Intercultural Competence: Voices from an Algerian Secondary School Context

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Abstract

Developing intercultural competence (IC) is an important area in foreign language education to help learners communicate effectively and appropriately in both global and local contexts. In Algeria, several studies have focused on intercultural education at the tertiary level, whereas the secondary school context is still underrepresented. Therefore, this study aimed to enhance intercultural competence among twenty learners affiliated with the second-year foreign language stream by implementing differentiated instruction strategies. This investigation lasted for three months and adopted a single case study methodology. The classroom materials and tasks were designed according to Byram's (2021) model of intercultural competence and Tomlinson's (2001) pioneering pedagogical model of differentiated instruction which highlights that a variety of students' needs requires the use of a variety of strategies and techniques in EFL classes to cover the three main curricular components: content, process, and product. The pedagogy is also responsive to learners' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. Qualitative data were collected through teacher's observation and learners' reflective writing. The findings reveal that the differentiated classroom materials and tasks have improved secondary school learners' intercultural attitudes as they showed openness and curiosity about other cultures. In addition to gaining intercultural knowledge, learners were able to compare and contrast cultural aspects, identify stereotypical and ethnocentric images about others and mediate between conflictual interpretation of phenomena. Finally, the study recommends that EFL secondary school teachers consider the richness and importance of targeting intercultural education through the implementation of differentiated instruction pedagogy to meet learners' needs for enhancing their intercultural competence.

Keywords: Algerian Secondary School learners; Differentiated Instruction Strategies; EFL classrooms; Intercultural Competence.

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Intercultural competence (IC) is a crucial aspect in the field of foreign or second language education. Developing only learners' communicative competence in such a context is not sufficient for them to better communicate with and understand others. That is why many researchers, such as Deardorf (2006) and Byram (1997; 2021), agree that developing IC is the ultimate goal for foreign language education.

Several empirical studies tackled the development of intercultural competence in Algerian higher education (e.g., Bennacer, 2019; Boualli, 2025; Nemouchi, 2022; Sellami, 2024). Yet, it is not largely targeted in the context of Algerian secondary schools (Boualli & Boudiaf, 2018; Doudi, 2021). Hence, this study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the potential of implementing differentiated instruction (DI) strategies for developing learners' IC. The rationale is that, as Tomlinson (2017) argues, differentiated pedagogy significantly accounts for learners' needs, interests, and variance. It also accounts for learners' diverse backgrounds and identities, which makes it a promising approach for cultivating intercultural competence. Boudiaf's (2023) pioneering work in the Algerian secondary school context has proved the usefulness of DI pedagogy for enhancing learners' reading comprehension. This study aims to extend this research by exploring the impact of DI on developing IC.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Defining Culture and Intercultural Competence

Culture is a complex word that cannot be defined easily since it is linked to various aspects of human life (Baker, 2015). Given the multifaceted nature of culture, it is important to adopt a conceptualisation that is relevant to Algerian EFL secondary school students. For example, Andretta and Ferraro (2014) define culture as "everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society" (p.29). What people have refers to the material objects that reflect their culture, and what they think refers to their ideas, values and attitudes, which influence what they do as behaviours and customs. Frank (2014) further elaborates on this by introducing the "3P's" model: Perspectives (assumptions, beliefs, norms), Practices (traditions, behaviours), and Products (art, music, literature). Moreover, teachers need to encourage learners to adopt a cultural relativist position (Baker, 2015) that all cultures are equal and there are no high or low cultures. Sellami (2024) emphasises that teachers need to adopt a non-essentialist view of culture that rejects stereotypes and prejudices about others.

Similar to culture, providing a single definition of intercultural competence is not possible. Deardorff (2006) argues that there is no consensus among researchers concerning the definition of IC. Generally speaking, IC refers to the attitudes, knowledge and skills which are required for appropriate communication "when interacting across differences" (Deardorff, 2020, p. 5). Fantini (2006) also views it as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p.12). Intercultural competence is also needed for effective communication with others who are not linguistically different (Byram, 2021). This pertains to the Algerian context that involves several cultures. Thus, learners need to develop an appreciation of cultural diversity and avoid judgmental attitudes towards various social and cultural groupings in their country.

1.2. Byram's (2021) Model of Intercultural Competence

Within the field of foreign language education, various researchers have proposed theoretical frameworks for developing learners' IC in an educational context (e.g., Byram 2021; Corbett, 2003; Deardorff, 2020). Until today, Byram's (1997; 2021) model has been influential in presenting a theory of IC that is relevant to language teaching and learning. According to him, learners need to develop the "five savours".

- "Savoir être": attitudes of curiosity and openness towards cultural otherness.

- “*Savoirs*” knowledge about one’s own and others’ culture, in addition to knowledge about the process of social and individual interaction.
- “*Savoir comprendre*”: skills of interpreting and relating which involve comparing aspects of one’s and others’ cultures/ Identifying and explaining the origins of ethnocentric perceptions.
- “*Savoir apprendre/ faire*”: skills of discovering other cultures.
- “*Savoir s’engager*”: critical cultural awareness refers to the ability to evaluate, critically and based on an explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one’s own and other cultures and countries.

Byram (2021) emphasises that there is no generalised curriculum or course for teaching IC. This entails that specifying the objectives for developing this competence depends on the context of foreign or second language education. Thus, it becomes evident that the development of critical cultural awareness, which is also known as the political dimension of education, may not be suitable for the age and level of Algerian secondary school learners. This is because they may find it hard to make their criteria for judging other cultural phenomena explicit, that is, they may not be able to clarify their ideological perspectives. What is more relevant at this stage is to develop their intercultural attitudes, especially respect and tolerance towards others, as these secondary school learners are still young. This can set the foundation for intercultural learning, especially since the secondary school environment is usually prone to bullying, discrimination, ethnocentrism and intolerance towards differences.

1.3. Differentiated Instruction Pedagogy

Differentiated Instruction Pedagogy is a current educational model suggested and coined by Tomlinson (1999, 2001). It is rooted in theories which emphasise learners’ differences, such as Multiple Intelligences Theory, Learning styles Theories, and Social Constructivism. The main concern of the approach is to address students’ diverse needs. This proactive and responsive model compels educators to modify instruction in a variety of ways based on learners’ attributes of readiness, interests and learning profiles.

Three curricula components should be adjusted to account for students’ needs. First, the content refers to the input that teachers plan to teach, as well as its access. Second, the process represents the sense-making activities. Finally, the product is synonymous with the summative assessment of students (Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011; Tomlinson & Moon, 2013).

Furthermore, culture is a complex interplay of shared beliefs, values, and behaviours that shapes individuals and groups. As an aspect of human identity, culture can influence how people think, learn, and interact with the world. Therefore, education must acknowledge and respect cultural diversity to ensure a more inclusive learning environment for learners. Culturally responsive teaching should acknowledge diversity not only between cultures but also within individuals to foster students’ sense of worth and belonging (Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011).

1.4. Differentiated Instruction Strategies to Enhance Intercultural Competence

Tomlinson (2001, 2017) provides a rich variety of DI strategies that can be implemented in EFL classes to develop learners’ language proficiency. Given the wide range of such instructional strategies, the discussion here is limited to the activities that can be linked directly to the amelioration of IC within the Algerian secondary school context. Such activities address students’ readiness levels, interests and learning profiles.

1.4.1. Readiness Level

Under this category, the Tiering Strategy is mostly used by teachers. It involves tailoring the difficulty of input materials and assignments to meet learners' current learning levels (Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005). For example, the context of intercultural learning is filled with abstract concepts such as culture, prejudice, and discrimination. The teacher's task is to use tiering activities to ensure that learners understand the significant ideas and perceptions within a particular intercultural teaching material.

Another Strategy is called the Learning Contract. As its name suggests, it involves an agreement between the teacher and learners to achieve specific goals. It can specify students' behaviour in class. The teacher can set classroom rules through a class charter that is filled and signed by students who are responsible for their behaviours and attitudes in class. Such rules can include respecting each other, listening attentively to one another, and promoting a culture of peace. Thus, learning contracts can enhance secondary school learners' intercultural attitudes.

1.4.2. Interest

Teachers can plan instructional activities to fit students' interests and/ or personal talents and passions (Boudiaf, 2023). Interest groups or centres are a strategy that motivates a group of students to work on tasks to explore topics of their interests (Tomlinson, 2021). This strategy pertains more to the project work where EFL secondary school students are guided to work on a topic that they prefer. In the context of this research, different groups of students collaborated to create their organisations for making peace. Their organisations ranged from defending women's rights to promoting peace in stadiums and helping refugees. Their final products involved posters, videos, online campaigns, acting out plays, etc. Moreover, interest groups can be employed to develop learners' skills in discovering other cultures as they investigate various cultural products and perspectives.

Another strategy that targets students' interests is the Jigsaw activity. Students can use it to look for synonyms or meanings of concepts related to intercultural learning (e.g., diversity, tolerance, empathy). They can also delve into their own interpretations of specific terms and how they relate to their personal and social identities. Furthermore, jigsaw reading can motivate learners to examine different perspectives within a single text, fostering collaboration as they share insights and reconstruct the complete piece.

1.4.3. Learning Profiles

This set of instructional strategies is based on students' learning profiles that can take various forms. One of the widely known ones is learning style strategies (Tomlinson, 2001). Teachers can employ various materials, activities, or techniques that pertain to auditory, visual, audio-visual, and kinaesthetic learners (Fleming, 2001). These include pictures that depict various cultural products, videos, tourist brochures, songs, written texts, and hands-on activities such as role-plays. Thus, teachers can create a motivating learning environment that encourages exploration and appreciation of diverse cultures.

Moreover, Synthesis Groups involve small, diverse groups of students who collaborate to synthesise the learned input into different formats like diagrams or presentations. This strategy can be used at the end of the unit to encourage a holistic understanding of concepts. Students need to present their work in class accurately and highlight the essential ideas and concepts covered in the unit (Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011). For instance, after being introduced to cultural diversity, students can synthesise what they have learnt in posters, brochures or videos to illustrate their understanding of cultural products and perspectives.

2. Methodology

This study investigated how the implementation of differentiated instruction (DI) strategies could enhance intercultural competence (IC) in Algerian secondary school learners. The central research question guiding this study is "How does the implementation of differentiated instruction strategies enhance Algerian secondary school learners' IC?"

To answer this research question, the study adopted a qualitative case study. The latter is defined as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its complexity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. 1). In other words, case study research is a qualitative approach in which researchers focus on a unit of study known as a bounded system, such as a classroom or a school. This design allows for an in-depth investigation of a specific bounded system, in this instance, a group of second-year foreign language learners in an Algerian secondary school. This approach is particularly relevant to answering descriptive and explanatory questions and valuable for studying and examining processes (Gay et al., 2012). This pertains to the current study's aim to explore how IC develops through DI strategies in a specific classroom context. Moreover, the complex and multifaceted nature of intercultural competence (IC) necessitates a case study approach since quantitative methodologies like tests and self-report instruments are insufficient. In this concern, Byram (2021) asserts that objectives for teaching IC are qualitative and best examined through teacher observations, student reflections, and portfolios. Therefore, a case study allows in-depth exploration of students' reactions and perspectives on various intercultural themes.

Case studies can be categorised as single, multiple or collective (Gay et al., 2012). This research employed a single, intrinsic case study, focusing on a specific group of students to understand the development of intercultural competence (IC) within their unique cultural, social, and local context (Stake, 1995). This contextual focus is essential for capturing IC development, as case study research inherently prioritises the complexity and particularity of the investigated case (Stake, 1995). By focusing on the lived experiences of the participants within their social and cultural context, the research aims to provide a deep understanding of the processes involved in IC development (Myers, 2009).

2.1. Research Instruments

The researchers employed qualitative tools for collecting data concerning learners' IC. The tools involve teacher observation and reflection journals, students' reflective writing, unit assessments and several other activities such as the project work. Such research instruments are suitable for the multidimensionality of the construct under study. Due to the richness of the collected data, the discussion is concerned only with some important highlights of teachers' observations and students' reflections.

Observation of the class is one of the widely employed tools to account for the development of IC in an educational context (Deardorff, 2006). It allows the teacher to capture students' (un)willingness to learn about cultural otherness and reaction towards different cultural themes. The observation grid was based on Byram's (2021) model of IC. While class observation can provide authentic insights into class discussion, it cannot capture the full picture. That is why students' reflective writing is one of the most important strategies for assessing IC. It allows learners to express their views on the outcomes of their learning (Deardorff, 2011).

Context and Participants

The current study of teaching IC took place in one of the secondary schools in Constantine during the academic year (2021-2022). The target population included second-year foreign language learners. They had four hours of studying EFL per week, which gave the teacher more opportunities to implement differentiated instruction for developing IC. The study lasted for three months.

The participants in this research were 20-second-year secondary school students between 16 and 18 years old. Learners in this context had limited use of English in real-life situations, except for some online encounters with foreigners. Thus, the ultimate goals for teaching IC were developing an understanding of cultures, respect and tolerance towards others. It was also important to develop their linguistic competence since their level in English was not yet advanced and was still at the intermediate level.

To ensure ethical research practices, confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. The teacher also dealt carefully with sensitive topics, such as bullying and discrimination, to maintain a safe learning environment and minimise any potential harm to learners.

2.2. The Plan for Developing IC through Differentiated Instruction Strategies

The researchers in this study were responsible for designing intercultural materials and activities for second-year secondary school students following Byram's (2021) framework and the principles of differentiated pedagogy or instruction. The rationale is that the class is made up of 20 different learners who need various strategies for learning English as a foreign language in general and developing their IC in particular.

The following table represents the plan for teaching IC that was implemented in the first two units of the English syllabus. It is worth mentioning that the Algerian Ministry of Education provided teachers with new progressions that consist only of the targeted competencies, learning objectives, and linguistic items that students need to learn in each unit. This gave the researchers more freedom to create a variety of materials and activities that follow the ministry's guidelines and develop learners' IC through DI at the same time.

Table: The Plan for Developing IC through Differentiated Instruction Strategies

| <i>Unit</i> | <i>Intercultural Objectives</i> | <i>Lessons</i> | <i>Differentiated instruction strategies</i> |
|---|---|---|--|
| Unit 1 <i>Signs of the Time</i> <i>Theme: Cultural Diversity</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitudes of openness and respect towards cultural diversity in Algeria and the world. Attitudes of willingness and curiosity to discover and learn about various cultures inside and outside Algeria Knowledge of social groups in Algeria and their cultural practices. Knowledge of social groups and their cultural practices in different countries around the world. Compare and contrast the | Introduction of the Unit + Launching the Project Work Reflection Writing: How do you view culture and cultural Diversity | Content (Videos, pictures, songs, PowerPoint presentation) Class discussion (Learning style strategy) |
| | | Discovering the language: Changing Manners Reflection Writing: Do you think that Algerian manners have changed throughout time, like Italian ones? What about your manners? | Process (different activities) Class discussion (Learning style strategy) |
| | | Listening and Speaking: Lifestyles in the Future Class Discussion: Talking about changes in lifestyles in the future. | Content (video about life in the future, pictures) Process (Various listening activities) Class discussion (Learning style strategy) |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| | <p>change in manners between Algeria and Italy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast present and future lifestyles • Raise awareness of misconceptions and stereotypes about others and their impact | <p>Project Work :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Creating a profile about lifestyles in Algeria (past, present and future) about different aspects. ✓ Learners choose a country and present general information about it and its culture | <p>Product (Summative assessment)</p> <p>Interest activities (each group deals with the country they like mostly)</p> |
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Unit 2 Make Peace Theme: Peace and Conflict Resolution</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes of openness and respect towards countries suffering from wars. • Describe their feelings and attitudes towards refugees. • Attitudes of openness and respect towards cultural diversity in Algeria. • Describe feelings and attitudes towards bullied students at school. | <p>Introduction of the Unit + Launching the Project Work</p> <p>Class Discussion: The suffering of countries such as Syria and Palestine because of wars and the absence of peace</p> | <p>Content (Videos, pictures, PowerPoint presentation)</p> <p>Class discussion (Learning style strategy)</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of slavery in the USA and how it has influenced US history. • Knowledge of the struggles faced by Black people in the USA • Comparing and contrasting issues of equality and racism between Algeria and the USA | <p>Discovering the Language: A text about refugees with different activities</p> <p>Reflection writing</p> | <p>Content (pictures about refugees+ Pictures about Kabyle and Arabs)</p> <p>Process (various reading activities)</p> |
| | | <p>Listening and Speaking A Story of Bullying</p> <p>Pair work: Role-play an act of bullying and how to stand against this immoral behaviour</p> <p>Group work: Designing posters and delivering speeches to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness about the problem of bullying at schools. - Suggest ways to promote a culture of peace inside and outside the school | <p>Content (video about bullying + pictures)</p> <p>Process (different while and post-listening activities)</p> <p>Synthesis groups (divide learners based on their learning styles to synthesize what they have learnt about bullying in their own way, like pictures, drawings, writing, videos, etc)</p> |
| | | <p>Reading and Writing Martin Luther King’s Speech “ I have a dream”</p> <p>Individual work: Write a speech entitled I Have a Dream to talk about hopes and dreams for future Algeria.</p> <p>Group work: Celebrating Black History Month through :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Creating videos and designing posters to raise awareness about the importance of equality. ✓ Acting out plays | <p>Content (pictures+ bubbles+ text and video of King’s speech)</p> <p>Process (various reading activities)</p> <p>Learning profile-based activities and interest groups</p> |
| | | <p>Project Work: creating an organization to defend human rights (examples: Children in Palestine and Syria, Muslims in foreign countries, Women’s Rights etc...)</p> | <p>Learning profile-based strategies (pictures, videos, writings, delivering speeches etc)</p> <p>Interest Groups: each group of learners establish an organization based on their interests.</p> |

Source: Authors’ Data

3. Findings

The above plan indicates that developing IC in secondary school involved an integration of various differentiated instruction strategies. Since it would be impossible to describe each lesson following learners' conceptions before and after dealing with the various intercultural materials and activities, the discussion is on the thematic analysis of two sample lessons. This data analysis method allowed the researchers to identify themes and patterns within large qualitative data. By examining teacher observations and student reflections, the researchers gained insights into the impact of differentiated instruction on learners' intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

3.1. *Curiosity and Interest to learn about other Cultures*

One of the recurring themes throughout this case study was the curiosity to learn about other cultures. Learners were motivated and enthusiastic to discover different cultural aspects. For example, one student revealed, *"It is interesting to learn about different traditions and customs"*.

Moreover, the interest group strategy allowed learners to choose different cultures all over the world to present them in class. Before choosing their topic, one learner said, *"The culture of Nigeria is not interesting at all, they have no traditions and no famous food, I want to deal with the Japanese one, it is so interesting and nice"*. After presenting their project work, they were surprised to understand the richness and diversity of Nigerian cultures. One of them said, *"I thought that I would not find interesting things about this culture, but I realised that they have rich traditions, food, and festivals."* Thus, as Byram (2021) emphasises, it is important to develop an interest in understanding and appreciating others' cultural perspectives, practices and products rather than having a touristic attraction of all that is new.

3.2. *From Ethnocentric to Ethnorelative Perceptions*

According to the above table, the first unit entitled Signs of the Time dealt with Cultural Diversity. The introduction of unit one, based on learning styles DI strategy, gave learners the chance to conceptualise culture and express views about cultural diversity. The teacher's observation has accounted for some of the learners' answers:

- Some students revealed that culture refers to the intellectual state of mind and civilisation, *"Culture is all about being intellectual and civilised, like we can categorise people into cultured and uncultured"*.
- Others referred to the hierarchy of cultures, *"Culture is good music, food and traditions, I think that my city has better culture than other cities in Algeria"*; or sense of inferiority towards one's culture, *"Our culture is not good, I prefer American culture"*.
- Very few students saw culture as a way of life: *"Culture is about everything in our life, food, music, traditions, dance, language, etc."*
- The majority of students held ethnocentric views and tended to have negative views about cultural diversity *"Culture of Constantine and its food are the best in Algeria"*; *"I hate some of the traditions of other cities, I think they are ugly"*; *"Constantine food is the best one"*.

After the discussion that encouraged learners to express their perspectives, the teacher displayed diverse pictures and videos about culture and cultural diversity. Students watched them attentively and answered questions. By the end of the unit, students were required to summarise their views about culture and cultural diversity and reflect on whether they had learnt something new that made them change their opinions.

- *"We all have cultures, no culture is the best"*

- *“Culture is our way of life, not good things only”*
- *“Our country has rich cultures, we should appreciate them all”*

The analysis of their answers reveals some insights about the attitudes of respect and openness towards cultural diversity. It is worth mentioning that the change in attitudes did not happen linearly since IC is a lifelong process rather than a finished product.

3.3. Skills of Interpreting and Relating

According to Byram’s (2021) model of IC, the skills of interpreting and relating are divided into three sub-skills. The first skill is the ability to compare and contrast one’s and others’ cultures. Throughout the empirical research, students showed the ability to compare aspects of their own and others’ cultures. For instance, a student wrote in a reflection activity, *“Learning about Italian manners helped me understand similarities between us”*.

The second skill is the ability to identify ethnocentric and stereotypical perspectives. Through implementing DI strategies such as synthesis group, students could understand how negative images about others can hinder understanding and communication.

The third skill is mediating between conflictual interpretations of the phenomenon. This entails that some learners could act as mediators to solve cultural misunderstandings that occurred in class. For instance, during project work presentation, learners explained to their classmates that it is important to understand the meaning of others’ practices and products within their specific cultural contexts rather than judging them from an outsider view.

3.4. Combating Racism and Prejudice to Encourage Social Justice

The unit of Make Peace introduced learners to the themes of peace and conflict resolution. One of the important lessons was Martin Luther King’s Speech “I Have a Dream”. As a warm-up activity, the teacher displayed a picture of this famous American figure. One student screamed, *“This is the Negro who defends Negroes like him in the USA”*. Another student replied, *“We shouldn’t call him this way; this is racism”*. Based on this answer, the teacher asked learners to define racism and give other examples about it.

The next activity was matching each bubble with its events to create a picture story about the history of slavery in the USA. Thus, learners have developed knowledge of slavery in the USA and how it has influenced US history.

After reading and analysing King’s speech through various comprehension questions, students identified the characteristics of the oratorical style and expressed their attitudes and feelings after watching the famous address. Overall, this lesson was so important for developing learners’ IC since it helped to discover the various perspectives about racism and ways to fight it. It has also helped them to compare and contrast the experience of Black people in the USA and Algeria and whether they encounter similar stereotypes and prejudice. These aspects can be found in their answers :

- *“Allah created us equal; no one has the right to be racist”*
- *“It is shameful that in our modern time to call others Black or Negroes, we are all humans”*
- *“I have relatives who live in the Sahara, they are so nice and kind, I hate when others call them Black, dirty, ugly or not civilised”*.

4. Discussion

The findings of this case study research stress the importance of differentiated instruction (DI) as a potential tool in cultivating intercultural competence (IC) among secondary EFL learners. Since any EFL context involves a kaleidoscope of learners, it is crucial to tailor instruction to address their readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles.

A significant observation is the marked shift in learners' understanding of culture from ethnocentric to ethnorelative perspectives. The implementation of DI strategies, such as class discussions and diverse multimedia resources, created a learning environment that encouraged learners to question their cultural assumptions and appreciate the richness of other cultures. This aligns with Byram's (2023) emphasis on "savoir comprendre" (skills of interpreting and relating) and "savoir être" (attitudes of curiosity and openness).

Moreover, the study demonstrated the potential of DI in addressing sensitive issues such as racism and prejudice. Through different activities like group discussions, role-plays, posters, and project work, learners developed an awareness of issues of social justice. This corresponds with Byram's (2021) emphasis on fostering ethical and responsible global citizens. Finally, though the study is limited to only one teaching context, it sets the foundation for further research that explores the implementation of differentiated instruction strategies to cater for learners' IC.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Developing IC is one of the major goals of foreign language education within the modern era of globalisation. It is then important to deal with interculturality not only in the context of higher education but also at the secondary school level. This is because learners at this stage are still teenagers and need more opportunities to express their perspectives, discover the various viewpoints, and develop attitudes towards others. In this secondary education context, implementing differentiated instruction strategies is significant for accounting for learners' variance and enhancing their IC in the sense that they develop the intercultural dimensions that are required for a better understanding of others and functioning in culturally diverse societies. It is worth highlighting that promoting IC is a lifelong process and that no single course can fully account for the development of this competence (Deardorff, 2006). However, as EFL teachers, we hold the moral responsibility of fostering learners' respect and understanding of others and not only teaching them linguistic proficiency (Byram, 2020). Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education in Algeria account for intercultural outcomes at the secondary school level. This can be achieved through updating the current textbooks to integrate intercultural attitudes, knowledge and skills which are prerequisites for "peaceful co-existence" (Deardorff, 2020) with others. Moreover, inspectors can organise seminars and workshops to raise teachers' awareness of the role of differentiated instruction pedagogy in general, and its significance for fostering intercultural competence in particular. Finally, as Hamadouche and Boualli (2022) suggest, pre-service teachers should receive relevant intercultural training to develop learners' IC. This training can involve for example understanding theories related to culture and IC and designing various intercultural materials and activities that suit learners in the Algerian secondary school context.

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