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**The Implimentation of UDL in Teaching English in the Algerian
Context: Case of First Year EFL Students at Saida University**

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in
Didactics.

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Academic Year: 2020/2021

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful for having such brave parents who taught me how to be strong in this wild society. Without them, I will not be able to write this piece of work. With their love and support, I will not be able to reach this level. "I am so proud to be your daughter".

As I dedicate this work to my fiancé Mr. Benyamina. "you bring the best in me"

To my lovely sisters: Wiam, Aya and Maram.

To my best friend Amine Wafa for being a true motivation and an amazing guide.

To those students who left schools because of the poor curriculum design.

And last, to every person helps me to bring an idea to reality.

Acknowledgments

My thanks go to my supervisor Dr. Nadia GHOUNANE for her help, guidance, and encouragement.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee, Dr. RABAHI and Dr. MAROUF who have given their time to read and evaluate this humble work.

Likewise, I am profoundly grateful to Mr. LAKHDARI who inspired me and encouraged me to choose this topic.

As I would like to thank Mr. LARBI and Prof. SERIR from Tlemcen University.

Last but not least, I would like to express my regards and blessings to my friends: Reguig Abdallah from Sidi Bel Abbes University, Boudekhil Anfal from Saida University, and Bouchelaghem Hakima from Boumerdes University for their support during the completion of this research work.

Abstract

No one can deny that teaching is a hard practice that requires effort, time, and patience; particularly teaching mixed-ability classes where educators are required to adopt new flexible methods and approaches as well. The present research paper does not pretend to create miraculous solutions for teachers who encounter challenges in mixed ability classrooms, but it aims at exploring the effectiveness of the Universal Design for Learning Approach to curriculum and improving first-year EFL learners' abilities in addition to address EFL educators and get their feedback about the framework since they are the real applicators of this approach. To address this issue, quantitative and qualitative methods were incorporated in which three research tools were conducted on first-year EFL learners and teachers from Saida University. The results indicated that although instructors have limited knowledge about the new approach, still teaching in such heterogeneous classes recommended thriving strategies such as Universal Design for Learning. In the light of the study findings, the research proposes some pedagogical remedies to teachers along with policy makers for the sake of improving learners' abilities as well as helping teachers to perform well in their profession.

Keywords: Challenges, curriculum, EFL students, , first-year, heterogeneous, mixed-ability, Saida University, Universal Design for Learning Approach

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General Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language remains one of the most difficult, challenging, and demanding professions because today's classrooms are so diverse and dynamic. They may be filled with students of the same age, cultural background, and social status, but their learning abilities will vary on a wide scale. Indeed, students are so different in the way they learn, they express themselves, and the way they are engaged in learning. Meanwhile, the persistent gap in students' different abilities requires teachers to provide a flexible environment to teach all learners to reach the required objectives, especially at the university where students are in a new academic environment.

Several approaches have been adopted to improve teaching and learning. However, so many previous approaches such as the "one size fit all" approach could not work when it comes to designing a flexible and universal curriculum, which tends to be a *bete noire* not only to novice teachers but also to advanced teachers as well. Still, instructors are looking for an approach that supports students' different variables and helps in decreasing the complexity of teaching. Consequently, the educational system can be shifted from traditional inflexible learning to a more effective and engaging one. To address this issue, an approach is needed for EFL teachers to improve their students' abilities, an approach that can transform learning into an engaging and exciting experience. Thus, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a suggested approach that gives access to all learners with and without disabilities as it addresses the multiple needs and interests. Certainly, mixed-ability classes in general and the UDL approach, in particular, is a crucial research subject that needs to be sincerely studied for the sake of improvement.

Many empirical researches have been done on the effectiveness of the UDL approach to curriculum and some barriers that may prevent its implementation. Lately, the American approach has been introduced in so many countries such as Australia, Canada, and Saudi Arabia, etc. To this end, the current study is conducted on first-year EFL learners and Saida university teachers to shed light on the EFL diverse classrooms and the current status of UDL implementation in addition to exploring EFL teachers' perspectives towards this approach.

This study is significant as it attempts to reveal the challenges faced by teachers in teaching students with different learning abilities and propose suitable solutions to teach all

students, regardless of their diverse abilities and learning styles. Otherwise, this research work addresses teachers to be knowledgeable about their students' variability.

To achieve the main aim of this research, three significant research questions were raised:

1. Does the implementation of UDL in EFL mixed-ability classrooms provide flexible and effective learning?
2. To what extent, can teachers use UDL to improve first-year learners' abilities?
3. What are the approaches that teachers opt for to teach students with different learning abilities?

To conduct this study, three research hypotheses were formulated:

1. The implementation of UDL enhances students' academic achievement.
2. Perhaps, teachers benefit from UDL principles and strategies to help their learners meet their needs through accommodating the learning styles.
3. Teachers may opt for students centered approach and cooperative learning strategies to improve learning in mixed ability classes.

To collect data, the researcher has opted for the triangulation method through the adoption of three research instruments (classroom observation, an interview, and a questionnaire for teachers). The first research instrument is a semi-structured questionnaire which is used to address the first research question. It aims to obtain data about the teachers' perspectives towards EFL mixed-ability classrooms and the difficulties encountered in these classrooms. It is delivered online through Gmail and Facebook applications to 40 EFL teachers at the department of English at Dr MoulayTaher, Saida University during the pandemic period (Covid-19). It took three months. This questionnaire is structured in the format of three entitled sections, each section has a purpose. It consists of closed-ended questions (yes or no/multiple choices questions). The second instrument is an interview which was composed of eleven open-ended questions. It was addressed to four teachers. The informants of the interview were selected according to their experiences. The third research tool is covert classroom observation. Its purpose is to check whether the content fits and addresses the students' needs in addition to verifying if the teacher uses some UDL principles in their courses or not. It spanned three weeks.

The current researchwork is split into three chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the review of the literature section. It provides an overview of the inclusive EFL classrooms and English Language Teaching(ELT).It has dealt with the students'diversity,particularly the different learning styles, abilities, and intelligence.Then,it has presented the UDL approach and its guidelines.Furthermore,it has discussed the effectiveness of UDL and some barriers encountered in its implementation. In addition, the chapter has introduced how theUDL approach incorporates other methods and strategies namely cooperative learning strategies. However, the second chapter is concerned with the research methodology part, as it has described the research design,the aim of this study, the significance, and the research instruments.The last chapter is devoted to data analysis and interpretations as well as some recommendations and suggested solutions.

1.1. Introduction

Teaching in mixed-ability classrooms can be a hard challenge for EFL teachers. Today's teachers' biggest concern is to prepare a universal course that fits all their students' needs, interests, and abilities. This chapter is devoted to the theoretical part which mainly tackles the review of the related literature. It aims to shed light on the English Language Teaching (ELT) situation in Algeria and provide understanding for the Algerian EFL classrooms which are filled by a wide range of students with various abilities and learning styles. Then, the chapter represents the concept of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and it provides a meaningful overview of this approach. As well, it elaborates that UDL is based on neuroscience research. The chapter discusses the three principles of UDL which are based on the three brain networks (recognition, strategic and effective network). Moreover, it clarifies the necessity and effectiveness of UDL in today's diverse classrooms and the teachers' beliefs about it. Subsequently, it emphasizes the role of technology in implementing UDL. Eventually, the chapter sheds light on some obstacles which may prevent the implementation of UDL.

1.2. Algerian educational system

The educational system in Algeria is divided into four cycles primary, middle, secondary school, and university. After the independence, Algeria values the sector of education by teaching languages, mainly the English language, to build its own identity and economics. English was taught in the first year of middle school as a second foreign language after French (Acheb, 2018). While at universities, English is one of the branches and sometimes it is taught for specific purposes (ESP) as a module in so many scientific specialties such as biology, Physics, maths, and engineering, etc. By the end of 2020, the Algerian ministry was thinking to put English as a first foreign language by starting teaching English from primary school.

1.2.1. English language teaching situation in Algeria (ELT)

Nowadays, the crucial need to know English is constantly recognized and significant. All the countries all over the world compete to focus on teaching English because it is an international language that gives access to knowledge, science, and technology.

Admittedly, Algeria is a country where teaching English witnessed great attention and an account of challenges. Particularly, at the Algerian diverse universities, where there is a rich list of languages spoken by diverse students. Unquestionably, these learners showed great preferences for the English language at the expense of other languages. Additionally, "The ministry of education in Algeria gives more importance to the usage of the English language and supported the teaching and learning of foreign languages " (Acheb, 2019, p.10). For these reasons, "the Algerian education system in general and the teaching of English, in particular, have undergone a kind of rebirth and vitality over the last decades " (Benzerroug, 2017, p. 8).

Recently, Tayeb Bouzid(2019), who was appointed minister of higher education in April, published his proposal on his Facebook page on August 20, after a national conference of Algerian universities: "I hope that my graduate research next year will be in English. I believe that English is the future of Algeria".

Certainly, each year, thousands of different students with various needs, interests, and learning abilities join classes where they wish to have equal opportunities, a welcoming atmosphere, and an accessible curriculum. Meanwhile, ensuring and maintaining access to all learners can be a hard mission for EFL teachers. Educators are still struggling to design a universal curriculum that is accessible to all students because the actual teaching methods and approaches do not satisfy the teaching aims and learners' needs.

In a nutshell, it is the role of teachers to teach all students to attain high standards by providing dynamic and various paths and using techniques that the majority of learners require (Novac& Rose, 2016).

1.3. Understanding students' diversity

Diversity in EFL classrooms is an important research subject. It is considered a major challenge for teachers and students because it impacts the students' academic achievement and the learning process. For instance, in 2017, a study conducted by Tate found that students' diversity has negative impacts more than positive influences.

Additionally, many sizable researches shed light on the concept of diversity and inclusive classrooms. For example, Marlowe (2003) wrote about students' diversity and its different types such as linguistic, cultural, and learners' level diversity.

Meanwhile, Scholars urged and called teachers to be knowledgeable about their different students' interests, levels, needs, and learning styles (Banks et al, 2005). To illustrate, Barkley (2019) claimed that "the highly effective teachers create purposeful opportunities to learn about their students and find ways to let students know they are known"(p.1). Moreover, Poulter (2020) stated that one of the key steps to succeed in teaching mixed-ability classes is to know their weaknesses and strengths. In other words, teachers need to study their learners' profiles, needs, and interests to show them that they are known. Also, teachers can help learners to recognise their weaknesses and strengths. Indeed, the teacher should understand, accept and appreciate learners' diversity to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, "Teachers must be prepared to teach a diverse population of students" (Banks et al, 2005, as cited in Abd Rahman, Scaife & Ab Jalil, 2010, p.83). Lately, Wiseman, Cooner, and Knight (1999) asserted that successful teachers who committed to understanding the impacts of different backgrounds and abilities on students' learning. Undoubtedly, those teachers will make the appropriate decisions that enable them to respond to their learners in an accurate, sufficient, and suitable etiquette (Abd Rahman, Scaife & Ab Jalil, 2010).

Ultimately, Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) highlighted that "research has suggested that teachers should offer four ingredients in the learning mix: learner's effort, social surround, the opportunity to learn and good teaching" (as cited in Novac & Rose, 2016, p. 2). An effective teacher has to influence the four ingredients to make learning more fruitful. Even though sometimes it is hard to affect the social environment and this may lead to a great obstacle. Hopefully, there is evidence that some classrooms can raise students' achievement, despite these problems (Rose & Novac, 2016).

Subsequently, one of the key concepts involving individual differences is learning style (Chen, Hang & Hsu, 2019). Many studies have been done on the students' different learning styles, which are the crucial characteristics that may influence the students' progress. For instance, Moussa (2013) has investigated the importance of learning styles in education. He assumed that "Understanding the relationship between learning styles and the learning process is one of the primary goals of learning styles research" (p.13). Moreover, they are considered as personal qualities that affect the ability of students to obtain data and to communicate with their peers and teachers.

For this reason, teachers need to understand, accommodate, and address all of the types of learning styles as well as encouraging students to understand their preferred style to push them to recognize the most productive way to study. This can only be if teachers create their students' learning profiles.

1.3.1. Students' learning profiles

Students' profiles are the best way which helps teachers to design a course that fits all learners according to their unique strengths and learning abilities. It is used to record data from different sources (Ghembaza, 2019).

1.3.1.1. The individual styles of learning

Different scholars have defined and studied learning styles. For instance, Reid (1995) maintained that: "learning style is an individual natural, habitual and preferred way of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills" (as cited in Keskes & Raha, 2017, p.98). Then, Judith C. Reiff (1992) described the different learning styles as the colors of a rainbow. In 1992, Keefe also defined learning styles as "The characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment (...) Learning style is a consistent way of functioning that reflects underlying causes of behaviours" (p 4). Grasha in 1996 has suggested six learning styles based on criteria suggested by James and Gardner (1995). The six learning styles are explained below by Raha and Keskes (2017):

1. Independent learners: these learners learn independently and prefer to work alone. They are autonomous and enthusiastic.
2. Dependent learners: they required guidance from teachers and peers and prefer teacher-centered classroom methods.
3. Competitive learners: they usually learn through competition to be rewarded and enjoy challenging tasks.
4. Collaborative learners: they learn through sharing and cooperating with teachers and students and preferred lectures with small group discussions.
5. Avoidant learners: they are neither enthusiastic nor interested in classroom content, they are always exhausted by the class activities, and they don't support the passionate teacher.

6. Participant learners: they are interested in classroom activities as they enjoy classroom reading discussion and prefer a teacher who analyzes the information.

On the other hand, another study by Fleming and Mills (1987) has established four types of learning styles which were commonly known by the abbreviation VARK: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic (Cherry, 2019). These styles are explained as the following:

1. Visual style

Students who learn better when seeing the use of posters, pictures...

2. Auditorystyle

Students who learn best when they listen to lectures and records...

3. Reading/writingstyle

Students who work best in the reading/writing modality demonstrate a strong learning preference for the written word.

4. Kinesthetic or physical

These learners learn best through hand activities

1.3.1.2. The cognitive styles

Other differences are more specific than learning styles, these differences are commonly known as cognitive styles. According to Zhang and Sternberg (2006): "cognitive styles are typical ways of perceiving and remembering information" (as cited in Seiffert& Sutton, 2009, p.67). Moreover, Riding and Rayner (2000) claimed that differences between students' learning styles are also partly due to variations in their cognitive style, i.e., differences in how they respond to the environment and process data

1.3.1.3. Multiple intelligence

The concept of intelligence was defined as a specific broad ability that allows a person to remedy or complete the task according to many traditional definitions (Garlick, 2002 as cited in Seiffert&Suttan, 2009). In 1993, Gardener suggested a model theory of multiple intelligences in his book: *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligence*. In this book, Gardner proposed 8 forms which will be summarized in the following table (Cherry, 2019):

Table 1.1. *Gardner's model theory*

Form of intelligence	Examples of activities using intelligence
Linguistic: verbal skills, ability to use language well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal persuasion • writing a term paper skilfully
Musical: ability to create and understand music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • singing, playing a musical instrument • composing a tune
Logical: mathematical: logical skill, ability to reason, often using mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solving mathematical problems easily and accurately • developing and testing hypotheses
Bodily: kinesthetic: sense of balance, coordination in use of one's body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing a difficult jigsaw puzzle • assembling a complex appliance (e.g. a bicycle)
Spatial: ability to imagine and manipulate the arrangement of objects in the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dancing • gymnastics
Interpersonal: ability to discern others' nonverbal feelings and thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensing when to be tactful • sensing a "subtext" or implied message in a person's statements
Intrapersonal: sensitivity to one's own thoughts and feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noticing complex of ambivalent feelings in oneself • identifying true motives for an action in

	oneself
Naturalist: sensitivity to subtle differences and patterns found in the natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying examples of species of plants or animals • noticing relationships among species and natural processes in the environment

Note 1.1. Adapted from Seiffert and Suttan (2009, p.69)

To conclude, Gardner's multiple intelligence theory was introduced to present the different abilities that may affect learning.

1.4. Understanding mixed-ability classes

It is a sheer truism that teaching is a daunting job, especially when it comes to mixed- classes abilities. Many teachers and specialists have defined the term mixed ability class on their own, using a different point of view gained from several learning environments (Al-Subaiei, 2017). For instance, Walters (2017) acknowledged that mixed-ability classes are commonly known by the term heterogeneous classes. Furthermore, Ainstlie (1994) identified mixed-ability classes as: "classes where students differ greatly in ability, motivation, needs, interests, learning styles, anxiety and so on" as cited in (Svard, 2006, p.4).

1.4.1. Challenges of teaching mixed ability classes

A mixed ability class is a challenge for teachers and students as well. Walters (2017) wrote an article about the difficulties that teachers can face in mixed-ability classes, these challenges can be closely related to class management. According to Walters, the first obstacle habitually appears when the learning materials designed by teachers did not satisfy the smart student (advanced) who prefers to be challenged to learn. While the weaker students find them very difficult. Then, keeping attention and motivation can be another obstacle. To illustrate, the advanced students are likely to be more active in the class, they interact and participate in the class; however, the less advanced students are a bit calm learners, maybe due to shyness or they feel uncomfortable. Additionally, the less

advanced students, in general, feel that they are not the top students because the teachers cannot give attention and awareness to every individual in their class. Consequently, teachers may feel stressed and frustrated because they have no time to help their weaker students.

1.4.2. *Overcoming challenges of teaching mixed-ability classes*

Getting students involved in the same learning situation can seem an impossible task. To this vein, some strategies were suggested by Rees (2011) to overcome the challenges of teaching mixed-ability classes, they can be summarised as follow:

Firstly, teachers need to get students involved in groups and allow them to learn together by exchanging ideas. Then, educators should develop learners' responsibilities about learning i.e. helping students to think about their learning as Tomlinson (1999) substantiated that: " it is very important to let the students be part of the assessment by letting them discuss in a small group with the teacher " (as cited in Svard, 2006, p.7). Moreover, educators' essential job in mixed ability classes is to create a positive and relaxed atmosphere because this will automatically create a good learning environment (Ainstlie, 1994).

1.5. **Revolution in traditional classes**

During the last decades, so many approaches have been adopted by ELT educators. Undoubtedly, these approaches have labelled ELT teaching, but the adoption of new productive and fruitful methods and approaches is still recommended to improve teaching in mixed-ability classrooms. The approaches that teachers should opt for should be aligned with the students' diversity and the growth which touches the ELT sector. This growth leads to the shift from the old traditional approaches to the more flexible and practical ones. Because the "one-size-fits-all" curriculum approach is no longer effective since it ignores the diversity of students' interests, strengths, and weaknesses (Rose & Strangman, 2007). Even for students without learning difficulties, this approach makes them struggle to learn (Meo, 2008).

Many studies have been done to test the traditional strategies. To illustrate, Donhue (2015) wrote on the flaws of one-size-fits-all. As he presented a student-centered approach and differentiated learning concepts. Moreover, in 2017, Mead conducted a study on how to make learners motivated, engaged and successful. She also called for differentiation in learning to reach the individual differences of each unique student. Yet;

no teacher can deny that curriculum should be differentiated because the traditional approaches failed in accommodating the different learning styles. For instance, Mead (2017) pointed that only verbal learners can be served by the previous educational approaches. Whereas others will feel overwhelmed and unmotivated to learn. Teaching and learning processes need some changes at the level of the approaches, methods, and strategies adopted. Thus, teachers as a part of the educational system can make some changes (Alsalem, 2015). They are required to do their best by offering students multiple chances to succeed and UDL is the best way to do so (Novac & Rose, 2016).

1.6. Universal learning design: An overview

Many experts in the field of didactics have established the concept of Universal Design for Learning, which is commonly known by the acronym of UDL. In their part, Rose and Meyer (2000) identified universal design for learning as an approach to curriculum with the provision of multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement in the classroom. Indeed, Maguire and Hall (2018) identified UDL as "a pedagogical framework that aims to provide an equal and inclusive learning experience for students and cater for the difference in learning styles among them" (p.2)

On the top, Teaching excellent in an adult literacy centre (TEAL) (2010), UDL is a set of principles that offer a roadmap for designing strategies, assessment, tools, and materials to reach all students' needs regardless of age, ability, disability, gender, cultural background, and social status. Similarly, the Centre of applied special technology (CAST) (2011) indicated that UDL is the best practice framework for addressing learner variability to provide challenging, accessible, and relevant content for all learners including those for varied strengths, talents, abilities, interests, and linguistic and cultural background.

1.6.1. Origins

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) emerged in 1999 in America (Maguire & Hall, 2018). According to the Centre of Applied Special Technology (CAST) (2015), the term UDL is linked with Universal Design (UD) which is often applied in architecture. UD aims at creating an environment that allows people with and without disabilities to move around without any barriers. It takes to facilitate life and provide mobility, usability, and accessibility.

According to the centre of Universal Design of North Carolina State University, Architect Mace (1998) tried with his colleagues to design products and environments that

could be readily accessible and available without special designs or other criteria for all individuals (Anstead, 2016). Later on, Young (2013) said that " People quickly began to realize the benefits of building structures and product designs that could accommodate diverse needs and abilities while also providing accessibility" (as cited in Anstead, 2015, p.12).

In 1998, The CAST took the concept of UD a step further by applying it to a framework for classroom instruction and curriculum. It is at this stage the notion of universal learning design was born and becomes widely used in the field of special education.

1.6.2. UDL Guidelines

UDL helps teachers to design lesson materials and assessments. It offers teachers three guidelines for eliminating barriers encountered in the learning environment (Meyer et al., 2014; CAST, 2014; Rose & Meyer, 2002). CAST has developed the three UDL guidelines which are grounded in research on cognition and learning (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014):

Representation

It extends to changes that can be made to educational programs that will make them available to learners of different needs. This implies that teachers need to learn how to present educational resources not only oral or written but also reflected by some modalities and techniques such as images, blogs, photos, etc.

Action and Expression

It applies to alternative communication strategies for learners with different needs. More importantly, UDL allows teachers to include a range of ways for learners to interact and show what they have learned, so those options can be used outside standard tests and documents, enabling learners to capitalize on their unique skills or talents.

Engagement

It refers to the use of strategies that engage learners with diverse needs in the learning process. This means that teachers need to implement different strategies that improve their learners' achievement and involve them in learning by providing choices, reducing anxiety, and rewarding effort.

Indeed, according to Teaching excellence for adult literacy center (TEAL) (2010), the UDL principles can be adopted in any domain to ensure equity and access through three main components:

Multiple means of representation

Using a wide range of methods to present data and offer a set of means to support and sustain the information (TEAL, 2010). From this principle, "educators can create more information for learning options. It offers different ways to provide students with content knowledge" (Martin, 2016, p. 12).

Multiple means of actions

Delivering alternative ways for learners to behave masterfully and recognize what they know (TEAL, 2010). Moreover, action and expression help teachers to be conscious and aware of the differences those students have and then demonstrate the acceptable styles of learning for each student (Smith, 2012).

Multiple means of engagement

Providing the content and tools according to the students' interests, in addition to inspiring and motivating learners by giving collapsible challenge levels (TEAL, 2010). "This principle allows learning to be more meaningful" (Martin, 2016, p. 15).

1.6.3. The four interrelated components of the UDL curriculum by Relabate (2011):

After teachers incorporate UDL guidelines to their course design, they are required to apply these principles to four UDL curricular components to effectively meet the students' needs. These components are summarised in the few following lines:

- **Goals:** are defined as thoughts and talents that the learners must master, they are commonly referred to as learning expectations (Relabate, 2011).
- **Methods:** are the strategies adopted by educators to support the students' learning. UDL methods are flexible and they are usually adjusted through consistent refection for the sake of the learners' progress (Relabate, 2011).
- **Materials:** These are typically known as the media used to present the content. UDL materials provide options and choices (Relabate, 2011).
- **Assessments:** is about the collection of learners' feedback i.e. "UDL assessments are concerned with accurately measuring the learners' knowledge and skills" (Relabate, 2011, p.03).

1.6.4. UDL as neuroscience

According to Meyer and Rose (2005), the framework of UDL is built on the latest neuroscience research that has established the three brain networks.

1.6.4.1. UDL and the three brain networks

CAST (2018)"UDL framework is based on three scientific insights that teach us how human learn" (as cited in Guberman&Grimmet, 2018, p. 1). Each UDL principle aligns with the brain network, and the UDL principles are designed to specifically address the learning related to each network, as they are explained in the following paragraphs (Rose &Strangman, 2007):

The effective network

According to Rose and Strangman (2007), the effective network "why" of learning is linked to the learners' motivation and engagement. Therefore, providing students with multiple means of engagement is very significant to support and involve all students because the individuals differ in the ways they are engaged and motivated to learn.

The recognition network

The "what" of learning (recognition networks) represent the multiple ways in which learners possess, receive and understand the information that is presented to them.Thus, using multiple means of representation is very important to teach diverse students(Guberman&Grimmet, 2018).

The strategic network

The "how" of learning (strategic network) discusses the forms in which students express their ideas since students are different in the way they handle and explore their learning environment (CAST, 2018).

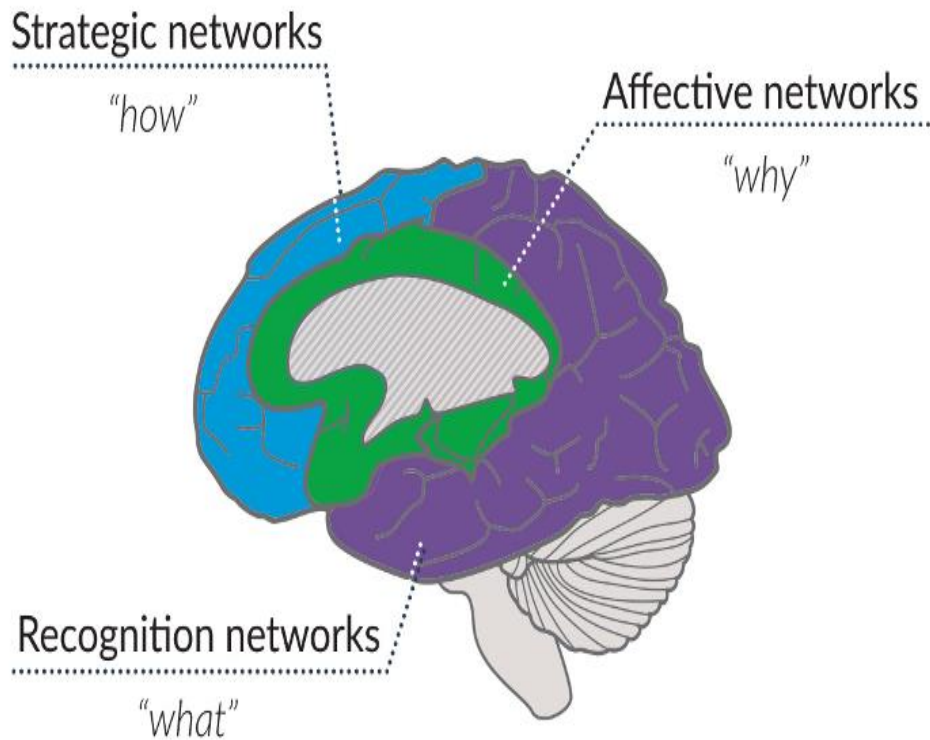


Figure 1.1. UDL and the three brain networks (adapted from CAST, 2018, p. 1)

Briefly, neuroscience researches, which supported students' variability, have confirmed that the three brain networks are active during the learning.

1.6.5. Under UDL

1.6.5.1. UDL and cooperative learning

Cooperative learning, which is commonly defined as a method that involves students working in groups and peers, allows for the three components of UDL namely: representation, engagement, and expression (Taylor, 2016). In other words, the UDL approach can be applied through cooperative learning. To illustrate, research conducted by Taylor (2016) studied and analysed the effect of the implementation of UDL found that the cooperative learning method complements the principles of UDL.

1.6.5.2. UDL and differentiated instruction

In 2017, Katie Novac, who is one of the famous researchers on UDL, claimed that UDL is not a differentiated instruction, they are two different terms. Differentiated instruction is somehow a similar method that offers students options. Indeed, these options

are managed by teachers. However, UDL allows students themselves to select options that suit them. Still, both of them are good approaches that give kids choices

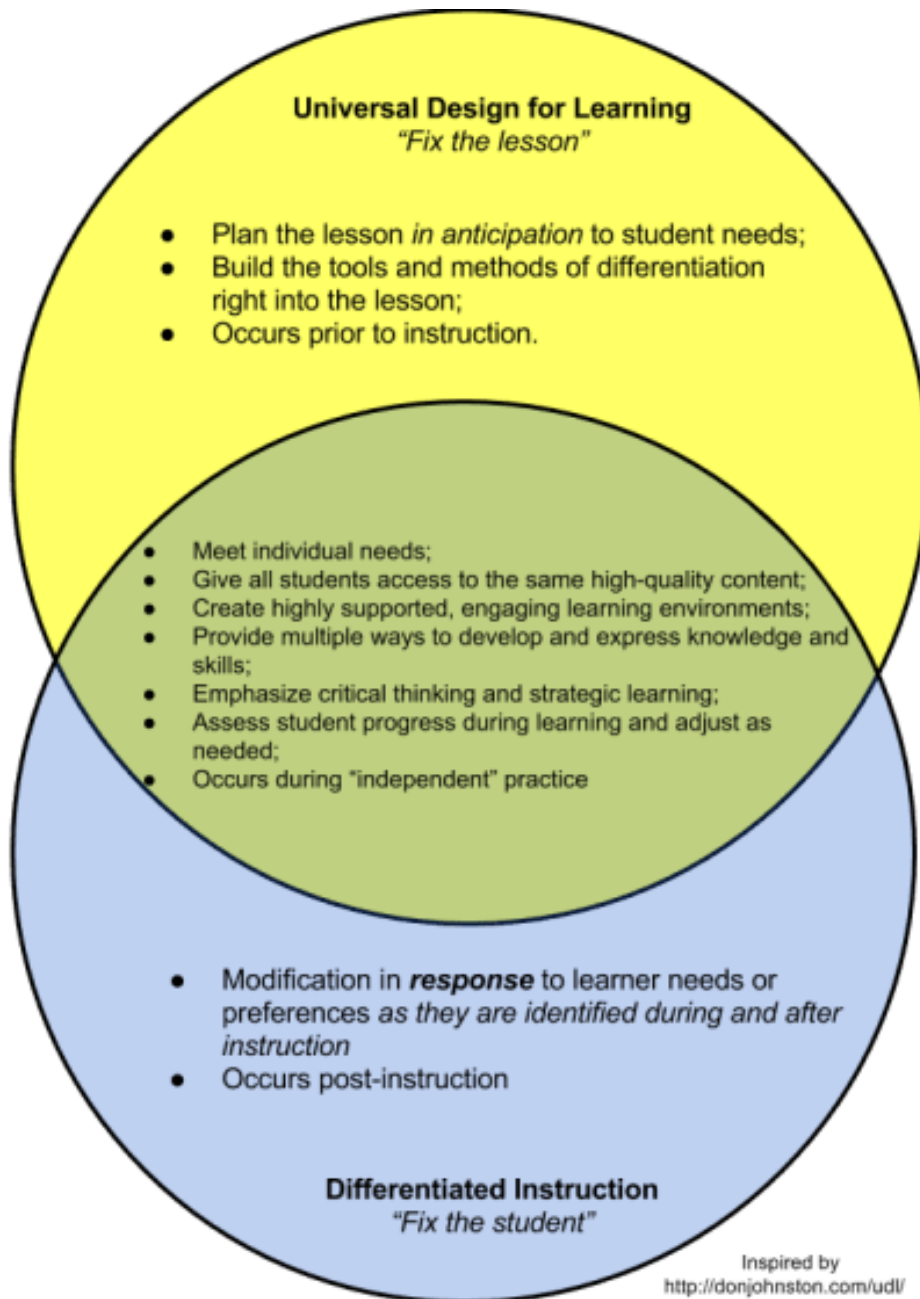


Figure 1.2.UDL and differentiated instruction (adapted from inclusive education, n.d.)

According to TEAL (2010), differentiated instruction has six dimensions. These dimensions explain the relationship between the teachers and students, which is the main core of this method (McCarthy, 2014).The six dimensions are summarised as the following:

- ❖ **The content** is the "what" of the lesson.
- ❖ **The process** is the how of the lesson.
- ❖ **The product** is about the students' results, and it takes into account the three components: **Students' readiness, profiles, and interests.**

1.7. Effectiveness of UDL

Prior researches have investigated the efficacy of the UDL approach and its benefits. To illustrate, in 2007, Jimenez, Graf, and Rose specified one of the most relevant advantages of UDL is to help teachers to decide about how to teach. Then, teaching excellence adult literacy (TEAL) (2010) indicated that students benefit from UDL flexibility and accessibility which earned teachers concern in today's inclusive classroom. In addition, Evmenova (2018) claimed that UDL helps in designing curricula that recognize learners' diversity as a result of human variability. Additionally, "UDL accommodates the different preferences of diverse learners" (Martin, 2016, p. 30)

Debates have been continued for many years on the efficacy of UDL in improving learners' abilities and enhancing their autonomy as well as on the barriers which may prevent its implementation. For example, Spooner et al. (2007) discussed the effect of professional development on using the UDL concept in lesson planning and how it impacts students' success in the classroom. Moreover, a very recent study was done in America by Dickinson and Gronseth (2020) to clarify the necessity of including UDL principles in the course design during the pandemic era to optimize learning when face-to-face instruction is absent. Eventually, Parish (2019) declared that learning with UDL would be more affordable and accessible.

On the other hand, so many scholars may dedicate UDL to learners with learning difficulties. But, the main core of UDL is to recognize and respond to diversity as Rao, Wook OK, Smith, and Evmenova (2020) assumed that UDL aims to design environments that decrease barriers and increase access for all students with and without disabilities. Firstly, UDL helps teachers to meet challenges of serving those with special needs while enhancing learning for all" (TEAL, 2010, p. 1). Since, "so many students without disabilities find the curriculum is purely designed"(TEAL,2010, p. 1).Furthermore, UDL enhances students' success and reaches the marginalized groups in educational settings, particularly learners of the English language (U.S.Department of education,2010).What is more, theUDL lesson reduces misbehavior problems because all of the students' needs are met during this course(Morrissey, 2009).

Equally important, Hitchcock, Meyer, Rose, and Jackson (2002) insisted that innovation in teaching is the use of multiple classroom techniques that engage learners to participate and be successful participants. Thus, the researchers confirmed that UDL teachers will innovate their teaching and bring so many changes into the kingdom of teaching and learning. For instance, Novac and Rose (2016) said that "the implementation of some guidelines of UDL each day will make changes and differences in engagement and achievement" (p.3). Additionally, Israel et al., (2014) declared that: "UDL emphasis the role of innovation in teaching to create an atmosphere that allows individuals to be more creative and help to reduce barriers" (as cited in Alsalem, 2015, p.49). In brief, UDL puts student diversity first and encourages teachers to plan lessons that will never need to be revised or adjusted to fit various levels of students (Novac & Rose, 2016).

1.8.UDL and technology

Generally, teachers benefit from technology to support students with and without disabilities. Indeed, over the last decades, the role of technology in learning is significantly increasing, particularly in higher education (Dahlstrom, deBour, Grunwald, & Vockley, 2011; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Oblinger, 2005). On the other hand, UDL became a research focus of so many scholars. To this end, several studies have been done to test whether the implementation of UDL requires technology or not.

Recently, a significant chapter from research conducted in Turkey at Anadolu University by Emerksiz (2016) explored the teachers' opinions about this issue. In this study, Emerksiz confirmed that UDL is mainly about pedagogy. Also, in 2016, King sears declared that UDL was not about the use of technology. But still, the integration of technology options in UDL increases the flexibility of learning (Chen, Curran & Peterson, 2013). Furthermore, technology allows responsiveness and personalization that UDL aims to facilitate for students in a class (King sears, 2016). Additionally, Smith (2012) admired that the implementation of instructional frameworks which incorporate technology tools is necessary to engage students and create a flexible learning environment.

In the end, teachers can still teach UDL principles without software, but technology is also important and makes UDL much smoother (Novac & Rose, 2016).

1.9. Three ways to implement UDL (Parrish 2019 model)

Teaching content in many ways

According to the traditional approaches, there is only one way to plan lessons such as lectures or slide presentations. However, according to UDL, the teacher can vary methods namely: listening to podcasts, using podcasts and visual aids, etc (Parrish, 2019).

Provide choices to sustain students' engagement

Allowing students to choose activities that match their interests is the key to flexibility. Generally, today's generations like to be free and independent, they will feel bored if they are always guided and controlled. Indeed, educators could provide a flexible setting where learners can decide whether to answer independently or play a game, etc. These will highly demonstrate their understanding of the concepts, especially the new concepts (Parrish, 2019).

Provide accommodation for all students

Obstacles in learning require some accommodation to reach all types of students. Teachers need to think about accommodations that all students need as they are required to make these accommodations available to all. For instance, instructors may post an online copy of notes.

1.10. Barriers in implementing the UDL approach

UDL is implemented in many distinct curricula to offer opportunities to engage all students and reach all preferences. However, barriers do exist when implementing UDL, particularly from the point of view of a teacher (Martin, 2016). In other words, teachers can get overwhelmed and give up due to so many reasons. Firstly, the concept of reaching all learners can seem impossible. Secondly, UDL implementation consumes a lot of thoughts, creativity, and time (Novac & Rose, 2016). However, at that point, it is really important to realize that educators are not required to change all at once. They can take just one UDL lesson a week and later on they can add additional adjustments when they feel relaxed (Novac & Rose, 2016).

Briefly, the most barriers which have been tackled by many scholars are the lack of time, lack of training, teachers' frustration, and crowded classes.

1.11. Conclusion

This chapter tackled the theoretical part of teaching English as a foreign language in mixed-ability classes. Moreover, it has provided some insights about students' diversity, particularly students' level diversity that can influence learners' outcomes. Then, this chapter has presented an overview of the new framework, its guidelines, and some barriers that may prevent its implementation. Lastly, it has proposed three tips to effectively implement UDL.

2.1. Introduction

As the previous chapter tackled the review of the related literature. This chapter is devoted to the research tools and methodologies which are used to analyze the EFL mixed-ability classrooms and the financial situation of UDL implementation at Saida University. It aims to shed light on the practical part. It will identify the methodological approaches and the research instruments (questionnaire, classroom observation, and the interview) that the researcher opted for. In addition, it will present the research design, the significance, and the aim of the work.

2.2. Aim of the study

The research aim is a specific statement that expresses the aspiration of the study and what the researcher wants to reach after finishing the research. "The term research aim usually refers to the main goal or overarching purpose of a research project" (Hodges & Thomas, 2010, p. 38). Research without a purpose, it's not worth calling it investigation.

This study has two general aims. The first one is to examine the effectiveness of UDL in improving first-year EFL learners' abilities. Whereas, the second main aim is to help teachers to understand their students' preferences and to design a sufficient course based on their learners' needs through the implementation of the UDL approach.

2.3. Significance of the study

This study is significant in the field of didactics because it attracts the attention of educators to one of the major students' differences which affects deeply the learning progress and creates so many barriers if the teachers do not consider it.

The findings of this study will attempt to provide teachers with more insights about teaching in mixed-ability classrooms. Additionally, this work will present more teaching techniques and methods to eliminate learning barriers to engage and involve a wide scale of learners. It will bring novelty to the kingdom of teaching and learning to shine brightly and affect positively.

2.4. Structure of this study

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Each chapter opens with a small introduction and ends with a concise conclusion. The first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical part which mainly tackles the review of the related literature. It is devoted to shedding light on the inclusive EFL classes and the situation of English language teaching in Algeria. Then, it presents the approach of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and it provides a general overview of the approach and its guidelines. The second chapter is concerned with the research methodology. It includes the description of the research instruments as it aims to pinpoint the triangulation method and the reason behind opting for it. Supplementally, it identifies the aim behind this study, the significance, and the design. The third chapter deals with the practical part of the research which includes the description of the analysis of the three research instruments (questionnaire and interview for teachers and classroom observation). In addition, there was a discussion of the results gathered. Afterward, it gives the interpretations and recommendations.

2.5. Sample of study

In this study, simple random sampling is used because of so many reasons. First of all; it is an advantage for the researcher since there is "no easier method exists to extract a research sample from a larger population than simple random sampling" (Depersio, 2018, p. 7). Then, the research can be generalized to a wider population later on. In addition, it is a method that instills a sense of fairness in the research because no prior information about the people or things involved is incorporated in the data collection procedure (Gaile, 2017).

The population of this study was first-year license students and EFL teachers from the department of English language, faculty of languages and arts Dr. Moulay Taher University of Saida. The study was conducted during the first semester of 2020/2021.

2.5.1. Description of the teachers' profile

Forty EFL teachers from the department of English language were selected randomly to answer the questionnaire which was submitted online through the Gmail application because of the pandemic period (Covid 19). In addition, four teachers teach different modules were selected to interview to check their knowledge about the UDL approach and elicit information about teaching at EFL mixed-ability classrooms.

2.5.2. Description of the students' profile

To fulfil the objective of this study, an observation was done with four first-year groups which were chosen randomly to contribute to this study. The maximum number of students in each group was 27 students.

2.6. Research Instruments

In this research, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to answer the research questions and to validate the research hypotheses. The qualitative method is adopted to describe the students' diversity in EFL classrooms. While the quantitative approach is used to examine and demonstrate the current status of UDL implementation.

To conduct any research, several research tools should be opted for to reach the study aim. These tools are generally defined as different ways that the researcher uses to obtain data for his or her investigation such as classroom observation, questionnaires, interviews, portfolio... etc. A detailed account of the research instruments will be introduced in this section. The researcher will present the advantages and the drawbacks of each research instrument used in the research, and justify the reason behind selecting the data collection methods and the objectives behind the use of each tool.

The researcher has designed three tools because one instrument gives the researcher one part of the view. Whereas using multiple tools leads to gathering valid and sufficient data for a complicated situation. Thus the only way to ensure validity is through the use of the triangulation method.

The triangulation method is the adoption of more than one tool to enhance confidence in the findings. Heale and Noble (2019) claimed that: "Triangulation can enrich research as it offers a variety of datasets to explain different aspects of a phenomenon of interest" (p.2). Denzin (1978) identified four types of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation
2. Investigator triangulation
3. Theoretical triangulation

4. Methodological triangulation.

To offer a more comprehensible set of results in the current research, a methodological triangulation is adopted by the investigator through the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

In this study, the researcher has used three data gathering tools to answer the research questions and validate the research hypotheses. The first tool is a semi-structured questionnaire to teachers. It is used to answer the first research question which revolves around the flexibility and the effectiveness of the UDL approach at EFL mixed-ability classrooms. The second tool, which is a covert classroom observation, is designed to solve the second research question and the last instrument is a semi-structured interview. This tool is applied to address the third research question because: "The interviews were considered as a method of triangulation a checking out of the consistency of the data obtained from the questionnaire and the classroom observation" (Patton, 1990, p. 464).

2.6.1. Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a systematic and vital tool for the collection of primary population data of interest applied to theoretically based research. It is a very relevant tool in the education sphere, as Mbeki said "I think that probably the most important thing about our education was that it taught us to question even those things we thought we knew" (p. 1).

What is more, the questionnaire as a data-gathering tool has many advantages and disadvantages. First of all the answers may be received rapidly. Then, it is an easy method that any researcher can undertake. Moreover, the correspondents can answer the questionnaire at their leisure, so they put less pressure on the respondents. On the other hand, the investigators still encounter some barriers when opting for questionnaires because they may provide poor responses and incomplete entries.

2.6.1.1. Description of the teachers' questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is a semi-structured questionnaire. It aims to obtain data about the teachers' perspectives towards EFL mixed-ability classrooms and the difficulties encountered in these classrooms. To address the first research question, a semi-structured questionnaire (see appendix A) is delivered online to 40 teachers. It was composed of

closed-ended (yes or no/multiple choices questions) questions. The questionnaire took two months.

The questionnaire has a significant introduction that presents the topic. The researcher defines the approach of UDL in the introduction to make the concept clear to the informants because the topic is the first time to be tackled in Algeria, and it is the first thesis that deals with the Universal Design for learning approach.

The first section was entitled the teachers' profiles and their work experience. It consists of two main questions: the first question was about how long they have been teaching the English language to check whether they are still beginners or they are advanced teachers, and the second question asked teachers about the level which they teach.

The second section was instructed to teachers' perspectives toward the different learning abilities. It is made up of seven questions (yes or no and wh questions). This phase aims at testing the teachers' knowledge and awareness about students' diversity in addition to investigating the problems that they usually face when teaching students with different learning abilities and their suggested solutions to teach mixed-ability classes. The third section is committed to asking teachers about UDL effectiveness and their knowledge about the approach.

2.6.2. Teachers' interview

The interviews are research tools used to help the researcher to understand and explore the research behaviours and phenomenon. There are three well-known types of interviews namely: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured.

The interview can be a positive addition to any research because it increases the knowledge of both the interviewer and the interviewee. Furthermore, it enhances mutual understanding and cooperation. However, the researchers are still facing some limitations in the interview process such as lack of attention and time-consuming.

. 2.6.2.1. Description of the teachers' interview

To address the third research question, the researcher has structured a third significant instrument which is a face-to-face interview administered to six teachers who

were selected according to their teaching experiences at Saida University, each one was interviewed alone. The type of interview used in this investigation is semi-structured.

Before starting, the researcher opened the meeting with a concise introduction in which she defined the topic and identified the major points which are going to be discussed. Additionally, she asked for permission to record the session, and she guarantees confidentiality to the interviewee. The reasons behind designing the third tool are:

Firstly, she wanted to reinforce her research by adopting some questions from another questionnaire that was used in another research in Saudi Arabia in 2015. The adopted questions were modified according to the objectives of this study. Secondly, the questionnaire answers were not sufficient because it was delivered during the confinement. Thirdly, the approach is new to teachers, and some of them were not knowledgeable about it. This pushes the writer to conduct questions on the informants implicitly through the interview.

The interview was semi-structured. It consists of 12 questions. Five questions were taken from the Alsalem research which is entitled: " Considering and supporting the implementation of Universal Design for Learning among teachers of students who are deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia ". The interview was a mixture between WH questions and yes/no questions. Some teachers have appreciated and welcomed the research as they contribute very significant explanations and discussions while others apologize for not responding because they had no time to do so.

2.6.3. The Classroom Observation

To describe and record data about the students' diversity at EFL classrooms and the current level of the incorporation of UDL guidelines into the course design. The researcher has selected a classroom observation as a second research tool. Its purpose is to check whether the content fits and addresses the students' needs in addition to verifying if the teacher uses some UDL principles in their courses or not. The classroom observation was undertaken at the department of English at Saida University during the first semester of the academic year 2020/2021.

Marshall and Rosman 1989 defined observation as the structured description of the actions, behaviours, and artifacts. The observation can be overt (everyone knows they are

being observed) or covert (no one knows they are being observed and the researcher is concealed)

2.6.3.1. Description of the classroom observation

In this research, the type of observation is a covert observation (the participants of the study were not informed that they were observed). The class was observed for two weeks, ten sessions per week. The number of the informants was 27 students in each group. The researcher attends different lectures from different modules.

For the sake of gathering valid data and making the observation process more structured, focused, and organized, the observer has developed a guide sheet observation. The researcher was sitting at the back of the classroom, and she noticed all that happened during each session, paying particular attention to every single detail. During these sessions of observation, the researcher used a variety of techniques to collect information.

The researcher has relied on taking notes about the following details:

Teachers' flexibility, the content accessibility, the materials used, the assessment tools, and the students' engagement. In addition, more focus was on highlighting the obstacles which both students and teachers faced at mixed-ability classrooms.

The researcher split the observation into four parts:

The first part: observing the classroom environment in general such as the sitting, the classroom size, and atmosphere which may help in delivering a universal lesson that fits the needs of a wide range of students. The second part: checking the materials, assessment tools, and content accessibility. The third part: For students' involvement and participation. The fourth part: the researcher focused on whether teachers are incorporating some UDL guidelines into their courses in today's diverse classrooms or not.

2.7. Difficulties encountered in this study

The limitations of this study include the topic, the informants, and the university. Concerning the topic, this work will be the first thesis done on UDL in Algeria, and many EFL teachers do not have any basic knowledge about it.

The informants or the teachers felt overwhelmed because of the topic first. Then, some of them were unwilling to answer the questionnaire because of the pressure of the pandemic

period and the limited time which they had. Lastly, the library of the university did not provide the researcher with any book, especially in the field of didactics. There are no beneficial books related to TEFL

Finally, these limitations did not prevent the current work to achieve its main objectives and figure out its problems.

2.8. Conclusion

The chapter was concerned with the description of the research instruments, the sample and the setting of the study. The data collection tools used for testing the research hypotheses have been also introduced in this chapter as it negotiated the design of the proposed work which portrayed the process followed by the investigator when planning the research tools for the purpose of gathering data from the participants.

3.1. Introduction

As mentioned previously, the preceding chapter reviewed the research methodology and design. This chapter will tackle the practical part of the study. It will present the analyses of the data gathered from the three research tools which are used in this research. It will draw the final picture of this work. It will lay the analysis of the results of each instrument and their interpretations in the first part, whereas the second part is spared for the recommendations and the suggested solutions for this research.

3.2. Findings

The interpretation of the results collected from the teachers' questionnaire was carried out quantitatively. However, the interview and classroom observation were qualitatively analysed.

3.2.1. Teachers' questionnaire

This section is devoted to the analyses of the teachers' questionnaire. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter (see page 25), the teachers' questionnaire was administered to EFL teachers at Saida University to elicit data about the teachers' perspectives towards EFL mixed-ability classrooms and the difficulties encountered in the classroom.

3.2.1.1. Teachers profiles and work experiences

Question one: how long have you been teaching English?

This question aims to see whether teachers are a novice or experienced.

Table 3.2 : *teachers' experience in teaching*

Years	Lessthan two years	From 2 to 10 years	From 10 to 15 years	More than 15 years
Teachers' number (N)	02	08	26	04
Percentage (%)	05	20	65	10

According to the results displayed in the previous table, it is shown that the quasi totality number of teachers (95 %) teach English for more than two years. Two teachers only (5%) have less than two years of experience.

Question two: What level do you teach?

- a. University
- b. Secondary school
- c. Middle school

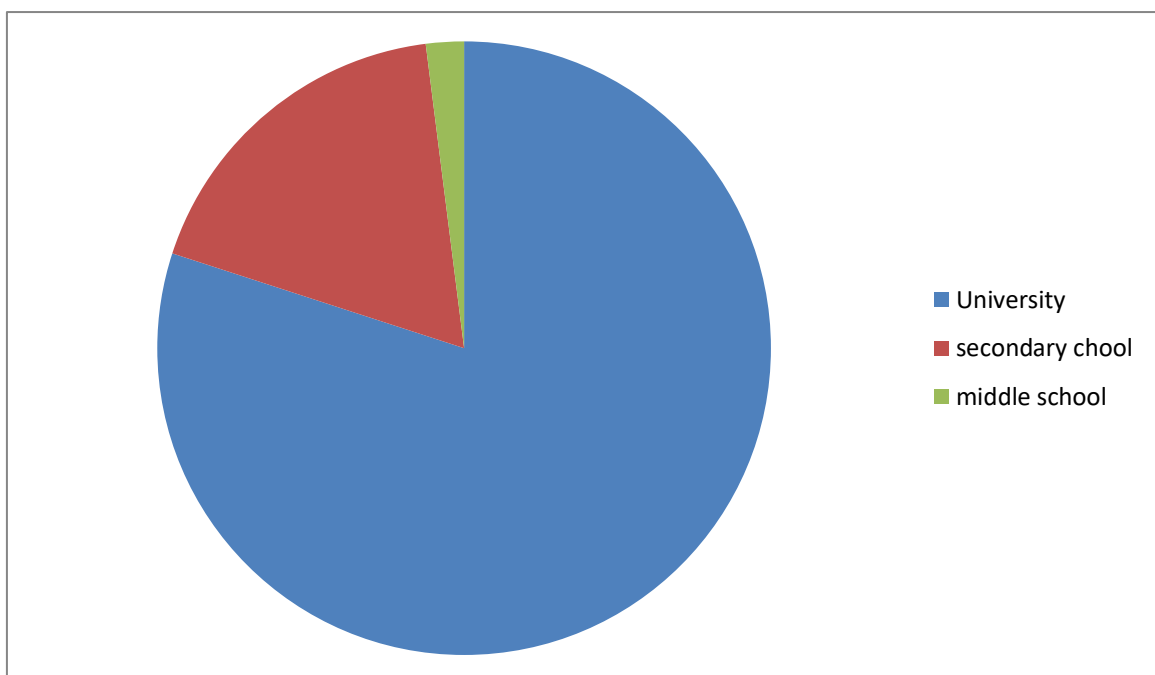


Figure 3.3 Levels

The figure above demonstrated that 80 % of the informants are university teachers and 18 % are secondary school teachers, whereas 02 % only of the participants teach at middle school

3.2.1.2. Teachers Perspectives towards Students' Different Learning Abilities

Question one: 1/Today's EFL classrooms are so diverse and dynamic. Different students with various needs, interests, and abilities come to learn. Thus, does students' diversity affect the teaching and learning process?

- a. Yes

b.No

This question aims to investigate if teachers are aware of the effect of students' diversity on the teaching and learning process or not.

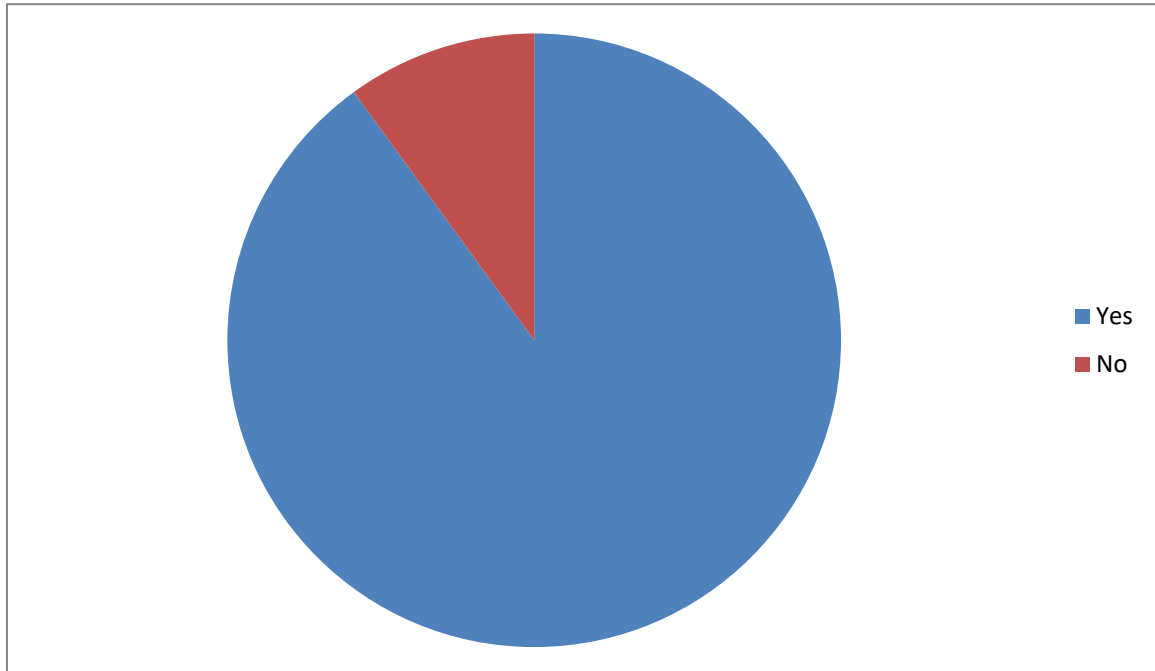


Figure 3.4. Teachers' responses about the students' diversity impacts on teaching and learning

The results of the above figure indicate that 90 % of the teachers agree that students' diversity affects the teaching and learning process. However, 10 % believe that diversity does not affect the learning process.

Question two: If yes, does one size fits all approach serve different student abilities? Justify

The purpose of this question is to test one size fits all efficacy and teachers' perspective toward the approach.

Table 3.3: teachers' beliefs towards one size fit all approach

The options	Teachers 'number (N)	Percentage(%)
Yes	38	95
No	02	05

The table above shows that 38 teachers (95 %) agree that the one size fits all approach to curriculum does not fit all the Algerian students' needs, and they considered this approach ineffective when it comes to teaching at mixed-ability classrooms. Their arguments were summarized follow:

- The different abilities of students oblige teachers to vary and update the methods and approaches.
- It does not fit teachers who are obliged to be eclectic.
- No, because students have different psychological and cognitive profiles.
- Surely no, teachers diversify their teaching approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques to suit students' abilities.
- No, it does not simply because every learner has his or her learning style and preferences.
- No, thus learning styles are studied and observed.

Though, two teachers (05 %) still believe that it may serve the students' necessities if the students are from the same cultural backgrounds.

Question three: where do teachers encounter difficulties at mixed-ability classes?

- a. In designing the course
 - b. In delivering the course
 - C. In maintaining students ' motivation and engagement
 - d. All the above
- Others.....

This question has been asked to collect data vis a vis the obstacles faced by EFL mixed-ability classes

Table 3.4: *difficulties encountered in mixed ability classrooms.*

Problems encountered at EFL classrooms	The percentages (%)	Teachers' number
Maintaining student's motivation and engagement	20	08
Designing the course	62.5	25

In delivering the course	05	02
All of the above	12.5	05

The analysis of the table reveals that 25 teachers (62.5%) from 40 teachers encountered difficulties in designing a course to teach at mixed ability classrooms. While two educators(05%) only struggle when delivering the course. In addition, eight teachers(20%) say that maintaining students' motivation and engagement is the hardest mission in teaching English to different students with various learning abilities. Subsequently, five correspondents(12.5%) affirm that all of the overmentioned elements can be the main barriers for EFL teachers when teaching different abilities.

Question four: What do you suggest to overcome the previous obstacles?

- A. Assessing students' abilities before designing the course
- B. Varying materials
- C. Providing students more choices and allowing decision making
- D. All the above

In responses to the previous challenges faced by EFL teachers in teaching mixed-ability classes (see question and responses three), teachers were asked to provide solutions to facilitate teaching different students' levels. The results are shown in the following table:

Table 3.5. *Teachers' suggestion to foster teaching and learning at mixed ability*

Suggestions for teaching at mixed ability classrooms	Teachers percentages	Teachers' number
Varying materials	%50	20
Assessing students' abilities	%20	08

Providing students with more options and choices	%25	10
All of them	%05	02

The analysis of the table tells that the half number of teachers (50 %) suggest varying materials to improve EFL mixed ability class. Meanwhile, eight of the teachers (20 %) admit to assessing students' abilities. Ten of them (25 %) recognise that providing learners with options and choices is a solution to foster learning and decrease obstacles teaching different abilities. Although the rest of the educators propose to use all of the overmentioned techniques.

Question five: Are you more comfortable providing students with choices and options?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Sometimes

This question aims to test teachers' flexibility.

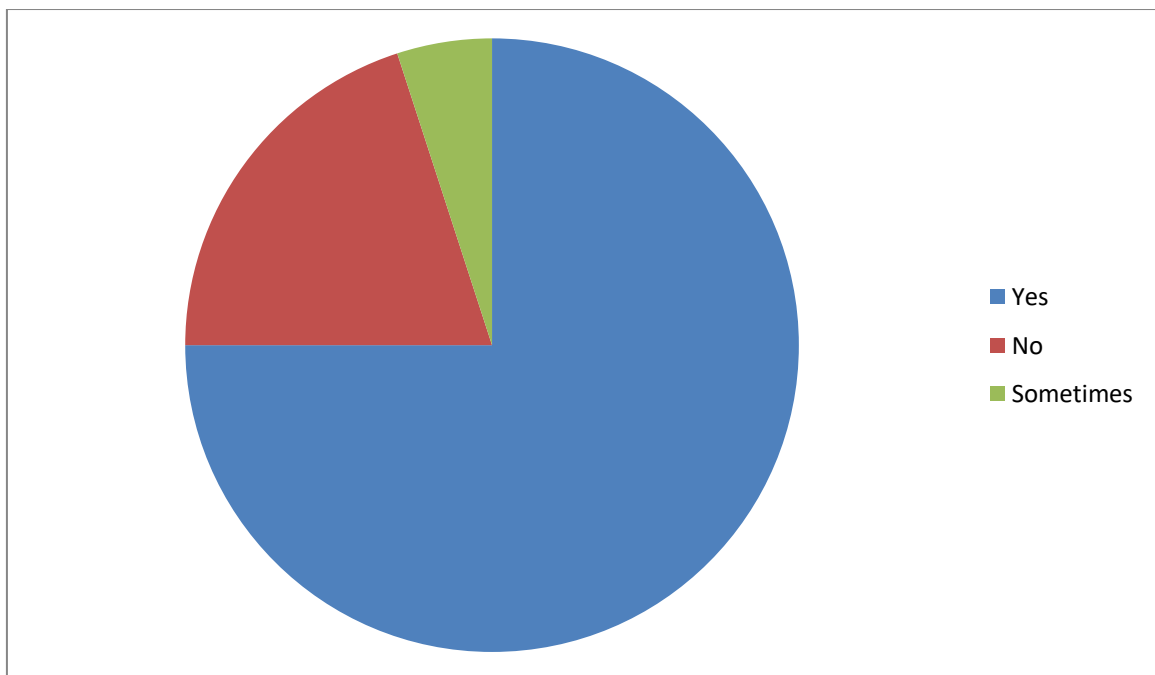


Figure 3.5: Teachers' perspectives towards the concept of providing students choices

Through the analysis of the above figure, it is recognised that the quasi totality number (75%) of teachers prefer providing students with choices and options, but still, twenty (20 %) are not comfortable with this technique. The remaining educators (5%) said that sometimes they offer students options.

Question six: Do you usually try to make all your learners feel included, seen, heard, and valued?

The purpose of this question is to explore teachers' responsibility toward involving and engaging students based on the concept of "no child left behind".

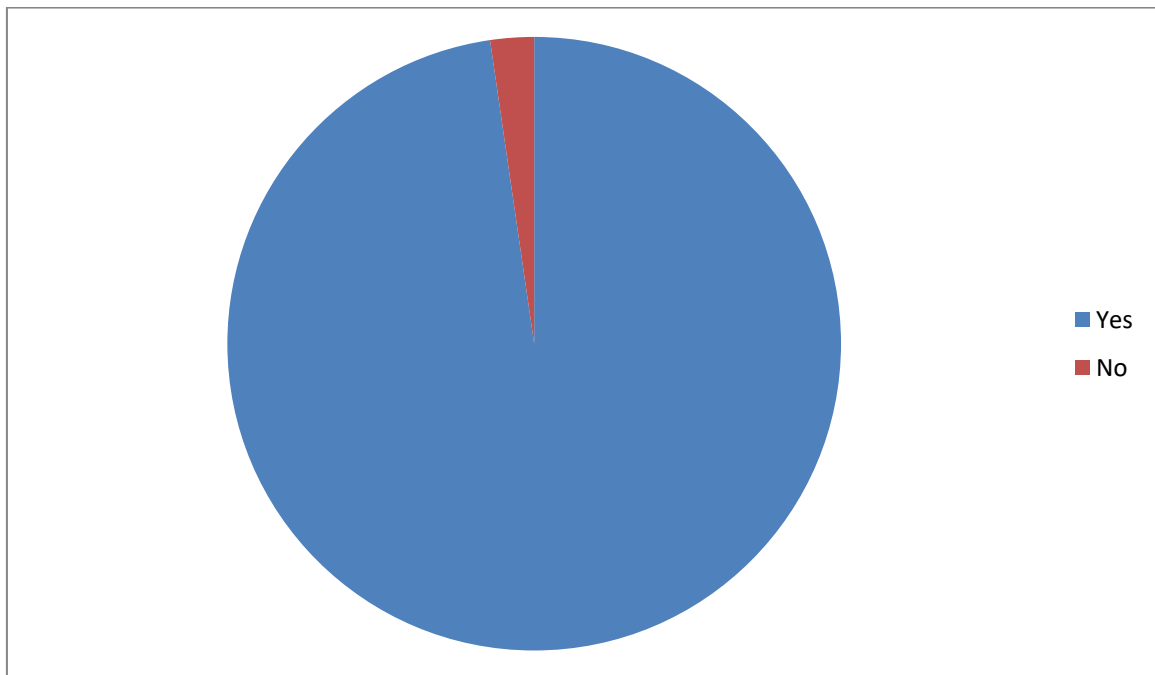


Figure 3.6. Teachers' responses

Figure four shows that it is exhibited that 38 teachers (97.7%) always consider every individual learner in the class. Therefore, only two informants do not always try to involve all the students.

Question seven: How would you assess students' ability?

Teachers are asked this question to elicit data about how teachers manage to vary assessment tools for different students with diverse abilities.

Table 3.6. *Teachers' techniques to assess their students*

The number of teachers	The techniques suggested by teachers to assess students abilities
17	Through testing and providing quizzes (formative and summative assessment)
10	Through providing multiple choices to enable students to express themselves (varying classroom materials and assessment writing speaking, etc)
06	Through observation discussion and questioning
03	Creating students portfolio

Based on the results of the previous table, 17 teachers propose to assess students' abilities through formative and summative assessment. Whereas, ten of the 40 teachers advise providing students' choices through varying materials and assessment. Controversy, six teachers demand to use observation technique and classroom interaction and the rest urge to create students' portfolio.

3.2.1.3. *The implementation of UDL*

Question one: what do you think about the implementation of UDL in today's classrooms?

a. It is vital for both students and teachers

b. It cannot be implemented

c. others.....

This question was asked to elicit the teachers' opinions about the new approach.

Table 3.7. *Teachers' beliefs towards UDL*

Teachers' opinions	Teachers' percentages (%)	Teachersnumber
Teachers have no idea about the approach	60	24
It is vital for both students and teachers	10	04
It is not vital and it cannot be implimented	7.5	03
It will be implimented after training	22.5	09

The above-stated table reported that twenty-four (60%) did not answer the question because they have no basic knowledge about the approach. Meanwhile, four teachers (10%) said that it is vital and effective for learners. However, three teachers (7.5%) reported that UDL cannot be implemented. Additionally, nine teachers (22.5%) recommended training on UDL so that it will be effectively implemented.

Question two: In which educational circle, UDL is the required approach

- A. At University
- B. At secondary school
- C. At middle school

Table 3.8. *Levels where UDL is the required approach*

The educational level	Teachers' number
At all levels	29
At university	08
At secondary school	03

In the previous table, twenty-nine from forty teachers assumed that UDL is required in all the educational circles because students of all ages need variation and consideration. Furthermore, eight teachers asserted that UDL should be adopted at university since learners are adults and their levels of understanding are wider than learners of other circles. Thus, three tutors only believe that the UDL approach is needed at secondary schools where students are autonomous by that age.

Question three: What kinds of problems can teachers encounter in the implementation UDL approach?

- a. Crowded classes
- b. Limited time
- c. It is a very tiring approach
- d. Others

This question aims to sort out the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing the UDL approach.

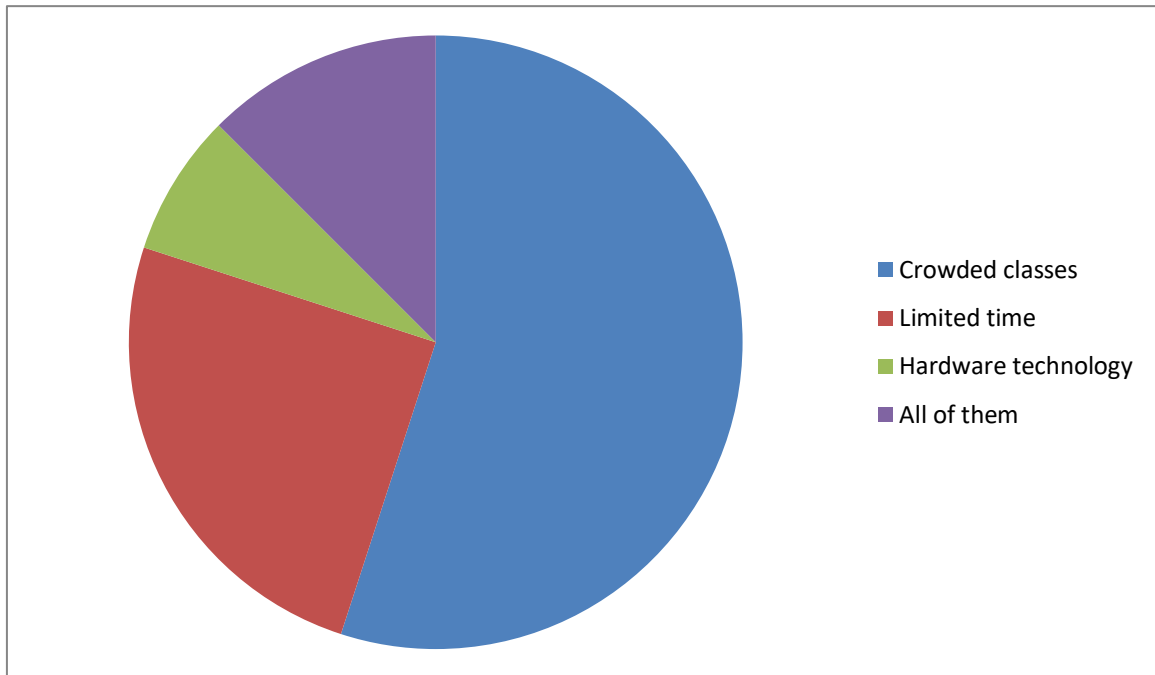


Figure 3.7. Barriers in implementing the UDL approach.

The results displayed in the figure revealed that most teachers (55%) agreed that UDL cannot be implemented in crowded classes. In addition, ten teachers (25%) answered that time is a major obstacle that prevents its implementation. Although, three teachers believe that hardware technology is also a barrier. The remaining teachers (12.5%) vote for all of the previous elements can be limitations for UDL.

Question four: Do you think that DI (Differentiated instruction) and UDL are the same? Justify

When teachers were asked to give a distinction between UDL and differentiated instruction, most of the teachers around thirty teachers (75%) declared that they have no idea about what both notions mean. Whereas, four teachers said that they may share common implications and both of them take into consideration the learners' needs. However, six teachers say no, they are two different concepts.

Question five: If you think UDL can be an effective approach, how can the concept of UDL change your teaching?

Teachers show positive feedbacks about UDL, their point of views are summarised as follow:

- This approach will ease stress

- It will widen the available possibilities
- Giving more concerns to students' abilities and needs
- It can optimise the teaching and the learning process, as it enables the instructor to accommodate the individual differences
- it will make teaching more effective
- It will shift from a teacher-centered environment to a student-centered environment
- A big yes, it would help learners to achieve goals
- Fortunately, the teacher attended two training courses about UDL teaching strategies and he has done his best to apply them in his class
- Teaching will be more effective because there will be no minorities or majorities in learning, everyone will be involved and motivation will be higher

Question six: What about the best lesson you taught, how did you know it was such a success?

Most teachers around 98 % of them admit that the best lesson is when students are involved, satisfied and motivated teachers.

These are some of the teachers' point of view about their best lesson:

- You had a lesson such a success when students themselves express it. when everybody participates, even the quiet one
- When students interact and they gave examples from their real life
- All smiles around completed lesson and students asking critical questions
- I knew it from the classroom discussion and the way they changed their views about my module
- When students create mindmaps and their feedback was significantly positive
- It was in grammar when I noticed my students applying the tenses they have learned in their daily conversations with their mates.

3.2.2. *Teachers' interview*

Question one: According to you, what are the major obstacles witnessed in teaching English as a foreign language in the Algerian diverse classrooms?

Teacher (A) said: "EFL teachers in classrooms faced many obstacles that may make teaching hard for them to provide the right information. They do not have problems when delivering the course, but they have problems with the learners themselves. Learners do not know what they are learning and for what they use the acquired information. In addition, teachers need to present their classes in a way that does not harm learners, their ethnic groups...away from heterosexism, regionalism...".

Teacher (B) claimed that: "teaching English in Algeria needs a lot of research, because it is not the first language, it is a foreign language. The syllabi need a lot of work. In addition to that, there is a lack of materials, for instance, language laboratories, classes need to be provided with advanced materials such as ICT and the use of the software. Then, there are also obstacles at the level of the syllabus which are not designed to meet the learners' needs. Teachers are not trained, for example, you can find a teacher who is specialized in civilization he/she is teaching phonetics".

Teacher (c) affirmed that: "teaching English is completely different from teaching the mother tongue, they may share the same techniques and strategies, but the content and the processes are quite different. Additionally, materials are not available at all, for example, in Sahara, there is no data show or extra materials, they always rely on the textbooks only. These some obstacles which may prevent teaching foreign languages to be developed in Algeria".

Teacher (D) asserted: "even though Algeria is considered the largest country in Africa, it does not face cultural shocks, there is a slight difference, but it does not affect as largely as the language they speak daily. The obstacles exist when it comes to EFL students, they vary psychologically, economically, culturally, etc. The second obstacle goes beyond the teaching methods which are adopted as they are, they are not updated, and sometimes they do not fit our culture. For example, if we take the competence-based approach (CBA), it was applied in the US for the reason that they want to generate the maximum of workers. However in Algeria, it will be a loss because Algeria's culture

differs from the US culture, what we need is to design our specific course design which fits with the Algerian context "

Question two: Do you think that one size fits all approaches to the curriculum can fit all the Algerian students' needs?

Concerning the second question, teacher (A) said that: "it can fit, but as teachers, we are not the decision-makers, we need to design an approach that maybe based on this one and it fits with the Algerian context ". However, teacher (B) proposed that: " teachers should be eclectic in terms of students' needs and the skills being taught. The use of the approach to teaching has to do with the type of module taught to be. For instance, an approach that is useful in teaching grammar cannot be useful when teaching oral expression ". Simultaneously, teacher (c) claimed that: "No, if you come back to Hutchinson and Waters in ESP, learning a language is based on learners' needs, wants and lacks. To go further in this question, the demands of students of economics are not the same as the needs of students who study social sciences or biology. The teacher has to tailor the learning process according to the students' wants and needs. Regarding the approach, you can adopt one approach like the CLT, but when you present the course it should be presented according to the learners' needs". While, teacher (D) argued that: "we cannot say something which is as clear cut as this one can fit, and this one does not fit. We need first to know the learners' needs, then we adapt the teaching methods based on these needs because here the learners are centered not the teachers. The approach which fits our learners' diverse needs is the best one".

Question three: what kind of approaches may teachers opt for to teach at EFL mixed-ability classrooms?

The teachers are asked to suggest approaches that can help them teaching English to students with different learning abilities. Teacher (A) mentioned that: "I think each module has its specific approach or each module requires an approach which needs to be developed based on the learners' needs" Concurrently, teacher (B) insisted that: "it depends on the module being taught, there are some teaching approaches which have been recently introduced, we should cope with the invention and avoid being stuck to the traditional methods. For example, I used a storytelling approach when I was teaching phonetics to improve my learners' pronunciation ...".

On the otherhand teacher (C) affirmed that:"whenthe teacher has amixtureof class composition (learners with different abilitiesand learners with disabilities), it is an endeavor task. A teacher needs energy and strategies because teaching a smarter student is not the same as teaching a slower student ... The teacher here needs to give much importance to those with disabilities or to those who are slow learners i,e to simplify the content of the course". Nevertheless, teacher (D) suggested that: "for me, I guess the most appropriate approach for the Algerian students and context is the CLT because the goal is to communicate and practise the language ".

Question four: In thinking about your teaching plans, could you please identify how often you use the following:

- a.Using lectures as your primary teaching technique
- b.Encouraging students to work in groups
- c.Designing class activities that match students' interests
- d.Allowing students to choose activities that match their interests
- e.Offering online assignments

- ✓ Concerning the statement (a),teachers (A) and (B) agreed on using lectures as the primary teaching technique, while the teacher (C) and (D) said that it depends on the lesson being taught and the aim.
- ✓ Concerning the statement (b),teacher (A) and (B) assumed that they do not prefer to give group work or a peer work and it depends on the subject if it is the oral expression, a group work plan is needed, whereas teacher (C) and (D) advised to use group work when giving an assignment needs interaction and a team spirit as they claimed that encouraging group work is one of CLT tenets,but it can be an impossible mission if the classes are so large.
- ✓ As far as the third statement is concerned,all four teachers have agreed on designing classroom activities that match the students' interests.
- ✓ Concerningthe fourth statement,the four teachers declared that they started to provide online assignments during the pandemic period.

Question five: Do you have any other method to engage students except the previous methods?

The teachers (A) and (B) said that they usually use quizzes and debates to engage students, and it depends on each module, and each teacher has his/her method we cannot say this method is good and the other is bad. Meanwhile, teacher (C) confirmed that: "each method has its drawbacks and advantages, teachers should be eclectics... There is what is called the artistic style of the teacher which is to know how to simplify, innovate and stimulate... etc ". Whereas, teacher (D) said that he does not have another method except the overmentioned.

Question six: Do you present information in a variety of ways?

Indeed, the four informants acknowledge that they usually present information in a variety of ways. In a way that addresses the weak student and the smart one.

Question seven: to what extent do you support the concept of providing students with summaries at the end of each session?

All four teachers declared that they do not prefer to provide summaries, but they recall and recapitulate the lesson orally. In addition to encouraging students to take notes as a technique to enhance their writing skills. Moreover, teacher (D) added that in each session he reminds the students about the previous conceptions so that they can make connections and build their knowledge.

Question eight: Did you have students with disabilities? How did you manage to explain the lesson to them?

The teachers use different acts and methods. First of all, they dedicate much time to them since they are slow learners. Then, they try to simplify the information using various techniques such as datashow, flashcards, record, etc., in addition to inviting learners who have vision problems to sit closer to the blackboard. Eventually, they admit that dealing with learners with disabilities is still a hard task for EFL teachers.

Question Nine: Do you have any previous knowledge about UDL?

Two teachers affirmed that they do not have basic knowledge about UDL. One teacher said that he knew about the approach, but he still needed further information to

understand it well. Whilst only one teacher said that he habitually incorporates UDL principles into his course design.

Question ten: what do you think about the integration of technology to teach EFL mixed-ability classes?

The four correspondents hold a positive attitude toward the integration of technology in today's learning. They confess that technology is very important in the learning environment, particularly in special education. Moreover, teachers advise using computers, datashow, flashcards, etc. Mostly, when teaching the new generations who enjoy learning through software technology. As they wish to see our schools and universities occupied with digital machines and language laboratories.

Question eleven: what are your recommendations to teach EFL mixed-ability classes in specific and UDL approach in general?

The most significant recommendations provided by teachers were summarised in the following points:

- The approach is very important.
- In mixed-ability classes, we need to consider each individual, and this is what is called equity.
- We need to increase discussion and treat every individual as he/she is a genius as we should not underestimate any learner.
- UDL is a relevant approach for foreign language teaching.
- It is a new interesting approach which teachers need to be trained on to improve their teaching.

3.2.3. Classroom observation

The classroom observation was meant to obtain a complete and careful evaluation of teaching and learning at mixed-ability classes. Even though the questionnaire is effective and practical, it may not provide all the data concerned with a given phenomenon. In the first instance, the observation gave the researcher tangible results, and it helped to fill the void. For the most part, it acted as a reliability test for data collected using the questionnaire. In other words, what is observed can confirm or deny the answers provided

in the teachers' interview and questionnaire. Finally, the researcher has relied on a checklist to facilitate the observation process as it is shown in the following tables:

Table 3.9. *The classroom management results*

	Never observed	Sometimesobserved	Oft enobserved
Time management			✓
Group work		✓	
U s h a p e	✓		
Anxiousatmosphere	✓		
C o m f o r t a b l e A t m o s p h e r e			✓
S m a l l c l a s s e s			✓

Table 3.10: *materials and tools results*

	Never observed	Sometimesobserved	Oft enobserved
U s i n g I C T		✓	
Providinghandouts		✓	✓
Usingvisualaids		✓	✓
Providing out class A c t i v i t i e s			✓

Allow students To select activities		✓	
The teacher who select activities			✓
Content accessibility			✓

Table 3.11. *Students' involvement results*

	Never observed	Sometimes observed	Often observed
Students' Motivation		✓	
Students' Participation			✓
Students ask Questions			✓
Students interact with the teacher			✓
Learning styles			✓

Table 3.12: *the incorporation of UDL principle results*

	Never observed	Sometimes observed	Often observed
Presenting lesson goals		✓	
Regular feedback			✓

Options		✓	
Digital materials		✓	

As was mentioned in the second chapter (see page 28), the observer divided the observation process into sections or parts. The first part: observing the classroom environment in general such as the setting, the classroom size, and atmosphere which may help in delivering a universal lesson that fits the needs of a wide range of students (see table 3.8). The second part: checking the materials, assessment tools, and content accessibility (see table 3.9). The third part: For students' involvement and participation (see table 3.10). And the fourth part: the researcher focused on whether teachers are incorporating some UDL guidelines into their courses in today's diverse classrooms or not (see table 3.11).

The first table showed that most teachers succeed in managing their time and the learning environment because the classroom size helped in creating a welcoming atmosphere where each student gets the attention he/she needs from the teacher. In another word, the teacher could easily observe, teach and assess all students with no learner left behind. Hence, learning will be faster and students will achieve high grades.

On one hand, teachers were encouraging students to work in pairs and groups to increase social support and help students to develop their voice about peers. In addition to enhancing solidarity spirit to solve the complex tasks. On the other hand, some weaknesses can be spotted such as the strategies and the techniques used in delivering the information, teachers need to present the lesson in a variety of ways so that each student gets an opportunity to understand well the content. Likewise, much time should be devoted to the slow learners to enable them to participate in the learning process like the other students.

Above all, teachers succeed in helping students to construct their knowledge; during the attended sessions, the teachers started their lectures by activating the prior conceptions and relating the previous lesson with the current one.

On top of that, the students were the leader of their learning, especially in oral expression sessions because teachers were acting as guides and monitors. For instance, one of the teachers was helping students to grasp the meaning of some words by giving them hints, then encouraging them to think and reflect before answering.

In the same way, it is worth noting that another teacher was explaining thoughts in a very interesting and chronological way which pushed students to predict the next events. As they were very active and involved. This point proved that the course content was accessible and interesting. Another point worth considering is that during the most observed sessions, the data show was present. On the other hand, the remaining teachers preferred to provide handouts and in-class activities. Also, the teachers were continuously giving remarks, instructions, and feedback to students; attracting their attention to the most common errors.

The observer noticed that the learners were highly motivated specifically when the teacher was moving around the tables with the board pen, inviting them to solve the tasks, and at the end of the session, students were asking critical questions. But still, it is worth reminding that teachers should do more efforts to get all students involved.

Accordingly, the results of table 3.10 revealed that learners have different characteristics, they act differently in the way they learn, understand, reflect, answer and use their various abilities and skills to show their interests and learning styles. This fact confirmed that classes are made up of mixture abilities which can be an obstacle for educators to deal with, accommodate, and address all of them.

3.3. Discussion and interpretation

As mentioned earlier, the study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of UDL implementation in improving learning at mixed-ability classrooms, particularly at first-year EFL classrooms at Saida University. In addition to raising teachers' awareness about the students' needs, characteristics, and learning styles...

After analyzing the results obtained from the three research tools, the researcher gets the final and convincing responses to the suggested research questions, mainly the first one: Does the implementation of UDL in EFL mixed-ability classrooms provide flexible and effective learning? The second: To what extent, can teachers use UDL for the sake of

improving first-year learners' abilities? And the third: What kind of approaches that teachers opt for to teach students with different learning abilities?

Starting with the questionnaire which tried to answer the first research question that the study is built on, the researcher aimed to determine if the implementation of UDL can succeed in improving mixed-ability classes through offering a variety of strategies to teach effectively and multiple opportunities to learn fruitfully.

Indeed, the teachers' questionnaire was of paramount role in helping the examiner to collect valuable data about teaching at mixed ability and teachers' perspectives towards students' diversity. However, it failed in collecting data about the approach because most of the informants do not have enough knowledge about the approach (see table 3.6).

The results of the questionnaire confirmed that a quasi totality number of tutors (90%) are aware of learners' diversity's impacts on the learning and teaching process (see figure 3.2). This is because most of the informants (75 %) have experienced of more than 10 years in teaching; during this long journey, they taught many class compositions. Another reason was 80 % of teachers were teachers at university where each year hundreds of students succeed, each learner is unique and unparalleled in terms of learning needs, abilities, and interests.

Besides, most of the teachers are not familiar with the term UDL, but all of them are aware of the importance of student's differences to achieve the teaching aim and satisfy the learning needs (see section two, figure 3.2), because one of the key steps to succeed in teaching mixed-ability classes is to know learners, their weaknesses, and strengths (Poulter, 2020)

Furthermore, the almost totality number of teachers agree that traditional approaches such as one size fit all; are flawed and they cannot satisfy the needs of the new diverse generations (see section two, table three), as Rose and Strangman (2007) assumed that the "one-size-fits-all" curriculum approach is no longer effective since it ignores the diversity of students' interests, strengths, and weaknesses

Identically, teachers exhibited a positive mindset away from the traditional rigid approaches which are unable to cater to individual preferences because teachers acknowledge that their profession is about enlightening the minds and not filling the minds. As well as, teaching English required some methods which can turn teaching into

an engaging and inspiring practice as Novac and Rose (2016) acknowledged that teachers are required to do their best to adopt flexible methods to help their diverse students.

Ultimately, the findings of the teachers' questionnaire announced that the UDL approach can be effective since it cares about learners' preferences. As they confirmed the second hypothesis which is about the implementation of UDL in mixed ability classes enhances students' academic achievement.

Moving to the second research tool that the researcher opted for to ask teachers implicitly about the approach and gain more data about the ELT situation in Algeria. The teachers' interview helped the investigator to interpret the roots of the central insights leading this research.

According to the emerging results, all four teachers appear to hold a positive attitude toward the adoption of the new instructional frameworks (see answers of questions 11 and 03), because the Algerian EFL classes in general and mixed-ability classes in particular need to be improved as they need to be shifted from teacher centeredness to student-centeredness. In addition, the lessons should be designed according to the student's learning styles, not the teaching styles to reach all students.

The interview succeeded in helping the interviewees in setting their motives toward the UDL approach (see the answers to question 11). Their motives were apparent when all the informants wished to be trained on UDL. The analysis of the results also revealed that they unconsciously incorporate some UDL principles into their course design such as inviting students to work in groups or pairs, providing online assignments, especially during the pandemic period Covid19 because UDL increases learning when face to face instruction is absent (Dickinson & Gronseth, 2020).

Accordingly, teachers alluded to the UDL approach as an advantageous framework for course design because it allows them to meet their students' needs through offering multiple opportunities for all learners to be successful; basically, engaging and involving a wide range of learners whatever their abilities and learning styles are. It is of great value to find that teachers' perspectives towards describing teaching at mixed-ability classes and the UDL approach were summarized into two positive adjectives: exciting and enjoyable. To this end, the results of the teachers' interview announced that the second research hypothesis "perhaps, teachers benefit from UDL principles and strategies to help their

learners meet their needs through accommodating the learning styles " is accurate and verifiable.

On the whole, the classroom observation provided a solid amount of data; it acted as a test of the results gathered from the teachers' interviews and questionnaires. First of all, during the attended sessions the topic was easy and the content was accessible, teachers were using different materials to present and explain the course (such as using scripts, videos, and ICT). Apart from this, sometimes students were not highly involved since they were still first-year and their first academic experience in university; they were not familiar with teachers and the system there. Despite the hardship encountered by learners, they seem to be curious about learning. In brief, the findings of the classroom observation answered the third research question by providing other useful approaches and methods that can improve mixed-ability classes such as student-centered approach which mainly incorporates the implementation of some UDL principles as Taylor (2016) declared that cooperative learning strategies and student-centered approach allow for the three components of UDL namely: representation, engagement, and expression. It is a sheer truism that the three research instruments served the purpose of triangulation, and they confirmed the suggested hypotheses.

3.4. The Suggested Solutions, Recommendations, and Pedagogical Remedies

In the light of the past and present conditions of teaching and learning at the Algerian EFL mixed-ability classrooms and the difficulties encountered by both students and teachers, the researcher tried to provide some practical recommendations for teachers and policymakers.

For Teachers

Encouraging group work and cooperative learning strategies

Teachers should encourage students to create a helpful atmosphere in the classes, particularly in mixed-ability classes where the weaker student can learn from the intelligent one. Teachers can put their students in groups of three or four students per group, this will improve students' abilities but only if the classes are small.

Increasing discussion and classroom interaction at mixed-ability classes

Today's learners are so different in the way they learn, think, and understand; bringing them together, on one hand, can be very challenging for teachers. Hence, classroom discussion and interaction is one of the steps to deal with mixed-ability classes and understand each student's level. Indeed, classroom discussion is also one of the most crucial elements of good and effective classroom management because managing a situation is often defined as a way to handle interaction in a variety of circumstances in terms of guiding, overseeing, and inspiring. Still, the teacher, as a classroom manager, is there to create a balance where everyone can feel safe, heard, and valued because the core of teaching and learning is to carry oneself within an environment like respecting oneself and respecting others, listening to others to be listened to, debating issues and solving them intelligently. Consequently, through discussion, teachers can understand different students' styles, interests, and needs. The interaction will open the door to teachers to be reflective so that they can decide about what to teach, how to teach, in what way to teach, and through which way students provide their feedbacks.

Adopting then adapting the new approaches, methods, and techniques

Teachers can feel comfortable when teaching, in the same way, every year. However, students can feel unwelcome and unsatisfied. Most students like to be challenged. To this end, teachers should adopt teaching approaches and strategies to challenge students and accommodate their learning styles.

Match the learning styles with the teaching styles

There have been many empirical studies that call for a match between teachers' styles and learners' styles to motivate students' process of learning because teaching and learning are overlapped processes.

Using technology in teaching and supporting the E-learning

Teaching today's generation can be one of the toughest issues that teachers are struggling with within the classroom. Indeed, this generation was brought up in a digital world; our digital kids have been bombarded by a variety of colored screens of all sizes and shapes enriched with options, high features, and motions of all kinds of sounds. These screens can be phones, ipads, and laptops, etc. They can be found in homes, almost in

every room, in the stores, and anywhere. Additionally, most of the digital learners are not only exposed to this technology, but they are also actively involved in using it at all levels. They tend to be more visual and verbal; they are impressed by colors and motions. Consequently, our classrooms will be like black and white colors, and our learners will not be impressed by the traditional ways of teaching (like proving handouts). Instead, they will be dead bored.

Creating students' portfolio at the beginning of each academic year

The call for teachers to be eclectic

Consider every individual in the class (equity)

For Policymakers

Offer teachers' training on UDL

Training teachers for using the UDL approach through preparing training sessions and conferences about the effectiveness of the approach and how to incorporate its guidelines; then addressing educators to prepare one UDL lecture per week as a first step to encourage them to use UDL. The training sessions or the conferences are recommended to:

1. Train teachers on the concept of UDL through identifying what is meant by UDL, its guidelines, its efficacy, and its importance in teaching EFL mixed-ability classes. In addition, to peruse them about some limitations such as the lack of technology, time and efforts.
2. Support teachers to exchange thoughts and experiences about UDL.
3. Train teachers to set objectives for each UDL lesson.

Review the curriculum and do not burden teachers

Teachers are always worried about how to prepare lessons, deliver them and carry the syllabus; they are always working under pressure. However, the policy makers may help them with an annual review of the curriculum to focus on the quality, not the quantity. This will significantly create a helpful and supportive environment to implement UDL successfully because teachers generally feel helpless and powerless, particularly where there is no support from the school administrations.

- Manage and set small classes (making of 20 students in each group)
- Language laboratories

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter attempts to present, analyze, and discuss the obtained data from the three different data collection tools. Relevant results were achieved in this chapter. First of all, it has been witnessed that teaching mixed-ability classes is a daunting job that requires huge efforts from teachers and support from the higher administration. Moreover, there are many flexible approaches to teach in these heterogeneous classes. On the whole, the implementation of UDL through cooperative learning and students' centeredness can make the teaching and learning process more effective and fruitful.

General conclusion

Diversity in EFL classrooms is an important subject that earns the concerns of so many researchers, especially students' level diversity in which learners possess various abilities and intelligence that make them react differently from each other. Indeed, teachers found themselves facing some severe problems when trying to address, accommodate and improve their students' levels. The current research focused on highlighting the challenges encountered by EFL educators in mixed-ability classes in addition to addressing them to adopt some flexible frameworks to minimize barriers and maximize learning; basically, this research attempted to pursue and help EFL mixed-ability teachers since they are the essential part of these classes.

The three research questions were guided by three research tools (questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation). First of all, the results gathered from the questionnaire show that teaching mixed-ability classes requires time, effort, and daily work as it seems an impossible mission for some novice teachers and experienced teachers as well. The findings of the interview showed that instructors are aware of the learners' diversity as they always work on these characteristics to enhance the learning chances for all learners. Then, the findings of the interview revealed that educators unconsciously incorporate some UDL tenets in their course design as well as they hold positive attitudes towards the adoption of new pedagogical frameworks. In addition, the classroom observation confirmed the data obtained by the interview and the questionnaire as it showed that diversity is not always a barrier since it may increase students' outcomes if teachers succeed in managing the classroom.

The selected three research instruments were very helpful and effective in gathering reliable results despite the non-cooperation of some informants. The results obtained from this study confirmed all the hypotheses.

After discussing and analyzing data, the researcher recommended the collaboration of teachers and policymakers as a first step to deal with the heterogeneous classroom. Also, this work emphasized supporting teachers to show their creativity, passion, and aesthetic sense toward teaching. Moreover, the researcher called for building teacher-teacher relationships because teachers should have common goals, they need to cooperate and innovate together to solve their teaching and learning problems.

Surely, this endeavor like any other work has come across some limitations, namely: the teachers' non-cooperation and the lack of sources, but, fortunately, these difficulties did not prevent the researcher from achieving the main objective of the study.

The current study is the starting point of a further research project in terms of appreciating the different cultural and social backgrounds of students in Algeria, such a diverse and vast country. In this regard, the following topics could be proposed as a kind of continuation to the current study for further research: "The implementation of UDL through cooperative learning strategies and student-centeredness"; "The importance of UDL inaccomodating the Algerian students' cultural differences" and the importance of UDL implementation in decreasing online learning barriers.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teachers' questionnaire

Dear teachers,

You are kindly requested to fill the present questionnaire which serves as a data-gathering tool. It aims to collect information needed in our research entitled: "The Implementation of UDL in Improving First-Year EFL Learners' Abilities at Saidauniversity. We would be pleased to help us get the appropriate answers to our suggested questions. This questionnaire will take less than 5 minutes and Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and the given information will be used for academic purposes. Your contribution is highly appreciated and valuable for our research.

Thank you.....

Ps: UDL (Universal learning design) definition: is an American approach to teaching and learning. It aims to provide learners with and without disabilities equal opportunities to learn taking into consideration the diverse individual learning styles, interests, and needs...

DI (differentiated instructions) definition is a method of instruction design to meet the needs of all students by changing what students and how they demonstrate knowledge...

Section One: Teachers' Profile and work experience:

1/ how long have you been teaching English?

- A. less than 2 years
- B. more than 2 years

2/ Where are you teaching?

A-At University

B-At middle school

C-At secondary school

Section two: Teachers' perspective towards Students' different abilities

1. Today's EFL classrooms are so diverse and dynamic. Different students with various needs, interests, and abilities come to learn. So does students' diversity affect the teaching

and learning process?

Yes..... No.....

2. If yes, does one size fits all approach serve different students' abilities?

Yes..... No.....

Justify.....

3. What kind of difficulties that teachers encounter in mixed ability classrooms?

A- In designing the course

B - In delivering the course.

C- In maintaining student engagement and motivation...

D- Others

(You can select more than one option)

4/ what do you suggest overcoming the previous problems?

A- Assessing students abilities before designing the course

B -Varying materials

C- Providing students with choices

D-others

(You can select more than one option)

5/ Are you more comfortable providing students with choices and options?

Yes..... No.....

6/Do you usually try to make your learners feel included, seen heard, and valued?

Yes..... No.....

7/ how would you assess students' ability?

.....

Section three: The implementation of UDL

1/ what do you think about the implementation of UDL in today's classrooms?

A- It is vital for both teachers and students

B-It cannot be implemented at all

C-others

(Select one option)

2/In which educational circle, UDL is the needed approach?

- A-At universities
- B-At middle schools
- C-At secondary schools

Justify your answer.....

3/what kinds of problems can teachers encounter in implementing UDL approach?

- A-crowded classes
- B-limited time
- C-It is a very tiring approach

(You can select more than one option)

4/If you think that UDL is an effective approach so how can the concept of UDL change your teaching?

.....

5/ Do you think that DI (Differentiated instruction) and UDL are the same?

Yes..... No.....

Justify.....

6/ what about the best lesson you taught, how did you know it was such a success?

.....

Appendix 02

Teachers' interview

1. According to you what are the major obstacles witnessed in teaching English as a foreign language in the Algerian diverse classrooms?
2. Do you think that one size fits all approach to curriculum can fit all the Algerian students' needs?
3. What kind of approaches may teachers opt for to teach at EFL mixed-ability classrooms?
4. **In thinking about your teaching plans, could you please identify how often you use the following?**
 - a. Using lectures as your primary teaching technique

b.Encouraging students to work in groups

c.Designing class activities that match students' interests

d.Allowing students to choose activities that match their interests

e.Offering online assignments

5. Do you have any other method to engage students except the previous methods?

6. Do you present information in a variety of ways?

7. To what extent, do you support the concept of providing students with summaries at the end of each session?

8. Did you have students with disabilities how did you manage to explain the lesson to them?

9. Do you have any previous knowledge about UDL?

10. What do you think about the integration of technology to teach EFL mixed-ability classes?

11. What are your recommendations to teach EFL mixed ability classes in specific and UDL approach in general?

Appendix C

Classroom observation checklist

The classroom management:

\	Never observed	Sometimesobserved	Oftenobserved
Time management			
Group work			
U s h a p e			
Anxiousatmosphere			
C o m f o r t a b l e A t m o s p h e r e			
S m a l l c l a s s e s			

Materials and tools

\	Never observed	Sometimesobserved	Oftenobserved
U s i n g I C T			
Providinghandouts			
Usingvisualaids			
Providing out class			

A c t i v i t i e s			
Allow students To select activities			
A teacher whoselect activities			
Content accessibility			

Students' involvement

	Never observed	Sometimesobserved	Oftentimesobserved
Students' Motivation			
Students' Participation			
Studentsask Questions			
Students interact with the teacher			
Learning styles			

The incorporation of UDL principles

	Never observed	Sometimesobserved	Oftentimesobserved
Presentinglesson goals			
Regular feedback			
Options			
Digital materials			

Glossary

UDL(Universal Design for Learning):is an American approach rooted in the architect movement (UD) universal design. This movement stands on helping people with disabilities to access the building by designing spaces in a way that makes them accessible for a wide range of people. Fortunately, the idea was taken and applied in education by CAST (Centre of Applied Special Technology) in the 1970s.

DI (Differentiated Instruction): is a method that tailors instruction to students' different learning needs. Its main core is to respond to students' interests, readiness, and profiles.