

# Title: what does personalised learning mean in practice

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



Assignment TMI Title: What does personalised learning mean in practice?

Analyse the learning needs of EAL pupils, and those of SEN pupils. Discuss how the needs you identify can be met most effectively in subject teaching. Within this context over the past ten years' the term 'personalised learning' gained political capital and could be considered as a defining feature of the UK's educational system. Miliband 2004) Personalised learning - theory and practice The Sussex report states personalised learning is 'characterised by high levels of participation of pupils and staff in the schools, learning to learn and pupil voice'. It is a continuous progress which facilitates a 'deeper learning'. (University of Sussex, 2007). Personalisation is concerned with people, hence what or who is a person, their purpose, how they develop, are motivated, gain skills, form abilities and relate to others.

Hence, personalised learning is not simply the acquisition of knowledge or skills but how to forge a person's capacity and capabilities to do so.

Consequently, concepts of personalised learning have reflected diverse contemporary theoretical discourses, including Piaget's conceptualisation of cognitive development based on biological maturity and environmental experience to behavioural psychologists focus on learning through conditioning, through to Skinner and Watson's reward and punishment.

Vygotsky explored how a person's individual social, economic and cultural influences can determine their 'actual' and 'potential' development levels within school based learning. Howard Gardner could be considered as a paradigm shifter (Smith 1994) as he questioned the concept of intelligence based on cognitive development, and sought to demonstrate that a child

may be at different stages of development at a single time, and that this is reflected in their ability to learn their maturity on different learning styles.

He therefore questioned the concept of scaffolding referring to seven multiple intelligences, two of which have been adopted within school environments, namely linguistic intelligence relating to the ability to learn and use of verbal and written language, and logical mathematical intelligence relating to analysis of issues, grasping of quantitative information and the sciences. I implemented this pedagogy with my top set 10 class while teaching controlled assessment vocabulary.

Recent UK Government policy has encouraged an educational approach that tailors support to individual needs so that 'every child matters'. The five core inter-related aims; be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being underpinned by practice guidance and regulatory performance systems signify the importance of social, economic and environmental factors on child development. Peter Senge said "many children struggle in schools because the way they are being taught is incompatible with the way they learn" (Capel, S. al, 2007) hence teaching and support can be improved by encouraging school based learning to be designed around a pupil's needs, hence Miliband's quote above. Assessment for learning directly relates to national teacher standard 6; 'make accurate and productive use of assessment'. Teaching uses both formative ongoing assessments and summative assessments, normally at the end of a module, scheme of work or a part of an academic year.

Summative assessments usually relate to formal examinations that inform

streaming and ranking, to inform accountability (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall and William, 2002).

Summative assessments are often isolated from normal teaching and learning, and are often areas of which teachers have little direct control in terms of personalising for learners, for example '6SCEs'. Key formative techniques include higher order questioning that targets towards their current level; personalised comment marking, identifying clear targets for improvement, self and peer assessments and analysing and using mark schemes and feedback from summative assessments to assist individual learning plans.

According to Williams (2009) the effectiveness of formative assessments can generate nearly three terms extra earning per year. However Ofsted reviews have identified teachers' difficulties in identifying clear learning objectives and outcomes by the use of attainment levels to inform structured lesson planning and assessment (Ofsted, 2007). For example in my second placement school I asked a mixed ability group of year 7's to assess sentence exemplars and explained the success criteria based on Bloom's taxonomy.

This showed what was expected to answer higher order questions and levelled answers. It was difficult at first however as soon as they got accustomed to my expectations a marked improvement was identified in their work. They were able to interpret the differences properly and with scaffolding the majority of them were able to vastly develop their answers.

(See appendix 1) When considering Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence, personalisation leans towards the understanding and application of different learning styles, namely audio-visual, and kinaesthetic.

However Cofield et al (2004) suggest that the effectiveness of this focus is varied, in terms of their reliability and as a motivator for learning. Placing the learner at the heart of the teaching process and in turn enabling them to take more responsibility for their learning can also be delivered through developing learning objectives reflective of individual and classroom needs. Bloom's taxonomy provides a classification of learning objectives under cognitive, affective and psychomotor providing a methodology for scaffolding actual and potential learning within the classroom.

Differentiation can ensure a classroom of mixed ability students are all stimulated and stretched, and this can be achieved regardless of ability when setting tasks, if executed as though one were climbing a ladder in order to reach the top, or objective of the lesson. (Petty, 2009). Within the MFL department we operate an 'ALL, MOST, SOME' to differentiate our tasks, (see appendix 2 ; 3) adding a challenge at the bottom for the most able or for native speaking students. This ensures that every single student can be accessed and also be stretched regardless of ability and rank order.

Alex Moore suggests that a good teacher needs to be strategic in applying models and theories to shape and develop 'pedagogic identity' (Moore, 2000). Using these ideas, together with Vygotsky's theory of constructivism helps practitioners develop and go on to plan lessons that are creative,

fun, focused, structured and interesting combined with delivering content to any ability, regardless of need (be that G&T, mixed ability or SEN) or those that encounter difficulty with focus, learning and progressing in a traditional classroom environment.

Some of the methods used in the classroom to take advantage of 'multiple intelligences' are video clips, imagery and displays for visual learners and group work such as role plays or quiz type games for interpersonal learners. For the intra-personal learners, enabling them to set personal goals and challenges for themselves, for the more verbally inclined students question and answers or qualitative assessment and finally problem solving and modelling for more kinaesthetic pupils.

Curriculum entitlement and choice relates to national teacher's standard 3. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action recommended at a national and school level that "schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions" (1994) As above mentioned, and experienced in both my school and in my placement schools, many Stage and 1 and 2 EAL students are withdrawn from MFL and other on - core subjects in order to focus on literacy and numeracy improvement.

Interestingly, MFL is one of few areas that many EAL students do not feel isolated as other students are also at a new stage of learning a different language also, and thus can excel in the subject. The National Curriculum (1999) outlines that "in order to overcome any barriers to learning in MEL";

specific requirements such as laptops, support and help should be provided in order to access the learning for EAL students needing support. Indeed, this subject specific inclusion information decrees that " all upils have a right to participate in the study of MEL" (Pachler, Barnes ; Field, 2009).