

Personalised Learning in Early Childhood Education: Nurturing Young Minds through Individualised Approaches

Ms. Sakshi Sibal



Source: <https://stock.adobe.com/in/search?k=teacher+clipart>

ABSTRACT

In the dynamic realm of early childhood education, personalised learning emerges as a transformative approach to cater to the unique needs and capabilities of every young learner. As a dedicated educator, I share my experiences and insights into implementing personalised learning strategies for children aged 4 to 7 years. From fostering a learner-centred approach to integrating technology and promoting collaborative projects, there are practical examples and classroom anecdotes that highlight the principles and strategies aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Through empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey, embracing diversity, and fostering inclusive environments, personalised learning becomes a catalyst for holistic development and lifelong learning. Let us explore the transformative power of personalised learning in early childhood education.

INTRODUCTION

As educators, we are entrusted with the vital task of nurturing young minds and laying the groundwork for their lifelong journey of learning. In this dynamic landscape of education, personalised learning stands out as a beacon of innovation and adaptability, offering a tailored approach to meet the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of each student. Rooted in the principles of student-centricity and adaptiveness, personalised learning reshapes the traditional educational paradigm, ushering in a new era of empowerment and engagement in the classroom.

In this article, we embark on a journey into the

world of personalised learning, exploring its foundational elements and practical applications through the lens of a dedicated teacher. From fostering a learner-centred approach to integrating technology and promoting collaborative projects, we delve into the theories aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and share firsthand experiences of empowering students through personalised learning.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Personalised learning for young learners is an educational approach that customises teaching & learning to meet the individual needs, interests, and abilities of each child, typically in

the age range of early childhood to primary school (approximately ages 3 to 12 years). This approach recognises that children have diverse learning styles, preferences, and developmental trajectories, and aims to create customised learning experiences to optimise their educational outcomes.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF PERSONALISED LEARNING: Elements of personalised learning

Learner-Centred Approach:

- **Individualisation:** Recognising that each student learns differently. For example, allowing some students to draw while listening to a story instead of just listening.
- **Autonomy:** Giving students choices in their learning tasks. For instance, letting them choose between writing a story or drawing one.

Flexible Learning Paths:

- **Adaptive Content:** Providing different books or materials based on students' reading levels. For instance, giving simpler books to developing readers and more challenging ones to advanced readers.
- **Varied Assessment Methods:** Instead of just giving written tests, also assess students through activities such as drawing, storytelling, or acting out a scene.

Data-Driven Decision-Making:

- **Continuous Assessment:** Regularly observing students and taking notes on their progress during class activities.
- **Analytics:** Keeping track of how students are doing in different subjects and adjusting teaching strategies accordingly.

Technology Integration:

- **Digital Tools:** Using educational quizzes or smart board activities for practicing math or spelling.
- **Learning Management Systems (LMS):** Using a simple online platform to share learning resources and track students' progress.

Teacher as Facilitator:

- **Guided Instruction:** Helping students when

they need it but also giving them space to explore on their own.

- **Mentorship:** Having one-on-one conversations with students to discuss their progress and goals.

Collaborative Learning:

- **Peer Interaction:** Pairing up the students to work on an activity or project together, such as building a model or solving a puzzle.

Personal Learning Plans:

- **Goal Setting:** Sitting down with each student to talk about what they want to learn and achieve.
- **Reflection:** Asking students to think about what they've learned and what they still want to learn.

Inclusive Education:

- **Cultural Relevance:** Choosing books and activities that reflect the diversity of the classroom.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Providing different ways for students to learn and show what they know, such as using pictures or words.

Continuous Professional Development:

- **Teacher Training:** Attending workshops or classes to learn new teaching techniques or about new educational tools.
- **Collaborative Learning Communities:** Meeting with other teachers to share ideas and learn from each other's experiences

THEORIES FOR ALIGNING WITH NEP 2020 FOR PERSONALISED LEARNING

In the realm of education, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has sparked a paradigm shift, emphasising personalised learning approaches to cater to the unique needs and interests of every child. For children aged 4 to 7 years, this period is crucial for laying the foundation of lifelong learning. As educators, understanding and applying relevant theories can enrich our teaching practices and create impactful learning experiences. We now delve into personalised learning theories aligned with NEP 2020 and provide practical examples for teachers working with young children.

1. Constructivism Theory:

The theory of Constructivism by Jean Piaget explains that children actively construct knowledge through hands-on experiences and interactions with their environment. As a teacher, you can design learning centres in your classroom that encourage exploration and discovery. For instance, a science corner with magnifying glasses, plants, and animal models allows children to observe, explore, and make connections with the world around them.



Source: <https://pin.it/2nkPjnLlr>

Source: <https://www.kindercare.com/content-hub/articles/2018/may/science-skills-preschool-magnifying-glass>

2. Socio-constructivism Theory:

The theory of Socio-constructivism by Vygotsky emphasises collaborative learning experiences and peer interaction, recognising the social aspect of learning. Implement group activities such as building blocks or collaborative art projects where children work together to achieve a common goal. Encourage communication, negotiation, and sharing of ideas among peers, fostering social skills and cooperation.

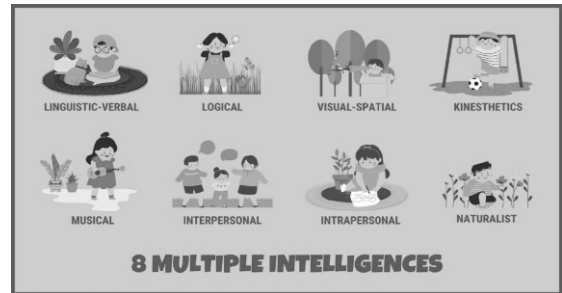


Source: <https://usa.minilandeducational.com/school/5-benefits-of-the-multilingual-classroom/>

3. Multiple Intelligences Theory:

According to the Multiple Intelligences Theory by Howard Gardner, children possess diverse talents and abilities across various domains. As per this theory, we should provide opportunities

for children to engage in activities that tap into different intelligences. For example, set up a music corner with instruments for auditory learners, a sensory table with textured material for kinesthetic learners, and a storytelling area for linguistic learners. This allows children to explore and excel in areas that align with their strengths.



Source: <https://prsschool.com.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/PRS-INFOGRAPHICS-8-1024x576.jpg>

4. Play-based Learning:

Play-based learning views play as a natural vehicle for learning and development, promoting exploration, creativity, and social interaction. Integrate playful activities into your curriculum, such as dramatic play, sensory exploration, and outdoor nature walks. For instance, a pretend kitchen area allows children to role-play, experiment with different materials and develop language skills through imaginative play.



Source: Pictures from a school in Delhi

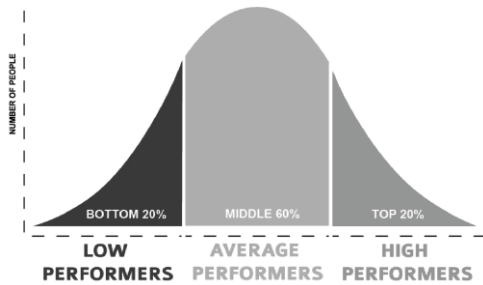
PERSONALISED LEARNING FOR EACH LEARNER

There are 4 types of learners- Gifted, Average, Weak and Special learners. Each type of learner requires an Individualised Education Plan.

Here are some ways to cater to each type of learner for a language skill.

Gifted Learners:

- Story Building: Encourage them to create their own stories using advanced vocabulary and complex sentence structures.



Source: <https://markmanson.net/being-average>

- **Word Challenges:** Introduce word games such as Scrabble to expand their vocabulary and enhance spelling skills.
- **Advanced Reading Clubs:** Form small reading groups where they can explore more challenging books and discuss their interpretations.
- **Creative Writing:** Provide prompts for creative writing activities, allowing them to express their thoughts and ideas in depth.

Average Learners:

- **Story Sequencing:** Provide picture cards and ask them to arrange them in the correct sequence, and then narrate the story.
- **Rhyming Games:** Engage them in rhyming activities such as creating rhyming pairs or singing nursery rhymes.
- **Picture Dictionaries:** Introduce picture dictionaries to help them learn new words and their meanings in context.
- **Read-Aloud Sessions:** Conduct regular read-aloud sessions to improve their listening comprehension and pronunciation skills.

Weak Learners:

- **Word Matching:** Create matching games where

they match simple words to corresponding pictures to reinforce vocabulary.

- **Sight Word Practice:** Focus on practicing high-frequency sight words through flashcards and repetitive activities.
- **Phonics Exercises:** Use phonics-based activities to help them understand letter-sound relationships and improve decoding skills.
- **Interactive Storytelling:** Utilise interactive storytelling apps or puppets to engage them in storytelling activities and enhance comprehension.

Special Children:

- **Multisensory Learning:** Incorporate multisensory activities such as using textured letters or sensory play dough to reinforce language concepts.
- **Visual Aids:** Use visual aids such as picture schedules or visual prompts to support understanding and communication.
- **Adapted Books:** Provide adapted books with simplified language and interactive elements to make reading more accessible.

CONCLUSION

In embracing the foundational elements of personalised learning, educators in early childhood education unlock the potential of each young learner, fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment where every child thrives. By tailoring experiences to individual needs and interests, we lay the groundwork for a lifelong love of learning and academic success. Through collaboration, reflection, and continuous professional growth, we embark on a journey of empowering young minds and shaping the future generation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sakshi Sibal

Primary Teacher

Salwan Public School, Rajendra Nagar, New Delhi

As a primary teacher, Ms. Sakshi Sibal serves as both an educator and facilitator, nurturing young learners to explore, inquire, and discover. Through engaging lessons and hands-on activities, she empowers students to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. With compassion and dedication, she strives to create a supportive classroom environment where children feel valued and inspired to reach their full potential.

Reach her at: sibal.sakshi@salwanpublicschool.com