

# UNIVERSAL UNITS

## UNIT 5

### PERSONALISED LEARNING

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Trainees will:**

- Consider some of the challenges and opportunities that personalising learning can create
- Understand that reviewing the procedures and outcomes of personalised learning and adapting the learning environment are a continuous process, not a product
- Consider one pupil or group of pupils and make a start on personalising their learning

#### ONLINE RESOURCES

The content and tasks throughout these PDFs are supported by online resources that are designed to facilitate and supplement your training experience.

Links to these are signposted where appropriate. The resources use graphics and interactive elements to:

- Highlight salient points
- Provide at-a-glance content summaries
- Introduce further points of interest
- Offer visual context
- Break down and clearly present the different stages and elements of processes, tasks, practices, and theories

The online resources offer great benefits, both for concurrent use alongside the PDFs, or as post-reading revision and planning aids.

Please note that the resources cannot be used in isolation without referencing the PDFs. Their purpose is to complement and support your training process, rather than lead it.

You should complete any learning or teaching tasks and additional reading detailed in this PDF to make full use of the Advanced training materials for autism; dyslexia; speech, language and communication; emotional, social and behavioural difficulties; moderate learning difficulties.

To find out more about the resources, how they work, and how they can enhance your training, visit the homepage at: [www.education.gov.uk/lamb](http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb)

The first resource for this unit can be found here:

[www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/intro](http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/intro)

Effective pedagogy must do the following<sup>1</sup>:

- Ensure that learners are capable of making informed educational decisions
- Diversify and recognise different forms of skills and knowledge
- Create diverse learning environments
- Include learner-focused forms of feedback and assessment

*“Personalised learning is a concept which has eluded an agreed definition”<sup>2</sup>.*

Personalisation is often viewed as a problematic concept because its definitions have shifted over time. A review of approaches to personalised learning by Cambridge University in 2007<sup>3</sup> noted that some consensus about the criteria for defining personalised learning had emerged; others questioned the emergent definitions and how far they had come from the roots of the approach to teaching and learning.

*“Contemporary personalisation has been used in two ways. The first is as a new mode of governance which is complementary to the existing bureaucratic and market driven modes of governance. The second usage of personalisation is its emergence as a type of ‘learning’ or ‘pedagogy’”<sup>4</sup>*

In 2008, the DfE produced ‘*Personalised Learning- A Practical Guide*’. This offers a pedagogy of personalised learning, the component parts of which can be found both within this unit and throughout the module that you are studying. The nine components identified in this publication are:

- High quality teaching and learning
- Target setting and tracking
- Focused assessment
- Intervention
- Pupil grouping
- The learning environment
- Curriculum organisation
- The extended curriculum, and
- Supporting children’s wider needs.

*“Personalisation differs from differentiation in that it affords the learner a degree of choice about what is learned, when it is learned and how it is learned. This may not indicate unlimited choice, since learners will still have targets to be met and informed adults will wish to play a part in guiding the learner to make responsible choices.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Green, Facer, Rudd, Dillon & Humphreys (2006) The Three P’s of Pedagogy for the Networked Society: Personalisation, Participation and Productivity. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (2008) Vol 20:1, 10 – 27.

<sup>2</sup> Pollard & James, (2004)

<sup>3</sup> Galton, M et al. (2007) An Investigation of Personalised Learning Approaches Used by Schools. DfES.

<sup>4</sup> DfES (2007) Pedagogy and Personalisation.

*However, personalisation may also provide learners the opportunity to learn in ways that suit their individual learning styles and multiple intelligences.”<sup>5</sup>*

So, it can be seen that personalisation is seen by many to include elements of pupil-centred approaches that we have examined in Unit 3, on theories of learning. Sometimes the term personalisation is improperly used as synonymous with differentiation or with producing entirely individual curricula for each and every pupil. For a teacher with a whole class, individualising every lesson for every pupil would be an unrealistic goal. “Personalisation” and “individualisation” are two distinct terms with a different pedagogical meaning. Individualisation refers to the set of didactic strategies aiming to guarantee all students the achievement of the same learning objectives, by different ways, times, learning styles, and so on. Differentiation often includes the same objectives, although there can be differentiation by outcome as well. In the models of individualisation and differentiation the teacher (or the computer, as the term is often claimed as a benefit of IT software programmes for the classroom) manages the best solution for the learner.

Personalisation, on the other hand, aims to capitalise on the strengths of the learner and their individual aspirations. Learning objectives will then be different for each learner, and they cannot necessarily be foreseen from the beginning of the learning process. This emphasises the point that personalisation, as distinct from differentiated learning or individualised learning, is a continuous process. In a system driven by external targets this can be a disconcerting prospect and it is one that relies heavily on the negotiating and planning skills of the teacher. The learner, guided by the teacher, is an active co-designer of their own learning pathway.

Dialogue is a central element to personalisation, as it is, along with all theories of learning, based on social constructivism. One example of this style of learning is demonstrated through the use of learning logs, such as the ones that you are completing, which support development of thinking and learning skills in students.

Whilst personalised learning may happen in traditional learning contexts such as schools and colleges, it also embraces learning that happens anywhere, for example in the home, or in the community. Personalised learning can happen in partnership with other learners, for example learners working together in a group to study a particular topic.

**Table 1:** Illustrates some potential differences between individualisation and personalisation

---

<sup>5</sup> Hartley, D. (2009). Personalisation: the nostalgic revival of child-centred education. *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol 24: 4, 423 – 434.

<b>Personalisation</b>	<b>Differentiation</b>
Different objectives for each learner	Same objectives for all learners
Applying of different didactic strategies to promote personal potential	Applying of different didactic strategies to achieve key competences
The learner actively participates in the construction of their own curriculum	The educational curriculum is defined by the educational staff
Acknowledgement and praise of all dimensions of learner, not only the cognitive (emotional, social, life experience, etc.)	Acknowledgement and praise of the cognitive dimension of the learner
Value given to previous knowledge, competence, life and work skill, also informal aptitudes and achievements	Value given to previous knowledge and competencies, formal and non formal
Learner's self direction as a fundamental skill	Learner's self-direction as an accessory skill
Tutor has a key role	Teacher has a key role

This table gives a highly polemic interpretation of the differences between the two approaches. In practice, each criterion may be seen on a sliding scale or as a continuum.

## **UNDERPINNING VALUES FOR PERSONALISED LEARNING**

The theoretical roots of personalisation rest in marketing theory<sup>6</sup>. It advocates a move away from mass marketing and mass consumption and instead implies a 'co-production'. Co-production positions the consumer and the producer in a relationship such that they both co-produce the needs of the consumer, and, to a lesser degree, both co-produce the solution whereby these needs are met.

In the UK many have been keen to express the view that personalisation has little to do with child- or learner- centred education<sup>7</sup>. However, the work from the USA that stemmed from the Disability Rights Movement has permeated some thinking about personalised learning. In particular, four key values that were established in the 1998 work appear to have permeated post-16 settings and social and health care provision. They may be less familiar to schools.

<sup>6</sup> Victor, B & Boynton, A (1998) *Invented Here: maximising your organisations internal growth and profitability*. Harvard Business School.

<sup>7</sup> Milliband (2004), cited 26<sup>th</sup> March 2004 in TES Newspaper

The underpinning values are seen as a means to enable learners to participate as fully as possible in social and working life. Seen as a whole, they represent a commitment to ensuring that education and training take full account of the expressed aspirations and needs of learners. The values also acknowledge the need for learners to be both challenged and supported if they are to achieve their aspirations.

The four values focus on key aspects of all people's lives:

- respect
- self-determination
- inclusion, and
- fostering relationships.

**See online resources:**

[www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/respect](http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/respect)

[www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/self-determination](http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/self-determination)

[www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/inclusion](http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/inclusion)

[www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/relationships](http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/relationships)

## **TASK 1**

The above values are key to all learners, but write down in your learning log the specific implications for each of the four values for pupils with SEND. In particular, do you feel they have a particular resonance for the group of need that you have chosen to focus on?

### **Respect**

Respect is characterised by:

- listening to people
- valuing different ways of communicating
- allowing enough time for responses
- learning from each other privacy and 'personal space'
- understanding that dignity is precious
- valuing the home and cultural backgrounds of learners
- speaking for up for people when they want us to
- acknowledging the importance of people's feelings
- encouraging people to express their feelings and views, and
- supporting people when they feel vulnerable.

### **Self-determination**

Self-determination is characterised by:

- choice-making, as an expression of personal freedom and autonomy
- access to a range of experiences and activities
- guided learning, living or working that supports independence
- encouragement and support to express personal aspirations and goals
- optimal opportunities for independent and guided choice and decision-making
- control of key aspects of one's life as a matter of right (e.g. in relationships with personal carers/support workers, including hiring and managing them)
- identifying and achieving personal ambitions, and
- personal decision-making that involves substantial and meaningful choices about their own lives.

## **Inclusion**

Inclusion is characterised by:

- participation in a range of social or leisure activities within the community
- community-based living of various kinds
- participation in learning activities that involve working with a range of people including other students, trainees and employees
- opportunities to play a role in the economic life of the country, through work or work-related activities
- person-centred planning approaches being 'owned' by the person concerned, and
- access to and participation in lifelong learning.

## **Fostering relationships**

Fostering relationships is part of the commitment to the advancement of rights for people with learning difficulties in all aspects of their lives. It is an aspect of development that many parents indicated to the Lamb Inquiry, in parental attitudes to the SEND system, was vital to their child's well being and future prospects but was not always given similar priority by the education system.

The fostering of social relationships is characterised by:

- friendships
- meeting other people and sharing experiences with them
- personal care and support where the interests of the learner are fully acknowledged and represented, and
- a range of relationships (e.g. personal, social and professional), in a variety of contexts and in accordance with the expressed wishes of the learner.

People with learning disabilities have the right to a decent education, to grow up to vote, to marry, and have a family, and to express their opinions, with help and support to do so where necessary. It is of particular relevance to this module because it was a widely expressed concern from parents who responded to the Lamb Inquiry that children with SEND were perceived all too frequently to be isolated

and that some schools had concentrated on academic achievement to the exclusion of social development.

## **TASK 2**

Choose *two* values that have been discussed above and log the extent to which your setting demonstrates and models these characteristics to the students. Write down the evidence that supports your judgement.

Then, draw up an action plan together with at least two other colleagues that could enable your setting to progress any weaker or absent characteristics.

## **PROGRAMME OR COURSE CONTENT**

Three of the values we have explored - respect, self-determination and inclusion - are well known to anyone working to improve educational opportunities for young people who experience difficulties in learning. The importance of relationships, however, both within education and life more generally, is often either taken for granted or ignored.

However, as well as responding to the concerns of many parents expressed to the Lamb Inquiry, schools could place a very particular value on social relationships, seeing them as a central feature of the teaching and learning process, but also as the key to future participation in society and to personal fulfilment.

The four values underpinning personalised learning represent a commitment to learners that can be expressed as a promise in each case. Each promise could be expressed through actions through every aspect of school life, including curriculum planning:

- Respect - we undertake to listen to you and to speak up for you when you want us to.
- Self-determination - we will enable you to make choices about your life.
- Inclusion - we will enable you to take your place in the community.
- Relationships - we will enable you to be with different groups of people and to choose your friends.

It is anticipated that learners and staff will develop, through discussion, a shared understanding of the values. This might be recognised formally in policy documentation that is accessible to both learners and staff.

### **TASK 3**

Prepare a presentation for colleagues using the 4 promises above and explaining how they might be used as a planning tool for developing your existing provision. You should explain the rationale and invite evaluation as to where you think you currently have strengths as a school and where and how you could develop a more coherent approach.

### **TASK 4**

To what extent does your school's senior management team:

- show, through policies and organisation, that all of the values are considered to be important and are reflected in practice?
- ensure that skilled and knowledgeable staff are available to work with learners, and that they have regular access to continuing professional development opportunities?
- allocate resources on an equitable basis so that learners can work in ways that most effectively meet their needs?
- provide teaching environments that optimise opportunities for successful teaching and learning, whilst ensuring that the well-being and safety of learners are maintained?

### **HOW CAN PERSONALISATION BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PLANNING THE CURRICULUM?**

The first thing to note is that the curriculum is far broader than either the national curriculum or those elements of the school curriculum that are delivered through formal subjects. The curriculum involves thinking about all the learning experiences and opportunities that are offered to pupils and includes:

- assemblies
- break/playtime
- breakfast club
- extended day and other after school activities
- day trips
- sports days
- arts festivals
- field trips
- residential activities
- work experience
- social interactions



The following planning questions concern the content (what), the teaching or teaching methods (how) and the learning environment (where).

### **What:**

The content of the curriculum is generally broken into separate subjects or activities through which a wide range of underlying skills can be developed. These components make up the programme content. For older secondary and post -16 students, work-based training programmes consist of a range of vocational activities that are generally dependent on the setting. Work-based training can take place in open employment or in sheltered or simulated work settings, e.g. a supermarket, library, café or garden centre. In schools and colleges the content of the programme is generally a combination of academic and vocational subjects and activities, social and leisure activities, and everyday living and community activities. It is widely acknowledged that these separate activities provide the contexts through which key or basic skills are developed. It is equally true that other skills may be developed through such contexts, therefore it is not the case that personalised learning consists of every learner doing something entirely different, but rather the focus within the activity for the learner may be different.

### **How:**

A wide variety of teaching or training methods are available for teachers to use. They can select methods that are suited to the learners and what is being taught, and support learners to learn more effectively through the teaching and training processes. Crucially to the concept of self – determination, by using modelling, coaching and using prompts, they can encourage learners to develop strategies for organising themselves and their learning as well as methods to solve any problems which may arise.

### **Where:**

Where the learning takes place, i.e. the learning environment, will also have an impact on the young person's learning experience and the opportunities that present themselves. Specialised settings offer different kinds of learning opportunities to community or mainstream settings. Some learners will do better in a formal, traditional classroom, others less so. Others may make better progress through 'hands on' learning, such as through field trips, or learn better social interaction skills through carefully planned support from assistants during break times or school trips.

## **DRAWING UP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR PERSONALISATION**

The values and promises may look vague and it would be a daunting prospect to begin to plan a curriculum in its entirety using such a basis. However, when seen as a means of refining your current practice, the case study below provides a useful point to both begin reflection and to draw up an action plan for one of your own pupils or a group of pupils. They are *not* a checklist to work through, and it is

important that you determine just *one* area to work on with colleagues. It does not matter for curriculum planning (or more accurately, curriculum refinement) which section you begin with. If you worked with colleagues on previous tasks you may like to carry through by making one of the following aspects the focus of a group activity. Begin by reading through all the questions then select one that you think would be interesting and profitable to develop for your learners with SEND.

## **CASE STUDY 1**

This example shows how a key stage 4 student with MLD was assisted by her school, which used the four areas above as a touchstone for personalising its curriculum offer.

### **Celine**

#### **1. Developing and exploring aspirations**

Celine is in year 11 of mainstream school. She lives at home with her parents and brother, where she enjoys helping to look after her aunt's children who live locally. She now sometimes brings them along to her local youth club.

Celine's strengths lie in her interpersonal skills. Although she has speech impairment, she communicates well and, if she is not understood at first, she will patiently repeat herself.

She enjoys and is comfortable when meeting new people and, for example, will often anticipate what they need to know and offer information. However, Celine's 'need to be liked' can lead her into difficulties at work and college. She will sometimes engage in socialising when there are tasks to be completed and this can bring her into conflict with her employer on work experience or with a tutor.

Other children teased Celine as a child and she can show a high level of sensitivity to criticism, which can lead to defensive approach when challenged.

Celine is a popular and outgoing member of her group. Her form tutor, parents and teaching assistants discussed Celine's aspirations with her. She said that she wants to:

- have work experience in childcare
- eventually work in a crèche connected to either her local supermarket or leisure centre, including being able to read stories to children.

## **2. Getting started on personalising the curriculum**

Staff negotiated goals with Celine, which took account of her aspirations and addressed the skills, knowledge and understanding she would need to work on.

Goals were set in each subject area and included:

- to improve her willingness to read her written work out loud,
- to take part in group discussions and give feedback on the main points,
- to use more complicated budgets, e.g. estimating the cost of ingredients when shopping to make a meal for a group of people and calculating how much money she will need to make a trip into the nearby city,
- to take greater responsibility for planning her own work-experience placement, e.g. speaking up for herself about the specific age group of children she would prefer to work with, and
- to work on recognising more clearly the boundaries between work and social relationships.

## **3. Designing strategies to support learning**

Staff are aware of the difficulties Celine has in coping with criticism and confrontational situations. They have built time into her curriculum to have planned and frequent discussion with her to help her examine her responses to criticism. Celine has proved to be very willing and open in these discussions and is making progress in these areas.

Celine has been encouraged to examine her childhood experiences of being teased through work that is part of her ASDAN personal safety course. She has worked closely with another student and they have produced a poster showing strategies for coping with any difficulties they might encounter at school, the college link course or in the wider community. This has not only given her a platform to consider her difficulties, but has also raised her self-esteem as her work is seen and commented upon positively by other students.

## **4. Identifying resources to support learning**

Important resources in working with Celine include:

- access to the local community, e.g. for shopping and work-experience placements,
- access to a Connexions personal advisor
- time for tutors and support staff to offer opportunities for one-to-one discussions with her
- an appropriate level of budget to pay travel expenses to work-experience placement, and
- the Self Advocacy Action Pack (Department for Education and Skills, 2001).

## 5. Monitoring progress, recognising achievement and moving on

A record of Celine's goals and her progress towards them is maintained in her individual education plan for each subject area. Progress is reviewed:

- Daily - during subject sessions, tutorials etc
- Weekly - assessment opportunities are built into her programme and are monitored, e.g. as part of her ASDAN course
- Termly - goals are reviewed, in discussion and negotiation with Celine
- Annually - during annual reporting procedures, which include parents/carers and all school staff and other professionals who work with Celine.

### TASK 5

With a group of colleagues, identify a pupil or a group of pupils with the SEND that you have elected to study. Watch the video clip “ASD-David and Brendon” and note how individual each person is and how they feel their school supported their individual aspirations.

**See this clip:**

[www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/david-brendan](http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb/mld/personalised-learning/david-brendan)

Now, using the above case study as an example, complete a similar template for the pupil or group of pupils using the same 5 headings mentioned above.

<b>Pupil name:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
1. Developing and exploring aspirations ( <i>You will need to think about what data you already have, and how you will further explore these, e.g. conversation with pupil, parents, etc.</i> )	
2. Getting started on personalising the curriculum ( <i>You will need to think about how you can turn aspirations into manageable goals and steps</i> )	
3. Design strategies to support learning ( <i>You will need to build time into the curriculum to support any</i>	

<i>particular strengths or weaknesses)</i>	
4. Identifying resources to support learning ( <i>If you have a provision map in your school, this would be the best place to start, but remember you can bring in parents, volunteers, and so on)</i>	
5. Monitoring progress, recognising achievement, and moving on ( <i>Remember schools tend to focus on quite a narrow range of outcomes in wider areas of development, pupils will need an agreed set of criteria for success that is understood by all their teachers)</i>	