INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Atajonova Kumush Ulug'bek qizi
English Language Teacher at Khiso School
DOI:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23123277

Abstract: Primary school pupils enter English lessons with different experiences, interests and levels of confidence. A single task may be too difficult for some children and offer too little challenge to others. This article examines how individualized learning can address these differences within a shared classroom programme. Drawing on books about differentiated instruction, young language learners and classroom assessment, it discusses ways to identify pupils' needs, vary support, organize flexible groups and give useful feedback. Detailed examples show how one lesson goal can lead to several appropriate tasks in vocabulary, speaking, reading and storytelling. Individualized learning is presented as an ongoing cycle of observation, teaching and adjustment, rather than a fixed division of children into ability groups.

Key words: individualized learning, primary education, English language teaching, differentiated instruction, young learners, formative assessment.

Children of the same age do not necessarily begin an English lesson at the same point. One pupil may recognize many English words from songs or videos but hesitate to speak. Another may enjoy answering questions aloud yet find it difficult to read a short text. Their interests differ too: an activity about animals may engage one child, while a story about travel captures another's attention. These differences create a practical challenge for the teacher. If everyone receives identical instructions, materials and time, some pupils may need support that the task does not provide. Others may finish quickly without extending their language. Individualized learning responds to this challenge by adjusting aspects of teaching according to what pupils currently know and need. Tomlinson's work on differentiated instruction offers a framework for making such adjustments while keeping important learning goals available to the whole class.[1] (ascd.org)

In primary English education, individualization must also suit children's development. Young learners need language they can use for a purpose, opportunities to interact and activities whose demands they can understand. Cameron's discussion of tasks for children helps explain why teachers should consider both the language in an activity and what the activity asks children to think and do.[2] (Teaching Languages to Young Learners)

Individualized teaching begins with observation. Before choosing different tasks, the teacher needs to know what pupils can already do independently and where they need help. This information can come from a short conversation, a picture-matching activity, a few written sentences or pupils' responses during a game. A lengthy test is unnecessary at the start of every lesson. Imagine a Grade 3 lesson on daily routines. The teacher shows pictures of get up, have breakfast, go to school and go to bed. Pupils name the actions they know and then tell a partner one thing they do every day. From this brief activity, the teacher notices three needs: some pupils are still learning the action phrases; others know the phrases but need a sentence model; several can already ask and answer questions. The class can then work toward one goal: "I can talk about my daily routine." Pupils who need vocabulary

Mualliflik huquqi egasi tomonidan ushbu material Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) litsenziyasi asosida tarqatiladi.

support use picture cards and complete "I get up at …" Those ready to speak in full sentences describe two or three actions. Pupils who need a further challenge ask a partner "What time do you go to school?" and report the answer. These are temporary responses to what the teacher observed. A pupil may need help in one lesson and lead a more demanding activity in another.

Individualization is often easier to manage when the teacher changes the support around a task, rather than preparing a completely different lesson for every child. The support might be a picture, a word bank, an example sentence, extra thinking time or a chance to practise with a partner.

For instance, in a lesson on describing animals, every pupil aims to describe an animal so that a partner can guess it:

- A pupil beginning the topic uses pictures and prompts: "It is … . It has … ."
- A pupil with more vocabulary adds an ability: "It can climb trees."
- A pupil ready for extended language gives clues without naming the animal: "It lives in the forest. It has a long tail, and it can climb."

All three pupils take part in the same guessing game. The teacher can gradually remove prompts as pupils become more independent. Pinter's work on young language learners supports careful attention to what children can manage in English while encouraging their participation and choice.[3] (global.oup.com)

Pupils can also work toward a common language goal using different content. Consider a lesson whose goal is "I can write and say three sentences about something I like." The teacher offers pictures of sports, food, toys and animals. A pupil chooses one topic and prepares a short description:

"I like football. I play it with my friends. It is exciting."

Another pupil chooses a cat and says:

"I like cats. My cat is white. It sleeps on my bed."

The teacher assesses whether pupils express their ideas clearly using the target language. The children's topics need not be the same. A simple choice can make the task more meaningful and give a hesitant pupil something familiar to talk about.

Choice still requires guidance. Giving young learners too many options may make it hard for them to start. Two or three clear choices, accompanied by pictures and a model, are usually easier to use than an instruction such as "Talk about anything you want."

Individualized learning includes work with other pupils. The teacher can vary groups according to the purpose of an activity. A child who needs support with reading may work with a partner to sequence story pictures. In the next activity, that same child may confidently describe the pictures to another group. For example, pupils read a short story about a lost puppy. First, pairs place four pictures in order. The teacher gives some pairs a word bank: park, girl, puppy, home. Other pairs receive the pictures without words and explain their choices in sentences. Next, the teacher forms new pairs. Each pupil retells part of the story, and the partner asks one question: "Where was the puppy?" or "Who found it?" The activity allows pupils to contribute different strengths while practising the same story language.

Such tasks require preparation, but they need not require entirely separate sets of materials. Picture cards, optional word banks and follow-up questions can create several levels of support from one story.

Individualization is useful only if the teacher checks whether an adjustment helps a pupil learn. During the lesson, the teacher can note a few specific observations: uses animal words independently, answers with a prompt, or can ask a follow-up question. These notes are more useful for planning than

Mualliflik huquqi egasi tomonidan ushbu material Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) litsenziyasi asosida tarqatiladi.

a general label such as weak or strong. Suppose the goal is "I can ask for an item politely." After a classroom role-play, the teacher notices that one pupil remembers "Can I have …, please?" but pauses before naming an item. That pupil's next practice can use object cards. Another pupil names items easily but forgets please; the teacher gives feedback on the whole request. A third pupil can make the request and respond, so the teacher adds "Here you are" and "Thank you." McKay's discussion of assessing young language learners shows the value of observing language use in classroom activities such as games, questions and stories. Assessment can therefore help the teacher decide what to teach next, instead of serving only to assign a mark.[4] (cambridge.org)

A Grade 4 lesson on places in town shows how these ideas can work together. The common goal is: "I can ask for and give simple directions."

The teacher begins by displaying a small map with a school, park, library and shop. Pupils point to the places they know. The teacher models "Where is the library?" and "Go straight. Turn left." Pupils practise the directions by moving a marker on the map. During the main activity, the teacher gives pupils three versions of a route task. Some pupils follow arrows and complete short phrases. Others receive a map with a starting point and give directions using a prompt card. Pupils who are ready for a challenge plan a route with two turns and explain it to a partner without showing the map. The pairs then exchange roles so that each pupil both gives and follows directions. At the end, each pupil completes a short exit task: tell the teacher or a partner how to get from the school to one place on the map. The teacher notes who can use the directions independently and who still needs the visual prompt. The next lesson begins with practice based on those observations. Practical activity collections for young learners can help teachers build this kind of purposeful interaction around familiar themes.[5] (shop.cambridge.org)

Individualized learning in primary English education is a process of noticing pupils' needs and responding to them through suitable tasks, support and feedback. A teacher can keep a common goal for the class while varying sentence prompts, pictures, choices and follow-up questions. Flexible groups allow children to practise together, and brief observations show what each pupil is ready to learn next. When these decisions are made throughout a lesson, more pupils can participate in English and make visible progress from their own starting points.

References:

1. Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms (3rd ed.). ASCD. (Alexandria, VA 223)
2. Cameron, L. (2001). Teaching Languages to Young Learners. Cambridge University Press. (cambridge.org)
3. Pinter, A. (2017). Teaching Young Language Learners (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. (global.oup.com)
4. McKay, P. (2005). Assessing Young Language Learners. Cambridge University Press. (cambridge.org)
5. McKay, P., & Guse, J. (2007). Five-Minute Activities for Young Learners. Cambridge University Press. (cambridge.org)

Mualliflik huquqi egasi tomonidan ushbu material Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) litsenziyasi asosida tarqatiladi.