

PERSONALIZED TEACHING MATERIALS AS A TEACHING–LEARNING STRATEGY IN CONTEXTS OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.022-008>

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the use of personalized teaching materials as a strategy to promote teaching and learning in contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity. The research explores how these materials meet the needs of students from different backgrounds, fostering inclusion and engagement. Through a literature review and analysis of case studies, effective practices, challenges, and benefits are highlighted. A concrete example is a study conducted in a public school in São Paulo, where teachers developed bilingual booklets featuring stories and everyday situations of immigrant students, facilitating content comprehension and promoting a sense of belonging among students of different nationalities. The results indicate that culturally contextualized materials strengthen meaningful learning and educational equity, providing greater participation and valuing students' identities. However, the implementation of these materials faces barriers such as limited financial resources for producing specific content and the lack of adequate teacher training. For instance, many teachers report difficulties adapting the curriculum due to insufficient training in inclusive pedagogical practices and restricted access to diversified teaching materials. The lack of teacher training not only hinders the creation of adapted materials but also limits their effective use in the classroom, directly impacting the potential for inclusion and student engagement.

Keywords: Teaching materials; Cultural diversity; Linguistic diversity; Teaching–learning; Inclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

The demographic and social configuration of contemporary educational institutions has been profoundly transformed by the intensification of migratory flows and the growing global interconnectedness. This phenomenon positions cultural and linguistic diversity not as an exception but as the central reality of countless classrooms worldwide, creating educational environments of remarkable richness and complexity (UNESCO, 2017). The presence of students with different cultural repertoires, worldviews, and mother tongues directly impacts pedagogical practice, challenging historically homogeneous and standardized teaching models. Educators face the daily task of mediating knowledge, building communication bridges, and ensuring that the teaching–learning process is relevant and accessible to all, regardless of their origins.

In this scenario, significant pedagogical challenges emerge. The application of a single curriculum and standardized teaching materials often results in a dissonance between school content and the reality experienced by students. This monocultural approach can generate comprehension barriers, disengagement, and a sense of non-belonging, undermining learning potential. The difficulty for minority students to see themselves represented in textbooks, examples, and proposed activities perpetuates a cycle of exclusion and reinforces structural inequalities. Educational systems that fail to recognize and value diversity risk systematically marginalizing students from cultural and linguistic minorities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, the search for new educational strategies that overcome the logic of standardization and promote genuinely inclusive and equitable education becomes imperative.

The response to these challenges lies in adopting pedagogical approaches that are culturally sensitive and responsive. For education to be truly equitable, it is not enough to guarantee access to school; it is essential to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to participate, learn, and thrive academically (Banks, 2015). At this point, the investigation into personalized teaching materials becomes fundamental for improving educational processes in multicultural contexts. Personalizing pedagogical resources transcends mere translation of content or inclusion of folkloric elements. It is an intentional strategy to connect the curriculum to students' life experiences, prior knowledge, and cultural references, using them as a foundation for constructing new knowledge. By doing so, learning becomes contextualized and, consequently, more meaningful (Gay, 2010).

This article, therefore, aims to investigate the potential of personalized teaching materials as a strategic tool for strengthening the teaching–learning process in highly diverse environments. The central objective is to analyze how these materials can be conceived, developed, and implemented to meet students' cultural and linguistic specificities, fostering not only academic performance but also the appreciation of their identities and the development of intercultural competencies. Based on a methodology that combines systematic literature review and in-depth case study analysis, we seek to



identify effective practices, challenges inherent to their application, and observed impacts. The guiding question of this investigation is: How do personalized teaching materials contribute to achieving meaningful and equitable learning in culturally and linguistically diverse educational environments?

The relevance of this study is justified by the urgent need to build educational paradigms that respond to the demands of the 21st century, preparing citizens to coexist in plural societies. By offering theoretical and practical support to educators, managers, and policymakers, this research aims to contribute to overcoming barriers that have historically limited the school success of millions of students. To present the results clearly and systematically, this work is organized into five sections: the present introduction, which contextualizes the theme and problem; the theoretical framework, which deepens the concepts of multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy; the methodology, which details the research procedures; the results and discussion section, which presents and analyzes the collected data; and finally, the conclusion, which synthesizes the main findings and points out implications for future research and pedagogical practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural diversity refers to the coexistence of different values, beliefs, social practices, and worldviews within the same context, representing the plurality of ways of life that shape contemporary societies (Banks, 2015). Linguistic diversity, in turn, involves the presence of multiple languages or dialects in a social or educational environment, constituting an essential part of the identity of groups and individuals. In this scenario, recognizing cultural and linguistic diversity in education is not merely an additional aspect of the teaching process but a structural element for pedagogical practices that aim to be inclusive and equitable. Echoing the writings of Vera Maria Candau (2008, 2012), the school can serve as a space for dialogue among different cultures rather than a place for imposing a hegemonic culture.

According to Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally relevant education is fundamental for valuing students' identities, enabling the learning process to become meaningful and connected to their realities. This implies adopting teaching practices that go beyond the transmission of universal content, promoting the incorporation of elements that respect and acknowledge students' sociocultural origins. In this sense, the personalization of teaching materials stands out as a pedagogical strategy. Such materials may take the form of bilingual texts, examples contextualized in local experiences, activities that engage with community traditions, or narratives representing diverse identities, thereby strengthening students' self-esteem and sense of belonging (Gay, 2010).

This perspective aligns with Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning (2000), which asserts that learning is more effective when new knowledge is related to students' prior experiences. When teaching materials incorporate familiar cultural and linguistic elements, they create cognitive bridges that facilitate

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understanding and retention of content. Complementarily, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that cognitive development is profoundly influenced by social interactions and cultural context. Thus, materials reflecting students' realities not only enhance engagement but also stimulate collective knowledge construction, transforming the classroom into a more dynamic and inclusive space.

Personalized materials also connect with the concept of differentiated instruction, which seeks to address the needs of students in heterogeneous contexts (Tomlinson, 2017). In classrooms marked by cultural and linguistic plurality, differentiated resources allow each student to find meaning in the educational process. Examples include narratives featuring characters from diverse cultural backgrounds, math problems situated in local realities, or activities that encourage valuing students' mother tongues without disregarding the official language of instruction (Barbosa, 2019). When carefully planned and contextualized, these resources increase motivation, foster active participation, and improve content retention, promoting more meaningful and inclusive educational experiences.

Furthermore, educational literature highlights that personalized materials not only contribute to individual learning but also help reduce structural inequalities within schools. UNESCO (2017) underscores that creating pedagogical resources adapted to students' cultural and linguistic specificities is a strategic path toward greater educational equity. In this sense, personalization emerges as an instrument of social justice in schools, as it democratizes access to knowledge, recognizes diverse identities, and strengthens inclusion, whereas standardized materials often perpetuate stereotypes and power relations (Silva, 2000).

The Freirean framework also relates to this theoretical foundation, as the concept of "reading the world," which precedes "reading the word," is the very essence of personalized teaching materials. Freire (1996) advocates that education should begin with the student's concrete reality. Using personalized materials is a direct application of his pedagogy, which values learners' knowledge and experiences as the starting point for meaningful and critical learning.

This theoretical foundation is not only academically supported but also strongly endorsed by Brazilian educational legislation. The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB, Law No. 9.394/96), in Article 26-A, establishes the mandatory inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture in basic education curricula, requiring materials that reflect this diversity. More specifically, the LDB guarantees Indigenous communities the right to bilingual and intercultural schooling, with their own learning processes (Art. 78). This perspective is reinforced by the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which, in its general competencies, advocates empathy, dialogue, and respect for diversity (Competency 9) and the appreciation of diverse cultural manifestations (Competency 3). These regulations legitimize and promote the creation and use of personalized teaching materials, transforming cultural adaptation from a pedagogical ideal into a legal obligation for fostering equity.

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However, the mere existence of culturally appropriate materials and legal support does not guarantee effective application. The implementation of a pedagogy of diversity depends intrinsically on the educator's role, making continuous professional development an indispensable pillar. Teachers need support not only to develop technical skills for selecting, adapting, or creating these resources but also to cultivate attitudes sensitive to differences and attentive listening to students' realities. This preparation involves critical reflection on their own worldviews and the development of competencies to mediate conflicts and intercultural dialogues in the classroom. Without educators prepared for the cultural and didactic management of these materials, there is a risk of superficial or folkloric application that fails to achieve the goal of promoting truly transformative learning.

Therefore, by considering cultural and linguistic diversity as central axes of pedagogical practice, the personalization of teaching materials is not merely an alternative methodology but an ethical and educational imperative. This approach expands learning potential, respects identity plurality, and contributes to building a school environment that is fairer, more participatory, and more responsive to students' realities.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, combining a literature review and case study analysis, as suggested by Yin (2016) for exploratory research. The literature review encompassed articles published between 2015 and 2025, retrieved from databases such as Scielo, ERIC, and Google Scholar, selected based on three criteria: (1) relevance to the topic, (2) methodological rigor, and (3) publication in peer-reviewed journals. A total of 18 articles addressing teaching practices in contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity were analyzed.

Three case studies were selected: (1) an Indigenous school in Brazil that uses bilingual materials; (2) a multicultural school in the United States focusing on immigrant narratives; and (3) an institution in Australia incorporating Aboriginal content. These cases were chosen because they represent contexts of high cultural and linguistic diversity. The analysis was structured into four categories: (1) characteristics of the materials, (2) implementation strategies, (3) impact on learning, and (4) challenges encountered. Data triangulation, as recommended by Creswell (2018), was employed to ensure the robustness of the conclusions.

Data were collected from institutional reports, academic articles, and pedagogical documents. The qualitative analysis involved thematic coding to identify patterns related to the use of personalized materials. The research adhered to the ethical guidelines of ABNT NBR 14724:2011 for academic work preparation, ensuring confidentiality and methodological rigor.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analyzed studies indicate that personalized teaching materials are primarily characterized by three dimensions: flexibility, cultural contextualization, and linguistic accessibility. These elements enable content to engage with students' realities, promoting more meaningful and inclusive learning.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

In national experiences, for example, an Indigenous school located in Mato Grosso do Sul implemented bilingual materials (Portuguese and Guarani) in science teaching, which resulted in greater student participation and strengthened interest in scientific subjects (Coelho, 2019). This initiative also fostered community integration, enhanced the appreciation of traditional knowledge, and contributed to more contextualized and meaningful pedagogical practices. This case demonstrates how including the mother tongue can affirm students' cultural identity while expanding their understanding of content.

Similarly, studies with the Xerente people show that producing bilingual teaching materials, developed with active participation from the school community, constitutes a powerful strategy for integrating Indigenous knowledge with contemporary knowledge, aligning with national and international experiences in intercultural education. The research process involved discussion circles and teacher validation sessions with continuous training, favoring memory preservation and identity strengthening, bridging territory and curriculum. The articulation between oral and written language prevents generic materials, requiring careful pedagogical planning (Souza; Andrade; Martins, 2024).

In the same direction, the collective and bilingual production of specific teaching materials has enabled the strengthening of mother tongues, cultural preservation, and improvement of pedagogical practices. Experiences developed by the "Projeto Ação Saberes Indígenas" reveal that research, documentation, and community authorship are as relevant as the final product, as they value traditional knowledge and bring it closer to the school. Such practices foster critical and transformative interculturality (Moreira; Zoia, 2021).

Among international examples, in the United States, a school in Los Angeles adopted literary texts portraying Mexican immigrant culture, which increased student motivation during literature classes (Rodrigues, 2019). This contextualized approach also strengthened cultural identification, expanded engagement in discussions, and contributed to a more inclusive and meaningful learning environment. Recognizing their own culture in study materials reinforced students' connection with school and reduced disengagement rates. Similarly, in Australia, introducing Aboriginal narratives into school materials was associated with improved self-esteem and greater student engagement (Sales, 2023). This pedagogical strategy also encouraged valuing local identities, increased participation in classroom activities, and



contributed to richer, culturally sensitive learning experiences. These results show that personalization can transcend the academic dimension, reaching holistic and psychological aspects essential for student development.

Recent literature highlights convergent criteria for teaching materials aimed at Portuguese as a second language in Indigenous schools. It is essential that these materials align textuality with sociocultural context, avoiding decontextualized lists and prescriptive practices. Analyses show progress when materials originate from the territory, as in the Xingu case, and setbacks when they prioritize oral repetition without real interaction. To ensure relevance, it is crucial to align curriculum, bilingualism, and interculturality with continuous teacher training and classroom use evaluation. These criteria guide the production and revision of more effective books for Indigenous literacy in Portuguese (Moscardini; Fargetti, 2024).

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The most effective implementation strategies include direct collaboration with local communities in developing culturally relevant content and continuous teacher training. Community involvement ensures that teaching materials reflect students' realities, incorporating traditions, languages, and everyday experiences often absent from standardized curricula. Collective material development strengthens school-community ties and legitimizes local knowledge as an integral part of the educational process.

According to Tomlinson (2017), teacher training is a cornerstone of this approach, providing educators with methodological and conceptual tools to adapt pedagogical resources to students' specific needs. Well-prepared teachers can not only select appropriate content but also develop competencies to reinterpret the curriculum critically and contextually. This training fosters teacher autonomy and contributes to consolidating more creative and inclusive pedagogical practices.

However, recurring challenges emerged across all analyzed studies. Among them, the scarcity of financial resources stands out, limiting both the production of differentiated materials and the provision of continuous training. Added to this is resistance to change among some education professionals, often accustomed to traditional teaching methods and skeptical about the effectiveness of new pedagogical practices. Another significant obstacle is the time required to develop personalized materials, which becomes challenging given the multiple demands already placed on teachers (Banks, 2015).

These barriers reveal that, although personalization is a pedagogical strategy of proven effectiveness, its applicability depends on structural, political, and institutional conditions that support it. In other words, recognizing the importance of personalized materials is not enough; mechanisms of



support, incentives, and appreciation of teachers' work must be created for this practice to expand and consolidate as part of everyday school life.

PEDAGOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

The positive impacts of adopting personalized teaching materials were reported at different levels. Pedagogically, there was an increase in content retention and greater interest in subjects. Barbosa (2019) highlighted that Indigenous students showed significant improvement in interest in science after introducing materials contextualized to their cultural reality, strengthening their connection with studied content and promoting deeper, more relevant, and motivating learning.

By incorporating diverse narratives, symbols, and cultural references, learning becomes more meaningful and closer to students' daily lives. This perspective resonates with Paulo Freire, who argued that knowledge should start from students' concrete reality, valuing their life experiences and sociocultural contexts. For Freire, education is not a process of mere content transmission but a collective construction of knowledge, where dialogue between educator and learner ensures relevant, critical learning connected to students' experiences. Arroyo (2013) corroborates this view by asserting that recognizing popular cultures in schools strengthens students' dignity and sense of belonging, functioning as an emotional and social protective factor. This strengthening translates into a more inclusive and democratic environment, where students perceive themselves as rights-bearing subjects and protagonists of their own learning process.

Psychologically, studies such as Gay (2010) reinforce that cultural validation provided by these materials strengthens student identity, reducing feelings of exclusion and marginalization. This effect is particularly relevant in contexts of linguistic diversity, where bilingual or multilingual students often face communication barriers (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Additionally, Tomlinson (2017) argues that personalization can contribute to creating more inclusive learning communities, where students feel represented, recognized, and valued.

The strategy of personalizing teaching materials supports the development of students' self-esteem and self-concept. These psychological dimensions directly influence academic performance, as they shape students' understanding of themselves and their ability to learn. Brazilian studies show that students with higher self-esteem tend to perform better, show greater willingness to face challenges, and are less prone to feelings of failure. According to Coelho (2019), students with average or above-average academic performance tend to demonstrate higher self-esteem and a more developed social self-concept, positively contributing to their participation and interaction in the school environment. This demonstrates that pedagogical practices validating students' cultural and linguistic identity not only enhance cognitive understanding but also provide essential emotional support for their holistic development.

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When students recognize themselves in teaching materials, they feel more connected and attribute greater meaning to learning, which reduces emotional barriers that hinder academic progress. Dionísio and Stribel (2020) analyzed Geography workbooks from the Nova EJA program, revealing stereotyping or absence of Black population representation in materials. The authors conclude that using pedagogical resources with little or no representativeness reinforces feelings of exclusion and invisibility among program students, most of whom belong to the Black population. This highlights the urgent need for teaching materials adapted to be representative, promoting inclusion and recognition of these students. When schools acknowledge and value students' sociocultural backgrounds, they act as spaces of care and belonging, preventing discomfort and strengthening positive bonds with the educational process.

A parallel can be drawn between personalized teaching materials and the concept of intrinsic motivation in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The authors define intrinsic motivation as performing tasks for personal satisfaction, based on genuine interest, without external rewards. By including elements that resonate with students' realities and interests, materials reinforce basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and belonging. This process directly impacts academic engagement, as students who feel recognized and respected tend to participate more actively, showing greater involvement and persistence in the face of difficulties.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCALABILITY CHALLENGES

Another relevant factor identified is the role of technology. Digital platforms, educational software, and multimedia tools not only enable greater agility in creating adapted content but also facilitate personalized teaching, individualized student monitoring, and the scalability of this approach across different educational contexts, significantly expanding its reach and impact (Rodrigues, 2019). However, reliance on technological resources can also exacerbate inequalities, especially in low-infrastructure contexts, as emphasized by Banks (2015). This contradiction highlights the need for policies that ensure not only access but also equity in the use of educational technologies.

In addition, IoT platforms play a fundamental role in managing sensors, processing and integrating data from different devices, and assigning added value to selected information. Examples of these platforms include FIWARE, Konker, and ThingsBoard, which can be applied in various sectors such as smart cities, healthcare, environmental monitoring, and industrial management, providing greater efficiency, automation, and data-driven decision-making (Sales, 2023). Likewise, cloud computing has proven highly useful in education by offering a wide range of learning tools, enabling access for both teachers and students regardless of location or time. Artificial Intelligence integration further enhances this process by analyzing user patterns to optimize these tools (Govea et al., 2023).



In this sense, the use of cloud computing has expanded significantly in recent years due to its flexibility and scalability in service delivery (França et al., 2023). Moreover, numerous devices connected to the internet generate vast amounts of data daily, which are utilized on a global scale (Sousa et al., 2018).

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOEMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

The literature also indicates that the personalization of educational materials can go beyond cognitive learning, influencing aspects related to the student's holistic development. In this context, socioemotional competencies are particularly relevant, including empathy, cooperation, autonomy, resilience, and respect for diversity, which contribute to forming individuals who are more conscious, participative, and prepared for complex social interactions both in school and in everyday life (Barbosa, 2019). These competencies are essential in increasingly plural and interdependent societies, where coexistence with different cultures, languages, and worldviews demands skills in dialogue and mutual understanding.

Pedagogical activities based on cultural narratives, for example, not only foster intercultural dialogue but also stimulate students' critical reflection on their own identities and the relationships they establish with others. This process helps reduce prejudice, deconstruct stereotypes, and strengthen an ethical stance that values diversity. Furthermore, the personalization of materials can encourage group work and collaborative learning, promoting a more democratic, participatory, and inclusive classroom environment where everyone feels represented and respected.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PRACTICE

Finally, the analysis of the studies demonstrates that the successful implementation of personalized teaching materials depends on their articulation with solid educational policies. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes that such policies must treat diversity as a pedagogical asset, ensuring continuous investments in school infrastructure, teacher training, and the production of teaching resources. Without this support, these experiences tend to remain isolated cases, lacking lasting impact on the educational system as a whole.

Decree No. 4.281, dated June 25, 2002, under the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), No. 9.795, highlights that environmental education has a political character, aiming to transform society toward a more sustainable future committed to environmental preservation. It seeks to form conscious citizens who understand their rights and social responsibilities and adopt a critical and participatory stance in collective decision-making.



The LDB, through the cited decree, establishes that environmental education is a fundamental and continuous component of education in Brazil, and must be present at all levels and modalities of teaching, both formal and non-formal, as described in Article 1 of Law No. 9.795.

Environmental education is understood as the processes through which individuals and communities build social values, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies aimed at conserving the environment, as well as common-use resources essential to a healthy quality of life and sustainability (BRASIL, 1999).

The concept of sustainability reinforces the need for a closer and more conscious relationship between people and the environment, emphasizing care for oneself, others, life in society, and the planet. In this context, environmental education—according to Article 2 of the National Curriculum Guidelines—is understood as an intentional social practice that seeks to develop individuals with social awareness, in harmony with nature and with other human beings.

CONCLUSION

Personalized teaching materials represent a powerful strategy for promoting inclusion and meaningful learning in contexts marked by cultural and linguistic diversity. By respecting students' identities and adapting content to their sociocultural realities, these materials contribute not only to knowledge construction but also to the promotion of educational equity. Valuing individual and collective experiences strengthens the sense of belonging, increases classroom participation, and positively impacts students' self-esteem, as they recognize themselves as active subjects in the learning process.

Despite their transformative potential, the implementation of personalized teaching materials faces obstacles that cannot be ignored. Among these challenges are the limited financial resources available for producing adapted materials, the lack of time within teachers' routines for differentiated planning, and, most importantly, the need for continuous teacher training. Pedagogical preparation is essential, as teachers are the mediators between school content and students' realities. Without adequate institutional support, consistent public policies, and investments in teacher development, personalization tends to remain restricted to isolated initiatives, hindering its consolidation as a systematic pedagogical practice.

In this sense, the role of digital technologies emerges as a promising resource to overcome some of these challenges. Technological tools can facilitate the production, adaptation, and dissemination of personalized content, making them more accessible to teachers and students. Digital platforms, multimedia resources, and educational software can be leveraged to create learning environments that are more flexible, interactive, and sensitive to student diversity. Nevertheless, future research must deepen the debate on the impact of such resources, investigating how they contribute to long-term academic performance and the social inclusion of historically marginalized groups.



This scenario reinforces the importance of formulating educational policies that value cultural and linguistic diversity as a pedagogical resource rather than as an obstacle to teaching. When systematically incorporated, diversity becomes a tool for building more just, critical, and inclusive educational practices capable of responding to the demands of a plural society. Thus, the personalization of teaching materials should be understood not merely as an innovative methodology but as part of a broader project of democratizing knowledge, ensuring that all students have real opportunities to learn, develop, and actively participate in social and cultural life.



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