

A case study of “Taare Zameen Par”: Every Child is Special

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<p>Corresponding Author Lim Mei Wei</p> <p>Faculty of Education, Open University Malaysia</p> <p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 30 / 04 / 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 12 / 05 / 2025</p> <p>Published: 15 / 05 / 2025</p>	<p>Abstract: The paper evaluates knowledge and capabilities in educational psychology by analyzing the film Taare Zameen Par. It focuses on individual differences among learners, comparing behaviorism and constructivism through Ishaan’s experiences. The film highlights the importance of accommodating diverse learning styles to promote classroom performance and student well-being. It discusses Ram Nikumbh’s use of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Theory and examines the impact of different teaching methodologies on motivation and engagement. The paper poses four research questions regarding the effectiveness of these approaches in enhancing learning outcomes for students with differences.</p> <p>Keywords: Educational psychology, individual differences, Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, behaviorism, constructivism, diverse learning, motivation and engagement</p>
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Introduction

The primary objective of this paper is to evaluate knowledge, understanding, and capabilities in the context of educational psychology. It focuses explicitly on critically analyzing the diverse individual differences among learners by analyzing Taare Zameen Par.

Taare Zameen Par is a fascinating, enlightening video that reflects how we, as parents and teachers, teach and guide our children. The video helps educators and parents compare and analyze two prevalent learning theories—behaviorism and constructivism—about Ishaan’s educational experiences depicted in the film Taare Zameen Par. This involves examining how these theories account for Ishaan’s varied responses to conventional teaching methods as opposed to the innovative approach employed by Ram Nikumbh.

Furthermore, this paper encourages an exploration of how individual differences in learning styles can influence classroom performance and overall student well-being. Insights from the film highlight the necessity of accommodating diverse learning needs within educational settings. This paper analyzes how Ram Nikumbh’s application of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Theory aids Ishaan’s learning, providing specific examples from the film to support their discussion; it also evaluates the effectiveness of the different teaching methodologies portrayed in movie film through the framework of motivation theory, assessing how these strategies affect student engagement and learning outcomes.

Finally, this paper proposes effective teaching strategies for learners with learning differences, drawing inspiration from Ram Nikumbh’s techniques illustrated in ‘Taare Zameen Par.’ Hence, the following research questions for this paper to achieve the purpose,

- *RQ1: How do Behaviorism and Constructivism explain his different responses to traditional teaching approaches versus Ram Nikumbh’s approach in Ishaan’s learning journey?*
- *RQ2: How do variations in individual learning styles impact classroom performance and student well-being by addressing diverse learning needs, as portrayed in ‘Taare Zameen Par’?*
- *RQ3: How does Ram Nikumbh apply Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Theory to help Ishaan?*
- *RQ4: How do these diverse teaching approaches inspire student engagement and elevate learning outcomes through the lens of motivation theory?*

Literature Review

Overview of Behaviourism and Constructivism

The behaviourist learning theory fundamentally investigates how observable changes in behaviour arise from past experiences. At its core, this theory serves as a framework to enhance the educational process by fostering positive and desirable student behaviours. Success in learning, within this context, is typically evaluated through measurable accomplishments such as the ability to read, write, memorize course content, and respond accurately to questions. However, it is essential to recognize that authentic learning encompasses more than just these tangible skills; it can manifest as significant shifts in an individual’s thought processes or actions. Before implementing the behaviourist learning theory within educational settings, exploring its principles and implications in greater depth is crucial, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of its impact on the learning journey (Veranica, 2024).

Constructivism traces its origins back to 18th-century philosophical thought, offering a compelling alternative

perspective on the nature of human learning. This educational theory emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge rather than passively absorb information. It underscores the importance of drawing upon one's prior knowledge and experiences, suggesting that each individual builds understanding uniquely, shaped by their background and context. As such, constructivism advocates for an interactive and reflective approach to learning, where students engage deeply with concepts and ideas, leading to more meaningful and lasting comprehension (Veranica, 2024).

Overview of Individual learning styles

Learning style is intricately intertwined with an individual's personality and temperament. Personality encompasses the broad spectrum of traits that define a person's demeanor, emotional expression, and overall behavior. These nuances in personality often manifest distinctly in how individuals react and adapt when faced with particular challenges or environments.

Willing (1988) characterizes learning styles as individuals' established preferences in their learning habits (Fitri et al., 2021). This perspective emphasizes the uniqueness of each learner's approach to acquiring new knowledge and skills. Similarly, Keefe (1979) defines learning style as the lens through which a person perceives, interacts with, and interprets the world around them (Fitri et al., 2021). This interpretation highlights the subjective nature of learning, suggesting that the material and their context shape each individual's experience.

Drummond (1998) further elaborates by defining learning styles as the favored modes and conditions under which an individual engages with new information (Fitri et al., 2021). Learning style encompasses the strategies and environments learners find most conducive to their educational experience. Thus, learning style blends cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor behaviors. It represents a relatively stable factor, enabling learners to connect with their surroundings and respond effectively to their educational environments. Understanding one's learning style can illuminate pathways to more effective learning and personal growth (Fitri et al., 2021).

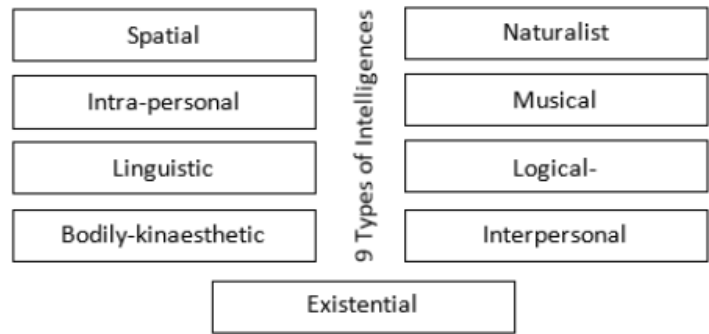
Overview of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory

Table 1: The Nine Intelligences and their description (Ahmad & Dzulkarnain, 2020)		
No.	Intelligence Type	Description
1	Naturalist Intelligence	Understanding other natural world features, such as plants, flora, fauna, other creatures, the ground, and the environment.
2	Musical Intelligence	One can recognize tone, sounds, pitch, noise, rhythm, and reverberation, contributing to music recognition, creation, and reproduction.
3	Logical-mathematical Intelligence	Calculating, quantifying, and measuring propositions and hypotheses is essential in various fields involving mathematical operations and arithmetic expressions. Mathematical geniuses and individuals engaged in engineering, scientific research, game strategy development, and forensic analysis possess this skill.
4	Existential Intelligence	This intelligence pertains to life, encompassing its capacity for understanding religions, empathy, and the connection between life and death.
5	Interpersonal Intelligence	Those who possess this kind of intelligence are suitable leaders. They are very good at communication and can effectively interact with other people verbally or nonverbally. This intelligence can find differences among

According to the influential theory proposed by Howard Gardner, multiple intelligences can be intricately classified into nine distinct categories, commonly referred to as the nine intelligence domains. This groundbreaking theory has gained considerable traction and is widely embraced by researchers delving into the depths of human cognition. Gardner posits a compelling notion: that a singular skill or ability cannot encapsulate human intelligence. Instead, he emphasizes that the human brain is intricately connected to diverse cognitive capabilities, each contributing to our unique intellectual profiles (Ahmad & Dzulkarnain, 2020).

In their research, Ahmad and Dzulkarnain (2020) underscore a prevalent misconception that individuals who excel in logical reasoning and mathematical prowess possess a singular, superior type of intelligence. Nonetheless, Gardner challenges this conventional belief, asserting that some individuals may grapple with mathematical challenges yet flourish spectacularly in other domains. These individuals often emerge as top achievers or innovative problem-solvers in their respective fields. By embracing this nuanced understanding of cognitive function, we can broaden our perception of intelligence beyond the confines of mathematics and logic, recognizing that it spans a rich tapestry of disciplines. These intelligence fields are thoughtfully categorized into nine unique types, as illustrated below.

Figure Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Categories (Ahmad & Dzulkarnain, 2020)



Explanations of the Nine Intelligences

		others and tackle conversations from different perceptions.
6	Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence	The ability to handle objects and possess various physical skills. This skill enables the perfect use of the mind to control the body's movement or action in union.
7	Linguistic Intelligence	The capacity to successfully engage with language and written material is crucial. It involves utilizing meta-linguistic abilities to create and comprehend language. People with this intelligence enjoy reading, writing, and tackling crossword puzzles.
8	Intra-personal Intelligence	Intra-personal intelligence people are self-motivated and can understand other people's thoughts and feelings.
9	Spatial Intelligence	Spatial intelligence includes the ability to think in mental imagery, spatial reasoning, image manipulation, graphic and artistic skills, and a vivid imagination. People who navigate ships for sailing, pilot aircraft, or design buildings exhibit this intelligence.

Overview of motivation theory

Motivation is a significant focus of study within educational psychology (Koenka, 2020). Motivation and student preferences are crucial to effective learning and achievement (Gopalan et al., 2017). Motivation can facilitate success in decision-making processes, while a lack of motivation can create substantial barriers to success (Jeamu L. et al., 2008). The movie examines various teaching approaches and their effects on student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. By analyzing the film using motivation theories such as Expectancy-Value Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Attribution Theory, one can assess the effectiveness of the depicted teaching methods and their impact on the protagonist, Ishaan, and other students.

Expectancy-Value Theory

Expectancy-value theory (EVT) is an essential framework for understanding academic motivation. It has been widely utilized to predict and explain students' task choices, their persistence in learning, and their overall academic performance. Researchers in this area argue that students' expectations of success and value on tasks significantly influence their choices, effort, persistence, and performance in various subjects, including language learning, mathematics, and science (Loh, 2019).

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) defined "expectancy for success" as an individual's belief in their competence to achieve different learning tasks in specific domains, both in the immediate context and in the future. Wigfield (1994) noted that children and adolescents often struggle to distinguish between immediate and long-term expectations. However, as they progress through mid-elementary and secondary education, they gradually develop a clearer understanding of these concepts, along with more concrete, domain-specific beliefs about value (Loh, 2019).

Research shows a noticeable decline in expectancy for success, which leads to a decrease in students' subjective task values across various subject areas. In the early elementary years, students maintain an optimistic view of their academic abilities and expectations. As they advance through primary and secondary education, this perspective shifts to a more accurate assessment of their abilities, which tends to become more stable in late adolescence. This shift is attributed to the increasing difficulty and complexity of the learning material as students progress to higher

levels of education. Additionally, older students are better equipped to interpret their teachers' feedback and make social comparisons among their peers (Loh, 2019).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-determination theory (SDT) is grounded in intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. In this context, intrinsic motivation represents the inherent human drive to incorporate various aspects into the learning experience, whereas extrinsic motivation highlights a significant difference in relative independence. Therefore, it can only reflect either external control or authentic self-regulation. To summarize, autonomy relates to the sense of choice and freedom. Competence is associated with effectiveness and confidence in undertaking and completing a task. At the same time, relatedness fosters a sense of safety and connection within a learning atmosphere. The previously mentioned learning environment can improve students' academic performance and motivation. Additionally, SDT consists of five sub-theories: cognitive evaluation theory (CET), organismic integration theory (OIT), causality orientations theory (COT), basic psychological needs theory (BPNT), and goal contents theory (GCT) (Gopalan et al., 2017).

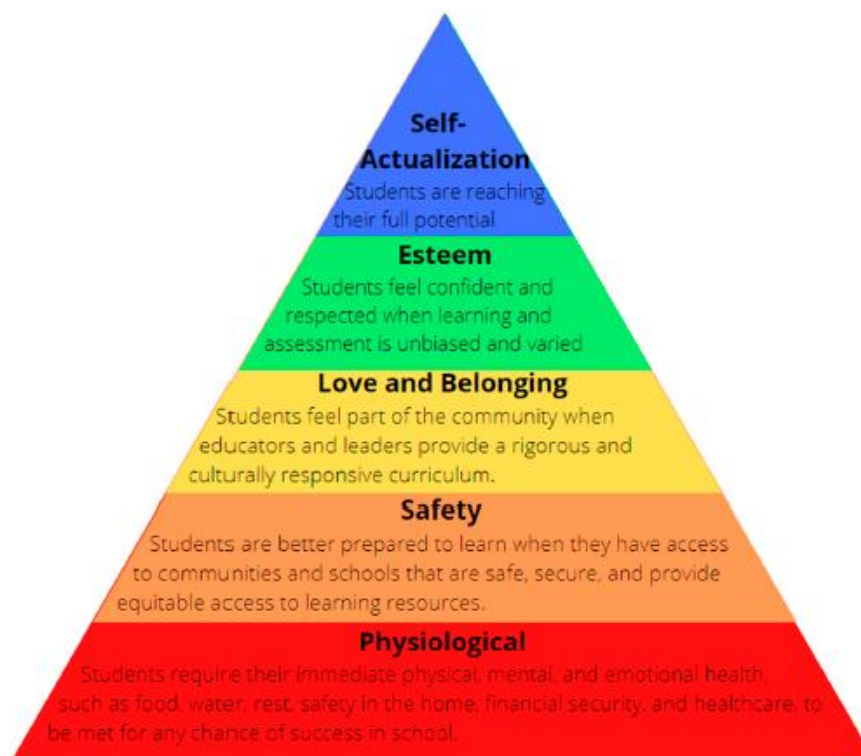
To begin with, CET is a theoretical framework in psychology aimed at elucidating how external consequences influence internal motivation. CET emphasizes the essential roles of autonomy and competence in nurturing intrinsic motivation, which is crucial across various fields such as education, arts, and sports. In contrast, OIT represents a range of motivational states divided into three main categories. In the impersonal or motivational stage, the emphasis is on competence. Lastly, BPNT categorizes human needs into three primary psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, emphasizing that satisfying these needs is vital for achieving engagement, motivation, healthy development, and overall well-being. Lastly, GCT differentiates between the satisfaction of basic needs and well-being about intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. Within a social context, intrinsic goals are particularly relevant to educational settings, making it more beneficial for students to concentrate on inherent goals rather than extrinsic ones to enhance their academic performance (Gopalan et al., 2017).

Overview of Maslow's hierarchy

Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs, a pyramid of five distinct levels. At the base of this pyramid are physiological needs, which encompass the essential biological requirements such as food, water, air, and shelter. The second level is dedicated to safety needs, reflecting the human desire for secure environments, stability, and protection. Moving up to the third level, we find belonging needs, which capture our innate longing for affectionate

relationships with friends, partners, children, and even a sense of community. The fourth level centers on esteem needs, encompassing self-respect—such as confidence, competence, achievement, and independence—and the desire for recognition from others, including status, fame, attention, and appreciation. Finally, at the pinnacle of the pyramid lies self-actualization, representing the ongoing quest to realize one's fullest potential and strive for personal growth, as shown in the following diagram (Shi et al., 2021).

Figure 1 Adapted Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs. Source: (Ansorger, 2021)



Attribution Theory

Kasap, S and Ünsal, F. (2021) stated that attribution is a psychological idea that pertains to how individuals interpret the causes of their daily experiences as external or internal. In other words, attribution serves as a person's explanation for events to help them handle and predict similar situations in the future based on a basic understanding of human behavior. This concept is also called perceived locus of causality, illustrating how individuals interpret their environment. Consequently, the way people perceive events and their influence on thoughts and behavior is defined by attribution theory. On a different note, this theory is often called common sense psychology. Individuals make judgments to comprehend the reasons behind the events they observe, focusing on perceived causes rather than actual ones. Therefore, according to attribution theory, people seek to understand the motivations behind others' actions or assign explanations to behaviors. They may consider one or multiple reasons when determining why someone acted in a particular way (Kasap, S & Ünsal, F., 2021). Attribution is based on a three-step process:

- The person must observe or recognize the behavior.
- The individual should believe that the action was carried out voluntarily.
- The individual must assess whether the person was compelled to perform the behavior.
- Thus, attribution theory is crucial in the context of learning and teaching.

Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive focus. The study centers on the film *Taare Zameen Par*. To enhance the completeness and efficiency of the research, it utilizes various data sources, including the film itself, internet resources, academic journals, and YouTube.

The data collection technique used in this paper is document analysis. Document analysis involves gathering data by examining existing research related to the topic. Documents can take many forms, such as writings, books, diaries, biographies, life histories, photographs, and creative works like films. In this case, the data collection involved watching *Taare Zameen Par* multiple times to fully understand the storyline. Additional information was gathered from various sources, including journals, YouTube, and other audiovisual media.

The specific technique applied in this research is content analysis. The steps taken during the analysis process are as follows: (a) Watching *Taare Zameen Par* several times, (b) Analyzing scenes and dialogues from the film, (c) Collecting all dialogues from *Taare Zameen Par* in English text form to create a script, and (d) Analyzing the content of the film according to predetermined categories.

Discussion

RQ1: How do Behaviorism and Constructivism explain his different responses to traditional teaching approaches versus Ram Nikumbh's approach in Ishaan's learning journey?

John Watson, often called the Father of Behaviorism, argues that psychology should concentrate mainly on observable behaviors instead of the unmeasurable internal mental processes (Watson, 1913). His pioneering experiments, especially the well-known Little Albert study, demonstrated how emotional reactions could be conditioned in individuals who previously did not display those feelings, as seen in this film. For example, Ishaan struggles to articulate his emotions due to his difficulties and frustrations in school despite his considerable efforts to enhance his academic performance without success. He refrains from communicating with his parents and has lost his enthusiasm for painting. Additionally, Nikumbh remarked, "They are children; it is natural, and if kids do not express their emotions in an art class, where will they?" By creating environments that promote emotional expression, educators and caregivers can assist children like Ishaan in reconnecting with their feelings and interests.

In Watson's study, a young child was taught to associate a previously neutral stimulus—a white rat—with a loud, frightening noise, developing a fear response to the rat. This study can reflect on Ishaan's case. Take Ishaan's scenario in English class. At the beginning of the class (before conditioning), his teacher asked the class to open the book by giving instruction (Unconditioned Stimulus, US), "Class, turn to page 38, chapter 4, paragraph 3. We are going to mark adjective today." repeatedly to get Ishaan's attention to follow it as he was daydreaming. He cannot follow the teacher's instructions. (Unconditioned Response, UR). After that, the teacher scolded him as he said the letters were dancing. Then he tried to read, but he failed to read, and the teacher scolded him, "Read the sentence loud and proper!" repeatedly (Conditioning Stimulus, US). This CS caused him to read randomly by twittering in the class (Unconditioned Response, UR). The teacher stopped him and kicked him out of the class by saying "Shameless boy" in front of the class, and everyone laughed (Conditioning Stimulus, US). This cycle of conditioning can significantly impact Ishaan's self-esteem and willingness to participate in class. The negative reinforcement from the teacher not only fails to encourage him but also exacerbates his struggles, leading to a detrimental feedback loop. To break this cycle, it would be crucial for educators to create a supportive environment that fosters confidence and reduces anxiety around learning.

Unfortunately, after this conditioning, when another teacher asked him to read or his mother asked him to write correctly, he would fear to read and refuse to do so (Conditioned Response, CR), and then, gradually, he lost his learning motivation and interest in the class. He also skipped the class by wandering the road alone without fear and eventually asked his brother, Yohan, to write the absent note. Continually, he will refuse to study. For instance, when his mum asked him to do his homework, "All spelling is wrong; you did it many times, but why still not remember them? Stop fooling, concentrate, Ishaan." he refused and ran away—scolding and labeling fools, shameless as the stimulus generalization. According to Watson's finding, stimulus generalization occurs when the organism responds to similar or related stimuli. Thus, Ishaan learned to associate fear with studying; he was scared of spelling, writing, reading, or anything related to studying. The behaviorist learning theory observes changes in behavior due to past experiences (Veranica, 2024).

Additionally, Watson's findings underscore the significance of classical conditioning in educational and organizational settings, suggesting that emotional and behavioral learning can be effectively cultivated. This approach advocates for structured methodologies in teaching and learning, where positive and negative reinforcements can shape student behavior and learning outcomes. By integrating principles of behaviorism, educators and organizations can create environments that foster desired behaviors, enhance motivation, and promote effective learning strategies. Unfortunately, this movie significantly reflected how Ishaan's school teachers and even his parents' negative reinforcements by labelling him as an "Idiot. Lazy. Dumb. Crazy." This approach did not yield the desired results for Ishaan. Even though his father sent him to the boarding school as negative reinforcement for him to train his discipline, it worsened until he did not want to talk with his parents and lost interest in painting. He was hopeless and drowned.

Watson believed that human emotion was a product of heredity, experience, and emotion, including fear, rage, and love. If fear can be learned, it is possible to unlearn or extinguish it. All the teachers applied the traditional teaching method, one-method-to-fit-all, without patiently analyzing all students' backgrounds, and they believed that normal kids must learn discipline and follow all the teachers' instructions to study. Ideally, teachers must prepare children for life race because students need to compete, succeed, and make a brighter future. For instance, in the boarding school, most teachers disagree with Nikumbh's teaching method. One teacher said, "The singing-dancing teaching style will not work here. Teachers prepare children for life's race. Kids have to compete, succeed, and make a future life." Teachers should understand our students to make learning more effective. Additionally, in the real world, most teachers follow the guidelines and school motto to teach students. For instance, one of the teachers said to Nikumbh, "Order. Discipline. Pillar. These are our school motto. Headmaster wants the student to be disciplined, so follow it." Hence, teachers will use the same method to teach the students how all the students can become the same organism without understanding how students feel and behave. According to Rahma (2021), the behaviorist theory argues that learning experiences change a person's behavior. The interaction between stimulus and response affects the learning process. Waldorf teachers believe in three feelings when teaching young children: respect, enthusiasm, and protection (Veranica, 2024).

Additionally, Watson believed he could transform any child into anyone he wanted to by changing the child's environment. His father applied this concept and decided to send him to a boarding school that trains students in self-discipline, but Ishaan initially refused. Nevertheless, he was compelled to attend. In the case of Ishaan, a child struggling with dyslexia, both his parents and teachers employed punitive measures as a response to his difficulties with reading and writing. These included scolding, detention, and even threats of sending him to a boarding school, all intended as deterrents. Despite being in the same class for a second year and facing complaints from teachers and the school principal about his performance, the punitive approach did not yield significant improvement.

The traditional teaching method of handling his situation did not accommodate Ishaan's individual learning needs and failed to recognize his cognitive differences, highlighting the necessity for personalized educational strategies. Once at the boarding school, his academic performance remained unchanged, prompting adverse reactions from teachers, who treated him harshly. This

approach led to significant emotional distress for Ishaan, contributing to learned helplessness—a psychological condition where individuals feel unable to change their circumstances. The ongoing experiences of failure further exacerbated Ishaan's low self-esteem, anxiety, and withdrawal behavior, leading to increased rebellion and avoidance of academic activities.

Constructivism, a learning theory advanced by educational theorists such as Giambattista Vico (1710), posits that learning is an active and meaningful process in which individuals construct knowledge through their experiences and interactions. Ram Shankar Nikumbh, a temporary art teacher at Ishaan's school, exemplified this approach, effectively implementing constructivist principles in his teaching practices. He had dyslexia and faced the same scenario as Ishaan. He encouraged Ishaan by sharing his experience and regained his motivation to learn and his life.

Upon recognizing Ishaan's dyslexia, Nikumbh adapted his teaching strategies to better cater to Ishaan's unique learning needs. He incorporated experiential and multisensory learning techniques, engaging Ishaan in hands-on and creative activities like painting, clay modeling, and storytelling. Giambattista Vico's assertion that "one only knows something if one can explain it" aligns well with contemporary educational philosophies emphasizing understanding through engagement and active construction of knowledge. Vico's perspective underscores the idea that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are involved in the process, allowing them to construct their understanding and express it clearly. In Ishaan's learning journey, Nikumbh's approach demonstrates the effectiveness of using creative methods, like painting, to help Ishaan grasp concepts of recognizing and writing letters that have become challenging for him. Nikumbh engaged Ishaan's creativity and imagination to make the letters more enjoyable and less intimidating, as Ishaan has a high intelligence in art. Additionally, this learning by painting can nurture Ishaan's emotional well-being and rekindle his interest in education, making the experience less about fear and creativity. Eventually, Ishaan begins to understand and recognize letters through a medium he enjoys; he might regain confidence in his abilities.

Jerome Bruner (1960) states, "Learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge." they defined constructivism as a learning theory in which learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge. Nikumbh will explain Ishaan's problem clearly at first so that Ishaan can learn about it and improve his learning by cooperating with Nikumbh. Bruner believed that the learner needed to do something because learning requires learners to engage with the world. Nikumbh let his students step outside the class to engage with the environment and create anything in the art class. This hands-on approach enables Ishaan to manipulate the surrounding things fully and his collected tongs to make a moving boat, which is crucial for constructing knowledge. When learners actively participate, they are more likely to internalize what they are learning. Nikumbh's approach demonstrates how educators can effectively implement constructivist principles in educational settings, especially for students who may find traditional learning methods challenging. By creating an environment where students can explore and develop, educators can help them gain a deeper understanding of concepts while increasing their motivation and engagement.

In addition to his instructional strategies, Nikumbh uses group discussion by telling stories about famous scientists, painters, and artists to inspire Ishaan. All students, including

Ishaan, have the chance to present their ideas. These narratives can inspire Ishaan by showing him that struggles are a standard part of success, and hearing how others overcame challenges can help him see the value of perseverance and creativity in his journey. In this group discussion, Ishaan can answer Nikumbh's question to regain Ishaan's confidence. He employs positive reinforcement and confidence-building techniques during storytelling sessions. Rather than relying on traditional punitive measures, he celebrates Ishaan's strengths, which help shift the focus from academic challenges to creative talents, facilitating emotional healing and self-discovery. For example, Nikumbh organized the whole school painting competition, and Ishaan won. This approach to winning the art competition is pivotal for Ishaan, as it fosters intrinsic motivation. Students who experience success and acknowledgment are likelier to pursue their interests out of a genuine desire to learn and create rather than solely for external rewards. This shift in motivation is essential for long-term engagement in learning.

By the end of this learning journey, Ishaan had learned to recognize letters and read words and sentences; he had also acquired practical skills such as dressing and tying his shoes—tasks he had previously found difficult. With the care and support of his teacher, Ishaan was encouraged to improve, leading to significant advancements in his handwriting. This transformative teaching methodology demonstrated Ishaan's strong capacity for learning and creativity as a painter. Thus, Nikumbh fostered Ishaan's autonomy and self-efficacy. Ishaan could learn at his own pace, explore alternative reading and writing methods, and ultimately excel in painting.

In summary, the behavioral teaching methods used in Taare Zameen Par led to Ishaan's passive learning and compliance, which were driven by fear and emotional distress. This method illustrates the limitations of such a rigid approach to education. In contrast, constructivism in Taare Zameen Par promotes individualized learning, creativity, and emotional well-being, emphasizing the importance of recognizing diverse learning needs. Nikumbh's empathetic, learner-centered approach helps Ishaan rediscover his potential, demonstrating that when children naturally learn aligned with education, it fosters academic success and supports emotional growth and self-belief.

RQ2: How do variations in individual learning styles impact classroom performance and student well-being by addressing diverse learning needs, as portrayed in 'Taare Zameen Par'?

Taare Zameen Par (2007) is a powerful film that explores individual differences in learning and their impact on classroom performance and student well-being. The study of individual differences in education is the differences in thinking, feeling, and acting among students in a class (Fitri et al., 2021). The protagonist, Ishaan Awasthi, struggles in a rigid, one-size-fits-all education system due to dyslexia, which affects his reading and writing skills, even to follow instructions. The film demonstrates how a lack of understanding and support from teachers and parents can lead to poor academic performance, low self-esteem, and emotional distress. His journey highlights how diverse learning needs require flexible teaching methods, emotional support, and an inclusive educational environment. The individual difference in the

learning process is the task of educators in understanding students because they face students with various individual differences.

Ishaan has dyslexia, which makes reading, writing, and spelling challenging for him—essential skills in a traditional classroom setting. Unfortunately, his teachers and parents often misunderstand his difficulties, resulting in poor academic performance. He frequently confuses similar-looking letters, such as “b” and “d,” and finds it hard to spell, read, and write words correctly. Additionally, Ishaan struggles with understanding numbers and mathematical concepts, further impacting his performance in class. Despite these challenges in traditional academics, Ishaan is highly innovative and artistic, showcasing creative strengths often overlooked in the conventional school system. Keefe (1979) views learning style as how a person accepts, interacts, and views his environment.

Additionally, Willing (1988) defines learning styles as learning habits that learners favor. Regrettably, his talents are not valued, limiting his recognition and support in areas where he excels. His teachers label him a “failure” and “troublemaker,” reinforcing his struggles and discouraging him from trying. His poor performance leads to repeated failures, demotivation, and a lack of engagement in school.

Ishaan experiences learning differences that significantly impact his emotional and psychological well-being, mainly due to a lack of understanding from the adults in his life. When schools fail to recognize individual learning needs, students like Ishaan suffer academically and emotionally. This situation contributes to feelings of isolation, misunderstanding, and low self-worth. The continuous cycles of failure and criticism from teachers and parents lead Ishaan to internalize the belief that he is “stupid” and incapable of learning. As a result, he may exhibit frustration and overwhelm, manifesting as disruptive behavior in the classroom and at home. Such actions, unfortunately, result in additional consequences and further alienation. Based on previous research, educators do not understand and study student learning styles in advance, causing much harm to students; this is proven by research conducted by Jeanet & Neleke (2016) in their study entitled *Identification of Styles*. Over time, Ishaan becomes increasingly withdrawn, leading to a decline in interest in activities he previously enjoyed, including painting and playing, after his father sent him to boarding school—impacting Ishaan's well-being. Ishaan's emotional distress manifests as anxiety, sadness, and a sense of hopelessness. The lack of support exacerbates his struggles, leading to a cycle of poor performance and declining mental health.

The film powerfully illuminates how the attitudes and actions of teachers and parents can profoundly impact the challenges faced by students with learning differences. It presents stark contrasts between negative and positive influences. Ishaan's traditional teachers exemplify detrimental approaches, employing rigid, one-size-fits-all methods that fail to accommodate his unique learning needs. Rather than fostering understanding, they punish him for his mistakes, deepening his struggles. Additionally, Ishaan's father dismisses his difficulties, misattributing them to laziness and a lack of discipline. He views education as a mechanized process, focused only on preparation for life, devoid of empathy—this mindset further alienates Ishaan and stifles his potential.

Every student has a variety of learning styles in the learning process (Fitri et al., 2021). Conversely, the temporary art teacher, Nikumbh, embodies a transformative approach to education. He is

a perfect example of a compassionate, sincere, and inspiring educator who understands that life is a continual learning journey. Recognizing Ishaan's dyslexia, Nikumbh adopts a personalized teaching strategy, utilizing creative methods such as art and storytelling to ignite Ishaan's passion for learning and help him rebuild his confidence. The contrast between the two educational philosophies in the film emphasizes the critical need for empathy and adaptability in teaching, demonstrating that genuine understanding can unlock the potential of every student.

The critical moment in the movie occurs when Ishaan finally receives the support and understanding he has been yearning for through Nikumbh. This crucial turning point highlights the transformative potential of recognizing and addressing individual educational differences, ultimately enhancing academic success and well-being.

Nikumbh employs multisensory teaching methods—such as writing in the sand and using visual aids—effectively tailoring his approach to Ishaan's unique learning style. As noted by Fernald in Munawir (2005), the multisensory technique is recognized as one of the most effective teaching strategies, engaging all defined stimulus modalities. This method captivates students and fosters an inclusive learning atmosphere where every child can thrive. Thus, Nikumbh's multisensory approach exemplifies how tailoring teaching methods to meet the specific needs of students can lead to more effective and meaningful learning experiences. This approach addresses academic goals and nurtures emotional and social development.

The multisensory approach engages and stimulates all the senses, including sight, hearing, touch, and movement, often referred to as the VAKT method (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile). This approach makes it easier for children to grasp concepts, particularly about numbers (Udin et al., 2022). For instance, Nikumbh let Ishaan play the jumping grid and follow his instructions to learn maths and listening. Thus, this activity can engage all the senses while improving Ishaan's motor skills. Activities that require movement, such as jumping, enhance cognitive learning and improve motor skills and coordination. Physical activities can help Ishaan develop better control and balance, which are critical in academic settings and daily life.

Additionally, Nikumbh praises Ishaan's artistic talent and helps him recognize his strengths, boosting his self-esteem by organizing the painting competition. Many individuals with dyslexia often excel in the arts, such as music, dance, drawing, or acting. They frequently possess a natural ability to perceive patterns in noise, enabling them to generate creative and abstract ideas from what many would consider mundane sensory environments, as Chakravarty (2009) mentioned.

Over time, Ishaan's academic performance improves as he gains confidence and learns effective strategies to tackle his challenges. His emotional well-being is restored through the support, understanding, and appreciation he receives from those around him. By the movie's end, teachers remark, “Ishaan is a bright boy” and “What a lovely boy he is.” Additionally, Nikumbh takes the time to educate Ishaan's parents about dyslexia, helping them grasp how to support their son better. Initially, Ishaan struggles to estimate distances or catch a ball, but by the film's conclusion, he joyfully plays soccer with his friend.

This movie reminds us that everyone learns differently, which can impact how they perform in school and feel overall. By recognizing these differences and offering personalized support,

teachers and parents can help students like Ishaan succeed academically and emotionally. It shows empathy, understanding, and inclusive education are essential for every child's potential.

RQ3: How does Ram Nikumbh apply Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory to help Ishaan?

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, introduced in 1983, questions the conventional perspective of intelligence as a singular, overarching capability. Instead, it suggests that intelligence encompasses various forms representing different methods of processing information and addressing problems (Cavas & Cavas, 2020). Thus, in the film, Ishaan's art teacher, Ram Shankar Nikumbh, applies this theory to help Ishaan, a dyslexic child struggling in a traditional school system but above average ability in more than one intelligence by giving cognitive and affective support. Nikumbh identifies Ishaan's strengths and weaknesses and tailors his teaching methods accordingly.

First, Nikumbh uses verbal-linguistic and musical-rhythmic intelligence to help Ishaan, who struggles with reading and writing due to dyslexia. Regarding verbal-linguistic intelligence, Nikumbh asked the principal for permission to test Ishaan's spelling verbally instead of in writing. Nikumbh's decision to test Ishaan's spelling verbally instead of through writing is a fantastic demonstration of understanding and adapting to a student's unique needs, particularly given that Ishaan struggles with dyslexia. This approach aligns with Ishaan's verbal-linguistic intelligence and alleviates the anxiety associated with written tests.

By asking the principal for permission to make this adjustment, Nikumbh advocates for Ishaan's learning style and seeks to create an inclusive environment where students can demonstrate their knowledge in ways that suit them best. This method allows Ishaan to express his understanding without the barriers that traditional writing can impose, enabling him to showcase his strengths and build confidence in his abilities. Moreover, verbal tests can enhance Ishaan's auditory processing and pronunciation skills, reinforcing his engagement with language and spelling. It emphasizes that there are multiple ways to assess and appreciate learning, which is vital in understanding diverse educational needs. Thus, this verbal test highlights the importance of flexibility in educational assessments and the significance of recognizing individual student strengths.

Instead of forcing rote learning, Nikumbh uses recording sounds with constant rhythms to improve the reading and phonetic techniques. He encourages Ishaan to listen to recordings and express himself orally, reducing the stress of traditional reading methods. For example, Ishaan can read the sentences by following the tapes in his comfortable rhythms or pace in the scene of the part 2 movie [57:34]. Listening to sentences read aloud while following along can help bridge the gap between auditory processing and visual text, making it easier for him to decode words and improve fluency. This approach alleviates the pressure associated with traditional reading methods and fosters a more positive learning experience. Encouraging Ishaan to express himself orally builds his confidence and reinforces his understanding of language through spoken expression. Thus, the combination of auditory learning and verbal expression allows for a multi-sensory approach, which is crucial for students with dyslexia.

Regarding logical-mathematical intelligence, Nikumbh introduces playful methods to engage Ishaan in understanding mathematics operations. For example, instead of giving Ishaan a

formula, Nikumbh gets the jumping grid game to ask Ishaan to jump by asking, "Now add three?" Then, Ishaan will jump forward three grids and answer his question at the scene of part 2 [57:59]. Nikumbh's approach to fostering Ishaan's logical-mathematical intelligence through playful and interactive methods is an exceptional strategy that transforms how math is perceived and learned. By incorporating physical activity, such as the jumping grid game, he ties mathematical concepts to movement, making them more engaging and relatable for Ishaan. This method breaks the monotony of traditional math instruction and allows Ishaan to experience mathematical operations physically, reinforcing his understanding in a way that makes sense to him. The playful nature of the jumping game demystifies mathematical concepts like addition, showing Ishaan that math can be enjoyable rather than intimidating. By removing the fear associated with formulas and traditional drills, Nikumbh creates a learning atmosphere where Ishaan feels safe to explore and make mistakes. This approach encourages problem-solving and critical thinking without the added pressure that can often accompany more traditional methods. Moreover, by connecting math to movement and play, Nikumbh helps Ishaan develop a fondness for learning—transforming math from a subject of anxiety into one of excitement and curiosity. This interactive learning enhances comprehension and supports Ishaan's creativity and ability to follow instructions effectively. Thus, Nikumbh's recognition that logical-mathematical intelligence is about making connections rather than just solving problems highlights the importance of personalized learning experiences.

Regarding visual-spatial intelligence, Ishaan excels in painting and visual representation. Nikumbh recognizes this talent and uses the arts as a gateway to learning, integrating it with language, mathematics, and storytelling. He allows Ishaan to express himself through drawings and supports his confidence development by employing visual learning techniques. For example, Nikumbh used painting to help Ishaan practice writing the alphabet to help Ishaan recognize and remember the alphabet in the learning method that suits Ishaan. This example is the scene in part 2 of the movie [56:39]. Before the summer school holidays, Nikumbh organized a painting competition for all teachers and students, ensuring Ishaan was appreciated by others, including his once-dismissive teachers and classmates. This recognition restores Ishaan's self-worth, motivating him to engage in other areas of learning. Thus, this holistic approach to education, which embraces individual talents and interests, emphasizes the importance of emotional and social support in a learning environment.

Regarding bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, Nikumbh incorporates hands-on activities, outdoor learning, and movement-based approaches instead of confining Ishaan to traditional desk-based learning, which helps him stay engaged. Morgan et al. (2021) noted that teachers provide opportunities for students to physically engage with objects to learn new content, help students connect concrete experiences with abstract concepts, and make learning enjoyable. Nikumbh also encourages Ishaan to express himself physically through art and clay modelling. For example, instead of using the pencil-and-paper method, Nikumbh used plasticine to let Ishaan hand make the alphabet and also used the blackboards to ask Ishaan to write the numbers in enormous numbers and gradually decrease the size. Ishaan was confident and trusted Nikumbh. Hence, these methods can make learning more fun, enabling Ishaan to develop fine motor skills and enhance his memory through tactile involvement. The transition from larger to minor writing on a blackboard is an excellent strategy that allows

Ishaan to practice and refine his skills progressively while keeping the activity dynamic and visually stimulating.

Ishaan initially struggled with peer relationships due to low self-esteem, which affected his interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. However, Nikumbh helped him build social confidence by encouraging teamwork, group activities, and recognition from classmates. Additionally, Nikumbh raised awareness among other students and teachers about learning differences through storytelling. Nikumbh tells the students about popular scientists and artists, etc., who also have learning problems to help students understand that we should support and encourage individuals who think outside the box in our communities today. Nikumbh fosters a more supportive environment for Ishaan. For example, in the scene [46:53], Nikumbh shared that many great scientists, painters, singers, etc., throughout history have faced opposition and found themselves misunderstood and recognized their time. However, their unique perspectives ultimately led to groundbreaking advancements and societal changes. However, their ability to see the world differently allowed them to break boundaries and inspire others. This storytelling highlights the importance of nurturing individual talents and perspectives, which can lead to transformative ideas and solutions that benefit society. After that, Ishaan gained attention and interest from that class when he showed his smile. Thus, Ishaan feels accepted, connects with classmates, and develops social confidence, learning that he is not alone.

Last, regarding naturalistic intelligence, Nikumbh takes Ishaan and other students outside the classroom to allow him to observe and learn from the small pond's nature. Nikumbh's approach to integrating nature into Ishaan's learning experience is a beautiful way to engage his naturalistic intelligence. Taking Ishaan and his classmates outside the traditional classroom allows them to connect with their environment, observe natural beauty, and use their surroundings to inspire creative expression. This approach nourishes Ishaan's curiosity and love for observation and encourages him to explore and appreciate the world around him. Creating an environment where students can freely express their creativity using natural materials promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance, particularly for Ishaan, who may have felt marginalized. By highlighting Ishaan's creative efforts in front of his peers, Nikumbh fosters a supportive atmosphere that encourages collaboration and mutual respect among students. This recognition can significantly enhance Ishaan's self-esteem and motivate him to participate more actively in class.

Furthermore, this holistic approach to education—where art, nature, and learning intersect—can make the learning process much more enjoyable and memorable for Ishaan and his classmates. Research by Morgan et al. (2021) on the chemicals released by the brain during learning supports the idea that teachers should tailor their instruction to match students' abilities. If students feel frustrated or bored because the lessons are too complex or straightforward, their brains may produce too much or too few chemicals necessary for effective learning. As a result, students might withdraw or misbehave. It highlights the value of experiential learning and reinforces the idea that education can be dynamic and multifaceted. By integrating nature into art and learning, Nikumbh makes the educational process more holistic and enjoyable for Ishaan.

By recognizing Ishaan's strengths and applying Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, Nikumbh transforms Ishaan's learning experience. Gardner's theory has significantly influenced

educational practices by encouraging the development of teaching methods that cater to diverse learning styles. Educators should recognize and nurture all types of intelligence in students rather than focusing solely on linguistic and logical-mathematical skills (Attwood, 2022). Nikumbh shifts the focus from rigid academic performance to a more personalized, strengths-based approach, helping Ishaan regain confidence, improve his skills, and thrive academically and emotionally.

RQ4: How do these diverse teaching approaches inspire student engagement and elevate learning outcomes through the lens of motivation theory?

Motivation is a significant focus of study within educational psychology (Koenka, 2020). Motivation and student preferences are crucial to effective learning and achievement (Gopalan et al., 2017). Motivation can facilitate success in decision-making processes, while a lack of motivation can create substantial barriers to success (Jeamu L. et al., 2008). The movie examines various teaching approaches and their effects on student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. By analyzing the film using motivation theories such as Expectancy-Value Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Attribution Theory, one can assess the effectiveness of the depicted teaching methods and their impact on the protagonist, Ishaan, and other students.

Deci and Ryan's SDT, introduced in 2017, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human motivation, personality, and well-being. At the core of this theory is the concept of self-determination, which explains intrinsically motivated behavior—actions that feel autonomous and are not reliant on external controls or reinforcers (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Unfortunately, traditional teaching methods often fall short of meeting the three essential psychological needs outlined in SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, all of which are fundamental to the self (Connell & Wellborn, 1991).

Ishaan's school teacher adopted a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction, overlooking the individual needs of each student. Ishaan, in particular, felt a lack of control over his learning experience, especially when pressured to fit a specific mold. When he mentioned that he saw the letters as "dancing," the teacher dismissed his observation as foolishness and insisted that he read aloud. This situation led to Ishaan struggling through the assignment, which deepened his frustration. The misunderstanding diminished his confidence and trapped him in a cycle of failure, making him feel inadequate. The teacher's lack of empathy created a hostile environment that harmed the student-teacher relationship. At Ishaan's school, traditional methods employed strict discipline, humiliation, and punitive measures to enforce compliance. As a result, peers often labelled him as an "idiot," "lazy," "dumb," or "crazy" due to his struggles with reading and writing. He frequently faced removal from class as punishment, which greatly influenced his behavior. When Ishaan began to feel isolated or intimidated, he withdrew from class activities, struggled to participate, and eventually lost interest in painting while at boarding school. Motivation is closely tied to our emotional states; it manifests as feelings that drive action and are crucial to human behavior. Unfortunately, the teachers overlooked their students' unique needs, interests, and learning preferences. Ishaan's lack of support from parents and educators only added to his growing disconnect. Over time, he became increasingly disengaged and demotivated, negatively impacting his self-image and intrinsic motivation. This scenario highlights behavioral regulation and

motivation variations, aligning with Causality Orientation Theory (COT). Ishaan felt helpless and unmotivated, navigating an environment where he felt neither understood nor valued.

In contrast, Ram Shankar Nikumbh adopted an empathetic, supportive, creative, and experiential student-centered approach, promoting autonomy in line with SDT. Nikumbh focused on recognizing and addressing his students' needs, interests, and strengths. The Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT) emphasizes that motivation stems from fulfilling the three core psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (M. & E.L., 2014). For instance, Nikumbh introduced storytelling and painting as engaging methods for teaching the alphabet, reigniting Ishaan's interest in learning. He also shared stories of well-known individuals who faced learning difficulties, which helped satisfy Ishaan's psychological need for relatedness. Ishaan felt connected with Nikumbh, who understood his feelings and experiences after Ishaan knew that Nikumbh did have learning difficulties in the past. This interaction marked a turning point for Ishaan as he moved from external regulation to identified regulation, recognizing the value of his learning and aligning it with his personal goals and identity. Consequently, Ishaan found himself in a supportive learning environment that nurtured his motivation and engagement.

Over time, Ishaan built his intrinsic motivation by pursuing learning through creativity and painting for his enjoyment and interest. He gradually mastered reading and writing skills himself, thanks to Nikumbh's support, which emphasized autonomy more effectively than that of other teachers. Nikumbh's empathy and encouragement fostered a sense of belonging and trust, even as Nikumbh provided external rewards to motivate Ishaan. He also acknowledged Ishaan's dyslexia and tailored his support to help Ishaan experience success, building his confidence and enhancing his competence in terms of relatedness. Nikumbh's methods illustrate the spectrum of extrinsic motivation, ranging from external control to complete internalization, as described in Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). As a result, Ishaan became intrinsically motivated, engaged, and eager to learn.

Additionally, Nikumbh built a positive, nurturing relationship with students and Ishaan. This approach is fulfilled with intrinsic motivation, part of the action when it is an exciting, enjoyable, or intrinsically satisfying experience. Conversely, extrinsic motivation is tied to an action's consequences, as externally motivated learners seek pleasant consequences and try to avoid unpleasant ones. Forms of extrinsic motivation of the organismic integration theory can be distinguished according to the extent to which the action is integrated into the self. The more internalized the motivation, the more it becomes part of a learner's identity (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Students who identify with their motivations are more likely to pursue learning with enthusiasm and commitment, often resulting in a deeper engagement and satisfaction with their educational experiences.

Goal Content Theory (GCT), as part of SDT, delves into the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goals and their subsequent influence on motivation and overall well-being. This concept is exemplified through the character of Ishaan. Intrinsic goals, such as personal growth, mastery of skills, and nurturing relationships, tend to foster a more profound sense of well-being and fulfilment. In Ishaan's case, his confidence in picking up new skills and his enthusiasm for learning are significantly heightened when he is supported by Nikumbh, who provides a nurturing and encouraging environment.

Nikumbh adopts a trial-and-error approach, allowing Ishaan to explore and learn at his own pace. He plays a crucial role by verbally acknowledging Ishaan's efforts and successes, which bolsters Ishaan's self-esteem. Furthermore, the physical gesture of affection, such as gently touching Ishaan's head, is a powerful reinforcement, demonstrating care and encouragement. This supportive interaction enhances Ishaan's motivation to learn and cultivates a safe space for him to thrive emotionally and socially. Through these strategies, Nikumbh effectively illustrates the principles of GCT, highlighting how intrinsic goals can lead to genuine personal development and well-being.

What were Ishaan's needs based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the film? Maslow found that humans have five needs: survival, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-realization, as shown in Figure 1 (Shi et al., 2021). The school environment fails to meet Ishaan's fundamental psychological needs, often ignoring personal struggles and focusing only on academic performance. For instance, the school teachers compared Ishaan with Yohan (Ishaan's brother) in academics, and they thought that Ishaan was mentally disabled. The punitive approach fosters fear and isolation, undermining his sense of safety and belonging. Besides, school teachers often lack personal connection with strict authority-based relationships.

Regarding self-esteem, constant criticism and comparisons to his peers diminish Ishaan's self-worth. Without these basic needs, Ishaan cannot progress toward self-actualization or reach his full potential, and he even neglects his interest in painting. Hence, the traditional methods often neglect psychological needs, focusing only on academic success and discipline.

In contrast, Nikumbh's approach aligns with Maslow's hierarchy by ensuring students feel safe, valued, and supported before expecting them to excel academically. First, Nikumbh understood Ishaan's situation after Nikumbh had a family visit and went through all of Ishaan's workbooks. Nikumbh recognized students' well-being and emotional states as Nikumbh understood that Ishaan struggled because Ishaan lacked psychological needs. Ansorger (2021) said that the psychological level includes the emotional wellness students require by proving that students who struggle with their emotions impact their motivation and abilities in school. Hence, Nikumbh began the class by telling stories and sharing his story with Ishaan to let him know that Ishaan was not alone. This action also provides a safe, judgment-free classroom where students feel comfortable expressing themselves when Ishaan first talks to Nikumbh. After that, Nikumbh focuses on helping Ishaan meet his higher-level needs. Regarding love and belonging, Ishaan experiences acceptance and appreciation from his teacher and peers.

Regarding esteem, his artistic abilities are acknowledged and celebrated, enhancing his self-worth, such as in the school painting competition. Ansorger (2021) supported that students also require esteem and respect from others. The respect and esteem from others must be stable and based on reality. This respect and esteem will enable students to gain self-confidence and view themselves as valuable. If the respect and esteem from others is false or made up, the student may develop feelings of inferiority or inadequacy (Ansorger, 2021). For self-actualization, as these needs are satisfied, Ishaan starts to thrive both academically and creatively—Ishaan transitions from merely getting by to genuinely flourishing, achieving his full potential.

Weiner (1992; 2010) defined attributions as people's subjective reasons and explanations for their failure or success at a

task, test, or activity (as cited by Kasap, S & Ünsal, F., 2021). Through Attribution Theory, Nikumbh assists Ishaan in changing his perspective on failures. Rather than attributing his difficulties to internal, unchanging factors (e.g., “I am not smart”), Ishaan learns to view them as external, manageable challenges (e.g., “I have dyslexia, but I can improve with proper support”). Ishaan cultivates a growth mindset and gains control over his educational journey. Regarding Attribution Theory, Ishaan attributes his academic difficulties to internal and stable factors, telling himself, “I am mentally retard.” This belief leads to learned helplessness. Unfortunately, teachers reinforce this mindset by labelling his failures as laziness or a lack of effort rather than acknowledging his unique learning differences. Hence, these scenarios show that the internal locus of control within the student can lead to success or unsuccess.

Nikumbh believes intelligence and skills are malleable and can be improved through guidance and support. He uses innovative teaching techniques, such as visual learning and creative activities, to help Ishaan overcome his learning difficulties, reinforcing that struggles are temporary and that problems can be overcome with the right approach. Traditional teaching methods tend to foster a mindset that views intelligence as fixed and unchangeable. Ishaan was a struggling student who was often labelled as an “idiot” or “lazy,” which discouraged them from making an effort because they believed their abilities could not improve. Hence, when the person has suitable methods, the person can change over time for future success.

Last but not least, Nikumbh instructs students that they can influence their learning outcomes through effort, strategies, and self-belief. In contrast, traditional education often suggests that success is beyond control, influenced by innate intelligence or luck. For example, Nikumbh implemented alternative learning techniques customized to individual needs, helping Ishaan rebuild his confidence and recognize that his performance was something he could manage. Conversely, when Ishaan struggled academically, teachers remarked, “Ishaan is an abnormal student that is mentally retarded,” suggesting that academic success is fixed rather than something that can be affected by effort and strategy. Therefore, Nikumbh’s teaching approach supports positive attribution patterns, reinforcing that learning lies within a student’s reach and that abilities can improve with effort.

On the other hand, conventional teaching methods frequently encourage a fixed mindset, resulting in learned helplessness and diminished motivation. Psychological education should incorporate supportive, student-centered approaches to ensure students cultivate confidence and adopt a proactive learning stance. By transforming educational practices to promote internal, unstable, and controllable attributions, we can empower students to take responsibility for their academic achievements and personal development.

Finally, Ishaan will attempt to relearn under Nikumbh’s guidance, which is based on expectancy-value theory (EVT), one of the major approaches to studying academic motivation. This theory is commonly used to predict and explain students’ choices of tasks, persistence in learning, and academic performance. Scholars in this field argue that students’ expectations for success and subjective values associated with tasks directly influence their choices, effort, perseverance, and performance across various subjects, including language learning, mathematics, and science (Loh, 2019). From this movie, Ishaan initially thought that he did not have any chance of improving his academics and even

considered himself really mentally retarded under critic of his parents and teachers; this is a zero factor that caused the zero motivation in his education and entire life. After Nikumbh’s help and guidance, Ishaan can cooperate with Nikumbh to learn and start from the ground (high expectation), then slowly pick up his confidence to change his academics, such as reading, writing, and calculating, which is a high-value for Ishaan. Hence, at this point, the expectancy-value theory is achieved.

In conclusion, Taare Zameen Par highlights the transformative power of student-centered, empathetic teaching approaches. By addressing students’ psychological needs and fostering a positive learning environment, educators can unlock their potential and inspire lifelong learning. The film serves as a reminder that every child is unique and deserves an education that nurtures their strengths, supports their challenges, and celebrates their individuality.

Conclusion

Nikumbh’s teaching style exemplifies motivational theories, particularly Self-Determination Theory, by fostering autonomy, competence, and a sense of relatedness among students. His approach embraces constructivist learning, empowering students to build knowledge through experiences and guidance rather than rote memorization. In stark contrast, traditional teaching often relies on behaviorist principles that depend on rewards and punishments, failing to address the unique learning needs of each student.

The film powerfully illustrates the critical importance of recognizing diverse learning needs and adopting student-centered approaches that actively empower learners. This methodology enables students to develop confidence, motivation, and a genuine love for learning. Educators must prioritize effort, adaptability, and resilience over outdated notions of fixed intelligence. Teachers should consistently offer targeted support to facilitate improvement rather than labeling students as weak. Educators can significantly enhance motivation and engagement in the learning process by creating a safe and open environment for students to express their challenges.

Educators and parents should work together to enhance educational practices and ensure every student receives the support they need. The following recommendations aim to promote a more effective educational environment:

- Academic institutions should shift from rigid, exam-driven teaching methods to more personalized, imaginative, and inclusive learning strategies. This involves training educators to understand and address diverse learning needs.
- Teachers should develop the skills necessary to recognize and assist students with learning differences, ensuring no child is overlooked. This approach promotes Constructivist and Growth Mindset practices.
- Schools should foster experiential learning, critical thinking, and resilience-building strategies that empower students. This means reducing reliance on behaviorist techniques, such as rewards and punishments.
- Educators should emphasize intrinsic motivation and encourage self-directed learning rather than depending on external rewards.
- Schools must focus on providing emotional support, mentorship, and a safe learning environment to cultivate student confidence and creativity.

By implementing these recommendations, educators and parents can create a more supportive and effective education system for all students.

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