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TO THE PROBLEM OF INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING/TEACHING

IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

As the demand for qualified employees to serve in business, industry, government, and academic institutions increases, so the need for educating and training these people becomes greater and greater, in recent years, numerous attempts have been made to develop methods and techniques and to prepare new materials which will meet these needs. Modern classrooms are teeming with students of varying interests, backgrounds, abilities and learning needs. To engage these students, learning must be every bit as diverse as they are. The consideration of the problems which this situation presents brings us to a consideration of individualized learning. The article *is aimed* at showing techniques and methods of individualization, their efficiency and advantages for students in higher educational institutions.

The term 'individualization' is the combination of some different concepts. Firstly, we can speak about individual training when a teacher works with only one student. There are a lot of advantages of such training model: a teacher knows student's weaknesses, gaps in knowledge; a teacher adjusts all steps and pace of his work individually taking into account student's level of knowledge and his abilities. Secondly, we can speak about an individual approach when within a group a teacher works with individual students individually taking into account their intellectual and psychological characteristics. Moreover, Gail L. Baker and Isadore Goldberg [1] define an individualized learning system as a highly flexible system of multiple materials and procedures, in which the student is given substantial responsibility for planning and carrying out his own organized program of studies, with the assistance of his teachers, and in which his progress is determined solely in terms of those plans.

There is a difference between personalization, differentiation and individualization. The first is learner-centered; the others are teacher-centered. According to the U.S. Department of Education individualization refers to instruction that is paced to the learning needs of different learners. Learning goals are the same for all students, but students can progress through the material at different speeds according to their learning needs. For example, students might take longer to progress through a given topic, skip topics that cover information they already know, or repeat topics they need more help on. Differentiation refers to instruction that is tailored to the learning preferences of different learners. Learning goals are the same for all students, but the method or approach of instruction varies according to the preferences of each student or what research has found works best for students like them. Personalization refers to instruction that is paced to learning needs, tailored to learning preferences, and tailored to the specific interests of different learners. In an environment that is fully personalized, the learning objectives and content as well as the method and pace may all vary (so personalization encompasses differentiation and individualization) [2]. Thus, individualization is when the pace of learning is

adjusted to meet the needs of each student. With individualization, each student shares the same overall learning goals, but individual students are able to progress through learning objectives at different speeds. For example, some students may take a little longer on topics they haven't quite grasped, but can move quickly when they have demonstrated mastery.

There are certain underlying basic assumptions regarding learning [3, P. 202] when we talk of 'individualization':

- people learn – even the same material – in different ways (this implies accepting different learning styles);
- people can learn from a variety of sources, even if the final goals are the same – implying that the instructional materials can vary;
- direct teaching by a teacher is not essential for learning; it is only one of many possible experiences – which means that – a teacher can be a facilitator instead of a preacher;
- a variety of learning activities can take place simultaneously – referring to integrative language-learning activities;
- people may have a variety of goals or objectives for learning a second language – implying that learners learn for different reasons.

These five basic assumptions – different learning styles, a variety of sources, the teacher as facilitator, integrated learning tasks, and different learning goals – lead towards individualization.

In all assumptions the key word is 'the individual'. Teachers, interacting with the student, base not only on his knowledge and training skills, but also on his psychological characteristics. Not only the pace of work, typical for the student, but also the qualities of the student's personality like self-confidence and sociability are taken into account. Thus, the task of a teacher is to find a key to each student, to create an atmosphere of goodwill in the classroom. Although it seems obvious, to achieve this is not always easy.

If speaking about the difficulties we should recognize that it is a time-consuming process. Teachers must think over a syllabus that meets the needs, abilities, and interests of each learner; personalized goals, means, and expectations for learners; teaching methods tailored to the needs of the learners. Especially difficult it might be for young teachers who are not so fast to redirect the course of a lesson. It is not easy, so a teacher should work using the prompts. A teacher either might mark separately the tasks that he gives to individual students or he might mark special instructions, lesson stages which serve as individualization techniques. In general, the work is energy-consuming to achieve results and a teacher keeps in his mind all the factors that may predict the development of the training situation.

Gail L. Baker and Isadore Goldberg emphasize the importance of student and teacher features [1]. The abilities and requirements of each student must be considered in planning his overall program of instruction and each of its component parts. These abilities and requirements must be specified in terms of entry level behavior, with regard to the student's weaknesses and strengths. The characteristics of each student play a major role in the selection of objectives, the sequence of study, and the choice of materials and procedures. It should be emphasized that regardless of the importance of the student in the individualized learning system, the teacher is no less important.

Teachers serve in varied roles – as members of the systems analysis curriculum development and evaluation team, as diagnosticians and evaluators, and as counselors. The individualized learning system provides for a significant amount of teacher-student interaction. Among other approaches, the teacher spends more time answering questions of individuals and small groups than lecturing to an entire class. In general, the teacher is concerned with reinforcing the behaviors appropriate for each of the individual students.

In their article "Second language teaching strategies within the framework of individualization and differentiation in higher educational institutions",

Lahodynskyi O. and Semeniako I. state that, in the first turn, second language teaching strategies should increase the students' motivation to learn the language [4]. This means the organization of the learning environment which will facilitate enhancing students' motives for foreign language learning. The motives are aimed at succeeding in acquiring the foreign language when the following conditions are observed:

- creation of favorable atmosphere in the classroom and during extracurricular work of students (reward for successfully completed tasks; direction to succeeding in task completion and avoiding troubles and difficulties; making corrections without interrupting the communication process; providing conditions for an equal person-to-person interaction between the teacher and students);
- offering original communicative tasks that involve thinking and allow the students to discover something previously unknown by using their own personal reserves;
- involvement of the students' various skills, not only communicative but also other types of activities, as well as their personal experience to reinforce basic psychological conditions associated primarily with personal feelings concerning the importance of work and its results necessary for meeting future professional challenges;
- allowing the students to complete some challenging tasks independently to demonstrate their creativity and ingenuity;
- enabling students to see and feel the results of their work by providing a continuous feedback;
- considering the congruence of task complexity with students' abilities to complete it, as well as the congruence of its level of complexity with encouragement from teacher's side.

Teachers should keep in mind the four Rs of individualization [3, P. 203]:

- *Reeducation.* This means reconstructing the role of the teacher as facilitator and the learner as the active agent in the process of learning.

- *Responsibility.* This implies that the learner takes charge of his own learning. It also implies the teacher's responsibility to set up clearly stated tasks that can be monitored by learners on their own and ensure the availability of self-learning materials for learners.

- *Relevance.* Firstly, teachers need materials relevant to their learners and, secondly, teachers should find contexts of learning that are meaningful for the learners.

- *Rapport.* It implies that only through the proper rapport that an atmosphere conducive to learning can be built up.

In today's environment, growing classroom sizes make it difficult to individualize learning for each student. In addition to providing one-to-one instruction, individualization requires teachers to constantly keep tabs on how students are performing and meeting the targeted educational objectives. Although the teacher is always the driving force in the classroom and can never be replaced, technology can assist teachers in their work.

Individualized learning systems are usually supported by computer-based flexible scheduling programs. Individualized instruction requires more record keeping than other methods of instruction, and provisions must be made for handling this requirement on a daily basis. Computerization of the schedule reduces the inordinate clerical load otherwise encountered by the staff in assigning students and teachers to classrooms and other facilities. Computer-based instructional management systems show great promise for handling functions like testing, diagnosing student deficiencies, maintaining continuous and detailed records of student progress, and providing individual schedules and study assignments [1]. Both students and teachers are finding that online technology helps individualize the learning process and makes better use of learning time.

New technologies available today are empowering schools to implement this form of education in a way never possible before. Adaptive learning and intelligent adaptive learning technology in particular which tailors learning to the individual student provides many benefits for students and teachers:

- integrates instruction with assessment;
- adapts within and between lessons in real-time;
- deeply personalized, engaging individualized learning experience for every type of student – the right next lesson at the right level of difficulty at the right time;
- supports and empowers teachers with current student progress data to set and meet goals and state standards.

It should be mentioned that one of the priorities in the individualized learning system is considering various temperaments within the language training. Individualized teaching strategies are aimed at enhancing students' motivation and should arouse and maintain interest for the language learning. Different strategies for different temperaments have been worked out by Lahodynskyi O. and Semeniako I. [4]. Thus, working with the sanguine students, teaching strategies should be focused on:

- developing their abilities to focus and concentrate on some details to remember oral or written foreign language information;
- alternating between different types of exercises changing the nature of activities, preventing monotony and uniformity of work within the classroom;
- involving students into active exercises and collective interaction in order to facilitate expressing their emotions;
- developing the students' integrity to complete the exercise being started;

- taking control of students' participation in a group work, namely their relationships in order to prevent some of them from falling under the influence of others.

Teachers' strategies for choleric students should be focused on:

- containing the students' reaction in case of sudden changes of mood; maintaining a calm, normal communication;
- containing the students' impulses to start and complete the task quickly; providing them with detailed, repeated instructions;
- making the students think over their answers more thoroughly; working at tasks that contribute to the development of language and speech tools;
- involving the students in active exercises (role-plays, discussions, debates) which exceed the level of their speaking skills to some degree, but maintain interest to the language learning;
- taking control of the students' participation in a group work to prevent misunderstanding and conflicts.

Working with the phlegmatic students, language teaching strategies should be focused on:

- providing the students with additional time to complete the tasks;
- stimulating and encouraging any initiative from their side;
- gradual alternating between quiet individual tasks and more active competitive group exercises (in this case it is advisable to assist the students in preliminary training of their lexical and speaking skills);
- taking control of the students' participation in group work to prevent the suppression of their initiative and activity.

Working with the melancholic students, teaching language strategies should be focused on:

- maintaining a positive atmosphere in the classroom and constant encouraging of speaking activities;
- providing favorable organizational and pedagogical conditions by establishing trustful contacts and preliminary preparation for more active participation of the students in exercises that involve collective interaction;
- offering new exercises only in case of preliminary preparation and providing necessary environment for their completion;
- taking control of the students' participation in a group work to prevent misunderstanding within the group and the suppression of their initiative and activity.

Moreover, Lahodynskyi O. and Semeniako I. [4] worked language teaching strategies for extroverts, introverts, for work with visuals, audials, kinesthetic types of students. Teaching strategies are not the rules but recommendations to the teachers on how better to organize the teaching process in higher educational institutions.

One of the priorities of the individualization of teaching is the preservation and further development of individual student's intellectual and personal potential. This means that students do not have to lose their individuality. Emphasis is placed on maintaining the unique look of the student, which is manifested in training activities, socialization, and self-development of a student. Teachers provide completion of a student curriculum and define the zone of proximal development of learners. Teaching strategies are helpful for teachers but, of course, they cannot solve all the problems. Individualized learning/teaching system requires additional research focusing on incorporating individualization techniques in large classes of students with different peculiarities.

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Kozlovska Anna, Gluboka Nataliia. To the problem of individualized learning/teaching in higher educational institutions. *The article deals with the issue of individualized learning/teaching in higher educational institutions. Taking into account that a learner is an individual and all the innovations help to a degree to improve education and training, we need a system which permits the selection of both the curriculum and the manner in which it will be presented for each individual learner. Individualized learning systems have been developed to accomplish this. The difference between personalization, differentiation and individualization has been explained. The first is learner-centered; the others are teacher-centered. The individualized system is a total educational program incorporating all useful concepts known to enhance the learning process. Its success depends upon an optimal balance between the student's own self-appraisal and the teacher's counsel – the student does not progress autonomously in his learning program. The achievement of foreign language training goals by students is closely connected with the implementation of teaching and learning techniques based on concepts of*

individualization and differentiation in higher education. The foreign language teaching strategies, which can be used both during classroom and self-study work, have been described in the article. The task of a teacher is to find a key to each student, to create an atmosphere of goodwill and the most comfortable conditions for student's learning in the classroom, to increase students' motivation and maintain interest for foreign language mastering.

Keywords: *individualization, teaching strategies, teacher, student*

Козловська Г.Б., Глубока Н.А. До проблеми індивідуалізації навчання / викладання у вищих навчальних закладах. *У статті розглядається проблема індивідуалізації навчання / викладання у вищих навчальних закладах. Беручи до уваги, що учень – це індивід, і всі інновації допомагають певною мірою покращити освіту та навчання, нам потрібна система, яка дозволяє вибирати як навчальний план, так і спосіб, у який він буде представлений для кожного окремого учня – індивідуалізація системи навчання. Персоналізація орієнтована на учня, диференціація та індивідуалізація є в центрі уваги вчителя. Індивідуалізована система є загальною освітньою програмою, що включає всі корисні концепції, які відомі для покращення процесу навчання. Її успіх залежить від оптимального балансу між самооцінкою студента та порадою вчителя - студент не прогресує самостійно у своїй навчальній програмі. У статті описані стратегії викладання іноземної мови, які можуть бути використані як під час навчальної роботи, так і самостійної роботи. Завдання вчителя - знайти ключ до кожного студента, створити атмосферу доброзичливості та найбільш комфортних умов для навчання студентів, підвищити їх мотивацію та зберегти інтерес до навчання.*

Ключові слова*: індивідуалізація, педагогічні стратегії, вчитель, студент*

Козловская А.Б., Глубокая Н.А. К проблеме индивидуализации обучения/преподавания в высших учебных заведениях.

В статье рассматривается процесс индивидуализации обучения/преподавания в высших учебных заведениях. Принимая во внимание, что учащийся является личностью, и все инновации помогают в некоторой степени улучшить образование и обучение, нам нужна система, которая позволяет выбирать как учебный план, так и способ, которым он будет представлен для каждого отдельного учащегося. Для этого были разработаны индивидуальные системы обучения: персонализация ориентирована на учащихся, дифференциация и индивидуализация ориентированы на учителей. Успех индивидуализации обучения/преподавания зависит от оптимального баланса между самооценкой ученика и совета учителя - ученик не продвигается самостоятельно в своей учебной программе. В статье описаны стратегии обучения иностранному языку, которые можно использовать как в классе, так и в процессе самостоятельной работы. Задача учителя - найти ключ к каждому ученику, создать доброжелательную атмосферу и максимально комфортные условия, повысить мотивацию и поддерживать интерес к изучению иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: *индивидуализация, педагогические стратегии, учитель, студент*