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ELEMENTS OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING

The idea of personalization of education can be traced back to the XIX century, when Helen Parkhurst created the Dalton Plan stating that each student can program his or her curriculum in order to meet his or her needs, interests and abilities; to promote both independence and dependability; to enhance the student's social skills and sense of responsibility toward others.

The idea of customization and personalization of education has evolved ever since. In the 1970s, Victor García Hoz [1] was the first to coin the term of 'personalization' in the context of educational science.

According to the former United Kingdom Minister of State for School Standards, David Miliband [2], there are five components to personalized learning.

- **Assessment for learning**

In order to create personalized learning targets for each student, plan lessons and choose appropriate learning strategies we need to understand his or her individual strengths, weaknesses, interests and learning needs. This can be done through a range of assessment techniques, with an emphasis on formative assessment that engages the learner. Progress monitoring should be consistent throughout the whole learning process.

- **Effective teaching and learning**

Teachers should choose the most effective teaching and learning strategies to engage students in the education process, help them unlock their potential and ensure that they can take ownership and responsibility for their own learning.

- **Curriculum entitlement and choice**

Personalized learning implies the ability of students to participate in the selection of curriculum content as well as in the development of individually tailored learning programs. At the same time, to achieve the desired results students must be presented with clear pathways through the system, gaining

high standards in the basics allied to opportunities for enrichment and creativity.

- **Radical approach to the organization of educational institutions**

Personalized learning means that the starting point for class organization is student progress. This implies a new approach to teaching and learning resources allocation, and calls for redesigning the traditional classrooms in order to create a positive, safe and secure environment, as well as for higher standards for on-site services, such as catering and social areas.

- **Beyond the classroom**

The education activity must be taken beyond the classroom. Building partnerships with community, local institutions and social services can become a key to create a successful personalized learning program.

Though the personalized learning approach has many advantages for teachers, students, parents, educational institutions, there are also some risks and possible drawbacks associated with this approach.

Some educators believe that personalized learning could diminish the relational and ethical dimensions of education. To avoid this, personalization should not be taken to the extremes, when it becomes similar to self-learning. The teacher using personalized learning in the classroom should combine it with other teaching techniques (teaching in small groups, mentoring, etc.).

Another common argument is that personalized learning is more and more equated to technology-augmented learning. This negative effect can be reduced by showing teachers how to use information technologies to improve their in class personal interaction with students.

One more drawback indicated by some critics is the diminishing role of social interaction in personalized education. Though this may be the case in short-term trainings, in long-term education programs the effect is opposite: virtual social communities (of different educational institutions, teams of students or teachers) tend to enhance the learning experience.

References:

1 Hoz, V. G. La práctica de la educación personalizada / V. G. Hoz. Madrid : Ediciones Rialp, 1988. – 314 p.

2 Miliband, D. Choice and Voice in Personalized Learning / D. Miliband // Personalizing Education. – UK : OECD, 2006. – P. 21–30.