

# Personalized Education Strategies

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The topicality of the research is connected with the modern socio-cultural situation which requires from an educational institution to create an active, responsible, self-reliant member of the society who can act thoughtfully and rationally in ambiguous situations. It is necessary to develop a new model of educational strategies based on the principles of personification, dialogueness, subjectness, individual approach, and complementarity. The purpose of the article is to describe the methodological base of personalized education and the instructional strategies which are used within this approach. The main approaches to research this issue are learner-centered, culturological, axiological, synergistic, and hermeneutic approaches. The main results of the article are the author's understanding of the strategies of personalized education given through the description of their characteristics and differences from other teaching strategies, and the description of certain strategies of personalized education. The article and the research result described can be used to modernize the educational process in general and higher education organizations, to provide for conditions of subjectness progress and learner-centered approach.

*Keywords:* person, personification principle in education, personalized education, teaching strategy, personalized education strategy, individuality, learner-centered approach

## INTRODUCTION

### Topicality of the research

Modern education is characterized by a variety of problems and contradictions. One of the most vivid ones in education is still a contradiction between the mass character of modern education, which results in its "average" approach, and the individual needs, abilities, goals, and expectations of each person involved in the learning process. Despite the increasingly relevant principle of variability (alternativeness) of the Russian education, the existing teaching practice has not settled the above controversy yet.

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## Research problem statement

Personalized education teaching strategies can be seen as one of the ways to solve the complicated problem in conditions of mass education to consider individual characteristics of not just every person but his individuality as well.

There has been a lot of research (Bespal'ko, 2008) into this problem stating the necessity of personalized education (nature-aligned education) approach, which confirms its topicality. However, there are no *clear practical algorithms and regulations on how to implement* personalized education strategies in conditions of the modern mass scale general and higher school education.

In view of the above, the research problem is: What are the essential characteristics of the personalized education teaching strategies and what are the ways to implement them in the modern educational process?

## Hypothesis and research goals

Educational process can become more personalized if the following psychological and pedagogical conditions are created:

- there is a concept of personalized education, an essential feature of which is application of personalized education strategies;
- essential features and characteristics of the personalized education teaching strategies are defined;
- personalized education strategies are developed which are based on the concept-based regulations and which implement the principle of personification at every stage of the educational process – goal formation, retention of the learning material, control and modification of the learning process and its results;
- the developed personalized education strategies have been tested and it has been proved that they are effective / ineffective to create comfortable conditions for developing both the personality and individuality of a student.

Thus, the goal of the research is to establish the theoretical *framework*, based on the author's approach to understanding the essence of personalized education and on the current teaching ideas and concepts regarding the implementation of the personification principle, to develop personalized education strategies and test them in practice in Russian schools and higher education institutions to make the educational process closer to its personalized variant.

## Essence of the notion of personification

Personification in education refers first of all to a person or personality [Persona (Person): <http://tolkslovar.ru/p5544.html>. <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Персона>. <http://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/персона>]. As there are always two participants in the educational process – a Teacher and a Student, one should refer to the process of education as a “two-personality” process.

Personification is understood as the process of acquiring by a person universal, public interest, unique individual qualities and features which help him to creatively perform a certain role and communicate with other people, making an active influence on their perception (*Slovar terminov po obshchey and sotsialnoy pedagogike* [General and social pedagogy terms]: <http://psychology.academic.ru/1633/персонализация/>)

Personification (Latin “*persona*” – personality) is the process owing to which a person has a personal representation in life activities of other people and can participate in public life as an individual (*Psikholog. Slovar Personalizatsia* (Psychology Dictionary. Personification) <http://psychology.net.ru/dictionaries/psy.html?word=649>). The essence of personification is in the effective transformation of the intellectual, affective and requirement identity of another person, which results from an individual's activities. The only effective way to satisfy

the needs in personification is being *involved* in an activity as an individual can influence other people only by being engaged in an activity which reflects his individuality to others (Maslow, 1954).

### Specific character of personified education

When comparing the traditional and personified education it becomes clear that:

- traditional education is “childless”, artificial, against nature; it can be described as having a “one-size fits all” approach.

- personified education is learner-centered, natural and nature-aligned; it can be described as a “made-to-measure” approach (Bespal’ko, 2008).

The main disadvantage of traditional education is the lack of a diagnostic objective focused on the meaning of human life. It results in complete failure to develop and improve the educational process. The aim of education is to educate without considering its ultimate outcome – a person and his personality. It is possible to decide reasonably how long the process of education (both general education and all the stages of professional training) should last only if the goal of education is a professionally-focused training of each learner preparing him to independent life in society. This goal determines the essence of personified education (Bespal’ko, 2008).

There are three interconnected components in the framework of goals of personification of the educational process:

- the axiological focus of an individual to create a personally significant and culture (and profession) oriented self-image. This component includes personal goals, standards, principles, expectations, and beliefs about oneself, one’s capabilities with regard to social demands, learning and professional standards.

- widening the scope of “self-competencies” of a learner, i.e. of those personal qualities which integrate into a unity of knowledge, skills, understanding, and creativity in a certain sphere of human activity.

- promoting personal responsibility of a learner as a kind of inner accountability for everything he does or learns. This component means the formation of a learner’s viewpoint on the educational process and his involvement in not only what he does or learns but in social and cultural life of the society and the world as a whole (Grachev, 2007).

“Personified” education has in its name the sense that the process of teaching and bringing up of every learner should be individualized (not individual!) in accordance with each learner’s natural abilities and talents. Only such education can produce high-level professionals and creators who are so required in the modern society. The pedagogic effect of personified education is that a creator is aware of his transformational role in the society while a performer inevitably becomes a destroyer.

The notion of “personified” education in pedagogy is associated with such notions as “subject”, “subjectness” “subjective attitude”. These notions are considered within the framework of the learner-centered teaching approach.

The development of the subjective attitude of a learner is determined by a number of educational factors. They include: age-appropriate teaching, learner-centered teaching approach, problem-oriented training materials, integration of individual, group and team teaching techniques, creating the atmosphere of cooperation and dialogic communication. They are established in conditions of intentionally organized educational interaction and promote formation of the components of the subjective attitude of a learner (Moscalenko, 2011; Selivanova, 2014).

In modern psychology and education science the notion “subject” is usually used in two meanings: as an actor capable of learning an activity and transforming it; and an

inner world individual capable of developing the strategy and tactics of life activities (Selivanova, 2014).

Personification of the educational process is an integral image of its functioning and developing when a learner becomes the subject of the educational activity and other major life activities connected with it (cognitive, information, innovation, community, cultural, management, leisure and other activities) (Grachev, 2008).

The major conditions which provide for personification of the educational process in an educational institution are the following:

- restructuring the educational content in accordance with the principles of generality and fundamental nature of knowledge, sense bearing and problem-oriented teaching content, openness, alternativeness and structural character of knowledge, humanization of education content, as well as the principles of flexibility, variability and academic and research character of the education content.

- development and widening of educational communications in accordance with the principles of their availability and interactivity, sensitivity, target orientation, redundancy, diversity and complementarity, integral character, and interchangeability.

- personification of the teacher's activities by developing an individual educational approach based on the professional self-actualization and implemented in practice through cooperation with the learner during the educational process in an educational institution.

Personification of the educational process considers the mechanisms and functions of individual existence of a person as an educational goal in itself and all the content and structural components of it are aimed at achieving this goal. The following aspects are meant here: reflection, sense creation, selectivity, responsibility, autonomy, critical thinking, problematic character, motivation, reasoning, orientation, self-actualization, self-fulfillment, spiritual life (Grachev, 2008; Sagitova, 2014).

In general, in the context of personification of education, personality is an individual (a student, a pupil, a learner), having his life story, living in a particular cultural environment, possessing (already possessing!) the features of subjectness and individual originality, realizing oneself in independently chosen life activities, being in the process of self-development and search for meaning, and trying to understand one's own uniqueness. To develop personified education approach one should accept the fact that a person creates one's own personality making use of those individual features, which are characteristic of only this person in the given cultural community.

### **The essence of the personification principle in education**

The principle of personification is an explicable and important didactic principle.

The principle of personification is considered nowadays as an educational meta-principle [<http://www.pedpro.ru/education/15/293.htm>] as well as the principle of poly-subject (dialogic) approach. The learner-centered principle is naturally interconnected with the principle of personification of the teacher's interaction which requires to refuse from role masks and to employ in the educational process one's personal experiences (feelings, emotions, actions and behavior corresponding to them). Depersonalized teaching interaction is strictly determined by role expectations, which contradicts with another humanistic meta-principle of poly-subject (dialogic) approach.

According to the latter principle, the superposition of a teacher and the subordinate position of a student are replaced with personally-equal positions of cooperating parties. The dialogic approach to the educational process is not the return to "pair pedagogy" as it requires implementation of different forms of

cooperation. A certain dynamic pattern should be observed when implementing these forms: from maximum help from a teacher in solving tasks to gradual increase in a student's engagement in the educational process and finally to complete self-regulation of the educational process and partnership relations between the teacher and the student. The change of positions of a teacher and a student requires other forms of cooperation and gives a possibility for the subject of education to change itself, independently determining the ways for self-development.

The principle of personification plays the leading role in the model of pedagogical interaction as it determines the specific nature of pedagogical interaction in the learning process. In line with this principle, the teacher selects the method of impact on educational conditions, focusing one's efforts on creating culture- and nature-based learning environment.

The principle of context-based enculturation determines the humanitarian and social meaning of the learning process.

The principle of partnership determines the bilateral character of pedagogical interaction in the educational process, and the principle of the pedagogic support determines the position of the teacher in this interaction (Moscalenko, 2011).

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Major methodological approaches**

The major approaches to the research issue are learner-centered, culturological, axiological, synergistic, and hermeneutic approaches.

The learner-centered approach is the backbone one which considers the individuality of a person to be the main object of personified education. It is a person's individuality that personified education is oriented to.

The culturological approach reflects the socio-cultural situation around the developing personality of an individual. It provides for the personalized learning to create conditions for an individual to interiorize the positive values of the society, their development and growth in sense bearing and subjectively meaningful human activities aimed at self-improvement and transformation of the socio-cultural environment. The approach reflects the didactic law of socio-cultural influence on the choice of goals, content, methods and forms of education.

The axiological approach supports one of the aspects of the above approach and aims at understanding and developing by an individual a unique positive value orientation system that will let an individual be successful in life activities in a particular social group or community. The approach places a priority in the learning process on an individual and his personality.

The synergistic approach is one of the new approaches to understanding the human nature in post-nonclassical picture of the world, assuming versatility of the unique ergo-informational and material phenomenon called a man (Arsaliev, 2013). In personalized education this approach widens the potential of the systemic method relating to complex non-equilibrium dynamic education systems.

The hermeneutic approach requires understanding or "feeling" of the situation of interaction with a developing personality so that one can build tolerant and cooperative interaction, relations of co-creation, empathy, dialogue and co-development.

### **Research Methods**

– a comparative analysis of the theoretical concepts of personalized education in secondary school and higher education institutions;

- synthesis of the theoretical data on the personalized training and developing a complementary definition of personified education strategies and the principle of personified education;
- theoretical modelling implementing the principle of personification of the teaching strategies;
- a psycho-pedagogical experiment on the effectiveness of personalized education strategies and their impact in terms of requirements of the Federal State educational standards;
- *statistical and mathematical methods of analysis of the multi-stage experiment data.*

## RESULTS

### **The guidelines of the concept of prersonified education:**

- The socio-cultural conditions of modern civilization (information overload, high degree of uncertainty, globalization and ethnic identity and disconnection, a human being's role in the picture of the world as a cosmo-bio-socio-spiritual-natural being, etc.) make it necessary to develop a new didactic model of education of the personalized type.

- The main feature of personalized education is the use of personalized education strategies. Personalized education strategies are an educational system of consistent actions and activities of students and a teacher aimed at developing an individual's personality and creating the learning conditions to manifest it.

- Personalized education strategies allow to design the educational process for each learner independently taking into account the learner's personal abilities and peculiarities; they are aimed at providing the highest level of learner-centered education and its implementation to its fullest extent.

Transition to personified education is highly resource-consuming, so it would require a long transition period. It is due to the fact that the essence of this kind of education differs significantly from the one of mass-scale education ("one-size fits all" approach vs. "made-to-measure" approach).

- Personalized education is not identical to individual training. It is much richer and it differs essentially in its content and forms, preserving individual, group and team activities which complement each other.

### **Essential features of personified education strategies**

There is a rather strictly regulated sequence of learning, training, and development activities that guarantees successful results. Therefore, the essence of personalized education is to introduce these activities taking into account the peculiarities of individuals interacting in the educational process. Today the emphasis is not on the personality in learning but individuality and uniqueness of a person. The modern society requires a unique person, capable of exercising a high degree of creativity and ingenuity, of generating new original and positive ideas and solutions of problems in situations of high uncertainty.

The strategies follow the didactic principle of nature-based learning: the general goal of the entire educational process is developing innate intelligence of an individual to its genetically highest level; education and training should be strictly individualized (but not individual!) in both content and methods of its implementation.

The leading strategies of the personalized educational process include such components and algorithms as didactic, organizational and methodological, informational, educational and research work, psychological, social, management (Grachev, 2008).

Essential features of personified education strategies are dialogueness, reflexivity and cooperation.

Personified education strategies are aimed at developing the subject position of a student in the learning process; at encouraging self-discovery and self-transformation.

The following *personified education strategies* are offered: strategy for defining personalized education goals, strategy of integrated and differentiated approach to learning, mind map strategies, strategies for teaching gifted students.

The strategies for defining personalized education goals are a set of target setting techniques for an individual:

- “Arsy-varsy” strategy
- “I know” – “Repeat” – “I want to know” strategy
- “Do you believe that...” strategy
- “Auction” strategy
- “Ka me ka thee” strategy
- “Where’s mine?” strategy
- “A blind captain” strategy
- “Train of goals” strategy

These strategies create such conditions which are favorable for each learner to determine diagnostic and personality-meaningful targets which outline an individual process of education. They contribute to the process of target setting in personalized education.

The strategy of level-and-style differentiation in learning as part of the modular training programme is a proprietary technology. Its main provisions, algorithms, and stages are described in publications of foreign scientists (Keislar, 1970; Petzold, 1985; Werner, 1957) and the scientist (Korshunova, 2009-2014). It is quite multidimensional in its nature. It synthesizes three acclaimed in the pedagogical science and in practice strategies of education: level differentiation strategy, individualization strategy which take into account the cognitive style of learning, and the strategy of modular training. The main purpose of the strategy is to create comfortable learning environment for each individual. It makes use of the training module which coordinates all educational and cognitive activities of a student. The other objectives of the strategy are: a) encouraging individual independence and responsibility for the process and the results of studies; b) fostering work organizing skills and competence of students, including willingness to define personality-meaningful learning objectives; in) developing information competency and relevant educational activities of students; g) encouraging creativity and research competencies of students. The strategy specifies a new form of a training module which allows to significantly upgrade the current design of the multifunctional block of information.

Mind map strategy is mostly informational. Its main purpose is to create comfortable conditions for working with a big amount of information, also to develop associative and creative thinking, to rationalize mnemonic activities. It is very effective when you have to plan and organize educational and research activities. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an effective means of learning, organizing, problem solving, decision-making, and when writing articles.

This strategy is based on the principle of “radiant thinking” which refers to associative thinking processes that proceed from a central point (the radiant). It shows the infinite variety of possible associations and, hence, the inexhaustible possibilities of the brain. This method allows the mind map to constantly grow and be supplemented with new ideas.

Modern information and communication technologies give an opportunity to use the mind maps with the help of several computer programs (for example, XMind),

allowing various formats – HTML, PNG, JPEG, TITLE, Word, Powerpoint, FreeMind and MindManager.

In general, the strategy ensures personification of the learning process, helping a student build one’s own “bay” in an “endless ocean” of information accumulated by human civilization. In our view, it can be used as one more strategy for defining personalized education goals, specifying a personal educational trajectory of learning based on associations and connections reflected in the mind maps.

Strategy for teaching gifted students/ We want to present the current findings for the gifted students teaching strategy which result from the analysis of motivational and instrumental features of giftedness. The findings are presented in the form of two tables (Table 1 and Table 2), the first gives specific recommendations on the components of the learning strategies, and the second illustrates an example of solution of creative tasks in the form of "morphological matrix", giving the teacher-researcher many morphologically different strategies for teaching gifted children.

## DISCUSSIONS

Since the problem of personified training is being developed in line with the student-oriented and system-and-activity approach paradigms, their ideas and methodological foundation are comprehensively reflected in the theory of personalized learning.

Thus, the idea of nature- and culture-based learning and training was discussed by the Czech scientist J.A. Comenius and further developed in the works of classics of Pedagogics: J. Pestalozzi, A. Diesterweg, K. D. Ushinsky, V.P. Bepal’ko. It is a theoretical foundation of the personalized learning approach as well (Bepal’ko, 2008)

The theoretical foundation of the new format of personalized learning are ideas of the learner-centered education (Bondarevskaya, 2000; Gritsenko, 2008; Dautova, 2010; Serikov, 2005; Yakimanskaya, 1996; Shiyarov, 1999).

**Table 1.** Factors defining the strategy characteristics

Instrumental	Features of GIFTEDNESS Findings for Strategies		Motivational
<b>1. Special activity strategies:</b> – fast mastering of an activity and being highly successful in this activity; – new ways of finding a solution in a given situation; – proposing new objectives leading to a new vision of the situation and explaining unexpected ideas and solutions	Tasks requiring ambiguous solutions. Open-situation tasks.	Giving a possibility for a gifted learner to choose an activity to do	<b>1. Experiencing enjoyment</b> when a learner does an activity he is particularly sensitive to.
<b>2. A distinctive personal style of doing an activity</b>	Individual character of the strategy, taking into account psychophysiological and individual characteristics of one’s personality!!!	Exploratory and research tasks	<b>2. Enthusiasm for</b> and absorption in an activity
<b>3. A special type of learning capability (both quick and slow)</b>	Individual rate of learning	Working with different sources of information	<b>3. A high need for cognition,</b> intellectual curiosity
4. Well-structured knowledge, comprehensive understanding of the situation	Methodological tasks, research character of an activity following the “path” of scientific cognition	Re-coding of information, developing logically structured schemes reflecting causal relationship	4. Preference for <b>paradoxical, contradictory and uncertain</b> information, rejection of <b>standard,</b> typical tasks and ready answers
<b>5. Self-sufficient self-regulation system</b> of doing an activity	Techniques of self-assessment of one’s activity and its results	Self-assessment possibility, trust, non-grading teaching	<b>5. Highly critical attitude to the results of one’ activities</b>



**Table 2.** Strategies for teaching gifted students in terms of the Federal State educational standards (FSSES)

Main principles of the strategies ( in terms of FSSES): targets	Morphological Features of the Strategy			Methods of assessment and control of students' achievements
	Content of education	Technological means	Methods, techniques, organisation forms	
1. Development of creativity	Methodological form of presenting the content (teaching information )	Situation tasks	Project methods and techniques	Self-assesment
2. Development of independence	Paradox, contradictory information	Practice-oriented tasks	Modular methods and techniques	Principle of doing everything in one's own way
3. Development of proactive and initiative attitude	Highly uncertain information	Teaching module (with level-and-style differentiation )	Problem methods and techniques	
4. Acquiring general educational skills (subject, meta-subject and personal)	"At option" content in accordance with psychological preferences	Non-standard (nontypical) tasks	Research methods and techniques	Non-grading teaching
5. Principle of an activity systems approach to the process of education		Tasks which promote a gifted learner's active approach	Heuristic methods and techniques	
6. Principle of developing a research culture	Content having personal meaning	PISA tasks	Methods and techniques developing intuition, imagination and divergent thinking	Identifying progress through dialogue with the teacher
7. Principle of unity of differentiation and integration		Recoding information tasks	Methods and techniques of solving creative tasks	

In our research we have used the following ideas of:

- development of the subject position of high school students in conditions of pedagogical interaction by A. Moskalenko (2011);
- development of students' subjectness in educational activities by O.G. Selivanova (Selivanova, 2014);
- personification of the educational process in higher school by V.V. Grachev (2007)

One of the main methodological bases of our research is the theory of education technologisation (Bespal'ko, 2008; Selevko, 2006, etc.).

However, these works, emphasizing the necessity for personified education, do not show how to implement the principles of personified educational approach. So our research aims at developing this very component of the approach in education.

## CONCLUSION

The above provisions are the source for designing the comprehensive system of personification of the educational process in an educational institution. Strategies of the personalized educational approach define the organization and content of all the components of the didactic process of a new format. The developed strategies are now being tested in the teaching practice. Thus, teachers have been trained to use the proprietary strategy of level-and-style differentiation in modular learning at distance education courses for 10 years (Moscow Pedagogical University "September 1") [<https://edu.1september.ru/distance/16/005/>]. In prospect, the ideas and strategies developed within this research are to be implemented into practice in different educational institutions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The article and the research result described can be used to modernize the educational process in general education institutions of any type and higher education organizations, to provide for conditions of subjectness progress and learner-centered approach.

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