



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages

MASTER DISSERTATION

Letters and Foreign Languages
English Language
Applied Linguistics

Submitted and Defended by:

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**Towards a Personalised Co-Designed Syllabus for Oral
Expression Course: The Case of Third Year Students at
Biskra University**

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Declaration

I, Manar DELENDIA, do hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

This inquiry was conducted and completed at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra,
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Dedication

Proudly, I dedicate my work to the unsung heroes of my success throughout my entire learning journey, my beloved parents; ***Brahim*** and ***Assia***. Thank you for teaching me the value of knowledge!

To my dear brothers; ***Younes***, ***Chiheb Eddine*** and ***Lahcene***. Bless you for the immense support and encouragement!

To my sister in law; ***Ikram*** and the star of our family, my little nephew; ***Joud Nazim***.

To both families: ***DELEND***A and ***RAKI***

To my cherished sisters, friends and colleagues who made college a better place; ***Melissa***, ***Ramia***, ***Sana***, ***Ikram***, ***Kaouther*** and ***Imane***. Thank you for never letting me down!

To my childhood best friends and sisters; ***Roua*** and ***Widad***.

To my motivation engine, my dearest; ***Dr. Wafa OUARNIKI***. I am endlessly grateful to you!

May this work be the inspiration that paves the way to new research avenues and quest for knowledge.

Acknowledgments

All praise be to Allah, the Almighty, for bestowing upon me strength, courage and patience to finish this research especially during this critical period of covid-19 pandemic.

I would like to acknowledge several individuals for supporting me throughout not only my dissertation journey, but also during the five years of my course of learning.

First and foremost, I am greatly indebted to my teacher and supervisor **Dr. Meddour Mustapha** for his priceless pieces of advice, continuous guidance and support.

I also want to seize the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and great respect to my revered teachers who left on me an everlasting impression: **Dr. Turqui Barkat Djamel, Dr. Chelli Saliha, Dr. Ouarniki Ouafa, Dr. Mehiri Ramdane, Dr. Assasssi Tarek, Mrs. Messaibi Samira** and **Mrs. Bencharef Sakina**.

I would also like to thank members of the board of examiners: **Dr. Rabehi Salima** and **Mrs. Aichaoui Theldja** for their efforts to read and evaluate this work.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the participants and teachers who partook in this study in spite of the critical period of the pandemic.

Abstract

Personalised learning (PL) approach is one of the contemporary trends in the realm of education where the learner lies at the forefront of the learning process. It; thus, advocates learner-centredness with its miscellaneous aspects. Within the same regard, to co-create a syllabus is one of the highlighted topics in PL. On the other hand, it was observed that the course of oral expression of the third year level at the section of English does not follow any kind of structured syllabus; on the contrary, teachers deal with the course differently, yet learners are somewhat side-lined in the sense that the teacher does most of the work. Therefore, the researcher aimed to devise a personalised co-authored syllabus for oral expression course. The syllabus was inspired from learners' learning profiles in which their choices and voices were taken into account. Moreover, the study aimed to unravel teachers' attitudes and practices towards a co-designed syllabus. Methodologically, the research was exploratory in nature as it followed a qualitative research approach paired with a case study design. In essence, the participated sample (n=12) was selected purposefully, in addition three questionnaires were employed in order to collect optimal data needed to answer the research questions. The analysis of the obtained information enabled the researcher to co-author a personalised syllabus for oral expression course, which encompassed to a certain extent students' major highlighted preferences and differences, that was from the one hand. From the other hand, teachers in their majority provided favourable and encouraging attitudes and opinions vis-à-vis syllabus co-design. As a consequence, the researcher was able to confirm what was previously hypothesised. Lastly, findings resulted from the current study can be useful for future inquiries, especially at the level of application and evaluation of a co- created syllabus.

Keywords: personalised learning (PL), learner- centredness, oral expression, a personalised co-authored syllabus, choices and voices, learning profiles

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

SD: Syllabus Design

ELT: English Language Teaching

UDL: Universal Design for Learning

PL: Personalised Learning

NLP: Neurolinguistic Programming Theory

VARK: Visual, Aural, Read/write, kinaesthetic

MIT : Multiple Intelligences Theory

IQ : Intelligence Quotient

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

HCS: Henry County Schools

PLPs: Personal Learning Profiles

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الملخص

General Introduction

1. Background to the Study

Foreign language teaching and learning is at the heart of applied linguistics. Thus, striving towards its betterment through introducing new methods, exploring its unveiled areas and suggesting alternatives for its anomalies is primordial. As such, the conventional prevailing concept of ‘one-size fits all’ has been dethroned by recent teaching approaches, such as: PL approach. The latter is deemed to actively involve learners as partners with teachers unlike the classical methods, which do not give sufficient attention the learner in the sense that they do not emphasise learner’s choice and voice, besides idiosyncratic differences.

From another regard, designing a syllabus as being the centre of the present study is still perceived by some teachers of English at Biskra University as the instructor’s responsibility alone. Nevertheless, it is worth stating that the tertiary level requires some freedom in the sense that learners can play a salient role in designing their syllabus. Recent studies (Bovill, Cook - Sather & Felten, 2011; Bray & McClaskey, 2015; Eidinger, 2017; Ahmadi & Hasani, 2018; Dura, 2019; Nelson, 2019) have completely reset the ground, and opened door to learners’ suggestions and contributions to co-create a syllabus as they constitute the crux of the approach under investigation, which is ‘personalisation’.

In the view of what has been mentioned above, the researcher aspires to spot light on the syllabus as one major element to demonstrate the possibility and efficiency of teacher and learners’ collaboration to co-create a compatible syllabus within the limits of personalised approach.

2. Definitions of Terms

Personalised learning: is tailoring learning for each student’s strengths, needs and interests—including enabling student voice and choice in what, how, when and where they learn—to

provide flexibility and supports to ensure mastery of the highest standards possible (iNACOL, cited in Slocum, 2016, para.04).

Syllabus design: Syllabus design is seen as being concerned essentially with the selection and grading of content (Nunnan,1988, p.05).

Co-designed syllabus: is when the instructor obtains preferences for course structure, policies, and content and using these, plans the course with students instead of for students (Logan& Bueno, n.d, para. 02).

Learner's choice: means students choose how they learn something and, possibly, what they learn (Bray, 2012, para. 02).

Learner's voice: refers to the values, opinions, beliefs, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds of individual students and groups of students in a school, and to instructional approaches and techniques that are based on student choices, interests, passions, and ambitions (Great Schools Partnership, 2013, para.01).

3. Statement of the Problem

The present research problem is stemmed from the fact that syllabi at Biskra university, section of English are either designed by teachers alone, or no syllabi exist at all in some other courses. Considerably, a preliminary study (see appendix A) was conducted where four teachers, with different teaching experience, of oral expression (three of them are currently teaching third year classes) were interviewed. It was pointed out by the interviewed teachers that no syllabus exists for this course arguing that the ultimate objective is to make learners communicatively competent. Therefore, each teacher deals with his/her class differently; some teachers use what they see appropriate as methods to proceed with oral expression leaving some space for learners' topic suggestions. However, others prefer to undertake an unofficial needs

analysis, and then decide what to deliver as content to students. Whereas, other teachers provide an absolute freedom for students to shape the session the way they want, use whatever methods and tackle their preferred topics (absence of teacher's scaffolding). It is worth stating that although teachers might handle oral expression course in various ways, but they all lack systematicness and a clearly defined procedure to go through in order to co-design an optimal syllabus.

Despite the fact that many oral expression teachers are not accustomed with the terminology (syllabus co-design), some of them were using some of its traits (using learners' feedback to direct the course and shape it, undertaking an unofficial needs analysis...etc). what is significant; therefore, is that all the interviewed teachers insisted on the shared responsibility of both the teacher and learners to co-operate in syllabus design (SD).

As such, the researcher suggests the concept of PL, which is an approach that is tightly related to the notion of co-creating a syllabus. It considers the teacher and the learners as partners in education who should co-operate in many phases, such as designing a syllabus and taking into account every learner's choice and voice in order to obtain the desirable outcomes at the end. Within this regard, the teacher and learners are not only co-designers, but also co-learners who can benefit from each other, and not depend on the teacher as the sole source of knowledge.

Finally, the researcher presumes that the flexible nature of oral expression course, and the fact that no official syllabus exists give a convenient and urgent reason to conduct an inquiry regarding the above- mentioned issue. In fact, learners' diversity in personalities, learning styles, besides idiosyncratic needs and preferences are likely to be apparent due to the nature of the course. Learners are expected to do various oral performances, and thus every learner might opt for a different method that shows his/her abilities best and go along with his/her choice and

voice. Consequently, learners will be hyper-active, engaged and motivated because learning will be more meaningful to them as they will identify with the personalised learning process.

4. Research Questions

Having stated the statement of the problem, the following research questions are raised:

RQ1: How does a personalised co-designed oral expression syllabus look like?

RQ2: What are teachers' perceptions and practices of a co-created personalised syllabus?

5. Research Hypotheses

To pursue the aim of answering the aforementioned research questions, the researcher hypothesises the following:

The co-designed syllabus will be a collaborative work where both teacher and learners' imprints are present. Thus,

RH1: the co-designed personalised syllabus will mirror learners' choice and voice, besides their idiosyncratic diversities.

RH2: The researcher expects positive perceptions, in addition to appreciative attitudes towards co-created personalised syllabus.

6. Aims of the Study

General Aim:

- The ultimate objective of the present study is to co-design a sample personalised oral expression syllabus with third year students.

Specific Aims:

In light of the general aim, we can state some specific aims, namely:

- To sensitise both teachers and learners about the usefulness of syllabus co-design.
- To provide learners with sense of belonging and boost personal autonomy.

- To explore some of the constraints of co-design and the different ways to overcome them.

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Research Approach

Dörnyei (2007), points out that “qualitative research is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and thus the explicit goal of research is to explore the participants' views of the situation being studied.” (p.38). Consequently, the type of this research is exploratory, which falls under the qualitative approach and the interpretivist paradigm. ‘Qualitative’ because it is deemed to be the most convenient approach to answer the previously stated research questions, besides attaining the aforementioned research objectives (creating a co-designed personalised syllabus, discovering teachers and learners’ perceptions, besides exploring co-design constraints).

7.2 Research Design

In accordance with the qualitative approach, a case study design will be implemented. (Hvozdíková, 2012) states: “The low number of participants in the research allows the study to explore the phenomenon in a more detailed way and it may provide more data for exploration.” (p.88). Therefore, the obtained results will not be generalised to the total population; as the main goal of this study is to co-design a syllabus that is mostly compatible with learners’ profiles of a limited and definite number of students.

7.3 Data Collection Methods/ Tools

In order to answer the previously asked research questions, the researcher utilised three various questionnaires; namely: a semi- structured questionnaire for students, the visual, aural, read/write and kinaesthetic (VARK) questionnaire, in addition to a semi-structured teachers’ questionnaire. Every questionnaire was meant to help gather necessary data to attain research objectives. First and foremost, students’ questionnaire served as an instrument to obtain relevant

information related to learners' preferences and differences vis-à-vis the course of oral expression. Secondly, the widely used VARK questionnaire was implemented in order to properly identify learners' learning styles. Together, these questionnaires offered optimal information to create learners' profiles, which in turn were used to develop a tentative personalised co-authored syllabus.

Lastly, a semi-structured questionnaire was emailed to teachers in order to explore and describe their perceptions and practices of a co-designed personalised syllabus. In this view, a well-designed questionnaire played a pivotal role in gathering a considerable amount of information to help verify the already set research hypotheses.

8. Population and Sample

The population of the current study is third year students (N= 333) in the section of English in Biskra University. Firstly, the researcher has selected third year students because they are expected to have an acceptable level of speaking proficiency as it is their third year of having oral expression class. Secondly, oral expression teachers have confirmed that no official syllabus exists in this course (preliminary study); that is why co-designing a syllabus can be beneficial for the teachers as well as learners of this level. Accordingly, the selected population is deemed to serve the general objective of the entire study to obtain optimal results. Finally, the researcher chooses a small number (n=12) for the sample as the nature of the study (qualitative) does not necessitate a large number for the sample.

9. Sampling Techniques

The researcher opts for a purposive sampling as it goes with the overall qualitative nature of this study. To illustrate, Dörnyei (2007) asserts:

The main goal of sampling is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn.

This goal is best achieved by means of some sort of 'purposeful' or 'purposive' sampling (p.126).

As such, the selected sampling technique seems to be the optimal choice for the current study as it serves the ultimate objective of this research.

10. Significance of the Study

The study in hands seeks to throw light on the concept of syllabus co-design along with PL as research in this area of study is getting considerable attention and importance. Moreover, this research is worth undertaking because it highlights the possible partnership between the teacher and the learners to break the stereotyped image of passive learning where the teacher is in the centre rather than the learner. In this sense, this work attempts to raise teachers as well as learners' awareness of the shared responsibility of syllabus creation.

To pursue this aim, the teacher can scaffold learners to discover themselves as individuals with distinct learning styles and preferences to incorporate the latter in their learning profiles, which constitute the basis of the co-designed syllabus. Lastly, this research is deemed to be helpful and useful for learners to know themselves more in terms of what suits them best in learning and to direct them to be more autonomous.

11. A Provisional Structure of the Dissertation

This study comprises three chapters. Chapter one represents the theoretical background of SD; its conceptualisation, types, characteristics and principles, besides all the relevant components under the notion of designing a syllabus. Chapter two introduces the notion of PL where syllabus co-design constitutes one of its major tenets; this chapter reviews the main understandings and interpretations of personalisation, in addition to stages towards personalising a syllabus. Finally, the third chapter is devoted for the field work and research

methodology. It mirrors in addition to the population and sample, the used data collection instruments, procedures, analysis, besides reporting data, discussing the final results and providing recommendations.

Chapter One: Syllabus Design (An Overview)

Introduction

1. Conceptualisation (Definitions)

2. Brief Account on Types of Syllabi

2.1 Product-Oriented Syllabus

2.1.1 Grammatical Syllabus

2.1.2 Notional Syllabus

2.1.3 Situational Syllabus

2.2 Process-Oriented Syllabus

2.2.1 Task-Based Syllabus

2.2.2 Content-Based Syllabus

2.2.3 Skills-Based Syllabus

3. SD and English Language Teaching (ELT)

3.1 Teacher's role

3.2 Learners' role

4. General Principles of Syllabus/ Course Design

5. Elements of SD

6. Functions of Syllabus

7. Goals and Objectives in Syllabus/Course Design

8. Constraints

9. Modern Trends in SD

9.1 Negotiated Syllabus

9.2 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide comprehensive literature about some of the major issues regarding SD. It introduces and compares different definitions of what a syllabus is according to several eminent scholars in the field. Besides, it highlights the major types of syllabi, their merits and drawbacks. Furthermore, the chapter unveils the different principles, elements, and functions of the syllabus. In this view, a distinction between goals and objectives will be made as an independent part because it constitutes an important element of the syllabus. By the end, some of the limitations to syllabus design are pointed out, in addition to a brief discussion on some of the modern trends in SD.

1. Conceptualisation (Definitions)

The notion of SD is assigned various definitions by scholars according to their own field of expertise and perspective.

A large and growing body of literature has been established regarding SD. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) take into account various factors to define a syllabus. They state that a syllabus consists of what is to be orderly learned, the targeted objectives, besides parameters of success and failure. They indicate that a given syllabus is interpreted from three distinct angles, respectively: materials writer, teachers and learners. These three polls provide sense and practicality to the syllabus.

Furthermore, Nunan (1988) singles out the syllabus from methodology as it is being primarily pertained to the different processes of content selection and grading. Additionally, Widdowson (1990) perceives a syllabus as: “the specification of a teaching programme, or pedagogic agenda which defines a particular subject for a particular group of learners . . . a syllabus specification, then, is concerned with both the selection and the ordering of what is to be taught.” (p.127).

A broader perspective has been adopted by Richards and Rodgers (2001) who relate their understanding of syllabus to product-centred methods at the expense of process-centred ones. In other words, syllabus constitutes a manuscript with ‘linguistic’ crux. In more specific terms, it is an organised account where content is selected and displayed depending on different standards. The latter decide the type of the syllabus. To illustrate, grammatical content leads to a structural syllabus whereas thematic content creates a notional syllabus (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Moreover, Luke, Woods and Weir (2013) depict the syllabus as a ‘map’ that reflects an organised set of what should be taught and learned. That is, it is a mirror of a certain curriculum. In Robinson’s view: “Syllabus design is based essentially on a decision about the “units” of classroom activity, and the ‘sequence’ in which they are to be performed. The syllabus thus formalizes the content to be learned in a domain of knowledge or behaviour.” (Robinson, 2009, p. 294).

In summation, the aforementioned scholars may have explained the syllabus in different terminology, but their conceptualisation of SD is almost akin. As such, their understandings meet in the fact that any syllabus has to be a detailed plan, which specifies what is to be taught and learned, in addition to overtly set objectives, ways of assessments and evaluation.

2. Brief Account on Types of Syllabi

SD has undergone a massive wave of change and evolution throughout time, which led to the birth of multiple, yet diverse types and approaches of syllabi.

The gradual development in language teaching theories is inevitably accompanied by a change in the philosophy, and thus type of syllabus. Likewise, it is worth noting that SD has a rich history of evolution where any newly coined syllabus in essence is a result of emergence of a new trend in language teaching/ learning (Berardo, 2007).

Hence, types of syllabi can be grouped under two broader classifications, namely: product-oriented and process-oriented syllabi. As such, Nunan (1988) distinguishes between the two as:

product syllabuses are those in which the focus is on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of instruction, while process syllabuses are those which focus on the learning experiences themselves (p.27).

2.1 Product-Oriented Syllabus

To start with, product-oriented approach entails a number of syllabi, such as: grammatical (structural) syllabus, situational syllabus and notional syllabus.

2.1.1 Grammatical Syllabus

To begin with, grammatical (structural) syllabus has occupied a remarkable place in conventional language classrooms. As a matter of fact, the widely disseminated structural approach in linguistics during early twentieth century has treated language as an ‘interwoven’ structure where every item of language depends on another item to make sense within the broader system of language (Structural Linguistics, 2019).

In the same vein, Kara (2001) points out that a structural syllabus is mainly built upon a collection of ‘structural’ items within a certain language, and classifying them in a way, which is mostly compatible with the teaching process. The organisation of elements is to respect some parameters like: ‘frequency’, ‘difficulty’ and ‘usefulness’.

Nonetheless, during the 1970’s, the grammatical syllabus received a harsh criticism as it failed to form competent learners in communication. Skehan and Ellis (1996; 1997, as cited in Faravani, Zeraatpishe, Azarnoosh & Kaargozari, 2018) have drawn attention to the impracticality of grammatical syllabus. They stated that learners’ diversities make it difficult to ‘acquire’ language depending upon a mere structural syllabus.

2.1.2 Notional Syllabus

The notional (functional) syllabus is another type that falls under the product-oriented approach. It appeared with the advent of communicative competence, and it was a dissatisfaction to the grammatical syllabus. Hedge (2000) explains how the ‘communicative revolution’ which took place in the 1970’s has directed linguists’ attention from structural approach to the communicative approach. The latter put emphasis on the various functions and different meanings performed via language rather than a mere, static description of linguistic items. In this view, the notional syllabus equips learners with the ability to understand and effectively make use of different functions achieved by language (making suggestions, apologies...etc) (Rajae Niya, Abbspour & Zare, 2012). Moreover, it prioritizes learners’ needs and the functions they want to transmit (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

However, Nunan (1988) raises some issues regarding the notional syllabus. He says: “Syllabus planners find that when turning from structurally-based syllabus design to the design of syllabuses based on functional-notional criteria, the selection and grading of items become much more complex.” (p.36). Finally, regardless of the features of notional syllabus, it was proven to be limited due to the difficulty of items’ grading and choice.

2.1.3 Situational Syllabus

From another regard, situational (thematic) syllabus is tightly related to choosing and arranging various ‘real-life’ situations instead of rigid grammatical rules and items (Harmer, 2003). Additionally, it serves as a device that assists learners to get to know more about the target language culture, customs and social conventions via tackling different conversations and topics (Rajae Niya, Abbspour & Zare, 2012).

Nevertheless, situational syllabus has also displayed a number of shortcomings which made it replaced by other types of syllabi. Harmer (2003) provides some drawbacks to

situational syllabus as being less feasible regarding general English learners who are not supposed to limit their knowledge to a restricted list of themes. In addition to the wrong practice of selecting one list of situations to be taught for learners with idiosyncratic differences.

2.2 Process-Oriented Syllabus

Conversely to product-oriented approach, process-oriented approach which answers the question ‘how’ rather than ‘what’ consists of a number of syllabi, such as: task-based syllabus, content-based syllabus and skills-based syllabus.

2.2.1 Task-Based Syllabus

The core of task-based syllabus lies in the selection of appropriate activities that learners have to complete outside the classroom. Thus, learners are expected to put into practice their cognitive abilities, such as: evaluation, selection, combination and others. (Sabbah, 2018). Likewise, it is that type of syllabus which addresses ‘meaning’ and ‘communication’ in which learners are principally ‘users’ more than ‘learners’ of language (Ellis, 2003, as cited in Flowerdew, 2005).

What is; therefore, peculiar to task-based content is that it is exclusively chosen according to learners ‘needs’ and the ‘social contexts’ which learners wish to ‘access’ (Feez, 2002, as cited in Flowerdew, 2005).

From another perspective, task-based syllabus has a number of critical issues that diminish its spread worldwide. Firstly, grading activities according to its difficulty can be a challenging task for teachers (Harmer, 2003). Secondly, difficulty of activities is subject to numerous factors. Learners’ idiosyncrasy; for instance, can be a problematic factor because what is hard to be processed by one learner might not necessarily be hard for another learner (Nunan, 1988).

2.2.2 Content-Based Syllabus

Another syllabus which belongs to process-oriented approach is content-based syllabus. The gist of content-based syllabus is established upon ‘experiential’ content rather than linguistic items. As such, the content to be delivered might be derived from other subject areas in the school curriculum; for example, mathematics, physics, geography, (Nunan, 2004). In essence, it refers to a ‘programme’ in English (as a second language) that consists of the different skills that learners may need to proceed with in other school subjects (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). As a result, language in content-based syllabus is seen as a carrier content to facilitate the understanding of real content (biology, chemistry, science). On the contrary, learners are expected to be less competent in terms of ‘grammatical’ correctness and ‘sociolinguistics’ accuracy (Ellis, 2003, as cited in Rajae Niya, Abbaspour & Zare, 2012).

2.2.3 Skills-Based Syllabus

Additionally, skills-based syllabus is another type of syllabi within process-oriented approach. Far (2008) defines skills as: “Abilities that people must be able to do to be competent enough in a language, rather independently of the situation or context in which the language use can occur.” (p.381). Within skills-based syllabus, language is regarded as a set of skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing). Thus, learning a language implies learning these skills (Kara, 2001). In addition, Far (2008) demonstrates the benefits of skills-based syllabus in that it blends ‘linguistic competences’, namely: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and discourse into ‘behaviour’ types; for example, producing a well-written piece of writing.

Probably, one apparent demerit to this syllabus is that it is constituted of a mere list of skills where teachers feel confused in text selections for students to put into practice these skills (Willis et al., 2005, as cited in Rajae Niya, Abbaspour & Zare, 2012).

In spite of the miscellaneous kinds of syllabi that are coined in the literature, every type throws light on particular elements, but forgets about other aspects. What is; thus, common among product-oriented syllabi is their emphasis on the ‘what’ of learning. Conversely, process-oriented syllabi are more linked to the ‘how’ that enables learners to gain knowledge. Therefore, blending together some syllabi from every category might result in a more adequate type of syllabus.

3. SD and English Language Teaching (ELT)

In ELT, a syllabus has to be overtly recognised and understood by teachers who are expected to play a salient role in its design. However, the concept of overtness can be bigger or smaller to learners, but they should be aware of the content and its input (Yalden, 1987). Consequently, teachers and learners have certain roles to perform in SD.

3.1 Teacher’s role

Conventionally, many teachers were regarded as syllabus consumers. To put it simply, their major task was just putting into practice the content of syllabus claiming that designing a syllabus necessitates intensive training. However, some teachers firmly believe that designing a syllabus should be one of their responsibilities as some criteria for syllabus design require teacher’s in-class experience with learners, such as: determining learners’ different needs, besides grading and selecting content (Nunan, 1987).

From the one hand, Carl (2002, as cited in Al-Kathiri, 2016) explains two disparate viewpoints regarding teachers’ contribution in the syllabus. The first tendency restricts teachers’ role to implementing the syllabus only and letting its development to experts in the field. Nevertheless, the second viewpoint, expands teachers’ tasks to play an effective role while designing the syllabus by incorporating their ‘voices’ in its creation because, eventually, it is their duty to put it into practice.

From the other hand, Meier (2018) states that teachers' role within the 'curriculum' is to assist learners to identify with it and to be actively involved in its principles. It is worth stating; therefore, that the teacher has to incorporate learners' choice in the syllabus; using project-based learning; for instance, can make learners more connected with the syllabus.

In summation, conventional traditions have limited teachers' contribution regarding syllabus design. However, recent tendencies advocate syllabus creation as being the teacher's prime responsibility, in addition to its implementation.

3.2 Learners' role

Wilkins (1976, as cited in Robinson, 2009) relates learners' roles to syllabus approaches. In this sense, learners are expected to perform differently and according to the syllabus approach under instruction. Therefore, synthetic syllabi require learners to use synthetically the knowledge they learnt separately in the 'real-world'. conversely, analytic syllabi expect learners to analyse information and use it communicatively taking into account their learning styles, motivation, besides their 'developing interlanguage systems'.

From another angle, Ahmadi and Hasani (2018) conclude that learners can play a salient role in syllabus design. Learners should share some power with teachers to incorporate their voices to echo in the syllabus so that it became more meaningful to them.

Finally, it can be noted that recent research is becoming more flexible towards providing more freedom and actively involve learners in the process of syllabus design rather than being recipients and blind followers of a syllabus that does not reflect any of their needs, preferences or wishes.

4. General Principles of Syllabus/ Course Design

SD is an organised and well-structured plan which is governed by a number of principles to ensure its feasibility and efficiency.

Sárosdy, Bencze, Poór and Vadnay (2006) point out that any well-elaborated syllabus is subject to four principles, which are respectively: learnability, frequency, coverage and usefulness. Firstly, learnability refers to the gradual content selection in terms of difficulty. In other words, the teacher should first start by teaching easier items, and then moves to a more difficult ones as the level of learners is expected to improve. Secondly, frequency stipulates the fact that the teacher has to prioritise elements that are more recurrent in the language instead of those which are rarely used by natives as learners are more likely to encounter them. Thirdly, coverage is linked to ‘the scope of use’. It denotes that the instructor decides the order of elements to be taught based upon coverage. Finally, usefulness gives the impression to begin teaching what is mostly used by learners at the expense of other items. Classroom setting; for instance, necessitates the instructor to introduce words such as: ‘book’ or ‘pen’ as learners need to know different elements and items within the classroom.

According to Cotterall (2000), there exist five principles to course design that contribute to learners’ autonomy, namely: (1) learner goals, (2) language learning process, (3) tasks, (4) learner strategies, (5) reflection on learning. To start with, learners’ objectives, which are based on their needs are to be taken into account within the sphere of ‘language learning process’. Next, tasks constitute an important element which goes along with learning strategies. In this sense, learners will learn what they want according to their personal learning styles and preferences. Lastly, the fifth principle (reflection on learning) is implied within the four previously mentioned principles. Reflection upon the course will reflect positively on both the learners and the teacher.

5. Elements of SD

According to literature, SD components can vary and differ in terms of terminology and order from one researcher/ practitioner to another. However, there exists a number of SD elements which are common among many SD models.

Doolittle and Siudzinski (2010) explain that the overall image of SD components is still blurred as researchers have not come to a final cut agreement yet, but it is worth noting that four general categories can be considered more frequent among researchers. These elements are: instructor information, course information, grading information, and policy information.

In more specific terms, Sárosdy et al., (2006) suggest seven elements that constitute any model plan of a syllabus:

1. Setting objectives; teacher specifies general aim, besides specific goals of the course according to what learners will study.
2. Course organisation; it tackles the number of hours per week, besides the overall number of lessons to be delivered.
3. Content outline; the teacher defines the different headings to be covered.
4. Methodology implemented; it is about devoting enough and balanced time for the lecture, classroom tasks, and learners' queries.
5. Used materials; for example, handouts, data show, course book...etc.
6. Assessment; it must be specified ahead (assignments, types of test...etc).
7. Course evaluation; it can be done at the end of a term through learners' feedback.

6. Functions of Syllabus

There exists a myriad number of possible functions which can be performed by the designed syllabus. The functions and their classifications differ according to every researcher's own perspective.

To begin with, Parkes and Harris (2002) mention three major functions, namely: syllabus as a contract, syllabus as a permanent record, and syllabus as a learning tool. A syllabus which functions as a contract is a syllabus that puts forward responsibilities and tasks of both the teacher and the learners. To illustrate, a syllabus must state in details the academic year agenda;

that is, it should outline the due dates of assignments, tests and examinations, besides defining the expected behaviour of both parts.

On the contrary, Lang (2015) suggests an alternative for ‘syllabus as a contract’. Instead, a ‘promising syllabus’ serves as an official statement where the teacher displays his excitement and dedication to the course. The latter invites learners to be more involved and comfortable in learning. In simple terms, the syllabus ensures that if learners respect what is required from them, they will receive what they seek to gain as knowledge.

Moreover, Parkes and Harris (2002) point out that a syllabus can act as a permanent record of what has been taught in the sense that it meticulously displays the efficiency or inefficiency of a given unit over a period of time indicating learners’ interactions, and the instructor’s methodology of teaching. It can also document assessment procedures and learners’ overall results. Consequently, tracking the evolution and modifications of a syllabus is vital for effective long-term syllabus re-elaboration.

Finally, a syllabus can also function as a learning tool by guiding learners throughout the semester to know how to revise, monitor and evaluate themselves as learners (Parkes & Harris, 2002).

Among miscellaneous syllabus functions pointed out by Stanford University (n. d), the following functions can be stated:

- It serves as a tool to bridge the gap between the instructor and learners; in early stages, learners need to know some basic information about their teacher such as his name, field of expertise, email address and availability time to make learners more interactive, collaborative with him.

- It gives information about the syllabus background and underpinning; learners must know which type of syllabus is adopted by their teacher, in addition to the arrangement of lessons, assignments and projects to help learners be more acquainted and engaging.
- It suggests to learners the materials which can be used outside the classroom to better improve their learning; the syllabus can provide additional strategies for learning outside the classroom like checklists to track their performance and progress within a specific course.

7. Goals and Objectives in Syllabus/Course Design

A crucial step in the elaboration of a language syllabus is the clear identification of learning goals and objectives.

Papadopoulou (2019, para.04) defines learning goals as “long-term, broad, and achievable, but not necessarily measurable.” In the same regard, Nunan (1988) depicts the term ‘goal’ as “the general purposes for which a language programme is being taught or learned.” (p.25); in which ‘communicative goals’ are to be stressed. Goals can be determined via different sources coming from analysis of tasks, the knowledge of learners, besides any ministerial specifications (Nunan, 1988).

However, according to Graves (1996), objectives are more narrowed in which goals will be reached; if the goal is the destination, then the learning objective is those different ways that help learners attain the ultimate goal.

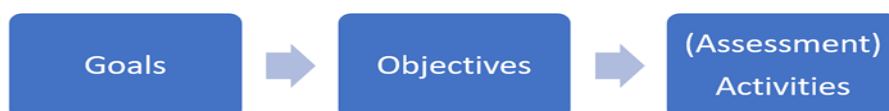


Figure 1 Breaking Down Goals into Objectives and then into Activities (Assessments)

Reprinted from *Learning Goals and Objectives in Course Design*, by A. Papadopoulou, 2019. <https://www.learnworlds.com/learning-goals-objectives/>

It is worth mentioning that setting goals and objectives of the syllabus/course is highly significant and necessary to both the instructor and learners. Goals and objectives direct the teacher throughout the implementation of the syllabus and the preparation of the course. As such, a well identified goals and objectives provide the teacher with a clear vision to choose appropriate content and select suitable activities. Also, they indicate the efficiency and feasibility of a given task (Graves, 1996).

Moreover, Goals can be grouped into four types for language learners: proficiency goals, cognitive goals, affective goals and transfer goals. Proficiency goals consist of the overall competency, in addition to achieving good command regarding the four language skills. Cognitive goals are concerned with both linguistic and cultural knowledge. Affective goals are linked to the attainment of a positive attitude regarding the target language, besides gaining confidence and satisfaction as language users. Lastly, transfer goals include having the ability to learn how to learn in order to avert the possible future learning obstacles (Stern, 1992).

8. Constraints

Creating a syllabus that mirrors its curriculum appropriately, applies to learners needs, and which is compatible with the instructor's competence is a quite challenging task that can be hampered with a number of limitations.

According to Brumfit (1984), a syllabus may be limited by three major constraints, namely: the general curriculum, administrative parameters, besides students' diversities. The curriculum is subject to political, social and even cultural backgrounds, and yet the syllabus must be organised in a way to hide those influential factors. also, administrative parameters, such as: setting, total number of learners, available materials, in addition to the instructor's competence must be taken into account before designing a syllabus. Furthermore, learners' idiosyncratic differences can be a difficult element to be met by syllabus designers who must opt for a

syllabus that holistically makes sense to every learner. Lastly, he indicates that “a syllabus can only be a device for teaching, which can be publicly influenced, if not controlled. It should make itself available as a device to assist learning, but it cannot define learning which is a private, and immensely complex and varied operation.” (p.76).

Similarly, van der Walt (1990) puts emphasis on two critical elements, which can be considered as limitations to SD; the teacher and learners. In implementing the syllabus, the instructor will reflect his personal viewpoints on language teaching and learning, in addition to his own philosophy of teaching. The latter might not be compatible with that of the syllabus; thus, the teacher can be one of the possible constraints of the syllabus. learners complicated features (motivation, personality, learning styles, level...etc) may be a difficult task to deal with in SD.

Therefore, what might be approachable in theory while drafting a syllabus can impede the successful application of the syllabus in real- world situations where various issues must be taken into considerations beforehand to guarantee a relatively optimal syllabus implementation.

9. Modern Trends in SD

Contemporary SD conceptualisations have evolved in perspective because they are taking into account the learner as an active part in the process of SD.

The shift that took place in language teaching and learning, which underscores learner-centred rather than teacher-centred approaches has had a remarkable impact on SD. As a consequence, ‘learner autonomy’ has been highlighted as a major hallmark of recent trends in SD (Montazeri, Fekri & Hamidi, 2015).

9.1 Negotiated Syllabus

Initially, the negotiated syllabus which is also named as ‘process syllabus’ (Breen, 1987) appeared as a result of change in focus. Thus, learners are expected to show more personal autonomy within this kind of syllabi.

Richards and Schmidt (2002) define negotiated syllabus as:

an approach to the development of a language course in which students’ needs and learning preferences are taken into account during the course; these needs are discussed by students and teachers together during the course and serve to generate ideas about the content of the course. The negotiated syllabus reflects a learner-centred approach to teaching (p.356).

In essence, negotiated syllabus can be effectively implemented in the following cases; chiefly, when the instructor and learners share different backgrounds. Besides, heterogeneity among learners can be solved when negotiated syllabus is applied in order to establish a common ground in the classroom. Time constraints and the possible unworkability of needs analysis necessitate the teacher to opt for negotiated syllabus in order to attain the desirable objectives at the end (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000b; Nation & Macalister, 2010, as cited in Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018).

It is worth mentioning; thus, that modern teaching pedagogies advocate teacher’s role as a facilitator and guide instead of being the sole source of knowledge. As such, learners are supposed to be aware of their needs and learning preferences which will be taken into consideration in syllabus negotiation. Adopting this kind of syllabi will notably motivate learners to take control of their learning with the help of the teacher (Öztürk, 2013).

On the contrary, negotiation cannot be reached or implemented directly as a number of factors can restrict and determine to what extent it can be applied within the classroom

(Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018). Learners may be unexperienced with such type of syllabi; thus, the teacher can gradually introduce negotiation to help learners smoothly identify with it. Additionally, large classes can hamper the successful application of negotiated syllabus as it seems to be time and energy consuming form the part of the teacher. Lastly, differences in culture can also impede negotiation and agreement between the instructor and learners (Macalister, 2010; Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018).

9.2 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Seemingly, the word ‘universal’ might be tricky at the first glance as it does not refer to a single generalised framework. Contrarily, it stipulates that the designed syllabus is a response to all different variance of learners. Therefore, UDL brings learner’s idiosyncrasy at the forefront of the design (Morin, 2019).

In the same vein, the founding fathers of UDL; Rose and Meyer (2002) define UDL as a systematic framework which is based upon three prime principles that provide answers to the ‘what, ‘how’ and why’ of learning. Firstly, ‘recognition learning’ answers the question ‘what’ via providing miscellaneous range of both teaching and learning representations (i.e. what to teach and learn); for example, using text-books or videos. Secondly, ‘strategic learning’ gives various ways of ‘action and expression’; that is, many options of how learners learn and express what they know (opting for presentations, group work project, Etc). Finally, ‘affective learning’ provides learners with many ways to boost ‘engagement’; it is related to the provision of different modalities to motivate learners via maximising learners’ choices and minimising punishments and distractions.

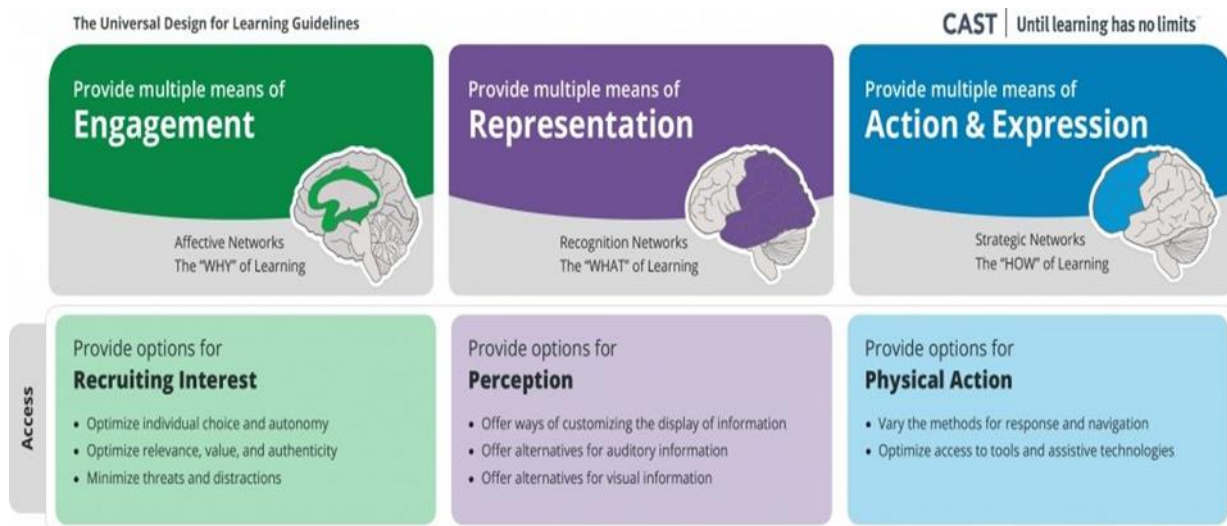


Figure 2 Universal Design Learning. Reprinted from *The UDL Guidelines*, by CAST,2018.

<http://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

As a matter of fact, UDL is the fruit of many years of research linked to neuroscience and education. It was proven; thus, that learners are as diverse as their ‘fingerprints’. That is why UDL ensures learning for all categories of learners (disable individuals, average learners, smart, Etc). In this view, it aspires to lessen barriers and boost learning opportunities (Hall, Meyer& Rose,2012).

Therefore, UDL syllabus is a considered as a convincing framework, which supports learners’ differences. It helps the instructor making a plan that anticipates learners’ diversities. Learners choose the tools that suit them, and consequently one task is realised differently by every learner (Posey, n.d).

In summation, UDL syllabus is one of the modern syllabi which believes in every learner’s capacity and personal abilities. It designs a plan which provides equal opportunities to all learners to be successful at the end of their learning journey.

Conclusion

This chapter has intended to communicate the different major understandings and issues related to SD. The latter constituted the crux of the present research and the reason to the next chapter (personalised learning). It was pointed out that SD at its superficial understanding can be understood as the teacher's responsibility alone. Nevertheless, at the very end of the current chapter; illustrative examples of contemporary SD were displayed in order to serve as a preparatory phase to the second chapter that will review various concepts and elements related to personalised learning, namely: syllabus co-design.

Chapter Two: Personalised Learning (An Overview)

Introduction

1. Conceptions of PL

2. Personalisation, Individualisation, Differentiation: Associated, But Different Concepts

3. Learner Differences

3.1 Learning Styles Models

3.1.1 Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (1984)

3.1.2 Fleming's VARK model (1987)

3.2 Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT) (1983)

4. Stages of PL

5. Teachers and Learners' Shift of Roles in PL

5.1 Teacher's Role

5.2 Learners' Role

6. Features of Personalisation

7. Tenets of Personalisation

8. Personal Learning Profiles (PLPs)

9. Challenges and Constraints

Conclusion

Introduction

Personalisation is at the forefront of the contemporary approaches in the sphere of education. Therefore, this chapter is a reviewing account of PL approach. It introduces some personalisation- related concepts and discusses associated issues with PL; starting by providing different definitions to PL and ending up by mentioning some remarkable challenges and constraints. The gist of the present chapter entails a critical comparison and illustrations among three close, yet distinct conceptions within PL that are: personalisation, differentiation and individualisation. The chapter also identifies some learner's differences as it is quite relevant to PL. In addition, stages, features and tenets of PL are thoroughly discussed throughout this chapter. Lastly, investigating the shift of roles of both the instructor and learners are also to be tackled in details.

1. Conceptions of PL

The concept of PL is variable due to the fact that a clear consensus has yet to be agreed upon. However, the essence of PL is shared among the majority of definitions as it caters for learners' idiosyncratic differences, needs, preferences and learning styles.

It is worth indicating that the term PL is dated back to the 1700s when Jean-Jacques Rousseau invoked the necessity of educational institutions being established upon individual potentials and choices (Zmuda, Curtis & Ullman, 2015). Correspondingly, a considerable amount of literature on PL has distinctively portrayed the foregoing notion. Originally, the notion of PL was primarily coined in the United States; nonetheless, it became more prevailing in the contemporary era when the United Kingdom adopted it in its policy of education (Jones & McLean, 2018).

As a matter of fact, PL is deemed the alternative of what is known as 'one-size-fits-all'. Accordingly, the Great Schools Partnership's "Glossary of Education Reform" (2015)

captures PL as: “[...] a diverse variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies that are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students” (para.01).

Substantially, Grant and Basye (2014) describe PL as a novel approach that customises learning for all learners despite their differences. Furthermore, they draw attention to the indispensable utility technology plays within PL. They indicate that the integration of digital instruments can remarkably help achieve more apparent results while applying personalisation.

A more elaborated conceptualisation on PL sheds light on the essential strategies, understandings and practices that both the teacher and learners should comply with. Addedly, primordial factors, such as: school leadership, teacher expertise and learner competence and objectives are significantly involved to decide on the capability to co-design a syllabus (Waldrisp et al., 2014).

Interestingly, Bray and McCliskey (2017) indicate that the learner is at the heart of PL where the instructor guides learners throughout their learning cycle. In essence, learners’ choices are what single personalisation out, that is learners are given freedom and flexibility to choose how to learn and how to express and discuss what they learned using the different ways available, which match their learning styles and preferred methods of expression. In this vein, “Personalized learning looks different in different places because it is personalized for the teachers, the learners, and the community” (Bray & McCliskey, 2015, p.6).

Furthermore, Zmuda et al. (2015) visualise PL as a twofold concept that can either lead to better learning achievements, or to a better way for raising youngsters. While the former seeks to reach lifelong and sustained learning, the latter attempts to develop learners as individuals in terms of personal skills and potential. Accordingly, they depict PL as: “[...] a

progressively student-driven model in which students deeply engage in meaningful, authentic, and rigorous challenges to demonstrate desired outcomes” (p.16).

Therefore, PL is the approach that brings together the instructor and learners as collaborators who mutually share different responsibilities, but with more emphasis on the learner to push him/ her to be autonomous.

2. Personalisation, Individualisation, Differentiation: Associated, but Different Concepts

Despite the rich literature on this topic, there is still a lack for a clear-cut distinction among personalisation, individualisation and differentiation.

To begin with, the 2010 National Educational Technology Plan failed to provide a neat explanation to the three intertwined terms. In this respect, both individualisation and differentiation are centred on the teacher who controls the degree of tailoring learning in accordance with learners’ interests and styles, while personalisation turns around the learner as an individual who actively decides upon his learning. As such, personalisation is regarded as the umbrella term, which entails both individualisation and differentiation (US Department of Education, 2010).

Considerably, Bray and McClaskey (2013) differentiate the three resembling notions in terms of perspective and roles. Firstly, personalisation is learner-driven whereas both individualisation and differentiation are teacher-driven. In simple terms, within PL the learner is expected to take charge of learning by setting goals, selecting content and deciding upon materials with the instructor’s assistance; nonetheless, the teacher is the one responsible for customising content and monitoring learning pace of every individual within individualisation and differentiation. Secondly, in terms of roles PL grants learners the opportunity to ‘drive their learning’. Contrarily, in differentiation the teacher delivers content to a group of learners who

share close differences, but the instruction is provided differently to every individual under individualisation. More detailed comparison is demonstrated in Table 1:

Table 1

Personalisation vs Differentiation vs Individualisation Chart

Personalization	Differentiation	Individualization
The Learner...	The Teacher...	The Teacher...
drives their learning.	provides instruction to groups of learners.	provides instruction to an individual learner.
connects learning with interests, talents, passions, and aspirations.	adjusts learning needs for groups of learners.	accommodates learning needs for the individual learner.
actively participates in the design of their learning.	designs instruction based on the learning needs of different groups of learners.	customizes instruction based on the learning needs of the individual learner.
owns and is responsible for their learning that includes their voice and choice on how and what they learn.	is responsible for a variety of instruction for different groups of learners.	is responsible for modifying instruction based on the needs of the individual learner.
identifies goals for their learning plan and benchmarks as they progress along their learning path with guidance from teacher.	identifies the same objectives for different groups of learners as they do for the whole class.	identifies the same objectives for all learners with specific objectives for individuals who receive one-on-one support.
acquires the skills to select and use the appropriate technology and resources to support and enhance their learning.	selects technology and resources to support the learning needs of different groups of learners.	selects technology and resources to support the learning needs of the individual learner.
builds a network of peers, experts, and teachers to guide and support their learning.	supports groups of learners who are reliant on them for their learning.	understands the individual learner is dependent on them to support their learning.
demonstrates mastery of content in a competency-based system.	monitors learning based on Carnegie unit (seat time) and grade level.	monitors learning based on Carnegie unit (seat time) and grade level.
becomes a self-directed, expert learner who monitors progress and reflects on learning based on mastery of content and skills.	uses data and assessments to modify instruction for groups of learners and provides feedback to individual learners to advance learning.	uses data and assessments to measure progress of what the individual learner learned and did not learn to decide next steps in their learning.
Assessment AS and FOR Learning with minimal OF Learning	Assessment OF and FOR Learning	Assessment OF Learning

Note: Reprinted from *Make Learning Personal* by B. Bray & K. McClaskey. Copyright 2014©

<http://www.personalizelearning.com/2013/03/new-personalization-vs-differentiation.html>

From another regard, Zmuda et.al (2015) distinguish individualisation in terms of learners' responsibility about learning pace where technology tools can be of a pivotal usefulness to gauge 'self-paced instructional path'. Conversely, personalisation is not solely restricted to learners taking control of pace, but also to the challenge per se, besides the various ways they take to attain their learning goals. However, differentiation necessitates instructors to customise 'content', 'process' and 'product' in order to make learning more approachable to every individual. A more extended and comprehensive distinction is displayed in Table 2:

Table 2

Distinction between Personalised Learning, Individualisation, and Differentiation

Delivery Model	How Student Owns the Learning Experience	Teacher's Role	Illustrative Examples
Personalized Learning	Student actively pursues authentic, complex problems that inspire cocreation in the inquiry, analysis, and final product.	Teacher facilitates learning through questions, conferences, and feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student develops and uses playlists (e.g., curation of texts, experiences) to inform. • Student leads teacher-parent conferences to evaluate performance and determine next steps. • Student moves through learning experiences at his own pace to demonstrate desired outcomes or competencies in ways designed by him.
Individualization	Student controls the pace of the topic as well as when to demonstrate mastery.	Teacher drives instruction through teacher-created tasks and related lesson plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher develops playlists. • Teacher assigns or student independently uses a digital tool to focus on fluency (e.g., Khan Academy). • Teacher assigns online independent study or intervention program (e.g., Dreambox or Compass Learning).
Differentiation	Student assesses and chooses instruction around content, process, product, and learning environment.	Teacher tailors instruction based on individual student need and preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher creates literature circles around different texts but same theme. • Student develops a learning contract with the teacher. • Teacher develops choice board or menu to provide student choice.

Note: Reprinted from *Learning Personalised* by A. Zmuda, G. Curtis, & D.

Ullman. Copyright 2015©Jossey-Bass

In light of what has been reviewed, it is worth noting that personalisation, differentiation and individualisation are still tricky, but associated notions. Firstly, differentiation is the association of learning goals of the syllabus to learners' distinct interests and styles. Secondly, Individualisation sheds light on the learner where the accent is put on the pace of every individual before moving to the next phase of learning. Lastly, personalisation is usually the coin that encompasses the former and latter notions.

3. Learner Differences

Understanding learners' differences has become part and parcel of an effective teaching/learning process. In this regard, the 21st reality of education is smoothly and swiftly shifting from standardisation to personalisation. Therefore, differences in learning styles and intelligences; for instance, are to be taken into account by instructors when coming to design a syllabus.

First and foremost, identifying learners' learning styles within a particular classroom, besides designing what can be eclectic to encompass the majority of individuals' differences are unavoidably what challenge teachers the most (Literacy Planet, 2017).

Despite impediments that may hinder harnessing the utility of learning styles in classrooms, Coffield, Moseley, Hall and Ecclestone (2004) put forward that sustained learning is far reaching without considering individual learners with distinct learning styles. That is, learners are to be more motivated if they are aware of their learning styles, strengths and weaknesses; when instructors reciprocally understand their learners' differences, achievement rates are to be augmented.

3.1 Learning Styles Models

A learning style, generally, refers to the approach or the particular way an individual learner can process information. In fact, learning styles are unique to learners, but similar tendencies can be found within a group of learners.

Fleming and Baume (2006) view the learning style in the sense that is a depiction of a process, or tendencies that stimulate learners' thinking and content processing; thus, ameliorating learning. However, "learners' styles are not fixed traits which an individual will always display. Learners are able to adopt different styles in different contexts" (Pritchard, 2009, p.42).

Moreover, Dunn and Griggs (1998) define learning styles as:

the way in which each person begins to concentrate on, process, and retain new and difficult information. Concentration occurs differently for different people at different times. It is important to know many things about individual's traits to determine what is most likely to trigger each adolescent's concentration, energize his or her processing style, and intervene to increase long-term memory (p.14).

Hence, being aware of one's learning style is crucial for lifelong learning as it deciphers learning challenges that learners usually encounter due to learning style unawareness.

3.1.1 Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (1984)

Kolb's learning style model is substantially stemmed from his particular view to learning. The latter is perceived as the transformation of information through experience. Thus, what is gained as knowledge is the fruit of a fully experience understanding and its transformation. In line with Kolb's advocacy of experiential learning theory, individuals develop learning styles as a response to their previous 'life experiences', besides the necessities in their present surrounding (Kolb, 1984, as cited in Coffiel, et al., 2004)

Consequently, four distinct learning styles are identified according to the latest revision on learning style inventory. Firstly, converging style; in which individuals are able to provide practical solutions to problems. They can identify more with technical tasks at the expense of sensitive, or interpersonal issues. Secondly, diverging style; which is centred around concrete situations that are looked at from various angles. Divergers are more aware of emotional and imaginative traits as they are more interested in people. Thirdly, assimilating style is generally linked to abstractions and reflections where individuals have tendencies towards logic and theories over focusing on people. Finally, accommodating style refers to individuals who prefer to learn by doing and experiencing. In addition, they count on others for information rather than aspiring for their own analysis (Kolb, 2000, as cited in Coffiel, et al., 2004).

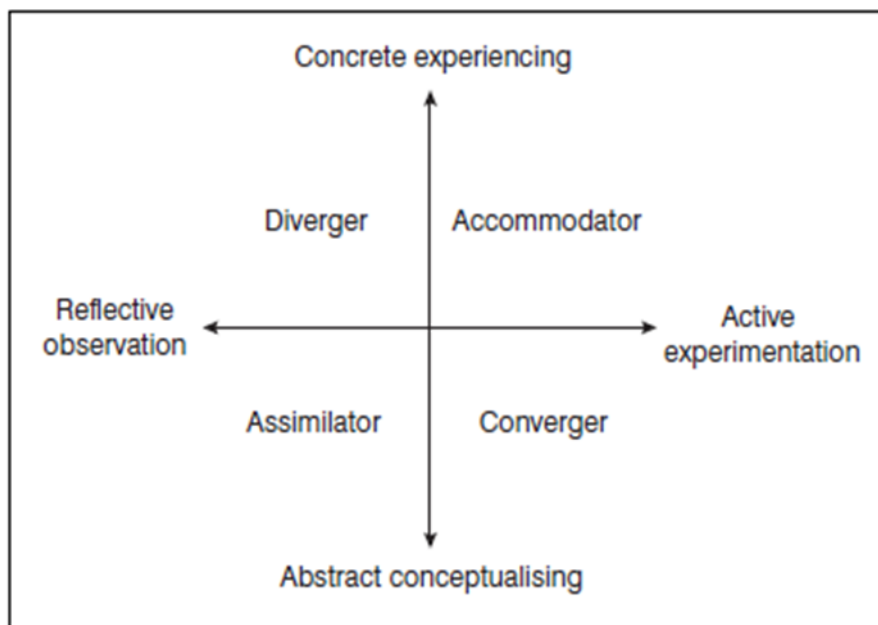


Figure 3 Kolb's Dimensions. Reprinted from *Ways of learning: Learning theories and learning styles in the classroom* (p.50), by A. Pritchard, 2009, Routledge.

On the contrary, Kolb's model has received a massive wave of criticism as being full a flaws and deficiencies. To exemplify, he was criticised at the levels of his theory and model where the theory of experiential learning is deemed to be equivocal on both the notional and practical paradigms. In other words, this theory may refer to styles of learning (personality-

related) or stages of learning (successive phases in a learning process) in which the former and the latter are primarily distinct (Coffield et al., 2004, cited in Bergsteiner, Avery & Neumann, 2010).

In line with the above criticism, the modelling of the model itself is subject to criticism. Coffield et al (2004) suggest that a more comprehensive model would be generated if the elements of: process, level and style are separated and not combined together as it can be misleading and ambiguous.

3.1.2 Fleming's VARK Model (1987)

The VARK model is one of the commonest and mostly used learning styles representation. It was principally inspired from the neurolinguistic programming theory (NLP) that classifies learning styles into: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Likewise, the VARK is deemed to be the sophisticated version of NLP (Pritchard, 2009).

According to Fleming and Baume (2006), "VARK above all is designed to be a starting place for a conversation among teachers and learners about learning" (para.03). In essence, VARK (visual, aural, read/write and kinaesthetic) advocates learners preferences to approach learning. It; thus, provides various modalities for different individuals' learning tendencies (Fleming & Baume, 2006).

As a matter of fact, V in VARK refers to visual learners whose learning is subject to information visualisation, pictures and charts depiction. Integrating visuals can be of a vital utility for individuals who rely on seeing things to grasp knowledge. Secondly, A in VARK stands for aural or auditory learners whose learning is centred around listening to the information. They prefer to be told as they can memorise the information more sustainably. Thirdly, R in VARK concerns reading and writing learners who have tendencies towards making loud readings, taking notes and writing down the piece of information. Lastly, K in

VARK refers to kinaesthetic or tactile individuals who prefer to learn by doing and experiencing. Kinaesthetic learners relate more with practical and real-like experiences and ideas (Fleming, n.d., cited in Cherry, 2019).

As any other learning style model, the VARK model has also been criticised for a number of reasons. To start with, its validity was questioned as assigning learners with one distinct learning style might constitute a hurdle to learning itself (Cherry, 2019). In terms of analysis, Svinicki (n.d.) points out that: “We found that (VARK) was hard to validate statistically, including with several modifications we tried and several statistical strategies such as multidimensional scaling. We just couldn't get a good fit with the data” (cited in Fleming & Baume, 2006).

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the VARK model has facilitated teachers' tasks to recognise learners' specific learning styles tendencies, which in turn unveiled many ambiguities encountered by both educators and learners.

3.2 Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT) (1983)

Conversely to what was widely disseminated, Intelligence is not static, and yet it is a multi-faceted gifted human trait. Naturally, individuals possess disparate types of intelligences, which make them unique and diverse.

Scholars have sought to define the notion of intelligence differently according to their own spheres of specialism. Binet (1960) who invented the intelligence quotient (IQ) test perceives the concept of intelligence as a means which incorporates sound judgment, sound reasoning and sound comprehension (as cited in Singh, 2015). Additionally, Thorndike (1921, as cited in Sternberg, 1982) regards intelligence as the optimal response from the factual viewpoint. From a different perspective, he states

[...] the intelligence will not develop in isolation, except in an unusual person; and so it becomes necessary to focus on those roles or situations where the intelligence occupies a central place. In addition, it should prove possible to identify disparate levels of expertise in the development of an intelligence, ranging from the universal beginnings through which every novice passes, to exceedingly high levels of competence, which may be visible only in individuals with unusual talent and/or special forms of training (Gardner, 1983, pp 68-69).

It is worth mentioning that linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences are generally regarded as the primordial parameters to gauge individuals' intelligence. However, Gardner's (1983) MIT has revolutionised the traditional and superficial ways educational systems have been using for decades when he demonstrated seven major types of intelligences, namely: linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, personal intelligence (interpersonal and intrapersonal) and naturalistic intelligence.

First of all, linguistic intelligence is thoroughly discussed by Gardner due to its significance and prevalence. Even though it was illustrated via poets and poetry as they represent the 'ideal' language users, it does not indicate that only this specific category enjoys this type of intelligence. As a matter of fact, linguistic intelligence varies in sensitivity from one individual to another. It; thus, refers to sensitivity to words' spectrum and to the ability to master the grammatical rules to the extent to know its usage, or to break these rules when it is necessary.

The next highlighted type of intelligence is musical intelligence. Individuals gifted this competence since early age can perform, compose and appreciate musical patterns. Musical intelligence constitutes two main elements, namely: pitch and rhythm. While the former refers

to the melody which is the centre of focus in many cultures, the latter refers to the specific sounds classified according to a particular system.

The next intelligence is logical-mathematical that was firstly based upon Piaget's visualisation of logical-mathematical thought. Individuals gifted this type of intelligence prefer to deal with abstractions established on logical proofs. They are inclined reasoning and numerical patterns. Accordingly: "...mathematical talent requires the ability to discover a promising idea and then to draw out its implications" (Gardner, 1983, P.151).

Another intelligence is named spatial, which is related to the visual capacity individuals make use of in order to identify objects accurately. Spatial intelligence is useful when working with 'graphic depictions', besides diagrams, charts and geometrical forms. Interestingly, spatial competence is chiefly regarded as the 'source of thought'; that is, our inner thinking operations are primarily elicited from our perceptions of the surrounding environment.

Bodily-kinaesthetic is another type of intelligence, which entails the competence developed by individuals in order to use their bodies to solve problems. Correspondingly, mental and physical operations are deemed intertwined within kinaesthetic intelligence.

The sixth broad type of intelligence is personal intelligence. The latter is comprised of two other types of intelligences, namely: interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Whereas the latter refers to the inner traits of individuals in terms of: emotions, aspirations, thinking, besides all the several internal aspects. The former is directed towards the knowledge of the 'other'; as stated by Gardner: "the interpersonal intelligence looks outward, toward the behavior, feelings, and motivations of others" (P.255).

Lastly, naturalistic intelligence was added by Gardner (1993). It entails the ability to make sense to the external natural world including species and plants. Individuals are able to

classify objects according to their similarities and disparities. Farmers, hunters and gardeners are thought to possess the highest levels of naturalistic intelligence (cited in Maftoon, 2012).

Gardner's theory of intelligences is widely recognised and applied because it sought to open new paradigms in order not to marginalise any learner. Accordingly, all learners feel more motivated and engaged to demonstrate what they know via the ways that best reflect their intelligence type.

4. Stages of PL

Personalisation requires the subtle shift from what is conventionally designated as 'one-size-fits-all' to what is recently known and put into practise as personalisation. As a result, Bray and McClaskey (2015) meticulously explain the major three stages of PL.

The prime phase to personalisation is deemed teacher-centred. The major foci within the first stage are directed towards the instructor who is expected to develop learners' profiles (LPs) in order to know his learners as individuals. In simple terms, LPs display distinct learners' idiosyncrasies in terms of needs, preferences, choices and voices. Moreover, the teacher, at this stage, is supposed to know the available instruments to be implemented, besides revising lessons and projects to make them compatible with LPs. The second stage is learner-centred in which partnership is the crux of this phase. The teacher with learners work collaboratively to update LPs and co-design various elements in the class, such as: the syllabus, lessons, projects, tools, etc. At the last stage, learners drive their learning by taking responsibility based on what they selected as educational instruments to assist them working according to their own pace. Consequently, the teacher guides and scaffolds learners, besides constantly providing feedback and help when needed.

5. Teachers and Learners' Shift of Roles in PL

Teachers and learners' roles have undergone a radical change within PL. Bridging the gap that was among the instructor and learners is one of the cornerstones of personalisation. As such, collaboration and partnership are at the forefront of this learning approach.

5.1 Teacher's Role

The task of the teacher has drastically changed with PL. It is no longer the teacher being the sole knowledge provider and the learners are the empty recipients who passively receive information from the instructor. On the contrary, the teacher is deemed a facilitator who simplifies learning through guidance and assistance (Hanover Research, 2014). In a similar view, Olson (2017) states that: "teachers can be the guides that shape educational experiences for their students, helping them engage with learning tools that will enrich and support deeper learning, including different types of technology" (para.02).

From a deeper perspective, Marquis (2017) identifies a number of roles instructors are performing within PL. Facilitator ('learning manager') is the prime role that many studies agree upon. Basing themselves upon customised smart programmes, learners are likely to face hindrances dealing with these programmes; thus, it is the teacher's job to facilitate its uses and keep learners on the right track of the task. Remediator is another role of the instructor where he is expected to provide alternatives and optimal options when learners are unable to attain their learning objectives. A teacher can also be a collaborator, which is the essence of PL. The instructor and learners are supposed to actively cooperate together in order to augment learners' engagement and motivation. Moreover, enricher and content creator are also among teacher's tasks. While the latter refers to the implementation of individuals' strengths and weaknesses to design content, the former entails scaffolding learners so that they can put into practice what they have gained as knowledge.

In line with the above discussion, Bray and McClaskey (2013) believe that striving towards personalisation results in a shift at the levels of: teachers, learners, parents and even community. Therefore, rather than passively delivering content, instructors become partners with their learners. This partnership includes two major key elements, namely: effectively involving learners in designing appealing environments to engage them and identifying them as co-designers in syllabus and lesson design.

From another angle, Zmuda (n.d.) makes an analogy between the teacher and the entrepreneur, artist and engineer in the sense that the instructor designs and evaluates results until the idea is fully achieved, or a totally new idea appears. To account for the teacher's shift of roles, Zmuda refers to three steps in order to attain the core role of the teacher in PL. Firstly, to transform a teacher from a lecturer to an instructor; learners are restricted where the teacher controls everything in class. The shift can occur by integrating workshops to help individuals actively identify with guided work. Secondly, to transform an instructor to a facilitator; applying what is known as 'rotation model'. The latter makes it available to teachers to teach mini-lessons to groups of learners, instead of whole class. Individuals are grouped according to their needs, strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, to transform the facilitator to the coach. It necessitates providing learners with more flexibility and ownership regarding learning, besides conferencing on what learners have achieved and constantly scaffolding them when needed. Together teacher as coach with learners take actions based upon the pre-analysis of their needs to eventually design optimal plans and projects

5.2 Learners' Role

As personalisation completely resets the ground for learners' role in the learning process, individuals are expected to actively engage in their learning. Essentially, learners are expected to be aware of and to understand the appealing ways to their learning; combined with the necessary skills and appropriate instruments to scaffold learning. As a result, individuals will

be more responsible about their learning, which will be reflected in their ownership and engagement. Furthermore, constant collaboration with the teacher is what distinguishes PL from any other learning approach. Accordingly, learners with their instructor set goals, design a 'personal learning plan' and carefully choose how to access and express content best (Bray & McClaskey, 2013).

In the same vein, learners are deemed active agents as they have a word to say about their learning, which brings to them sense of belongingness and motivation. Individual learners with idiosyncratic differences no longer feel marginalised like in the traditional 'one-size-fits-all' learning model. Learners are remarkably aware of the content they are taking, the goals of learning and more importantly they know the optimal ways to achieve success. Finally, learners are also granted opportunities to make choices about how they want to access information (Getting Smart Staff, 2017).

As stated by Zmuda et al. (2015): '...students become stewards of their own learning experience' (para.05). Individuals co-design their learning plans and actions by identifying their challenges and weaknesses. As such, learners are expected to consider and respond to what they already set as plans with the instructor in order to attain learning objectives.

It can be deduced; thus, that learners are given more responsibility and trust over their learning. Individuals actively sense the process of learning as they own a word to say about what they learn and how they learn it.

6. Features of Personalisation

Paving the path towards personalisation is a challenging yet, a possible task. It can be feasible if the government, community, school interior policy, educators and learners work hand in hand towards making learning a more meaningful experience. As such, effective PL programmes enjoy a number of characteristics.

Friend, Patrick, Schneider and Ark (2017) identify four key features that characterise PL. To begin with, learners' control and responsibility over their learning is the main feature within PL. In other words, learners are given more opportunities to freely learn using the many accessible ways that suit their learning styles best, besides the chance of learning outside the classroom walls via digital instruments, which constitute one of the bases of PL. In essence, PL is mostly characterised by its emphasis on the learning process, instead of the series of annual tests. It also stresses 'mastery-based progress' as learners are expected to demonstrate content mastery via the suitable ways, they are inclined to in order to shift to the next phase; the shift is tailored according to their own pace of learning. Lastly, PL is deemed the flexible learning approach that opens doors of learning at any time and in any place.

According to Grant and Basye (2014) an effective PL model is characterised by the following:

1. What interest learners is put at the forefront as they are engaged via practical, real-like activities in order to upgrade learning.
2. Instructor's role shifts from the sole knowledge provider to learning facilitator and coach.
3. Individuals' learning ownership helps them fulfil learning objectives, establish self-efficiency, besides critical and creativity skills.
4. Technology plays a pivotal proportion in the content of learning, ways of information access and express.
5. Formative assessment is prioritised when it is backed up with digital instruments.
6. Learning progress in a given area is displayed through mastery of a particular skills and understanding.
7. Integrating technology in the classroom to promote learning experience.

7. Tenets of Personalisation

Due to its popularity, PL has become a widely recognised approach, which is established upon a number of principles. Despite the absence of consensus, every scholar defines different pillars, yet they all converge in the essence of PL.

To start with, Keamy et al. (2007, as cited in Jones & McLean, 2018) identify four main key tenets for personalisation. The prime tenet in PL is deemed ‘learners as central’. It entails catering for different individuals’ idiosyncrasies in terms of preferences, needs and learning styles. It also includes the application of learner-centred approach of instruction, which matches the principles of personalisation, besides opting for formative assessment to keep tracking learners’ progression. The next tenet is ‘information and communication technology’(ICT). It grants learners to connect with learning beyond the physical walls of their classrooms. ICT integration can foster interaction among learners and can serve learners’ diversities of learning. ‘Lifelong learning’ is another principle of PL; as the ultimate aim of personalisation lies in the fact that it is implemented to result in sustained learning. Learning should not end when learners finish their learning careers; on the contrary, it is a lifelong process that continues after one’s graduation as learning is not only confined to the formal education received inside classrooms. The latter can be concretely achieved when applying ‘flexible learning environments’. Finally, ‘communities of collaboration’ refers to the importance of learners to be connected to their peers, instructor and other adults in the society. The crux of PL is established upon the notion of partnership and cooperation among the active actors in the learning process.

From a different perspective, Ripp (2015) states five major principles for PL that are exclusively centred around the learner, respectively: student voice, student choice, student planning, student reflection and student action. To account for the aforementioned tenets, the teacher should be aware of what makes his learners distracted, passive or disinterested., besides understanding what and why they like or dislike about a particular course. Moreover, choices

are also prompted in PL as they provide certain freedom to learners to choose what fits best their capabilities. The latter will result in engagement and motivation. Furthermore, planning is no longer the instructor's task alone. Sharing and partnership between both polls is recommended. Reflection; from another regard, is deemed necessary upon the strategies implemented, and the optimal prompts included in the session. Reflection can be also conducted with learners in order to attain more effective and apparent results. Lastly, student action which refers to what can learners do after having been instructed via PL. It is expected that learners show more productivity and creativity that help them solve practical problems encountering them in different situations.

Another worthwhile model of PL tenet is introduced by Henry County Schools (HCS) (n.d) (as cited in Sturgis, 2016) in the United States. This model provides five solid pillars towards personalisation. As such, the prime pillar entails 'learner profiles and personal learning plans'. Profiles constitute the mirror that reflects learners' prior information regarding performance and tendencies. As a matter of fact, profiles can be created using various means. For HCS, using technology is the optimal strategy to cater for learners' differences and to keep an eye over their pre-progress, present progress and future potential. As for 'personal learning plans', they are co-designed with learners in order to get more effective and authentic results. The second pillar refers to 'competency-based learning'. HCS have devised their own infrastructure to assist teaching/learning process and assessment in order to make sure that learners can move to the next phase having mastered what was required in the previous phase. 'Authentic/project-based learning' is another pillar, which includes teaching using real-like situations and projects. As it proved its efficiency to develop a more sustained learning where learners are ready to solve real life problems and have a deeper understanding of what they are taking as input. '21st century skills', besides 'technology-enabled' are two other principles of this model. HCS stress four main competencies, namely: communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

These skills ensure success, sustainment and learners' self-efficacy. Addedly, incorporating digital tools constitutes an important pillar within HCS as it makes instruction more meaningful to learners.

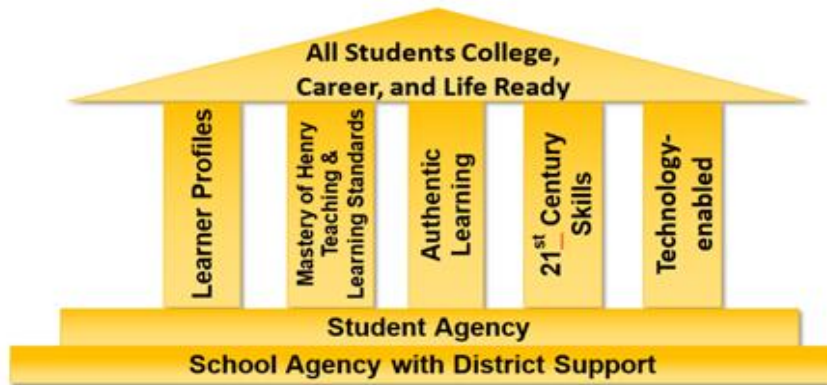


Figure 4 Henry County Schools' Vision for PL. Reprinted from *Henry County schools* (n.d) <https://schoolwires.henry.k12.ga.us/personalizedlearning>

The figure summarises the principles of PL as regarded by HCSs. Learner Profiles are at the forefront of the model followed by: mastery of Henry teaching and learning standards, authentic learning, 21st century skills, besides technology-enabled.

8. Personal Learning Profiles (PLPs)

Creating personalised profiles for every learner is at the heart of PL approach. It is what helps instructors to cater for individuals' distinct differences, learning styles, weaknesses and strengths.

It is worth noting that learner profiles are defined as:

comprehensive, data-rich learner profiles convey how a student learns best and are used to plan customized learning environments and instructional strategies. When we have a deep understanding of each learner, we can leverage individual strengths to determine the correct blend of learning modalities and strategies to ensure success (Hanover Research, 2014, P,9).

It is; thus, what makes instructors better understand their learners. A learning profile may be used in order to establish a stronger relationship among learners and their teacher, besides clarifying the vision of teaching as the instructor will know which strategies and modalities to implement to cater for the differences in the classroom. Learning profiles can be created by learners alone, or they can fill in an online survey via (Google Forms or Survey Monkey). Therefore, the notion of designing profiles augments engagement and shapes learning (Lynch, 2018).

According to Mangione, Pierri and Salerno (2009) a learner profile is composed of: 'learner identity', 'cognitive state' and 'learner preferences'. The first element entails personal and demographic information related to learners. The next component is split into 'concept and knowledge levels', which refer to individuals' prior knowledge. It is important to identify what learners already know or what they lack in terms of knowledge and concepts. Eventually, 'learner preferences' include three other subgroups, respectively: technical requirements, self-learning requirements and learning styles. To sum it up, learning profiles might be regarded as individuals' learning 'DNA' which reflects a detailed account of their learning styles, preferred modalities, strengths, challenges and much more.

From another standpoint, Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2011) depict the significance of profiles within five paradigms of elements; 'biological traits', 'cultural and social factors', 'emotional and social influences', 'academic performance' and 'learning preferences'. As for 'biological traits', it entails some basic data about learners, such as: age, gender and even physical abilities if any. Individuals' biological aspects can explain why some learners act differently in comparison to others. The next dimension includes different cultural and societal components namely, economic stability, ethnicity, language, religion, etc. Getting to know these specificities explains many aspects about learners and facilitates dealing with them. 'Emotional and social influences' refer to family structure and self-esteem as it is important to

know that in order to expect learners' attitudes and perceptions. 'Academic preferences' contains many elements related to learners' academic proficiency, such as: language progression, mastery of the four skills, Etc. The last dimension is 'learning preferences' which is constituted of interests, learning styles, intelligence preferences, besides the preferred learning strategies and modalities.

In line with what has been discussed earlier, PLPs entail valuable information and details about learners; however, they are not static. An effective profile is the one which is updated from time to time as learners' performance evolves and preferences change. PLPs provide a clearer vision to instructors to develop meaningful and comprehensive compatible syllabi and lessons.

9. Challenges and Constraints

Despite the miscellaneous innovations brought within PL, it has received criticism, as any other learning approach, regarding different aspects.

Probably, one major critique regarding the approach of personalisation lies in the absence of precision in the notion per se. As a concept, PL is still ambiguous as a well-defined, sharp description has yet to be agreed upon (Herold, 2017).

Addedly, Litmanen (2019) identifies a number of constraints related to the application of personalisation. To start with, the concept of personalisation may often be overlapped with the one of individualisation. However, tailoring instruction to fit every learners' learning profile does not deprive learners from learning from each other; as learning is deemed more meaningful and efficient when interaction takes place in the learning environment. The next issue is linked with technology role in PL. Likewise, technology should be mainly implemented as a scaffolding instrument, which facilitates learning only. Another problem regarding personalisation is that it puts much emphasis on learners' learning ownership (i.e. self-direct

and autonomous), which seems a difficult task to reach especially for unexperienced learners. It is worth noting; thus, that the real challenge lies between providing optimal balance between autonomy and support in order to attain effective results at the end.

In the same vein, PL necessitates intensive preparation from the part of the instructor; that is why intelligent-adaptive systems are highly advisable in such cases in order to assist administrations' task to collect learners' data. Accordingly, teachers need to adapt themselves to new modern technological horizons in order to have a mastery over the different digital tools to be implemented (Green, 2013). Class time is another critical problem when referring to PL. In essence, implementing instruments to design learning activities or to analyse individuals' learning preferences might be at the expense of the instructors' time (Pitts, 2009, as cited in O'Donnell, Wade, Sharp & O'Donell, 2013, p.272).

To conclude, PL has shown some intricacies when it is put into application especially in terms of time consumption, teachers' extra-efforts, besides the dire need to implement ICTs in order to fully achieve learning goals. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the new concepts related to PL have introduced both teachers and learners to a new and enthusiastic learning paradigm. That is, instruction is not only a matter of content reception, but rather a shared responsibility among the teacher and the learners.

Conclusion

PL is a sophisticated sphere of knowledge, which makes use of other different approaches, such as competency-based approach and smart tools like ICTs, besides learning styles models and intelligences. It is; thus, what makes this revolutionary learning approach rich, holistic and unique. PL provides a more comprehensive sense to learning and strives to bring together the influential polls in learning (i.e. the teacher and learners). However, a complete ideal shift towards personalisation is such a challenging task that educators are

working on because traditional approaches are deeply engraved within educational institutions and policy makers. Finally, smooth and gradual transformations in some aspects of education can be the first steps towards PL (which the present research is trying to realise via a personalised syllabus).

Chapter Three: Field Work, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Introduction

1. Research Methodology: Choices and Rationale

2. Population and Sampling

3. Data Collection Methods

3.1 Questionnaire

3.1.1 Questionnaire of PL Profiles

3.1.2 Students' Learning Styles' Questionnaire (the VARK)

3.1.3 Teachers' questionnaire

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Questionnaire of PL Profiles: Analysis and Interpretation

4.3 Summary of Personalised Learners' Profiles: Descriptive Analytical Account

4.4 Teachers' Questionnaire: Analysis and Interpretation

5. Discussion and Synthesis of Findings

Conclusion

Introduction

After having reviewed the literature relevant to the present study, the current chapter is deemed the essence of this research work. Correspondingly, this chapter mirrors the field work and the analysis of the collected data. It first sets the ground to review the theoretical background of the adopted research methodology, population and sampling, besides the rationale behind every data collection method. The chapter also demonstrates data analysis procedures, and finally it provides a synthesised account about the results and interpretation of the data.

1. Research Methodology: Choices and Rationale

Deciding upon the optimal research approach of any scientific inquiry is quite an important step to take. The latter is highly influential in the analysis and interpretation of the obtained data.

Creswell (2014) depicts the research approach as a procedure that entails various decisions to be taken starting from the general philosophical worldviews and moving to the specificities of data collection methods and data analysis procedures.

As the ultimate objectives of this study strive towards developing a personalised co-designed syllabus, besides exploring teachers' perceptions and practices, the qualitative research approach sounds convenient. According to Kothari (2004) "qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impression" (p.05).

Furthermore, Dörnyei (2007) asserts that what singles out qualitative approach from quantitative approach is the 'natural setting'. The former does not strive towards modifying or controlling the setting of a certain phenomenon. Conversely, it describes and interprets the phenomenon under investigation as it occurs within a situation.

As a matter of fact, qualitative research approach belongs to the interpretivist (constructivist) research paradigm. According to interpretivists, life is meaningful when it is realised through individuals' viewpoints and attitudes. As such, the prime focus of this worldview is to elicit participants' opinions of the situation under investigation (Creswell, 2014).

In line with the above, a case studies design is used. Mackey and Gass (2005) indicate that the sphere of second language research has witnessed a remarkable use of case studies in various ways. As the name suggests, case studies design sheds light on the provision of meticulous depictions related to certain learners, or sometimes groups within their learning context (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The following figure demonstrates more information about purposes, foci, key terms and characteristics of case studies design.

	Purposes	Foci	key terms	Characteristics
Case study	To portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts	Individuals and local situations Unique instances A single case	Individuality, uniqueness In-depth analysis and portrayal Interpretive and inferential analysis	In-depth, detailed data from wide data source Participant and non-participant observation Non-interventionist
	To catch the complexity and situatedness of behaviour	Bounded phenomena and systems: ▪ individual ▪ group ▪ roles ▪ organizations ▪ community	Subjective Descriptive Analytical Understanding specific situations	Empathic Holistic treatment of phenomena
	To contribute to action and intervention		Sincerity Complexity Particularity	What can be learned from the particular case
	To present and represent reality - to give a sense of 'being there'			

Figure 5 Elements of Research Styles. Reprinted from *Research Methods in Education* (p.79), by L.Cohen, L.Manion and K. Morrison, 2000, London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

In the light of what has been mentioned, besides the fact that the present research work does not necessitate any kind of sophisticated calculations because it aspires to collect attitudes and develop a tentative personalised co-designed syllabus; it is deemed logical to opt for a

qualitative research approach. The latter falls under the interpretivist research paradigm, in addition to a case study design that is compatible with the chosen approach. Thus, it is noteworthy that the gathered data is to be mainly analysed and looked at from a qualitative viewpoint; on the contrary, descriptive statistics (frequency distribution tables and bar charts) are to be used to strengthen results and better display data.

2. Population and Sampling

The selection of third year students of English in Biskra University as a population to the present study is not a haphazard choice. On the contrary, it is tightly related to two apparent reasons. Firstly, the core problematic of this research has initially risen from third year oral expression syllabus (the previously undertaken preliminary investigation where four oral expression teachers have confirmed the absence of a well-defined oral expression syllabus). Secondly, developing a tentative personalised co-designed oral expression syllabus was the prime objective of this study. In pursuit of the latter aim, besides providing optimal results to this investigation, the researcher has chosen third year students to be part of this inquiry.

As for sampling techniques, a purposive sampling is selected for various reasons. Cohen et al. (2000) state that: “in purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs” (p.103). Furthermore, Kothari (2004) points out that purposive sampling is deemed frequent especially in second language research studies where the purpose is to pose hypotheses, instead of seeking to generalise results. Accordingly, 12 students have been chosen to take part in this research; however, some of them have given up during the period of Covid-19 pandemic and were replaced by other randomly volunteered third year students.

3. Data Collection Methods

Research instruments are the cornerstone of any scientific investigation that help the researcher obtaining solid information to complete research.

Substantially, the chief purpose of this phase is to be able to accept or reject the previously established research hypotheses. As such, collection of data tends to provide optimal information for analysis and interpretation. It is; thus, worth mentioning that data can be gathered via various range of tools either by opting for the previously acknowledged research tests or even elaborating other personalised research instruments (Singh, 2006).

Henceforth, a number of operational factors are to be taken into account before deciding upon any of the available research methods. Type of the study, besides its perspective are two underscored critical factors that guide the researcher to choose the adequate research tools. Addedly, the variables of finance and time are also influential in the choice of data collection instruments; some methods necessitate a longer time than others and perhaps other tools require more money, which can cause a serious restriction to the researcher's method selection. Above all, the 'ability and experience of the researcher' constitute a remarkable difference in the choice and use of data collection methods (Kothari, 2004).

Regarding qualitative data collection methods, Dörnyei (2007) explains its multiple intricacies and overlapping. Contrarily to quantitative research methods, which are clearer and more systematic, qualitative tools are 'less systematic and standardised'. Consequently, data obtained from qualitative tools can be larger and messier due to the nature of these methods (transcripts, field notes, interviews, focus groups, diaries, taps...). However, it is the researcher's task to filter and report the relevant data in order to arrive at the expected results hypothesised earlier.

Over and above, data collection methods are part and parcel of scientific investigations. Therefore, the researcher needs to be conversant with the many research tools found in both the

literature and field work in order to judiciously pick up what is compatible with the research under study.

3.1 Questionnaire

Because it is the commonest data collection tool, especially in social sciences, questionnaires of different types are employed in both quantitative and qualitative research studies. Researchers are able to obtain a large amount of data in a limited time, which is unlikely to be reached when opting for other data collection methods. Considerably, questionnaires are used to elicit various kinds of data, such as: behavioural information, attitudinal data and opinions (Dörnyei, 2003). Furthermore, the wide spread of internet calls for mailing questionnaires, rather than administering them hand to hand. Indeed, mailing questionnaires offers several advantages for the researcher: be it economical, bias free, participants have more time to answer, in addition to the fact that it can approach inaccessible participants (Kothari, 2004).

3.1.1 Questionnaire of PL Profiles

The principal aim of this semi-structured questionnaire (see appendix B) is to help creating personalised learning profiles for students. The profiles (see appendix F) mirror learners' pluralistic idiosyncrasies and preferences in oral expression class. This questionnaire was mainly constructed seeking to answer the first research question (How does a personalised co-designed syllabus look like?). Considerably, the questionnaire was validated by our supervisor in order to be piloted before administering the final version to the targeted research sample. A devised opinionnaire (see appendix E) along with the primary version of the questionnaire were sent to five third year students for feedback. As a result, some modifications were made at the level of questions' reformulation and the overall length of the questionnaire. Moreover, it is worth noting that the questionnaire was first planned to be administered hand to hand; nevertheless, the unexpected quarantine caused by Covid-19 pandemic made it

impossible to reach participants in person. Accordingly, an online version of the questionnaire was developed using (Google Forms); the questionnaire's link was sent to the sample (n=12) in a previously created messenger group ensuring enough time for students to answer the questionnaire in order to increase responses' credibility. Table 3 provides a succinct summary about the general structure of the questionnaire, which is composed of: questionnaire's sections, items, contents, besides the overall objectives driven from every section.

Table3

Structure and Objectives of the personalised learning profiles questionnaire

Section	Item	Content	Objectives
Section one	1-5	Background information	To know student's basic background information (age, gender, school background, choice of English as a major and the degree of satisfaction with their previous learning experience in oral expression class.)
Section two	6-9	Learners' learning information	To explore student's strengths, weaknesses, learning styles and source of motivation to help personalise profiles.
Section three	10-20	Oral expression course	To unveil students' most appealing learning preferences, needs, and objectives in oral expression course. This data will be the crux to devise a tentative personalised co-designed syllabus.

3.1.2 Students' Learning Styles' Questionnaire (the VARK)

In accordance with what has been indicated previously in chapter two under the title (Fleming's VARK model '1987'), the researcher opted for this ready-made official learning style questionnaire (see appendix C) as it showed potential reliability in results when detecting students' learning styles.

The prime reason behind the use of this structured questionnaire is because the researcher thinks that many students face difficulty to know their real learning styles. The VARK questionnaire that stands for (visual, aural, reading/writing and kinaesthetic) is a standardised questionnaire that is widely used to discover one's close learning style. It is; thus, used to consolidate results obtained from the questionnaire of personalised learning profiles.

Because this questionnaire is widely disseminated and employed in second language learning, it was unnecessary to opt for a piloting stage.

Additionally, The VARK questionnaire is comprised of 16 different scenario-like questions. Each question is followed by four options where every option refers back to a specific learning style (V/A/R/K). As such, the questionnaire was filled online by students since the result is processed automatically by the official VARK website.

The analysis of personalised learning profiles, in addition to the VARK questionnaire resulted in the creation of adequate personalised profiles for students. These profiles are the cornerstone to develop a tentative personalised co-designed oral expression syllabus.

3.1.3 Teachers' Questionnaire

Chiefly, this semi-structured questionnaire (see appendix D) was devised in order to collect necessary data to answer the second posed research question (What are teachers' perceptions and practices of a co-designed personalised syllabus?). Indeed, teachers' questionnaire was constructed to elicit teachers' views vis-à-vis SD in general, and a co-

designed personalised syllabus in particular. Accordingly, the supervisor validated this questionnaire in order to be mailed to two oral expression teachers for piloting. Likewise, teachers' general remarks were appreciative and positive regarding the questions' logical order and length. However, one of the teachers found the options in fourth question in section two ambiguous; as a result, a small modification was made in order to make the options clearer to respondents. Ultimately, an online version of the questionnaire developed by 'Google Forms' was sent to the emails of five third year oral expression teachers in Biskra University, section of English. Table 4 captures the structure and objectives of teachers' questionnaire.

Table 4

Structure and Objectives of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section	Item	Content	Objectives
Section one	1-3	Teachers' background information	To collect basic data related to teachers' teaching background, such as knowing whether or not they have undergone SD training.
Section two	1-13	Teachers' classroom practices	To discover teachers' current classroom practices regarding oral expression session.
Section three	1-7	Personalised co-designed syllabus	To elicit teachers' opinions and beliefs vis a vis personalised learning in general, and a personalised co-designed syllabus in particular.

4. Data Analysis

This section is dedicated to analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the three used questionnaires in this study. Data is mainly analysed thematically, besides the use of some basic descriptive statistics to strengthen analysis and results. Finally, a synthesised account is provided along with pedagogical recommendations and research limitations.

4.1 Questionnaire of PL Profiles: Analysis and Interpretation

Section One: Background Information

Table 5 summarises factual information of the research sample. Demographic information (age and gender) is included as it constitutes necessary data to be incorporated in the profiles. A total of 12 third year students participated in answering the questionnaire where females outnumbered males as it is displayed in the table. Furthermore, the age of 21 was the highest (66,7%) among participants. As for high school background, results showed that students are heterogeneous; that is, (16,7%) of students come from scientific streams, (50%) belong to literary stream and (33,3%) come from languages stream. As a matter of fact, the choice of English as their major was willingly by all participants. The other side of the coin is that the degree of satisfaction with learners' previous experience in oral expression course was varied. (16,7%) of students were unsatisfied with their previous experience, quarter of the sample (25%) expressed their satisfaction; nevertheless, (58,3%) of students stated their neutrality vis a vis their past experience in oral expression. Overall, this section is significant in the creation of profiles in general, and the syllabus in particular.

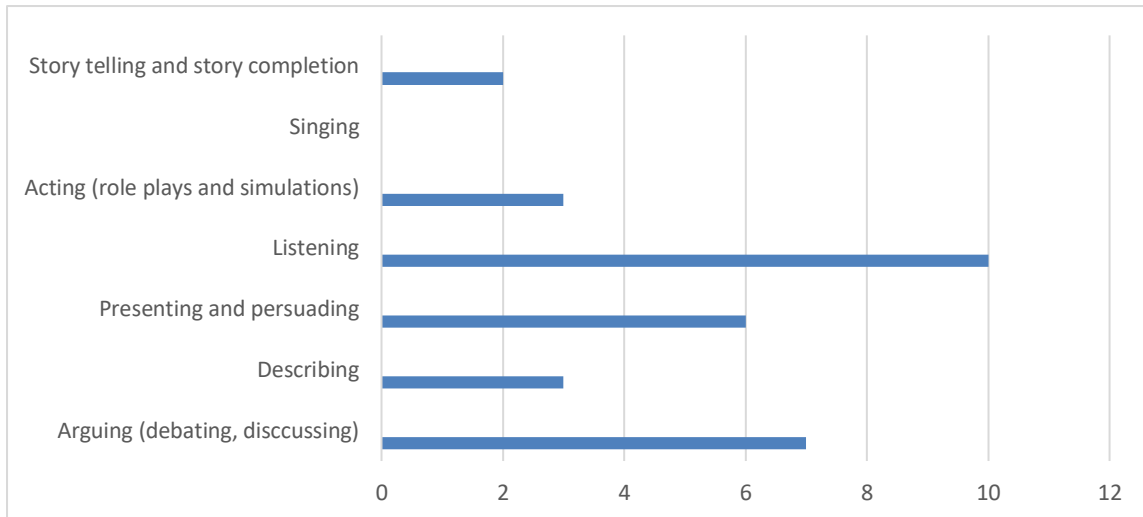
Table 5

Students' Factual Information

Aspect		Frequency	percentage
Gender	Male	4	33,3%
	Female	8	66,7%
	Total	12	100%
Age	20	1	8,3%
	21	8	66,7%
	22	1	8,3%
	24	1	8,3%
	34	1	8,3%
	Total	12	100%
High school background	Scientific	2	16,7%
	Literary	6	50%
	Languages	4	33,3%
	Total	12	100%
Choice of English as a major	Willingly	12	100%
	Imposed	00	0%
	Total	12	100%
Degree of satisfaction with learners' previous experience in oral expression course	Extremely unsatisfied	00	00%
	Unsatisfied	2	16,7%
	Neutral	7	58,3%
	Satisfied	3	25%
	Extremely satisfied	00	00%
	Total	12	100%

Section Two: Learner's Learning Information

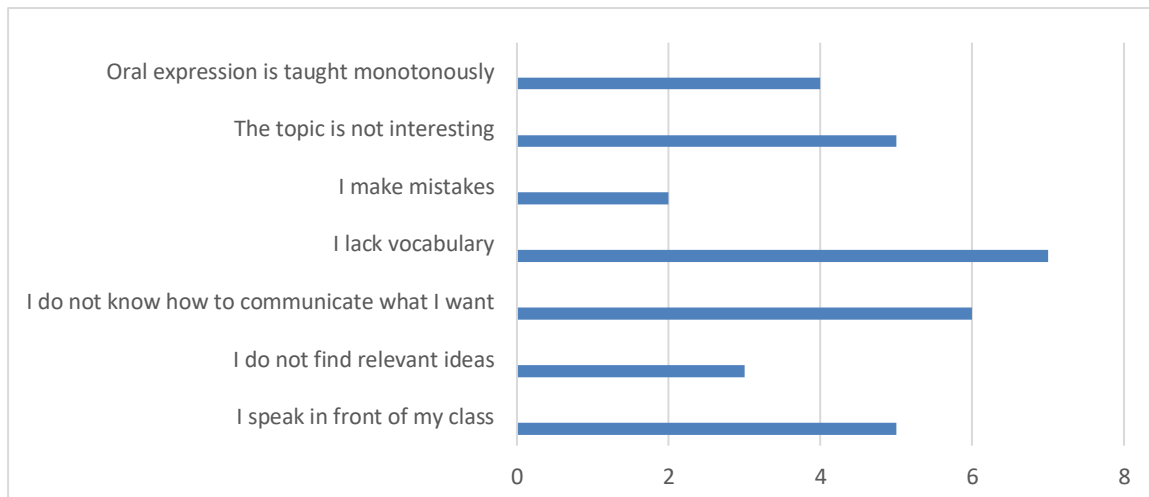
5- Tick the most appropriate strengths (you may tick more than one)



Graph 1 Students' Strengths

This question was asked in order to know students' related strengths in oral expression. Therefore, based on students' responses the researcher will carefully design a tentative syllabus to go with students' strength points. As it can be observed in graph 1, listening is chosen as top one (83,3%) strength point by students, which is respectively followed by arguing (debating, discussing) (58,3%), presenting and persuading (50%). On the contrary, singing (0%) was not chosen by any of the participants. As such, it is recommended to avoid incorporating singing activities in the classroom.

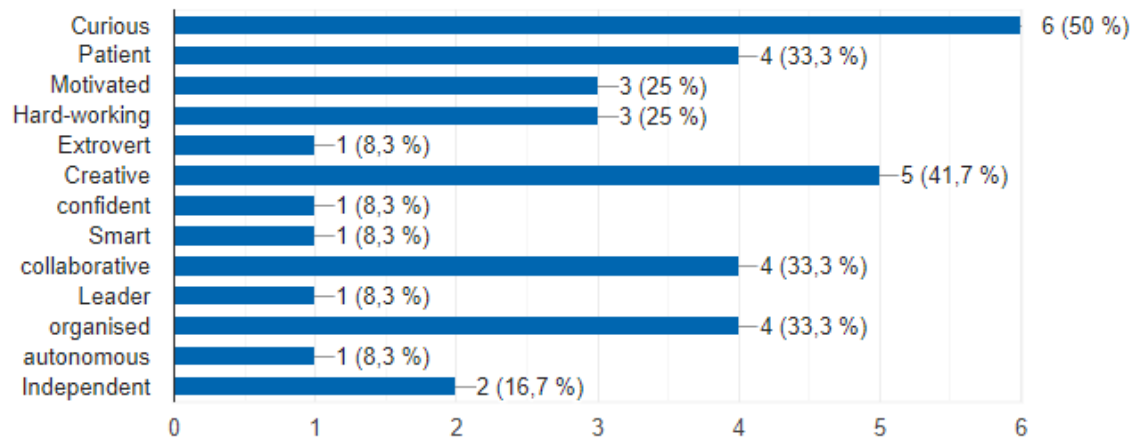
6- Tick the most appropriate challenges and weaknesses (you may tick more than one).



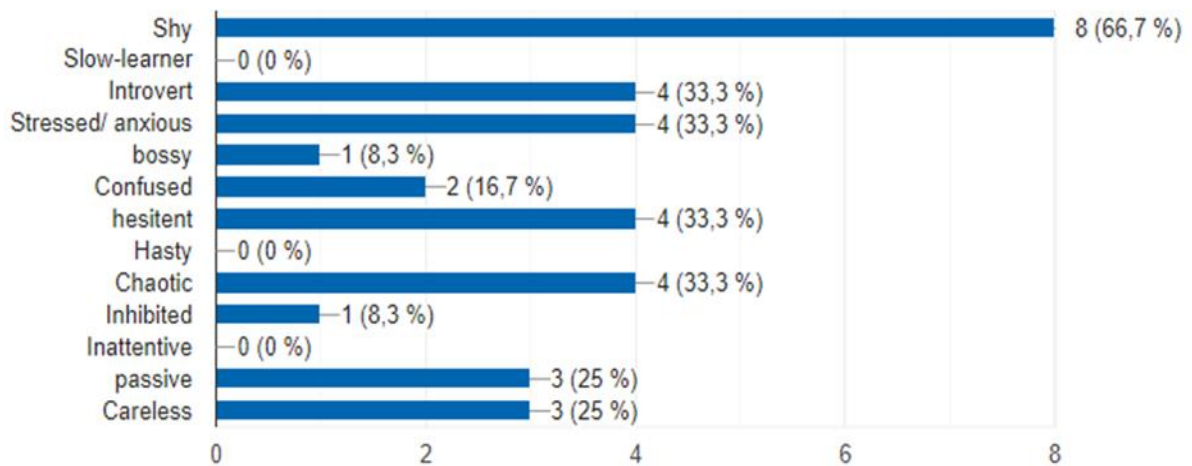
Graph 2 Students' Weaknesses and Challenges

The present question is a follow-up to the previous one. Identifying students' weaknesses aims to highlight them in order to work on improving them. As a consequence, it is noted that vocabulary deficiency (58,3%) constitutes the prime weakness of participants in oral expression. The latter can be due to lack in reading and absence of exposure to vocabulary. In addition, (50%) of respondents reported that they struggle communication strategies, while (41,7%) of students indicated that speaking in front of the class, besides the degree of interest in the topic form a challenge to them. Accordingly, the choice of topics to be discussed in the classroom has to be stemmed from students' preferences and suggestions; moreover, the teacher should know the multiple reasons behind students' fear of stage so as to find out the optimal remedies.

7- Three words that describe you as a learner: (Circle three words from every category).



Graph 3 Students' Choice of Words from Category "A"



Graph 4 Students' Choice of Words from Category "B"

This question was posed to know students as individuals with different personalities and traits, in addition to their self-perception. Students were provided two lists of words (13 words in each category) in which they select from each list three adjectives that reflect them. It is; thus, noteworthy to emphasise the fact that (50%) of respondents consider themselves curious whereas (66,7%) see themselves as shy individuals. Such salient information can guide the instructor to know what to design as activities and how to deal with students with shy personalities.

8- Learning Style

Table 6

Students' Learning Styles

Learning Style	Frequency	Percentage
Visual	00	00%
Auditory	1	8,3%
Kinaesthetic	1	8,3%
Visual and auditory	2	16,7%
Visual and kinaesthetic	00	00%
Auditory and kinaesthetic	00	00%
Combination of the three (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic)	8	66,7%
Total	12	100%

To be aware of students' learning styles is a key component in personalised learning; therefore, the question was asked with the aim to find out whether or not students are able to identify their own styles of learning. Indeed, (66,7%) of students consider their learning style as a combination of (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic), while (16,7%) regard themselves as a mixture of visual and auditory students. (8,3%) see themselves as pure auditory students, besides (8,3%) consider themselves Kinaesthetic. As a matter of fact, styles of learning pave the way to design a course with such interactive activities that are compatible with students' tendencies and styles.

9- Your source of motivation is: (choose and rank).

Table 7

Students Source of Motivation

Source of motivation	Ranking	Frequency	Percentage
Parents (extrinsic motivation)	1	6	50%
Yourself (intrinsic motivation)	2	6	50%
Friends/peers (extrinsic motivation)	3	5	41,7%
Teacher (extrinsic motivation)	4	4	33,3%
Environment (extrinsic motivation)	5	4	33,3%

As it is displayed in table 7, (50%) of students recognise their parents as their number one motivation source, which means that at the first level, students are extrinsically motivated. Furthermore, (50%) of students consider themselves as the second source of motivation; that is, students rely on themselves to be intrinsically motivated and enthusiastic. friends/ peers were ranked the third (41,7%), which can indicate that the students' classmates can have a potential influence of motivation on individuals. Finally, the remaining two sources of motivation are respectively: the teacher ranked the fourth (33,3%) and the environment (33,3%) ranked as the last source of motivation.

Section Three: Oral Expression Course

Question 10: Do you enjoy oral expression course?

Table 8

Students' Responses on Whether They Enjoy Oral Expression

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	58,3%
No	5	41,7%
Total	12	100%

According to table 8, students' responses are somewhat close. While (58%) of participants reported that they enjoy oral expression class, (42%) indicated that they do not. In order to dig deeper, we asked respondents to give reasons about their choice.

-Whatever you answer, please justify:

Fundamentally, this question was asked in order to reveal some reasons and views of students regarding the above posed question. Correspondingly, one of the participants who enjoys oral expression course explained: *"It enhances the communication skills of the learners and build their self-esteem mostly in funny and inspiring way."*

In a similar view, another respondent stated: *"Because when I prepare myself for an oral debate or essay I use to search for new words and new expressions .. so this help me to develop my knowledge."*

From an opposing perspective, one of the students who answered 'no' explained that: *"It would be much better if the teacher took in consideration of what the students are interested in and used multiple methods that go fairly with distinct personalities in class."*

Likewise, another participant also expounded that he/she does not enjoy oral expression class for the following reason: *"Because we don't have interesting topics and most of the teachers use passive ways in teaching oral sessions without motivating us."*

In summation, students who favour oral expression course; they linked their choice to the utility of this class to improve their speaking and listening skills, besides the communicative competence. They also stressed the idea that this session provides them with some space to freely communicate their ideas and thoughts, this is from the one hand. From the other hand, those who do not enjoy this course, explicitly emphasised the reasons that lie behind their stand; monotony in instruction, passivity in teaching, randomly chosen topics, in addition to sidelining students' preferences and personalities, which the latter needs to be recognised, especially in a speaking class.

11-What is your favoured accent?

Table 9

Students' Favoured Accents of English

The option	Frequency	Percentage
British	5	41,7%
American	4	33,3%
Mixture	3	25%
Total	12	100%

As far as this question is concerned, it was intended to discover participants' preferred accents of English. The main purpose of this question is for the teacher to know which audios and videos to select for students to listen to or to watch. As it is shown in table 9, (41,7%) of respondents use British accent and; thus, they would prefer to listen to the British accent in recordings, audios, videos. However, (33,3%) of students reported that they favour an American accent, while a quarter of the sample (25%) have a tendency towards both accents. As such, the teacher can vary the kind of accents to encompass the majority of students' preferences.

12- What was your final TD mark in oral expression course (S1)?

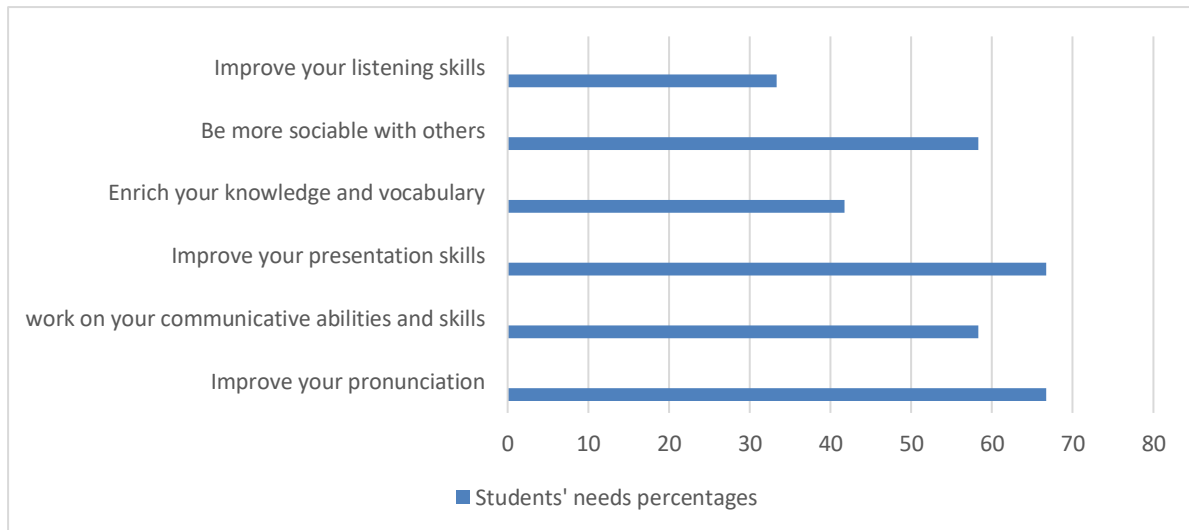
Table 10

Students' TD Marks in Oral Expression Course (S1)

TD mark (S1)	Frequency	Percentage
14	4	33,3%
15	2	16,7%
15,5	1	8,3%
16	4	33,3%
17,5	1	8,3%
Total	12	100%

Firstly, this question was asked in order to know the overall level of the sample participated in answering this questionnaire. Secondly, to be aware of students' achievement level in oral expression makes it easier for the instructor to design a syllabus/course and select the appropriate activities in harmony with their level of attainment. According to table 10, students' marks range between 14 and 17,5 which indicates that the participants are with close learning levels. Therefore, the teacher can easily select appropriate activities and tasks kinds to target students' levels.

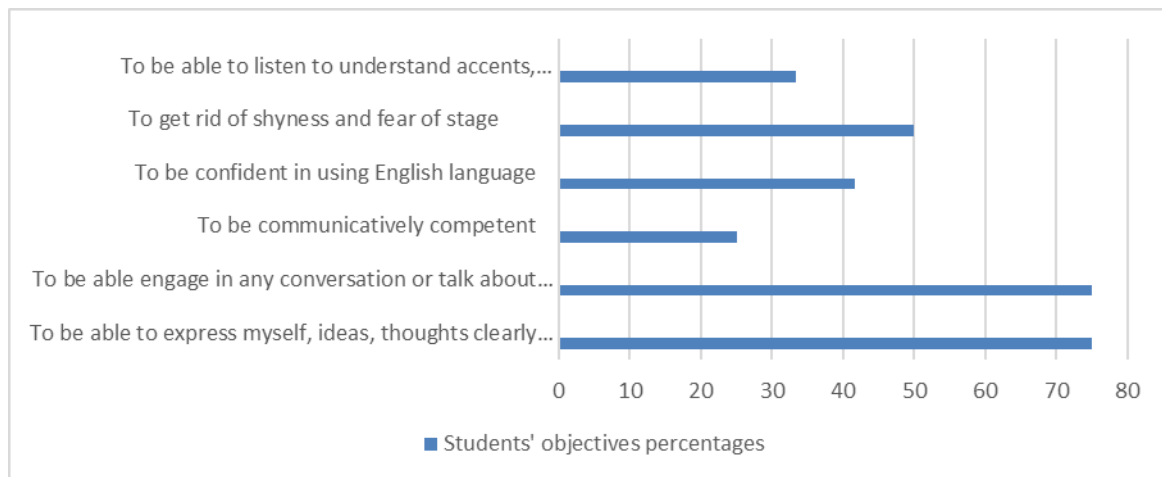
13- What do you need from oral expression?



Graph 5 Students' Needs from Oral Expression Course

This question highlighted students' needs from oral expression class as it is a significant component to personalise a syllabus/ course. As a consequence, students were asked to choose what they need from this course. Graph 5 revealed that students want to work more on their pronunciation (66,7%). Addedly, participants emphasised the necessity to improve their presentation skills (how to stand up/ use gestures...) (66,7) as it constitutes a part and parcel of the oral expression course. It is also remarked that the need to work on communicative skills and abilities (58,3%) and the need to be more sociable with others (58,3%) were also chosen by respondents.

14- What are your objectives from oral expression?



Graph 6 Students' Objectives from Oral Expression Course

Seeking to suggest a personalised co-designed oral expression syllabus, we posed this question to students in order to underscore their objectives from this course. As it demonstrated in graph 6, the ability to express one's ideas, thoughts clearly and freely, besides the capability to engage in any conversation or talk about any topic are two principal objectives that learners chose the most (75%). To get rid of shyness (50%) is another objective that students intend to attain, especially that the nature of this course necessitates students to be more courageous to discuss their ideas in front of their classmates. Similarly, (41,7%) of respondents indicated that they want to gain confidence when using English language.

15- Does the classroom setting (physical environment/ general atmosphere) encourage you to speak?

Table 11

Students' Responses to Whether or not the Classroom Setting Encourages them to Speak

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	50%
No	6	50%
Total	12	100%

In order to discover whether or not the classroom setting (physical environment/ general atmosphere) contributes in students' encouragement to speak, this question was posed. Interestingly, (50%) of respondents reported that the classroom setting does help them to speak and participate; on the contrary, (50%) of the remaining students admitted that the overall setting of the classroom does not encourage them to speak in oral expression course for a number of reasons.

- If no, please clarify:

This question intended to display some of the reasons related to the classroom setting that hinder students' engagement in oral expression class. Accordingly, three students underlined a number of aspects linked to the physical environment. Physical arrangements of the classroom, lack of air conditioning systems, lack of teaching materials, besides lack of hygiene in classes are the major reasons highlighted by respondents. From another perspective, two students drew attention to other disturbing reasons, such as: the threatening atmosphere which 'feels as if you are having a test all time'. The latter impedes students' engagement and participation in the classroom as they feel that their answers have to be correct, otherwise they do not participate. Monotony in teaching, in addition to the fact that some students would feel demotivated just because the majority of the classroom does not participate are also other causes that lie behind students' reluctance.

16- Choose and rank from each category the available options (summative / formative assessments)

Table 12

Students' Ranking of Different Formative Assessment Tasks

Formative assessment	Ranking
Individual assignments	1st
Listening tasks	2nd
Pair work	3rd
Group projects	4th
Participation and interaction	5th

Table 13

Students' Ranking of Different Summative Assessment Tasks

Summative assessment	Ranking
Individual work	1st
Pair work	2nd
Listening tests	3rd
Team projects	3rd

First and foremost, this question was asked so as to discover students' preferred ways of assessment in both formative and summative types of assessment. Secondly, it is worth noting that both types also are used in the section of English.

Regarding formative assessment (table 12), individual assignments was ranked the first by students as their top one favourite way of continuous assessment, which is followed by listening tasks ranked the second. Moreover, pair work was ranked the third, group projects the fourth and last, but not least participation and interaction was given the last ranking. Interestingly, students would not prefer to be assessed based upon their regular participation

and interaction during the session. Conversely, they would prefer to be assessed based upon individuality and listening activities.

As for summative assessment (table 13), it can be remarked that individual tasks were also ordered to be the first; which is the same as in formative assessment. Nonetheless, pair work was ranked the second, which indicates that students would not mind a pair work as a summative assessment task. Lastly, both listening activities and team projects were ranked the third.

Over and above, results that are shown in table 12 and table13 implied that respondents would prefer individual tasks over group projects. This can be due to their previous experiences in teamworking, which were not appreciated. As such, the tentative syllabus will take into account these results as it will be mainly designed upon students' preferences of different aspects.

17- Rank your favourite themes(topics) from 1-6.

Table 14

Students' Favourite Themes Ranking

Topic	Ranking
Sports and outdoor activities	1st
Family and society	2nd
Culture and lifestyle	2nd
Internet and social media	3rd
Education and schooling	4th
Leisure and entertainment	5th

This question was asked in order to generate participants' favourite topics to be discussed in oral expression class and; thus, to include these topics in the syllabus as well. Surprisingly, the topic of sports and outdoor activities was ranked the first among the other provided themes although females constitute (66,7%) of the whole sample. The topics of family and society/ culture and lifestyle were equally ranked the second. Internet and social media, education and schooling, leisure and entertainment were respectively ordered the third, the fourth and the fifth.

18- Rank the most appealing behaviours to you from each category from (1-4)

Table 15

Students' Engagement Behaviours Ranking

Item	Ranking
I can manage team projects.	1st
I feel confident and motivated to speak.	2nd
I prefer to work collaboratively.	3rd
I like working alone.	4th

Table 16

Students' Access Items Ranking

Item	Ranking
I like viewing information via different visuals (videos, pictures, charts...).	1st
I like listening to audios (songs, conversation...).	2nd
I like speaking to teachers, peers.	3rd
I understand what I read most of the time.	4th

Table 17

Students' Express Items Raking

Item	Ranking
I like group discussions/ Q&A	1st
I like picture narrating/ description.	2nd
I like in-class/ pre-recorded presentations	3rd
I like role plays and storytelling.	4th

Students were provided with multiple ways within each section of Engage/Access/Express. The main purpose was to obtain their preferences regarding the methods that appeal to them under every item.

As displayed in table 15, students were given different engagement behaviours to be ranked according to their preferences. The option of 'I can manage team projects' was ranked the first, which entails that students are able to handle group works when needed. Furthermore, the statement of 'I feel confident and motivated to speak' was ranked the second, which indicates students' readiness and enthusiasm to participate and practise what they know. The statement of 'I prefer to work collaboratively' was given the third ranking. However, the option of 'I like working alone' was ranked the last. In other words, results show differentiation among individuals as some of them can be more engaged if they are put with other students to form pairs or groups, others would be more engaged when working alone. Therefore, personalisation tends to implement various ways of engagement to match every student's preference. It is noteworthy to consider that the findings resulted from this question are not in contradiction with those of question number 16. In simple terms, the majority of students are better engaged when they work collaboratively; however, when it comes to assessment and evaluation they prefer to be graded individually, which can be fairly applicable, this is from the one hand. From the other hand, students can be collaboratively engaged during the first phase of the session (i.e. to enable

them to take part in the course). On the contrary, assessing them can be done through individual assignments as it was indicated in tables 12 and 13 (question 16).

Table 16 represents the ranking of the various ways that make students able to access to the information effectively. Students would prefer to view the information visually via videos, charts and pictures as this option was ranked the first. Listening to audios, such as songs and conversations was ordered the second. On the contrary, speaking with the teacher and reading were ranked to be the least favourite methods of access.

Table 17 demonstrates multiple means of representations. At this level, students are expected to show what they learned or what they already know via various ways. To illustrate, results revealed that respondents ranked group discussions and Q/A as the first option followed by picture narrating/ description as the second. Whereas presentations were ranked the third and role plays the last.

19- Something about you that you want your teacher to know

This was an open question to enable students express what they want to tell their teachers freely and explicitly. The collected results showed distinct and various answers. Some respondents admitted their problem of shyness and called for the teacher's help to overcome this challenge. Others expressed their readiness to improve their speaking and listening skills as they believe they have the optimal capabilities to do so. Whereas another category complained about how oral expression course is taught, some participants preferred to say nothing in this section.

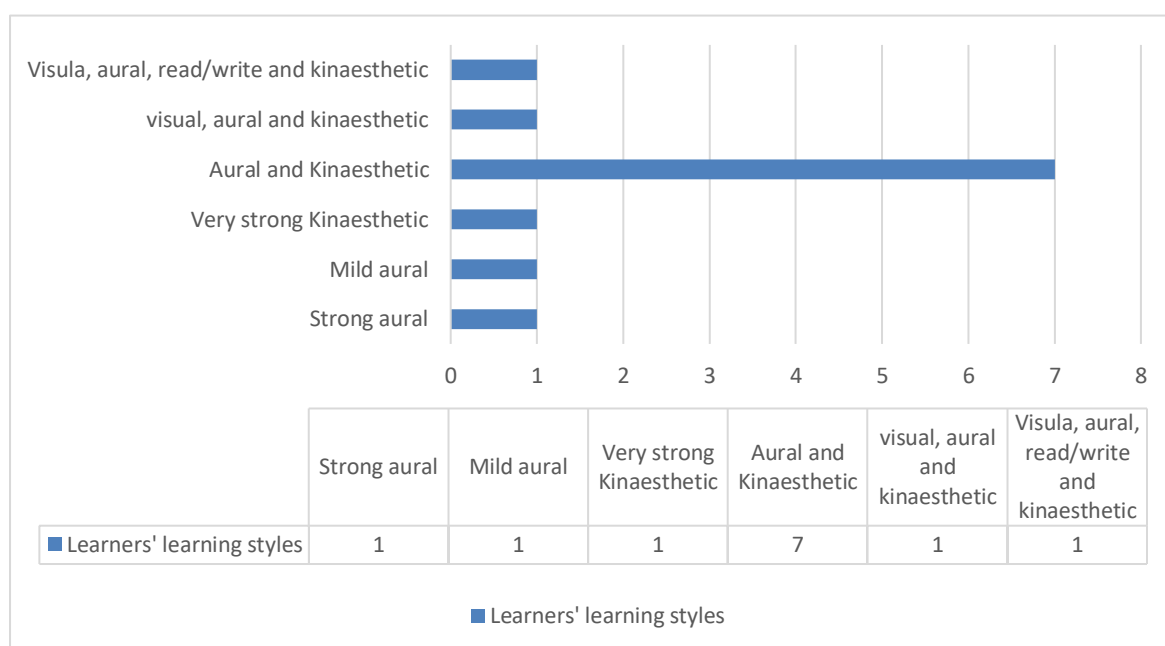
20- Something about you that you do not want your teacher to know

Respondents understood this question differently and; thus, responses were distinctively varied. Accordingly, some students reported that they did not like some methods of teaching of their teachers, besides some activities, such as: role plays. Another participant confessed that

making mistakes in from of the class disturbs him/her, while another one complained about assessment as it was not fair for him/her. Nevertheless, a number of students did not provide any answer regarding this question.

4.2 Students’ Learning Styles’ Questionnaire (the VARK): Results

Chiefly the VARK questionnaire was employed in order to compare students’ responses in the previous questionnaire, specifically question number eight in section two with the results found in the VARK.



Graph 7 Students’ Learning Styles Results (VARK Questionnaire)

Data displayed in graph 7 indicates that students possess multiple, yet disparate learning styles. Indeed, aural and kinaesthetic learning style was dominant among learners (58,3%). However, the rest of the remaining learning styles (strong aural, mild aural, very strong kinaesthetic, visual/aural/kinaesthetic and visual/aural/kinaesthetic/ read-write) received the same percentage (8,3%). It can be concluded; thus, that this sample is heterogeneous in terms of learning style, but it can be noted that aural and kinaesthetic aspects are common among the presented learning styles.

Comparing the above results with those found in students' questionnaire, it can be deduced that the majority of students are not aware of their real learning styles as they have randomly chosen them. Whereas the VARK questionnaire revealed more accurate results and their closest learning styles. Correspondingly, opting for such credible learning style's tests or questionnaires can be more effective to help both students and teachers know the adequate learning styles in order design matching activities and methods.

4.3 Summary of Personalised Learners' Profiles: Descriptive Analytical Account

Personalised learners' profiles (see appendix F) are the outcome of analysis of both personalised learning profiles questionnaire and the VARK questionnaire. The focal point of these profiles is to throw light on students' idiosyncratic learning aspects with regard to oral expression course. Moreover, these profiles are deemed the crux of the tentative personalised co-designed syllabus.

Henceforth, every devised personalised profile comprises of three different sections: background information, learner's learning information and oral expression course. It is noteworthy that every labelled section is composed of a number of information regarding every participant whereas the total number is 12. Primarily, every profile should include some basic factual data related to the individual. Thus, information such as: gender, age, high school background, choice of English major, besides the degree of satisfaction with learners' previous experience in oral expression course are included. These data help to reveal students' learning identity to gain a first impression about his/her entity as a learner. Secondly, the next section entitled learner's learning information involves components related to students' strengths, weaknesses, descriptive words, learning styles (from the VARK questionnaire), in addition to their prime source of motivation. The latter part of the profile is of a paramount significance as it provides the teacher with a closer look at students' distinct learning differences. Furthermore, the third section is concerned with oral expression course in particular. This item entails a

number of aspects that specify to the instructor students' characteristics regarding oral expression course. For example, this section contains elements such as students' preferred accents of English, their favourite topics, needs, objectives, favourite methods of teaching/learning and others. Finally, the profiles were created using ready-made Microsoft Word templates with some minor modifications in order to achieve an adequate design with the necessary data.

In summation, personalised profiles are at the heart of PL approach as they represent the DNA of students, which pave the way to teachers in order to be conversant with their students' differences and preferences. These profiles are a succinct summary that mirrors students' individuality (i.e. information that is peculiar to each student) from the one hand and highlights commonalities (i.e. learning aspects which can be shared among students) from the other hand. Thus, it is highly recommended to update them from time to time so as to track progress and to modify information.

4.4 Teachers' Questionnaire: Analysis and Interpretation

Section One: Teachers' Background Information

1- How long have you been teaching oral expression course?

Table 18

Teachers' Teaching Experience in Oral Expression Course

Experience in year	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	2	50%
5-10	1	25%
More than 10	1	25%
Total	4	100%

The question about teachers' experience regarding oral expression course was posed in order to know the number of years teachers have spent particularly in teaching this course. While experienced teachers can provide more information to help answer the second research question (What are teachers' perceptions and practices of a co-created personalised syllabus?), less experienced instructors can also give rich data regarding this study. As it is noted in table 18, respondents are of a varied teaching experience. (50%) have taught oral expression course from 1-5 years whereas (25%) have taught it from 5-10 years and (25%) have been teaching this course for more than 10 years.

2- Was teaching oral expression?

Table 19

Teachers' Answers on the Choice of Oral Expression Course

The option	Frequency	Percentage
A personal choice	2	50%
An administrative imposition	2	50%
Total	4	100%

The purpose of this question was to see whether or not teachers have a certain personal tendency and willingness towards teaching this course specifically. As it is displayed in table 19, the percentage of both options was equal (50%).

- If it was "a personal choice", please explain:

One of the respondents who selected the option of 'personal choice' stated: "*I like teaching this module because it gives me the opportunity to know about my students' learning differences at different levels.*" This answer indicates that the instructor is aware of the multitude of students' diversities that can be explored, especially in oral expression course.

Another participant said: "*I prefer teaching skills but it is not always an easy task that is why we try to diversify our choices in terms of courses to teach.*" Which stipulates the fact

that teaching such courses might not be as easy as it may appear as it certainly necessitates time and efforts to be well-delivered.

3- Have you ever gone through any kind of training regarding syllabus/course design?

Table 20

Teachers' Responses to Whether or not They Went Through syllabus/Course Design Training

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	25%
No	3	75%
Total	4	100

Surprisingly, only (25%) of teachers have gone through a training regarding syllabus/course design whereas (75%) did not join any. The latter could be due to lack in workshops and trainings related to SD.

- If yes, please specify:

As demonstrated in table 20, only one respondent has answered positively. However, no answer was provided in the specification section that enables us to know more about the nature of training that he/she undergone.

Section Two: Teachers' Classroom Practices

1- In general, how do you proceed (methods you use) with Oral expression course?

Table 21

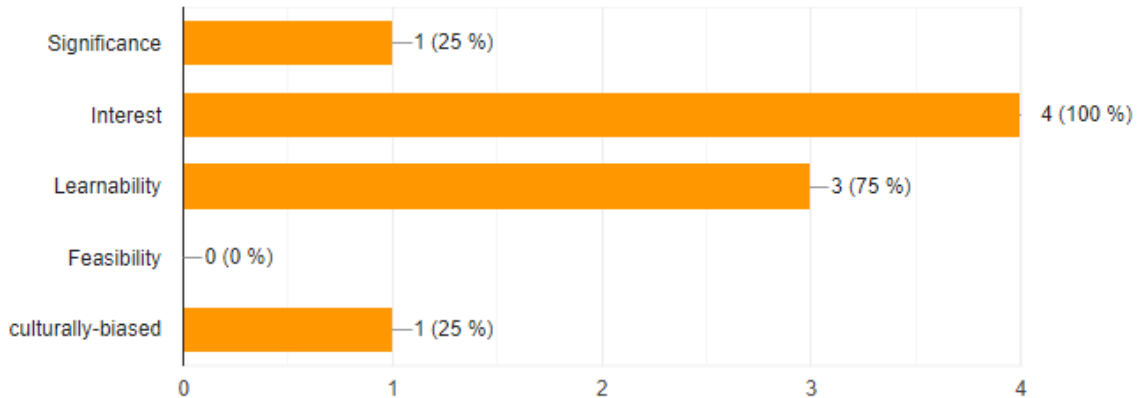
Teachers' Answers on How they Proceed with Oral Expression Course

Teacher	Response
A	Discussion among students.
B	I do start with an analysis of the students' level and needs and try to accommodate them with the official syllabus; and in the course of the semester, I add some activities to fulfil the students' needs.
C	Open discussions and free choice of topics. Educational games and argumentation with previously specified topics.
D	I generally vary the classroom tasks to enable the students practice the different skills to develop their language proficiency.

The prime purpose of this item was to investigate how teachers deal with oral expression course in terms of methods and ways of instruction. Notably, every teacher tends to employ different ways of teaching. One of the respondents reported that he/she only uses discussions among students. Opting for one single method of teaching especially in this course may not be a motivating idea to make students interested to participate. Conversely, the rest of teachers pointed out that they implement a variety of methods and activities in the course of teaching oral expression.

2- What are the content selection criteria you rely on in teaching oral expression course?

(you can tick more than one)



Graph 8 Teachers' Content Selection Criteria

All teachers agreed upon 'interest' as the major criterion upon which they base their content selection of the course. In the same vein, 'learnability' in its own respect was also chosen by (75%) of teachers. These two criteria are crucial and need to be taken into consideration, while seeking to develop content for students as it has to be relevant to them and in accordance with their levels of reception and understanding. On the contrary, 'significance' was only selected by (25%) of respondents, and the option of 'culturally-biased' was not initially among the provided options, yet it was added by one of the participants.

3- Does your current course cater for learners' idiosyncratic differences, learning styles and preferences?

Table 22

Teachers' Responses to Whether or not their Current Courses Cater for Differences, Learning Styles and Preferences

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	75%
No	1	25%
Total	4	100%

Table 22 indicates that the majority of teachers' current courses (75%) encompass students' different learning styles and preferences whereas only (25%) of respondents answered negatively. To be conversant with students' differences in the classroom helps massively shape a better syllabus and establish a more motivating atmosphere for students particularly in oral expression class.

4- Is your course?

Table 23

Types of Courses Implemented in Oral Expression Class

The option	Frequency	Percentage
One for all (one size fits all)	1	25%
One for many (one size fits many)	2	50%
One for individuals (one that corresponds to learners' differences)	1	25%
Total	4	100%

Unexpectedly, some of the responses are somewhat in contradiction with the previous question's results. While (75%) of respondents stated in the previous question that their courses do cater for differences among students, learning styles and preferences, only (25%) of teachers selected 'one for individuals'. Addedly, (25%) of teachers selected 'one for all course'; nevertheless (50%) of respondents opted for 'one for many' type of courses.

5- In your viewpoint, designing a syllabus/ course is:

Table 24

The Responsibility of Designing a Syllabus

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher's responsibility alone	2	50%
Shared responsibility (teachers and learners)	2	50%
Administration responsibility	00	0%
Total	4	100%

As observed in table 24, the responsibility of designing a syllabus was equally split into (50%) of teachers who stated that it is the instructor's responsibility alone, while (50%) perceived this task as a mutual responsibility in which students must be part of it. It is worth mentioning; thus, that modern views are extensively emphasising the concept of SD being a shared task between the instructor and students. To illustrate, students can suggest topics, design activities and the teacher incorporates them in the final creation of the syllabus, which leads to what is called in the literature 'syllabus co-design'.

6- Do you often vary your teaching strategies and modalities?

Table 25

Teachers' Responses to Whether or not they Vary Teaching Strategies and Modalities

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	75%
No	1	25%
Total	4	100%

As table 25 shows, (75%) of teachers indicated that they do diversify their teaching strategies, while (25%) reported that they do not. The flexible nature of oral expression course calls for making use of a multitude of teaching strategies so as to reach the maximum number of students. Monotony in teaching this course can affect students' motivation and active interaction in this course specifically.

-If yes, for what reason (s)?

Over and above, teachers who responded positively to the question denoted that varying teaching strategies helps at the level of students' motivation and attitude. In addition to the fact that opting for a various range of strategies enable both the teacher and students to benefit from each one.

7- Are you aware of your learners' lacks/ weaknesses, and what they want to improve?

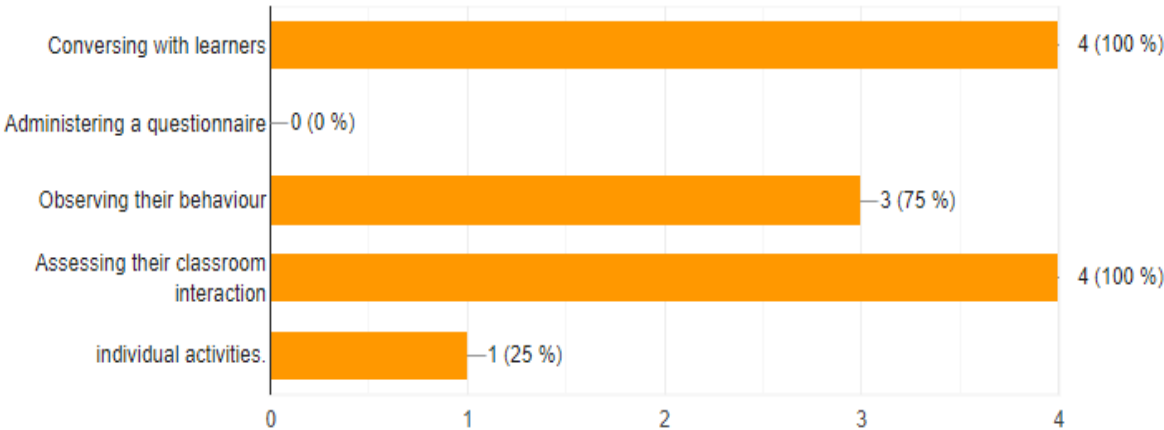
Table 26

Teachers’ Responses to Whether or not they are Aware of Learners’ Lacks and Weaknesses

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	100%
No	00	0%
Total	4	100%

All teachers indicated that they are aware of students’ weaknesses, besides the points they aspire to improve. One of the salient roles that teachers should maintain is to be updated regarding their student’s different lacks. The latter are to be considered to develop and modify the syllabus accordingly. Consequently, communicating with students is highly recommended to break the ice in order to decipher those weaknesses and challenges that impede students’ progress because identifying these impediments and working on them are the essence of teacher’s roles.

-If yes, how do you proceed?



Graph 9 Teachers’ Procedures to Identify Students’ Weaknesses and Lacks

As it is displayed in graph 9, all respondents prefer to converse with students, besides assessing their classroom interaction in order to identify weaknesses and challenges. However,

no one opted for a questionnaire as a tool to discover students' lacks since some shy students do not prefer to speak in front of their classmates to reveal their problems in learning.

8- How often do you discuss with learners their most appealing learning strategies?

Table 27

Teachers' Responses to How Often they Discuss with Learners their Appealing Learning Strategies

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	00	00%
Sometimes	4	100%
Rarely	00	00%
Never	00	00%
Total	4	100%

Because of its remarkable importance in teaching, the question about discussing students' favourite learning strategies was posed. Results showed that all instructors do sometimes ask their students about their appealing learning strategies, which reflects teachers' awareness with the necessity of continuous communication with students regarding such topics so as to make learning more meaningful to them.

9- How often do you ask learners about their favourite topics in oral expression?

Table 28

Teachers' Responses to How Often they Ask Learners' About their Favourite Topics

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	2	50%
Sometimes	2	50%
Rarely	00	00%
Never	00	00%
Total	4	100%

Topics' selection has to be student- driven in order to attract students' interest and attention, especially in a speaking class. According to table 28, (50%) of teachers reported that they always ask students about their preferred topics. While (50%) of respondents do sometimes ask about students' favourite topics. Indeed, when it comes to topics, it is better to be stemmed from students' preferences and suggestions.

10- How often do you track your learners' learning progress in oral expression?

Table 29

Teachers' Responses to How Often they Track Learners' Learning Progress

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	2	50%
Sometimes	1	25%
Rarely	1	25%
Never	00	00%
Total	4	100%

To track students' progress in oral expression course enables the teacher to gauge the effectiveness of his/her teaching strategies in order to keep the same plan, modify it or completely change it. Therefore, table 29 displayed different results. While (50%) of teachers do track students' progress all the time, (25%) indicated that they sometimes do it and (25%) of them rarely track student's advancement.

11- How do you ensure making all learners engaged in your course?

Table 30

Teachers' Responses to how they Ensure Making all Learners Engaged in the Course

Teacher	Response
A	ask them one by one. encourage shy students to participate.
B	By assigning motivating tasks and activities (debate, presentations, for instance).
C	It is very challenging to include all learners but giving the chance for low achievers throughout personalised communication can help.
D	providing them with pair work tasks or via open discussions of the whole class.

This question was posed in order to elicit teachers' different strategies and ways employed to help engage all students in the course, which is not an easy task to do. As it is observed in the table, instructors do follow distinct strategies for students' engagement. Interestingly, teacher's (C) response attracted our attention since it involves the use of

personalised communication in the course of engaging students, which is at the heart of the present study. Moreover, some teachers reported that they rely on some motivating tasks, such as discussions, presentations and pair work to achieve engagement, while one of the respondents indicated that asking them one by one can help engaging them.

12- How do you deal with the introvert/ inhibited/ reserved learners?

Table 31

Teachers' Responses to how they Deal with Introvert, Inhibited and Reserved Students

Teacher	Response
A	I invite them to participate personally. I assign them into groups with motivated learners.
B	I just try to help them overcome their inhibitions by giving them space and time for self-confidence. This achieved, I treat them as normal students, with their rights and duties.
C	At first through face to face and conversation with a very limited audience then pushing them towards joining a larger audience, or the whole group.
D	I generally try to integrate them in every session and give them the freedom to choose their partners so that to feel at ease and get involved in the learning tasks.

Whether they constitute the majority or the minority, it is unavoidable to encounter introvert, inhibited or reserved students in any classroom. As such this question was raised in order to investigate teachers' strategies and solutions regarding this matter. Respondents

provided various answers, but they converge in the ideas of integrating inhibited students with more motivated ones by giving them space and freedom to choose their partners, for instance. In addition to opting for personal communication to know the reasons behind their shyness and inhibition to work on solving them.

13- How do you assess your learners in oral expression course?

Table 32

Teachers' Responses to How they Assess Learners in Oral Expression Course

Teacher	Response
A	Through a descriptive rubric.
B	I just apply a grid with rubrics with objectives to attain. Rubrics are for evaluation and marking.
C	Acceptable to a certain degree given the teaching context.
D	I usually opt for pair work conversations, personal projects and listening tests

The majority of respondent did not really understand the purpose of this question. Thus, its main aim was to know types of tasks teachers apply for assessment and whether or not they ask students for suggestions regarding these tasks. Conversely, teachers' responses were not relevant to this question, yet teacher (D) pointed out that he/she uses pair work conversations, personal projects and listening tests as activities to assess students' oral performance.

Section Three: Personalised Co-Designed Syllabus

- 1- In the course of suggesting a better syllabus, have you ever thought of a personalised co-designed syllabus?

Table 33

Teachers' Responses to Whether or not they Thought of a Personalised Co-designed Syllabus

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	50%
No	2	50%
Total	4	100%

This question was raised in order to see whether or not teachers had previous thoughts in implementing what is called in the literature a personalised co-designed syllabus. As a matter of fact, results revealed that (50%) of teachers had thought of integrating such syllabus in oral expression course, while (50%) of them did not think of the idea. The latter might be due to unfamiliarity or some impediments.

- 2- How do you visualise a personalised co-designed syllabus?

Table 34

Teachers' Visualisation of a Personalised Co-Designed Syllabus

Teacher	Response
A	It's good.
B	I tune the official syllabus content items with the objective to reach, inject my own strategies with the students' needs and interests.
C	Extremely important. Without neglecting the importance of individual effort and the suitable co-designer.
D	It should include a variety of topics that touch the interests and needs of the students with their different learning styles

Regarding this question, teachers were asked to provide a sort of depiction for what a personalised co-designed syllabus might be. Overall, teachers' responses were positive and favourable in visualising this new trend. Some provided answers holding a number of characteristics, such as: adapting the syllabus to students' needs and interests and including various topics that correspond to students' preferences. However, none of the answers stated the notion of collaboration and partnership among the instructor and students, which lies at the forefront of this approach. Students are given more responsibility as they are regarded to be the agents of their own learning where the teacher is only a facilitator and a guide.

3- Do you apply personalised learning by any means in your course?

Table 35

Teachers' Responses to Whether or not they Apply Personalised Learning by any Means

The option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	00	00%
No	4	100%
Total	4	100%

The main purpose of this question was to discover whether or not teachers employ any principle or criterion of personalisation while teaching. Unfortunately, all answers were negative; none of the respondents applies personalisation by any means. This can be ascribed to several reasons, but mainly to the unfamiliarity with the approach.

-If yes, how?

No answers were provided as all responses were negative in the above part of the question.

4- In what ways learners' feedback, suggestions and ideas can help shape the syllabus/course?

Table 36

Teachers' Responses to the Different Ways Learners' Feedback Can Help Shape the Syllabus/Course

Teacher	Response
A	Level of difficulty.
B	They do help me gain time and effort to design the syllabus with a clearer vision to overcome students' weaknesses and reach smoothly the objectives.
C	After all, teachers design courses for learners so their feedback is crucial especially in terms of teaching techniques and preferences.
D	They help in making the right decision when choosing the material.

All teachers emphasised the significance of students' feedback to help better shape and modify the syllabus. According to table 36, respondents provided a number of elements that can be better elaborated if students' feedback and suggestions are taken into account. Some of these are: degree of difficulty, teaching strategies and preferences, attainment of learning objectives and material selection.

- 5- Number some hindrances you think can impede the application of a co-designed personalised syllabus

Table 37

Hindrances of the Application of a Personalised Co-Designed Syllabus

Teacher	Responses
A	Students' reluctance to participate
B	Lack of students' motivation, gloomy objectives, generalized syllabus content, inappropriate timetable.
C	Teachers' engagement and cooperation.
D	Maybe when the students do not provide you the chance to know about their needs and wants.

Table 37 accounts for a number of obstacles teachers think they can impede the employment of a personalised co-designed syllabus. Respondents expressed the impediments differently, yet most of them underlined the fact that students' motivation to be part of the co-design can play a decisive role in the success or failure. In this case, it is the teacher's responsibility to sensitise students of their crucial impact to be part of the co-design as it will serve their needs and objectives at the first place. Another respondent raised the problem of students' hiding their needs and wants. The latter can be sorted out via the use of a personalised questionnaire that targets such aspects where students can express themselves freely and clearly.

6- To what extent do you agree/ disagree with the following situations (statements)

Table 38

Percentage of Teachers' Attitudes Towards Different Statements Related to Personalisation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-When few learners show reluctance/ disinterest, the teacher makes efforts to know why.	00%	00%	00%	50%	50%
-If some learners want to express what they learnt from the course differently, the teacher gives them freedom to do so.	00%	00%	00%	25%	75%
-Knowing learners' interests, tendencies and preferences is important for the success of the course.	00%	00%	00%	100%	00%
-Learners are given freedom and flexibility to choose how to learn and how to express and discuss what they learnt using different ways available	00%	25%	50%	25%	00%
-Rather than passively delivering the content, instructors become partners with their learners (syllabus co-designers; for instance)	00%	00%	25%	25%	50%
-Learners with their instructor set goals, design a personal learning plan, and carefully choose how to access and express content best.	00%	00%	25%	50%	25%
-Learners are the first agents responsible about their learning.	00%	50%	25%	00%	25%
-PLPs are learners' DNA that help the instructor better understand learners as individuals; thus, the teachers will know which strategies and modalities to implement to cater for differences.	00%	00%	25%	50%	25%
-The use of ICTs is crucial in oral expression class.	00%	00%	25%	75%	00%

At this level, the researcher wanted to investigate and showcase teachers' different attitudes regarding a number of statements/ situations that are principally driven from personalised learning approach. Regarding the first situation, half of teachers strongly agreed that instructors should be concerned to know the reasons behind students' reluctance and passivity, while the other half just agreed about the same matter.

Furthermore, the second scenario revealed that (75%) of teachers strongly agreed upon providing students with a certain flexibility and freedom to show what they gained as knowledge using different ways whereas (25%) of respondents just agreed about it. This item indicated teachers' positive attitude towards allowing students to express what they want with the application of strategies that appeals to them. Additionally, all teachers agreed on the statement that underscores individuals' interests and preferences as being a salient factor regarding the success of the course.

From another perspective, teachers expressed distinct attitudes regarding the statement that advocates students' freedom to choose the content, in addition to the tools that better display their knowledge in the course. Consequently, (50%) of respondents indicated their neutrality, (25%) of teachers agreed, but (25%) disagreed about it. This can be related to teachers' unfamiliarity with personalisation, besides their acquaintance to do the majority of tasks without involving students.

Interestingly, (50%) of teachers strongly agreed on the necessity of partnership and collaboration between the influential polls in the classroom, namely the instructor and students. This partnership can be reflected via various tasks, syllabus co-design; for instance, which is the core of this research. Addedly, (25%) of respondents were neutral and (25%) expressed agreement about the collaboration between the teacher and students. These results entailed teachers' support to actively include students to be more engaged and participate in making decisions about their learning. Similarly, (50%) of participants agreed upon the collaboration

of the teacher and students to set learning goals and discuss about different aspects of learning. (25%) of teachers strongly agreed about that while (25%) were neutral.

Unexpectedly, (50%) of teachers reported their disagreement regarding the statement that expresses students' prime responsibility of learning, while (25%) indicated neutrality and (25%) strongly agreed that individuals must be the main agents responsible about their education. As a matter of fact, personalised learning views students as top one agents who should be responsible about their learning in which the teacher acts as a guide and facilitator only. Thus, results might be more precise if the number of participants was larger.

Regarding the significance of PLPs, (50%) of teachers agreed on its usefulness in helping teachers identifying students' different idiosyncrasies. (25 %) strongly agreed whereas (25%) were neutral. It is worth noting that profiles can offer several advantages to assist teachers know better their students as individuals and track their progress in learning, which ultimately enable the instructor to take optimal decisions and make modifications at the levels of the syllabus as well as methods of teaching. Finally, (75%) of teachers expressed their agreement on the indispensability of ICTs in oral expression class, while (25%) indicated neutrality. As such, integrating ICTs in an oral expression class is perceived as a necessity by instructors.

7- If you have any suggestions or views about the importance of a co-designed personalised syllabus, feel free to express them down below.

This part was included in order to give teachers the opportunity to give their suggestions and opinions on the importance of a co-designed personalised syllabus. The majority of teachers did not provide any suggestions. However, only one teacher emphasised: *"Our educational system needs to focus on new conceptions and designing of syllabi."* This statement summarised it all because there must be a shift towards the contemporary trends and approaches in ELT in general and in SD in particular.

5. Discussion and Synthesis of Findings

In view of what has been mentioned previously, the principal aim of this study was to create a tentative personalised co-designed syllabus for oral expression course. This syllabus is different as it was mainly emanated from students' learning profiles, which entail students' idiosyncratic information. The co-creation of the syllabus lies in the fact that there was a marriage between students' choice and voice (i.e. preferences, strengths, weaknesses and needs), besides the researcher's actual integration of these elements within a clearly defined syllabus, that was from the one hand. From the other hand, this research also aspired to explore and elicit teachers' views and attitudes towards a personalised co-designed syllabus.

Accordingly, the prime research question was: How does a co-designed oral expression syllabus look like?

In order to answer the first research question, the researcher employed one semi-structured questionnaire, which was assigned to gather various information about students, besides a structured questionnaire (the VARK) to identify students' learning styles. Together, the two questionnaires helped generating students' profiles whose main purpose was to co-create a personalised syllabus.

First and foremost, the analysis of the two questionnaires provided invaluable data regarding students as it revealed more idiosyncratic specifications, from the one hand, and less commonalities, from the other hand. That is to say, teachers need to spotlight these differences by regarding the classroom as individuals who possess disparate learning capacities, in addition to peculiar preferences and tendencies. It is worthy to notice that a remarkable number of students expressed their dissatisfaction with the overall teaching strategies used in oral expression course where they emphasised the notion of diversifying strategies and tasks to target all preferences; thus, all students. Furthermore, the VARK questionnaire results divulged that students in their great majority were unable to clearly identify their learning styles. Students

who are aware of their learning styles can easily identify what matches them in terms of learning strategies and techniques. As a result, the instructor should take part and guide students to know their proper learning styles.

In line with the above, students' profiles were constructed to be conversant with students' idiosyncrasies. To illustrate, they entailed necessary information pertained to every student, such as their favourite topics, favourite learning strategies, learning styles etc. In fact, profiles organised and summarised students' data to be comprehensive and manageable in order to facilitate the task of developing the syllabus.

Therefore, the researcher suggested to co-create a personalised syllabus for oral expression course (see appendix G) in order to mirror the aforementioned elements and notions. Correspondingly, the sample syllabus embodied students' diversities especially at the level of those aspects linked to oral expression course in terms of students' favourite topics, preferred engagement's techniques and strategies of learning. Thus, the researcher aspired to design a plan, which reflected these differences within a well-defined framework of six weeks. Likewise, the syllabus involved various topics for discussion with several methods of learning (i.e. one session includes the discussion of different topics and students work in groups, pairs or individually). Indeed, what made this syllabus particular is the fact that it is flexible and manageable, in other words, it is open to modifications in accordance with changes that occur at the level of profiles (i.e. students' progress), this is from the one hand. From the other hand, it is regarded as a bridge that brings together the teacher's and students' mutual responsibility of co-designing a syllabus.

Having reached that, the first hypothesis set for the first research question was confirmed. In a similar view, the findings extracted from the first part of this study were close to those of previous research works; (Dura, 2019; Logan and Bueno, n.d) which reported positive results in terms of co-designing some parts of the syllabus. Whereas, (Davidson, 2016;

Eidinger, 2017; Katopodis, 2018) underscored the efficiency and significant results gained after opting for a co-created syllabus regarding various courses.

The second research question was: What are teachers' perceptions and practices of a co-created personalised syllabus?

In quest of investigating teachers' views and attitudes towards a personalised co-designed syllabus, a semi-structured questionnaire was employed as a tool to gather data. First and foremost, the questionnaire disclosed various significant results vis-à-vis the present issue. The first section revealed that the majority of instructors did not undergo any kind of training regarding syllabus/course design, which in a way explains the unfamiliarity of some of them with the new trends in SD, namely: syllabus co-authoring.

Moreover, the principal aim of section two was to find out teachers' present classroom practices in relation with different aspects. Therefore, when it comes to tutoring oral expression, instructors indicated that they employ various methods, yet they did not specify whether they do it from their own, or they take students' opinions about their preferences. Based upon the questionnaire's analysis, the researcher deduced that although teachers diversify strategies, they apply them on the whole classroom, that is, when a particular technique is used, it is applied on all students, which what personalisation is not about (i.e. personalisation involves the integration of several methods at the same time). Another significant point was about the responsibility of SD; it was apparent that there was a debate because (50%) believed that it is the teacher's responsibility alone whereas (50%) indicated the shared responsibility of both teachers and students. It is; thus, worth stating that modern views in SD advocate the notion of instructors and students' mutual responsibility. Interestingly, teachers admitted that they do not always discuss with students their most appealing learning strategies, even for topics some of them ask students about their preferred themes, while others do not do it always.

Thirdly, the last section in the questionnaire was chiefly dedicated to elicit viewpoints vis-à-vis a personalised co-designed syllabus. It is; thus, interesting to note that half of teachers actually thought of implementing this kind of syllabi, which reflects an encouraging feedback regarding this approach. On the contrary, instructors pointed out that they do not apply personalisation by any means in their classrooms where the underscored obstacles were mainly centred around students' reluctance and lack of motivation. Finally, teachers were provided nine statements derived from PL approach in order to sum up their opinions and attitudes. Indeed, seven out of nine statements were favourable to instructors in which they either agreed or strongly agreed (students' preferences, partnership among the teacher and students, students' profiles, setting goals together, using ICTs etc). Nevertheless, teachers seemed to be reserved when it comes to providing students with freedom to choose what to learn and how to learn it. They also disagreed about students being the first agents responsible about their learning, which sounded odd for the researcher as recent approaches, particularly PL calls for students' personal autonomy and learning agency.

Over and above, findings drawn from teachers' questionnaire provided a remarkable appreciation and a quite positive feedback with regard to a personalised co-created syllabus. As a result, the second research hypothesis was also confirmed and accepted. Previous studies, such as: (Nelson, 2019; Bovill, Cook -Sather & Felten, 2011; Davidson, 2016; Bray & Mcclaskey, 2015) also reached similar promising conclusions.

Conclusion

The present chapter sought to provide a succinct, yet a comprehensive background about the different choices made at the level of methodology of the current study. It also displayed the employed data collection tools, namely: a questionnaire of personalised learning profiles, the VARK questionnaire, besides teachers' questionnaire. Data obtained from these instruments was analysed using both thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. Correspondingly, findings

were discussed and synthesised in order to confirm the aforementioned research hypotheses. In summation, final results were positive, encouraging and close to those of previous studies. Accordingly, the aims stated at the outset of this research were attained and fulfilled.

Implications and Recommendations

Motivated by the overall results, this account seeks to address some useful implications and suggestions on co-creating a personalised syllabus in particular, and opting for a PL approach in general.

- Teachers and students should practically think of partnership and collaboration, especially at the level of syllabus co-creation with its different elements.
- Teachers must undergo a training regarding SD.
- Teachers should be more flexible and communicate more with their students about differences and preferences.
- A well-elaborated questionnaire, besides regular discussions would give rich data about every student.
- Teachers should devise students' profiles, which are beneficial for both; for students to discover themselves as individuals and for teachers to easily track their progress and evaluate teaching strategies.
- Identifying students' learning styles via official questionnaires or tests gives credible data for both students and teacher.
- Instruction should be tailored to students' idiosyncrasies.
- Students should show more personal autonomy and ownership, especially at the tertiary level.
- To co-design a syllabus can be applicable on various courses.
- The administration should provide necessary technology- related materials.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Indicating limitations is part and parcel of any scientific inquiry in order to pave the way for further research. First and foremost, the findings drawn from this study are not to be generalised to the whole population because the researcher opted for a case study design.

Moreover, it is worth highlighting the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on this study; the researcher used online questionnaires only and dismissed the use of a focus group; thus, the second research question was modified and restricted to teachers' views only because of the previous issue. Whereas a variety in data collection instruments would provide richer and deeper data.

The present research remains theoretical; therefore, future researchers can follow the same stages, besides putting into practice the co-created syllabus and provide a course evaluation for more precise results.

In point of fact, there was a total absence for sources and books in the faculty library regarding the independent variable (PL). Therefore, the majority of the used sources were online publications.

General Conclusion

In the light of what has been discussed throughout the different three chapters of this dissertation, the researcher attempted to underscore the notion of syllabus co-design as it is deemed to be at the heart of the present study.

Initially, this research sought to devise a personalised co-created syllabus for oral expression course in order to mirror students' idiosyncratic differences and preferences within the various elements of the syllabus. The latter represented a tentative suggestion towards accounting for PL approach and adopting its principles to be adapted according to the Algerian teaching/ learning context. The second aim of the study was to explore and elicit teachers' practices and attitudes vis-à-vis a personalised co-authored syllabus.

Correspondingly, the nature of the study was exploratory and the adopted research approach was qualitative, in addition to a case study design. In essence, the researcher employed three different questionnaires; two questionnaires for students and one questionnaire designed for teachers in order to obtain necessary data to answer the two research questions and confirm what was previously hypothesised.

It is worth mentioning that the theoretical chapters served as the backbone of the study as they provided comprehensive and insightful account on both variables, namely: SD and PL. The first chapter threw light on the major topics related to the notion of SD as it attempted to analyse, discuss and compare what exists in the literature. On the other hand, the second chapter tackled different, yet relevant themes regarding PL and syllabus co-creation since they constituted a salient part of the research in which the researcher emphasised some topics, such as: syllabus co-design, the VARK model, besides learners' profiles that were in turn treated practically within the third chapter.

Motivated by the overall results, study findings revealed that the suggested syllabus was to a certain extent a representation of students' major differences and preferences that were stemmed from students' learning profiles. Nevertheless, the final syllabus was not highly detailed and sophisticated because of some limitations, such as: dismissal of the focus group (because of covid-19 pandemic) that was dedicated for in-depth information related to students' views about profiles and the amelioration of the syllabus, this is from the one hand. From the other hand, teachers' questionnaire disclosed appreciative attitudes and an encouraging feedback regarding personalisation in general and a co-created syllabus in particular in spite of some neutral answers regarding students' learning ownership.

In summation, research findings were in line with those of previous studies as they emphasised the utility of a co-creation syllabus, especially in terms of students' engagement, motivation and autonomy, which in turn strengthen and validate the conclusions drawn from the current inquiry. In fact, PL is that sphere of knowledge, which can be dealt with from various angles; discussing a personalised co-designed syllabus was one of the highlighted issues within this approach.

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Appendices

Appendix A: A Preliminary Study

Teachers' Interview Questions

- Q1.** For how many years have you been teaching oral expression?
- Q2.** Is there a syllabus to teach oral exp? Or how do you proceed with this course?
- Q3.** Do you think that designing a syllabus is the teacher's responsibility alone? explain
- Q4.** Have you ever heard of teacher-learner syllabus co-design?
- Q5.** If yes, what do u know about it? Do u apply it?
- Q6.** What are the possible constraints that hurdle learner-teacher co-operation?

Appendix B: A Questionnaire of Personalised Learning Profiles

Questionnaire of Personalised Learning Profiles (Learner's Information Sheet)



Dear students,

You are cordially requested to carefully provide accurate answers to the following questionnaire, which serves as valuable data to create 'Learners' Profiles' that constitute the crux of the present study which is entitled: **Towards a Personalised Co-Designed Oral Expression Syllabus.**

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. We earnestly look forward to read and analyse your responses, which will be strictly confidential and anonymous.

Manar DELEND
Email : nana.manar33@gmail.com
Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Section of English

Section One: Background Information

- Q1. You are: Male Female
- Q2. You are years old
- Q3. Your high school background: Scientific Literary Language
- Q4. Your choice of English major was: Willingly Imposed
- Q5. To what extent are you satisfied with your learning experience (throughout the 3 years) regarding oral expression course (in terms of methods of teaching and interaction, content, your progress...)?
- Extremely unsatisfied
 - Unsatisfied
 - Neutral
 - Extremely satisfied
 - Satisfied
-

Section Two: Learners' Learning Information

Q5-Q6. Tick the most appropriate strengths and weaknesses (You may tick more than one).

Q6. strengths: You are good at:		Q7. Challenges and Weaknesses: You struggle when:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arguing (debating, discussing...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	You speak in front of my class.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Describing	<input type="checkbox"/>	You do not find relevant ideas.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presenting and persuading	<input type="checkbox"/>	You do not know how to communicate what I want.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	You Lack vocabulary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acting (role plays and simulations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	You make mistakes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Singing	<input type="checkbox"/>	The topic is not interesting.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Story telling/ Story completion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oral expression is taught monotonously.

Q7. Three words that describe you as a learner: (Circle three words from every category).

<u>Category "A"</u>		<u>Category "B"</u>	
Curious	confident	Shy	confused
Patient	Smart	Slow-learner	Hesitant
Motivated	collaborative	careless	Hasty
Hard-working	Leader	Stressed/ anxious	Chaotic

Extrovert

organised

bossy

Inhibited

Creative

autonomous

passive

Inattentive

Independent

introvert

Q8. Learning Style:

You are mostly (tick one option):

- visual (you prefer to see the information and visualise the relationship between ideas)
- Auditory (you prefer to hear the information)
- kinaesthetic (you learn by doing/ experiencing/ touching)
- visual & auditory
- visual & kinaesthetic
- Auditory & kinaesthetic
- Combination of the three (visual, auditory & kinaesthetic)

Q9. Your source of motivation is (choose and rank):

- Yourself (intrinsic motivation)
- Your parents (extrinsic motivation)
- Your teacher (extrinsic motivation)
- Your friends/ peers (extrinsic motivation)
- The environment (extrinsic motivation)

Section Three: Oral Expression Course

Q10. Do you enjoy oral expression course? (Whatever your answer, please clarify).

Yes No

Explanation.....
.....
.....

Q11. What is your favoured accent?

British American Mixture

Q12. What was your final TD mark in oral expression course (S1)?

.....

Q13. What do you need from oral expression? (you can tick more than one).

- Improve your pronunciation
- Work on your communicative abilities and skills
- Improve your presentation skills (how to stand up/ use gestures...)
- Enrich your knowledge and vocabulary
- Be more sociable with others
- Improve your listening skills

Q14. What are your objectives from oral expression? (you can tick more than one).

- To be able to express myself, ideas, thoughts clearly and freely
- To be able engage in any conversation or talk about any topic
- To be communicatively competent
- To be confident in using English language
- To get rid of shyness and fear of stage
- To be able to listen to understand accents, presentations, answer questions, carry out instructions

Q15. Does the classroom setting (physical environment/ general atmosphere) encourage you to speak? (if no, say why)

Yes No

If no, please clarify:

.....
.....
.....

Q16. Choose and rank from each category the available options.

Side Note:

1. FA: It takes place during learning (continuous assessment).
2. SA: It takes place at the end of the term.

Formative Assessment (FA)		Summative Assessment (SA)	
	Participation and Interaction		Listening Tests
	Individual Assignments		Team Projects
	Pair Work		Pair work
	Group Projects		Individual work
	Listening Tasks		

Q17. Rank the most appealing behaviours to you from each category from 1-4.

Engage: How do I like to be engaged in oral expression class?

Access: How do I like to proceed with oral expression course?

Express: How do I like to express or show what I know/ have learned?

I like working alone.	I understand what I read most of the time.	I like role plays and storytelling.
I feel confident and motivated to speak.	I like viewing information via different visuals (videos, pictures, charts...).	I like picture narrating/ description.
I prefer to work collaboratively.	I like speaking to teachers, peers.	I like in-class/ pre-recorded presentations
I can manage team projects.	I like listening to audios (songs, conversation....).	I like group discussions/ Q&A

Q18. Rank your favourite themes(topics) from 1-6.

Theme	Ranking
Family and society	
Sports and outdoors activities	
Internet and social media	
Culture and lifestyle	
Education and schooling	
Leisure and entertainment	

Q 19. Something about you that you want your teacher to know:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Q 20. Something about you that you do not want your teacher to know:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time, efforts and cooperation

Appendix C : The VARK Questionnaire

The VARK Questionnaire (Version 8.01)

How Do I Learn Best?

→ Choose the answer which best explains your preference and circle the letter(s) next to it.

→ Please **circle more than one** if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.

1. I need to find the way to a shop that a friend has recommended. I would:
 - a. Find out where the shop is in relation to somewhere I know.
 - b. Ask my friend to tell me the directions.
 - c. Write down the street directions I need to remember.
 - d. Use a map.

2. A website has a video showing how to make a special graph or chart. There is a person speaking, some lists and words describing what to do and some diagrams. I would learn most from:
 - a. Seeing the diagrams.
 - b. Listening.
 - c. Reading the words.
 - d. Watching the actions.

3. I want to find out more about a tour that I am going on. I would:
 - a. Look at details about the highlights and activities on the tour.
 - b. Use a map and see where the places are.
 - c. Read about the tour on the itinerary.
 - d. Talk with the person who planned the tour or others who are going on the tour.

4. When choosing a career or area of study, these are important for me
 - a. Applying my knowledge in real situations.
 - b. Communicating with others through discussion.
 - c. Working with designs, maps or charts.
 - d. Using words well in written communications.

5. When I am learning I:
 - a. Like to talk things through.
 - b. See patterns in things.
 - c. Use examples and applications.
 - d. Read books, articles and handouts.

6. I want to save more money and to decide between a range of options. I would:
 - a. Consider examples of each option using my financial information.
 - b. Read a print brochure that describes the options in detail.
 - c. Use graphs showing different options for different time periods.
 - d. Talk with an expert about the options.

7. I want to learn how to play a new board game or card game. I would:
 - a. Watch others play the game before joining in.
 - b. Listen to somebody explaining it and ask questions.
 - c. Use the diagrams that explain the various stages, moves and strategies in the game.
 - d. Read the instructions.

8. I want to learn to do something new on a computer. I would:
 - a. Read the written instructions that came with the program.
 - b. Talk with people who know about the program.
 - c. Start using it and learn by trial and error.
 - d. Follow the diagrams in a book.

9. When learning from the Internet I like:
 - a. Videos showing how to do or make things.
 - b. Interesting design and visual features.
 - c. Interesting written descriptions, lists and explanations.
 - d. Audio channels where I can listen to podcasts or interviews.

10. I want to learn about a new project. I would ask for:
 - a. Diagrams to show the project stages with charts of benefits and costs.
 - b. A written report describing the main features of the project.
 - c. An opportunity to discuss the project.
 - d. Examples where the project has been used successfully.

12. I want to learn how to take better photos. I would:
 - a. Ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.
 - b. Use the written instructions about what to do.
 - c. Use diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.
 - d. Use examples of good and poor photos showing how to improve them.

13. I prefer a presenter or a teacher who uses:
 - a. Demonstrations, models or practical sessions.
 - b. Question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.
 - c. Handouts, books, or readings.
 - d. Diagrams, charts, maps or graphs.

14. I have finished a competition or test and I would like some feedback. I would like to have feedback:

- a. Using examples from what I have done.
- b. Using a written description of my results.
- c. From somebody who talks it through with me.
- d. Using graphs showing what I achieved.

15. I want to find out about a house or an apartment. Before visiting it I would want:

- a. To view a video of the property.
- b. A discussion with the owner.
- c. A printed description of the rooms and features.
- d. A plan showing the rooms and a map of the area.

16. I want to assemble a wooden table that came in parts (kitset). I would learn best from:

- a. Diagrams showing each stage of the assembly.
- b. Advice from someone who has done it before.
- c. Written instructions that came with the parts for the table.
- d. Watching a video of a person assembling a similar table.

Appendix D : Teachers' Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear teachers,

We would be grateful if you answer the following questionnaire that is developed to collect necessary data for the present research entitled '**Towards a Personalised Co-Designed Oral Expression Syllabus**'.

You are cordially asked to answer the following questions in order to elicit your perceptions and practices regarding syllabus design in general, and a co-designed personalised syllabus in particular.

Be noted that all your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. Thank you very much in advance for your collaboration.

Manar DELEND

Email: nana.mantar33@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of foreign languages

Section of English

Section One: Teachers' Background Information

1- How long have you been teaching oral expression course?

1-5

5-10

More

2- Was teaching oral expression:

a. A personal choice

b. An administrative imposition

- If it was “a personal choice”, please explain:

.....
.....

3- Have you ever gone through any kind of training regarding syllabus/course design?

Yes No

- If yes, please specify:

a. Workshops

b. Attending seminars

c. Online training

d. Other, please specify:

Section Two: Teachers' Classroom Practices

1- In general, how do you proceed (methods you use) with Oral expression course?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2- What are the content selection criteria you rely on in teaching oral expression course?

(you can tick more than one)

a. Significance

b. Interest

c. Learnability

d. Feasibility

3- Does your current course cater for learners' idiosyncratic differences, learning styles and preferences?

Yes No

4- Is your course:

- a. One for all
- b. One for many
- c. One for individuals

5- In your viewpoint, designing a syllabus/ course is:

- a. Teachers' responsibility alone
- b. Shared responsibility (teachers and learners)
- c. administration responsibility

6- Do you often vary your teaching strategies and modalities?

Yes No

- If yes, for what reason (s)?

.....
.....
.....

7- Are you aware of your learners' lacks/ weaknesses, and what they want to improve?

Yes No

- If yes, how do you proceed?

- a. Conversing with learners
- b. Administering a questionnaire
- c. Observing their behaviour
- d. Assessing their classroom interaction
- e. Other, please specify:

8- How often do you discuss with learners their most appealing learning modalities?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

9- How often do you ask learners about their favourite topics in oral expression?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

10- How often do you track your learners' learning progress in oral expression?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

11- How do you ensure making all learners engaged in your course?

.....
.....
.....

12- How do you deal with the introvert/ inhibited/ reserved learners?

.....
.....
.....

13- How do you assess your learners in oral expression course?

.....
.....
.....

Section Three: Personalised Co-Designed Syllabus

1- In the course of suggesting a better syllabus, have you ever thought of a personalised co-designed syllabus? (the instructor obtains preferences for course structure, policies, and content and using these, plans the course with students instead of for students).

Yes No

2- How do you visualise a personalised co-designed syllabus?
.....
.....
.....
.....

3- Do you apply personalised learning by any means in your course?

Yes No

-If yes, how?
.....
.....
.....

4- In what ways learners' feedback, suggestions and ideas can help shape the syllabus/course?

.....
.....
.....

5- Number some hindrances you think can impede the application of a co-designed personalised syllabus.

.....
.....
.....

6- To what extent do you agree/ disagree with the following situations (statements)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. When few learners show reluctance/disinterest, the teacher makes efforts to know why.					
b. If some learners want to express what they learnt from the course differently, the teacher gives them freedom to do so.					
c. Knowing learners' interests, tendencies and preferences is important for the success of the course.					
d. Learners are given freedom and flexibility to choose how to learn and how to express and discuss what they learnt using different ways available.					
e. Rather than passively delivering the content, instructors become partners with their learners (syllabus co-designers; for instance)					
f. Learners with their instructor set goals, design a personal learning plan, and carefully choose how to access and express content best.					
g. Learners are the first agents responsible about their learning.					
h. Personal learning profiles are learners' DNA that help the instructor better understand learners as individuals; thus, the teachers will know which strategies and modalities to implement to cater for differences.					
i. The use of ICTs is crucial in oral expression class.					

7- If you have any suggestions or views about the importance of a co-designed personalised syllabus, feel free to express them down below:

.....
.....
.....

Your time, efforts and cooperation are highly appreciated

Appendix E : The Opinionnaire

OPINIONNAIRE

1- Is the questionnaire of optimal length?

Yes

No

2- Does the questionnaire include any repetitive questions?

Yes

No

3- What do you think of the order of questions?

.....
.....

4- Are there any ambiguous questions that need further clarifications?

Yes

No

- If yes, please indicate them

.....
.....

5- Are there any irrelevant questions that need to be removed?

Yes

No

- If yes, please indicate them

.....
.....

6- Are the response categories appropriate?

Yes

No

7- If there are any additional questions you believe are relevant to the study, please write them below:

.....
.....
.....

Appendix F: The Personal Profiles Samples

Sample 1

PERSONALISED LEARNING PROFILE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Learner (H)	
Gender	Female
Age	21 years old
High school background	Literary
Choice of English	Willingly
Degree of satisfaction with previous oral expression course experience.	Satisfied

LEARNER'S LEARNING INFORMATION

Strengths: the learner is good at:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arguing (debating, discussing...).• Presenting and persuading.
Weaknesses and Challenges: the learner struggles when	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The topic is not interesting.• Oral expression is taught monotonously.
Descriptive Words	patient, collaborative, organised, introvert, inhibited, passive.
Learning Style	Multimodal (Visual/Aural/ Kinaesthetic)
Source of Motivation	The environment(extrinsic)

ORAL EXPRESSION COURSE

Favourite accent	British
Favourite Topics (Ranked)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Internet and social media2) Culture and lifestyle3) Sports and outdoor activities4) Education and schooling5) Family and society6) Leisure and entertainment
Needs: the learner needs to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve pronunciation.• be more sociable with others.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be able to express myself, ideas, thoughts clearly and freely.• To be able engage in any conversation or talk about any topic.
Assessment	➤ Formative assessment:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Individual assignments 2) Pair work ➤ Summative assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Listening tests 2) Pair work
I want my Teacher to know:	I am working hard in order to improve my listening and speaking skills and I have many capacities for improving that.
I do not want my teacher to know:	I do not have a lot of vocabularies because of a lack of reading.

ENGAGE/ ACCESS/ EXPRESS(RANKED)

Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I prefer to work collaboratively. 2) I feel confident and motivated to speak
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I understand what I read most of the time 2) I like viewing information via different visuals (videos, pictures, charts...)
Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I like in-class/ pre-recorded presentations 2) I like group discussions/ Q&A

Sample 2

PERSONALISED LEARNING PROFILE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Learner (D)	
Gender	Male
Age	22 years old
High school background	scientific
Choice of English	Willingly
Degree of satisfaction with previous oral expression course experience.	Neutral

LEARNER'S LEARNING INFORMATION

Strengths: the learner is good at:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arguing (debating, discussing).• Presenting and persuading.• Listening.• Acting (role plays and simulations).• Story telling/ Story completion.
Weaknesses and Challenges: the learner struggles when	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• speaks in front of the class.• Lacks vocabulary.• The topic is not interesting.
Descriptive Words	motivated, creative, leader, stressed, confused, chaotic.
Learning Style	Multimodal (Aural/ Kinaesthetic).
Source of Motivation	Myself(intrinsic).

ORAL EXPRESSION COURSE

Favourite accent	Mixture (American and British)
Favourite Topics (Ranked)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Sports and outdoor activities.2) Family and society.3) Culture and lifestyle.4) Leisure and entertainment.5) Education and schooling6) Internet and social media
Needs: the learner needs to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve pronunciation.• Improve presentation skills (how to stand up/ use gestures...).• Enrich vocabulary.• be more sociable with others.

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be able to express myself, ideas, thoughts clearly and freely. To be communicatively competent To be confident in using English language.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Formative assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) participation and interaction. 4) Pair work ➤ Summative assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) Pair work 4) Team projects
I want my Teacher to know:	I am always ready for the next challenge.
I do not want my teacher to know:	I dislike the way of teaching of my teacher.

ENGAGE/ ACCESS/ EXPRESS(RANKED)

Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) I can manage team projects. 4) I feel confident and motivated to speak.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) I like viewing information via different visuals (videos, pictures, charts...). 4) I like listening to audios (songs, conversations...).
Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) I like role plays and storytelling. 4) I like in-class/ pre-recorded presentations.

Appendix G: The Tentative Personalised Co-Designed Syllabus for Oral Expression Syllabus

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research



Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of Foreign Languages

Section of English

Towards a Personalised Co-Designed Syllabus for Oral Expression Course

The case of third year students of English in Biskra University

Prepared By:

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Academic Year: 2019/2020

Syllabus Description

As a matter of fact, this syllabus is chiefly developed in order to echo students' choice and voice regarding oral expression course. The present syllabus represents an attempt to display the integration of personalisation within the construction of the syllabus' elements. It; thus, enables students to be active parts in both phases, namely: co-design and practice. Precisely, this study sheds light on the theoretical part of the syllabus co-creation where it only tackles the syllabus from its conceptual foundation. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to spotlight the fact that the co-designed syllabus is primarily designated to third year students (the participated sample, n=12). In other words, the content of syllabus can be only employed with the students who partook in the research as it was mainly stemmed from their idiosyncratic preferences and traits (i.e. different students mean distinct preferences, which result in a different syllabus). Therefore, the focal point of this syllabus is to help students recognise themselves as individuals with disparate learning differences (strengths, weaknesses, learning styles and preferences), besides sensitising and pushing them to show personal autonomy and learning agency.

Syllabus Objectives

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Work on their communicative abilities and skills
- Improve their presentation skills (how to stand up/ use gestures...)
- Enrich their knowledge and vocabulary
- Improve their listening skills
- Improve their pronunciation
- Be more sociable with others
- Be more autonomous and show learning ownership

Syllabus Structure

Before delving into the construction of the personalised co-designed syllabus, the course should first commence with the distribution of the personalised learning questionnaire in order to identify students' choice and voice. Next, the questionnaire analysis will help create profiles that correspond to every student. Profiles can be modified and readjusted throughout the course.

Accordingly, the syllabus involves the general planning of six sessions. The syllabus is also composed of five different parts that demonstrate personalisation, respectively: the topic, students and the section of engage, access and express. Firstly, topics were assigned to students according to how they ranked them (from the most favourite topic to the least favourite one). In other words, every session entails a number of topics where different students work on different themes (according to how they ordered them previously). Additionally, topics were left broad in order to provide students with freedom to narrow them down and make them more specific to be easily dealt with. Secondly, students are referred to by letters for the research's ethical matters. Thirdly, the section of (engage/access/express) involves information on how students are better engaged in the course, how they can receive information, in addition to their appealing methods to demonstrate what they learnt. However, constant communication with students might lead to other modifications regarding the previously said elements.

Materials

The nature of this syllabus calls for the use of various teaching/learning materials, such as: data show, printed texts and pictures in additions to students' smart devices (smart phones, tablets and personal computers).

Assessment and Evaluation

Since both types of assessments are included, namely: formative and summative assessments, students chose and ordered the following tasks to be assessed upon.

Formative assessment	Summative assessment
Individual assignments	Individual work
Listening tests	Pair work
Pair work	Listening tests + team projects

Physical Arrangement of the Classroom

The physical setting should be organised and shaped according to students' learning strategies. In simple terms, the classroom can include several groups of students working together as it can also involve other students working alone.

Side Notes for Consideration

1. Regular discussion and constant communication among the teacher and students would readjust and enrich the syllabus structure and content.
2. Teachers can control the degree of personalisation to adapt it in accordance with the available conditions (i.e. either to personalise some parts, or all parts of the syllabus).
3. A distribution of a well-structured questionnaire to collect data related to students would save teacher's efforts and gain time.
4. Every student must receive a version of his/her profile, besides a copy of the syllabus in order to know how to proceed.
5. Some tasks could be done at home to gain time, such as: watching videos related to the topic, or even reading a short production about it.

6. Notice that some students are found alone although they prefer to work collaboratively; this can be solved via discussions with students to know what they prefer as alternatives (which the researcher could not do because of the research's limitations).
7. Week one in the syllabus refers to the first session after the profiles are created and the syllabus is co-designed where the agreement among the instructor and students is made.

Week One				
Topic	Student	Engage	Access	Express
Sports and outdoor activities	A, C, D, I	A, C, D, I: team work	Listen to an audio related to the topic (can be done at home)	A, D: role play C, I: discussion, Q/A.
Internet and social media	F, H, K	H, K: collaborative work F: works alone	H, K: read about the topic. F: watches a video (at home/ in class).	H, K: group discussion/A. F: presentation
Culture and lifestyle	J, G	J: prefers working alone. G: prefers to work collaboratively	J, G watch a video.	J: Presentation G: tells a story about the topic.
Leisure and entertainment	E, L	E, L: Collaborative work	E: reads about the topic and discuss it with L.	E: storytelling L: Q/A with the teacher
Family and society	B	Prefers working alone	B: reads about the topic.	B: discussion, Q/A with the teacher.
Week Two				
Family and society	C, D, G, J	C, D, G: team work. J: works alone	C, D, G: listen to an audio. J: watches a video.	C, D, G: role play J: presentation

Culture and lifestyle	L, E, K, H	L, E, K, H: team work	Read about the topic.	Group discussion
Education and schooling	A, B	B: prefers working alone A: feels confident and motivated to speak	B: reads about the topic. A: watches a video.	B: narrating about the topic. A: presentation
Internet and social media	I	I: can manage team projects	Listens to audios.	Presentation
Leisure and entertainment	F	Likes working alone	Watches a video.	Presentation

Week Three

Culture and lifestyle	A, B, D	A, D: pair work B: prefers working alone	A, D: watch a video. B: reads about the topic.	A, D: role play B: discusses with A D
Internet and social media	C, J, L	C, L: work collaboratively J: prefers working alone	C, L: view pictures related to the topic. J: reads about the topic.	C L: group discussion J: presentation
Sports and outdoor activities	H, G	H, G: collaborative work	H, G: view something related to the topic.	H: presentation G: tells a story about the topic.
Family and society	F, K	F: prefers working alone K: can manage team projects	F: watches a video. K: reads about the topic.	F K: discuss together

Education and schooling	E	E: prefers to work collaboratively	E: reads about the topic.	E: storytelling
Leisure and entertainment	I	I: can manage team projects	I: listens to audio.	I: presentation

Week Four

Education and schooling	H, C, J	H, C: work collaboratively. J: prefers working alone.	H, C: view something related to the topic. J: reads about the topic.	H, C: group discussion J: presentation
Leisure and entertainment	B, D	B: prefers working alone D: feels confident and motivated to speak	B: reads about topic. D: views something related to the topic.	B: Q/A with the teacher D: presentation
Internet and social media	A, G	A, G: work collaboratively	A, G: view pictures about the topic.	A, G: role play
Sports and outdoor activities	L, K	L, K: work collaboratively	L, K: view pictures about the topic.	L, K: group discussion, Q/A.
Family and society	I, E	I, E: work collaboratively	I, E: view pictures about the topic.	I, E: group discussion, Q/A.
Culture and lifestyle	F	F: prefers working alone	F: watches a video (at home).	F: presentation

Week Five

Education and schooling	D, L, I, F	D, L, I: team work F: prefers working alone	D, L, I: group discussion. F: views pictures.	D, L, I: group presentation. F: individual presentation.
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Leisure and entertainment	G, K, J	G, K: work collaboratively J: prefers working along	G, K: watch a video. J: reads about the topic.	G, K: group narration J: presentation
Family and society	A, H	A, H: work collaboratively	A, H: view pictures.	A, H: presentation
Internet and social media	B, E	B: prefers working alone E: prefers to work collaboratively	B: reads about the topic. E: reads about the topic.	B, E: group discussion, Q/A.
Culture and lifestyle	C	C: can manage team projects	C: listens to audios.	C: Q/A with the teacher.

Week Six

Sports and outdoor activities	F, J, E, B	F: prefers working alone. J: prefers working alone. B: prefers working alone. E: prefers to work collaboratively	F: views pictures J: views pictures B: reads something related to the topic. E: reads something related to the topic.	F, J: individual presentations. B, E: individual narrations.
Leisure and entertainment	A, H, C	A, H, C: team work.	A, H, C: watch a video.	A, H, C: group discussion.
Education and schooling	G, K	G, K: work collaboratively	G, K: View pictures related to the topic.	G, K: picture description/narration
Internet and social media	D	D: feels confident and motivated to speak	D: watches a video	D: presentation

Culture and lifestyle	I	I: can manage team projects	I: listens to audios	I: Q/A with the teacher
Family and society	L	L: feels confident and motivated to speak	L: views pictures.	L: discussion with the teacher.

المخلص

يعد مذهب الشخصنة من المذاهب الحديثة في مجال التعليم لأنه يولي أولوية للمتعلم بالدرجة الأولى. كما يعد موضوع التصميم المشترك للبرنامج الدراسي في مجال الشخصنة من المواضيع المهمة إذ يعمل الأستاذ والمتعلم جنباً إلى جنب من أجل التخطيط المزدوج للوصول إلى الهدف المنشود، ألا وهو تصميم برنامج يعكس توجهات الطلبة وميولاتهم. وانطلاقاً مما سبق فإن هذه الدراسة تسعى إلى تخطيط برنامج دراسي خاص بحصة (التعبير الشفهي) للسنة الثالثة ل م د من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية لأنها لا تتوفر على برنامج دراسي معين. وعلى ضوء ما سبق، فقد تم استخدام استبيانين مع الطلبة من أجل التعرف على طرق التعلم الأنسب لكل واحد منهم والتي تتماشى مع أساليب تعلمهم المثلى وفقاً لاختلافاتهم. أما من الناحية المنهجية، فيعتبر البحث ذو طبيعة استكشافية حيث تبنى الباحث نمط الدراسة الوصفية باعتبارها تتوافق وأهداف البحث أين تم اختيار عينة متكونة من 12 طالباً. من جهة أخرى، فقد تم استعمال استبيان ثالث موجه لأساتذة مقياس التعبير الشفهي من أجل اكتشاف آرائهم وتوجهاتهم حول منهج الشخصنة بصفة عامة والتصميم المشترك للبرنامج الدراسي بصفة خاصة. ولهذا فإن تحليل المعلومات التي تم الحصول عليها عن طريق الاستبيانات الثلاثة أدى إلى تأكيد ما تم افتراضه سابقاً حيث كانت النتائج النهائية إلى حد ما داعمة وإجابيه.