

## IMPLEMENTATION OF A PERSONALITY-ORIENTED APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN FRANCE

**Tetiana Kharchenko**

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Professor at the Department of Romance Philology and Comparative-typological Linguistics, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine  
e-mail: t.kharchenko@kubg.edu.ua, orcid.org/0000-0002-4480-1585

**Nina Khrystych**

Ph.D. in Pedagogy, Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Philology, Translation and Teaching Methods, Hryhoriy Skovoroda University in Pereiaslav, Ukraine  
e-mail: forkaf@ukr.net, orcid.org/0000-0002-6839-8946

### Summary

The article reveals the question of the introduction of a personality-oriented approach to the education system of France, higher education system in particular. It has been proven that it has been a part of the state educational policy since 1989. Due to the practical implementation of the personality-oriented approach, the learning process was considered as a project and activity of a dynamic and fully involved individual in the process of its development in accordance with its individual needs. It has been proven that the personality-oriented approach in the system of higher education involves the development of differentiation and personalisation of the learning process. Differentiation in education is realised by dividing the content of training into simple segments (modules), which are adapted to the already acquired knowledge of students or fill in the gaps of the subject. The purpose of personalisation is to help the student to determine his / her existing knowledge and make his / her own choice, i.e., to develop his / her own educational project. We have found out that the concept of project, personal and professional at the same time, is dominant in this model of learning. It has been confirmed that personality-oriented learning in modern France is more of a training. The methodologist plays the role of a “coach” who observes, outlines ways, directs the mental processes of the pupil / student.

**Keywords:** differentiation, individualisation, individual project, personalisation, teacher training.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.23856/5007>

### 1. Introduction

One of the priority tasks of modern international educational policy is to create conditions for the development and implementation of fundamentally new educational standards, which should be based on a person-centred approach to the organisation of education. However, the problem of contradiction between the current state of theory and practice of personality-oriented education remains acute in many countries. In our opinion, the study and dissemination of positive European experience will help interested countries to identify conceptual long-term strategies for further improvement and development of education systems in the context of turning it to the identity of each student. The experience of France is of undoubted interest to us,

as it has established traditions in the field of practical implementation of the ideas of humanism in the education system.

**The purpose of the article** is to characterize the phenomenon of “personality-oriented approach” in the French higher education system, to determine its essence and characteristics of practical implementation in the higher education system.

Interesting prospects for the realisation of this purpose opened up for us the opportunity to study the peculiarities of the organisation of the learning process directly in one of the European countries, namely France. This was supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of France within the framework of the “Dnipro” Joint Action Program in the Field of Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Ukraine and France.

The participants of the project were Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University (Ukraine) and the University of Avignon and Vaucluse Lands (France). Scientists from both countries had obtained a real opportunity to work in research laboratories of both countries, universities, to observe the peculiarities of the pedagogical process directly in educational institutions of France and Ukraine, to communicate with fellow teachers and students, to analyse, compare and summarize perspective pedagogical experience.

Within the project, researching the general problem of humanization of professional training of teachers in France, special attention was paid to the study of ways to implement a person-centred approach in the training of modern teachers and professors of foreign languages.

The project participants used a set of methods to collect and initially process factual material: study and analysis of legislative acts and government regulations on education, circulars and instructions of educational institutions, pedagogical documentation, educational and methodological literature, statistical publications and periodicals of France; collection and primary processing of factual material, comparison and critical analysis of sources; surveys, questionnaires, “mail surveys”, interviews, conversations with teachers and students. According to the results of the research project in accordance with the thematic framework of our study, the prognostic value of French theoretical and practical experience in implementing a person-centred approach to higher education, professional training of teachers and professors of foreign languages in particular was determined.

## **2. The emergence of the phenomenon of “personality-oriented learning”**

It is worth noting that the Law on the General Principles of the Organization of National Education, adopted by the National Assembly of the French Parliament on June 10, 1989, changed the vector of educational development in the country as a whole (*Loi d'orientation du 10.07.1989*). The preamble to the state document states: “The student must be at the centre of the education system” (*Loi d'orientation du 10.07.1989*). This is a distinctive feature of the new Law, because the red thread through the whole text is the idea that from now on it is the educational institution (primary, secondary, higher) that must adapt to the needs of each individual student. G. de Vecchi calls the Education Act 1989 a “true Copernican revolution” (*De Vecchi, 1992: 21*).

At the same time, the new state document imposes on French schools, colleges, lyceums and higher education institutions the obligation not only to transfer and disseminate knowledge, but also to teach students the methods of independent work. Of particular interest is the opinion of the modern French researcher of teacher professional training G. de Vecchi, who says: “Until now, no curriculum has had a clear idea that students should be taught to learn, to encourage

them to develop their own methods of work” (*De Vecchi, 1992: 27*). One might think, the researcher continues, that this is not worth paying attention to. The learning process seems quite natural to everyone. However, emphasizes G. de Vecchi, all those who have not developed the ability to learn, are often defeated in the process of education (*De Vecchi, 1992: 27*).

It is worth noting that the 1989 Law enshrined the provision that from now on pupils and students, based on personal aspirations and abilities, should develop their own individual project of school, university and professional orientation. They are assisted in this by parents, teachers, pedagogical staff responsible for orientation and competent professionals (methodists) (*Loi d'orientation du 10.07.1989*). In connection with this demand at that time in the French Republic, the question of professional training for teachers who would be able to go from an ordinary teacher to an educator, tutor and a companion of a child's development, a regulator of his learning and the first steps in gaining experience. Future French educators were tasked with taking into account the individual developmental characteristics of the students with whom they would work and the environment in which teacher-student interaction would take place.

The emergence of the phenomenon of personality-oriented learning in the French education system was also due to the growing number of students in schools and their personal diversity. “Student diversity is becoming a major problem in today's education in France; as a result, the task of pedagogical education is precisely the urgent need to train teachers who will inevitably face this problem” (*Tournier, 2001: 47*). In addition, the country needed a large number of teachers. The need to train a large number of teachers at a higher professional level was discussed in the National Project “School of the Year 2000”. The French pedagogical community was looking for measures that would allow the school system to adapt more successfully to the general level of knowledge and better meet the social and economic requirements of French society at the turn of the century.

One of the first such measures was that in 1986 teachers were hired under the new rules. The innovation was that in order to enter a pedagogical educational institution, candidates with a diploma of general university education or another equivalent, had to enrol and pass a competitive exam for recruitment for civil service (fr. *Concours de recrutement*) (*Prost, 2014*). At the same time, persons who already work in the education system, which is considered a civil service, pass a closed competitive exam for the recruitment of teachers (fr. *Concours interne*). And all those who do not have pedagogical experience, but have a desire to become a teacher, in the presence of the necessary diplomas take an open exam (fr. *Concours externe*). The introduction of the open competitive exam changed and simplified the requirements for applicants who wanted to obtain a teacher's diploma.

The next step, in our opinion, was in solving the problem of training a new generation of teachers, humanistically oriented in their professional activities, is the new conditions of pedagogical education announced by the 1989 Law. Important points of this law are: first, the organization of professional pedagogical education in the conditions of a new specialized institutional structure – the University Institute of Teacher Training; secondly, new requirements for admission to this educational institution.

Article 17 of the Act provides for the establishment of “at each academy, starting from 1 September 1990, a University Institute for Teacher Training” (academies in France are educational districts into which the country is territorially divided; there are 29 academies). The main task of the new pedagogical school is to “train teachers who have a high level of scientific and professional knowledge that fully meets the requirements of the future major” (*Lumbroso, 1986*).

The peculiarity of professional and pedagogical training of future teachers in France after 1989 is its implementation on the basis of three-year education at one of the universities, where students receive special scientific training and a bachelor's degree. According to the new law, education at the University Institute for Teacher Training is designed for two years, so the total period of study for a pedagogical major is five years. The main task of the first year of study for future primary and secondary school teachers, foreign language teachers in particular, is to offer each student the best possible preparation for participation in the above-mentioned National Competitive Examinations for Recruitment to the Civil Service. Moreover, next to the preparation for the competition tests to give them the opportunity to gain first experience in the profession. The purpose of the second year of study at the University Institute of Teacher Training is the development of professionalisation of the novice teacher. All elements of the two-year training are aimed at helping trainees to acquire the competencies and professional skills that will help them become true teaching professionals. Helping every future teacher to become autonomous is the main goal of the second year of professional pedagogical education.

We believe that the purpose of these innovations was to make the process of training of future teachers more personality-oriented and personalised. They were preceded by a wave of protests by students of pedagogical schools, who accused the system of teaching teachers of "infantilism" and of ignoring the diversity of their previous experiences. Contemporary French researcher of teacher training F. Tournier, calling these innovations "the result of protest and negotiation", argues that "they, for many reasons, are an event in the history of the French training system for teachers, future foreign language teachers in particular" (*Tournier, 2001: 46*). It is these changes, the scientist continues his opinion, for the first time clearly put forward the requirement of personal orientation of the teaching process of teachers.

D. Bancel, rector of one of the French academies (the rector in France is the head of the academy, i.e. the educational district), in his report "Creating a new approach to the development of teacher education" from October 10, 1989 on this occasion noted: the implementation of pedagogical training future teachers on the basis of a bachelor's degree with subsequent two-year professional training at the University Teacher Training Institute would be reflected in their new, more aware and critical, as well as more personal and individual attitude to their profession. Coming into education with a university degree in a particular discipline and with their personal life experience, these older adults, than before, had to add to the already acquired specific and often professional knowledge of their new professional individual image and identity (*Bancel, 1999; 2000*).

In our opinion, it is worth noting that in France during this period two national symposia on teacher training were held (fr. Le Colloque National sur la formation des enseignants – AECSE). One of them, "Individualiser les parcours de formation" took place in Lyon in 1991; the second "Pre-professional and professional teacher education: the problem of individualization" (fr. Formation préprofessionnelle et professionnelle des enseignants: La question de l'individualisation) – in Grenoble in 1993. All French scholars who participated in the symposia are unanimous in the fact that the personal orientation of the process of training teachers is both a goal and its means.

"The topic of distinguishing the individual by his individual characteristics in pedagogical education interested me with its novelty", – says one of the participants in these symposia, a researcher at the University of Strasbourg V. Gouillaud (*Gouillaud, 2001: 145*). "Until now, a personality-oriented approach in the training of future teachers has rather contributed to the development of individualism, as it was seen primarily as an individual work of students", – said the French researcher V. Gouillaud (*Gouillaud, 2001: 143*). Most of my studies at school and

university followed the transmission model, which revolved around the process of “teaching – learning” to pass the exam. Sometimes I felt bored and uninterested in the course of my studies, so I want to carry out educational activities, first of all, with the hope that I will be able to pass on knowledge close to the student’s personality. Thus, I had the need to be able to better understand myself as a person involved in the education process” (*Gouillaud, 2001: 145*).

We share Gouillaud’s view that for a teacher in order to be able to carry out the personality-oriented learning of his students, he must, above all, understand himself and his personal identity. “The individuality of a socialized personality is formed simultaneously through mutual understanding with other individuals through speech and through intersubjective and biographical understanding of oneself” (*Gouillaud, 2001*). At this time, the opinion of V. de Landsheere that “the teacher teaches at the same time what he knows and what he is” (*De Landsheere, 1992: 418*) received a special response among the French pedagogical community.

### 3. Differentiation and personalisation of training

We believe that the next important lesson worth following is the French experience of practical implementation of a person-centred approach in the modern education system in two aspects: differentiation (modular learning, variability of educational routes, etc.) and personalisation. In our opinion, it is important to explain what French scientists invest in the concept of “personalisation” in education, including teacher training. Because a large number of scholars, both in French and Ukrainian pedagogy, use them as synonyms. But each of these concepts has its meaning. Let’s try to understand this together with scientists – participants of the previously mentioned national symposia on teacher training on the basis of individualisation.

S. Baillauguès, P.-A. Dupuis, G. Ferry, M. Kempf and F. Tournier call variability a type of personality-oriented teacher training. “In itself, the variability of the educational process does not mean that the future teacher becomes a real subject of his training”, – say scientists (*Baillauguès & all., 2001*). Therefore, we agree with them that in order to understand the peculiarities of the organisation of personality-oriented learning, we should distinguish between the meanings of such concepts as “differentiation” and “personalisation”.

The personalisation of education is on the other side of its individualised differentiation, – says the French researcher of teacher training S. Baillauguès (*Baillauguès & all., 2001: 29*). Both phenomena consider the learner in its integrity and originality. The attention of teachers and methodologists is drawn to the knowledge and competencies already available to pupils, students or future teachers, which they have accumulated during training or in practice; and the fact that this knowledge is different for everyone. However, while the teacher-mentor, taking into account the difference he notes in students, can try to differentiate their work, the learner, who is engaged in self-education, he personalises his actions, i.e., adapts them to their needs. The student accepts the proposals that are offered to him based on their abilities, goals and personal experience (*Baillauguès & all., 2001: 30*). At the same time, according to S. Baillauguès, personal experience is the essence of the niche of knowledge development and “choice” of attitudes and values. This experience gives meaning and colours the “personalisation of learning” (*Baillauguès & all., 2001: 36*). Thus, the prospect of personalisation leads to the consideration of the student as a specific and potential subject and active participant in the pedagogical process.

A similar position is expressed in other works on teacher training. In particular, D. Possoz in his scientific paper “Polysemy of the terms: “individualisation” and “personalisation of

learning” consistently argues that the concepts of “individualise” and “personalise” overlap in that they both take into account the difference between learners and are based on their originality. “The general points contained in these terms, the scholar continues, are also manifested in the rejection of “totalitarian” teaching and exclusively frontal and collective types of knowledge transfer” (Possoz, 1991: 18). D. Possoz explains his opinion by the fact that a simple retransmission of knowledge positions the learner as an object of the pedagogical process, which is located in the same plane as others involved in the same content of education, to the same rhythms of knowledge acquisition, to the same goals of knowledge acquisition. The French researcher draws attention to the fact that this approach is completely at odds with innovative humanities education, for which respect for differences and personal self-identification is of the highest value. “Humanistic education presents itself as centred on motivated subjects”, – explains D. Possoz (Possoz, 1991: 23). It turns to them in anticipation of cognitive effort. It is based on the argument of difference and supports its emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge by both, in terms of their interests, their abilities and their ways of acquiring knowledge. It supports cognitive constructs. It is able to encourage exchange and cooperation between learners (Possoz, 1991: 19).

The list of such statements can be continued. In our opinion, they speak best of the fact that after 1989 the emphasis in French education was on the process of self-preparation, and not only on mastering the content of disciplinary knowledge, “as it was the case with previous education systems in France, pedagogical in particular”, – emphasize M. Altet, J. Desjardins, L. Paquay and Ph. Perrenoud (Altet & all., 2014). As we can see, French theorists and practitioners of the system of pedagogical training went beyond a simple division of the content of pedagogical education into modules and credits. In addition to the created diversity and richness of teaching offers for future teachers, they managed to develop such personalised training mechanisms that form autonomy in the teaching profession and lay the foundation for personal activity development of socio-professional personality of the teacher throughout life.

#### **4. Development and maintenance of an individual student project**

A positive innovative example of personalisation is the French experience of implementing a personality-oriented approach within university education. We believe that the development and maintenance of an individual student project is the leading mechanism of personalisation in French universities. It is represented by such modular courses as “Professional student project”, “Development of individual student project”, “Support of individual student project”, which are just the form of personalised education, which aims to optimise the chances of success of all students. This modular course is designed for first-year undergraduate students and is held in the first semester. The general task of such courses is to accompany, provide assistance to each student to optimise his success in the learning process. With the help of better “self-knowledge” he will be able to learn the necessary competencies and develop and implement his individual educational and later professional project.

J. Arrous (2006), Director of the All-University Service on Information and Orientation of Schumann University in Strasbourg, in his work “Development and maintenance of an individual student project: The module “Professional project” notes that an individual student project should be understood as a combination of training project and, on the other hand, his professional project. In this case, a professional project determines the training project, and not vice versa, as is often understood (Arrous, 2006: 2).

The first step in the practical implementation of the mechanism of development and maintenance of an individual student project was created in 1984 at the Claude Bernard University in Lyon (fr. L'Université Claude Bernard Lyon I) module "Professional student project" (Arrous, 2006). Designed for first-year students of the university, it aimed to help the student, facing the realities of working life in his chosen field, become an active participant in his educational / professional project. The Claude Bernard University in Lyon, having created the "Professional Project module", remained for more than 10 years the only university in France to implement it in the practice of teaching students. In 1994, the Professional Project module was introduced as an experiment at four more universities (Toulouse 3, Toulon, Paris 4 and Strasbourg 1).

The role of the teacher in the module "Professional project" is to accompany the student, – emphasizes J. Arrous in his work "Development and maintenance of an individual student project" (Arrous, 2006: 10). Its role is to follow the methodology of the module: to remind its goals, to support the process of finding documents, to stimulate students' interest, to encourage and motivate them to work, to raise issues during various contacts, to clarify the requirements to be met in preparation oral and written presentation of results. According to French researchers, the coordinator needs to know the history of orientation and its basic concepts; know the methodology of the module "Professional project"; know the university where the module should be implemented. These competencies, of course, can be mastered.

Thus, from January 1995 to July 1998, three waves of coordinators were trained during seminars at the Bernard University in Lyon. They were conceived and implemented by teachers and researchers, who in 1984 developed the module "Professional Project" at the same university. Representatives of 23 universities were trained (Toulouse 3, Toulon, Paris 4 Sorbonne, Paris Orsay, Montpellier 3, Metz, Paris Creteil, Catholic University of Lille, Valenciennes, Amiens, Strasbourg 1, Strasbourg 2, Rouen, Dunkerque, Bordeaux 1, Mulhouse, Paris 6, Rennes 1, Clermont 1, Troyes, Besançon, Brest, La Rochelle). In total, from 1995 to 2001, more than 70 people received such training.

It should be noted that in modern conditions author's courses on development of the individual project of the student are introduced in each university. They have become a real practice of training students in French universities, have evolved significantly and gained European significance. Today, within the framework of European scientific and educational cooperation, taking into account local needs, they are taught at universities in Hungary, Finland, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, etc. Their goal is to develop student success through work that develops the skills of self-observation and contributes, on the one hand, to better self-knowledge, and on the other – to the formation of the necessary competencies to become an informed and active author of his educational and later professional projects.

## 5. Conclusions

Thus, French theorists and practitioners of pedagogical education have come to the conclusion that education can no longer be limited to "universal" pedagogical and didactic knowledge, it must be focused on the personality of the learner. The modern personality-oriented approach in France considers the learning process as a project and activity of a dynamic and fully involved personality in the process of its formation. Its development becomes possible, according to French researchers, with the focus of the learning process on the needs of each individual. According to them, the process of learning on the basis of personal orientation

involves the implementation of all possible mechanisms that contribute to the development of differentiation and personalization of learning.

Differentiation in education is realized by dividing the content of training into simple segments (modules), which are adapted to the already acquired knowledge of students or fill in the gaps of the subject. But French scientists are convinced that for the practical implementation of a person-centred approach to learning is not enough to develop the combinatorial properties of the education system. Calling a facilitating condition for individualisation as differentiation, scholars argue that only personalisation makes sense. The purpose of personalisation is to help the student with the help of methodologists and the educational institution to determine the knowledge available to him or her and to make his or her own choice. The concept of project, personal and professional at the same time, is dominant in this model of learning, and independent choices are infinitely open. Today, personality-oriented learning in France is more of a training. The methodologist plays the role of a “coach” who observes, outlines ways, directs the mental processes of the pupil / student. Its functions are to support and organize the work of introspection, to help interpret their practices and their behaviour, and thus gradually create, build specific skills and competencies of the participants, taking into account the personal experience of each.

However, within one article it is impossible to present in detail all aspects of the French experience of the practical implementation of a person-centred approach in the education system. Therefore, we see the prospects for further research in a detailed study of the practical aspects of the implementation of personality-oriented approach directly in modern French institutions of secondary and higher education, its content and methodological design.

## References

1. Altet, M., Desjardins, J., Richard, É., Paquay, L. & Perrenoud, Ph. (2014). *Travail réel des enseignants et formation : Quelle référence au travail des enseignants dans les objectifs, les dispositifs et les pratiques ?* Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgique : De Boeck Supérieur. [in French]
2. Altet, M. (1996). *Les compétences de l'enseignant professionnel. Entre savoirs, schèmes d'action et adaptation : le savoir-analyser.* In L. Paquay (Ed.), *Former des enseignants professionnels* (27 – 40). Paris, Bruxelles : De Boeck Université. [in French]
3. Arrous, J. (2006). *Elaboration et accompagnement du projet personnel de l'étudiant: Le module "Projet professionnel".* Retrieved from [http://nte-serveur.univ-lyon1.fr/gilles/projetpro/Le\\_PPE.pdf](http://nte-serveur.univ-lyon1.fr/gilles/projetpro/Le_PPE.pdf). [in French]
4. Avanzini, G. (1989). "Pourquoi l'individualisation? L'actualité d'un concept dans l'histoire de la pédagogie et de la formation". In *Individualiser les parcours de formation. Colloque AECSE* (33–42). Lyon : Université. L. Lumière. [in French]
5. Baillauquès, S. (2001). *De la modulation à une personnalisation de la formation initiale : histoire d'une recherche, chemins de réflexion.* In S. Baillauquès (Ed.), *La personnalisation d'une formation professionnelle : Le cas des professeurs des écoles (17–44)*. INRP : IUFM d'Amiens : IUFM de Nancy-Metz : IUFM de Rennes. [in French]
6. Bancel, D. (1989). *Créer une nouvelle dynamique de la formation des maîtres.* Paris : Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de la jeunesse et des sports. [in French]
7. Bancel, D. (2000). *La professionnalisation des enseignants, 10 ans après la création des IUFM. Recherche et formation : Formes et dispositifs de la professionnalisation*, 35, 133–143. [in French]
8. De Vecchi, G. (1992). *Aider les élèves à apprendre.* Paris. [in French]



9. De Vecchi, G., & Carmona, N. (1996). *Faire construire des savoirs*. Paris : Hachette éducation. [in French]
10. Gouillaud, V. (2001). *Les attentes et les espérances de formation chez les futurs enseignants en formation à l'IUFM* In S. Baillauquès (Ed.), *La personnalisation d'une formation professionnelle : Le cas des professeurs des écoles (135–146)*. INRP : IUFM d'Amiens : IUFM de Nancy-Metz : IUFM de Rennes. [in French]
11. Lumbroso, M. & Bourdoncle, R. (1986). *Les attentes et les comportements de formation continue des enseignants du second degré et leurs déterminants*. *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, 75, 35–52. [in French]
12. Possoz, D. (1991). *Des expressions polysémiques: "individualisation", "personnalisation de la formation"*. *Actualité de la formation permanente*, 114, 16–27. [in French]
13. Prost, A. (2014). *La formation des maîtres de 1940 à 2010*. Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes. [in French]
14. Tournier, F. (2001). *Le principe officiel de personnalisation*. In S. Baillauquès. *La personnalisation d'une formation professionnelle : Le cas des professeurs des écoles (45–55)*. INRP : IUFM d'Amiens : IUFM de Nancy-Metz : IUFM de Rennes. [in French]