

# THE ROLE OF ADULT STUDENT'S INDIVIDUALITY IN OPTIMIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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*The article outlines the main criteria for determining the temperament of the student for the formation of educational groups in order to optimize the educational process. It describes the way of conducting research to identify the effectiveness of training students with a predominant phlegmatic type of temperament (introverts) and students with a predominant choleric type of temperament (extroverts) in separate academic groups. The article also touches upon the problem of the right to have a mistake as the only way to the educational growth of a person. The main results of the study are pointed out.*

**Key words:** adult student; adult education; temperament; successful education; individual differences; educational process optimization; right to have a mistake.

## INTRODUCTION

Adult education is a modern problem caused by fast becoming previously acquired skills out of date and the need for new ones. Teachers of adults need to have specific teaching approaches and to take into account peculiarities of adult learners.

According to M. Knowles, «the adult learner is a neglected species». The researcher points out a number of characteristics that distinguish the training of an adult: adults must know why and for what purpose they should study for some reason, before embarking on studying. In adults, there is a deep psychological need to be considered able, autonomous and independent individuals. Adult groups are more heterogeneous, mixed, but united by one purpose; adults have motivation for learning, a need for knowledge, a center of common interests and a goal that involves a certain style, a special style of teacher-methodologist while studying. Adults are much better absorbed and assimilate knowledge, competencies, values and settings, points of view, presented in the context of their application in real situations. Adults are more inclined to respond to factors of internal motivation than external ones (Knowles, 1990).

To optimize the learning process teachers should bear in mind that not only noticing the age and the level of knowledge but also individual psychological

features are important in forming academic groups of adult people. Talking about psychological features that should be taken into account, they are: *temperament and character* of each individual student.

### **STUDENT'S PSYCHOLOGICAL INDIVIDUALITY**

The connection of the prevailing type of student's temperament with the efficiency and speed of mastering the educational material is the actual topic of this study. It considers the characteristics of psychological temperament types.

In contemporary psychology there are four types of temperament: melancholic, phlegmatic, sanguine and choleric. It should be mentioned that these types are mostly characterized by being introvert or extravert that is extremely important for the way people perceive educational material.

A melancholic person is a labile introvert; a phlegmatic person is a stable introvert; a sanguine person is a stable extrovert; a choleric person is a labile extrovert. In labile types (melancholic and choleric) to the rapid occurrence of fatigue, a drop in performance, a sharp increase in the number of errors, a multiple decrease in the rate of activity results in: prolonged hard work, responsible independent work, negative assessment of their activity, work in noisy, restless environment. Introverts (phlegmatic and melancholic) have special difficulties in situations when: it is necessary to perform work of various content and methods of activity; have to work at a high pace with poorly structured material; work will be assessed, and the time for its implementation is strictly limited; frequent switching of attention from one type of work to another is required; after the first acquaintance with a new type of activity, their productivity is assessed; with a high rate of work required to be quick-witted. Labile types are desirable: being more careful in assessing their failures, due to the very painful attitude towards them; to build self-confidence; if it is necessary to perform a large amount of work in a limited period of time, which is diverse in content, trying to break it into separate parts, and performing it in stages; create a calm, welcoming environment. Introverts need to adhere to the following rules: reserve enough time for thinking about, preparing, checking and correcting work; they are not expected to be immediately included in the work, since the activity of the introvert in a new kind of activity increases gradually, therefore, it takes time to switch; try to prepare in advance or avoid questions that require unexpected answers. The labile types have their own advantages in activity: they more carefully control the correctness of the work done, check the results obtained and, in a calm, benevolent environment, make fewer mistakes than stable ones. Introverts are distinguished by a slow increase in activity, but its long preservation. They have a tendency to monotonous, monotonous work, to actions on a pattern, a pattern. They work in detail, step by step carrying out the assignment, so situations are favorable for them that require planned actions. They are not distracted, do not jump from one action to another, but perform them in strict sequence. Introverts tend to plan the upcoming activities, like to make plans in writing, using them as tools for external management of activities. Therefore, they are more successful in those activities that require advance preparation. They tend to systematize knowledge, which provides them with a greater depth of learning. In addition, due to thorough preparatory work, introverts learn the material more thoroughly and

therefore discover their advantages in such situations where a deeper understanding and knowledge of the subject is required. Introverts (as opposed to extroverts) begin to act, only to figure out what to do. In the work that requires ingenuity, introverts take an active part, if they have enough time to think. In addition, they are active in their well-established activities. Introvert long-term memory is better developed than short-term. If there is an opportunity to arbitrarily organize their activities, then introverts are able to quickly complete tasks. They are easier to cope with independent work, showing a high degree of independence in the performance of tasks. Extraverts also have their own difficulties, which endure monotony and monotony. In situations that require adherence to patterns, systematization, planning, and checking work performed, they often resort to different ways to diversify their activities: they are distracted from work, communicate with colleagues, friends, etc. In this case, it is recommended to learn to consciously direct your activity to constructive, productive activities, for example, other ways of solving the tasks at hand, etc.

It should be emphasized that the aspects of personality involve individual differences in self-concepts about goals and values, in contrast to the temperaments that involve differences in automatic emotional reactions and habits. Such self-concepts modify the significance or meaning of what is experienced, hence also changing emotional reactions and habits. Such individual concepts modify the significance or meaning of what is experienced, thereby also changing emotional reactions. Accordingly, the three character dimensions involve both an intellectual perspective about boundaries and an emotional perspective. Self-directedness is based on the concept of the self as an autonomous individual; from this self-concept are derived feelings of personal integrity, honor, self-esteem, effectiveness, leadership, and hope. Likewise, cooperativeness is based on the concept of self as an integral part of humanity or society; from this self-concept are derived feelings of community, compassion, conscience, and charity (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993). Furthermore, individuals with the same temperament may behave differently as a result of character development. But there are different psychological approaches to coping with different specific features of adult students' characters. The purpose of the research is to make the students' perception easier and more comfortable.

Since the 1980s, researchers have been studying the role of temperament in education: in behavioral manifestations, academic performance, and adaptation to the learning process. A number of studies have shown that certain individual differences that are potentially important for behavioral functioning are present at birth or soon after it. But there were few specific studies of such differences, and most of them were studies of a limited number of specific areas of behavior, such as sensory threshold, motility, and response perception. For the most part, the samples used were not large enough to summarize the results, and long-term studies that would assess the relevance of the initial behavioral characteristics for later development were rare. Subsequently, several studies have described the relationship between temperament and performance. Also, some researchers conducted a review of psychological and educational literature in this aspect, while the practical study of the issue so far has not been given sufficient attention.

Any consideration of the conditions affecting the student's ability to learn should be related to a number of factors. Specific areas of cognitive abilities are also crucial; for example, the development of a student's linguistic function, both verbally and in writing, must correspond to the expected task in the group. Student's strengths and weaknesses in the organization of perception, the ability to preserve facts or the ability to summarize should also be considered. It is important to assess the relevance of the tasks required for the student's abilities to determine if the curriculum is appropriate, whether it is not sufficiently complex or overly stressed. This problem area may be called the "subject" of study. The second major problem is the "cause" of functioning or motivation. Given the special ability to learn, the students' functioning will be affected by their desire to learn. Many relevant studies have studied both factors that encourage students to learn on their own, as well as factors that encourage them to develop an interest in specific subjects.

Psychologists distinguish the following criteria for determining temperament (Rothbart, & Jones, 1998):

1) The level of activity: the motor component that is present in the functioning of the child, and the daily proportion of active and inactive periods.

2) Rhythm: the predictability of functions such as hunger, diet, excretion from the body and the sleep-wake cycle.

3) Approach or rejection: the nature of the child's reaction to a new food, object or person.

4) Adaptability: the speed and ease of changing current behavior in response to changes in the structure of the environment.

5) Reaction intensity: the energy level of the reaction, regardless of its quality or direction.

6) The threshold of susceptibility: the level of intensity of stimulation necessary to cause a noticeable reaction to sensory stimuli, environmental objects and social contacts.

7) Quality of mood: the amount of pleasant, joyful or friendly behavior compared to unpleasant, unfriendly behavior or crying.

8) Distractibility: the effectiveness of external environmental influences on the intervention or change of direction of the current behavior.

9) The degree of attention and constancy: these two categories are related.

The attention span refers to the time period during which the person performs certain activities. Constancy refers to continuing activities in the face of obstacles to sustaining activities. Temperamental characteristics of the adult student play an important role in the nature of his functioning in the learning process, since they influence both the way he approaches the learning task and how he interacts with other students and teachers. These temperamental qualities in themselves are neither positive nor negative in their consequences. However, they have positive or negative consequences both in relation to certain requirements imposed on the student, and in relation to the environmental organization in which these requirements are imposed. We found that students adapt positively to learning and learn optimally when the requirements are in tune with their temperamental style. On the contrary, learning deteriorates when demands are dissonant and become a source of stress.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM STUDENT'S PERSONAL WORLD

During three years, based on foreign language courses of the United Language Center *Free Speech* (Kyiv, Ukraine), we have conducted an experiment to introduce the program of *Student's Personal World*, in which the research team has already achieved some results on this issue. The aim of the study is to optimize the learning process through the formation of groups of students, taking into account not only the level of educational preparation, but also taking into account the characteristics of the temperament of students. Thus, the purpose of this article is to present the research results for the past period. The article considered two points: theoretical and determination of temperament and practical and description of the process and results of the study.

So, our research project was developed, in which three groups of adult students take part (age – 20-26 years old). Interviews with students, direct observations in the group, testing, questioning and interviews are used. The choice of this age category was dictated by several psychological factors: 1) mature students have a previous learning experience sufficient for a comparative analysis of various aspects; 2) pupils of mature age are capable of self-esteem, self-control and self-analysis; 3) mature students are not afraid to make a mistake, because from experience they realize that only through mistakes can real research and study of the world be possible. According to an Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler, “nobody could grow without doing mistakes”. Our team of researchers pays special attention to the issue of *the right to have a mistake* which is based on a modern theory by a “wrongologist” Kathryn Shulz that the confidence of a person in his solely correct opinion is not only wrong, but also dangerous (Shulz, 2011). This feature is especially inappropriate for those teachers who, while working on a narrow problem during the long years of their lives, shame, accuse and negatively evaluate adult students who have barely begun to learn discipline and have made a mistake. Speaking about students with a predominantly phlegmatic type of temperament, they often in previous learning experiences suffered from the fact that they simply did not have time to cope with the task, although they performed it scrupulously. Students with the predominant choleric type of temperament in their questionnaires and interviews complained that they were the first to answer questions, were the first to perform tasks, but received a negative response from teachers because of an error.

So, as a result of the survey, 40 students were selected with approximately the same average level of English proficiency. After the analysis of scientific psychological and pedagogical literature, a theoretical conclusion was made about the direct influence of the prevalence of phlegmatic or choleric types of temperament on the speed of reaction and a qualitative indicator of the soundness of memorizing material.

Thus, through questioning, testing, and interviewing students, it was determined which of these two types of temperament is prevalent among these people. The survey revealed the problems of the learning experience obtained earlier (at school, college, university) of students with a predominantly phlegmatic type of temperament and students with a predominantly choleric type of temperament. Some of them were common: incompetent teachers,

authoritarian type of teachers' behavior, poor technical equipment of classrooms, excessively large home tasks. Some were opposites. For students with the predominant phlegmatic type of temperament: insufficient time to complete tasks, unnecessary activities (noisy competitions and game moments); while students with a predominant choleric type of temperament complained about the slow pace of classes and the insufficient number of competitions and methodical games.

Therefore, three academic groups were formed: 1) students with a predominant phlegmatic type of temperament (introverts); 2) students with a predominant choleric type of temperament (extrovert); 3) mixed control group. For the first and second groups, special techniques were developed taking into account the psychological characteristics of the prevailing types of temperament of their members. The third control group uses traditional teaching methods, which focuses on a general creative approach to the presentation of educational material and work on its learning.

At the end of each term, students are tested, as well as there are questioning and interviewing for each participant in the educational process. At this stage of the experiment, there is a steady trend towards the successful implementation of various methods for students with a predominant phlegmatic type of temperament and students with a choleric type of temperament.

Against the background of a qualitative increase in the intensity of academic performance compared to the first year of study in mixed groups, there is also a positive tendency in the final surveys of students about the comfort of the learning process, self-confidence, motivation and increased interest in learning.

There are main conclusions of the past period of our study:

1) there are visible improvements in the students' attitude to the educational process as a result of the use of methodic suitable for a certain temperamental group;

2) the process of studying became more rational;

3) there is growth of motivation in the educational process;

4) the use of time during classes became more reasonable.

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## РОЛЬ ІНДИВІДУАЛЬНОСТІ ДОРОСЛОГО УЧНЯ В ОПТИМІЗАЦІЇ ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОЦЕСУ

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*У статті викладено основні критерії визначення темпераменту дорослого учня для формування навчальних груп з метою оптимізації навчального процесу. Протягом трьох років, на базі курсів іноземної мови «United Language Centre» «Free Speech» (Київ, Україна), триває експеримент для впровадження програми «Student's Personal World». Метою дослідження є оптимізація процесу навчання шляхом формування груп дорослих учнів з урахуванням не тільки рівня навчальної підготовки, а й особливостей їх темпераменту. Таким чином, метою даної статті є представлення результатів дослідження за минулий період.*

*У статті означено мету проведення дослідження для виявлення ефективності підготовки дорослих учнів з переважним флегматичним типом темпераменту (інтровертів) і студентів з переважним холеричним типом темпераменту (екстравертів) в окремих академічних групах. Шляхом анкетування, тестування та усного опитування учнів було визначено, який з цих двох типів темпераменту у них переважає. Опитування виявило проблеми дорослих учнів з переважно флегматичним типом темпераменту і учнів з переважно холеричним типом темпераменту на основі їхнього попереднього досвіду навчання (у школі, коледжі, університеті). Деякі з проблем виявилися загальними: некомпетентні вчителі, авторитарний тип поведінки вчителів, погана технічна оснащеність класів, суб'єктивність оцінювання знань, надмірно великі домашні завдання. Інші складнощі були протилежними. Для учнів з переважним флегматичним типом темпераменту: недостатньо часу для виконання завдань, непотрібні види діяльності (гучні змагання та ігрові моменти); у той час як учні з переважаючим холеричним типом темпераменту скаржилися на повільний темп занять і недостатню кількість змагань та методичних ігор.*

*Стаття також розглядає проблему права на помилку як шлях до освітнього зростання учасників освітнього процесу. Зазначено основні результати дослідження, що триває.*

**Ключові слова:** дорослий учень; освіта дорослих; темперамент; успішне навчання; індивідуальні відмінності; оптимізація освітнього процесу; право на помилку.

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