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CONTINUOUS FORMATION OF SKILLS FOR DESIGNING A PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAJECTORY

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Abstract: This article presents a scientific-theoretical substantiation of the continuous formation of learners' skills of designing a personal educational trajectory (PET) across the successive stages of the continuing education system. The relevance of the study derives from the fact that the ability to design one's own educational path cannot be formed once and for all at a single stage of schooling; it must be cultivated cumulatively, with each educational level building on the competences acquired at the previous one and preparing the learner for the next, up to and including lifelong, self-directed learning in adulthood. The aim of the research is to substantiate the age-stage structure of this continuity, to identify the mechanisms of vertical and horizontal continuity that connect the stages, and to determine the pedagogical conditions under which the discontinuities typical of current practice can be overcome. The study employed the methods of theoretical analysis and systematisation of scientific literature, comparative-pedagogical analysis, structural-functional modelling, and pedagogical observation. The analysis showed that trajectory-design skill develops through four successive age-related levels — propaedeutic (preschool and primary school), elementary-conscious (lower and middle stages of general secondary school), independent-reflective (upper secondary and vocational education), and self-directed-lifelong (higher education and adult learning) — and that continuity between these levels is secured by a portfolio carried through from stage to stage, by unified diagnostic criteria, and by coordinated action among teachers of successive levels. The conclusion substantiates the necessity of a unified continuity standard for trajectory-design skill, of cross-level coordination among teachers, and of a single electronic portfolio that accompanies the learner throughout the entire educational path. Practical recommendations are proposed for the stage-by-stage, cumulative introduction of the described system into the continuing education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Keywords: personal educational trajectory, continuing education, continuity, trajectory-design skill, age-stage development, self-directed learning, electronic portfolio, lifelong learning, pedagogical continuity.

INTRODUCTION

The idea that a learner should be able to design his or her own educational path has become one of the central postulates of contemporary pedagogy. Yet the skill of designing a personal educational trajectory (hereinafter — PET) is rarely treated as a competence that must be cultivated gradually and cumulatively across the entire span of a person's education; more often it is addressed episodically, within a single stage of schooling, as though it could be instilled once and thereafter taken for granted. Such a fragmented approach contradicts both the psychological logic of skill development, which proceeds through successive, mutually dependent stages, and the structure of the continuing education system itself, which in the Republic of Uzbekistan encompasses preschool, general secondary, vocational, higher, and postgraduate education as an interconnected whole.

The strategic documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the development of continuing education — in particular, the Decree of the President No. PF-60 of 11 May 2022 and the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" — proceed from the principle of continuity (*uzluksizlik*) as one of the fundamental principles of the national education system, presupposing a logical and content-related connection between its successive stages [1; 2]. This normative foundation increases the relevance of a scientific elaboration of precisely how the skill of PET design should be built up, stage by stage, so that it develops coherently rather than being repeatedly reconstructed from scratch at each new educational level.

At the same time, pedagogical practice reveals a persistent discontinuity: the trajectory-design skills encouraged in primary school are frequently not built upon in general secondary school, and the individual approach cultivated at school often finds no continuation in vocational or higher education, where the learner is again treated predominantly as a recipient of a standard programme. The aim of the present article is therefore to substantiate the age-stage structure of the continuous formation of PET-design skill, to identify the mechanisms that secure vertical and horizontal continuity between educational stages, and to propose pedagogically grounded solutions to the discontinuities observed in current practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The theoretical foundation of the study rests on several interconnected lines of research. L.S. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, extended beyond a single lesson or school year, provides grounds for treating the learner's growing independence in trajectory design as a developmental continuum: what a learner can accomplish only with a teacher's close guidance at one stage becomes an autonomously exercised skill at the next, provided that pedagogical support is calibrated accordingly and gradually withdrawn.

M. Knowles's theory of andragogy substantiates the qualitative shift that occurs when the learner moves from pedagogically guided to genuinely self-directed learning: adult learners rely on accumulated experience, orient themselves towards practically significant goals, and expect to participate as equal partners in decisions about their own learning path. This position is used in the present study to characterise the final, self-directed-lifelong stage of PET-design skill formation.

E. Deci and R. Ryan's self-determination theory, already applied by Toshpulatov to the analysis of factors influencing PET design, is extended here across the age continuum: the study assumes that the balance between externally structured guidance and internally driven autonomy that self-determination theory describes must itself shift progressively in favour of autonomy as the learner advances through the stages of continuing education [4].

Toshpulatov's earlier works on personalised education and on the internal and external factors influencing PET design provide the substantive basis for identifying which competences are being built up at each stage, while his work with Kholikov on the digital model of teacher training supplies the rationale for treating an electronic portfolio, carried through from one educational level to the next, as the principal instrument of continuity [3; 5].

The following research methods were employed: theoretical analysis and systematisation of scientific literature; comparative-pedagogical analysis of the requirements placed on learners' independence at different educational levels; structural-functional modelling, used to substantiate the age-stage structure of the system; and pedagogical observation, used to identify typical points of discontinuity between educational stages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The pedagogical essence of continuity in PET-design skill formation. Continuity in this context signifies not the mere repetition of similar pedagogical actions at every stage, but a purposeful, cumulative deepening of the learner's independence, in which the competences formed at an earlier stage become the operational basis for more complex forms of self-directed design at the next. Continuity therefore has both a vertical dimension — the logical succession of educational levels — and a horizontal dimension — the coordinated involvement of teachers, family, and, at later stages, employers and the learner's own professional environment.

2. Age-stage structure of skill formation. The analysis allows four successive levels of PET-design skill to be distinguished.

The propaedeutic level (preschool and primary school) is characterised by the formation of elementary prerequisites — the ability to name one's own preferences and difficulties, to choose among a limited set of teacher-prepared options, and to reflect, with adult support, on the results of a completed task.

The elementary-conscious level (lower and middle stages of general secondary school) involves the formation of simple goal-setting and self-assessment skills: the learner, still under substantial teacher guidance, learns to set short-term learning goals, to select among several available resources, and to record progress in a simple portfolio.

The independent-reflective level (upper secondary and vocational education) is marked by the learner's growing capacity to plan a medium-term educational or vocational pathway independently, to justify the choice of a profile or specialisation, and to use diagnostic instruments for self-assessment with only episodic teacher consultation.

The self-directed-lifelong level (higher education and adult learning) corresponds to the andragogical model described by Knowles: the learner independently designs, monitors, and revises a long-term educational and professional trajectory, drawing on accumulated experience and engaging teachers or mentors as consultative partners rather than as directive guides.

3. Mechanisms of vertical continuity. Vertical continuity between the described levels is secured, above all, by a single electronic portfolio that accompanies the learner from preschool through higher education, allowing each subsequent teacher to build upon a documented record of the learner's previously formed goal-setting and self-assessment competences rather than beginning the process anew. A further mechanism is the existence of unified, age-differentiated diagnostic criteria that make it possible to establish, at the transition between any two levels, precisely which components of the skill have already been formed and which still require deliberate attention.

4. Mechanisms of horizontal continuity. At every stage, the formation of PET-design skill also depends on horizontal coordination: between the teacher and the family at the propaedeutic and elementary-conscious levels, between the school and vocational-guidance structures at the independent-reflective level, and between the higher-education institution and the labour market at the self-directed-lifelong level. The absence of such horizontal coordination frequently nullifies the continuity achieved vertically, since the learner's growing independence at school may find no corresponding space for exercise once he or she enters an institution that does not expect or accommodate it.

5. Problems and solutions. The first problem is the absence of a unified, cross-level standard describing which components of PET-design skill correspond to which educational stage; the solution is the elaboration of a single continuity standard, coordinated among preschool, school, vocational, and higher-education authorities. The second problem is the loss of diagnostic and portfolio data at the transition between educational levels, since institutions frequently use incompatible record-keeping systems; the solution is the introduction of a single, nationally coordinated electronic-portfolio platform that migrates with the learner rather than remaining bound to a single institution. The third problem is the insufficient preparedness of teachers at each level to build upon,

rather than to disregard, the trajectory-design competences already formed at the preceding level; the solution is the inclusion of continuity-oriented modules in teacher-training and in-service programmes at every level of the education system. The fourth problem is the abrupt increase in expected independence that many learners encounter upon entering vocational or higher education, without a corresponding gradual increase having taken place earlier; the solution is a deliberately calibrated, gradual withdrawal of direct pedagogical guidance across the general-secondary stage, consistent with the zone-of-proximal-development logic described above.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the skill of designing a personal educational trajectory cannot be adequately formed within the boundaries of a single educational stage; it requires continuous, cumulative cultivation across the propaedeutic, elementary-conscious, independent-reflective, and self-directed-lifelong levels of the continuing education system, with each level building deliberately upon the competences established at the one before it.

The analysis confirms that such continuity depends on two complementary mechanisms — vertical continuity, secured through a portfolio and diagnostic criteria that accompany the learner across educational levels, and horizontal continuity, secured through coordinated action among teachers, families, vocational-guidance structures, and, at later stages, the labour market.

The introduction of a unified continuity standard for PET-design skill, of a single cross-level electronic-portfolio platform, and of continuity-oriented modules in teacher training at every educational level are proposed as the principal directions for overcoming the discontinuities observed in current practice. The consistent implementation of these measures would allow the continuing education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan to form, rather than repeatedly re-form, learners' capacity for independent educational self-design, in keeping with the principle of continuity that underlies the national education strategy.

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