PROMOTING PERSONALIZED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION? – AN EXPLORATION OF 30 TEACHERS' VIEWS

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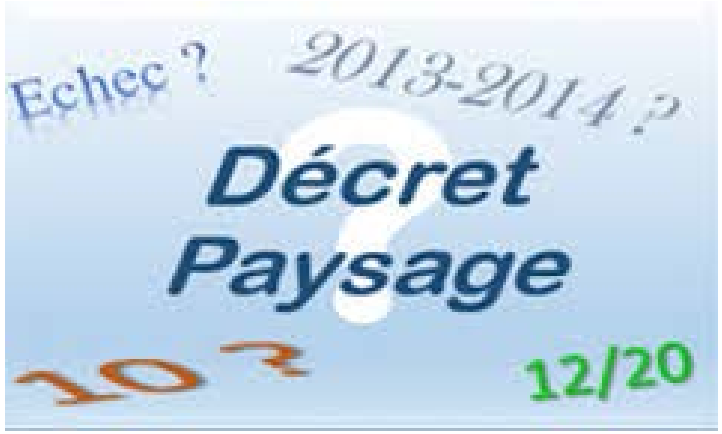
Context of the study

- A course: « Socio-political evolutions in higher education » (2 credits = 60 hrs)
- Audience: 30 teachers in higher education (not university)
- Data gathering: oral reflection on 3 questions, recorded in a « voicethread »

Relevance of the study

The topic has entered public debate



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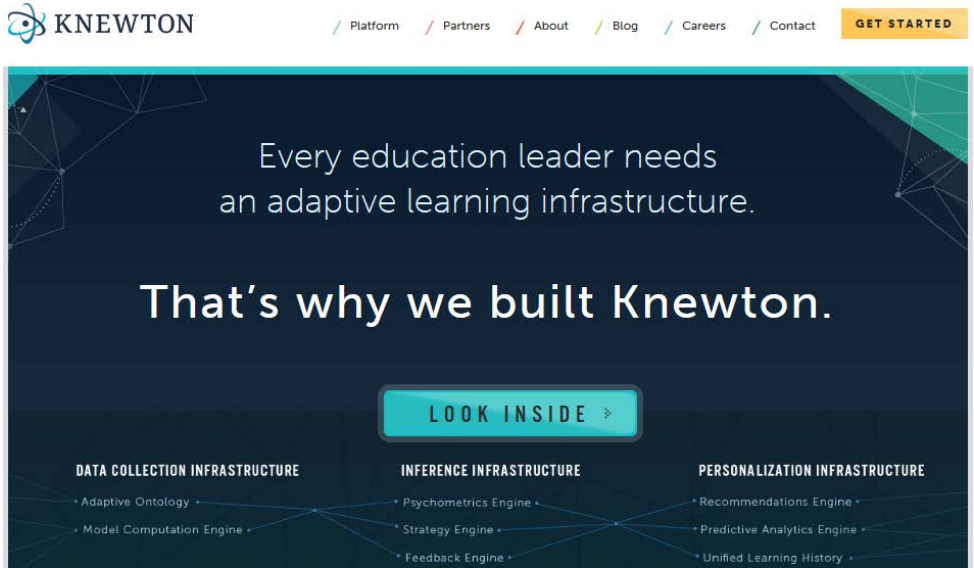

Method of the study

Phenomenographic research approach

- Captures variations ways in which individuals describe their conception (question 1-2) and experience (question 3) of a phenomenon
- Data from 20 informants is usually enough to discover all the different ways of understanding the phenomenon in question
- Two coders (pros and cons of interpretative research)
- (Interelations between the categories of description can be conceptualized diagrammatically as an *outcome space*)

un apprentissage personnalisé aiderait les apprenants à maintenir leur motivation et leurs efforts. (P30)

Pourrait aider à offrir au monde, au monde de l'emploi des profils plus variés et donc adaptés à la variété de l'offre et tous les étudiants pourraient se spécialiser. (P9)

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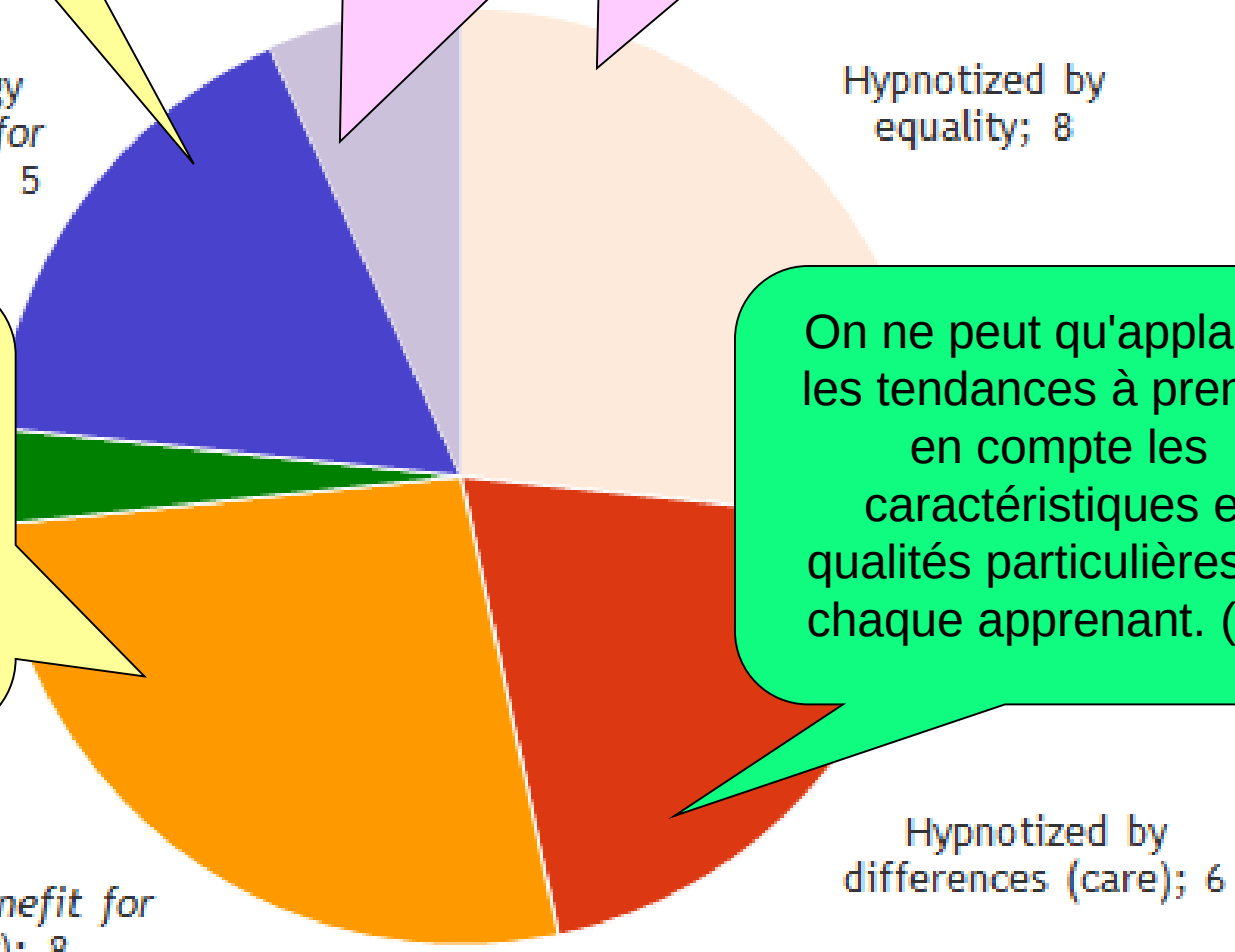
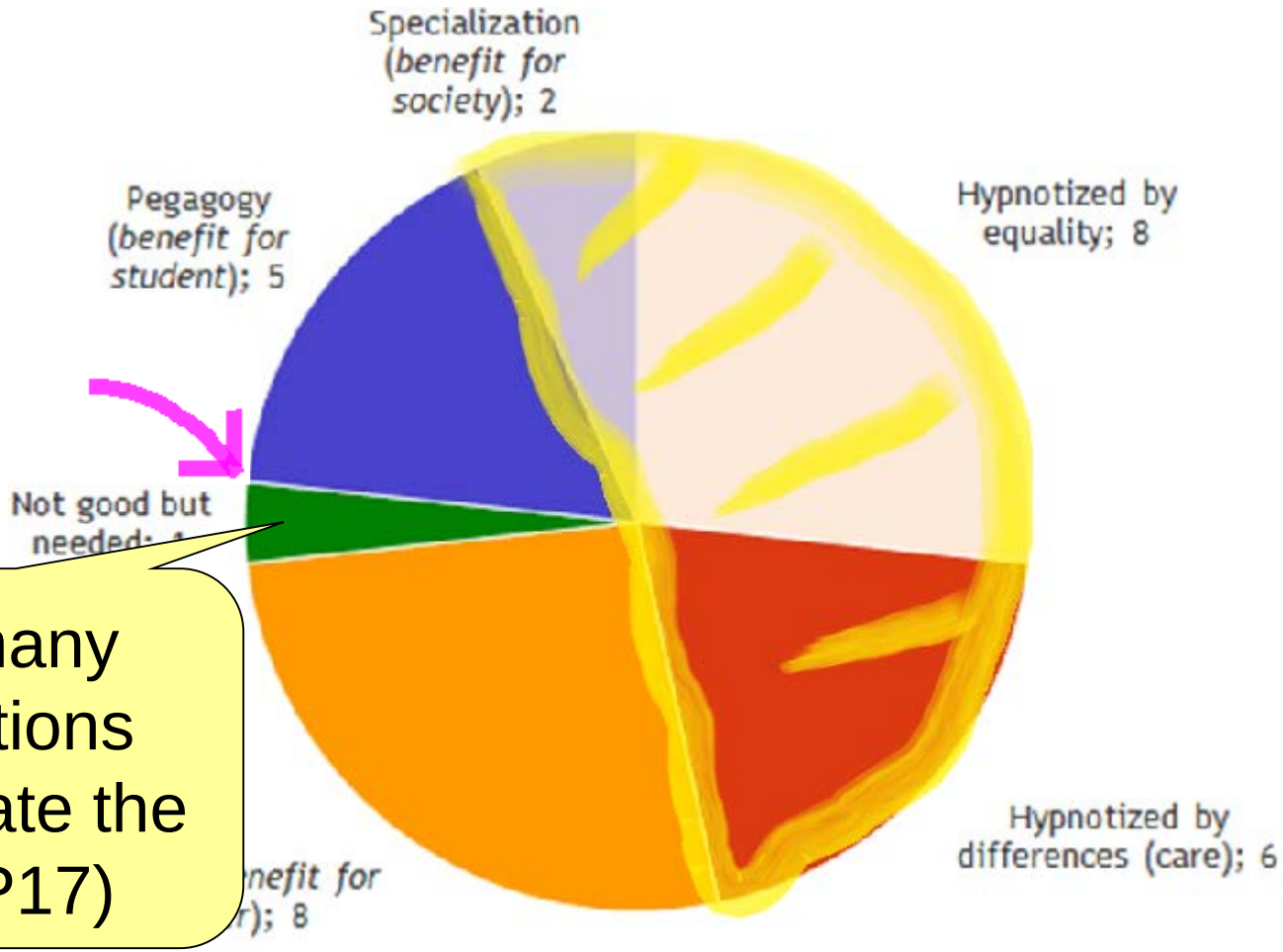


Nous devons pouvoir nous adapter à notre public estudiantin qui peut être très hétéroclite. (P13)

On ne peut qu'applaudir les tendances à prendre en compte les caractéristiques et qualités particulières de chaque apprenant. (P5)

Discussion - Reasons for PL



Too many exceptions depreciate the law (P17)

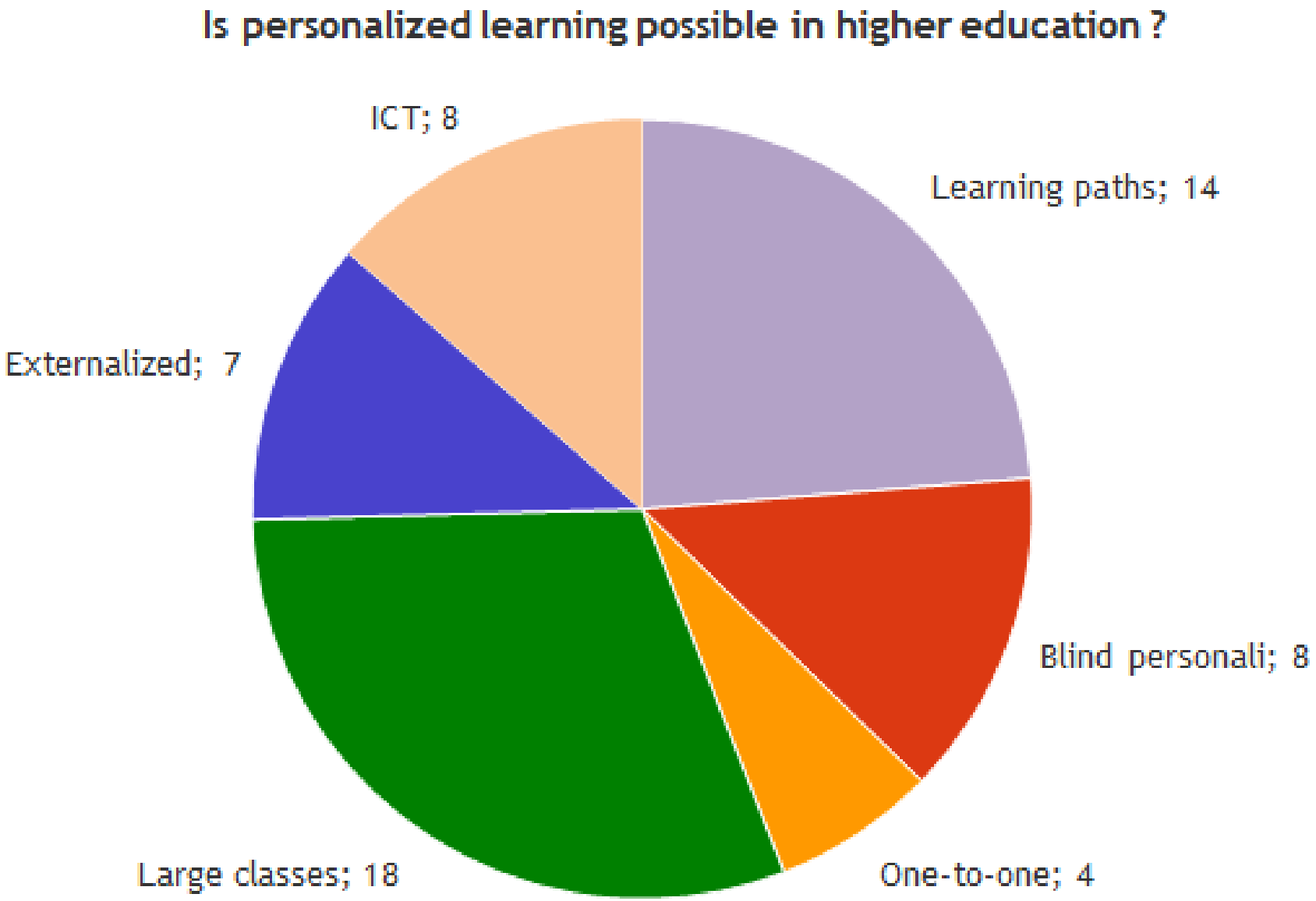
Tension PL/institution

« Impersonality hurts today's sensibility to singularities. However, the essence of an institution – and school is one – is to be a system of rules applying to everyone ». (Gauchet, 2014)

Effective pedagogy (1 resp) ?

Nevertheless, there is a substantial body of research which points to the instructional value of using multiple representations and specific devices such as graphic organisers and 'manipulatives' (things that can be handled). For example, Marzano (1998) found mean effect sizes of 1.24 for the graphic representation of knowledge (based on 43 studies) and 0.89 for the use of manipulatives (based on 236 studies). If such impressive learning gains are obtainable from the general (ie not personally tailored) use of such methods, it is unlikely that basing individualised instruction on modality-specific learning styles will add further value.

Result 2

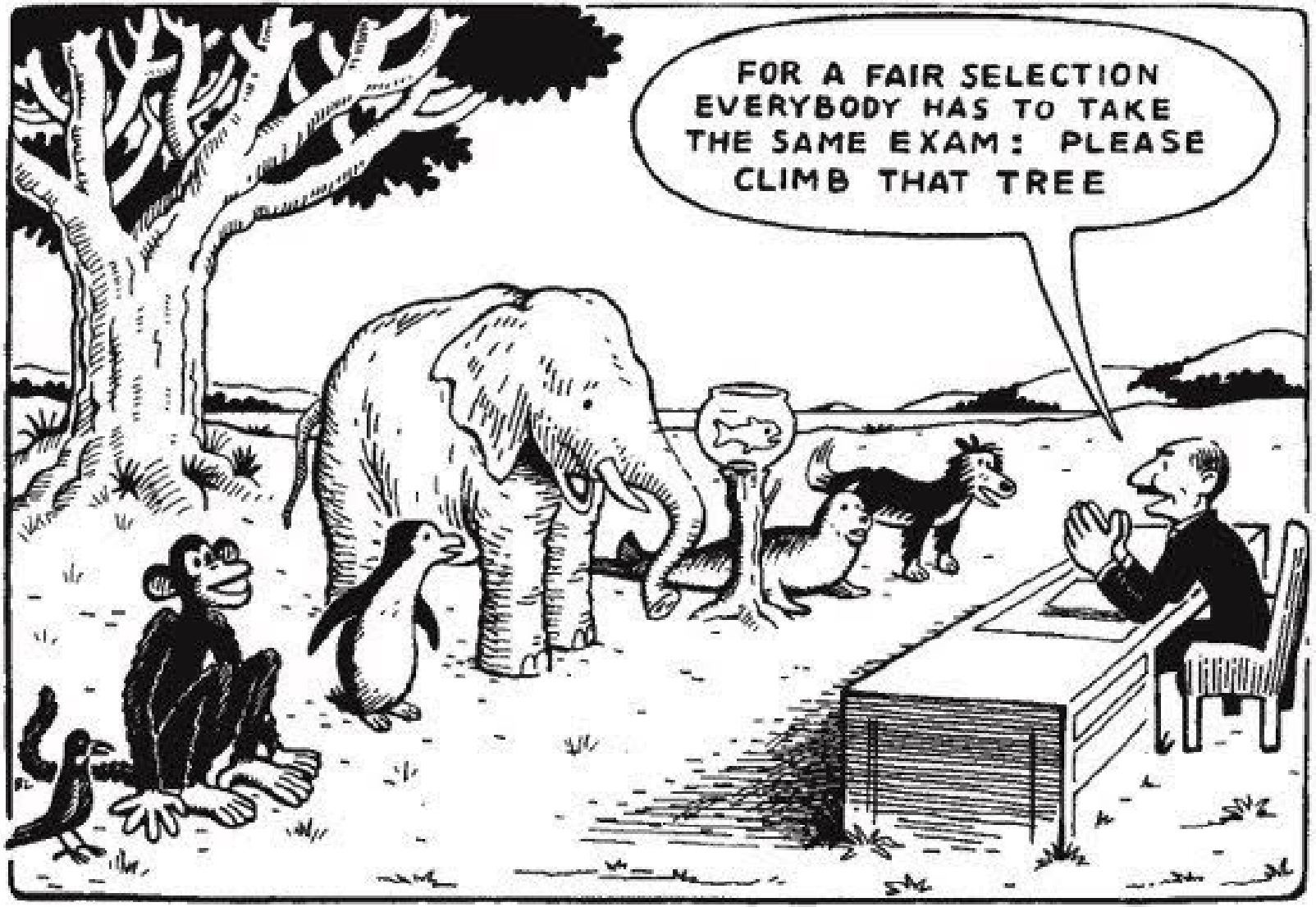

Is personalized learning possible in higher education ?
ICT; 8
Learning paths; 14
Externalized; 7
Blind personali; 8
Large classes; 18
One-to-one; 4

Ce qui est petit est joli…

ICT

Styles (2004, p. 146) also casts doubts: *"The benefits of individualized teaching are often greatly exaggerated, although many teachers will admit that it is extremely difficult to ensure that learners are benefiting from specially tailored approaches when there is a large class to manage. In a synthesis of 630 studies, Hattie (1992) found an average effect size of only 0.14 for individualized teaching in schools. This trivial result strongly suggests that in general, it is not a good use of teacher time to try to set up, monitor and support individual learning programmes where there are large groups to deal with. It should be noted that the potential of ICT to support individualised instruction has not been fully evaluated".*

Assessment: unaffected



Result 3

How and to what extent do you consider that you support personalized learning ?

23 ways with loci of control (student/teacher - 14, institution 7, government - 2)

Law of gravity…

Top-students mentionned once

Weak students (deficit discourse)

Remediation

Literature

- OCDE report (2006)
- G. Voos (2014)

	Customization			Empowerment
	Learning pace	Instructional methods	Learning content	
Individualization	✓			
Differentiation		✓		
Personalization	✓	✓	✓	

US Department of Education, 2010

Definitions of personalization

- antithesis of impersonal"
- technically focused: automatically structured paths to meet the needs of the learner
- essence of personalization is meta-cognition that allows the learner to understand herself as a learner and to make of learning a personal matter.

What I find striking

- Strong and large conviction that it very difficult or impossible to personalize in large classes
- Heavy emphasis upon remediation (rapport au temps, anticipation, prévention). Discours du déficit. Weak students
- Comment valider des parcours différentiés (minimum pour tous + variations)
- Peu d'insistance sur le diagnostic, forces faiblesses, paramètres (pas d'approche systématique)
- Qqch de systématique : plus c'est petit, plus cela ira mieux (petits groupes entre permanences et grands groupes). Plus de moyens, plus d'encadrement
- Emergence d'une personnalisation conçue comme une auto-évaluation continue
- Tendance à passer la patate chaude
- Peu de trace de l'outil informatique
- Peu de références théoriques mais certains discours nuancés
- Centration sur l'organisationnel de la personali lié au décret. A côté de cela, affaire d'équipe

- 30/30 la jugent souhaitable
- X posent des conditions

- Raisons valorisation de la différence (société et étudiant ?) IIIIII
- Raisons réduction inégalité (compensation-société) IIIIIIII
- Raisons forcées / devoir du prof / bombe H IIIIIIII
- Raisons proprement pédagogiques (prof) IIIII
- Raisons personnalisation = spécialisation II
- Malheureusement nécessaire mais pas souhaitable I

Question 2

Une personnalisation plus grande de l'apprentissage dans l'enseignement supérieur est-elle possible ? Pourquoi ?

LOCUS OF CONTROL

- établissement (parcours, maladie) Ic i
- enseignant Ib i
- Aide réussite et tutorat Ia Ia
- Enseignement à distance i Ib
- Peu possible en grand groupe

Question 3

How and to what extent do you consider that you support personalized learning ?