

# The Keller Plan

## General

The Keller Plan (also called *The Personalized System of Instruction*) is an instructional method introduced by [Fred Keller](#), J. Gilmour Sherman, and other researchers in the 1960s.<sup>1)</sup> This individualized learning method was oriented on improvement of high school learning.

## What is the Keller plan?

Keller's idea was to make higher education teaching more adjusted to individual needs. His method was first introduced in 1962 in order to help establishing a Department of Psychology at the University of Brasilia and design a course for the students. After additional modifications, the key aspects of his method can be described as follows:<sup>2)</sup>

- **Go-at-your-own-pace.** A student can move through the course content at his own pace.
- Strict definitions of **learning objectives**.
- **Unit-perfection requirement.** In order to advance to the next unit, a student needs to demonstrate mastery of the preceding unit.
- Emphasis on **written materials**. The emphasis is on learning from written materials. Lectures and demonstrations *will be provided only when you have demonstrated your readiness to appreciate them; no examination will be based upon them: and you need not attend them if you do not wish.*<sup>3)</sup>
- The use of **proctors**. Proctors enhance the social aspect of educational process, enable repeated testing with immediate scoring and tutoring.

Still, as this a behaviorist learning model and Keller is a reinforcement theorist himself, he also notes that the teacher himself decides on the content that is being taught and reinforcement means he employs. Modularization separating the content into a number of smaller units can also be considered to be a form of shaping, or forming desired behavior bit by bit.

## What is the practical meaning of the Keller plan?

The practical meaning of Keller's model consists of implementing above measures in practice. An example of this is a [hand-out describing Keller's teaching methods](#) applied to the first-semester course in General Psychology in 1967.

## Criticisms

Criticisms of Keller's method include<sup>4)</sup>:

- limited instructional methods,
- high dropout rates, and

- decreased human interaction.

1)

[Fox, Edward A. Keller Plan.](#)

2) 3)

[Keller, Fred S. 'Good-bye, teacher...' Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 1, no. 1: 79-89. 1968.](#)

4)

[Individualized Instruction - Pace, Method, Content, Examples of Individualized Instruction, Final Issues.](#)

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Last update: **2023/06/19 15:49**

