ESCP transforms itself with adaptive learning

As part of the school's transformation plan, ESCP Business School's Phygital Factory started collaborating with EdTech start-up Domoscio to implement an adaptive learning approach.

Newly-appointed Associate Dean of Learning Innovation, professor José Ramón Cobo, is moving forward in rethinking student pathways and experiences with the school's Chief Digital Officer, Anthony Hié.

A "phygital" transformation plan in line with students' needs

In 2019, ESCP launched its phygital transformation plan, called "So'SCHOOL" and made up of some forty projects. All of them aim to transform the learning experience by offering new, bold and innovative digital services. A number of these projects are currently driven by ESCP's digital & learning innovation team in a structure dedicated to experimentation: the Phygital Factory. It is within this framework that Domoscio and ESCP have launched a collaboration on adaptive learning.

"As every teacher knows, no student is alike. Each of them has his/her own characteristics, peculiarities, abilities and weaknesses, and broad-based learning approaches could be ineffective to embrace this complexity over the long term. Adaptive learning is an educational system based on technology and data analysis, allowing teachers to track each students' performance and adjust methods/programs to their needs," comments Prof. José Ramón Cobo.

An enhanced and individualized student experience, even for distance learning

According to Anthony Hié, *"adaptive learning consists in using the benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) & big data to create the best possible online learning experience for students!"*

With blended (physical and digital) and modular teaching activities, the challenge is to provide students with a tailor-made experience throughout their time at the school. Thanks to Domoscio, the students' learning data is

processed using AI to determine their profile and pedagogical needs (known as learning analytics), and to build the most relevant learning path for them.

Two elements are essential for this:

1.   The implementation of a **continuous assessment strategy**: among the types of data used by adaptive learning, assessment data is essential to measure the students' progress towards their learning objectives and estimate the skills gap. This data comes from positioning tests, online quizzes, grades, project-based learning assessments...

2.   The implementation of **a recommendation engine**: once the students' level has been positioned in relation to their learning objectives, adaptive learning can provide recommendations of pedagogical activities suited to their needs, and build a logical, optimal and blended path.

In use, the interest of adaptive learning is also to implement a predictive approach: by grouping students in homogeneous groups, measuring and comparing their progress and matching specific content with defined profiles.

Implications of adaptive learning for business and management education

Nowadays, students have a diverse educational and knowledge background when attending a class. It comes naturally to think that progression in higher education institutions should not only consider scholars' age and time spent in class, but should be more focused on proficiency. In addition to giving students the right amount of time to maximize their efficiency and engagement, there are other significant implications in putting adaptive learning into practice. Think about how useful it would be for teachers to get real-time analytics about their class' performance, emerging struggles and successful exercises. Thanks to automated data analysis, they could promptly intervene on critical issues and adjust their methods to solve them.

Here are some of ESCP's opportunities with adaptive learning:

        (1) Identify competency gaps: across every discipline, identifying and remediating competency gaps is crucial. However, in many cases, students are not aware of the gaps in their understanding. Adaptive learning uses a question-based approach (or situational questions, depending on the competence to evaluate) to understand what the students know and where the gaps are.

(2) Custom-design training by providing focused attention to every individual student. It also offers personalized feedback to the students, which enables them to understand the concepts better.

(3) Adjust to different learning styles: unlike the one-size-fits-all courses that could intimidate some students, adaptive learning is suitable for all, irrespective of whether they possess a beginner, intermediate, or advanced knowledge of the concepts.

(4) Update when information changes: when designing learning content, one of the crucial challenges is to provide the most up-to-date material. When a teacher introduces changes to the course, the system can differentiate between the material a student has already covered and new areas to master.

A pilot to be launched in the first semester of 2021 in executive education

Initiated in June 2020, the collaboration between ESCP and Domoscio first led to an audit of the existing tools, data and content in the ESCP course catalogue. ESCP Business School then decided to implement a pilot project starting in the spring of 2021 in executive education programmes. As part of the pilot, the Domoscio Hub portal will be integrated into the learning system and will allow to index a set of learning materials hosted on the different platforms used: Blackboard, FUN or Coursera, for example.

The system implemented for this pilot will allow ESCP and Domoscio to validate the learning experience, involve teachers in these new methods and confirm adaptive learning's impact. See you in the summer of 2021 for the first results.

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About ESCP Business School

ESCP Business School was founded in 1819. The School has chosen to teach responsible leadership, open to the world and based on European multiculturalism. Six campuses in Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Turin and Warsaw are the stepping stones that allow students to experience this European approach to management.

Several generations of entrepreneurs and managers were thus trained in the firm belief that the business world may feed society in a positive way.

This conviction and ESCP's values - excellence, singularity, creativity and plurality - daily guide our mission and build its pedagogical vision.

Every year, ESCP welcomes 7100 students and 5000 managers from 120 different nationalities. Its strength lies in its many business training programmes, both general and specialised (Bachelor, Master, MBA, Executive MBA, PhD and Executive Education), all of which include a multi-campus experience.

It all starts here.

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