

THE ROLE OF A TEACHER IN STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

Modern society demands the younger generation to be able to make independent decisions and judgments, work in teams, use innovations and be proactive. That means that new standards and requirements which are being presented nowadays should be connected with the basic skills and knowledge that were relevant in the past. Aiming at this, higher education institutions should help students learn how to make decisions, cooperate, develop creative thinking and communication skills that will be necessary for their future life and career. The European community has come to a conclusion that it is necessary to build a new system of education that will train a specialist who thinks creatively, is oriented towards innovations and self-development and possesses high moral values. This need for a new education system is proved by the fact that the educational process is implemented on the basis of competence approach which, in its turn, contributes to the implementation of the Bologna Process and one of its fundamental principles – student-centered learning.

Student-centered learning, which is the basis of the Bologna reforms in higher education, means a shift in the educational process from teaching (when the basic goal was to transfer knowledge) to learning and the active role of a student in the whole process.

The aim of this work is to analyze the approaches to student-centered learning and find out the ways to overcome the difficulties both the students and the teachers face in this process.

There appears a contradiction between need for implementing the student-centered principles in the process of education at the universities and the insufficient theoretical and practical research on this problem, both in Europe and in Ukraine.

The main feature and difference of this type of learning is that students act as direct participants and partners in the process of their education and training. The new standards specifically emphasize how educational institutions should implement student-centered approach in accordance with different criteria: the assessment of students' knowledge (constant monitoring in order to improve the learning process, with clear evaluation criteria and methods; assessment conducted by several examiners; students' self-assessment as an important part of the whole evaluation process; the Code of Student Honour; participation of students in the development of educational programs), social dimension (the policy of university support of students of different age and gender, considering their

needs and interests), learning outcomes (competence approach, the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, public access to the students' acceptance procedures).

Malcolm Knowles, the creator of the concept of "self-directed learning", has proved that every individual, in their nature, can be self-directed, even if at first they need help. The teacher here becomes a "facilitator of the learning process" meaning it is a person who helps achieve goals, develops the learner ability to cope with any problems, finds a way out of a difficult situations and even teaches to overcome stress [1].

A facilitator in terms of education is a teacher who works in the area of personally oriented pedagogy and applies the following principles while working with children: to be open to express one's own thoughts and feelings, share experience; to encourage and to trust as a way of expressing confidence and strong believe into students' abilities to do any tasks; "empathic understanding" (understanding of student's behavior, their reactions, actions and skills) [2].

Pedagogical facilitation is a number of requirements both for the learning process and for the personality of a teacher, especially their ability to build good and professional relationships with students. The main goal of the pedagogical facilitation in higher education is to transform the traditional idea that a student should perform only an executive function. This will allow us not only to change the way of a specialist training but also educate a proactive person, ready to cope with the problems at a work place, capable of independent analysis and making non-standard decisions.

While being a facilitator, a teacher gets an opportunity to use non-dogmatic methods and techniques which will contribute to the creative acquisition of the necessary information, form the ability to state reason and seek for new angles of problems, analyze the given material. It also allows a teacher not to be "above" but work together with students which gives an opportunity to know exactly what the learners need and what is the best way to present particular information, where to search for the material and why to adapt specific tasks and topics. It all becomes quite clear when a teacher is fully involved into educational process and always analyses their activities in order to improve the course and increase productivity. The teacher remains an explorer who doesn't give direct answers to all the questions listed in

the curriculum but gives a chance for students to think, analyze and be creative. All the above mentioned sets out conditions for increasing interest and cognitive activity of students, optimizes fostering their professional self-awareness and self-development.

To master the technology of facilitation a teacher has to possess the following qualities: empathy, reflection, leadership and communicative skills. But it wouldn't be enough lest a learner has a desire to master the subject and to improve professional qualities. The key techniques and methods of facilitation are: respect and acceptance of the fact that a learner is a person capable of self-change and self-development; displaying of pedagogical tact, based on trust without humiliation, easy-going manner without familiarity, cooperation without suppression of an individual, humor without mockery; developing situations of success, using sufficient learner praise and addressing them by name.

Taking into account the above mentioned, we can state that having communicative competence is one of the key characteristics of a teacher who wants to become a facilitator, since the ability to hold a dialogue with students is one of the factors which affects teachers, students and the educational process in general.

Communicative competence is the ability to establish and maintain the necessary contacts with other people, a certain set of knowledge and skills that ensure effective communication [3]. It also involves the ability to change the channels of communication, to understand and to be understood by a communication partner. Communicative competence is achieved through interaction; that is a result of the experience of communication between people. This experience is acquired not only in the process of direct interaction, but also indirectly from literature, when a person visits theatre or cinema and receives information about the nature of communicative situations, the features of interpersonal interaction and the means for making decisions. In the process of improving communication, people borrow from the cultural environment the means of analyzing communicative situations in verbal and visual forms. Taking into account the fact that communicative competence is a systemic formation, we have defined its main components and specified the content of each of them.

The components are analyzed according to the following criteria: practical and theoretical training of a teacher; their professionalism and the ability to organize and accelerate learning process of students of higher education institutions. The first one, motivation component, is associated with personal needs of university lecturers (desire to develop in professional and communicative sphere, self-realization). The second one is orientation of motives (specific behavior in any communicative situation, ability to overcome difficulties in pedagogical communication sphere, etc.). All these factors ensure the effectiveness of teaching and communication activities. Having such kind of motivation, the teacher's actions are directed to success and positive results of interaction with students [4, c. 15].

Self-confidence is associated with self-esteem and is formed in the process of one's own activities and evaluation of others (students, colleagues). Being satisfied with their profession encourages teachers to improve their professional skills and demonstrate commitment to success: they are ready to overcome any barrier and obstacle in order to increase the effectiveness of their actions [5, c. 42].

To achieve communicative competence, it is necessary to follow a certain plan: education, self-education and self-development. The development of competence should be carried out in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the perceptive, interpersonal and interactive aspects of communication. To achieve the communicative competence it is necessary, firstly, to have two or more participants in a communicative act; secondly, to provide social and psychological environment for the participant and identify the problems that can be faced in a communicative act; thirdly, to build a leadership strategy, to encounter possible of understanding and to find ways to overcome them. Some scholars also separately define international professional competence as a necessary quality for modern specialists working in a global environment[6]. Thus, it is formed on the basis of professional activity and represents a set of key qualifications which consist of knowledge of foreign languages, international professional knowledge, intercultural-logical knowledge, intercultural creativity. Moreover, international professional activities are described as professional tasks aimed at developing professional competence.

Professional activities of a teacher are always associated with communication, with setting and achieving goals.

All the above-mentioned proves that in modern conditions the role of a teacher is changing, students are becoming the centre of the classroom work. Various studies show that when a teacher becomes a facilitator improves the quality of education and helps educate well-qualified specialists.

Literature

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