PROACTIVE LEARNING- SHIFTING TOWARDS A MORE INNOVATIVE HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Modern higher education is no longer limited to the preparation of narrow specialists for a specific field of activity, but to the development of the personality of each student, increasing his professional competence and effectiveness and above all creating proactive and motivated citizens who participate in public life. The emphasis is shifting from learning large amounts of information to learning ways of continuously acquiring new knowledge and learning skills; forming habits of independent (creative) rather than reproductive thinking.. The new educational paradigm is a strategy of education for the future, its essence being the transition from mastering the volume of information to developing critical thinking, learning to solve problems and actively working with information in an increasingly complex world*

This paper looks at the revised approaches to education, which is seen as a process of knowledge creation resulting from the application of research methods, rather than as a process of mere knowledge and skills transfer. The main characteristic of knowledge is its timeliness and relevance - the learner learns it not because the curriculum requires it and not because it is necessary to know it, but because this knowledge allows to solve real problems in real conditions of activity. In this way, learning becomes practically oriented and evolves into lifelong learning.

Keywords: *innovative higher education, proactive learning, critical thinking*

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern socio-economic environment is characterized by accelerated rates of social development, massive economic change, the growth of new knowledge, and changing information and production technologies. In today's world successfully finding and keeping the job you want in a dramatically changed job market is becoming an ever-increasing challenge. Diplomas are no longer seen as a decisive indicator of professional qualifications, and cognitive skills are giving way to the so-called 21st century applied skills, building on relevant, highly specific, professional competences. In the age of the Internet and electronic means of storing information, formal human knowledge ceases to be significant. The new information society forms a new value system in which the availability of knowledge, skills and habits is a necessary but insufficient result of education. The individual is required to have the skills of orientation in information flows, mastering new technologies, self-learning, searching for and using the missing knowledge, possessing such qualities as universality of thinking, mobility, activity, initiative, flexibility, creativity. These characteristics determine the readiness and, above all, the ability of a person to receive lifelong education, to acquire new technologies, new practices of independent and group work, to work in conditions of increased information load and time deficit.

Accordingly, today's higher education focuses on maintaining and refining a range of productive skills, including the ability to communicate effectively, coordinate, adapt, work under pressure and solve problems. According to the Magna Charta Universitatum signed in Bologna in 1988, "the mission of universities to disseminate knowledge to younger generations implies that, in the modern world, they must serve society as a whole; that the cultural, social and economic future of society requires a special and significant investment in continuing education". The change of the educational paradigm from learning for life to lifelong learning shifts the main emphasis from the assimilation of a significant amount of information to the mastery of ways to continuously acquire new knowledge and skills for learning, the development of creative and critical thinking. The traditional principle of forming knowledge, skills and habits is complemented by the principle of forming competence. The personal-developmental orientation of educational processes as a leading trend of modern innovative changes in the educational sphere determines the transition from authoritarian-communicative to humanitarian-communicative interaction of the subjects of educational activity. Modern higher education is not limited to the preparation of narrow specialists for a specific field of activity, but to the development of the personality of each student, increasing his professional competence and effectiveness and above all creating proactive and motivated citizens who participate in public life. When defining the objectives and selecting the content of education, it is necessary to search for an optimal combination of the already established traditional approaches and the introduction of new information components aimed at forming the experience of personal activity on an information basis, conditioning the requirements for the individual in the information society.

When assessing the competitive ability of a specialist, it is not so much the volume and quality of the available knowledge that is crucial, but the level of competences that should ensure his preparation for life in modern society. Therefore, the assessment of both the level of preparation of the specialist for future professional activity and the process of obtaining higher education itself can be carried out in competence categories

One of the promising approaches to address the challenges facing the modern education system is the competency-based approach to education quality management. The implementation of the ideas of the competence approach in education at the beginning of the XXI century is conditioned by the following factors: the pan-European and world trend of integration and globalization of the world economy; the need for harmonization of the architecture of the European education system; the ongoing in recent years change of the educational paradigm; the richness of the conceptual content of the term competence approach; the educational policy resulting from the recommendations of the Council of Europe.

2. REVISED APPROACHES TO EDUCATION

The phenomenon of learning becomes a dynamically changing process with the revision of its methodological foundations, its main focus being the necessity to prepare not carriers or holders of information, but active users. In order to solve this task, an educational system is needed that allows, but also obliges the person to continuously learn in an increasingly complex world. The educational paradigm is shifting from learning for life to lifelong learning (LLL) in the transition to a new type of society. The emphasis is shifting from learning large amounts of information to learning ways of continuously acquiring new knowledge and learning skills; learning habits of working with information, forming habits of independent (creative) rather than reproductive thinking; the formation of knowledge, skills and habits is complemented by the formation of competences.

The new educational paradigm is a strategy of education for the future, its essence is in shifting the main focus from mastering the volume of information to independent (critical) thinking, learning to solve problems, developing habits of working with information in an innovative way.

The reproductive system of training, in which , on the one hand, the teacher reproduces and "re-transmits" to the learner a sum total of knowledge, then controls its absorption and, on the other, the learner "absorbs" knowledge, then reproduces it in a situation of control, does not allow the formation of the learner's corresponding personal characteristics. That is why in the world educational practice the orientations are changing, the concepts of modernization of the educational system appear. The essence of these changes boils down to the following: approaches to education are being revised, which is seen as a process of knowledge creation resulting from the application of research methods, rather than as a process of knowledge and skills transfer. The main characteristic of knowledge is its timeliness and relevance - the learner learns it not because the curriculum requires it and not because it is necessary to know it, but because this knowledge allows to solve real problems in real conditions of activity. In this way, learning becomes practically oriented and evolves into lifelong learning.

Approaches to the role of the teacher and the learner in the learning process are also being reviewed. The main role of the teacher is not to continuously guide and regulate the learning activity, but to create optimal conditions that support the cognitive, communicative and personal activity of the learners. Learners become initiative subjects of the educational process as they create a system of knowledge together with the teacher, analyze and process information, engage in project activity and experimentation, gain their own experience and fill it with personal meaning.

Education aims not only to provide knowledge, but also to modify the human attitude towards the environment, ensuring its adaptability in constantly changing conditions. And this largely depends not on the acquired knowledge, but on the ability to use it in the practical activity of the learners. The labour market dictates the need to modernise the higher education system by strengthening its vocational component. A special role here is played by the foreign language, the knowledge of which at the modern stage is a mandatory attribute of the successful specialist. The new times, the new conditions of professional activity require a revision of both the general methodology and the specific methods and means of foreign language training. Integration processes in different spheres of politics, economy, culture, ideology, pose the problem of intercultural communication and mutual understanding of participants belonging to different cultures. In connection with the fact that each non-linguistic higher school has its own professional orientation and is related to a specific industry, it is imperative to carry out the selection of the content and methods of training of foreign-language professional communication of students, including in the situational range of subject areas corresponding language and speech material reflecting the specifics of their future professional activity

An important structural component of the relevant professional competence is communicative competence, which includes the development of skills in 4 types of speech activity: speaking, listening, reading, writing. The formation of communicative competence also implies other competences: linguistic (learning the norms of language and being able to use them in a given situation), language (knowledge of language, mastery of the meta-linguistics of linguistics) and cultural (knowledge of the language and culture of the people). The concept of communicative competence was introduced by D. Hymes [1] in 1960, who launched the idea that the purpose of language learning is to be able to use language to carry out communication and that communicative competence is distinguished by linguistic, psychophysical and social characteristics.

Hymes was reacting to Chomsky's famous distinction between the **competence** of "an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly," on one hand, and "errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual **performance,**" on the other[2] (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3). Hymes [3] (1972) recognised this distinction as a contemporary interpretation of a tradition leading back to Saussure and even Humboldt, and questioned the prioritisation of linguistic competence, that is, "tacit knowledge of language structure" (p. 271) over performance, or "imperfect manifestation of underlying system" (p. 272).

The competency paradigm that has emerged in the context of the modernization of higher education and in the context of the Bologna Process is oriented towards competencies and competence as the leading criterion for preparing future specialists for the unstable conditions of work and social life. The main goal becomes the preparation of not just knowledgeable, but able to dispose of this knowledge - the preparation of professionals with critical thinking, able to choose the most optimal among the many solutions, reasonably refuting the wrong ones; professionals ready for self-education, self-determination, self-development. Changing the model of supportive education oriented towards "education for life" to the innovation paradigm oriented towards "lifelong education" means that the professional must have a consciousness of himself/herself as an individual, a free, intellectually autonomous person and be capable of self-identification and self-realization in a situation of indeterminacy. The change of the educational objectives requires changes in the approaches and technologies for the organization of the learning process. A transition is needed from a centralized model of knowledge transmission through the teacher to a model centered on the student, who, with the support of the teacher, defines his/her learning goals and achieves them. The lecturer in such a model should emphasize collaborative discussions and group project activities, and apply new educational technologies oriented towards a two-way relationship with deeper interaction between the lecturer and students.

Foreign language education of students aims to develop in them not only communicative competence but also intellectual skills for working with information in a foreign language. Future specialists will have to know the scientific achievements in the country and abroad, to select material for their work, to study accompanying documentation to instruments and technologies. Therefore, the main task of foreign language education in higher education institutions is to teach students to use foreign language literature in their field of study for professional purposes, to develop the ability to express themselves in a foreign language on issues related to future profession. One of the methods of foreign language teaching is the development of students' skills of analytical-synthetic processing of information in a foreign language. These are creative processes involving comprehension, analysis and evaluation of the content of an original text to extract the necessary information. Analysis allows to separate the most valuable information from the secondary information and data, without which it is impossible to extract the main content of the original. At the same time, a process of synthesis of the text takes place, i.e. the integration into a logical whole of the main information obtained as a result of the analytical operations. This requires learners to learn to extract the main content, concisely formulate it and present it in a logical sequence, creating a secondary text. In order to accomplish this task in the process of language learning, students need to develop intellectual skills of critical thinking. As a result of the requirements for specialists in modern conditions (the presence of professional competence, the ability to navigate the information flow, the ability to make quick independent decisions, the ability to self-realization and self-learning) the importance of developing critical thinking skills is growing.

3. CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

The study of critical thinking is relevant for the development of psychology, pedagogy, linguistics and sociology for the following reasons: thinking is inextricably linked to speech, which is the basic mechanism of thinking, speech in turn is a form of communication of people through language; critical thinking implies the development of certain habits, allowing to overcome stereotypes, to find correct solutions in one or another social or linguistic cultural situation; the study of critical thinking is necessary in connection with the fact that the English language in our time is a linguistic sociocultural dominant.

The ideas of critical thinking date back to Socrates' method of teaching through a series of questions stimulating dialogue, which teaches one to logically express one's thoughts and evaluate their credibility, developing habits of independent thinking. In the twentieth century, the necessity to develop thinking has been analyzed by psychologists, educators and sociologists (S. Brookfield, L. C. Vygotsky, G. Guilford, D. Dewey, A. H. Leontyev, D. Russell, etc.), characterizing it as a separate property of the personality, as a habit of thought activity, as a personal and socially significant phenomenon, a priority in the field of education. In 1941 in the USA the monograph of E. Glaser's "An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking" gives the main features of the new method: a willingness to consider and reconsider those questions on which one has already acquired an opinion by experience; knowledge of methods of constructing logical reasoning; building the habits of applying the new method.

The key habits necessary for critical thinking include: the ability to analyze and synthesize, interpret, draw conclusions, and evaluate. It is based on logic and value statements. Critical thinking is a complex integral quality of personality, a set of motivational, cognitive, activity, reflexive components, providing the processes of self-knowledge, self-education, self-realization [4]. Reflecting the socially conditioned level of student's development in educational and research activity, it is a professionally and personally significant value.

Critical thinking, capable of elevating new ideas and possibilities, is essential in problem solving [5]. The importance of knowledge of facts, laws, historical dates and events is not in doubt, but no less important is the ability to work meaningfully with information, to separate in it the main ideas, to see the relationship between them, to select the necessary and reject incorrect information, to analyze and evaluate it.

David Klooster [5] separates 5 main points in the characterization of critical thinking: 1) critical thinking is independent, everyone formulates his own ideas, evaluations and beliefs independently of others, critical thinking can exist only when it has individual character; 2) information is the starting point of critical thinking, knowledge creates reasoning, without which one cannot think critically, in order to generate complex thought one has to process facts, ideas, texts, theories, data, concepts; 3) critical thinking begins with posing the questions and clarifying the problems to be solved, the true cognitive process at each stage is characterized by the learner's striving to problem-solve and answer questions arising from his or her own interests and needs, the complexity of learning in critical thinking lies in part in helping the learner to consider an infinite variety of surrounding problems; 4) critical thinking strives for persuasive argumentation, the critical thinker finds his/her own solution to the problem and supports it with reasonable, reasoned arguments, he/she is also aware that other solutions to the problem are possible and tries to prove that the solution he/she has chosen is more logical and rational than others; 5) critical thinking is social - every thought is checked and accounted for when shared with others.

The concept of critical thinking is combined with the competence approach. The analysis of the goals and objectives set within the competency approach and the development of critical thinking in foreign language education show similarities. The technology for the development of students' critical thinking in the process of foreign language teaching is built on the basis of the systemic, cognitive-communicative, personality-oriented, activity-oriented approaches and the principles of communicativeness, text-centeredness, complementarity, controlled transition from activity in a learning situation to a life situation, reflections. The effectiveness of the development of students' critical thinking in the process of learning a foreign language is ensured by the following pedagogical conditions: formation of cognitive motives stimulating students' thinking activity; creation of a learning-research environment; integration of modern information technologies with active forms and methods of foreign language teaching (discussions, project activity, problem-based, heuristic research methods, etc.), contributing to the development of critical thinking and increasing cognitive interests.

In the process of professional language training, students should develop skills of systematic thinking, ability to generalize, analyze, perceive information; ability to construct oral and written speech in a logically correct, reasoned and clear manner; the ability to improve and develop one's intellectual and cultural level, the aspiration for continuous self-learning and self-development; the ability to find, collect and summarize factual material, to draw justified conclusions, etc. Competences are formed in the process of development of critical thinking, since competence is the ability to act successfully on the basis of practical experience, skills and knowledge in solving tasks common to many types of professional activity.

4. TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING

An important tool for organizing active learning is the pedagogical technology for developing critical thinking developed in the middle of the last century by the International Reading Association of the University of Northern Iowa and Hobart and William Smith Colleges. The authors of the technology are Ch. Temple, J. C. Temple, C. Steele, C. Meredith. TDCT includes goals, objectives, principles for construction, stages and conditions for creation, methods, approaches and ways of training in thinking, forms of organization of the activities of learners and ways of assessing the results. The main goal of the development of critical thinking in students is the expansion of thinking competencies for effective solution of social, scientific and practical tasks. TDCMT helps to create students' information competence, teaches them to work with information, to develop analytical abilities, to develop a critical attitude to information, helps to reveal cause-effect relationships, to separate the main from the non-essential, to express their thoughts clearly and argumentatively in oral and written form, to find solutions to problems.

Leading theoretical ideas defining the conceptual basis of TDCT are [5,6]: the philosophical-social concept of the open society (C. Popper, A. Bergson, J. Agassi); the traditions of the constructivist approach in psychology (L. S. Vygotsky, J. Piaget); the theory of cognitive flexibility (R. Spiro, R. Coulson, R. Anderson); metacognitive learning (M. Cole, D. Brunner, D. Halpern, D. Wood, B. Russell,); sociocultural theory (L. S. Vygotsky). In the practical applications of TDCT, pedagogical innovations are also used, such as the technology of full knowledge acquisition (J. Carroll, B. Bloom); the technology of multilevel learning (E. Cohen, J. Carroll) and the technology of modular learning.

TDCT has its own principles of construction, some of which are didactic, others are specific to it [7]:

1) information saturation of teaching and practical material for the use of arguments, evidence and refutations based on specific facts, data sources;

2) social conditioning of the subject of reflection - critical thinking is social, so the selection of problems, tasks, topics for discussion should be carried out through this its special property;

3) communicativeness in the process of comprehension of the problem and its discussion - critical thinking is individual and independent, but it manifests itself in group work when conducting disputes, discussions, discussing reports, the decisive importance in the comprehension of information is played by the communicative habits of the participants;

4) problematicity of the content of the material - a general didactic principle, one of the main ones in the construction of the TRCM, since problem-based and critical thinking are associated with common properties, methods and approaches of training;

5) motivation and necessity of knowledge - the main starting point of thinking activity and criticality of mind is reflection, which is possible only when the student has high motivation to learn, understand, reflect, establish the truth or obtain the result, low motivation of learners is a barrier to the development of critical thinking;

6) scientificity, reliability and accessibility of information - the basis of traditional methods of teaching is the translation of knowledge from the teacher to students, which negatively affects the research culture; the skills of not taking on trust, assessing the situation, seeking confirmation and formulating arguments help to develop learning constructed using TDCT approaches and strategies;

7) continuity of learning in thinking - universality of TDCT for all ages, high effectiveness of its use in different subject areas if the sequence of learning in critical thinking from school to university is followed.

The main theoretical tenets of TDCT boil down to: critical thinking with a necessary characteristic of a modern specialist; critical thinking can be purposefully formed in the educational process, spontaneously it can be created, but in significantly later terms after higher school; critical thinking allows not only to notice contradictions, shortcomings, gaps in the information, but also to weighted to analyze a variety of sources, to make sense of one's own position, to master a variety of strategies for working with information and solving problem situations.

TDCT has problem-based learning as its foundation; its study presupposes an understanding of the basic characteristics of critical thinking. Problem-based learning refers to the organization of the learning process in such a way that it involves the creation of problem situations in the minds of the learners under the guidance of the teacher and the organization of active independent activity of the learners, resulting in the creative acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits and the development of thinking abilities.

According to the content of solved problems there are 3 types of problem-based learning: scientific problem-solving (scientific creativity) - theoretical research, i.e. the search and discovery by the learner of a new rule, law, proof; the basis of this type is the setting and solving of theoretical learning problems; practical problem-solving (practical creativity) - the search for a practical solution, i.e. a way of applying known knowledge in a new situation, construction, invention; the basis of this type is the setting and solving of practical learning problems; creation of artistic solutions (artistic creativity) - artistic representation of reality on the basis of creative imagination; this type of training stimulates the manifestation of activity, initiative, independence and creativity in the learner, develops intuition and discursive (penetration into the essence), convergence (open) and divergence (creation) thinking, teaches the art of solving various scientific and practical problems, attempt to creatively solve theoretical and practical problems.

A key component and simultaneous drawback of problem-based learning is the dominant role of the teacher. Critical thinking development technology corrects this deficiency, starting on the path of further strengthening the active role of learners in problem-based learning. Training in TDCT is productive only if the trainer, in the process of becoming aware of his activity, is able to abandon formally established traditional ways of working.

The transition to learner-centred learning poses a significant difficulty for the teacher, transforming him or her from a mechanical transmitter of information into an acting partner in the process of knowledge acquisition. Therefore, it provides the teacher with room for professional growth and realization of their personal qualities.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can summarize that the leading trends in education in the 21st century are: informatization (conditioned by the development of the information society using global communications and by the creation of a fundamentally new information-educational learning environment); humanization (caused by the division in the 19th century of the unified culture into natural science and humanities and the need for their convergence in the new stage of development of society); technologization of the learning process (conditioned by the development of the technological approach to learning in connection with the massiveness of education, especially higher vocational education, and the introduction of pedagogical technologies); the integration of pedagogical and information technologies of education (caused by the new possibilities of information translation and computer support of the procedural part of pedagogical technology). The main focus remains on the increased attention to the independent work of students (resulting from the penetration of IT in all spheres of society) and the development of critical thinking as a complex integral quality of the personality, a set of motivational, cognitive, activity and reflexive components, ensuring the processes of its self-knowledge, self-education, self-realization. The technology for the development of students' critical thinking in the process of foreign language education is built on the basis of the systemic, cognitive-communicative, personality-oriented, activity-based approaches reflecting the need for independent improvement of qualification and acquisition of new skills throughout life.

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