

Students' self-educational activity in the process of European Credit Transfer System

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Abstract

Relevance of the problem under study is caused by need of the organization of the process of studying in the conditions of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and orientation of students to self-educational activity. The purpose of the article is in proving efficiency of programs of self-educational activity within a new system of studying. The leading approaches to research of this problem are person-oriented and information approaches, the theory of educational activity, the concept of values, motives, orientations of professional activity, the theory of self-educational activity. The main results of research are that orientation of students to self-educational activity within ECTS promotes activation of students' individual work in the development of an educational program; it develops skills of self-educational activity. The main characteristics of self-education are presented in the article, its levels are allocated, classification of motives of students' self-education is given. The special attention is paid to the needs of the development of special courses and carrying out students' individual work and students' individual work under the teacher's supervision. Materials of the article can be useful to the experts working in higher educational institutions, to students and all who are connected with the field of education.

Keywords: European Credit Transfer System, students' self-education, motivation, levels, courses, individual work.

INTRODUCTION

Reforming of national education systems by means of introduction of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) promotes entry of the countries into a united world space which, according to V.I. Baydenko [1], is subordinated to the following tasks: to increase graduates' ability to employment; to increase citizens' mobility; to improve higher education competitiveness potential.

According to the researches of F.L. Ratner, V.G. Ivanov, G.R. Iksanova [2], ECTS differs from the national education system. It is directed to increase the level of self-education and creative knowledge mastering on the basis of individualization, selectivity of an educational trajectory. They state that «educational activity demands from students abilities to constantly enrich their knowledge, to find and perceive new information, it becomes productive to use various sources of data, thus educational activity provides formation of skills of independent brainwork» [2]. At the same time the ratio of classroom and out-of-class activity is directed towards out-of-class one, which has a paramount value in the process of studying within ECTS students' individual work and is given twice more time for it.

As a result of studying works of A.K. Gromtseva [3], N.D. Ivanova [4], S.M. Kolova [5] we can conclude that, despite a variety of the directions in the researches devoted to self-education problems there is still no conventional definition of this concept in literature. We consider self-education as independent, systematic, cognitive activity directed to achieve defined personally and socially significant educational purposes, which are in their turn directed to satisfy common cultural and professional interests.

Thus, the specific features of ECTS and its differences from the existing education system, define a number of difficulties which students and teachers of higher education institutions face. Special relevance is acquired by students' orientation to self-educational activity within a new system of studying. We can state that this problem wasn't conducted earlier by scientists. Meanwhile, such a study would show efficiency of programs of self-educational activity within ECTS.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Theoretical and methodological base of the research are conceptual ideas of the person-oriented and activity approach (K.A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya [6], L.S. Vygotsky [7], V.A. Slastenin [8]), information approach (V.I. Shtanko [9]). While considering psychological and pedagogical aspects of the studied problem we were guided by the theory of educational activity (V.I. Zagvyazinsky [10], I.Ya. Lerner [11]), the concepts of values, motives, orientations of professional activity (G.E. Zalessky [12], E.N. Shiyarov [13]), the theory of self-educational activity (A.K. Gromtseva [3]).

The person-oriented and activity approach has allowed to create conditions to form students' activity due to the partnership with other participants of educational process, the work in cooperation taking into account their age and specific features. The information approach has provided expeditious and high-quality implementation of feedback.

The methods and approaches used in our research are focused on stimulation, self-realization and self-affirmation of the personality as the original subject of educational process. They have allowed understanding the effectiveness of programs of self-educational activity within ECTS.

DISCUSSION

The main characteristics of self-education are the following: free choice of a problem range, individual work with information sources, the mobile volume of knowledge limited to extent of interest saturation in the chosen subject. The personal tendencies, interests caused, eventually, by

social requirements are the cornerstone of such mental work. Despite flexibility and big individualization of self-education, it can't be considered as a spontaneous process. Everyone who is engaged on their own, sets specific goals, takes the volume of the studied material into account, follows a certain plan of work, sometimes overcoming the considerable difficulties connected with the assimilation of new knowledge.

Being engaged in studying the questions of self-education, scientists allocate its levels. Therefore, A.K. Gromtseva [3] characterizes three levels of self-education. At the first, the lowest level, it is not systematic, often casual, and additional to educational activity to satisfy interest, which is still not resistant. Being guided by broad, but insufficiently certain motives (inquisitiveness, interest in a subject, surrounding), the personality nevertheless acts actively, joins the most various sources of knowledge. However, the independent knowledge is, as a rule, complicated, students give obvious preference to knowledge under the leadership of a teacher. At the second level, self-educational activity turns into rather independent activity, which has the purposes and tasks, the contents and the organization. At this stage this activity is comprehended as an implementer of ideals, as a cure of vital plans of a person. The independent knowledge becomes leading in all self-educational activity. The third level is distinguished by big clearness, effectiveness and reality of goals of self-education. Gaining experience in this activity, the student learns to estimate the opportunities and to define the tasks according to them. The organizational abilities are developing. They give the chance to build self-education more rationally. In this connection the student refuses a big variety of forms and sources, chooses just two or three, which completely provide all links of his knowledge. At this level the programs of self-education are formed.

Student's self-educational activity is impossible without his actions, without the installation on his continuous self-improvement. Today teachers realize well that the accent should be put on motivation, but not on "coercion". According to native and foreign psychologists (J. Atkinson [14], A.N. Leontyev [15] and others), motivation acts as the leading factor of the regulation of personal activity and behavior.

The classification of motives of student's self-education is undertaken by the researcher I.L. Naumchenko in the book by A.S. Ayzenberg [16]. The author conditionally divides them into two groups: directly informatively-incentive motives (hunger of knowledge, desire to elevate own mind, to find answers to the arisen questions and so forth) and the motives connected with prospects for the future (to become a qualified specialist, to seize any art, to receive the second profession).

A specific place in the motivational sphere is held by installation. Installation of the personality in native psychology is understood as "the personal position which suggests a certain attitude to purposes and tasks and is expressed in readiness to act and achieve these purposes" [16]. Installation is a primary element of the valuable relation. It characterizes initial reaction of the subject on the surrounding. Therefore, it is necessary to form students' installation on self-educational activity in the process of studying within ECTS, because it is "a brainwork form in which the public orientation of the personality, its creative potential and identity are developed" [16].

RESULTS

Thus, formation of readiness for self-education means personal development of aspirations to continuous improvement of own skills and abilities to get new knowledge. Readiness for self-education is "mastering all components of self-educational activity" among which we can name the following: motivational, goal setting, procedural, organizational, powerful and evaluated.

In this regard, focusing students on self-educational activity in the process of their studying within ECTS, it is necessary to have the following:

- voluntary basis of self-education (the motivational sphere);
- understanding personal ideals, vital plans and educational tasks (goal-setting);
- formation of students' ability to learn a subject independently (the procedural sphere);
- abilities to choose working methods, plan time, organize self-checking to intensify the process of knowledge (self-organization);
- activity and positive emotions of students in self-educational activity as strong-willed and emotional aspects of the activity are important (powerful component).

We believe that this direction is realized through the development of programs of self-educational activity, preparation and carrying out students' individual work and students' individual work under the teacher's leadership with the specifics peculiar to each one, introduction of special courses directed to form and develop students' skills of self-educational activity.

The program of self-educational activity assumes teaching students on an individual educational path. Each student forms own individual curriculum and chooses elective disciplines (if necessary with the help of a consultant). Such program provides the individual and differentiated approach to each student; considers his personal qualities, abilities, interests, motives; promotes the development of a conscientious attitude to the activity and a reflection. This program of self-educational activity especially helps those students who go with an advancing and wish to reduce the period of studying at higher education institution.

With orientation of students to self-educational activity within ECTS the role of individual work increases. In its turn, it is divided into students' individual work and students' individual work under the teacher's supervision. The first one assumes carrying out individual consultations for students on classroom materials, on doing hometasks, on the maintenance of additional topics and subjects. The second one includes learning additional materials, holding supervisory activities. As the result of individual work students learn not only to perceive information actively, but also to accumulate knowledge about working methods, to put them into practice, to fix the difficulties. Students' abilities of self-organization and self-discipline are being developed.

Various special courses also promote the formation of students' skills of self-educational activity. Firstly, it is the course on the culture of brainwork training. It teaches to work with different sources of information, to make abstracts, to summarize, to write summaries, reviews, etc. Secondly, the courses which aim to develop students' research abilities and to familiarize them with scientific activity. Thirdly, special seminars which explain different techniques to organize and carry out a term paper as studying of many disciplines comes to an end with course design.

CONCLUSION

Thus, students' self-educational activity within ECTS promotes students' individual work intensification in the development of an educational program, develops skills of self-educational activity, thereby realizes a modern paradigm of education –life-long learning.

The results of the research can find application when organizing the process of study at universities and reading pedagogy at teacher training colleges, and in improving pedagogical culture of the general public.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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