

The Development of Soft Skills in Future Specialists through Facilitated Interaction

Набуття майбутніми фахівцями soft skills в умовах організації фасилітативної взаємодії

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of our research is to show acquisition of soft skills by future specialists in the context of organizing facilitated interaction.

Methods of the research. The following theoretical methods of the research were used to solve the tasks formulated in the article: a categorical method, structural and functional methods, the methods of the analysis, systematization, modeling, and generalization.

The results of the research. We believe that in the facilitative paradigm in the system of modern higher education, the following soft skills are basic: synergy of cooperation, interdependence, autonomy. Each of the soft skills is explicated at the 4th and the 5th levels. For example, synergy of cooperation is reflected at the first level as a willingness to work (cooperate) with other mem-

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bers of a micro-group in solving clearly agreed tasks; at the second level – as the ability to meet the educational needs of the group, its individual members; at the third level – this is an assessment of each person’s contribution to the educational product of facilitative interaction; at the fourth level – this is a willingness to give up an individual goal in favor of a more global goal.

Soft skill “interdependence” is modelling through the existence of the following levels: the first is an understanding of how all members of society interact, sometimes as autonomous, sovereign individuals, sometimes as those who cooperate within micro-groups; the second level is mutual respect, which arises from a sense of self-worth and understanding of the needs of others (taking into account the purpose of facilitative interaction); the third level is recognition of the rights and advantages of others during facilitative interaction; the fourth level is mutual learning based on recognizing the values of other people; the fifth level is interdependence and cooperation, which broaden perspectives in the cognitive process, develop self-esteem and understanding of the importance of facilitative interaction.

Conclusions. We proved, that soft skill “autonomy” was actualized due to the existence of the following levels: the first one included willingness to take responsibility for satisfying cognitive needs; the second one was understanding the level of aspirations and one’s own self-esteem, awareness of one’s own sense of dignity; the third level was changing decisions based on changes in circumstances corresponding to situations of facilitative interaction; the fourth level was learning both formal educational skills and its creative forms; the fifth level was a broad view of the future: determining the main direction of implementing facilitative interaction, rather than achieving a certain separate goal; solving urgent tasks and certain tasks for the long term.

Key words: facilitation, facilitated interaction, soft skills, synergy of cooperation, interdependence, autonomy, a willingness to work (cooperate), sovereign individuals, interdependence, cooperation.

Introduction

The result that is naturally obtained by a person as a result of applying the principles of facilitative interaction in the educational process is quite difficult to overestimate. Its influence occurs along the vector of interaction “teacher – student” (Drigas, & Karyotaki, 2017). First, this vector quite radically changes the attitude of the subjects of learning to facilitative

interaction: it becomes understandable, meaningful, attractive and creative (Gathercole, Pickering, Ambridge, & Wearing, 2004). The effectiveness of the final result will be much higher if the student works not only for the sake of assessment or due to the wishes of his/her parents, but because of his/her personal self-improvement and growth (Гончарук, & Онуфрієва, 2018). The student's self-esteem encourages him/her, as a rule, to further self-education, orientation on the acquired personally significant experience, reading works explicated in psychological and pedagogical science (Hecht, Torgesen, Wagner, & Rashotte, 2001).

Guided by the principle of facilitation in the process of practical activities, we paid attention to how it positively affects the emotional state of the subjects of the educational process (Ivashkevych Ed., & Rudzevych, 2023). Answering the question: "Do you like the principles of organizing facilitated interaction in the lessons?", teachers noted: "There was a desire to work creatively", "understood the mechanisms of activating the cognitive activity of students", "revealed their potential", "received emotional inspiration". Reflection on the results of cognitive activity creates prerequisites for teachers to "fan" ideas for further creativity in improving self-training, actualizes their desire to include changes and additions to curricula, to standardize time for the classroom and extracurricular education system, organize excursions, leisure of students, their interaction with libraries, scientific circles, public organizations (Rezaei, & Mousanezhad Jeddi, 2020).

At the highest level of productive cognitive activity and facilitative interaction, we are dealing with idealized attributes and rules for performing this activity, which ensure the achievement of these attributes and their actualization (Shiva Ram, Bhardwaj, & Phani Krishna, 2017). The latter, in turn, form the principles that determine the productivity of facilitative activity, appearing as a subjective (theoretical, rational, scientifically reliable) reality, as a prerequisite, the basis for the performance

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of externally determined (executive) objective actions and deeds of subjects of social interaction (Learning Preferences, & Strengths, 2023).

Facilitative interaction should help schoolchildren “enter” a democratic society, recognizing their civil rights to improve their professional level, taking into account the personal motivation of students (Pimperton, & Nation, 2010). In order to prove the latter, we have identified a set of general principles for organizing the educational process for teachers of the new generation, which should be guided by both teachers and students (persons who study):

- freedom and the right to choose an academic discipline, choosing an individual educational path (Ehri, Nunes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoub-Zadeh, & Shanahan, 2001);

- scientificity (at the same time, science should be considered not as truth, but as one of the versions, plurality and parallel existence of different systems of interpreting the world (Arrington, Kulesz, Francis, Fletcher, & Barnes, 2014). Modern science, given these positions, should be characterized not as a justification of certain knowledge, but as some clarification of the method of obtaining, analyzing and interpreting it) (Alahmadi, Shank, & Foltz, 2018; Conners, 2009; de la Garza, & Harris, 2017);

- an anticipatory practice-oriented approach in the educational process (Engle, 2002);

- a personality-oriented and activity-oriented approach in the educational paradigm (Alahmadi, & Foltz, 2020; Falé, Costa, & Luegi, 2016);

- creativity, dialogicity (multi-subjectivity), openness, integrativeness (Astle, & Scerif, 2011; Greco, Canal, Bambini, & Moro, 2020; Heidari, 2019);

- dynamism and relevance of the content of educational courses (Mykhalchuk, & Bihunova, 2019);

- integrity of educational practice and optimality of the content of educational and thematic blocks of educational programs

(Alyami, & Mohsen, 2019; Dale, & Duran, 2011; Phani Krishna, Arulmozi, Shiva Ram, & Mishra, 2020);

• adherence to the principles of facilitative interaction (Ivashkevych Er., 2024; Івашкевич Ер., & Комарніцька, 2020).

The purpose of our research is to show acquisition of soft skills by future specialists in the context of organizing facilitated interaction.

Methods of the research

The following theoretical methods of the research were used to solve the tasks formulated in the article: a categorical method, structural and functional methods, the methods of the analysis, systematization, modeling, generalization.

Results and their discussion

We think that there are three skills of such kind of emotive teaching, which can be called pedagogical facilitation techniques (empathy, respect, sincerity):

– teachers ignore the emotional manifestations of their students, thereby causing their aggression. In such a way teachers' statements, as a rule, do not correspond to the person's feelings, they are not sincere, except of some individual cases when they condemn and blame schoolchildren;

– the teacher reacts not to the real feelings of each student, but to those people whom he/she himself/herself suggests to him/her, in his/her own statements he/she is only sometimes sincere, but he/she tries not to show positive emotions;

– the teacher reacts only to the superficial feelings of the student, but does it quite precisely and often he/she is not afraid to express both positive and negative feelings, but does not confirm it out loud, expresses his/her feelings in a non-verbal way;

– the teacher reacts to the hidden, deep feelings of each student, thereby helping students to realize why the person feels what he/she feels, gives a sincere reaction both at the verbal and non-verbal level, both positive and negative evaluation, while a negative assessment in no way degrades the student's sense of self-worth.

So, we'd like to know that facilitation is a change in the students' performance during the contact with the teacher or other students. Even the passive presence of the teacher in the classroom greatly activates the students, directs their activity in the right direction, stabilizes it outside of purposeful actions on the part of the teacher. However, the phenomenon of facilitation has considerable influence only if the teacher is authoritative, referential, recognized. Then, as a result of pedagogical interaction, various psychological new formations of a personal and interpersonal nature are arisen, which are usually called "changes" or "phenomena".

The phenomenon of the teacher's authority is of great importance in the implementation of pedagogical interaction strategies that he/she uses. Observations of educational activities indicate that a teacher can be quite an authoritative person for students of any age, but the grounds for recognizing his/her authority are different. For younger students the teacher is an authority in a view of the authority of his/her role position. With regard to the given age of schoolchildren, we can speak, most likely, about the authority of the role, then the authority of the individual. At the same time, the teacher is recognized as having the right to make responsible decisions regarding a certain situation, both with a regard to a specific student and the class as a whole, both in educational and other types of the activities.

One of the determinants of facilitative interaction is mutual understanding, which is defined as a certain established system of feelings and relationships, which allows to achieve the goal of joint activity or communication in a largely coordinated manner, and maximally contributes to the observance of trust and interests, providing great opportunities for self-disclosure of the abilities of each participant of this process of interaction. Facilitative mutual understanding in this way ensures such a level of community when there is no authoritarian dominance, emotional tension, mistrust and lack of interest in everything

that happens in the process between the participants of the pedagogical process.

One of the main conditions for the emergence of the phenomenon of mutual understanding is the mutual acceptance of individual psychological characteristics of each other, the ability to put oneself into the place of others, to identify themselves with others. Mutual understanding is a consequence of the humanistic orientation of teachers who perceive the success of students and the goals of their educational activities as their own ones. In the process of facilitative interaction, the phenomenon of trust is similar in its main characteristics to the phenomenon of mutual understanding. Trust is a feeling of openness to the world of people, phenomena and processes. Trust does not mean accepting something on faith without realizing the deep essence of this phenomenon. Trust can be intuitive or conscious, direct or indirect. Lack of trust, alienation from the child is one of the main destructive reasons that delays personal development. Children feel an urgent need to be trusted by both authoritative significant peers and adults, also by teachers.

In our opinion, the phenomenon of reflected subjectivity is revealed in the process of facilitative interaction. In its emergence, the subjective parameters of the teacher's personality, which are understood and necessarily are taken into account by the students, play a significant role. From the psychological image of the teacher, these parameters are explained in the personal sphere of the students. The image of the teacher can be both a real and imaginary one. In some cases, the imaginary image is, at the same time, real in terms of the effectiveness of influence, like, by the way, a real teacher. In such facilitative interaction the teacher's subjectivity is broadcast, namely his/her ability to make meaningful transformations in the structure of the students' personality.

So, we proved, that one of the significant constructive phenomena of facilitative interaction is a psychological status of the individual, without the acquisition of which there cannot be a process of active, consistent progressive development and self-

development of the individual. Psychological status characterizes play not only the student's real place in the system of interpersonal relationships, but also the position in the class, in a family, peer groups. They also depend on that situation how he/she attributes to himself/herself. The need to build oneself as the individual, to get self-improvement, etc. does not arise spontaneously – it is formed in the process of facilitated interaction. It is the pedagogical influence that allows the student to realize the difference between “Me-real” and “Me-ideal”, without which personal development cannot take place. Facilitative interaction performs the function of not only helping and protecting the child from insecurity, fear of failure to complete educational tasks, but also helps to establish the student's status, form his/her role position. Facilitative interaction involves considerable attention given to a person in a situation where he/she is still objectively unsuccessful; this attention may take the form of either direct utterances or implicit frames or scripts. Facilitative interaction also involves the student's implementation of influences on another person. In turn, exerting a facilitative influence on the student, the teacher addresses his/her personality regardless of his/her failures and successes, mistakes and achievements. Thus, for the effective facilitative interaction the unconditional acceptance of the other becomes decisive, and final results of the facilitative interaction, grades from the educational subject, and some more external features are unimportant. Facilitative interaction should be with each child, and for this process it is only necessary to see and actualize attention to his/her strengths constantly.

Models of facilitative interaction are not created by themselves. They have socio-cultural significance, reflect the specifics of a teacher's life path, his/her age, personal characteristics, as well as the level of professional competence and pedagogical creativity. The teacher should help students solve not only educational, but also personally significant tasks; in this situation facilitated interaction should come to the rescue. However,

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in the pedagogical process, the students' success/failure is the main indicator of their failures and achievements during their entire staying at school. A high level of success is usually associated by parents with the general well-being of the student, and low success is perceived as an indicator of considerable difficulties, the student's disadvantages. The latter significantly distorts and complicates the student's position, because the variety of psychological factors that influence the organization of facilitative interaction, and they are often replaced by one of them. At the same time, such characteristics of a schoolboy as business and collectivist orientation, highly developed abilities, appearance, personal attributes, age, sociability, willingness to help a friend, manners of behavior, which remain unaccounted for or not taken into account.

Let's consider each of the individual components, because all of them are *characteristics of facilitative interaction*. It is well known that Activity is the basis, means and positive condition for the development of the Person. The Activity is the expedient transformation of the surrounding reality of people. We call activity "a unit of life", mediated by the process of mental reflection. Also, there are neither means of the activity, nor signs, nor objects of art; there are no people outside the activity.

Therefore, the activity is a purposeful, multi-level human activity. "Purposeful" is because "the subject" appears as its goal. "Multi-level" is because it includes secondary motivation determined by the purpose and the tasks of the activity into its structure of actions. And this, in turn, ensures the actualization of the main goal-motive of the activity by the individual. And, finally, the operation of the activity differs from the action in that it is not marked by a goal, but by the conditions of the activity in which this goal is explained. It is very necessary to distinguish the actions from the activities and from operations.

So, the process of facilitation in educational activities cannot be understood simplistically. Participating in any form of the activity and learning consciously are doing quite different

things. The action, if it is imposed by a team of methodologists, teachers, pedagogues, etc., is carried out under pressure on the student, then it is perceived beyond any meaning as a so-called “temporary” necessity. In Psychology the following attributes of a person are recognized: a student’s consciousness and activity; attributes of the psyche, such as subjectivity, activity, adaptability; attributes of the person’s consciousness – the experience, knowledge and attitude; attributes of the activity – the awareness, purposefulness, motivation.

All these attributes are directly or indirectly were included into the cognitive process. But in the traditional reproductive system of education such attributes as “consciousness”, “activity”, “subjectivity”, “attitude”, “purposefulness” and “motivation”. They are as some constant, unchanging components. Psychologists claim that they only participate in a wide-ranging activity, which includes: planning, organization, implementation, the analysis of the results, and communication in a reference group. Thus, the subject of learning gets access to the awareness of the meaning of cognitive activity. Only on this basis a person can develop meaningful motives, value orientations and, ultimately, the direction of the individual and relationships with others. This formula of “facilitatively expedient activity” (the author’s term) reflects the scheme of reproduction of absolutely new knowledge, having been tested by us in the process of cognitive activity, which will be used to justify facilitation as a separate type of the activity.

The main functions of facilitation are these ones:

- the function of stimulation;
- update function;
- the function of forming the sovereignty of the student’s personality;
- the function of managing the educational process;
- the function of organizing the process of interaction;
- the function of providing a creative educational environment.

We proved, that students who are used to facilitative relationships are sufficiently courageous, they do not simply modify the educational environment, but fundamentally transform it. Thus, the environment itself becomes the condition of their success situation. Interpersonal relationships of recognition of value, acceptance, trust, created in the environment, are an incentive for students to participate in creative types of the activities. These relationships, we believe, are highly effective in facilitating learning. First of all, expressiveness and naturalness, not artificiality of the facilitator himself/herself, readiness to be a person, to be and to live with the feelings and thoughts of a certain moment. When this authenticity includes a valuable attitude, care, trust and respect for the student, a positive climate for the effective learning process can be considered as created ones. All this context includes sensual and empathetic listening, then there really it is a climate of liberation, stimulating self-initiated personal growth.

The Subject of the Facilitative Activity is intended, first of all, to answer the question: "From what can (should) be (or already exist) the actually obtained results (products) of predicting its result (the aim of cognitive activity)?" The "Subject" of the activity clearly correlates with the questions: "From what context can (should) the result be obtained?" Since the teacher deals with students as Subjects of the Facilitative Activity, it is in this question that the replacement of the pronoun should be actualized: "From what exactly, from what context can (should) the pedagogical result be obtained?" Learning as a cognitive activity actualizes the understanding of the subject of the activity in the initial state of the formation of knowledge, abilities, skills, soft skills, motives, needs, etc., which, in fact, are inherent to the student who is studying. It is important that teachers of academic subjects are clearly aware that schoolchildren simultaneously play the role of both *The Subject of Learning* and *The Subject of the Facilitative Activity* simultaneously. In order to actualize Subjectivity in the educational process, special me-

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thods should be used that ensure the study of students' needs. We will also develop such methods in the empirical part of our further researches.

So, let us outline the basic approaches of the conceptual paradigm of *the principles of facilitative interaction*. Three key positions – synergy (cooperation), interdependence and personal autonomy – were laid down as the basis of the principles of facilitation. They significantly complement the holistic complex of psychological and pedagogical conditions and determine the success of the process of knowledge of subjects of each other in the process of facilitative interaction (Table 1).

Table 1

**Key principles of soft skills in the facilitative paradigm
in the system of modern high education**

Synergy of cooperation	Interdependence	Autonomy
willingness to work (cooperate) with other members of the micro-group in solving clearly agreed tasks	understanding how all members of society interact, sometimes as autonomous, sovereign individuals, sometimes as cooperating within micro-groups	willingness to take responsibility for meeting cognitive needs
the ability to meet the educational needs of the group and its individual members	mutual respect arising from a sense of self-worth and understanding of the needs of others (taking into account the goal of facilitative interaction)	understanding the level of aspirations and one's own self-esteem, awareness of one's sense of self-worth
assessment of each person's contribution to the educational product of facilitative interaction	recognition of the rights and benefits of others during facilitative interaction	changing decisions based on changing circumstances, appropriate to facilitative interaction situations
willingness to sacrifice an individual goal in favor of a more global goal	mutual learning based on recognizing the values of others	teaching both formal educational skills and its creative forms

	interdependence and cooperation, which broaden perspectives in the cognitive process, develop self-esteem and understanding of the importance of facilitative interaction	a broad view of the future: determine the main direction of facilitating interaction, rather than achieving a specific goal; solving urgent tasks and certain tasks for the long term
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From the frames given in this Table 1, we see an understanding of the importance of cooperation (synergy), interdependence, tolerance, human rights, and everyone's responsibility for the final results they are aimed at achieving. These key provisions of the cognitive process contain the meaning of the philosophy of facilitation, the personally and actively mediated position of the teacher-facilitator, and the essence of the principle of facilitation in the Psychology, Didactics of Andragogy.

The facilitation strategy in the educational process of a general university education involves the direction of well-coordinated actions of the subjects of the educational process, primarily with the aim of identifying and eliminating the causes that give rise to problems and difficulties in professional and pedagogical activities, assisting in the self-actualization of the teacher, and not to combat their consequences or in view of the desire to teach and punish. Timely preventive psychological and pedagogical consultations, which are focused on the needs of a specific student or a micro-group of students of a given age, contribute to overcoming difficulties and obstacles at the stages of personal growth of students.

We believe that in the facilitative paradigm in the system of modern higher education, the following soft skills are basic: synergy of cooperation, interdependence, autonomy. Each of the soft skills is explicated at the 4th and the 5th levels. For example, synergy of cooperation is reflected at the first level as a willingness to work (cooperate) with other members of a micro-group in solving clearly agreed tasks; at the second level – as the ability to

meet the educational needs of the group, its individual members; at the third level – this is an assessment of each person’s contribution to the educational product of facilitative interaction; at the fourth level – this is a willingness to give up an individual goal in favor of a more global goal.

Soft skill “interdependence” is modelling through the existence of the following levels: the first is an understanding of how all members of society interact, sometimes as autonomous, sovereign individuals, sometimes as those who cooperate within micro-groups; the second level is mutual respect, which arises from a sense of self-worth and understanding of the needs of others (taking into account the purpose of facilitative interaction); the third level is recognition of the rights and advantages of others during facilitated interaction; the fourth level is mutual learning based on recognizing the values of other people; the fifth level is interdependence and cooperation, which broaden perspectives in the cognitive process, develop self-esteem and understanding of the importance of facilitative interaction.

The main thing in implementing the principle of facilitative interaction is the self-development of the personality of the child who is studying, assistance in realizing latent potential creative abilities in solving problems of self-determination and self-improvement.

Conclusions

We proved, that soft skill “autonomy” was actualized due to the existence of the following levels: the first one included willingness to take responsibility for satisfying cognitive needs; the second one was understanding the level of aspirations and one’s own self-esteem, awareness of one’s own sense of dignity; the third level was changing decisions based on changes in circumstances corresponding to situations of facilitative interaction; the fourth level was learning both formal educational skills and its creative forms; the fifth level was a broad view of the future: determining the main direction of implementing facilitative in-

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Хупавцева Наталія, Сімко Руслан, Кульчицька Анна. Набуття майбутніми фахівцями soft skills в умовах організації фасилітативної взаємодії.

Мета дослідження – показати особливості набуття майбутніми фахівцями soft skills в умовах організації фасилітативної взаємодії.

Методи дослідження. Для розв'язання поставлених завдань використовувалися такі теоретичні методи дослідження: категоріальний, структурно-функціональний, аналіз, систематизація, моделювання, узагальнення.

Результати дослідження. Ми вважаємо, що у фасилітативній парадигмі в системі сучасної вищої освіти базовими є такі soft skills: синергія співробітництва, взаємозалежність, автономія. Кожне із soft skills експлікується на 4-5 рівнях. Наприклад, синергія співробітництва відображується на першому рівні як готовність до роботи (співробітництву) з іншими членами мікрогрупи в розв'язанні чітко узгоджених задач; на другому рівні – як здатність задовольнити освітні потреби групи, окремих її членів; на третьому рівні – це оцінка внеску кожного в освітній продукт фасилітативної взаємодії; на четвертому рівні – це готовність поступатися індивідуальною метою на користь більш глобальної мети.

Продемонстровано, що soft skill «взаємозалежність» моделюється завдяки існуванню таких рівнів: першому – розуміння того, яким чином усі члени суспільства перебувають у взаємодії, іноді як автономні, суве-

ренні особистості, іноді – як такі, що співпрацюють у межах мікрогруп; другому – взаємна повага, що виникає з огляду на почуття власної гідності та розуміння потреби інших (з урахуванням мети фасилітативної взаємодії); третьому – визнання прав і переваг інших під час здійснення фасилітативної взаємодії; четвертому – взаємонавчання, засноване на визнанні цінностей інших осіб; п'ятому – взаємозалежність і співробітництво, які розширюють перспективи в пізнавальному процесі, розвивають самооцінку і розуміння важливості фасилітативної взаємодії.

Висновки. Доведено, що *soft skill* «автономія» актуалізується завдяки існуванню таких рівнів: першому – готовність взяти на себе відповідальність щодо задоволення пізнавальних потреб; другому – розуміння рівня домагань і власної самооцінки, усвідомлення почуття власної гідності; третьому – зміна рішень на основі змін обставин, відповідних ситуаціям фасилітативної взаємодії; четвертому – навчання як формальним освітнім навикам, так і його творчим формам; п'ятому – широкий погляд на майбутнє: визначити головний напрямок здійснення фасилітативної взаємодії, а не досягти певної окремої мети; розв'язання нагальних завдань і певних завдань на довготривалу перспективу.

Ключові слова: фасилітація, фасилітативна взаємодія, м'які навички, синергія співпраці, взаємозалежність, автономія, готовність до роботи (співпраці), суверенні особистості, взаємозалежність, співпраця.

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