Organization of Independent Work of the Students Using Individual Educational Plans

Ekaterina Viktorovna Politsinskaja

Yurga Technological Institute (branch) of the Federal State Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education “National research Tomsk Polytechnic University”, Yurga, Kemerovo region, Russia

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Abstract: Lectures, seminars and practical studies are the basic educational forms in a higher educational institution. However, the independent work plays a special role in the training of the prospective specialists. The efficiency of independent work depends on specificity of organization. Individual study plan can become an effective method for organization of independent work. This article provides the comparative analysis of the organization of independent work of students revealing the traditional approach to learning and the method of individual study plan and shows an importance of the value orientation of students in individual learning, as well as an analysis of value orientation of students. To assess the value orientation of students required for the compilation of individual study plan, the technique of American sociologist Milton Rokeach was used. The article considers the stages of the compilation and implementation of individual plans, which allow the implementation of the Milton Rokeach’s technique in higher educational institutions for training of students of various professional specializations.

Key words: Independent work • Competence • Value orientation • Practice-oriented objectives and tasks • Individual study plan

INTRODUCTION

Educational process in the higher educational institution is a goal-oriented interaction between the teacher and the students to achieve the goals determined by the National educational standard. This interaction can appear as the lecture, seminar, practical training, or independent work and performed in the lecture-room, laboratory, etc.

Independent work among all educational forms mentioned above is most important. In the education plan of any specialization, the independent work takes more hours of the total educational hours allocated for the study.

However, the independent work of the students do not allow achieve the desired results. This form of education due to the lack of purposefulness, weak control, insufficient differentiation considering the individual opportunities, needs and interests of the students, can not provide high-quality implementation of the tasks.

In addition, a significant amount of tasks offered for independent work, or fails, either formally accomplished, or simply coping from the various available sources.

To confirm these assumptions, we have questioned 600 students from the first to fourth course of different specializations.

As a result, approximately half of the first study year students (205 individuals) spend 1 hour per day in average (only 8,3% spent more than 3 hours per day) to independent work and the students of undergraduate course spend less then 3 hours on independent comprehension and study of the course material. For most students of undergraduate courses (more than 77%), the education is limited by classroom lessons, although the specific courses required for successful professional
activities are learned during this period. Thus, the study process of the undergraduate students insufficiently considers the role and importance of independent work and education process becomes passive unlike the initial phase (1-2 study years).

In general, the analysis of the questionnaires showed that the majority of students insufficiently possess the necessary skills for independent work.

Professor A.A. Verbitsky noted that “Independent work has great didactic potential, therefore there are the learning of the academic content and its extension, acquiring the skills of work with different types of information, the development of analytical skills, skills of control and planning of the learning time” [1, p. 6].

We entirely agree with O.I. Bliznetsova and T.V. Snegireva [2, p. 50] that “the efficiency of training of specialist in the system of higher education institutions is achieved if the students are engaged in to different activities including the independent preparation of objectives, planning, self-monitoring and evaluation of the results”.

In recent years, the problem and project-organized education is positioned as one of the most effective forms of organization of educational process [3-6] which enables the independent activity of the students, development of the self-presentation skills, reflection of their own activities, raising creative approach to their activities.

We assume that independent work of students in the higher institution should be organized as a special activity that is an essential part of education process.

One of the organizational forms of independent work, which allows the development of the self-expression skills, reflection of own activities, raising creative and individual approach to activities is the method of construction of individual study plan.

The individual educational route is structured program of the student’s activities at some fixed stage of educational process.

The main purpose of the individual study plan is the maximum implementation of individual learning, which allows successfully form the professional competence, significantly raise the level of student’s preparation and raise the interest to the education.

Value of individual study plan is that it allows anyone ensures the identification and formation of creative personality, formation and development of a value orientation, own views and beliefs and the unique technology of activities based on quickly adjustable self-esteem and active pursuit to perfection.

Thus, the students performing the individual plans are not passive consumers. This is a creative, self-regulated process providing the ability to optimal selection of information resources, systematization of knowledge and the determination of independent ways of learning the material. Table 1 represents a comparative analysis of the independent activities of a student at traditional teaching and the implementation of the individual study plan.

The Table 1 shows that the basis of individual study plan is the individual approach to each student. In our case, an individual approach is manifested in the construction of individual study plan for a student taking into account its value orientation.

Value orientation is a selective attitude of the man to material and spiritual values, the system of his aims, beliefs, preferences expressed in his behavior [7, p. 11]. According to Zeera E.F., the value orientations express a conscious attitude of a person to social reality and determine the motivation of his behavior significantly impacting all aspects of his activities [8, pp. 100-101]. Sociologist V.B. Olshansky compares the values with the unique beacons which promote “to notice the most important information (in a positive or negative sense) in the general flow for human life; these are landmarks following which, a person retains the certainty and the internal consistency of the behavior” [9, p. 471].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters of comparison</th>
<th>Organization of independent work of a student at traditional teaching in the classroom and preparation</th>
<th>Implementation of individual study plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value orientation of the organization of independent work</td>
<td>Not considered</td>
<td>Basis for the development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Level of motivation is insufficient for active work</td>
<td>External demands, sufficient motivation level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of aims and objectives of prospective activities</td>
<td>Occasional participation of student</td>
<td>Determined independently by a student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of particular activities in work</td>
<td>A teacher develops a plan of actions without participation of a student</td>
<td>Independent work of a student with recommendations of a teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Teacher assesses the student’s work according to certain criteria</td>
<td>Self-control of own activities, teacher’s assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Comparative analysis of the organization of independent work of students at the traditional approach to learning and using of individual study plan
Table 2: Groups of value orientations of the highest order

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<th>Group of value orientations of highest order</th>
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<td>Group I: Love; entertainment; freedom of action; good and reliable friends; happy family life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II: Endowed life; interesting work; health; cognition; active life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group III: Endowed life; interesting work; health; creative activity; the beauty of nature and art.</td>
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</table>

Thus, the students, with higher efficiency perceive the information, which corresponds to their values and hardly perceive the other.

To study of value orientations, we have used a questionnaire of Milton Rokeach [10]. The method is based on direct ranking of a list of values separated into two classes: terminal values (values-goals) and instrumental values (values-means). The terminal values include the convictions of a person that terminal goal of the individual existence is worth to strive for. The personal qualities of a person promoting the goal achievement were considered as the instrumental values.

The students were suggested to arrange the terminal values of Milton Rokeach to identify the value orientations that determine the individual purpose of existence of the students, i.e. their orientation on sufficiently paid job, creative activity or leisure and entertainment. The obtained results were divided into three groups of values of the highest order (Table 2).

This allowed us to determine the dominant values among present student, i.e. their general orientation for: creativity, more profound study of the subject or lack of the motivation to learning.

Thus, using this method, we can distinguish three groups of learners for individual planning.

**First Group:** The students of the first group are oriented for the love and entertainment. As a rule, the values as interesting work, the pursuit for material security and public recognition are hardly interesting for these students, that is related with the thoughtless choice of the future professional specialization and indifference to education (“just receive degree in something”, “I prefer easy way to receive diploma”, etc.), convenience, or choice of the parents.

**Second Group:** This category of students is interesting in studying of the subject, possess the cognitive motivation and interest in the new facts and phenomena. The dominant values of this group of students include creative activity and admiration of the beauty of nature and art.

**Third Group:** Students of this group characterize by deep knowledge, sensible and consistent learning, stable activity, initiative, independent learning, as well as higher interest and emotional predisposition to the study subject. The students belonging to the group prefer the following values: the desire to have an interesting job, to be financially endowed and the desire to public recognition.

The individual study plans were complicated after the diagnosis and the division of students into three groups:

- Specified the time period for accomplishing of an individual plan, for example semester.
- Compilation of a time schedule for return of finished tasks.
- Development of tasks.

The tasks for all groups of students consisted of three levels. The first level, the most general level represented by the basic knowledge. The second level includes everything that has been achieved on the first level, but in more sophisticated form. The third level is completed by all achievements reached at 1 and 2 levels, but applied in unusual situations. However, for the second group, the tasks obligatory include the creative component. Generally, this is a research work including the creative works, essays, reports at conferences and seminars, participation in different student forums and competitions.

For the third group, the tasks require deep knowledge in particular discipline.

For students of the first group, individual study plan is developed with the tasks for learning by all students in the particular discipline, the creative and more complex task. The student performing a plan chooses the task himself to collect the necessary points for attestation, performing creative or complex tasks. The purpose of individual plans is to transfer the students of the first group into the second or third.

**Control and Correction:** All performed tasks are checked, analyzed and assessed by the student and the teacher to find the mistakes and analyze the reasons of success or misfortunes. Each student works independently and learns study material during possible time. The results of each task scored and rating of every student is periodically reported to the teacher.
Therefore, the value orientation allows the administration of educational activities and the use of individual study plans reflects the interaction of the competence-based, context, problem and student-oriented approaches.

Independent performing the tasks allows the teacher to identify the difficulties met by individual students and provide them with necessary help in academic work.

The students performing the individual study plan form the specific personal quality, which should have a modern graduate such as the ability to control, objectively evaluate and adjust their activities. Thus, the independent work of a student, organized according to an individual study plan ensures the formation of professional competence, development of self-organization skills and self-control of educational activities. This is particularly important because involves the formation of a prospective specialist as a subject of professional activity, who capable to self-development, planning and transform own actions.

REFERENCES


