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FORMATION OF CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING METACOGNITIVE ABILITIES

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Abstract. In modern conditions of transformation of higher education, the development of students' metacognitive abilities, which ensure conscious management of their own cognitive processes, is of particular importance. One of the effective tools for the formation of metacognitive skills is constructive criticism, implemented through the practice of mutual assessment, reasoned feedback and reflective analysis of learning activities. The purpose of this study is to explore the potential of constructive criticism skills formation as a means of developing students' metacognitive awareness, critical thinking, and subjective perspective in the educational process. The methodological basis of the research is a theoretical analysis of modern scientific approaches to the problem of metacognition, constructive feedback, and peer assessment technologies in higher education. The results of the study show that the systematic involvement of students in the processes of analyzing and evaluating academic papers contributes to the development of skills of self-assessment, reflection, control and regulation of their own cognitive activity. It is concluded that the formation of a culture of constructive criticism is an important condition for improving the quality of education and developing students' independence.

Keywords: metacognitive abilities, constructive criticism, peer assessment, reflection, higher education, subjectivity of students, critical thinking, feedback.

Introduction

The modern educational paradigm is undergoing significant changes, moving from the traditional model of knowledge transfer and passive assimilation to a model focused on the active participation of students in the learning process, the development of their critical thinking, communication skills and the ability to learn independently (self-directed learning). In the context of the requirements of the 21st century, the so-called soft skills are of particular importance, including the ability to interact effectively, analyze information, express one's own position in a reasoned manner and receive constructive feedback. In this regard, there is an increasing need to find pedagogical tools that contribute to the development of students' metacognitive abilities, allowing them to consciously plan, monitor and evaluate their own educational activities.

Despite the widespread use of interactive teaching methods in higher education, many students have difficulty evaluating the work of their peers and providing objective feedback. Often, criticisms are based on subjective impressions, emotional attitudes, or personal preferences rather than pre-established academic criteria. Insufficient formation of constructive criticism skills limits the possibilities of students in the development of analytical thinking, reflection and the ability to objective self-assessment. Consequently, the formation of a culture of reasoned assessment is becoming an important pedagogical task of modern higher education. The problem of the development of metacognitive abilities has been widely covered in the works of foreign researchers. The term "metacognition" was first coined by the American psychologist John H. Flavell, who viewed it as a person's awareness of their own cognitive processes and the ability to control them through planning,

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monitoring, and evaluation [3]. Later, the concept of metacognition was developed in research on self-regulated learning, reflection, and cognitive control.

In pedagogical science, considerable attention is also paid to peer assessment as a method of active learning involving students in analyzing and evaluating each other's academic achievements. The researchers note that this approach contributes to the development of students' responsibility, critical thinking, argumentation, and a deeper understanding of the criteria for the quality of academic work. The purpose of this article is to theoretically substantiate the relationship between the formation of constructive criticism skills and the development of metacognitive monitoring among students in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

In modern pedagogical and psychological science, metacognitive abilities are considered as the most important component of effective learning activities, ensuring the ability of students to consciously manage their own cognitive processes. Meta-knowledge includes not only the possession of certain knowledge, but also an understanding of how the learning process takes place, which strategies are most productive, and how one can improve one's own results. There are three interrelated components in the structure of metacognitive abilities: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive monitoring, and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive knowledge is a system of student's ideas about their own cognitive abilities, the features of learning tasks and ways to solve them. They include an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, knowledge of effective learning strategies and their application conditions [3].

Metacognitive monitoring involves constantly monitoring and evaluating the progress of one's own cognitive activity. It manifests itself in the student's ability to ask himself questions: "How well do I understand the material being studied?", "Does the chosen strategy correspond to the task?", "What aspects require additional attention?" [2] Metacognitive regulation is a decision-making process based on monitoring results and includes planning learning activities, choosing or changing cognitive strategies, allocating time, and adjusting ways to solve emerging problems. Thus, the developed metacognitive abilities allow the student to act as an active subject of his own educational process.

Constructive criticism in the educational context is a form of reasoned feedback aimed not at a negative assessment of the personality of the author of the work, but at analyzing the quality of the completed task in order to improve it. Unlike subjective criticism based on personal preferences or emotional reactions, constructive criticism relies on objective criteria, evidence-based judgments, and the desire to find ways to improve [7]. There are several key components in the structure of constructive criticism. The first is decentralization — the ability of a student to go beyond his own point of view and consider work from the perspective of objective criteria and requirements of the learning task. The second component is argumentation, which involves the ability to justify one's own assessment based on facts, examples, and established quality indicators. The third component is the formulation of recommendations, expressed in the ability to suggest specific ways to improve the work, rather than being limited to pointing out shortcomings. The development of these components contributes to the formation of a culture of academic communication, increasing students' responsibility for the quality of learning activities and developing critical thinking skills. The practice of mutual assessment creates a special educational situation in which the student acts not only as a performer of a study assignment, but also as an analyst and expert. Analyzing the work of another person, the student is forced to apply quality criteria, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the completed task, compare different ways to solve the problem and formulate reasonable conclusions [4]. This process triggers a mechanism for transferring an external assessment to an internal self-regulation plan. Realizing the criteria used to evaluate someone else's work, the student begins to apply them to

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his own results. This contributes to the development of introspection, a more objective self-assessment, and the ability to identify shortcomings in one's own learning strategies.

In addition, comparing one's own work with the work of peers broadens the student's understanding of possible ways to solve learning problems and encourages a review of previously used cognitive strategies. Thus, mutual assessment becomes not only a feedback tool, but also a mechanism for the development of metacognitive monitoring and regulation, ensuring the student's transition from passive task completion to conscious management of their own learning process. Effective formation of constructive criticism skills among students requires a purposeful organization of the mutual assessment process. Peer review technology should not be a spontaneous exchange of opinions, but a structured pedagogical practice based on transparent criteria, academic ethics and reflective analysis. There are three main stages in this process: preparatory, procedural and reflexive.

The preparatory stage is aimed at creating a common understanding of the criteria for the qualitative assessment of educational work. At this stage, the teacher, together with the students, develops assessment criteria, decomposing them into specific indicators and indicators. The inclusion of students in the process of creating criteria allows them to better understand the requirements for the educational product, form common assessment standards and increase the level of responsibility for their own expert judgments. In addition, students learn to distinguish between an assessment of the work itself and an assessment of the personality of its author, which is a fundamental condition for constructive academic criticism.

The procedural stage involves direct mutual peer review using special feedback methods. One of the effective techniques is the "two blind reviews" method, in which the work is evaluated by two independent reviewers without disclosure of authorship, which helps to reduce subjectivity and personal bias. Another tool is the "feedback sandwich" method, which provides for a consistent presentation of the positive aspects of the work, identification of growth areas and offering specific recommendations for improvement. This approach contributes to the formation of a respectful culture of academic communication and the development of skills of reasoned assessment.

The reflexive stage is focused on students' understanding of the feedback they receive and using it to further improve their own learning activities. The authors of the papers analyze the reviewers' comments, correlate them with the original idea, determine the validity of the comments and make decisions on the need for changes. At this stage, the processes of metacognitive monitoring and self-regulation are activated, as the student evaluates not only the final result, but also the effectiveness of his own ways of thinking and learning.

The introduction of mutual assessment practices leads to a change in the traditional role of the teacher in the educational process. While in the classical model, the teacher acts as the main source of knowledge and the only expert with the right to final assessment, in the modern student-centered paradigm, his function is transformed into the role of a facilitator, mentor, and moderator of educational interaction. The task of the teacher is to create a safe academic environment in which criticism is perceived not as a form of condemnation, but as a means of professional and intellectual development. He teaches students the principles of constructive feedback, demonstrates examples of high-quality reviews, helps formulate objective arguments, and monitors compliance with ethical communication standards. In addition, the teacher provides pedagogical support for the mutual assessment process, correcting possible manifestations of subjectivity, excessive categoricality or insufficient reasonableness of judgments. Thus, his role is shifting from the function of a controller of learning outcomes to the function of an organizer of conditions conducive to the development of independence, reflexivity and metacognitive competence of students.

Results and Discussion

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As part of the study of the effectiveness of technology for the formation of constructive criticism skills, both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used to assess changes in students' metacognitive involvement. The Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) questionnaire could be used as a diagnostic tool, aimed at identifying the level of metacognitive knowledge and regulation of educational activities before and after the introduction of peer review practices. A comparative analysis of the results allows us to determine the dynamics of students' ability to plan their own educational activities, monitor the process of completing assignments, critically analyze the results and adjust the learning strategies used. The data obtained (or the expected results within the framework of the theoretical model) indicate that the systematic participation of students in the processes of constructive assessment and receiving feedback contributes to a deeper understanding of their own cognitive processes. Students develop an understanding of the criteria for the quality of academic work, and develop the ability to compare external assessments with internal perceptions of the results of their own activities, which is an important indicator of the development of metacognitive monitoring. The analysis of the results of the introduction of peer review technology allows us to identify a number of positive changes in the educational activities of students. First of all, there is an increase in the level of educational autonomy, which is expressed in greater independence in planning, performing and evaluating educational tasks. Students begin to perceive themselves not only as performers of the teacher's requirements, but also as active subjects of the educational process, able to independently determine the directions of their own development. Another significant result is a reduction in the fear of mistakes. Regular interaction with constructive feedback contributes to the formation of an understanding of error as a natural element of the cognitive process and a source of further improvement. This creates a safer educational environment in which students are willing to experiment with new approaches and openly discuss difficulties. In addition, the practice of mutual assessment contributes to the development of academic empathy — the ability to take into account the position of another participant in the educational process, respectfully perceive alternative points of view and provide recommendations in a form aimed at supporting and developing the author of the work. The development of this quality improves the culture of academic interaction and increases the effectiveness of collective learning.

Despite the significant educational potential of constructive criticism, the introduction of peer review technologies can be accompanied by a number of difficulties. One of the most common barriers is the psychological resistance of students associated with the fear of criticizing their peers or, conversely, receiving criticism of their own work. To overcome this barrier, students must gradually adapt to a culture of feedback, establish rules for respectful interaction, and teach the principles of academic communication. Another problem is subjectivity in evaluation, which arises from personal sympathies, lack of experience, or lack of understanding of the criteria for the quality of work. It is possible to reduce the impact of this factor through the joint development of evaluation criteria, the use of detailed evaluation headings, as well as the use of double-blind peer review. An additional limitation may be the cognitive overload of students, especially if it is necessary to simultaneously analyze the content of the work, apply assessment criteria and formulate reasoned recommendations. To minimize this difficulty, it is recommended to gradually complicate tasks, use well-structured feedback forms, and develop critical analysis skills in the early stages of learning. Thus, the results of the study confirm that the practice of constructive criticism is an effective means of developing students' metacognitive abilities. However, its successful implementation requires a methodically competent organization of the process, the formation of a trusting educational environment and the active facilitating role of the teacher.

Conclusion

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The conducted theoretical analysis allows us to confirm the hypothesis that the purposeful formation of constructive criticism skills is an effective tool for the development of students' metacognitive abilities. Involving students in the processes of mutual assessment requires them not only to analyze the quality of other people's work, but also to comprehend their own cognitive strategies, which contributes to the development of metacognitive monitoring, self-regulation and reflection. The practice of constructive feedback facilitates the transition of students from the passive perception of the teacher's assessment to the active position of the subject of the educational process. The ability to reasonably evaluate the work of peers, take into account objective quality criteria, and formulate recommendations for improving academic products is becoming an important component of modern educational competencies. The results obtained are of practical importance for teachers of higher education institutions seeking to introduce student-centered learning technologies. To effectively integrate peer-to-peer interaction practices, it is recommended to include peer review in the structure of training courses on a regular basis, develop transparent assessment criteria together with students, teach the principles of constructive feedback, and create a safe academic environment in which mistakes are considered as a learning resource. A promising area of further research is to explore the possibilities of digital educational platforms and artificial intelligence technologies in developing a culture of peer review. Modern digital tools are able to automate the organizational aspects of peer review, provide analytical data on learning activity, and help students formulate more structured feedback.

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