

Psychological Barriers Connected with the Control and the Assessment of Students' Individual Work

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Аннотация В статье рассматриваются особенности восприятия студентами и преподавателями разных форм оценки и контроля самостоятельной работы студентов, их целенаправленности и мотивации на примере исследований, проведенных в ВГУ. В результате анализа исследований выделены факторы, влияющие на восприятие оценки и контроля самостоятельной работы на психологическую установку.

Ключевые слова. Студентоцентрированное обучение, самостоятельная работа, контроль и его виды, оценка и его функции, восприятие, мотивация, целеполагание, установка, личностное достижение.

Summary

Students' effective independent work and assessment have a great impact on personal specialization. They orient students, contribute to the development of educational motivation. The perception of individual work by students is different. The main barriers are related to how students adjust installations, especially the relationship with the teachers, the monitoring and evaluation policies.

Key words: student-centered learning, individual work, ways of controlling, assessment and its functions, perception, motivation, aims, personal achievements.

Under the reformations of specialized education some priorities have come about which aim at student-centered learning, teaching and assessment.

Within this context the actuation of individual work gains a new connotation: it becomes the primary type of management and fruition of academic process. In the challenges of the third generation of the Bologna process the relation between the auditorium and the individual works should be 30% to 70%. Such approach also suggests role redistribution of the participants of the academic process and in case of which the student is converted from “the doer” to “the creator” in the educational process. In this case he or she can make a choice which promotes the development of self-reflection. The professor’s role changes too: he becomes the organizer and the conductor of the very process and this is reflected in the cooperation with students.

The change in the essence of subject-subject relation and its display in the student’s individual work lead also to the change in assessment as a means of retroaction. Actually, assessment always results in increase of quality used as a tool to measure the obtained knowledge by students. In the case of analyzing the results of students’ individual work it works as a unique indicator of assimilation of professional abilities and it changes its essence becoming continuous.

The mechanical change in the relation between a lecture and individual work can’t result in the needed outcomes if certain management mechanisms are not

arranged for each action, if methods of retroaction and checkup of results are not clearly defined, and if the roles and the responsibilities are not distributed.

Students' individual work qualitatively differs from other types of organizing academic activity if it is problematic and aims at not *implementation* of the process but at *formation* of general and specialized *competences*. The problems related to arrangement of students' individual work, conducting, supporting and providing retroaction is diverse which is conditioned by perception of the concept by participants of individual work. It can be accepted as a way of academic discipline, a tool, a means of organizing and managing a cognitive activity. *From our point of view students' individual work is a problematic situation controlled by methods and planned by a professor, due to which a student gains and enhances knowledge, develops skills of independent orientation in the level of assimilation and practice. It develops student's professional growth, enables them to use creative approach and initiative in display of professional skills.*

Students' perception of individual work is conditioned by a number of circumstances which in some cases occur as barriers. Among them are student's adaptation, attitude, peculiarities of communication with a professor, as well as the existence of supervising and assessing the results and so on.

Students' individual work at VSU is planned at any level of assimilation of academic material, but effectiveness varies. In spite of the fact that the university has legal bases for individual work and the professors has made academic methodological package of individual work for each subject, there are a lot of problems connected with arranging individual work revealed by students. The bases of it are the obstacles in the relationships between a professor and a student, the peculiarities of attaching meaning and value to material by a student, and this may prevent students' orientation, assimilation and so on. The analysis of literature about the psychological peculiarities which affect the productivity of students' individual work shows that it puts emphasis on students' motivation, orientation, targeting, decision making, self-control and self-management. In its turn it leads to development of such qualities as independence, self-confidence, creative approach and so on. But the assessment of individual work as an indicator of individual activity the role of which in students' assimilation of professional skills is underestimated.

The analysis of the results received from VSU Quality Assurance Centre and empiricist experience shows that we can't mechanically change students' individual work; different students from different courses have different attitudes towards perception, the meaning and the importance of individual work in education process.

If the effectiveness of students' individual work is conditioned how a student perceives and attaches meaning, perception of assessment concept of individual work improves the growth of educational motivation and it affects personal orientation.

The following problems are to be discussed by investigators:

- To reveal the factors which affect first-year and fourth-year students' perception of individual work,
- To study the role of assessment in perception of individual work.

The matter of the research is students' individual work.

The subject of the research is the factors affecting students' perception of individual work and the role of assessment in that process.

Interviews and the focus group with the controlling group have been used in the research. In the experimenting group some material has been used like T. Elser's tests on aspiration of personal success and on motivations of escape from failure, A. M Shusber's adapted method and Y. M. Orlova's requirement of reaching a destination.

The results of the research will improve the increase of effectiveness of individual work in professional educational programs:

- For professors - improvement of planning individual work and assessment system
- For students – change of the attitude towards individual work and its evaluation as a means of developing the creative component of educational process and assimilating professional skills.

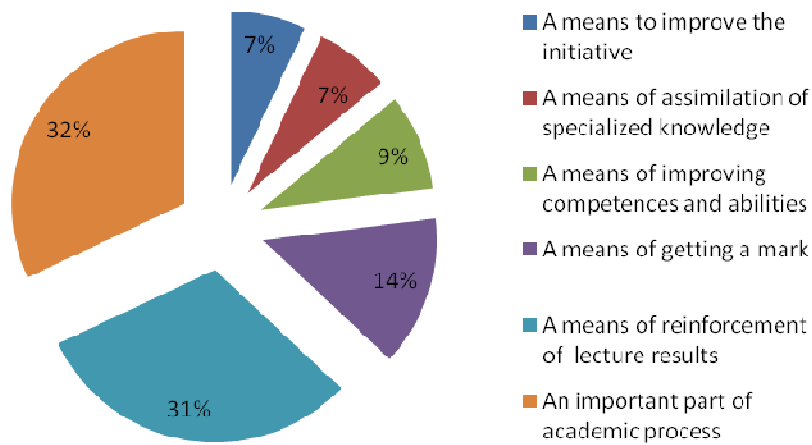
The research has been carried out among first and fourth year students (40 students studying full-time in their Bachelor's degree and 40 students studying in their Master's degree). Approximately 80 people have participated in the survey.

The results and conclusions of the research

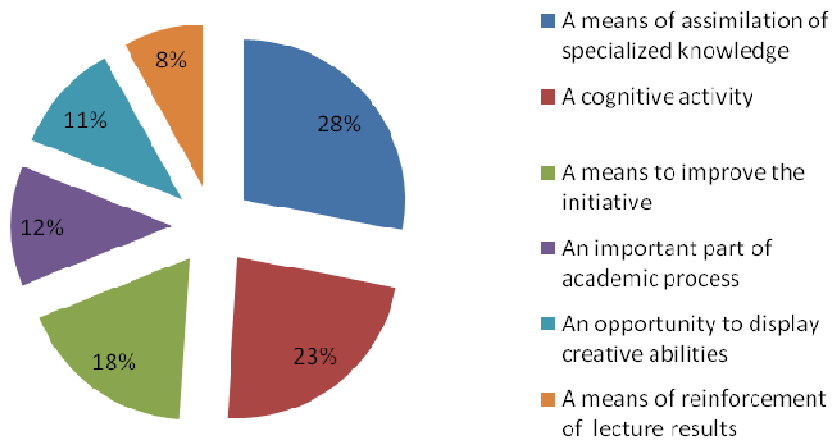
Questionnaire cards have been made by the first-year and the fourth-year students for investigation about perception of the purpose of the individual work. In the questionnaire cards the individual works in the classroom and out of the classroom have been separated. The questionnaire card has comprised three types of questions which were asked before carrying individual work. With the help of a group of questions we have had an aim to find out what kind of factors influence students' perception and expectations of auditorium and extracurricular individual works. In particular, the results and answers are grouped in this way:

Students' perception of the purpose of individual works	I	IV
A means of assimilation of specialized knowledge,	4	18
A cognitive activity,	8	15
An important part of academic process,	18	8
A means to improve the initiative,	4	12
An opportunity to display creative abilities,	5	7
A means of reinforcement of lecture results,	17	5
A means of getting a mark,	16	8
A means of improving competences and abilities	8	7
The number of the choices made by the students	80	80

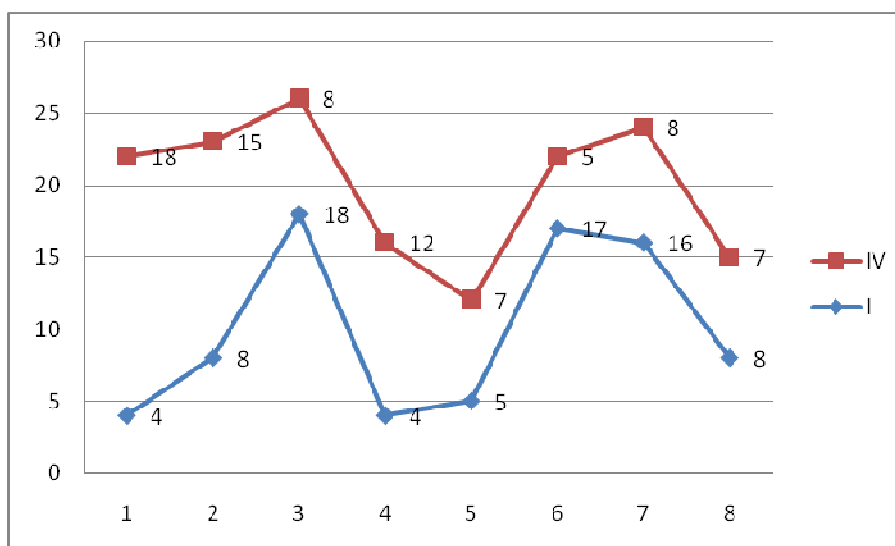
First-year students' perception of individual work



Fourth-year students' perception of individual work



As is seen from the diagrams, individual works are perceived in different ways by the first-year and the fourth-year students.

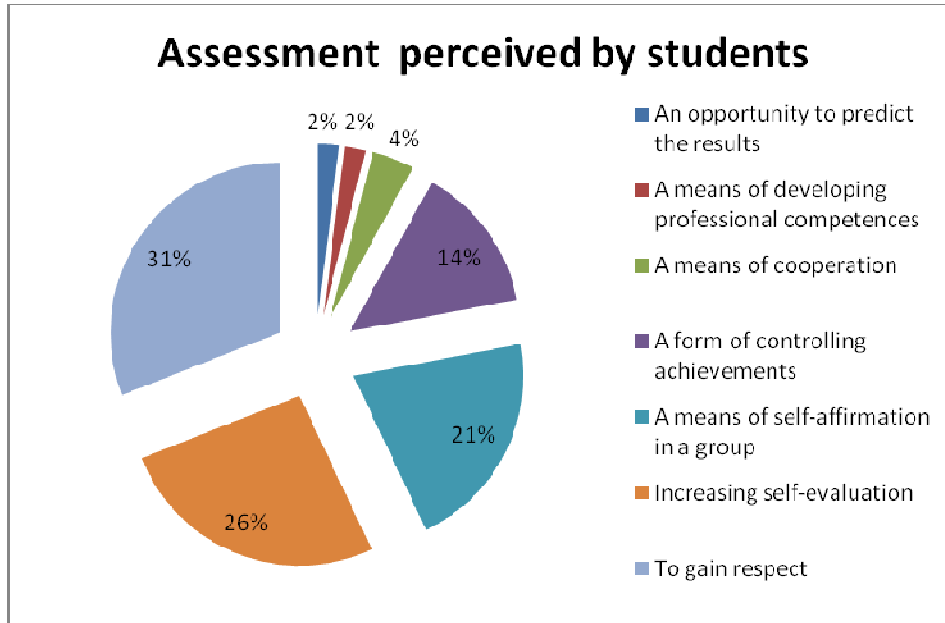


On one hand individual works are an important part of the academic process for 32% of first-year students and a means of reinforcement of lecture results for 31%, on the other hand the meanings change among the fourth-year students: for 28% individual work is a means of assimilation of specialized knowledge and a cognitive activity for 23%, 18% consider it as a means to improve the initiatives. The results show that student's attitude towards the auditorium individual work is closely connected to how he or she perceives professor's advisory, methodical and guiding activities.

Students mainly confront some difficulties in their first year at university when they should be involved in active cognitive process instead of passive reproduction of material, they should express themselves, their opinion, their viewpoint and attach some meaning. In order to reveal the reasons we have used A. M. Shoobert's method of analysis of being vulnerable to risks. As is seen from the results, if students perceive individual works as a condition of ambiguity, they become frustrated and have difficulties orienting in a certain situation. It is proved by the fact that academic motivation is not thoroughly realized as a means of gaining professional skills. It definitely comes from schools. A student is afraid to show independence, he tends to work according to an example or a model. Here marks are of great importance since 31% of the first-year students consider marks as a means of professor's assessment of personal achievements, a means of personal ego's appreciation and maintaining one's position among students, and a means of perception of one's social role by those surrounding them. In fact, external aspirations not cognitive requirements prevail among students when assessment can be regarded as source of motivation which will lead to changes in the attitude towards individual works.

A form of controlling achievements	10
A means of self-affirmation in a group	15
To gain respect	22
A means of cooperation	3

Increasing self-evaluation	18
A means of developing professional competences	1
An opportunity to predict the results	1



The peculiarities of perceiving individual works by the fourth-year students is conditioned by the fact that the students are able to predict results. They emphasize the fact how the very work will influence their future profession.

As is seen from the above mentioned the hierarchy of the first-year students' motives directly affects the perception of individual works. The students who succeed in individual works have not only high motivation but also expectations. Some correction activities have been done with those students, who perceive individual works as an important part of the academic process, which aims at reinforcement of lecture results or assessment. As a result, their awareness has been increased.

Usually the motivation of success is high in the case of the students who get good marks; on the other hand, the students with poor marks have the motivation of "an escape from failure". Expected assessment influences students' perception of the concept and the purpose of individual works, if assessment is motivated and a student shows his interest and motivation which is indicated by initiative and showing creative competences.

The results prove that students' attitude towards an individual work and its perception play a vital role in the process of developing academic motivation. The chain of individual works "perception-motivation-assessment" has a reciprocal relation, has a direct mutual dependency, progress of a factor leads to the others' change and progress.

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