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TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROLES OF UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES TEACHERS IN STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING AND TEACHING

The article deals with the problem of the readiness of Ukrainian academic staff to transform the role of teacher in student centred learning and teaching. Our research was aimed at studying the readiness of Ukrainian teachers to transform the role of teacher in student-centered learning and teaching. Despite the fact that student-centred approach is confirmed both in normative educational documents and in the theory and practice of European higher education, the teachers of Ukrainian universities are not well-informed about the transformation of the teacher's role in student-centred learning. And, consequently, the change of the authoritarian role of the teacher to the delicate support of the individual educational search of each student goes hand in hand with some difficulties. The empirical material of the research was collected by the method of questioning of academic staff from Ukrainian universities and students of the Central Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The results of the study confirmed our hypothesis: Ukrainian university lecturers in the majority of cases are not ready to use flexibly different strategies for interaction with students in order to activate, stimulate and encourage the active educational activities of each student in student-centred learning and teaching.

Key words: academic staff; facilitator; learning; student-centred approach; teacher; teaching.

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Introduction. Student-centred approach to learning and teaching is a fundamental principle of the European Higher Education Area. This principle had been mainstreamed in the strategic documents of the Bologna process, starting with Leuven / Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009), in which it was declared for the first time, and the Paris Communiqué (2018).

Student-centred approach shifts the emphasis in the educational process from teaching (transfer of knowledge) to learning (student's educational activities). The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;

- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods;

- encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher;

- promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;

- has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints (Standards and Guidelines, 2015, p. 12).

The central figure in the educational process is not a teacher as the main source and knowledge transmitter, but a student, who ceases to passively perceive and memorize educational information, but becomes an active participant in the educational process, acts as a full-fledged subject of relations in education, assumes a part of responsibility for teaching. The student is active, has more preference and has the power in a student-centred learning approach (O'Neil and McMahan, 2005). One of

the principles of SCL is developing learners' knowledge by communication, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Accordingly, the role of the teacher changes: he or she creates conditions for the student to have the opportunity to work with his or her experience, develop communicative and organizational skills, plan research activities, make decisions and bear responsibility for them, adapt the educational goal to the personal qualities of each student, activate and stimulates the process of his individual progress in the education system. The teacher changes from the «sage on the stage» to the «guide on the side»; teacher helps to guide the students, manage their activities, and direct their learning (Morrison, 2014, p. 1).

Consequently, the traditional role of the teacher as a mentor and translator of knowledge in student-centred approach is transformed into a facilitator, moderator, tutor, coach who shares the responsibility for learning with their students and focus on their autonomy as learners, encouraging them to «construct» their own meaning through pro-active, independent learning, discovery and reflection (Trends 2015, p.70).

The aim of this article is to analyse the readiness of Ukrainian academic staff to transform the role of teacher in student centred learning and teaching.

It should be noted that these terms have are used in the Ukrainian education in the last decade and they still have no established definitions; there are different definitions of these concepts in scientific works. Facilitation in Ukrainian pedagogical science is treated as a specific type of pedagogical activities of the teacher which aims to assist the learners in their self-actualization, self-improvement and self-esteem, to maintain their commitment to self-development, self-improvement, to promote their personal growth, to disclose their capabilities, cognitive abilities, to actualize their axiological attitude to people, nature, national culture based on setting up the atmosphere of unconditional acceptance, understanding and trust, helpful, humanistic, partnership communication (Halitsan, 2009; Kolomiichenko, 2010; Shevchenko, 2014; Ogienko, 2016).

We are impressed by the understanding of these concepts as the various communication roles of the teacher, as the strategies of his interaction with students, aimed at motivating, stimulating, organizing the activities of students, supporting and assisting them in the educational process at various stages of the educational process. We are committed to the view of D. Wise (2017), who points, both teaching and facilitation are effective instructional techniques, but each is appropriate for particular educational objectives and scenarios. At the stage of introducing new information or instructing students before the practical training of professional skills, the teacher performs a traditional role: organizes, teaches new information, demonstrates and manages student activities.

During students' individual work, the teacher carries out the role of facilitator: advises, adapts the tasks to the personal qualities of each student, creates a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom, which encourages students

to participate in research tasks, activates and stimulates cognitive motives and curiosity of each student. During group work, the teacher activates the analytical and reflective activity of students, develops their communicative abilities and teamwork skills as well as induces the participation and activity of all participants to ensure the students to master the new material during their practical activities, that is, they act as moderators.

Scientific discussion on the role of a teacher within student-centred learning, as noted V. Goodyear and D. Dudley (2015), resulted in the suggestion that teachers find it difficult to be less directive and more facilitative and that teachers often revert to more didactic teaching methods. As a consequence, many questions have remained unanswered about the teacher-as-facilitator. For example, what does it mean to act in more facilitative ways? How does the teacher interact with students in paired or group work activity? What does the teacher do to support learning during lessons? What effect does the teacher-as-facilitator have on learning? (p. 275).

In addition Farrington (1991) also adds that in many practices teachers think that they use SCL, it is still the teacher who controls and directs the learning process instead of facilitating and guiding the process: «there is more rhetoric than reality involved in claims about student-centered learning methods in higher education» (p. 16).

We agree with D. Bayram-Jacobs and F. Hayırsever (2016), who points that it is very important to know the perceptions of the teachers not only of the method of SCL but also the roles of teacher and student, and to detect the misunderstandings about this approach (p. 6). So our research was aimed at studying the readiness of Ukrainian teachers to transform the role of teacher in student-centred learning and teaching. At the beginning of the study, we make a hypothesis: despite the fact that student-centred approach is confirmed both in normative educational documents and in the theory and practice of European higher education, the teachers of Ukrainian universities are not well-informed about the transformation of the role of teacher in student-centred learning. And, consequently, the change of the authoritarian role of the teacher to the delicate support of the individual educational search of each student goes hand in hand with some difficulties and barriers.

Method. The research methodology includes an analysis of questionnaires completed by university lecturers. The empirical material of the research was collected by the method of questioning with the direct participation of the authors. Academic staff from the 7 Universities of Ukraine, as well as scientists from the research institute was interviewed. A total number of 68 respondents were interviewed. Among respondents there were teachers of mathematical, technical, natural and humanitarian sciences. The survey was anonymous, but we asked the respondents to name their work experience in the sphere of pedagogical activity, as well as to note the presence or absence of an academic degree. The results of the distribution of respondents with the reference to these features are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

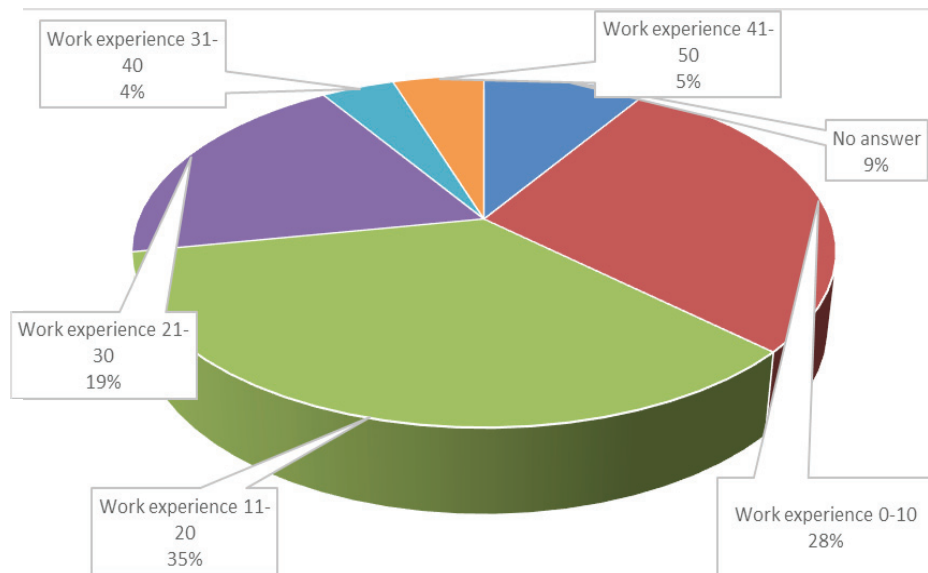


Figure 1. Duration of teaching experience of respondents

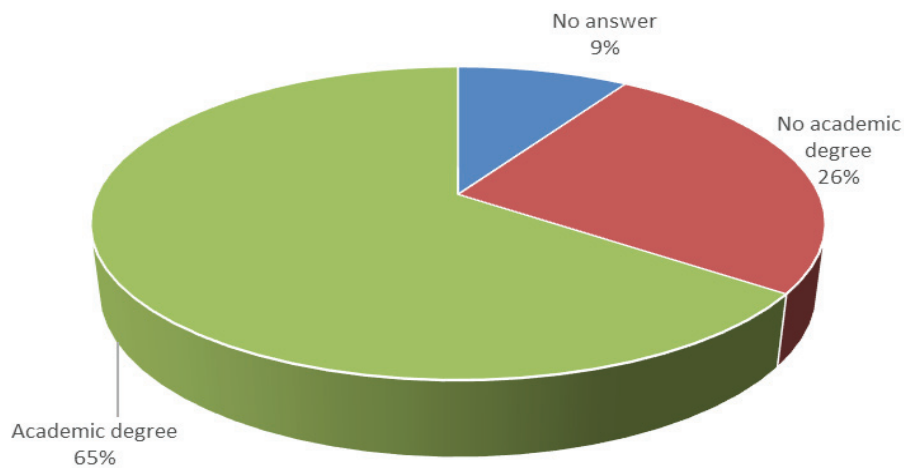


Figure 2. Respondents' academic degree

The respondents were asked questions, grouped in 2 blocks. In the first block, the respondents had to pick up the correct definition (facilitator, moderator and tutor) to the expanded definition. The second block was a question about the difficulties the teachers face during student-centred learning. The respondents were asked

multiple choice questions with a chance to provide their own answer. The survey contained questions allowing an interviewee to choose several answers at once.

Findings and discussion. Infographics of the results based on the first block of questions as presented in Figure 3.

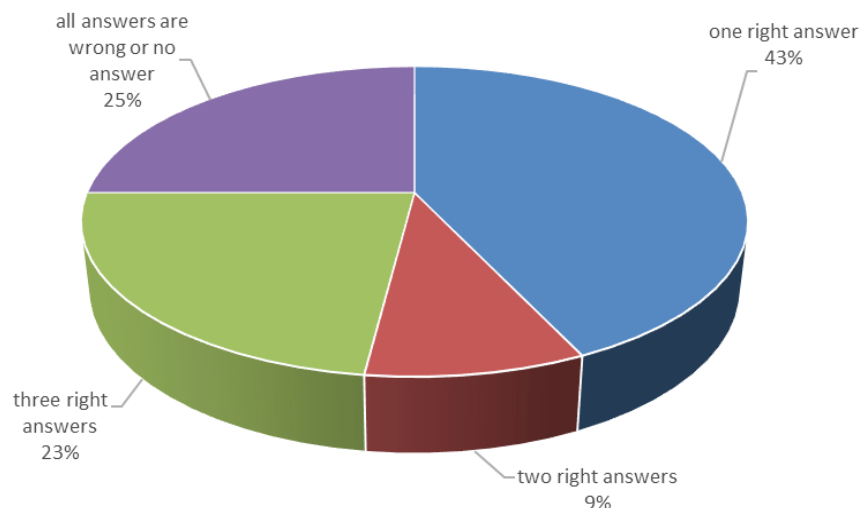


Figure 3. Results of the survey about the definition of the teachers' roles.

So, as the poll showed, only one fourth (23% of respondents) rightly pointed out all three variants of the determinants of the facilitator, the moderator, the tutor, almost half (43%) – only one correct option (the term tutor was used mostly, this definition was correctly called most often), and 25% of respondents were not be able to correctly answer this question. These results allow suggesting that in the majority of the surveyed teachers of Ukrainian universities poorly imagine the differences between the role of traditional teacher from a facilitator, a moderator as well as a tutor in student-centred learning.

However, the definitions correctly named are not the main result of the survey to determine the readiness of

scientific and pedagogical staff of Ukrainian universities to perform different roles in the educational process. In the context of our study, it is more important to investigate the difficulties faced by teachers in the use of active and interactive forms and methods. However, as noted by V. Goodyear and D. Dudley (2015, p. 276), with the reference to the works of their predecessors, teachers may be reluctant to use student-centred approaches due to a limited understanding of how to interact with learners when their role is described as merely that of a facilitator. This misunderstanding causes difficulties in the activities carried out by a teacher in student-centred learning.

The results of this survey, ranked by the number of responses, are presented in Table 2.

Table 1

The results of the survey on difficulties

Difficulties	Number of answers	%
to encourage students with different levels of knowledge and learning opportunities to participate in the educational process	33	48,5
to perform various communication roles of the teacher (facilitator, moderator, tutor)	14	20,5
to organize dialogic interaction	13	19
tactfully and objectively evaluate the level of achievement achieved by students	13	19
students are not ready for such forms of study	9	13
to help students to overcome the difficulties that arise in interpersonal interaction	8	11,7
to take into account the relationships, personal sympathies and antipathies of students when they are grouped together to perform the task	8	11,7
to organize interactive activities with the help of a favourable atmosphere at the lesson	7	10
to manage with unforeseen conflict situations by communicating with students or students between themselves	7	10
to predict the nature of the difficulties of students in the planned system of pedagogical actions	6	8,8
There are no difficulties	6	8,8
Other difficulties (name them)	1	1,4

The results of the survey showed that almost half of the surveyed scientific and educators (48.5%) are having difficulty in engaging students with different levels of knowledge and learning opportunities to participate in the educational process. In our opinion, this result means that it is difficult for teachers to adapt tasks to the personal qualities of each student, to create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom, which encourages students to participate in research tasks, to intensify and stimulate the cognitive motives, curiosity of each student, despite his or her level of knowledge and educational opportunities.

20.5% of respondents admitted that they had difficulty fulfilling the role of facilitator, moderator or tutor in the educational process. However, correlating this result with the answers to the first question block, on which 77% of the interviewed teachers could not name the correct definitions of these roles, we can conclude that the proportion of respondents having trouble in performing

the various roles of the teacher could be greater if they correctly understood the meaning of the concepts.

19% of respondents find it difficult to organize dialogue interaction. This result confirms that the more commonplace for Ukrainian higher education remains unilateral (from teacher to student or working backwards at seminars - from student to teacher) way of communication as the main communicative process in the institution of education and the traditional role of the teacher as «sage on the stage».

19% of the interviewed teachers noted that it is difficult for them to tactfully and objectively evaluate the level of achievement gained by students. Consequently, we can conclude that respondents do not have the skills to formulate an assessment that is aimed to reveal the potential of each student, as well as to involve the diagnosis of unsuccessful results to help them in their individual educational search.

Other variants of responses, which indicate that the

university's scientific and pedagogical staff are not ready to change the teacher's communicative authoritarian role to delicate support for the individual educational search of each student, collected a slightly smaller and roughly equal number of votes (from 8.8% to 13%). Only one respondent (1.4%) chose the answer «other difficulties» and described it as follows: «The basic level of student knowledge is horribly low». And only 8.8% of the respondents stated that they had no communicative difficulties in student-centred learning.

Thus, the results of the study confirmed our hypothesis: Ukrainian university lecturers in the majority of cases are not ready to use flexibly different strategies for interaction with students in order to activate, stimulate and encourage the active educational activities of each student in student-centred learning and teaching.

As the authors of the analytical report «Empowering Teachers for A Student-Centred Approach» (Marinko et al, 2016) note, the transformation teachers' role to a facilitator in a student-centred teaching and learning goes hand in hand with some difficulties and serious threats. A teacher should know the scientific area, be acquainted with pedagogy and didactics, know how to prepare study materials, make connections with libraries and employers, and be an ideal facilitator (this role requires additional knowledge). Teachers do not receive all this during their studies and it is also difficult for them to acquire this knowledge in the first year of their work. There are not enough development programs for university teachers. Teachers' salaries have not improved in the majority of countries that were faced with the economic crisis while teachers should work more and get more training (p. 161).

These findings are confirmed by D. Bayram-Jacobs and F. Hayirsever (2016). The researchers think that the disadvantages of or barriers to using SCL approaches may arise if a teacher cannot perform his / her roles related to the planning, guiding and leading of the learning process. As a disadvantage and difficulty to this approach they mentioned that it takes long time. Among the other disadvantages the researchers noted high number of students in a class, inadequate instruments to use, economic reasons and the difficulties related to planning and applying SCL (p. 10). Y. Gibadullina (2016) adds conservatism of the teachers, the dominance of traditional knowledge-oriented technologies over activity-competence, as well as low social and creative activity of a significant part of students.

These studies support our hypothesis: transformation of the role of the teacher in student-centered approach goes hand in hand with some difficulties, disadvantages and barriers.

Conclusion. The study we conducted showed that in the majority of the Ukrainian academic staff poorly imagine the differences between the role of traditional teacher from a facilitator, a moderator as well as a tutor in student-centred learning; face difficulties in the use of active and interactive forms and methods; find it difficult to organize dialogue interaction with the students. The results obtained in this paper will be used in further research on the development of training programmes for continuing professional development of academic staff to enhance teaching quality and to change the teacher's authoritarian role to delicate support for the individual educational search of each student.

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ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ РОЛЕЙ НАУКОВО-ПЕДАГОГІЧНИХ ПРАЦІВНИКІВ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІВ У СТУДЕНТОЦЕНТРОВАНОМУ НАВЧАННІ ТА ВИКЛАДАННІ

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У статті розглядається проблема готовності до трансформації ролі викладача в студентоцентрованому навчанні та викладанні. Незважаючи на те, що студентоцентрований підхід утверджений як у нормативних освітніх документах, так і в теорії та практиці європейської вищої освіти, викладачі українських університетів не надто інформовані про трансформацію ролі викладача в студентоцентрованому навчанні та викладанні. І отже, зміна авторитарної ролі вчителя на делікатну підтримку індивідуального навчального пошуку кожного студента йде рука об руку з деякими труднощами. Емпіричний матеріал дослідження був зібраний методом опитування викладачів з українських університетів. Респондентам були запропоновані питання, згруповані у 2 блоки. У першому блоці опитані мали підібрати правильну дефініцію (фасилітатора, модератора, тьютора) до розгорнутого визначення. Другий блок складала запитання щодо труднощів, з якими викладачі зустрічаються в умовах студентоцентрованого навчання. Результати дослідження підтвердили: більшість опитаних науково-педагогічних працівників українських університетів погано уявляють відмінності традиційної ролі викладача від фасилітатора, модератора, тьютора, вони не готові гнучко використовувати різні стратегії взаємодії зі студентами з метою активізації, стимулювання та заохочення активної навчальної діяльності кожного студента, а також зазнають труднощів з використання студентоцентрованого підходу в освітньому процесі; більш звичним для української вищої освіти залишається односторонній (від викладача до студента на лекціях або в зворотному напрямку – від студента до викладача – на семінарських заняттях) спосіб передачі інформації як головний комунікативний процес у закладі освіти

Ключові слова: викладання; викладач; навчання; науково-педагогічні працівники; студентоцентрований підхід; фасилітатор.

ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ РОЛЕЙ НАУЧНО-ПЕДАГОГІЧЕСКИХ РАБОТНИКОВ УКРАИНСКИХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТОВ В СТУДЕНТОЦЕНТРИЧЕСКОМ ОБУЧЕНИИ И ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ

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В статье рассматривается проблема готовности к трансформации роли преподавателя в студентоцентрическом обучении и преподавании. Несмотря на то, что студентоцентрический подход утверждён как в нормативных образовательных документах, так и в теории и практике европейского высшего образования, преподаватели украинских университетов не слишком осведомлены о трансформации роли преподавателя в студентоцентрическом обучении и преподавании. И, следовательно, изменение авторитарной роли преподавателя на деликатную поддержку индивидуального учебного поиска каждого студента идет рука об руку с некоторыми трудностями. Эмпирический материал исследования был собран методом опроса преподавателей из украинских университетов. Результаты исследования подтвердили: большинство опрошенных научно-педагогических работников украинских университетов плохо представляют отличие традиционной роли преподавателя от фасилитатора, модератора, тьютора, они не готовы гибко использовать различные стратегии взаимодействия со студентами с целью активизации, стимулирования и поощрения активной учебной деятельности каждого студента, а также испытывают трудности по использованию студентоцентрического подхода в образовательном процессе; более привычным для украинского высшего образования остается односторонний (от преподавателя к студенту на лекциях или в обратном направлении – от студента к преподавателю – на семинарских занятиях) способ передачи информации как главный коммуникативный процесс в учебном заведении.

Ключевые слова: научно-педагогические работники; обучение; преподавание; преподаватель; студентоцентрический подход; фасилитатор.

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