

COGNITIVE INDEPENDENCE AS A BASIS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Novikova Irina Yuryevna,

senior lecturer, Chelyabinsk State Agroengineering Academy,
post-graduate student, Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University

i.t-novikova@mail.ru

The goal of Russian education today is a highly qualified specialist who is competent not only within the professional field of activity but also in adjacent areas. He is also to be an active, initiative and independent personality ready for lifelong learning. It is vital as success in career of everyone greatly depends on the ability and aspiration to self-development and self-improvement.

A person is not born as a personality. The process of becoming a personality is complicated, long-continued and controversial. The main characteristic feature of this process is the dialectical transition of quantitative changes into qualitative characteristics (physical, mental and spiritual).

“Personality” is a social characteristic of a person. To become a personality means to acquire certain qualities during the process of socialization. Thus, a person integrates into a social system adapting to the conditions of this system (social experience, values, norms, attitudes and behavior patterns). In addition a person’s socialization means the process of self-actualization (self-concept), self-realization, creativity and therefore self-development, with the socialization conditions being the result of environmental factors interacting at all levels.

Socialization has a lifelong character: a person finds himself in some continuously changing social circumstances, being involved in some new kinds of activity and relations. Thus, a person performs different social roles, obtaining new social experience and living within already adopted social relations essential for the social environment. Socialization is social likening with a person’s further increasing autonomy (individualization).

If a person's interaction with the environment is particularly organized and therefore forwards personality development, another factor comes into effect. It's education as a pedagogical process which also has its definite social function. Education (training) regulates the influences of the society on a person and at the same time creates favorable conditions for personality formation, development and socialization. Thus, education (training) may be characterized as a process of deliberate and consciously controlled socialization.

All sides of a personality are revealed and formed only due to activity and relations with other people. According to this regularity a person is to be considered not as a passive object but as a subject interacting with the environment and other subjects. To develop a personality in a person's his activities are essential, the character of these activities and attitudes to his own self and the world around being very important because a personality is developed within a social system.

In the process of education a personality is also developed through activities when learning and acquiring knowledge (cognitive activities). A person's ability to think productively to solve non-standard problems, the aspiration to independence, self-organization and self-realization during the educational process depend on the level of independence development.

As for independence, it is not an inborn characteristic and develops in the process of a person's growth when he is involved in different types of activity. While studying at a higher educational institution, independence develops mainly in learning (through cognition, comprehension, adoption and application of acquired knowledge and the skills essential for the mankind) as a series of discoveries of something new and previously unknown. Thus, a person becomes independent in cognition and develops his cognitive independence.

As an integrative quality of a personality cognitive independence means the stable interest in cognition and activities brought about by this interest. They are realized in cognitive search caused by a continuous pursuit of knowledge to transform the world around.

Cognitive independence may be characterized in two ways. First, it encompasses the whole set of all means – knowledge and skills – which are acquired and adopted by a person, and, secondly, a person's attitude to cognitive activity itself as well as to the conditions of its implementation and outcome.

A person can develop cognitive independence only through activities, the activity approach being an indispensable condition of forming, developing and functioning of any personality characteristics.

In developing students' cognitive independence a teacher plays an important role. A teacher is not only to have a profound knowledge of the subject and be able to teach, but also to ensure extensive knowledge, depending on the level of students' independence in studying the subject. Thus, the main tasks of a teacher are the subtle and proper management of educational situations on the whole through using various forms of interaction between all participants to achieve the educational goals; skillful stimulation of each student to participate in setting goals and objectives, solving problems and analysing the results.

Provided a teacher's appropriate influence by means of directed and considered activities and a precisely formulated set of didactic purposes, students acquire knowledge and master their competence at the level necessary to solve cognitive tasks. This develops critical, productive and creative thinking that favorably affects the development of students' personalities and their independence, including the ability to realize their potentials in a range of situations throughout life. But this is impossible without a continuous search for knowledge formed during the process of education and realized in lifelong learning. In other words this is impossible without cognitive independence that helps specialists to be mobile as it is the key to their success in life.