The Psychological and Pedagogical Block: From Theory to the Practice of Facilitation

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Annotation

In this article I show how the psychological-pedagogical block of teacher preparation must be restructured in the CCFP paradigm. My key thesis: the traditional psychological-pedagogical block, focused on the transmission of theoretical knowledge about pedagogy and psychology, must give way to practice-oriented preparation in which the student masters the art of facilitation - the creation of conditions in which students themselves arrive at understanding through thinking. Drawing on the CCFP model presented in previous issues of the series, on current research of 2024-2026, as well as on the principles of dialogic pedagogy and the facilitative approach, I substantiate that the teacher of the new formation is not a "transmitter of knowledge" and not a "classroom manager," but a facilitator of development. I show that the activity of the facilitator is the practical realization of the zone of proximal development (L.S. Vygotsky) and the designing of a "rich cognitive niche" (A. Clark, K. Sterelny), in which priority is given to the development of the mechanisms of the core. I propose concrete principles for the restructuring of psychological-pedagogical disciplines, show how theory becomes an instrument of practice, and substantiate that the psychological-pedagogical block must be not an "addition" to subject preparation, but its core.

Keywords: psychological-pedagogical block, facilitation, dialogic pedagogy, practice-oriented learning, zone of proximal development, cognitive niche, group dynamics, psychological safety, unique abilities, teacher preparation.

Introduction: Why Theory Without Practice Is Dead

In previous articles of this series I substantiated that the pedagogical university must prepare not a "subject specialist," but an "architect of thinking" [1], that the core of his competence is the eleven mental mechanisms [2], that without diagnostics he works blindly [3], and that subject preparation must be restructured - the subject ceases to be a goal and becomes a means of developing thinking [4]. Now I must turn to what in the traditional structure of the pedagogical university is called the "psychological-pedagogical block." These are the disciplines that must give the future teacher an understanding of how the psyche of the student is structured, how the pedagogical process works, and how to build relations with the class. And here I encounter a fundamental problem. In most pedagogical universities the psychological-pedagogical block is theory divorced from practice. Students study developmental psychology, pedagogical psychology, the theory of upbringing, and pedagogical technologies. They pass examinations and write term papers. But when they come to the classroom, they do not know what to do with this knowledge. It is like a person who has learned from a textbook how to swim, knows all the styles, all the movements, all the theories - but, having found himself in the water, sinks to the bottom. Knowledge about swimming is not the ability to swim.

As a 2025 study devoted to the diagnostic competencies of future teachers shows, the ability to effectively assess learning situations is not an abstract requirement, but a "critically important component of professional competencies... especially in the diagnostics of learning difficulties and the potential of students in heterogeneous classes" [7]. This ability is not formed through lectures - it requires practice-oriented formats that "overcome the gap between pedagogical education and professional practice" [7]. That is precisely why I insist: the psychological-pedagogical block must be restructured. It must cease to be "theory about children" and become the practice of working with children. It must cease to be "knowledge about pedagogy" and become the art of facilitation. Without this block, turned into practice, an exit from the "epistemological trap" is impossible [6], when the teacher reproduces only those methods by which he himself was taught. It is like the well-known parable of the centipede that thought

about how it walks and unlearned how to walk. A teacher who knows only theory but has not practiced it finds himself in the position of such a centipede: he knows "how it should be done," but cannot do it.

What Facilitation Is and Why It Becomes the Teacher's Central Competence

I introduce this concept not by chance. "Facilitation" (from the English "facilitate" - to ease, to help, to promote) is the art of creating conditions in which other people can work, learn and develop effectively. In the context of education pedagogical facilitation is the teacher's ability to create an environment in which students independently arrive at understanding through thinking; ask questions and seek answers; argue constructively and listen to each other; are not afraid of mistakes and learn from them; and develop their unique abilities. Drawing on the theory of L.S. Vygotsky (Issue 3, Art. 9), one can say that the facilitator is the one who organizes the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). He does not simply give knowledge, but creates scaffolding (supports) allowing the student to take a step that he cannot yet take independently. It is like the scaffolding around a building: it is not part of the building, but without it the building cannot be constructed. The facilitator is the one who erects and removes this scaffolding at the right moment, when the student can already stand on his own.

As a 2025 study emphasizes, "the role of educators in contemporary education is increasingly shifting from traditional instruction to facilitation, which requires the development of facilitative competencies for the creation of an engaging, student-centered educational environment" [8]. The study also confirms that "pedagogical facilitation" is an effective approach to the development of "critical and creative thinking, problem-solving skills and metacognition" in students. Moreover, "the implementation of facilitation technologies in pedagogical education is an effective approach to strengthening the professional preparation of students" [10]. How does the facilitator differ from the traditional teacher? The traditional teacher transmits knowledge - the facilitator creates the conditions for its discovery. The traditional teacher explains - the facilitator asks questions (MM-5). The traditional teacher controls - the facilitator accompanies. The traditional teacher assesses the result - the facilitator works with the process. The traditional teacher works with the class as a whole - the facilitator works with the uniqueness of each. The traditional teacher gives answers - the facilitator helps to find answers. This is not simply a change of methods. It is a change of position. A change of optics. A change of the very way of being in the classroom.

Researchers distinguish the key characteristics of the facilitator-teacher: "the ability to hear the student, the encouragement of independent thinking, and the ensuring of motivation" [14]. As a study conducted in Turkey notes, an effective facilitator occupies a "facilitative, and not a directive role, giving priority to open, multi-voiced dialogue emphasizing critical reasoning, the evaluation of sources and reflective inquiry" [13]. It is precisely such a role - facilitative, and not directive - that must become central in the preparation of the teacher of the new formation. It is like the difference between a conductor and a musician: the conductor does not play the instruments, but creates the conditions in which the orchestra sounds. So too the facilitator: he does not "play" for the students, but creates the space in which their thinking can sound in full force.

From Theory to Practice: How to Restructure the Psychological-Pedagogical Disciplines

If facilitation is the central competence, then the psychological-pedagogical block must be restructured so that the student not simply "knows about facilitation," but is able to facilitate. I propose five key directions of this restructuring. The first is from "lectures about psychology" to "living through psychological processes." Traditional psychology in the pedagogical university is lectures about how the psyche is structured, how age crises proceed, and how memory and attention work. The student knows the theory, but does not know how to apply it in the classroom. The new logic: the student must not simply know about age crises, but live through them via role-playing games, case analysis, and reflection on his own experience. He must not simply know about memory and attention, but diagnose them in students and design tasks that develop them, with an accent on MM-4 and MM-10. What changes? The course "Developmental Psychology" includes not only theory, but also the practice of observing children of different ages, the analysis of video recordings of lessons, and the solving of cases. The course "Pedagogical Psychology" includes not only knowledge of theories of learning, but also the practice of designing learning situations that take psychological regularities into account. The course "Psychology of the Development of Thinking" becomes central - students study how mental mechanisms are formed in ontogenesis and learn to diagnose their level.

The second direction is from the "theory of upbringing" to the "practice of managing group dynamics." Traditional pedagogy is theories of upbringing, methods, forms, and means. The student knows what a "collective" is, but does

not know how to manage group dynamics in a real classroom. The new logic: the student must be able to see group dynamics, to understand it, and to influence it. He must be able to create a psychologically safe environment in which students are not afraid to make mistakes, to ask questions, and to express their opinion. What changes? The course "Theory of Upbringing" includes the practice of observing group dynamics, the analysis of conflict situations, and training in classroom management. The course "Pedagogical Technologies" includes not only "methods," but also "how to create an environment in which the methods work." A course "Group Dynamics and Facilitation" is introduced - practice-oriented, with role-playing games, trainings, and analysis of real situations. Researchers emphasize that "the successful development of critical and creative thinking abilities requires a balanced approach combining structured support systems, innovative pedagogical strategies and technological infrastructure" [7]. The practice of managing group dynamics is precisely that "structured system of support" which allows the facilitator to work effectively. Without it the classroom turns into an ungovernable element where each pulls in his own direction, and no thinking can develop.

The third direction is from "methodologies" to "facilitative practices." Traditional methodology is "how to explain the topic," "how to conduct a lesson," and "how to assess." The student knows the structure of the lesson, but does not know how to adapt it to the real situation in the classroom. The new logic: the student must be able to read the situation in the classroom and to adapt his actions in real time. He must be able to ask questions that deepen understanding (MM-6 as the basis for MM-5), to organize debates (MM-7), and to create situations for forecasting (MM-11). What changes? The course "Methodology of Teaching" includes not only the "structure of the lesson," but also "how to facilitate dialogue," "how to organize group work," and "how to ask open questions." Practical modules are introduced: "The Art of the Question," "Facilitation of Discussion," and "Management of Group Work." Students practice micro-teaching with feedback from instructors and fellow students. A 2025 study conducted at the Universidad de Tarapacá showed that such pedagogical actions as "the formulation of open questions, the use of Socratic dialogue, the modeling of a skeptical position and the application of inquiry methodologies" contribute to the activation of the skills of inference, analysis and explanation in future teachers [12]. It is precisely these actions - not "methodological devices," but facilitative practices - that must become the center of preparation. It is like the difference between a craftsman and an artist: the craftsman knows how to make a thing according to a model, the artist knows how to create a thing that has not yet existed. The facilitator is an artist of the pedagogical process.

The fourth direction is from "assessment" to "feedback." Traditional pedagogy teaches one to assess - to put marks, to check works, and to assign points. The student knows how to assess, but does not know how to give developmental feedback. The new logic: the student must be able to give feedback that helps the student to grow, and not simply "to know his grade." He must be able to formulate feedback so that it is concrete, constructive, and supportive. What changes? The course "Pedagogical Assessment" includes not only "how to put grades," but also "how to give feedback." Practices of formative assessment are introduced - students learn to give feedback in real time, in the process of learning. Students practice analyzing student works from the point of view not of "right/wrong," but of "what works, what can be improved, and how." Researchers emphasize: "formative assessment" effectively improves critical thinking skills [7]. And feedback is the main instrument of formative assessment. It is like a mirror for the student: he sees himself not in the distorted reflection of a grade, but in the precise and benevolent reflection of his actions and possibilities.

The fifth direction is from "work with the class" to "work with uniqueness." Traditional pedagogy is oriented toward the "average student." The student learns to work with the class as a single whole. But in a real classroom every student is unique - each has his own pace, his own strengths, and his own difficulties. The new logic: the student must be able to see the uniqueness of each student, to diagnose his strengths (MM-10 - spatial imagination, MM-11 - forecasting), and to use them as a "point of entry" for the development of all the other mechanisms. What changes? The course "Individualization of Learning" becomes central - students learn to identify the unique abilities of students and to build individual trajectories. Students practice diagnosing the strengths of students and designing tasks that "enter" through these strengths. Practices of working with "difficult" students are introduced - not as with a "problem," but as with a "uniqueness that requires a special approach." As I already showed in article 5 of Issue 1, "individualization through unique abilities" is the key principle of the CCFP model [5]. And this principle must become the core of psychological-pedagogical preparation.

Dialogic Pedagogy as the Basis of Facilitation

I want to single out a special approach which, in my view, must become the basis of facilitative preparation - dialogic pedagogy. Dialogic pedagogy is an approach in which instruction is built not as the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, but as a dialogue in which both sides learn, both sides change, and both sides grow. Dialogic teaching is defined as "a pedagogy that encourages student talk in order to expand and challenge critical thinking and to promote the co-construction of knowledge" [11]. In a study published in the journal *Language and Dialogue*, it is shown that the integration of dialogic teaching and online discussion forums "contributed to a deeper understanding of the course content and the creation of an atmosphere of cooperation both in face-to-face and in online discussion" [11]. Separately, researchers emphasize the role of the facilitator: "teachers play a vitally important role as guides and facilitators of dialogue in order to strengthen the processes of students' critical thinking" [10].

What does this mean for the preparation of the teacher? The student must master the art of dialogue: to be able to ask open questions that deepen understanding (MM-6 as the basis for MM-5 - Socratic dialogue); to be able to reformulate and clarify in order to check understanding; to be able to create a safe space where students are not afraid to speak out; to be able to manage a group discussion so that it is productive, and not chaotic; to be able to listen - not only to words, but also to subtext, not only to content, but also to emotions. In a study presented at the ECER 2025 conference, the action-reflection cycle is introduced as "a dynamic process that impels educational professionals to continuous introspection and adaptation of their practices in order to support the development of students' critical thinking" [9]. The student must not simply know about dialogue - he must practice it, reflect on his practice, and improve it. It is like the Eastern parable of how a student asked the master: "How much time is needed to become a master?" The master answered: "If you try, then ten years. If you try very hard, then twenty. And if you think that you have already become a master, then never." Dialogue is not something that can be "learned" once and for all. It is a practice that must be practiced throughout one's life.

Psychological Safety as a Condition of Development

I must also speak of what often remains outside the framework of pedagogical programs - psychological safety. Psychological safety is a state in which a person is not afraid to make mistakes, to ask questions, to express his opinion, and to be himself. Without psychological safety the development of thinking is impossible - because thinking requires risk, requires trials, and requires mistakes. As I already showed in article 8 of Issue 1, "the culture of the fear of error is one of the main reasons why schools do not develop thinking" [6]. And this culture is created (or not created) by the teacher. What does this mean for the preparation of the teacher? The student must understand what psychological safety is and why it is important; how to create a psychologically safe environment in the classroom; how to react to students' mistakes so that they are not afraid to make them; and how to manage his own fear of error, because a teacher who is afraid of making mistakes cannot create a safe environment for students. How is this trained? Through reflection on one's own experience - the student recalls situations when he was afraid to make a mistake and analyzes what helped and what hindered. Through role-playing games - the student tries different ways of reacting to mistakes and sees their effect. Through the analysis of video recordings of lessons - the student sees how different teachers react to mistakes and evaluates which reactions create safety and which create fear. Through practice in the school - the student tries to create a safe environment and receives feedback.

A 2025 study devoted to the formation of the facilitator of dialogic teaching shows that the key condition is "the creation of a trusting environment in which ideas can be freely shared and explored" [11]. Without trust there is no dialogue. Without safety there is no thinking. Psychological safety is not "softness," it is a necessary condition for the formation of the core of mental mechanisms. It is like the soil for a plant: without it the seed will not sprout, no matter how much we water it. A teacher who creates psychological safety is a gardener who prepares the soil, and not one who pulls the plant upward, forcing it to grow faster.

Working with Unique Abilities: From Diagnostics to Development

I have already spoken of this in previous articles, but here I must repeat it with special emphasis. Working with unique abilities is not an "additional" task of the teacher. It is the central task of the facilitator. As I showed in article 5 of Issue 1, "some children have abilities for music, others for dance, others for mathematics, and still others for working with wood or metal. And it is precisely through the prism of these identified unique abilities that each individual child will have the opportunity to develop the other mental mechanisms" [5]. This is precisely the

designing of a "rich cognitive niche" for a concrete child (Issue 3, Art. 13). What does this mean for the preparation of the teacher? The student must be able to identify the unique abilities of students through observation, diagnostics, and dialogue; to use these abilities as a "point of entry" for the development of the other mechanisms, above all those of the core; and to design individual trajectories - not "identical tasks for all," but tasks that "enter" through the strengths of the student. How is this trained? Through the diagnostics of one's own unique abilities - the student first identifies his strengths and learns to use them as a "point of entry." Through the analysis of student works - the student learns to see in the works of students the manifestations of their unique abilities. Through the design of individual tasks - the student learns to create tasks that take different strengths into account. Through practice in the school - the student tries to work with uniqueness and receives feedback. Researchers emphasize: "the ability to effectively assess learning situations is a critical component of teachers' professional competencies, especially in the diagnostics of learning difficulties and the potential of students in heterogeneous classes" [7]. It is precisely this ability - to see potential, and not only difficulties - that distinguishes the facilitator from the traditional teacher. It is like the well-known metaphor of how important it is to see in a child not a "vessel that must be filled," but a "torch that must be kindled." But in order to kindle a torch, one must know where the wick is - that is, one must see the uniqueness of each student.

The Role of Practice in Psychological-Pedagogical Preparation

I have already spoken of practice in article 4 [4], but here I must repeat it with special emphasis. The psychological-pedagogical block cannot be only theoretical. It must include intensive practice in which the student lives through those processes that he will have to facilitate. What formats of practice are needed? Trainings of facilitative skills - students practice asking questions, managing discussion, and giving feedback in a safe environment. Role-playing games and simulations - students play the roles of teacher, student, and observer, and analyze their actions and the actions of others. Micro-teaching - students conduct short lessons (10-15 minutes) before a group, receive feedback, and analyze video recordings. Analysis of video recordings of lessons - students watch recordings of real lessons and analyze which facilitative practices work and which do not. Reflective sessions - students regularly reflect on their practice, analyze their successes and difficulties, and plan the next steps. A 2025 study confirms the effectiveness of such formats. The micro-teaching model "Practice-Feedback-Journal" effectively develops critical thinking in future teachers. And "reflective self-assessment and collaborative project work" are key elements of the development of critical thinking [7]. Practice is not an "appendix" to theory. It is its continuation. It is the place where theory becomes alive. Without practice theory remains dead weight. With practice it becomes an instrument.

What the Graduate Must Know and Be Able to Do: The Psychological-Pedagogical Aspect

I conclude this article with a concrete answer to the question: what must the graduate of the pedagogical university know and be able to do in the psychological-pedagogical aspect? He must know how the psyche of the student is structured at different age periods; how mental mechanisms are formed in ontogenesis (with an accent on the core); what facilitation is and how it differs from traditional teaching; how group dynamics work and how to manage it; what psychological safety is and how to create it; and how to diagnose the unique abilities of students. He must be able to create a psychologically safe environment in the classroom; to ask open questions that deepen understanding (MM-5, MM-6); to organize and facilitate group discussions and debates (MM-7); to give developmental feedback; to diagnose the unique abilities of students and to use them as a "point of entry"; to manage group dynamics - to see, to understand, and to influence; to reflect on his own practice and to correct it on the basis of reflection; and to be in dialogue - with students, with colleagues, and with himself. Researchers emphasize that "these pedagogical practices help to create favorable conditions for the development of critical thinking in pedagogical education" [12]. This means that critical thinking must not be "added" to the program, but systematically integrated into it through concrete pedagogical actions. It is like learning a language: one cannot learn a language only by reading a textbook. One must speak it, make mistakes, correct them, and speak again. So too with facilitation: one cannot learn to facilitate only by listening to lectures about facilitation. One must facilitate, reflect, and facilitate again.

Conclusion: From Theory to the Practice of Facilitation

I want to end this article by returning to its title. The psychological-pedagogical block must cease to be theory about children and become the practice of working with children. It must cease to be knowledge about pedagogy and become the art of facilitation. This does not mean that theory is not needed. Theory is needed - but not as an end in itself, but as an instrument for understanding practice. The student must know how the psyche is structured in order

to understand what is happening in the classroom. He must know theories of learning in order to choose adequate strategies. But this knowledge must be embedded in practice, and not exist separately from it. Research confirms: "pedagogical facilitation" is an effective approach to the development of "critical and creative thinking, problem-solving skills and metacognition" [9]. And this approach must become the basis of psychological-pedagogical preparation. It is precisely such preparation that I propose. Not "a teacher who knows pedagogy and psychology." But a "facilitator" for whom psychological-pedagogical knowledge is an instrument for creating conditions in which students develop their thinking, their unique abilities, and their personality. This is a necessary condition for the teacher to become a genuine "architect of thinking" and to be able to launch an ascending epistemological recursion [8]. In the next article I will show how the practice and internship of future teachers must be organized - the school as a laboratory, and not a proving ground.

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