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**STANDARDIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITY IN TEACHING:
INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEACHER
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

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Abstract

The paper presents comparative study of teacher professional standards in Singapore, England, Scotland, Canada (Ontario) and Russia. The similarities and differences in teacher practice standardization and content of standards have been revealed. The generalized teacher competencies from all the standards studied have been determined. Prospective lines for development of teacher practice standardization in Russia are presented. The generalized teacher competencies reflect: teacher's role in creating learning environment and learning community; understanding of school life, ability to plan learning process and teach using adequate teaching methods; knowledge of legislation and regulatory documents in education area; ability to develop education programs.

Russian teacher standards do not pay enough attention to: research and scientific activity of a teacher; teacher's responsibility to upgrade his or her professional qualification and develop professionally; responsibility to make reports on student development; requirement to upgrade and actualize the subject knowledge; developing teacher leadership and active communication with colleagues.

The study of pedagogical education standardization and comparative analysis of trends in this sphere in the countries studied compared to trends in Russia is of great interest to research in order to determine future perspectives of pedagogical education development. The study results also allow determining the components of the standardization from the point of freedom and responsibility of a teacher in respect of his/her professional practice. Thus the standardization of teacher practice and education at large are considered in a single context as an instrument of modern education quality development across the nation and the world.

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1. Introduction

The comparative study of teacher practice standardization becomes challenging due to the introduction of teacher professional standard in Russia and changes in education paradigm – orientation to the system activity approach in education. The study of teacher professional standards in Singapore, England, Scotland and Canada are of special interest for Russian educators. Singapore education system is recognized as a unique phenomenon. The consulting company McKinsey called it the most effective system in the world in 2008 emphasizing the teacher education system. In England recently (in 2012) new teacher standards were introduced. In Scotland also within last decades the fundamental research was conducted on different elements of education system, and new teacher professional standards appeared. Canada used to place high in PISA studies since 2000 with the Province of Ontario showing best results (Measuring up: Canadian results, 2015; Program for International Student Assessment, 2016).

In Russia the teacher practice standardization takes place as a part of system changes targeting education quality development and teacher education modernization. Similar processes take place in other countries. For example, the Teaching and Learning International Study report in OECD countries (Uchitel kak spetsialist, 2012) points to the fact that unconnected steps of reforms in teacher practice and training are insufficient. There is a need in a system of efforts such as stepping up the requirements for teachers; improvement of working conditions and pay rates for teachers; development of teacher appraisal system including career and professional development opportunities for teachers. It is particularly noted in the report that raising teacher autonomy may cause loss in education quality if teacher education quality is not good enough. The main point is that best results are attained by those systems that introduce clear and accurate criteria of what teachers must know and be able to do within their subject area.

2. Problem Statement

The study problem is to reveal similarities and differences in approaches to teacher practice standardization; outline the balance between freedom and responsibility of a teacher; define generalized teacher competencies from all the standards studied; derive prospective lines for development of teacher practice standardization in Russia.

3. Research Questions

1. Determine the targets of teacher professional practice standardization in chosen countries.
2. Distinguish similarities and differences in requirements to teachers and their professional responsibilities.
3. Reveal prospective lines for development of teacher practice standardization in Russia.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to compare the requirements for teacher practice in Singapore, England, Scotland, Canada (Ontario) and Russia – countries where the teacher professional standards are implemented.

5. Research Methods

The research methods are: comparative analysis of the regulatory documents and practical issues related to the teacher practice standardization in several countries; generalization and systemization of their experience.

6. Findings

In Singapore the Teaching Competency Model plays a role of teacher professional standard helping teachers to bring to light their strengths and weaknesses in order to keep up high quality of teaching and self-development (Redpath, 2009). The Model consists of thirteen competencies: key competency “Nurturing the child” and four clusters of competencies “Cultivating knowledge”, “Winning hearts and minds”, “Working with others” and “Knowing self and others”. Several levels (usually five) of teacher effective behavior correspond to every competency (Sclafani, 2008). In Singapore teacher competencies are understood not as special professional skills, but as special personal features – mentality, way of feeling and acting, manner of speaking - that allow a teacher to be successful in profession. Such a personalized orientation of the Teaching Competency Model allows for the conclusion that the main function of the “standard” is orientation. The big role in providing high quality of education is played by the teacher. It requires high level of teacher personal responsibility for his/her professional practice.

The Teacher’s Standards in effect at the present time in England were introduced in September, 2012 (Teacher’s Standards, 2011). This is an instrument of evaluation of professional level for those teachers who apply for the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), for interns finishing teacher education programs, and for all the practicing teachers going through the appraisal process in British School Teachers’ Appraisal System. The Standards describe the qualification requirements for any teacher regardless of his/her professional status. The school principal or other designated for the appraisal person uses the Standards as a system of professional requirements. Basing on his/her expert opinion and professional experience the principal evaluates teacher’s professional level taking into account career position of the teacher (young teacher, middle-career, master teacher). Besides that educational programs in teacher training institutions should be aligned with the standards. Thereby the teacher standards in England play several roles: projecting, orientational, diagnostic and selective – in a system of requirements to teachers.

There are several teacher professional standards in Scotland. Among them are: The Standard for Provisional Registration (The Standards for Registration, 2012) The Standard for Full Registration (The Standards for Registration, 2012), The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning (The Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning, 2012), The Standards for Leadership and Management (The Standards for Leadership and Management, 2012). The Standard for Full Registration specifies professional requirements for a teacher who wants to enter the profession and at the same time is a teacher professional standard for any teacher in Scotland. This Standard describes teacher’s personal qualities, profession motivation, professional knowledge and skills. These requirements are described in details and might be used by teacher or school as well as by the assessment committee.

The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession in Canadian Province of Ontario were presented by the College Governing Council of Ontario in 2006. These Standards describe 16 teacher professional competencies (Teacher Performance Appraisal, 2010). In Ontario the young teacher status is

officially received by graduates from Ontario College of Teachers or by teachers trained outside the province but recruited in one of the schools of Ontario. As soon as they complete the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) or after 24 months since teachers had been recruited they lose this status. So the main function of the standard is to form the profession requirements, especially at entrance to the profession. The role of the standardization is mostly orientational.

In Russian education system the problem of teaching quality was usually addressed through the term of “preparedness”. The preparedness for teaching may be considered as an ability to act in certain problem-based professional situations; as an integration of theoretic and methodic knowledge, professional and practical skills, positive professional motivation and ability to solve problems in real professional practice. Our research in St. Petersburg and Tyumen showed that employers mostly worry about absence of professional motivation (54.8 %) and disability to communicate with others in teaching process (45.2 %) among young teachers (Piskunova, 2016).

Russian teacher professional standard “Pedagog” underlines “providing education services within basic educational programs by educational institutions” as a main goal of teaching (Professionalniy standart “Pedagog”, 2013). The standard describes teaching practice through the requirements for teaching and learning, requirements for practical experience, and then – through practical actions, needed knowledge and skills (activity approach). Intrinsically this is a standard of teaching practice. It may be used as a guide in specific modern teacher professional actions that might be used by teacher education institutions to plan the content of teacher education. The work on aligning the teacher professional standard and educational standard for teacher training institutions has started. Other functions of the standard are control and appraisal. These tasks are on the agenda now.

From the Singapore’ Teaching Competency Model one can derive subject, psychological, pedagogical, communicative and organizational tasks that a teacher must solve. The specific requirements for Singapore teachers are: analytical thinking skills, ability to consider the effects of teacher’s own actions, ability to take into account future needs, goals and opportunities, ability to make decisions in uncertain situations, effective work in command, and ability to follow some ethical professional requirements: self-development, respect to personal integrity, intention to understand others, respect to others.

In English teacher standard there are several requirements for teachers related to knowledge and skills needed to teach subjects. However according to the standard a teacher must also have high expectations for the students and be able to create positive and safe learning environment.

Scottish Standard for Full Registration consists of four sections. First section “Professional values and personal commitment” is in the center of all Scottish teacher standards and is essential for any teaching practice. The core components of this section are: social equity, integrity, confidence, respect and commitment to the profession. Other sections of the standard determine the requirements for teachers in different aspects of teaching and learning, and also professional reflection and professional cooperation.

Among teacher competencies outlined in the teacher standard of Ontario we should emphasize the following: a teacher should demonstrate readiness to ensure the wellbeing and development of every child; treat students with respect and fair; create a problem-solving environment, where students solve problems, make decisions by themselves and are aimed to lifelong learning.

The teacher standard “Pedagog” in Russia describes in most details the requirements for teachers – on the level of professional functions, actions, skills and knowledge (Professionalniy standart “Pedagog”, 2003). For example, it specifies the functions of forming soft skills and understanding the place of the subject studied in the world picture; using the analysis of student learning results to determine the best teaching methods; finding in cooperation with students, parents and others the student’ zone of proximal development; constructing and implementation of student personal learning path; planning special education process for students with special needs and so forth.

Our comparative study allowed setting some groups of competencies.

Competencies that are essential for all professional teacher standards studied reflect:

teacher’s role in constructing learning environment;

forming learning communities;

understanding school life and environment;

ability to plan learning process;

knowledge and ability to use different teaching methods;

knowledge of legislation and regulatory documents in education area;

ability to develop education programs.

Competencies that are not explicitly described in Russian teacher standard but are recognized as important in other standards:

research and scientific practice of a teacher;

teacher’s responsibility to improve qualification and develop professionally;

responsibility to make individual reports on every student development;

ability to discover the potential of every child (in Russian standard – teacher should *develop* the potential of a child);

updating and actualization of subject knowledge;

leadership;

interaction with colleagues.

More study outputs:

the teacher’ responsibility to engage parents into school life is not included in Russian standard but is obligatory for teachers from other countries (Russian teacher should engage parents in child development);

Russian standard requires from a teacher wider and deeper knowledge of psychology and developmental physiology compared to other countries;

Russian teacher should have the subject knowledge needed to teach according to the curriculum and education standards, whereas teachers in other countries should keep the knowledge of subject they teach at actual scientific level and stay up to date with innovations in their subject area;

teacher’s work with kids with special talents and special needs is described in details only in Russian and English standards.

The comparative analysis of competencies related to the teaching process such as planning, assessment, subject knowledge, teaching methods, regulations in education, accountability and ability to develop education programs are described similarly in Russia and other countries studied. Making regular

reports on each student' development is included in all the standards studied besides Russian. Russian standard unlike others requires from teachers developing emotional and value system of a child, tolerance and skills of behavior in virtual reality. The fairness, respect and confidence are mostly mentioned as professional values in other countries. English standard stresses the respect for British values.

It is remarkable that Russian standard does not mention teacher's knowledge of his/her rights. However, the Federal education act of Russian Federation (Federalniy zakon "Ob obrazovanii", 2012) determines some rights and freedoms for educators, for example: teachers have rights to take part in administration of the institution they work at and to have a protection of their honor and dignity; teachers have rights to choose teaching methods, education resources, methods of assessment etc.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of teacher professional standards allowed making a comparison of generalized competencies and competencies from Russian teacher standard "Pedagog". Special and general requirements for teachers have been revealed from the standards studied. The prospective lines have been derived for development of teacher practice requirements in Russia. Such challenging competencies could be, for example, those directed to the individualization of communication with a student: using special methods to engage every child into the learning process; organization of learning taking into account students' culture differences; discovery and realization of every child' s personal potential; ability to see the needs, strengths and weaknesses of every child; ability to feel the need for specialist's help; development and support of student motivation for learning. We also think that it is important to develop the following competencies: ability to create safe and comfortable learning environment and ability to inspire student learning outside the school program.

The teacher competencies related to value interaction and professional ethics also deserve attention: ability to communicate effectively with students, recognize their integrity, understand and accept them; ability to find value aspects in any knowledge; designing situations and events that develop emotional and value sphere of students; ability to promote learning and education as values; ability to encourage curiosity and raise students' self-esteem.

The most perspective for future studies in this field are the following: system of continuous pedagogical education (A Teacher Education Model, 2009) in Singapore: career ladder for teachers, all aspects of work in command, teaching methods for big classes making possible individualization of learning (Sergienko, 2017).

On the whole the results of the study allow proposing to enhance personal and professional teacher development, and also to encourage teachers' cooperation in solving professional problems that every teacher and every school faces. Note that teacher innovative activity and personal commitment are necessary for successful reforms in Russian education system.

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