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### Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

#### ON THE DEVELOPING EDUCATION OF FUTURE SPECIALISTS IN SOCIAL WORK

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#### *Abstract*

The successful solution of strategic, tactical, operational tasks within higher and college education implies not only the formation of diverse competencies, but also the presence of one's own internal behavioural regulator – the social work specialist's (SWS) value orientations. One of the leading ways to implement the concept of modern university and college education, including student-centered teaching, is to rethink the role and place of subject preparation. The emphasis is shifted from regarding a subject as the main goal to regarding it as a means of revealing students' potential. Another idea of this concept is connected with the construction of such educational forms, in which the educational process, its understanding and research work exists in harmonious unity, which favours the development of the future SWS's personal position. The main idea of cooperative learning technologies is to create conditions for active joint learning activities of students in different learning situations. Combining students in small groups of 3 – 4 people, setting one common task and specifying the role of each group member make everyone responsible for the results of the whole group. Therefore, less prepared students have an incentive to learn new knowledge, while more prepared students are interested in high academic achievements of their groupmates. The ideology of the project method and cooperative learning is humane in its essence. These are psychological and pedagogical technologies that ensure not only the successful assimilation of educational material by all students, but also their intellectual development, independence, benevolence towards the teacher and each other.

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## **1. Introduction**

Speaking of the “development of a professional”, V.I. Baydenko, A.A. Verbitsky, E.F. Zeer, I.A. Winter, A.V. Khutorskoy, A. Shelten, S.E. Shishov and others indicate that this process implies a steady, holistic, complicating, stabilizing and productive transformation of professional competencies. The psychological and pedagogical essence of such transformation consists in the trajectory of personal maturity development through overcoming intrapersonal, interpersonal and activity contradictions. It also presupposes the constantly improved personality potential (knowledge, skills, professionally important qualities) which can be used to overcome difficulties and achieve goals.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The successful solution of strategic, tactical, operational tasks within higher and college education implies not only the formation of diverse competencies, but also the presence of one’s own internal guideline, behavioural regulator – the social worker’s value orientations, which are a set of ideas, grounds for evaluating professional activity, differentiation of objects according to their importance. These orientations reveal the ideal goals, meanings and relationships enabling a future social work specialist (SWS) to choose the purpose, motives and priorities of his/her professional and life activity.

## **3. Research Questions**

### **3.1. Formation of Specialist’s Professional Values**

Mastering activities at the highest level presupposes the formation of the SWS’s ordered range of hierarchical professional values, which not only orient a person in the profession, but also really regulate his/her relations with clients and colleagues, allow assessing and self-assessing the results of professional activities and interactions.

### **3.2. Definition of Specialist’s Key Orientations**

The most significant motivational and value orientations in the structure of the SWS’s professionalism are manifested in humanism, professional knowledge, ethics, constructive cooperation, in an effort to provide successful interaction with a client, in mutual respect, assistance, support, etc.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

### **4.1. Contribution to the Concept of Developing Education**

For the personal and professional development it is necessary to create *developing education*, i.e. the structured organizational process of training and education, which provides a future SWS with certain skills needed for self-education, self-training, self-nurturing, self-development, self-determination, self-activity and self-realization.

#### **4.2. Proposing Ideas Favouring the Development of Professional Educational Space**

Developing a person's professional-educational space is a special sociocultural phenomenon that unites the lifelong education system and the world of professions, in which qualitative positive changes in the educational space will contribute to the actualization and satisfaction of the individual's need for self-development

### **5. Research Methods**

Nowadays the development of the concept of student-centered learning goes in four key directions focused on different aspects.

#### **5.1. Analysis of Scientific Literature**

Representatives of the axiological concept of personal education are Shiyarov (1991), Bondarevskaya (1995), Kolesnikova & Gorchakova-Sibirskaya (2005), Kotova (2014) and others. This concept uses an axiological approach to the study of social phenomena as the basis for the development of personality-oriented teaching. This idea focuses on the value-oriented thinking, which provides a future SWS with an understanding of the significance of the whole world and every person living in it.

The concept of culturological personality-oriented education is based on the idea of educating a person by addressing his/her inner world. In accordance with this concept, the global goal of education is a person of culture. However, education is not presented as a set of ritual pedagogical methods (belief, example, conversation, etc.), but as implementation of systematized principles that ensure the individual's holistic socialization. The leading principles of education are two interrelated processes – human-forming and culture-building – and the humanization of education. Universal culture determines the content of education in combination with the requirements coming both from a person (development, formation, mastering and appropriation of universal human values) and from pedagogy (laws of personality development and formation of its moral foundations).

#### **5.2. Implementation of Authors' Professional Experience**

Personality-oriented teaching does not form an individual with given properties, but creates conditions for the full-fledged manifestation and development of the personal functions fulfilled by the subjects of the educational process – this is the key idea of this concept. Personality-oriented education achieves its goal to the extent that it makes a person effective, needed and satisfied. The phenomenon of "neededness" (being in demand) manifests the humanistic essence of any human-related activity. Interesting is the idea of university and college students' "immersion" in theoretical and applied research through organizing their independent search for the sense and values of future activities.

### **6. Findings**

One of the leading ways to implement the concept of modern university and college education, including student-centered teaching, is to rethink the role and place of subject preparation: the emphasis is

shifted from regarding a subject as the main goal to regarding it as a means of revealing students' potential (Demidov & Mokhorov 2018, Gashkova, Berezovskaya, & Shipunova, 2017; Pozdeeva, Trostinskaya, Evseeva, & Ivanova, 2017; Zemlinskaya, & Fersman, 2017). Another idea of this concept is connected with the construction of such educational forms, in which the educational process, its understanding and research work exists in harmonious unity, which favours the development of the future SWS's personal position.

The main provisions of this concept are determined by the following sequence: 1) personality is the main value for itself and for "others"; 2) education is the transformation of a person, carried out within integral psychological-pedagogical process taking place at a college or university; 3) the main result of such education is not knowledge or skills, but the ability to grow personally, to have empathic interaction and socially addressed personal productivity. The fundamental principle is management based on self-management: the removal of external coercion, coupled with a meaningful creative task, creates environment for joint and independent creative work.

The activity of teachers in modern colleges and universities is also changing: from the "translator" of knowledge or the "master", who organizes joint activities aimed to develop students' professional abilities, to the "consultants", who help students in designing their professional activity.

This urgent problem requires active search for innovative learning technologies. In our opinion, the most productive ones are the project method and cooperative learning.

### **6.1. Potential of Project Method**

*The project method* (PM) is not fundamentally new in the world pedagogy. It is also known as the problem method and is associated with the ideas of the humanistic trend in philosophy and education, developed by the American philosopher and teacher J. Dewey.

Training is built on an active basis, through the student's rational activity, correlating with his/her personal interest precisely in this type of knowledge. It is important to make students acquainted with the practical relevance of the acquired information, with how it can be useful to them in their own lives.

It is necessary to solve a problem, taken from real life, familiar and meaningful, requiring both acquired knowledge and new one. The teacher suggests sources of information or just directs the young people's thoughts in the right direction for self-search. As a result, students should solve the problem independently and in joint efforts, applying the necessary knowledge and getting a real and tangible result (Lomteva, 1990, p. 25).

When studying the discipline "Psychology of Mature Ages", fourth-year students of the Institute of Foreign Languages of RUDN University (speciality "Psychological and pedagogical education") prepare annual projects on such topics as "Adulthood as a psychological period", "Social situation of development and leading activity in the period of adulthood", etc. Within the discipline "Psychological service in an educational institution and a commercial company" the following topics were proposed: "The current state of psychological service in education in our country and abroad", "Psychological health of schoolchildren", "School psychological service", etc. One of the best projects was created by Anna Shirkova and Aida Arutyunova – "Model of the organization of the socio-psychological service "Teenage Youth Centre"". The students were able to show the significance of creating this Centre for all residents of the city. This

project was defended at an open session, attended by employers' representatives and leading teachers of the Institute of Foreign Languages.

Today the idea of the PM becomes an integrated component of a fully developed and structured education system. However, its essence remains the same – to stimulate students' interest in certain problems, involving: 1) a certain amount of knowledge; 2) the ability to select and practically apply existing knowledge and use it to acquire new one. With the information boom at the turn of the century, this method is becoming increasingly important within the teaching process.

Since the PM is focused on the independent activities of students, which they perform within a certain period, it will be the most optimal and effective in combination with the use of computer and new information technologies.

The *educational telecommunication project* is a joint educational and cognitive, research, creative or gaming activity of partner students organized on the basis of computer telecommunications, with a common problem, goal, agreed methods and ways of working aimed at achieving a joint result.

The Internet creates the conditions for obtaining any information needed by students and teachers. This information is mostly authentic. Working with it, one can get the necessary data on the research issue. Project participants may be students from different countries, which leads to cross-cultural communication and exchange. Discussion of interim results become particularly significant, since they contain not only material from official sources, but also the opinions of foreign project partners, their data and interpretations of various phenomena.

Telecommunications allow students to independently form their own view of events taking place in the world, be aware of many phenomena and regard them from different positions, which will finally lead to understanding that some problems can only be solved by joint efforts. These are the elements of global thinking, the path to apprehending the essence of human collaboration.

Telecommunication projects can be classified according to various criteria:

1. *Educational projects* aimed at forming and improving certain speech skills.
2. *Cultural (regional) projects* involving the development of language and speech skills by acquainting students with the culture, history, geography, economic, political and social life of other countries. The natural language environment contributes to the formation of the communicative aspect of the future SWS's professional competence.
3. *Historical and social projects* introducing the history and modern organization of social protection of people living a given country, city or district.
4. *Ethnographic projects* aimed at studying the peoples' traditions and ways of life, the country's ethnic and national composition, the national specifics of social work.
5. *Political projects* focused on familiarizing the students with the state structure of countries, political parties and public organizations, the legislation, etc.
6. *Economic projects* aimed at studying the financial life of different countries, their economic and social opportunities.

7. *Game and role projects* that involve students' creativity through games or solving certain social situations.

8. *Imaginary travel*, pursuing various goals of developing imagination, thinking, etc.

9. *Simulation-business games* that simulate professional situations.

10. *Theatrical games* aimed at the study of literary works in game situations.

11. *Imitation and social games*, in which students perform various social roles.

## 6.2. Potential of Collaborative Learning

The implementation of the PM in educational systems showed significant increase in the students' activity, employment and understanding of the studied material, which indicates the relevance of this method in the modern context. However, it is necessary to make the following remark: since electronic support for the educational process is in its infancy, not all colleges and universities can afford to purchase computer equipment in the amount necessary for the productive work of students and teachers. This impedes the implementation of the PM in the educational practice and makes it necessary to search for ways to optimize the teaching process taking into account the lack of these opportunities.

In this case, the best is the use of collaborative learning (CL). Its basic ideology was elaborated by three groups of American educators Robert Slavin (from Johns Hopkins University), Rogers Johnson and David Johnso (from the University of Minnesota), and the group from the University of California headed by J. Aronson (Kluge, 1990, p. 98).

In the process of communication, individuals "create" each other, being mutually enriched regardless of the results (positive or negative). That is why communication is one of the most important conditions for the formation of the individual's consciousness and self-consciousness, a stimulator of the personality's general development.

Being aimed at the students' personal development, the training of future SWS is also focused on their integration into other nations' culture, familiarization with their norms and traditions, which cannot but influence the person's overall development. This is an issue of tolerance.

The main idea of CL technologies is to create conditions for active joint learning activities of students in different learning situations. Combining students in small groups of 3 – 4 people, setting one common task and specifying the role of each group member make everyone responsible for the results of the whole group. Therefore, less prepared students have an incentive to learn new knowledge, while more prepared students are interested in high academic achievements of their groupmates. The score (mark) is also general, based on individual successes and failures.

CL gives the teacher a lot of room for creativity. There are the following types of training in cooperation (Almazova, Khalyapina, & Popova, 2017; Chiu, 2000; Ghazzoul, 2018; Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015).

1. *Training in a team*. This method pays special attention to group goals and the success of the whole group, which can only be achieved due to independent work of each team member in constant interaction with his/her teammates.

2. *Case study.* Students are organized in groups of 4 – 6 people to work on problem situations that can be divided into fragments (logical or semantic blocks). Such work contributes to the development of professional knowledge in the field of social work, is useful in the educational process within preparation for practical activities. For example, when working on the topic “Social work with the family”, various sub-topics can be singled out: social work with disabled children, single mothers, large families, etc. We can distinguish sub-topics not by work objects, but by areas of activity (social work with the family, social work in public health, social work in education) or on other grounds, based on one type of activity (for example, social assistance to the family includes studying family composition, problems, targeting of services, etc.).

3. *Method of learning together.* Each group receives a task, which is a subtask of a large topic, on which everyone works. For example, the whole team is working on the topic “Professional Requirements for a Social Worker”. Together they think through the SWS’s style of behaviour, which is formed under the influence of his/her personal qualities, professional and individual values and interests, affecting the entire system of relations. Students divided into groups prepare their part of the task: the humanistic orientation of the individual; personal and social responsibility; kindness and justice; self-esteem and respect for the human dignity; tolerance, politeness and empathy; willingness to understand and help other people; emotional stability; personal adequacy and social adaptability. The joint work of each group and each member provides for the assimilation of all the studied material.

From the very beginning the group has a double purpose: on the one hand, the academic task is the achievement of some cognitive, creative goal, and on the other hand, the socio-psychological objective is demonstrating certain communication culture. Both are equally significant. The teacher also necessarily monitors not only the fulfillment of the academic assignment by groups of students, but also the way they communicate with each other, the way they provide mutual help.

It should be noted that it is not enough to form groups and give them the corresponding task. The essence of this method is that the student wants to acquire knowledge himself or herself. Therefore, the problem of motivating independent learning activities is no less important than the way of organizing, the conditions and methods of work on the task. However, it is the joint work that gives a great incentive for cognitive activity and communication, since in this case one can always count on the help from his/her comrades.

## **7. Conclusion**

The main ideas inherent in all the described options – the common goals and objectives, individual responsibility and equal opportunities for success – provide an opportunity to focus on each student. This is a student-centered approach within university and college education.

Practically, we are speaking about training in the process of communication (between students or between students and the teacher). This is social communication, because students alternately perform different social roles: Leader, Performer, Organizer, Speaker, Expert, Researcher, etc.

Given the specificity of the subject, CL can provide the necessary conditions for activating the cognitive and verbal activities of each student in the group, giving him/her the opportunity to realize and comprehend new material, to get enough practice to form the necessary skills and abilities.

The ideology of the PM and CL is humane in its essence. These are psychological and pedagogical technologies that ensure not only the successful assimilation of educational material by all students, but also their intellectual development, independence, benevolence towards the teacher and each other. Therefore, the professionalism of SWS is a systemic phenomenon, reflecting a dynamically developing level of professional activities.

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