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The personnel training's innovative technologies for the social protection of the population

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the innovative technologies of the personnel training for the social protection of the population. The methods of applied modelling, social and educational experiments are preferred among other applied methods. The discussions in the relevant literature concern the issue of the status of social work as a profession. The analysis of the relevant literature and our own research allowed us to make the following conclusion: all these contradictions can be solved through the innovative teaching technologies that include active and interactive methods, game-based technologies, competitive and interactive methods in education, student Olympics.

Key words: Social work, Work, Training, Educational Technology.

Las tecnologías innovadoras de capacitación del personal para la protección social de la población

Resumen

El objetivo del estudio es investigar las tecnologías innovadoras del personal capacitado para la protección social de la población. Los métodos de modelado aplicado, experimentos sociales y educativos son preferidos entre otros métodos aplicados. Las discusiones en la literatura relevante se refieren a la cuestión del estatus del trabajo social como una profesión. El análisis de la literatura relevante y nuestra propia investigación nos permitió llegar a la siguiente conclusión: todas estas contradicciones se pueden resolver a través de tecnologías de enseñanza innovadoras que incluyen métodos activos e interactivos, tecnologías basadas en juegos, métodos competitivos e interactivos en educación, Olimpiadas estudiantiles

Palabras clave: Trabajo social, Trabajo, Capacitación, Tecnología Educativa.

1. INTRODUCTION

The professional personnel training for the social protection of the population is mainly the training in the field of Social work. The search for the new conceptions and the awareness of the new role of social work as a profession in the modern world is actively studied (Gray & Fook, 2004). The range of opinions is extremely wide: from stating of the increasing role of the social work to the negation of its status as an independent profession. The majority of the researchers share the opinion according to which for the moment there is no

comprehensive conception of social work that meets modern challenges. This is evidenced in the definition of the social work that was formulated by the International Federation of Social Workers, and that changed 4 times during the last 15 years. This is surely a challenge for the theoreticians. But, at the same time, the solution of this problem is significant for the practitioners as well: the emergence of the new frame of references, of the grounded target indicators predetermines the choice of the practical help technologies. The new conception changes the content of professional education as well.

The problems of the status are reflected in the study of the content and methodical provision of professional education. There are some authors who reasonable suppose that social work is a whole group of professions (Hare, 2004; Huegler et al., 2012). Whereas other scholars view a social work specialist (a social worker) as merely a mediator who redirects the citizen needing help to other specialists and other organizations (for the provision of material, financial or psychological assistance). In other words, a social work specialist does not have an independent field of professional activity. This question needs to be solved, because it drastically changes both the content of the professional activity itself and the ways of the specialists' training. In order to solve this question, we will identify several basic problems. The first problem is the relation between fundamental and applied education. The problem is not a new one, but, under the new conditions, it acquires a new meaning. We suppose that, under modern conditions, the theoretical education becomes extremely significant (Askeland & Payne, 2006; Dent & Whitehead, 2002; Makarov et al.,

2017). The second problem is associated with the change of educational technologies, with the move to more active and interactive methods and technologies (Makarov et al., 2017). The third problem in the personnel training related to the possibilities of obtaining of the practical skills during the learning process and to the post-graduates' readiness for a future professional activity (Kopnina, 2015; Firsov et al., 2014). The fourth problem is associated with preparation for professional activity under the conditions of multiculturalism (Firsov et al., 2015).

The analysis of the literature and practical experience of social work allowed to set the purpose of the research: to conduct a theoretical and applied analysis of the above-mentioned problems and to offer the ways of their solution. The object of the research is personnel training for the system of social protection under modern conditions. The subject of the research is represented by the innovative training technologies within the Russian and foreign educational environment. The tasks of the research included the analysis of changes in the society's demands for the citizens' social protection, for the new approaches to the personnel training. The authors analyzed the ways of combining of the professional practical activity and professional education, the relations between the fundamental and applied parts of the education, the ways of enhancing the students' orientation towards practice and of the improvement of their interest in the future professional activity. The

authors conducted a social-pedagogical experiment on the development of the Social work competence within the international championship World Skills and championship Abilympics for the professionals with special health needs. The perspectives for using these technologies in professional education are investigated.

2. THE MATERIALS AND THE METHODS

The purposes and the tasks that were set in the article imply the use of the theoretical research methods: historical-social comparative analysis, structural-functional analysis, system and complex, contextual approaches, the method of cross-cultural analysis. The methods of applied modelling, social and educational experiment are preferred among other applied methods. We also used the method of the participant observation, questionnaire survey, interviewing, expert survey and secondary processing of the results of sociological researches that were conducted by other authors. The participant observation started in 2013 and is still being conducted. The expert survey was carried out among the academic staff (N = 25), the representatives of employers (N = 12), the representatives of practitioners (professionally trained social work specialists, N = 25). The topic related to the interactive methods in social education, to their content and meaning (Fig. 1).

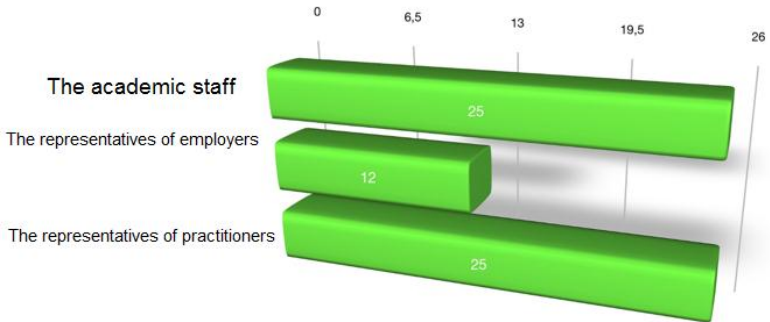


Figure 1. The sample of the participants of expert survey

In relation to the application of the modelling method, the authors took part in the formation of the professional activity standards and of the educational standards of higher education of a new generation. The standard of professional activity a social work specialist is approved by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation and came into force. The educational standard in the area of Social work was developed in 2017 and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation in 2018. The modelling of the standards is conducted through combining of the tasks of the professional activity and professional education.

During the elaboration of the research topic, the authors analyzed game-based methods that were used in social education as a project method. The method of pedagogical experiment was applied during the organization and conducting of the international championships World Skills, of the championship Abilympics for the professionals with special health needs, of the Student Olympics and

game-based trainings. The social-pedagogical experiment was conducted during 2016-2018 and was aimed at the improvement of the students' practical readiness for fulfilling of the professional tasks. The participants of the experiment were 35 students who were trained in the area of social work, 10 social workers (professionally untrained) and 10 social work specialists (academically trained) (Fig. 2).

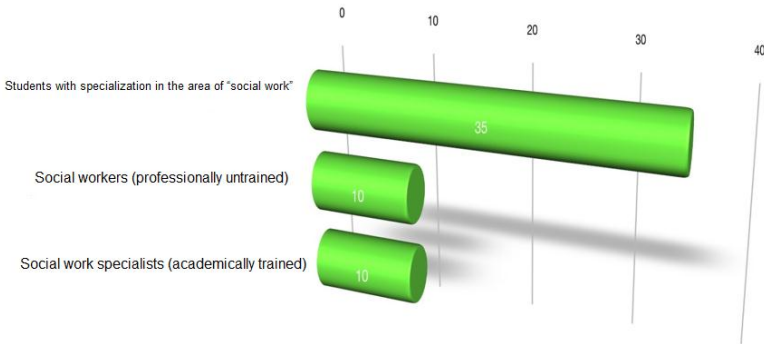


Figure 2. The sample of the participants of experiment

Thus, the sample of the respondents of the surveys and experiment equally reflects both the opinions of the employers and practitioners and the positions of the professional education system.

3. THE RESULTS

The research started from the analysis of the theoretical problems. In the authors' opinion, the reliable and qualitative results of the research are possible only through the use of a relevant theoretical

basis. The question of the role of the theoretical fundamental training in the professional education was studied. Traditionally, the orientation towards the obligatory fundamental training is viewed as a strength of the Russian higher education. Initially, it was supposed that it was the only basis that ensured further development of a professional's personality: his or her self-education and self-development, the enrichment of the professional knowledge, the increasing of the level of his or her competence and responsibility. The expert survey of the professionals-practitioners showed that the demand for the fundamental training had not decreased. On the contrary, it has increased. The question of whether our post-graduates must be well theoretically trained, was unanimously answered in a positive way. The experts were selected from the young, most successful and advanced chiefs of the social services organizations.

The reason for such evaluation on the part of the employers has also explained: the social protection of the population under current conditions is a very complex object of impact. In order to achieve real significant goals, a specialist must well understand the environment that he or she intrudes in, the consequences of his or her methods of work with a person or a group. Since these conditions rapidly change, a professional must be able to immediately find new solutions on his or her own. During the course of the expert survey, the strengths and weaknesses of the professional training were investigated. Its prevailing purposes included the formation of the practical skills of the specialists. SWOT-analysis of the results provided the following picture (Table 1).

Table 1. SWOT-analysis of the professional education model that is mainly oriented towards practical skills

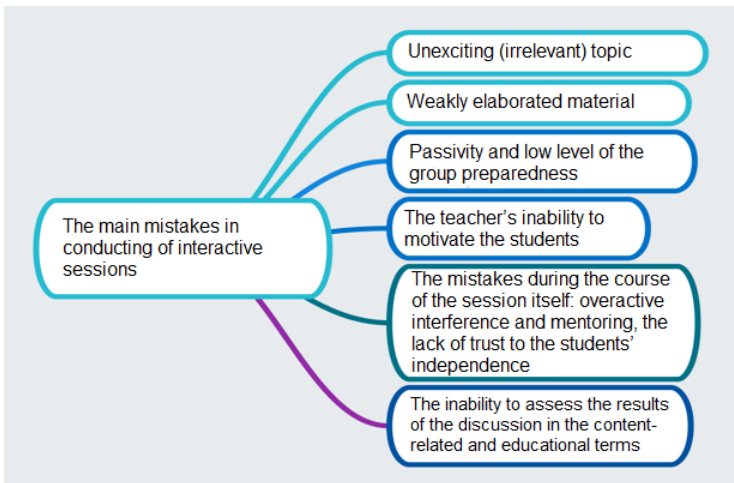
Internal factors	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the readiness to start professional activity immediately after finishing of the learning process; - a short adaptational period on the workplace; - a high level of the skills of the actual professional activity (in comparison to the theoretically trained students); - the compliance, high productivity after entering a work team; - a relatively short terms of personnel training. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the limitedness of professional instruments (the ability to follow the learnt pattern of professional behavior, to solve only urgent typical tasks); - the lack of independence in the choice of the methods of solving of the client's problem or in the choice of technologies; - the inability to flexibly react to the changes of the external environment; - the inability to analyze social changes and to use them for improving of the client's position; - the necessity to train the personnel "from scratch" in case of a change in the conditions of the professional activity.
External factors	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the creation of a vast system of additional professional education; - the constant immediate updating of the actual knowledge and skills; - the use of the networked forms of short-term education on-job; - the possibility to involve highly qualified specialists-theoreticians and practitioners from various regions of the country and from abroad 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training of the personnel who does not have fundamental theoretical education decreases the level of the advanced training; - the limitation of horizontal mobility (a higher risk of a low adaption to the new types of professional activity in case of changing of the work place or of the object of professional activity); - the vertical professional mobility is almost absent (the career development requires fundamental training); - a high risk of the professional emotional burnout due to the work routine; - scarce opportunities to demonstrate one's own professional sides and high motivation of the professional activity.

There is another question: are our post-graduated really able to apply the knowledge they acquired? As experts noted, the protest against the theoretical nature of the professional education was associated not with the theory itself, but with the fact that it was divorced from the students' real life. They were not able to make use of it. This implies the need for the additional elaboration of the social protection and work theory itself and for the change of the teaching

methods. (Anikeeva, 2018). The problem of the professional education is associated with the kinds of methods that are used to ensure the acquiring of theoretical knowledge. The survey of students demonstrated that theoretical knowledge could be very attractive for them. But it is extremely important to prepare them for such classes. The experience proved the effectiveness of the game-based technologies within this section of professional education.

The Russian State Social University has been applying discussions as a teaching method for a long time. The students like to feel their involvement into the elaboration of social policy, and the discussions on various significant social-political issues create such a possibility (Yegorychev, 2017). The widely used educational technology Parliamentary readings, or parliamentary discussions, is a form of discussion sessions. But this session requires special preparation: a certain topic is chosen, the teacher prepares relevant literature and provides references to the informational sources, shows the ways of searching for the missing material, documents and facts by the students themselves. Such material can clarify their position and help them to win an argument. This latter aspect is extremely important, because it is just the way that the students learn to self-educate themselves (the ability to learn to study). The teacher poses the questions for discussion, prepares the opposing teams in advance. During the session, the teacher plays the role of moderator.

Figure 3. The main mistakes in conducting of interactive sessions



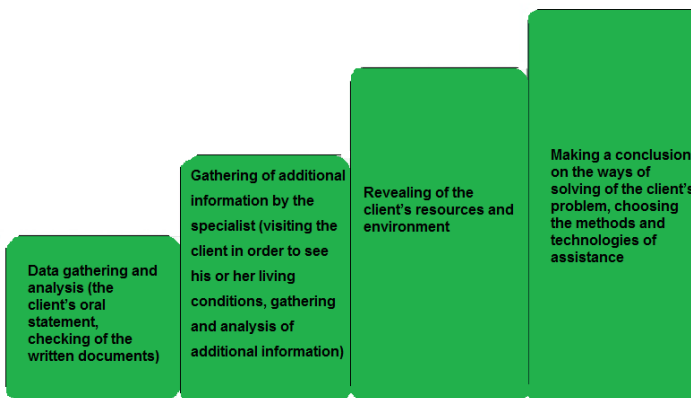
The social work practitioner-professional constantly faces a dilemma: he feels contradiction, because of the need to find the correct relation between the help and control. The choice should be made between the social role of an assistant and the role of a dictator (mentor) who knows better how to live than his student. The teacher faces the same dilemma. It is in the process of overcoming of these contradictions that a specialist emerges. Thus, the processes of the development of a professional and a teacher are parallel and interdependent in their nature. The need for the theoretical training became evident during preparing and conducting of the championships World Skills and Abilympics. Within these championships, the Russian State Social University was the creator of the new social

competence Social work. It should be mentioned that this is the first experience in the international practice.

The experience points to the typical basis of the problems that form many specific situations of the citizens who need assistance. For example, such situations can include financial disadvantages and material problems of a family. The causes and the ways out of such situations may vary, depending on a person's resources and social environment. Another example is a conflict in a family or at work.

When identifying such typical situations, the specialists (scholars and practitioners) develop solution algorithms – the technologies of social work (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Data gathering and analysis (the client's oral statement, checking of the written documents)



Such typical actions and technologies formed the basis of the tasks during preparing and conducting of the championships World Skills and Abilympics. The elaboration of the tasks reflected various aspects of a professional's work. One of the tasks was devoted to the technology of detecting of the needs during the analysis of the situation in accordance with the documents (paper work). As far as the documents exist in an established form, it is not difficult to check the correctness of the work. Besides, this task is universal in its character and can be offered to any national school of social work. Within another task, it was offered to develop a scenario of preventive conversation with a certain target group (a conversation with teens about preventing tobacco consumption or a conversation with elderly people about the significance of a healthy lifestyle). The following criteria are used to evaluate the efficiency in accomplishing of the task: the conclusiveness and persuasive power, the quality and emotional component of the conversation, the visualization and aesthetic qualities of the video-presentation, the accounting for the characteristics of the target group, the elements of the ability to communicate with a group.

It should be mentioned that this task is also aimed at checking of the theoretical level of readiness (the awareness of the problems and characteristics of a target group), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, at checking of the practical skills of working with material, of the ability to prepare for practical work, the skills of independent work with sources and information. The case-study technologies were also used during working out of the tasks. They imply the solution of a situational task in the form of the analysis of a real-life situation from

the experience of practical workers. These solutions were evaluated according to certain criteria that were known in advance and were elaborated by the practitioners. For example, the knowledge of the rules and regulations for solving of the tasks, possible economic norms and possibilities of material help, potential technologies that could be applied in each specific situation. The results were also assessed with the help of the practitioners.

The tasks for Abilympics championship were developed in a similar way with due reference to the special health needs. During the study of the interactive teaching technologies, the game-based and creative teaching and learning techniques were emphasized. The survey of the students proved the orientation of the modern young people who study Social work to the transformation of the surrounding world, strive for self-realization. The competitive element is introduced into the learning process in a form of various professional Olympics such as the all-Russian Student Olympics in Social work area. Such Olympics have been organized on the basis of the Russian State Social University for more than 10 years. All Russian universities that organize personnel training in this field can take part in it. During 2012-2017, the participants of the Olympics were 100-150 students. The students are trained both in theoretical and applied questions. One of the tasks is associated with the reflection and awareness of the mission of the social work in the modern world. This serves as a good reason for the students to check their readiness for such a demanding profession as social work.

One of the difficult tasks that lies at the intersection of the theory and practice of professional training is multi-cultural social work. Russia is a multi-national country, and, unfortunately, national conflicts are not uncommon. Besides, there is an urgent question that relates to the borrowing of the methods of social work and ways of the social protection of the population that are applied in the USA or other European countries (Firsov, 2018). The possibilities for using of the experience of other countries in the Russian social work are still widely discussed. The research work allowed the authors to develop educational standards of the Bachelor's and Master's programs on social work that were aimed at solving of various professional tasks:

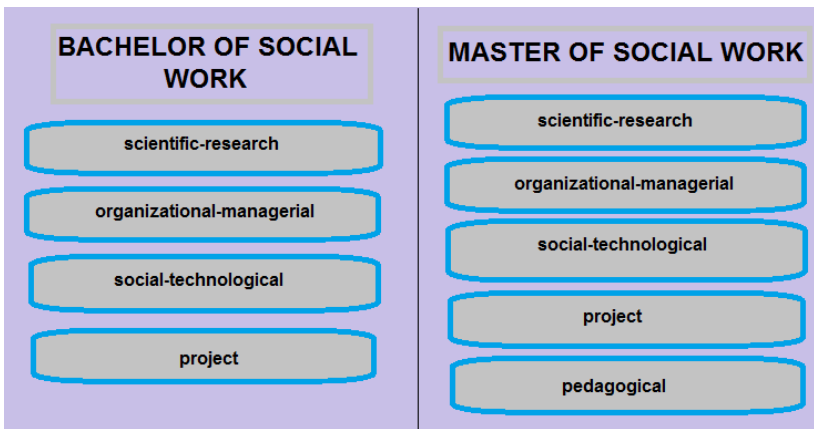


Figure 4. Bachelor's and Master's programs on social work

4. THE DISCUSSION

As it was already noticed, the problems of social education attract the attention of many specialists. The discussions have been initiated a long time ago. The new stage of discussion relates to the essence of the profession Social work. The objects of study include the following: political conceptions and ways of the social protection of the population, organizational and socio-cultural bases, the content of professional training of social workers. The authors note that the world of social work and social protection is represented with extremely varying names. In Germany and Denmark, they are called social teachers, in Great Britain they are referred to as specialists on the community development, whereas in Holland and France they are animators. In a range of countries, including Russia, there are the specialists who are named according to the name of a client group: specialists working with families, children, elderly people or people with disabilities. The training of the representatives of the classical sciences who are involved in the practice of social work and for conducting of the applied researches should also be taken into account. The discussion of the academic and applied character of social education also tends to the dynamic balance of both aspects. The academic part of education is the same integrative part of the professional education as the applied one. This corresponds to the Russian tradition of higher education that we intend to preserve.

However, the demand for both active and interactive training forms and practice-oriented professional education has significant

increased during the last years. One of the research directions relates to the training profile or specialization (Kopnina, 2015; Firsov, 2018). The technologies and methods of the practice-oriented education require more attention than they are paid now.

5. THE CONCLUSIONS

In its current condition, the social protection of the population undergoes serious changes. This system includes various ways and methods that allow the citizens of a certain country to escape the main social threats. There are the following threats among them: the threat to the life and health, to the quality of life and to the opportunities to effectively live in a socially accepted ways, to realize one's chances for one's own and social welfare. This kind of activity is professionally realized by the social workers. Their professional education undergoes significant changes as well. The complexity of social processes that a social work specialist intrudes insists on a higher level of the academic theoretical training. This is accompanied by a growing demand for the post-graduates with a high level of practical training. The acceptance of the standards in the profession and education imposes high requirements to the training level in general. However, there is a high risk of formalization and bureaucratization of the work with students. The authors view the solution of this problem in the changes of the teaching technologies and in the introduction of the active and interactive techniques, in the increasing of the students' educational independence. There is another one direction of the activation of the

students' learning activity. This is their participation in the real social-project activity on request of the social services organizations. However, this topic requires a special research.

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