

LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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The article deals with the features of learner-centered educational technology at the university focused on the effective management of learning and educational process. This technology is based on varied forms of pedagogical influence, diagnosis and self-diagnosis of levels of students' professional training and it involves forming and updating pedagogical skills of the students' as active subjects of educational process and the following continuous self-development.

Раскрыты особенности личностно ориентированной технологии обучения в вузе, направленной на эффективное управление учебно-познавательным и воспитательным процессом. Она основана на вариативных формах педагогического воздействия, диагностике и самодиагностике уровней профессиональной подготовки студентов и предусматривает формирование педагогического мастерства и актуализацию активности студентов как субъектов образовательного процесса и последующего непрерывного саморазвития.

Keywords: *learner-centered training, teacher's personality, pedagogical activity, educational technology, pedagogical proficiency, educational process.*

Ключевые слова: *личностно ориентированное обучение, личность педагога, педагогическая деятельность, технология обучения, педагогическое мастерство, образовательный процесс.*

The European trend of the Ukrainian society development actualizes the need for all-round, fully developed, socially active and competent employees with fundamental scientific training, rich inner culture, and high professional level. In this regard, the role of teachers, the importance of their personal qualities and pedagogical proficiency level are increasing. The Ukrainian higher pedagogical educational institutions face a complex and multifaceted problem whose solution involves, on the one hand, the formation of future teachers' competence and, on the other hand, the educational process orientation to general cultural, intellectual and moral development of future

teachers. During the intensive modernization of education characterized by updating training contents and professional training, appearing innovative technologies, improving the forms and methods of training, there is a need to revise the classical approaches to teachers' training.

The traditional system of teacher training, though declared teacher's personality development as one of priority objectives, mainly focused on the basic needs of education in which a teacher is intended to operate. However, a modern teacher must be not only a high level professional, but also meet the following requirements: to have developed competence in the field of professional activity; to be able to design individual educational trajectories of students to provide educational content variability; to be prepared to implement interactive, active ingredients into the learning process including training teaching methods, information and communication technologies; to have formed skills needed to continue their own education [5, p. 15].

The primary challenge in education today is the shift of teacher training to a new level of training specialists who possess advanced technologies and methodologies, different means of diagnosis of mental and intellectual development of young people. The foreground task is to study individual-typological characteristics of students, their creative individuality and to design such contents of teacher education that provides the conditions for the all-round development of each individual. Therefore, modernization of higher pedagogical education in the 21st century requires, in our opinion, the implementation of individual approach to learning.

The works by B. Anan'yev, S. Arkhanhel's'kyi, M. Vashulenka, I. Zimniaya, I. Ziaziun, V. Krayevs'kyi, V. Kremen', N. Kuz'mina, I. Lerner, I. Pidlasyi, V. Slast'onin, V. Sukhomlyns'kyi et al. are dedicated to studying the problems of contents optimization, forms and methods of teacher education. Features of implementing individual approach to the educational process are investigated by I. Bekh, T. Dem'yaniuk, M. Kuznyetsov, O. Pyekhota, S. Podmazin, V. Rybalka, V. Syerikov, M. Chobit'ko, A. Khutors'koy, I. Yakimans'kaya et al. The technological aspects of the problem are studied by N. Huziy, V. Koval'chuk, A. Nisimchuk, V. Pylypenko, H. Selevko, I. Unt et al.

Pedagogical proficiency includes ideological beliefs, thorough knowledge of the subject of education, possession of training and education methods, teacher's pedagogical tact and ability to establish contacts with students. V. Sukhomlyns'kyi proved the necessity of such teacher's personality traits as love to a child, deep knowledge, art of educational technology, constant work on yourself, and good understanding of the nuances of the educational process. N. Kuzmina offers to consider orientation, ability level and structure of teacher competencies. According to I. Ziaziun, teacher's proficiency includes two subsystems: the logical and educational one that covers knowledge and pedagogical thinking and the emotional and creative one related to creativity, psycho-physiological characteristics, intuition, and art of communication. The structure of pedagogical skills includes four components which are interrelated and complement each other and

can serve as a basis for diagnosis in actual educational practice: 1) humanistic orientation identity, 2) professional competence, 3) ability to educational activities, 4) pedagogical technique [8, p. 26].

Humanistic orientation of educational activities is focused on student's personality, promotion of the highest spiritual values, moral behavior and relationships and provides humanistic expression of value attitude to work, its purpose, contents, tools, and subjects. Humanistic orientation of the teacher's personality means student ratio as the highest value, the recognition of his or her right to free development and expression of own abilities, personal realization of creative potential in professional activities.

Teacher's professional competence, according to V. Slast'onin, combines teacher's theoretical and practical commitment to educational activities, shows his professionalism and consists of professional skills that characterize this commitment [7]. A. Markova [4, p. 34] distinguishes special, social, personal and individual competence. N. Kuz'mina considers that teacher's professional competence includes special, methodological, psychological and pedagogical elements and reflection of profession. Hence, there is a reason to design teacher's professional competence as a set of professionally important qualities of his or her personality necessary for the effective implementation of learning objectives, development and education of students. Let us note that professional competence plays an important role in shaping the prospects for teacher's professional development.

Teaching skills are considered as a number of qualities that are the conditions for successful implementation of teacher's professional activity – clear speech, flexibility, observation, ability to transfer knowledge in a concise, accessible, entertaining way, independent thinking and creativity, organizational skills (M. Levitov) and as a system of individual psychological characteristics – cognitive interest, love of children and the need to work with them, more coherent and strong character (tact, patience, self-control), autonomy, efficiency, child perception adequacy, prediction of child's personality development (O. Shcherbakov). Teaching skills are individual, stable personality characteristics reflecting a particular sensitivity to the requirements of the educational systems, specific reflection of identities of the participants of the pedagogical process, as well as possible ways to influence it [1]. They are the following:

- communicative (need for communication, willingness to come into contact easily, trigger positive emotions and enjoyment of communication);
- perceptive skills (professional acumen, alertness, pedagogical intuition, ability to perceive and understand the other person);
- dynamism of personality (ability to influence another person actively);
- emotional stability (ability to control oneself, to keep self-control in any situation);

- optimistic forecasting (prediction of personality development with a focus on the positive sides in it and transformation of the entire personality structure due to the impact on positive qualities);
- creativity (ability to generate innovative ideas and quick solutions to problematic situations).

Teaching skills include a high level of developing certain specific capabilities (e.g., poetry, artistic ones etc.) that are involved in the professional sphere.

Pedagogical technique is defined as a system of skills, allowing a teacher to use own psychophysical apparatus for effective teaching results [3]. The main components of pedagogical techniques include verbal ability (culture and technology of speech) and nonverbal (facial expressions, gestures, appearance) communication and management of his or her psychophysical condition (breathing, muscle tension, emotion, attention, imagination, observation). In addition, the pedagogical technique involves the development of specific tools, skills, and teacher's behavior, including knowledge of psychotechniques (understanding own mental health, ability to govern oneself), the ability to "vision" of pupils' internal state and adequate exposure to them. According to I. Ziaziun, educational technology is a set of professional skills that promote harmony of inner meaning of teacher's activity and its external manifestations [8, p. 37]. Therefore, individual pedagogical technique determines the specificity of teacher' methods of teaching. This is a system of well-worked professional skills (intellectual, behavioral, communicative ones) due to which professional teacher does his or her job quickly, efficiently and most effectively.

However, in spite of considerable research and pedagogical development and innovation processes in higher education, the implementation of current approaches has not received adequate coverage in pedagogy, psychology and methods of teaching at Ukrainian higher pedagogical institutions. Despite the considerable amount of theoretical and methodological research on teaching profession, there are still a number of problems, e.g., – future teachers' formation, his or her pedagogical skills' formation, readiness for teaching activities, required further research and methodologies to resolve the contradiction between high demands on teachers' professional and educational training and insufficient scientific and educational software process, weak elaborated technology of its formation. In particular, there are very few studies on implementing ideas of individual approach to preparing future teachers in higher school.

Instead, education humanization, orientation to person, attempt to find ways of the best use of inexhaustible possibilities of personality suggest a change in priorities in the field of social and educational values. According to the new paradigm of learner-oriented education, training process is directed on formation of advanced, self-sufficient individual, adapted to the rapidly changing realities. Education should arouse cognitive interest, encourage individual creativity, and give a

chance to see achievements and future prospects. Unlike the traditional paradigm, which focuses students on mastering a certain amount of knowledge and skills, the center of humanistic, learner-oriented educational paradigm is an individual, his or her potential as a basis for forming a creative, competitive, capable of self-development person [9]. The new paradigm of education highlights the learner-centered approach to shaping a future teacher, the essence of which is to focus on the personality of a teacher, the realization of his or her own value system in the professional activities. New scientific-pedagogical strategy is targeted to design personal development [2, p. 19]. Improving training involves developing new educational technologies aimed at implementing personal approach to education, which is possible only in one way - to make education a personality's self-study area (V. Serikov).

Learner-centered approach to education and training is a purposeful, planned, specially organized educational process aimed at development and self-development of students, their personal characteristics that contribute to revealing future specialist's potential resource. In practice, unfortunately, the improvement of the learning process at teacher's higher schools reduces to the development of new schemes of practical training cycle, new disciplines, which usually leads to additional extensive student workload. In most cases, no attention is paid to studying own personal power, developing their potential, and forming semantic field of future teachers, in particular.

According to scientists, the preparation of teachers at universities can be qualitatively improved if: student's personality, his or her activity, psychological mechanisms of learning and formation of intellectual and professional activities are put in the center of the didactic system; management of teaching and learning process is based on continuous diagnostic monitoring in terms of personal and professional development and continuous self-development of students and monitoring their progress; each student's individually-typological characteristics, learning style and professional activity, subjective experience, the ability to interpersonal relationships and professionally significant qualities of future teachers are considered; and basic didactic, organizational, methodological, psychological and technological requirements are adhered in the pedagogical process built according to the new paradigm of education [6, p. 5-6].

Thereby, all the students at every stage of training are composed individual educational trajectory, which, unlike the curriculum, is flexible and takes into account dynamics of personal and professional development of future teachers. It includes the results of educational and psychological assessment of students' professionally significant qualities which are registered in his or her psycho-pedagogical card.

During the learner-centered teaching teachers purposefully mobilize students' activeness, stimulate training activities motivation, personal and professional growth taking into account the level of professional and personal training of each student. In practice, the integrated use of

different forms of motivation, such as – the organization of educational space, success, estimation, example, moral and material incentives, etc. are optimal.

The contents of learner-centered learning is based on matching invariant and variant core of an educational program allowing students, to some extent, control the contents of their training. Learner-centered training organization provides continuous management of educational process in order to enhance students' cognitive activity and, at the same time, enable them to self-own training.

Monitoring of the educational process success according to learner-centered approach includes teacher's evaluation of future professionals' general and vocational training level, students' self-assessment of their educational success and expert evaluation of the learning outcomes effectiveness. The major criteria for future teachers' personal and professional training are personal qualities and individual style expression; effectiveness of interpersonal relationships; educational achievements and subjective experience; professionally significant characteristics of a graduate as a competent teacher.

Developmental environment, which occurs in the learner-centered learning, must have certain properties that provide quality educational training:

- flexibility, i.e. an ability of educational institutions to rapid adjustment in accordance with the needs of the individual (their experience, level of training, degree of teaching activity individual style), environmental, and social requirements;
- students' involvement in self-education management and, collaborating with the faculty, elaboration of individual educational trajectory based on diagnosis and self-diagnosis of training level;
- continuity reflected in the interaction and continuity of all educational components at different stages of students' professional development;
- variation that involves changing the educational system according to the need for educational services and students' individual-typological characteristics;
- integration aimed at addressing educational challenges by strengthening the interaction between all the components of the educational system;
- openness, involving broad participation of all the subjects in governance and management, democratization of learning and education;
- self-development and self-regulation of training and professional activities, based on the development and self-identity, personal style of teaching and professional activities;
- aim at interaction and communication of all the subjects of educational process that is based on pedagogical support as future teacher's focused position.

Within individual approach to teacher training, learner-oriented technologies of education should be taken into account, paying attention to the specifics of students' future careers. Technologies of learner-centered education:

- help students in choosing the type of teacher behavior that meets both their personal needs and abilities and the needs of educational institutions in the task of training and educating young people, contribute to optimizing the learning activities of students;
- give productive ways of personal growth models, methods and styles of communication, effective problem-solving skills that activate the development of their own programs of self-development and self-improvement;
- develop students' motivational sphere and pedagogical skills (pedagogical tact, observation, reflection and empathy, abilities to influence a young person and to consider individual and their age peculiarities, to promote student group, etc.);
- create new professional standards of behavior and new ways of interacting with students as subjects of the educational process;
- provide conditions for full manifestation and development of personality and cognitive functions of subjects of educational process [6, p. 17-18].

Application of individual approach to future teachers' training in practice showed its feasibility and effectiveness. First, students who are trained at universities in learner-centered teaching, show more humanistic orientation, personality and cognitive reflection, commitment to the development of creativity and search for individual style of teaching. Thus, learner-oriented educational technologies of future teachers' training include educational process management based on the diagnosis and self-diagnosis of students' training levels; involve the use of variant forms of pedagogical influence aimed at creating students' educational activity and updating their own activity as subjects of the educational process and subsequent self-education and self-development during professional activities.

Thus, learner-oriented educational strategy is focused on the nature of teacher training, and helps reveal the creative potential of future teachers. It contributes to students' individual style of teaching activities by disclosing potential resources of the individual, focus on building students' individual trajectories of education during training at universities and further postgraduate education. High-level pedagogical skills can only be achieved through constant and continuous personal and professional self-development and self-teaching throughout life.

Further research should be dealt with diagnosis of students' professional training at pedagogical universities, algorithmic process of building their individual educational trajectories at different stages of education; gender aspect of future teachers' professional development within implementation of learner-centered approach to learning. It is also important to clarify the criteria

for future teachers' professional training, as well as the problem of detecting psychological defense mechanisms that prevent the disclosure of individual potential and teaching skills development.

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