



DOI: 10.3189/2308-4081/2020-10(4)-4

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### **PECULIARITIES OF THE CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF AUSTRALIA**

#### **ABSTRACT**

*The article examines the Australian experience in organizing the training process of professional training of future primary school teachers in universities. The components of the professional training of future primary school teachers are analyzed. It was found that all curricula are structured in such a way as to include professional subjects, which involve the study of the content of academic disciplines, their teaching and assessment; academic subjects, including social and psychological development, education of children with special needs, education of aborigines; at least six weeks of continuous and complete pedagogical professional experience at school. It is determined that the practical component of teacher training occupies an important place in the process of forming a teacher's personality and is a central component of all training programs for primary school teachers in Australia. During this period future teachers observe practicing teachers in the workplace and actively participate in school life. The legislative documents regulating the educational process in Australia are listed, among which the following should be singled out: Australian Education Act; Higher Education Act; Higher Education Support Act; Australian qualifications framework; Training packages; Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and others. The guiding principles underlying the training programs at universities are defined: integration, provision, clarity (evidence, obviousness). The study showed that the professional training of primary school teachers in Australian universities is based on the principles of mobility, matching learning needs and opportunities, life and professional prospects. The Australian Government pays great attention to the quality and standards of education, which aim to clarify the knowledge, skills, abilities and values that future teachers must acquire before starting their professional activities.*

**Keywords:** vocational training; primary school teacher; qualification; training program; standards; the quality of education.

#### **АНОТАЦІЯ**

*В статті досліджено австралійський досвід організації процесу професійної підготовки майбутніх вчителів початкових класів в університетах. Проаналізовано складові професійної підготовки майбутніх вчителів початкових класів. З'ясовано,*



*що всі навчальні програми структуровані таким чином, щоб включати: професійні предмети, що передбачають вивчення змісту навчальних дисциплін, їх викладання та оцінку; академічні предмети, включаючи соціальний й психологічний розвиток, освіти дітей з особливими потребами, освіта аборигенів; не менш шести тижнів безперервного і повного педагогічного професійного досвіду в школі. Визначено, що практична складова підготовки вчителя посідає важливе місце в процесі формування особистості педагога та є центральним компонентом усіх програм підготовки вчителів початкових класів Австралії. Протягом цього періоду майбутні вчителі спостерігають вчителів-практиків на робочому місці, та беруть активну участь у шкільному житті. Перелічено законодавчі документи, що регулюють освітній процес в Австралії, серед яких слід виділити наступні: Австралійський закон про освіту; Закон про вищу освіту; Закон про підтримку вищої освіти; Австралійська система кваліфікацій; Навчальні пакети; Австралійський професійний стандарти для вчителів та ін. Визначено керівні принципи, що лежать в основі програм підготовки в університетах: інтеграція, забезпечення, наочність (доказовість, очевидність). Дослідження показало, що професійна підготовка вчителів початкових класів в університетах Австралії ґрунтується на принципах мобільності, відповідності навчання студентським потребам та їхнім можливостям, життєвої та професійної перспективи. Велику увагу Австралійський уряд приділяє якості та стандартам навчання, що спрямовані на уточнення знань, умінь, можливостей та цінностей, які майбутні вчителі повинні здобути, перш ніж розпочати свою професійну діяльність.*

***Ключові слова:** професійна підготовка; вчитель початкових класів; кваліфікація; програма підготовки; стандарти; якість освіти.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The basis of social development and sustainable economic growth of the state that provides the growth of its competitiveness is largely determined by the level of education. In recent years, a number of actions have been taken in Ukraine to modernize the education system, improve its quality and accessibility. All the transformations that take place, lead to the emergence of the new approaches to the future teacher training, especially the primary school teacher, who is the initial link in the domestic educational system. Contradiction between the requirements of the society to the level of teacher training and the modern conditions of professional activity of primary school teachers motivate to identify the ways of updating the content and nature of the future primary school teacher training, which, in turn, implies the study of the leading foreign experience. At the present stage, Australia is one of the safest and most stable countries in the world the culture and education of which meet the world standards. That is why the problem of teacher training in Australia is topical for educational practice and pedagogical science of Ukraine.

## **THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

As follows, the aim of our article is to study and analyze the organizational and content foundations of the professional training of future primary school teachers at Australian universities.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS**

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature showed that the problem of professional training of future primary school teachers at universities in Australia and Ukraine was the subject of scientific research for many researchers. The theoretical basis of



our research searches was the works of domestic and foreign scientists: L. Glushok (2014), O. Ogienko (2017), G. Craven, K. Beswick, J. Fleming, T. Fletcher, M. Green, B. Jensen, E. Leinonen & F. Rickards (2014), L. Darling-Hammond (2006), L. Ingvarson, K. Reid, S. Buckley, E. Kleinhenz, G. Masters, G. Rowley (2014). In the process of research, to achieve the goal, the main research methods used, were methods of retrospective analysis, synthesis, generalization of scientific works, and a comparative method.

### **RESULTS**

A review of the scientific literature has led to the conclusion that it is important for the Australian Government to have a high-quality and equitable education so young people in Australia can become successful, confident, creative, active and knowledgeable citizens. The high level of the Australian education system is its reliable normative base and transparent accountability mechanisms. The main task of Australian pedagogical education is to train highly qualified teachers who are able to work effectively in modern society. Education and training is the common responsibility of the Australian authorities in general and of individual states and territories in particular. Responsible for improving the education system at the national level are: the Council of Australian Governments, the Department of Education and Training, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and the National Partnership Agreements between states and territories (*The Australian*, 2016).

Australian scientists have identified the fundamental principles which the high-quality training of primary school teachers is based on. The first of these is integration. Universities, employers and schools must improve the system of teacher training and cooperate to achieve high results. The whole pedagogical education must be integrated with school practice to become a conglomerate of higher education and vocational training. The next principle is implementation. Because implementation and quality improvement of all elements of pedagogical education is important in upgrading the quality of teachers and the education they provide. Quality assurance processes must be carefully designed. The accreditation system must accredit effective teacher training programs and ensure that poor quality programs are not accredited and will be canceled. The principle of evidence should be the basis of all elements of the teacher training system, from the programs development and testing, to the teaching. The principle of clarity provides transparency of all elements of the system of teacher education, from the selection of applicants to graduation (Craven, Beswick, Fleming, Fletcher, Green, Jensen, Leinonen, & Rickards, 2014).

The effective functioning of the system of teacher education in general, and the training system for primary school teachers in particular, largely depends on the legal support of education and teacher training. The processes of regulation of teacher education in Australia are declared in the relevant regulatory documents of national importance. There are legislative documents regulating the educational process in Australia: Australian Education Act, Higher Education Act, Higher Education Support Act, The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders, Australian quality training framework, Australian qualifications framework, Training packages, Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Australian universities are thorough in their selection of applicants for study, using a variety of selection methods. The country government is doing everything possible to ensure that such methods are based on the academic and personal characteristics of the future teacher, and that sophisticated and transparent selection approaches are introduced, that take into account the academic opportunities and personal characteristics, that will be necessary for successful training.



To become a primary school teacher in Australia, a graduate must have at least a four-year full-time higher education qualification structured as follows: a three-year bachelor's degree plus a two-year vocational qualification for graduates (eg, bachelor of arts and master); integrated qualification – at least four years (for example, bachelor of primary education); combined degrees lasting at least four years (for example, bachelor of secondary education and bachelor of science); other combinations of qualifications defined by universities and approved by teacher education authorities in collaboration with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (including employment-oriented programs) (Craven, Beswick, Fleming, Fletcher, Green, Jensen, Leinonen, & Rickards, 2014).

For Australian students the academic year coincides with the calendar year, which begins in January – February and ends in November – December. Higher education institutions have two semesters with exams taking place in June and November. Long breaks for summer holidays (vacations) – from November to February. Some higher education institutions have introduced a third semester, which takes place during the summer months. Also interesting is the fact that the length of distance learning is doubled. If the duration of full-time studies lasts 4 years, then the external form of education- 8 years (Ogienko, 2019).

Our research showed that the training of primary school teachers in Australian universities is based on the principles of mobility, accordance with needs and opportunities, life and professional perspectives (*Australian Qualifications Framework*, 2013). Based on this, primary school teacher training programs are built on such requirements: coherence which is based on a clear vision of training results, which permeates all theoretical and practical training; a strong core curriculum based on knowledge of child development; studying in social and cultural contexts; extensive practical experience that is carefully developed and closely associated with theoretical training; well-defined standards that are used to guide and evaluate theoretical and practical training of future teachers; explicit strategies that help students to confront their own deep-seated beliefs about student learning, and learn about the experiences of others; an inquiry approach that connects theory and practice; strong school-university partnerships that train and allow students to learn how to teach in a professional environment; assessment based on professional standards that evaluate teaching through demonstration of critical skills and abilities using performance assessments that support the development of 'adaptive expertise' (Ingvarson, Reid, Buckley, Kleinhenz, Masters, & Rowley, 2014).

At Australian universities students actively participate in the studying process. Focus is on the ability to think outside the box, independently and critically, to take part in discussions and work in a team. Universities help develop academic skills and also provide a platform for further professional and personal growth. (*The Australian education*, 2015). All curricula for the training of elementary school teachers consist of professional subjects with study of content of subjects, their teaching and assessment; academic subjects with social and psychological development, education of children with special needs, Aboriginal and Torres Island education; at least six weeks of continuous and complete professional teaching experience at school.

Analysis of scientific sources has shown that Australia is paying great attention to the practical component of teacher training which plays an important role in the process of the teacher personality creation. It helps to form a methodical reflection in the conditions of the pedagogical process, when the future specialist thinks about the means and methods of his own pedagogical activity and the processes of making practical decisions. Thus,



professional experience is a central component of all Australia's primary education teacher programs. During this period, which occupies about 25 % of the time of study at the university, future teachers observe practical teachers in the workplace and actively participate in school life. A strong component of professional experience is required for successful primary school teachers training. Australian researchers and practitioners need to create a good environment for getting professional experience, which actually involves future teachers in their professional activities and allows to determine their own development prospects (*Teachers are leaving*, 2016).

L. Darling-Hammond (2006) defines the basic conditions that provide the success of professional experience in the teacher training programs framework: 1. Early professional experience, with intensive supervision of experienced teachers. Early first professional experience allows future teachers to review the decision to become a teacher at the beginning of university studies. 2. Close collaboration between universities and practical teachers in providing professional experience. A significant problem in Australia's teacher education is lack of integration between theoretical knowledge and professional experience. To solve it, we need to rethink the traditional relationship between universities and schools to provide professional experience, to establish partnerships and close cooperation in the processes of developing training programs for primary school teachers and involve both parties in active collaboration to achieve high results. 3. Carefully planned professional experience allows to combine theory and practice. The theory and practice in primary school teachers training should be indissoluble and mutually related in all components of professional training programs. Students should have theoretical knowledge and practical skills, in the process of obtaining which there will be opportunities for their integration. To do this, universities that work with schools must create mutually beneficial partnerships.

The main goal of gaining professional experience for future teachers is to get acquainted with the programs and curriculum, develop skills in planning work with schoolchildren, get more practice in working with individual groups of pupils, take on the role of a teacher, interact with the teaching staff, pupils, parents, improve observation skills, develop the ability to put theoretical knowledge into practice (Glushok, 2014).

In Australia, there is a significant difference in the length of professional experience. The minimum number of days that teacher education programs should devote to professional experience is determined by Australian standards. In general, in four-year bachelor programs, it is from 95 to 140 days (Ingvarson, 2014). In most primary school teacher training programs offered by universities, professional experience begins with short observation periods in schools that leads from limited teaching in small groups and teacher help, to responsibility for the whole class. This sequence is developed gradually, starting with familiarization during the first year, often during the first few weeks of training. By the fourth year, students took full responsibility for the class. Future teachers practice at various stages of their education, they take on a greater degree of responsibility in the classes and the role between teacher and student changes from supervisor to colleague and mentor (Craven, Beswick, Fleming, Fletcher, Green, Jensen, Leinonen, & Rickards, 2014).

Studying various types of pedagogical practice of future primary school teachers in Australian universities, we can distinguish the following: short-term day-time observation practice, which takes place in parallel with the study of professionally oriented disciplines; active block practice; continuous undergraduate professional internship in the last year of study (Glushok, 2014).



In the process of receiving professional experience, an important component is the interaction with the leader and mentor, which provides leadership and mentoring, provides feedback on teaching practice and helps evaluate the students. The presence of such a specialist is the main task in supporting future teachers and providing high-quality professional experience.

Pedagogical faculties and educational departments are actively working together to develop partnerships with schools. This is evidenced by the mutual work of teachers of higher educational institutions in schools and education departments. As a result, there is a growing tendency to establish concrete partnerships between schools and universities to create links between theoretical training and professional experience.

An important aspect in the future primary teachers training in Australia is preparation for pupils' diversity in Australian schools. It requires readiness to communicate with students who have different culture and language and have certain difficulties or obstacles in studying. Teacher training programs should instruct on how to apply science-based theory in practice effectively. Teachers should analyze and evaluate their influence on teaching and correct their practice to meet the needs of their pupils. Improving student learning results demands a teacher to have knowledge which will allow them to effectively resolve training and development needs of all pupils in the class. Therefore, teachers should be able to personalize learning, assess student performance, and be able to choose appropriate learning strategies. Research recognizes that teachers need a wide range of skills and strategies to maximize learning across different groups of pupils. (Craven, Beswick, Fleming, Fletcher, Green, Leinonen, & Rickards, 2014).

The Australian government pays attention to quality and standards of education. For the good quality of educational activities, Australian legislation provides a clear and transparent regulation mechanism, the main element of which is the accreditation of educational and professional programs in accordance with the quality criteria of the educational process and the activities of higher education institutions that are developed according to the requirements of the International Quality Standard. Accreditation in Australia is carried out by non-governmental organizations along with the approval of the State Accreditation Commission. As for right now, accreditation is an important element in the process of regulating the level of education and the quality of educational services.

Standards are measures or "benchmarks" and provide a vision for high quality learning. They are aimed at refining the knowledge, skills, opportunities and values that future teachers need to acquire before beginning their professional activities (Ogienko, 2017). The main components of the standards-based primary teacher training system include: 1) Standards describing what is being learned in the preparation process and, therefore, planning the training program. 2) Consistent training program where each course of the program is justified in terms of meeting certain standards. 3) The learning process and the completion of the training program based on a series of rating evaluations that together provide reliable evidence that students meet all standards. 4) Accreditation of teacher training programs by independent professional bodies which is based on reliable evidence that graduates meet certification standards and professional requirements. Together, these components form a system of complementary elements that strengthen teacher training programs (Ingvarson, Reid, Buckley, Kleinhenz, Masters, & Rowley, 2014).

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The requirements of our time are pushing us to find new ways to update the content of education, to draw on the experience of the leading countries of the world. Exploring the education system in Australia, we can talk about its high quality and



accessibility. The success of the professional training of future primary school teachers at Australian universities is determined by the introduction of new approaches to organization and modern pedagogical technologies into practice, the quality of state educational standards, curricula and programs, the qualification of the teaching staff, the level of students' training, condition of the material and technical base and social provision. Ensuring a high level of practical training of future teachers at the university is closely connected with the use of the so-called active, professionally oriented methods along with the traditional academic ones. Our study does not exhaust all aspects of the problem under study. The problems of relations and the institutional support of processes related to the definition and forecasting of the competency requirements of future primary school teachers, evaluating and recognizing learning outcomes remain relevant. Further study requires the question of the impact of professional standards on the quality of training.

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