



A Social and Psychological Training Course as a form of Teaching in the Process of the Students' Professional Education at a Higher Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to a very important problem of contemporary education - the problem of professional and personal development and self-determination of a student at a higher education institution. The article outlines the theoretical analysis of studying the role of a training course in the educational process, as well as advantages of applying the social and psychological training course as a form of teaching for specialists' education. The theoretical- phenomenological analysis and a forming experiment were used as the study methods. The conclusions described in the article emphasize the fact that a student should have initial opportunities, abilities, knowledge, competence, skills and a high motivation to achieve a high level of professionalism in his professional activity. It is very important that a professional should not only possess mastery but be recognized to have a high effectiveness and stability of activity results which is achieved by the use of various forms and methods of teaching in the process of professional education. The social and

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psychological training course is a form of work that helps to effectively develop the skills of professional activity creating the emotionally safe milieu in students' learning that gives an opportunity of getting an active feedback and forming a skill of self-analysis.

This article can be of use to teachers of higher education institutions, social workers as well as to psychologists-practitioners.

Keywords: professional education, professional and personal development, a social and psychological training course

INTRODUCTION

The entry of domestic higher education institutions into the world educational community (The Bologna process) involves the transition to European criteria of ensuring higher education qualifications - the training of competitive specialists in demand on contemporary regional labor markets, competent, capable of solving professional goals under conditions of the market economy. In this connection, the problem of training a competitive specialist in the setting of a higher education institution seems to be very important and this problem is stipulated by social and economic changes that take place in society at a contemporary stage of its development characterized by the establishment of market relations. Today every person must improve both his professional skills and psychological readiness under the changed social and economic conditions. A university graduate is willing to realize his professional skills and knowledge, to achieve success and build a career, but to this end he has to be able to realize his life potential demonstrating activity, enterprise, competence, an ability to work in a team. One of the objectives of contemporary higher education is the objective of training a competent, flexible, competitive, mobile specialist. The key question that the system of professional education faces today is: how to train specialists capable of participating in manufacturing output, competitive on the world market? This question determines the central objective of the system of professional continuous education - to raise the training quality of specialists in the system of higher professional education [1].

The structure and content of the professional and personal formation of a student at a higher education institution is studied in the framework of the sociological [2] and psychological-pedagogical [3; 4] range of problems. Separate personality characteristics that determine a person's competitiveness have been studied by foreign scientists: A. Maslow [5], K. Rogers [6] (self-actualization, an ability to self-assertion), R. Alberty & M. Emmons [7], V. Capponi [8], (an ability to self-assertion, self-assertive behavior), V.F. Birkenbil [9] (life success) and et al.

The issues of the professional and personal development in the education system have been disclosed with various degrees of comprehensiveness and concrete aspects in works of V.A. Oganeseva [10], V.I. Shapovalova [11], A.I. Scherbakova [12] and other scientists. I.V. Vachkov [13], O.A. Ovsyanik [14], N.G. Enyashina [15], N.V. Kalinina [16], S.N. Mitin [17] and other scientists substantiate a contemporary vision of the education content in the field of physical culture and sport determined by social and economic realia of the life of society.

METHODOLOGICAL BASES AND METHODS

Professional and personal development is a deep and multifaceted process. The person's formation as a personality and as a professional takes place throughout his entire life and, beyond any doubt, this is an interrelated process: there is no professional without a personality and without self-realization in a one's own profession a man's personality is not fully realized [18, 19, 20, 21, 22].

The topic of students' professional and personal development in the process of professional education at a higher education institution has always been important. The more a person is aimed at the development in his profession, self-realization the more it is interrelated with how he will work further, how he is going to develop himself and his activity direction, with the fact if he will be satisfied with his life. This aspect is already connected with the development of the social sphere and society as a whole.

A training course today has become the widespread interactive technology among the methods of learning through play. Unlike theoretical schemes offered in lecture courses that have, as a rule, few variants. In the process of a training course the participants develop the most productive practices and ways of interacting based on individual features of a person and his communicative competence. The training's high educational performance is also determined by the fact that the training course being built on the modeling of real situations requires participants' active involvement in the process of communication and mobilization of the intellectual and analytical potential. Training classes represent a form of active teaching and they are applied to form an interpersonal constituent of professional activity by means of developing psychodynamic and professional activity that determines the personality's further development through an integration into this activity. One of the ways to overcome this conflict in the process of students' professional education at a higher education institution is to apply a social and psychological training course. Thus the importance of the problem of a specialist's comprehensive and continuous professional-personal development is undeniable. However, there are many contradictions in this issue. One of them is the conflict between formed qualities of a person and objective requirements, norms, standards of an individual's psychical properties and forming social skills [23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29].

An essential feature of the training course is also that it helps to «play» the process of people's interacting while searching and putting the decisions taken, chosen actions and deeds into practice. An activating effect of the training course is also determined by the creation of a special educational and experimental atmosphere that provides understanding by participants what individual and group psychological events take place in processes of interpersonal communication, an intensive feedback and formation of practical skills needed for achieving the goal [30, 31, 32].

The training course in the educational process is compulsory and is not voluntary, and if it is conducted formally without creating a special atmosphere it will not be effective.

Teaching with the help of training courses significantly differs from traditional methods of teaching (lessons, lectures, seminars) not only in the form of conducting but in the main principles. In conventional teaching a person is taught to give correct answers and

only correct ones. In a training course mistakes are treated condescendingly, they are viewed as a necessary part of the learning process.

The training course included in the educational process has a number of peculiarities. It is conducted, as a rule, in a usual classroom and lasts 90 minutes (two academic hours) once a week. Attendance of classes is not mandatory. The members of the group know one another well, they usually communicate a lot outside the training course, in the course of learning and in an informal atmosphere. All this complicates the use of standard techniques and requires a special preparation.

The participation in a social and psychological training course is especially important to people whose professions involve intensive communication as well as to those who experience difficulties in the sphere of human contacts. Since similar difficulties are typical of many young people, learners – future specialists of various professions are in need of such a training course especially [33].

Common goals of the social and psychological training that help to develop professional qualities and skills are the following:

- the study of psychological problems of participants and rendering assistance in their solution;
- improving a subjective condition and mental health;
- studying psychological objective laws and efficient ways of interpersonal interaction to create the foundation for more effective and harmonious communication with people;
- developing participants' self-cognition and self-study to correct or to prevent emotional disorders on the basis of one's inner and behavioral changes;
- assisting the process of personal development, realization of creative potential, the achievement of an optimum level of life activity and a feeling of happiness and success [34, 35].

It is also necessary to be well aware of group work advantages:

1. A group experience counteracts the alienation, helps to solve interpersonal problems;
2. A group reflects society in a miniature form, makes such hidden factors evident as partners' pressure, social influence and conformism;
3. There is a possibility of getting a feedback and support from the people with similar problems;
4. A person in a group can learn new skills, experiment with various relationship styles among equal partners;

5. In a group participants can discover their own identity among the others, «play» the role of another person in order to understand himself and another person better, to familiarize themselves with new efficient ways of behavior applied by someone;

6. Interaction in a group creates tension which helps to reveal psychological problems of each person;

7. A group makes the processes of self-realization, self-study and self-cognition easy;

8. A group work form is also more preferable in an economic aspect: work in a training course is more affordable for participants than individual therapy (and for many people training work is much more effective) [36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43].

In the process of students' professional education social and psychological training courses are widely used in various disciplines: «An Introduction to a profession», «Creative technologies in a profession», «Professional formation technologies», «Managerial psychology» and others. One of the disciplines that in its content provides conditions to use the social and psychological training course is the discipline «Professional and personal development». In the framework of this discipline the training course was conducted with future specialists that was aimed to make participants concentrate on the goals which they wanted to achieve and to understand what they have and lack to get the desired result.

RESULTS

While creating the program of the social and psychological training course and its implementation we rested on personal and activity principles that facilitate the examination of the process of a specialist's professional and personal development in the course of the educational activity implementation appropriate to the future profession.

The application of identified methodological principles is determined by the fact that the renewal of general professional training at a higher education institution is based on the unity of personal and activity components in the process of practical work to form in students the skills of solving professional problems.

Professional and personal development is influenced by a set of personal and activity conditions. The most important condition of professional and personal development is raising the level of professional self-consciousness. Control localization in professionally important spheres, realization of terminal values in production and interpersonal spheres, a high level of social intellect are related to personal conditions that determine the professional and personal development level. Activity conditions that determine the dynamics and direction of professional and personal development comprise: emotional involvement in activity, satisfaction with work results, awareness of the actions done; a distinct procedure of activity which is expressed in the proportion of formal and informal rules that function in a group of people, a creative direction of activity, a prognostic character of activity, a variety of complicated types of activity included in hierarchical relations.

The essence of the systemic principle consists in the search for scientific means that express holism of the studied object. The central objective of the study from the systemic principle positions is to reveal and investigate multiple varied ties intrinsic to the object.

Reliability and validity of research results have been provided with initial methodological positions, the application of tested tools and instruments, a broadly representative sample of research, and also mathematical data processing with the use of a package of statistical analysis computer programs.

The training course is intended for students of a higher education institution since it presupposes a certain level of the self-analysis and is oriented to typical features of this age. The training course is designed for 18 hours of classes. It is recommended to conduct in a group of 12-14 participants on a regular basis (2 times a week of 1,5 hours during a month) or with the immersion method - 3 days of 6 academic hours. In this connection the training course is presented in a holistic form and it is not scheduled on certain days and for classes. It is important to cover and study one constituent of the world view at one time.

Each content block (unit) of the training course is marked with Roman numbers. Each new class should be started with a greeting and the exercise-activator. It is recommended to finish classes with self-analysis of the emotional state of participants as well as with the same rite of saying good bye chosen by the group at the first class which was suggested by the coach. The sequence of the practiced elements should be retained since the program has been aligned in conformity with the theoretical bases stated earlier. The exercises selected and used to develop certain skills can vary depending on a group's wish and the coach's personality and a desire to focus on different thematic units of the training course.

To conduct classes one should have a room without tables with a lot of space for group work and required conditions for individual work. Hand-out materials are required for each class that are given in the description of concrete and specified exercises. The effectiveness of classes is provided with the creation of participation motivation in each member of the training group, the establishment of the coach's trusting relations with the group and the coach's theoretical competence.

Figure 1: Approximate subject planning of the training course

Topics of the training course units.	Number of hours
Acquaintance. Revealing expectations. Comprehension of the world view.	2
Self-diagnostics.	2
Setting the goals.	2
Being aware of mindsets.	4
Work with ideals, meaning, «I-image».	4
Work with resources.	2

Group world view.	1
Self-analysis.	1
Total number of hours:	18

The selection of exercises for the training course was carried out by us in view of the targets that are reached when the exercises are done. So, we have picked the following exercises:

1. «A cobweb of success» (the purpose is to create an atmosphere of trust and security in a group);

2. «Mask off» (the purpose is to eliminate emotional and behavioral shyness, to form the skills of sincere expressions for the analysis of the essence «I»);

3. Painting on the topic «Success» (the purpose is to contribute to one's awareness of the attitude to success issues);

4. «You are a good boy/girl anyway...» - a verbal warm-up exercise (the purpose is to contribute to gaining recognition by every participant, approval from the group as the confirmation of the right to success);

5. «Self-analysis» (the purpose is to contribute to every participant's awareness of which qualities help him achieve success and which prevent from achieving);

6. «What has formed me» (the purpose is to make an emphasis on a positive life experience of participants contributing to their personal development);

7. «Epitaph» (the purpose is to raise the players' readiness to build their life and professional prospects consciously, identifying and logically connecting the major (key) events of one's own life);

8. «A suitcase for the trip» (the purpose is to upgrade life targets and raise motivation to achieve them as well as to be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses);

9. «My coat of arms» (the purpose is to be aware of personal targets and their priority).

The final item of conducting the training was self-analysis. The participants of the training answered the following questions:

- What new did you find out and understand during the training about yourself, about the others, about success?
- What changes appeared in your thoughts, feelings, behavior?
- What did you reflect on?
- What would you like to change?

In view of the results of this discussion one can make a conclusion that the goals the exercises done were aimed at were achieved. The majority of participants definitely decided for themselves:

- what they imply by the notion «success» at the moment;
- what qualities help to achieve success, and what qualities impede it;
- which qualities of the identified ones already exist and which ones need to be developed;
- the necessity of upgrading life targets and their priority [44, 45].

DISCUSSION

Beyond any doubt, only training is not enough to achieve the goal set. This training course was a part of the developed and implemented program on the students' professional and personal development at a university which was implemented with the participation of students of Ulyanovsk State University and Plekhanov Russian University of Economics. However, without it the positive dynamics would not be so evident, it is precisely a considerable increase in the number of respondents with the motive of success achievement (45,5% after the experiment completion in comparison with the result before the beginning of the experiment - 13,6%), and also the achievement of the internal motivation prevalence (IM) in comparison with the external negative motivation (ENM) after the experiment completion (IM = 45,5 % > ENM= 18,2 %).

CONCLUSION

Thus to achieve a high level of professionalism in a professional activity a specialist needs to possess initial abilities, opportunities, knowledge, skills, competence and a very high motivation. It is very important for a professional to possess not only mastery but to be distinguished by high efficiency and stability of activity results which is achieved by the use of various forms and methods of training in the process of the professional skills development. A social and psychological training course is a form of work that helps to effectively develop the skills of professional activity creating the emotionally safe milieu in students' learning giving an opportunity of getting an active feedback and forming a skill of self-analysis.

The materials of this article can be of use to social workers, teachers of higher educational institutions as well as psychologists-practitioners.

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