

The Process of Pedagogical Culture Formation in the Future Social Worker

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ABSTRACT

The paper is aimed at studying the features of pedagogical culture formation in future social workers and developing methods to improve the professional and pedagogical preparation quality of students in the "Social work" specialty. In the study, a survey of students in the "Social work" specialty (n=400), and a standardized interview with the teachers of educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan (n=150) was conducted. Data of the empirical part of the research suggest that in schools' practice the standard curricula and programs are used that do not take into account peculiarities of professional activity of social workers, are not aimed at developing practical skills and are not contiguous with the principles of modern personality-oriented educational technologies. The monitoring results became the basis for the development of a model to improve the quality of professional and pedagogical preparation of students in the "Social work" specialty.

KEYWORDS

Pedagogical culture, practical orientation of the pedagogical culture, professional and pedagogical training of future social worker, personal-oriented training, the principles of social work

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Introduction

Pedagogical culture is an integrative characteristic of personality (Hare, 2004) and requires a certain level of mastery of professional and pedagogical values (Teleuyev et al., 2015; Adams, 2016), personality-oriented techniques (Kilburn, Nind & Wiles, 2014), and techniques of creative self-realization in professional activity (Gaysina, 2015), as well as appropriate communication skills (Godlevska, 2007).

In terms of pedagogical culture formation at the present stage, it is worth noting that social factors such as devaluation of moral values, loss of interest in

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spiritual ideals, as well as a decline in the value of education in the minds of young people, influenced a significant decrease in the level of pedagogical culture (Arrow, 2012; Mc.Donald et al., 2015).

The principles of pedagogical culture development in the process of pedagogical training of students should also be considered, because at this stage the process of personal-value and initial professional attitudes formation takes place (Baldwin, 2016).

Of particular interest are the students in the "Social work" specialty, because recently there has been much public demand for the provision of social services in the system of the population social protection (Miley et al., 2016; Zastrow, 2003; Forrester, Westlake & Glynn, 2012). Therefore, there is a need for monitoring the quality of professional and pedagogical training of students of this area in educational institutions.

Literature Review

A high level of pedagogical culture is one of the qualities that define the ability of future social workers to solve urgent social problems through the provision of timely and high-quality material and moral and legal support to the population (Adams, Dominelli & Payne, 1998; Baldwin, 2016; Buck, Fletcher & Bradley, 2016).

C. Zastrow (2003), S.J. White (2003) and D. Saleebey (2012) argue that the behavior of the social worker inspired by the set of his/her personal and moral qualities, value orientations and interests, has a major impact on the system of interpersonal relations. Therefore, the education of spiritual and moral culture should occupy an important place in the process of social workers' training (Zastrow, 2003). Only an optimal combination of professional skills with high moral culture of a specialist is the key to his/her high skill (White, 2003; Flexner, 2001).

Theorists and practitioners of pedagogy also agree on the opinion that the implementation of the professional and pedagogical preparation of students in the "Social work" specialty in educational institutions allows performing training, educational (Constable, 2009), developing, organizing and activating functions (Walker, 1928).

If we consider the main elements of professional and pedagogical training of a future social worker, we can highlight the following: teacher's professional and pedagogical education, teacher's professional and pedagogical development, teacher's professional and pedagogical politeness (Hepworth et al., 2016).

It should be noted that scientists studying the peculiarities of the modern professional and pedagogical training of students in the "Social work" specialty, in most cases, divide it into 4 main components: motivational-objective, substantial, activity and productive (Teleuyev et al., 2015). This allows taking into account the experience of application of all traditional and non-traditional forms, methods and techniques of students' training and education (Baldwin, 2016).

Special attention in research is paid to the influence of deficiencies in the content and organization of practical training of future social workers. Therefore, D.M. Godlevskaya (2007), P. Marsh & J.P. Triseliotis (1996) argue that the potential of students' training in the social services is implemented

insufficiently, so it is unproductive. In accordance with this, the need for specially designed educational technology becomes urgent as a way to continuous and consistent improvement of practical skills of students in the "Social work" specialty.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to determine the level of pedagogical culture formation in future social workers at the present stage, and to develop a universal model that will improve the quality of professional and pedagogical preparation of students in the "Social work" specialty.

Research questions

What psychological and pedagogical factors influence the pedagogical culture formation in a future social worker? What problems often arise in the process of professional and pedagogical training of students in the "Social work" specialty? What are the optimal ways of practical orientation formation of the pedagogical culture?

Method

The research used the following methods:

- content analysis of regulatory acts, organizational-conceptual and methodological documents for educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- expert assessment of the development of pedagogical culture in prospective social workers in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- questionnaire survey of students specializing in "Social Work" in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan (n=400);
- standard interview of teachers of educational institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan, who specialize in "Social Work" (n=150);
- pedagogical process modeling.

The development of pedagogical culture of a social worker in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan was studied in the following directions:

- search for ways of developing the practical orientation of pedagogical culture;
- generalization of experience of conventional and unconventional forms, methods, techniques of teaching students in the "Social Work" specialization;
- development of high moral qualities and pedagogical culture in students;
- availability of learning documents and academic-methodological literature during the educational process;
- extensive implementation of the individual approach to teaching.

The investigation of the practice of developing pedagogical culture generalized the experience of pedagogical and methodological work of educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan: L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, S. Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University, and Karaganda Economic University.

Data, Analysis, and Results

The content analysis of regulatory acts, organizational-conceptual and methodological documents of educational institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan showed that nowadays, educational institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan build their pedagogical process in accordance with the principles of the state educational policy – as a multilevel system of vocational education (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2007; Seyteshev & Abdyrkarimov, 1993; Rengasamy, 2005; Kholostova, 206).

The implementation of the concept of continuous vocational education, based on the principle of consistent accumulation of knowledge with observance of continuous vocational education programs, the main goal whereof is to bring the occupational training of prospective social workers in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan in compliance with the requirements of State Educational Standards of various levels, which reflect the process and result of occupational training of students for social and pedagogical work.

The conceptual elements of occupational-pedagogical training of students specializing in “Social Work” in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan are as follows: curricular classes, educational events, internship, work placement, research and development, etc.

Educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan give an expert assessment of the pedagogical culture of students specializing in “Social Work”. The problems of pedagogical culture are solved comprehensively and purposefully by such courses as “Methods and Technologies of Social Work”, “Social Work of Families and Children”, etc.

In practice, educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan use typical syllabi and programs. They take into consideration the peculiarities of the professional activity of social workers. At that, syllabi organize the educational process by semesters, hours, intensity, types of classes, and forms of assessment of students’ pedagogical training, while programs reflect the content of the subject. This provides purposeful pedagogical training, as well as formation and development of traits qualities, skills, and abilities of prospective specialists.

The analysis of the content of “Methods and Technologies of Social Work” and “Social Work of Families and Children” courses, the monitoring of the results of these subjects’ teachers, investigation of their opinions, and student survey show that the base minimum of the course content that is provided for by the state educational standard does not help students to develop systematized psychological and pedagogical knowledge.

The research showed that the pedagogical knowledge used in the educational process is excessively theoretical and often unrelated to practice – the methods of teaching and learning this knowledge allows students to learn the theoretical component, but does not provide complete training for the solution of practical problems. This is typical for the current practice of training students in the “Social Work” specialization in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan within the framework of psychological and pedagogical academic subjects.

Therefore, this research analyzed “conventional” subject plans and training programs that existed before the introduction of unified state educational

standards, as well as current plans and programs for the “Social Pedagogy” course.

The analysis of subject plans and training programs for the “Methods and Technologies of Social Work” and “Social Work of Families and Children” courses shows that positive changes are occurring nowadays in the target provisions and organizational-methodological instructions of subjects. The goals and objectives of psychology and pedagogy are now determined for both teachers and students. Many training programs emphasize that the study of the discipline is aimed at not only acquiring psychological and pedagogical knowledge, but also using them in practice during professional activity; however, pedagogical activity in the field of education, training, psychological training, relations with the public, clients, and colleagues at work is unspecified as of yet. This requires introducing an applied course as an optional discipline, which would reflect the specificity of professional activity of coworkers.

Independent training of students as a form and independent work as a method of teaching used in various classes (lectures, seminars, and consultations) is an integral part of the educational process in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Simultaneously, the form reflects the organizational aspect of extracurricular self-teaching (systematic and purposeful activity aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities).

The investigation of problems related to the organization of self-training and independent work of students and the development of recommendations regarding its further improvement are scientifically relevant and practically important for improving the level of professional pedagogical training of students specializing in “Social Work”.

The questionnaire and survey results show that the independent work of students has significant flaws and unutilized possibilities:

- 67% of students are not entirely proficient in the methodology of independent work with textbooks; 5.5% of students reported that they did not know the rules of working with textbooks;
- 65% of students feel the need for methodological assistance from teachers when doing written tests and writing term papers;
- 31.75% of students do not draft individual plans of independent work;
- about 60% of students who do draft individual plans do not act according to them.

One of the main pedagogical goals of occupational training of specialists for social work consists in combining theoretical and practical training. Work placement of students serves as a professional specific form of training.

Educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan plan it regularly; however, its organization and execution is of varying quality. The positive aspect is that programs and plans of work placement are developed trainees; the latter have to report on the performance of said programs and plans after completing the task. The assessment of the performed tasks affects the overall result of work placement. Students are given a certain scope of work that they have to do; assistance and assessment during work placement is planned, etc.

However, monitoring of real practice and conversations with students of educational institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan showed that not every

student's work placement corresponded to his or her chosen specialization. This does not facilitate high-quality training. Sometimes, several trainees were assigned to one position; experienced workers were not always assigned to the trainees.

Work placement of students as one of the main elements of pedagogical culture development is only introductory. The work placement plans do not reflect the individual knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, in spite of this knowledge presenting considerable possibilities for developing pedagogical abilities and skills.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the practical part of this study are in line with the conclusions of foreign researchers. For instance, G.I. Gaysina (2015), M. Adams (2016), D.W. Sue, N.M. Rasheed & J.M. Rasheed (2015) confirm the thesis that educational plans for training prospective social workers have minimum practical orientation. This is unacceptable, since social work requires developing appropriate communicative skills and experience of using certain psychological techniques.

The studies of G. Teleuyev et al. (2015), L.S. Abrams & J.A. Moio (2009) on the problems of developing pedagogical culture in prospective social workers in the historical context show that researching the organization of student training in the "Social Work" specialization and the development of recommendations for their further development remains relevant. The researchers emphasize the fact that unity of theoretical and practical training in the occupational training of social workers also lacked in earlier stages of development of pedagogical science.

It is worth noting that by using similar methods for diagnosing the level of development of pedagogical culture in students specializing in "Social Work" at Lancaster University, S.J. White (2003) identified the main pedagogical problems in the modern vocational education of social work specialists. S.J. White substantiated the use of innovative methods of organizing student self-training and emphasized the low level of development of professional responsibility in prospective social workers.

The conclusions from the analysis of educational regulatory acts and expert assessment of the pedagogical training of students in educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan are as follows:

- firstly, most teachers and students have only a basic idea of pedagogical culture and associate it with the process of teaching and learning the "Methods and Technological of Social Work" and "Social Pedagogy" courses; this waters down the training process and prevents from using many of its potential possibilities;
- secondly, the main conceptual elements of pedagogical culture (teaching of pedagogical knowledge, formation and development of pedagogical skills and abilities, pedagogical conviction, pedagogical activity, etc.) are ineffective;
- thirdly, pedagogical culture requires a special pedagogical technology as a means of continuous and successive realization of goals and tasks, and organization, with a view to improving the quality of education.

Implications and Recommendations

The research does not cover all the aspects of the studied pedagogical problem. Therefore, its materials can be used in follow-up researches devoted to the improvement of training quality of prospective social workers. The offered model, which was developed based on the results of the experiment, can be used by workers of social institutions, psychologists, and teachers of social disciplines in modern professional, psychological, and pedagogical practice.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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