

Some Issues of Teacher Training Modernization

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Abstract: The study deals with values and goals of modern teacher training system which are connected with peculiarities of the current socio-cultural situation. Teacher's professional functions and correspondent tendencies of their training are considered in the view of understanding education and teacher's activity as a vital humanitarian and social practice. Necessary changes in cognitive and practical constituents of teacher training in the Framework of competence model in higher education of intending teachers have been proved.

Key words: Teacher training, modernization, values, competence model, education

INTRODUCTION

Teacher's mission and the essence of their work have always been defined by the ideas of the society and the state about their future as well as by the development and relations of different educational factors such as educational institutions, family, mass media. As an intermediate between the periods of childhood and adult life in culture and society, a teacher needs clear and consistent guidelines. At this point we see an obscure guideline model characteristic to the era of change which has triggered drastic shifts in worldview, values, politics, economics and socio-psychological conditions.

There is no doubt that education and a teacher as a key figure of this field must comprehend and accept the main characteristics of a long-term development strategy of Russia shown in a variety of program guidelines in the recent years. Among such characteristics one can see an open society which should be aware of its being an inseparable part of the global economic and informational environment; open market-oriented economy which should switch from raw materials production to the development of innovative technologies; a democratic system as a state with strong civil and legal institutions; the unity of multicultural, multiethnic, multiconfessional environment of the country, etc.

How can one follow all these guidelines and tendencies? Some scholars see the goal of education in adapting the youth to social changes, i.e., in "formatting" school children's and student's personality to the preassigned parameters of modernization. Thus, in educational programs and programs of educational institutions development there appear personality models which mainly focus on building enterprise and success

skills, tolerance and respect to the rights of others, independence and confidence, flexibility in relations with other people. In order not to be criticized for being one-sided, the models include dedication to healthy lifestyle, patriotism, active life position and a number of other moral characteristics.

A model with such a set of values is usually designed quite well. However, it is eclectic and is not suitable for pragmatic educational needs as these models are based on excessive simplification which leads to the distortion of reality.

It is necessary to admit that complex and controversial reforms which have influence on almost all spheres of social life and are being implemented despite the imperatives dictated by the culture and civilization code of the country, rule out the technological approach to the definition of educational goals. It so happens because such practice leads to ignoring the negative factors created by the reforms themselves which deteriorate the educational quality of the social environment and the conditions of children's development. There are such factors as:

- "Infection" of a considerable part of the youth, adolescents and adults with a virus of consumer-hedonistic decadence
- The increase of individualism, the weakening of social ties and based on them ideals of civic consciousness as taking care of the motherland, fellowship and love which result in disrespect and deterioration of relations between children and adults
- An idea of freedom associated with excessive permissiveness and consumer abundance

Literature review: These and many other factors influence negatively on the results of development, education and socialization of the youth which has been proved in publications by Feldstein. Besides, the factors in question increase the chaos in the educational environment and in teacher's mind creating a new type of socio-educational uncertainty reflected in unawareness of the real goals instead of hesitation in choosing the means to reach them. "In fact, school works without any consolidated social demand" acknowledges a famous reformer of Russian education. As there is no clear demand for the results of teacher's work neither from the state, nor from the society teacher's motivation declines dramatically. Teachers labor is being increasingly merely "wage-work".

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Education as science as well as the system of teacher training must recognize the evolving phenomena of the prefigurative culture: uncertainty of the future (even in a short-term perspective), instability of the present, information chaos which complicates cognition. Only multisided, complex people, who can absorb new knowledge, react to changes quickly and at the same time preserve their identity can fit this world. That is why living in a constantly changing unpredictable world teenagers and youth seek for self-determination and personal identity which demand a higher level of individual self-consciousness than previous generations had. This type of life requires:

- Subjectivity and reflexive abilities as well as self-control, self-regulation, self-management and self-development
- Being ready for self-education and retraining connected with the ability to differentiate and define the limits of the significant and the insignificant, grasping the essential information in huge streams of meaningless data which dominates mass media nowadays
- Being open, sensible and sensitive to new life purposes as well as being able to go beyond the knowledge and experience you already have
- Spiritual balance as being morally and mentally rooted in your native culture which creates the foundation for understanding foreign cultures
- The ability to understand modern means of gene pool destruction and turning people into zombie-biorobots (drugs, alcohol, tobacco, addiction to computers and television, special kinds of music), etc

It should be noted that in order to build such a personality the values-oriented approach must become

fundamental for modern teacher's professional development and work. Education and teacher's work must be viewed from the perspective of a humanitarian social practice instead of regarding it merely from the economic point of view. Such understanding of the processes corresponding to the humanitarian tradition of the Russian Education and Psychology is supported by many schools and reflects many high-school and university student's values and goals. The students themselves consider their education in the framework of their personality development. Only a clear humanitarian focus of schools and education will help to stop the decline of the cultural and moral level of human resources in Russia.

As it is widely known teacher's informational function has seized to be an important one in a learner-centered approach due to the free access to IT nowadays. The main role of teachers now is that of organizers and coordinators of their children's study process. Alongside with that teachers should develop their student's motivation and reflexive skills. Such a teacher must know much. As Vygotsky (1981) stated, "in order to give your knowledge, you can know little but very well. In order to manage your student's knowledge, you need to know much more than that". However, one should not understand "much more" as just more knowledge of facts which often leads to kaleidoscope thinking. Methodological aspects which define the abilities and skills to learn new things are to be taught more in teacher training and retraining programs.

Vygotsky (1981)'s theory, teacher education environment offers support to teachers for developing a professional identity. A major constituent is that teachers should learn methods of teaching training for their main social meanings and how these meanings relate to their own structures of personal meanings (Huizen *et al.*, 2005).

In addition to that while training intending teachers the main focus should be on functional possibilities of this or that science. It is worth mentioning that in Theory of Education it is widely known (although quite often forgotten) that whatever is effective is true. That is why a student who is intending to be a Math teacher must be ready to teach all main categories of Math from Arithmetic to Set Theory from Calculus to the Probability Theory. Such teaching helps to understand the material better, makes studying more interesting, increases motivation to acquire new knowledge, helps students to understand the meaning of their education and leads to more independence in studies.

It is necessary to note that in the state of a global civilization crisis the results and products of science must not be used to change nature or achieve individual success. Both in research and in education soteriological motives are essential nowadays: to save nature, to save

culture, to save people. That is why while working with a massive amount of scientific information one needs to find, single out and focus on a saving knowledge which by the way will require much greater skills to work with than the previous project knowledge.

As for knowledge as a part of teacher training, it is necessary to consider the content of natural sciences and sociohumanitarian courses taught at universities today. These courses show an abstract and formal approach of contemporary scientific systematics which made a number of subjects both at schools and universities hard to understand. Such an approach promotes hostility to theoretical knowledge, a habit to act in accordance with a given algorithm, inability to see the meaning in their actions and explain why they do them. This takes away teacher's uniqueness. It is replaced by devotion to instructions, obscure and disorderly knowledge and worldview which teachers bring in the classroom.

We should pay attention to experienced teachers, to our students and admit that university courses cannot be automatically used in all kinds of teacher training and retraining programs. It is necessary to look for effective variants of content development in which scientific systematics could be taught in harmony with psychological aspects and scientific knowledge could be effectively applied in people's personality development. We need to go back to a learner-centered approach so that students could analyze and understand the meaning of the material they study. These were the characteristics of a classic Russian school. It is possible to ease the burden of scientific knowledge for students if it leads to better understanding of the material. It is also important to state that professional skills in Education and Methodology cannot be identical to scientific competence and must not be replaced with it.

The content of programs in Education should not be characterized only by university level of programs. Ushinsky considering the Prussian experience in teacher training stated that it was important not to teach future teachers too much as broad but obscure knowledge can do nothing but harm in their work. Shadrikov (2010)'s principal of "a refunding loop" may become a perspective way of teacher training at the bachelor's degree level. According to this principal the content of university courses is based on school program and goes to a deeper level of comprehension. For example, Physics for intending teachers at university is based on Physics which was taught at school however every unit is studied more consistently and in detail with historical insight. An experiment carried out in Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University showed good results of applying this principal.

A serious shift of goals, contents and results of teacher training is to happen due to the implementation of competence approach. The approach in question may lead

to actual modernization of teacher training as well as opportunities for teacher's professional and personal development at universities.

Despite the ongoing disputes about the term itself, it is possible to say that a competence is cognitive, social, moral and other abilities shown by individuals in their real life, behavior and actions, integrated in their personal experience of problem-solving. It is clear that general and professional competence is impossible to be formed in the framework of traditional teaching based on explanation and reproduction. "The peculiarity of a competence as of a certain professional ability is that it is acquired in a real professional problem-solving situation even if it happens in the classroom" (Serikov, 2010).

This is the reason why the work with a competence model starts with making a list of typical professional tasks, problems and situations which a student must solve, using theory as a basis for practice. The list should reflect the structure of teacher's professional activity and include project, organizational, communicative, information skills and many other tasks and situations which are integrated in the studies in a reproductive way as well as in problem-solving conditions (lack of time and means, lack of knowledge about a situation, etc.).

These problems require a careful selection of content from professional education and children's upbringing. It should also include historical data revealing how a problem was solved at earlier stages of Education development and provide enough theoretical and methodological information. There should also be knowledge about teacher's values, ideals, norms in addition to the elements described earlier.

On the whole, knowledge is an important factor of competence-based model implementation. There are concerns that professional issues will be considered and solved on the basis of student's common views, their professionally undeveloped intuition and little understanding of professional situations. Students may also borrow solutions from books. This will prevent them from self-study, development of productive thinking and generation of their own ideas.

The new approach of the competence-based model in higher education is in connecting the experience of professional problem-solving with searching and acquiring new knowledge. That is why the theoretical part of educational programs must leave the room for intellectual redundancy and must not give knowledge in its final form ready to be applied in practice which is ideal for positivists and pro-market apologists. Otherwise we shall go back to handicraft which doesn't leave any room between the theory and the practice and teaches training at universities will result in teaching implementers people who can only use things created by somebody else.

Transformation of student's knowledge, skills and personal qualities in professional competence can be helped with discussions, projects, micro-studies, digest of information resources, case-technology, master-class of professional skills development and with other active and interactive educational methods and strategies, oriented at student's abilities to take part in a dialogue, explain their viewpoint, see a problem, give reasons for choosing a solution and evaluate its result. We must admit that students cannot develop professional skills only in the classroom, regardless of all the sophisticated methodological instruments we use. Any competence is based on experience which comes from professional activity and professional environment which stimulates student's independence and responsibility. That is why it is sensible to reconsider the ratio of student's theoretical and practical training, increase the time and intensity of student teaching period. Bachelor's and master's degree students may be involved in continuous student teaching which will result in the unity of student's and professor's academic, scientific and research activity. These measures will provide students with more individual scientific and professional mentoring and will optimize professor's workload.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The goals of modernization in teacher training make us return to an old problem of the role and the place of the educational knowledge and theory in teacher training. The results of a research carried out by RAE showed that among professionally significant knowledge Theory of Education is put in the last place by most teachers, "which in a certain way proves the science crisis in the context of its practical side and flaws in subject teaching". Former graduates also confirm that they didn't like to study Education when they were at universities.

Theory must provide a basis for thinking and practice as well as give guidelines for this practice. This function of Education works insufficiently due to many reasons.

Firstly, teacher training system is constantly increasing in the formal side of the educational process, i.e., in making models where analytical skills, formal logics and mathematical instruments are applied the best. It is true that creating models and using them are productive cognitive skills, however, very often these models have nothing in common with real life. Models, notions, schemes and other abstract ideas about educational topics, connected with reflections in accordance with the rules of the formal logics are taken to the courses

attended by students and to the literature read by students. Both must reflect the current state of their science. This is the way a subject is made difficult to understand and study which leads to problems in understanding Education fully which in its turn activates protective mechanisms against such a mind-numbing activity.

Secondly, we need to pay attention to the individual empirical foundation which students use when they are introduced to new knowledge. This foundation consists mostly of child-parent relations and of playing a passive role of a student. There are not as many students in bachelor's degree programs who used to babysit their younger siblings who actively and regularly participated in games, competitions, labor activities with people of different age groups. There are not as many students who are members of youth and children social organizations, including professional clubs and religious organizations. However a lot of students have a considerable experience of online communication.

Most educational phenomena reflected in Theory of Education are connected with relations among people, children and adults. That is why such limited experience of direct social interactions, emotional and personal interactions of today's students with their peers, younger and older people and at times mere social immaturity lead to shallowness of certain views and emotions which should help in mind development, especially teacher's mind development.

Having considered written earlier, it is now clear what we must focus on in the near future. First of all, working at new educational programs we must diminish the abstract and scholastic character of their material, especially for freshmen and sophomores. This means that the process of teaching theory of education must start with concrete and figurative knowledge. It can be done by integrating works of A.S. Makarenko, V.A. Sukhomlinskiy, S. Frene, Y. Korchak and other outstanding teachers. It is important that their texts contain strong educational spirit which stimulates individual thinking and teacher's activity, strengthens educational optimism, confidence in the importance and meaning of teacher's work.

CONCLUSION

Opportunities in increasing empirical foundation of teacher training, stimulating student's interest to children, their development and personality growth may come from social educational work and activity of student's clubs, student's and professor's volunteer organizations.

Students will be more involved in different kinds of activities with children if the ideas of social projection are studied and integrated in their professional education. There may be other ways of involving students in interaction with children such as ecotourism, theatre, educational expeditions, etc.

The way we see school is most of all defined by teacher training. The school of development, creativity and human relations where the main focus is on values and attitude towards children and teachers is in need of a constantly improving psychological and pedagogical teacher training.

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