

DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE WITHIN THE STUDYING OF ELECTIVE COURSES OF INCLUSIVE ORIENTATION

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Abstract: The article addresses the scientific problem of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation. It describes the integration of social-personal, general and specific professional competencies in college students. We scientifically validated the model of developing students' professional competencies. We defined criteria, levels and characteristics of students' professional competencies development. We revealed the potential for professional competencies development in the content of elective courses of inclusive orientation. We provide theoretical validation of the pedagogic conditions, which are implied in the model of developing students' professional competencies and which provide increased efficiency of developing students' professional competencies. The model of developing students' professional competencies is recommended for using during the development of educational standards and educational programs in colleges.

Keywords: Development, professional competencies, student, elective courses of inclusive orientation, model.

INTRODUCTION

Competence approach contains the most significant essential difficulty that higher professional education in the country encounters. Being rather clear in its main ideas, in practice, competence approach gains multiple variations, which implies multitude of scenarios for its actualization in dependence from the subjects, who are involved in the professional-educational process, the level of education, regional needs, direction of education, specialization, etc. Competence approach ideology, which is translated in the normative documents, scientific publication and discussions, implies the development of competencies as practically-oriented result of education that manifests in the ability to successfully manage a certain range of professional tasks. In this light, professional training should become a system of quasi-professional actions and types of activity performed by students, i.e., bring the professional-educational activity closer to the professional one. In such approach, it is easy to notice the advantages, but it is also necessary to point out the disadvantages, both of methodic nature and in practical actualization in the conditions of higher professional educational process. The significance of the study subject is defined by increasing demands from the employers towards the

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content and quality of training the specialists in education. A college graduate can be professionally successful in the conditions of high competition in the intellectual job market, if he is professional, competent, professionally mobile and is able to adapt to rapidly changing conditions, and has well-developed key and basic professional competencies (Karimova et. al., 2016; Albekova et. al., 2014; Fernandez et. al., 2012; Gifford, 1994; Henner, 2004; Akhmejanova et. al., 2016; Hoffman, 1999).

There is a pressing need in changing not only the structure of professional activity of specialists in education, but also the orientation of the content and technology of specialists' training. The integrity of the educational process in higher school implies the synthesis of developing students' abilities, techniques, skills and professional competencies, development of personality qualities, which provide their job establishment as specialists and professionals.

Defining the content and designing the technology of professional competencies development in prospective specialists is one of the significant and still underdeveloped problems of the whole higher education system, and first of all, of the college teachers.

The significance of the problem of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation is defined by the tendencies of dynamical social-economic development of our country and the increasing demands towards a specialist from the job market and towards the higher professional education system in terms of inclusive content as a very significant factor of economic growth and stabilization of the social life. Inclusive education is a comprehensive process of providing equal access to high-quality education by organizing the activity in educational institutions on the basis of using personality-oriented teaching methods with consideration of the individual differences. The definition of the optimal ways and means of introducing inclusive education is based on the corresponding legal, educational-methodic, professional, material-technical and informational support (Brandon & Charlton, 2011; Kim, 2011). Early diagnostics and assistance of people from the risk population and expansion of the ranges of interaction of people with special development are possible only in the situation of professional approach by highly qualified specialists. Scientific-methodic and professional support of inclusive education development remains a pressing matter. There is a social demand for inclusion. However, practical requirements are currently marked by the questions of "who, who, where and where to teach". These are the questions of those who functions in the new reality, of those who are going to learn and teach.

In the process of studying in college, students of various specialties have to acquire the information about the specifics of inclusive education and its

purposefulness. Ultimately, such education provides the succession from inclusive education to inclusive society, makes the society more humane, expands each person's potential and facilitates self-actualization (Fajzrahmanova, 2014; Hill & Brown, 2013, Polat, 2011). The problems of teaching a college students to perform the professional functions and developing professional competence during the education are addressed in the works of higher professional education specialists, such as A. Chown (1994), A.Z. Saliyeva et. al., (2016), A. Zhumasheva et. al., (2016), A. Hutchinson (1994), D.C. McClelland (1973).

Analysis of pedagogical studies by N. Ivankova et. al., (2016), G.Z. Niyazova et. al., (2013), P. Makhashova et. al., (2016); B. Zhaparova et. al., (2016), Ch. Day (1994), K.M. Berkimbaev et. al., (2012), Z. Zhumbaeva et. al., (2016), and others, as well as the higher education practice, shows an increasing interest towards the questions of specialists' professional competence. However, there are not enough studies about the problem of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation in the conditions of higher education modernization.

The questions of essence and content of students' professional competencies in higher education system have not been studied enough, along with the integration of means, forms, methods and conditions that have a significant influence on the efficiency of students' training process with consideration of inclusion and job market's requirements.

Analysis of the literature on the topic of the study (Fajzrahmanova, 2014; Asenova et. al., 2013; Balabayeva et. al., 2016; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013; Kramsch, 2006; Kulkov, 2013; Fernandez et. al., 2012), review of the education practice and work experience in training prospective specialists in higher school allowed revealing the controversies between the demands of practice and job market, which are presented to a specialist in education, who has to be professionally mobile, capable of adaptation and competent in a wide subject area, and the insufficient level of a method of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation.

Considering the defined controversy, we defined the aim of the study: validation of the method of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation.

METHODS

Methodological bases of the study were: integral approach, systemic-regulating approach, activity approach, competence approach in professional education, personality-oriented approach, context approach, technological approach and variative technologies in higher education, regulations of elective courses.

Theoretical bases of the study consisted of: theory of specialists' professional education and personality development, theory of competence approach in education, theoretical validations of the essence of "competence" and "professional competence" concepts, activity theory of learning and theory of inclusive education.

We used the following research methods to solve the defined aim of validating the method of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation:

- Theoretical research methods: studying and analyzing philosophical, sociological, pedagogical and psychological literature on the problem of studying professional competence; concepts and terminological apparatus; researchers' approaches to the addressed problem of elective courses and professional competence; synthesis, comparison and generalization;
- Empirical research methods: studying and generalizing work experience in developing students' professional competence in higher professional education system within studying elective courses; interviews with students and teachers; survey, observation; method of generalizing independent characteristics; studying the products of students' creative activity; methods of mathematical and statistical data analysis; modelling, pedagogical experiment for studying the role of elective courses as a tool for developing the professional competencies of students as prospective teachers.

RESULTS

Students' professional competence is a characteristic of students' personal and professional qualities, which includes professional competencies, provides efficient and purposeful conduction of professional activity in various fields of education and characterizes the presence of students' professional organizational skills, knowledge, abilities and skills for conducting the pedagogic process, analysis and pedagogical activity results prediction (White, 1959; Onalbek et. al., 2013; Zhaparova et. al., 2013; Sundburg, 2001; Rakhimbekova et. al., 2015; Sakenov et. al., 2012; Omarov et. al., 2016). Such definition of students' professional competence creates a predisposition for validating and creating a method of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation as a tool for students' professional training. Analysis of works by D. Hill & D. Brown (2013), Z. Zhumabaeva et. al., (2016), J. Kim (2011), and A.T. Fajzrahmanova (2014) shows that evaluations and designs of a method of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation as a tool for students' professional training have not been studied enough, and therefore, their specifics in comparison with the basic courses is not being considered.

Considering the current tendencies of education development, which lead to the increased demands towards students' qualifications and professional competence, there is a need in integrated training and high academic mobility. Competence approach in developing students' professional competencies is the basis. Competence approach in college education would allow creating the conditions for training highly-qualified specialists of a new generation. Competence approach can be defined as a method of modelling the results of education and presentation of higher education as a norm. It is currently commonly accepted (Gifford, 1994; Albekova et. al., 2014; Berkimbaev et. al., 2012) that it is reasonable to use competence approach during the definition of education level and results. When governmental educational standards are concerned, at first, a list of students' professional competencies is defined and written in State Compulsory Educational Standard, and then it defines the list of educational courses and elective courses of inclusive orientation as a tool for students' professional preparation, which provide the development of these competence. Then, criteria and techniques of objective evaluation of the level of graduates' coherence with the requirements of the defined professional competencies are developed. Distribution of students' professional competencies by the courses and levels of education would allow developing an educational trajectory, actualization of which is reflected in the educational program.

During the different periods of students' college education, types and content of professional competencies necessary for acquiring change. During the junior years, studying the blocks of general-education subjects requires one set of competencies (general, multi-purpose, key), and the period of studying basic and profile subjects on the specialty calls for the competencies of another level (special, subject-specific, professional and specific). For in-depth professional competencies development, students have a right to choose elective courses of inclusive orientation, which develop a direction of education.

Therefore, such approach allowed us to develop a model developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation, which includes the following components (see Figure 1):

- Cognitive component of students' professional competencies development: implies having basic and special theoretical knowledge that is necessary for conducting efficient professional activity;
- Operational component of students' professional competencies development: implies efficient use of the obtained knowledge in prospective professional activity or in future education; it is defined by the set of specific practical abilities and skills, such as skills of inclusive pedagogic thinking and practical skills for conducting efficient pedagogic activity;

- Axiological component of students' professional competencies development: implies the ability to efficiently cooperate with other people, i.e., to create efficient communications, cooperate with colleagues and maintain a favorable atmosphere in the group for achieving professional goals;
- Life-long learning for students' professional competencies development: includes the readiness to construct and conduct one's own life-long education trajectory, which provides successfulness and professional competitiveness;
- Criterial component of students' professional competencies development: includes axiological, motivational, content and resulting criteria, as well as the levels of their development (threshold, advanced, productive), diagnostic inventory developed in the study (integration of criteria of professional competencies development, descriptors of levels of professional competencies acquisition, maps of professional competencies, matrix of interactions between competencies and elective educational courses of inclusive orientation, education evaluation), which allow monitoring the quality of students' professional training and facilitates the increased quality of monitoring the efficiency of the process of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses of inclusive orientation;
- Technological component of studying elective courses of inclusive orientation of learning the chosen profession within the specialization: in order to reach the required level of student's professional competencies and professionally-significant personality qualities, on the basis of the corresponding principles and factors, the content of study materials on the elective courses of inclusive orientation has to be structured in larger blocks (courses: Theory and methods of inclusive education; Practical course in inclusive pedagogics; Inclusive school, etc.). Additionally, the adequate methods, tools and forms of teaching, which are aimed at students' independent choice and completion of full, shortened or in-depth education, have to be selected. Rating system of evaluating the education results corresponds to the fullest with the technological component of studying elective courses of inclusive orientation. It allows considering almost all student's activity related to acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills, as well as many characteristics of students' professionally-significant competencies development. Because of this, it is necessary to use the technology of rating control of students' professional competencies development upon the components of professional competencies development separately and in general.

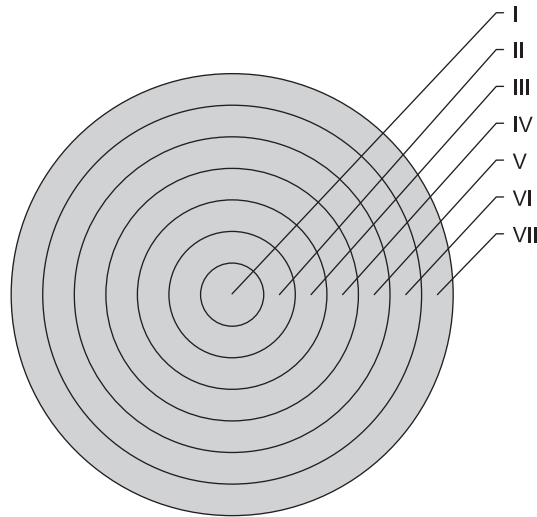


Figure 1: The model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation

Notes for Figure 1. The model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation. This Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation shows the interaction of the main components and elements of the process of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation:

- I. Process of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation;
- II. Cognitive component of developing students' professional competencies;
- III. Operational component of developing students' professional competencies;
- IV. Axiological component of developing students' professional competencies;
- V. Life-long learning for developing students' professional competencies;
- VI. Criterial component of developing students' professional competencies;
- VII. Technological component of studying elective courses of inclusive orientation.

Novelty of the Results

Therefore, the Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation implies that, at the beginning of education, 1-2nd-year students acquire only the general ideas and primary knowledge on the professional competencies. On the basis of students' sufficient level of

theoretical knowledge and practical abilities and skills, on the next levels (3-4th years) abilities and skills in the field of these professional competencies develop, and then the corresponding experience accumulates. This experience consists in an integration of other knowledge and abilities and skills, acquired on its basis. Moreover, it is reasonable to compare professional competence with the efficiency of their activity and to consider qualitative characteristics of students' activity as the criteria.

Communicative skills develop during all courses and years, also with regard to the specifics of elective courses of inclusive orientation. They characterize knowledge and abilities of efficient use of various communication means, oral and written communication, monologue, dialogue, communicative tasks, foreign-language communication (knowledge of English, Kazakh and Russian languages), interaction with the society, inclusive environment and the group, with colleagues, partners, family; conflicts and constructive ways of solving them, cooperation and teamwork, tolerance, respect and acceptance of others. As a result, pedagogical communication skills are developed. Communicative skills are evaluated in all types of control – current, midterm and final.

Competence in life-long learning is self-perfection; it actualizes the principle of education in current conditions – creative and scientific approach to learning. This competence is evaluated during the studying of each subject, elective courses of inclusive orientation or educational-industrial internship and during midterm and final control of knowledge. This competence develops person's abilities for positive intellectual, psychological and volition self-development. It gives an opportunity to treat oneself as a personality and a subject of life activity, personality growth and development, self-perfection and self-control; it predisposes for the efficient business activity. It develops the skills for working with inclusive information on electronic devices, on the Internet; skills for working with computer programs, skills for completing electronic documents; skills for collecting one's own portfolio with documental confirmation of personal achievements, participation in organizing and working on the conferences, presence of certificate of studying foreign languages, etc.; skills for research-scientific work, formatting publications for the press and in educational issues; scientific acknowledgement of the priorities, presence of scientific-creative components in various fields of inclusive activity, creative orientation in behavior and activity, development of prospective specialists' creative position.

Changing the approach towards organizing the educational process from translating the knowledge to developing professional competencies requires a different approach towards the used educational methods. Education gains an active nature, the focus shifts towards learning through practice.

Approaches towards evaluating the education results also change: apart from the knowledge, the level of professional competence development is also being evaluated. It requires the development of a system for evaluating students' professional competence; its forms and methods depend on the level of education and the evaluated component of professional competence.

The key professional competencies of the students are specified according to the level of education, which implies their improvement and development from one year to the next. Qualification requirements of SCES specialties (what a graduate has to know and be able to do to be competent) were analyzed and distributed upon the years of studies. Such approach would allow tracing the gradual nature of students' professional competence development and to design an educational trajectory by a validated choice of elective disciplines of inclusive orientation, which is built on the principle of completing the competencies, which are not fully acquired within the mandatory-component courses.

Competence approach is a multi-purpose mechanism of updating the content of education in response to its modernization. It brings significant transformations to professional, personal, cognitive, communicative, creative and general-cultural fields of activity of the new generation of specialists.

Therefore, the designed Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation represents an example of the process of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation. Each of the components of the Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation solves a certain part of the main pedagogical goal – development of students' professional competencies.

DISCUSSION

The process of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation is addressed in the study as a complex integral process, which includes cognitive, personality, activity and motivational components, level of general inclusive culture, capability of professional communication and need in life-long education.

The designed Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation creates:

- An ideal example for students for acquiring basic and special theoretical knowledge, which are necessary for conducting efficient professional activity;
- This, in turn, predisposes for students' efficient use of the obtained knowledge in the prospective professional activity;

- This state implies students' ability to efficiently cooperate with other people: to create efficient communications, cooperate with colleagues and maintain a favorable inclusive atmosphere in the group for achieving professional goals;
- As a result, a student is ready to create and complete his own life-long educational trajectory, thus providing successfulness and professional competitiveness.

The model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation has the criterial component of developing students' professional competencies, diagnostic inventory, which allows monitoring the quality of the process of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation.

The model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation contains the technological component of studying elective courses of inclusive orientation of learning the chosen profession, where the content of study materials on the elective courses of inclusive orientation has to be structured in larger blocks and the adequate methods, techniques and forms of education are selected.

The model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation is based on the rating system of evaluating the results of education, which allows considering almost all student's activity related to acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills, as well as many characteristics of students' professional competencies development.

The model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation can be widely used in the interaction of all components of the process of students' professional competencies development. It facilitates the organization of students' professional activity within studying elective courses with orientation on professional competencies development.

CONCLUSION

During the study, through designing the Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation, we obtained the following results and stated the following conclusions and recommendations:

- We defined the problems and controversies, which prevent the development of the process of students' professional competencies development, and systematized scientific knowledge in this field;
- Higher education theory is completed by scientifically-validated model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation;

- We revealed and validated an integration of components, which facilitate the successful actualization of the designed model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation and provide adequate correspondence of the aim, content, methods and results of the efficient development of students' professional competencies in higher professional education system;
- The Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation contains theoretical-methodological basis for new studies on various directions of improving the process of students' professional competence development.

Theoretical significance of the results of the study:

- It describes the role, the potential and perspectives of students' professional competencies development through the Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation;
- We propose the Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation, which facilitates the description and expansion of knowledge about the studied process, in order to transform and regulate it;
- The results of the study can become the basis for conduction of further studies in the field of scientific-methodic support of the process of students' professional competencies development.

Practical significance of the results of the study consists of the following:

- Using the Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation facilitates the improvement of students' professional competencies development process;
- The results of the study can be used in creation of new generations of educational programs, textbooks and in the development and teaching of special courses;
- The Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation, which allows developing an integration of professional competencies in the college conditions, can be used in colleges, as well as in the system of post-secondary education.

Unlike the studies of Y.B. Omarov et. al., (2016), F. Polat (2011), D. Hill & D. Brown (2013), A.T. Fajzrahmanova (2014), G.O. Rakhimbekova et. al., (2015), our study presents the design of the Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation, the structure of which contains the conditions for updating methodic materials and recommendations, educational programs, lecture courses, practical and laboratory

lessons, which provide the efficiency of the process of developing students' professional competencies within the studying of elective courses. The designed Model of developing students' professional competencies within studying elective courses of inclusive orientation is recommended for wide practical use in universities and in post-secondary courses for college teachers.

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