

ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT-CENTERED TRAINING IN THE SYSTEM OF ADDITIONAL EDUCATION OF ADULTS

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Abstract. *The article presents one of the modern trends in the development of the education system - the organization of student-centered training. Extrapolation of this type of training into the system of additional education of adults will allow to prepare a specialist with modern thinking, focused on innovation, continuous self-development. The purpose of the research is to explore the possibilities of implementing student-centered training tools into the practice of realization retraining programs for educational specialists. Research methods: a theoretical analysis of the essence of the concept of “student-centered training”, analysis of the characteristics of adult education, experimental work on testing methods of student-centered training in the system of additional education of adults. The main results of the research: methods of student-centered training of adults have been adapted to the specifics of organizing retraining programs, conditions for organizing student-centered training in institutions of additional education of adults have been identified, methodical recommendations have been developed. The use of these recommendations will optimize the implementation of retraining programs for education specialists.*

Keywords: *active training methods, educational process, project training, retraining program for education specialists, student-centered training, system of additional education of adults*

Introduction

The modern period of reforming and modernizing of the educational system has necessitated the penetration into the theory and practice of additional education of adults of new conceptual ideas and approaches, one of which is student-centered training. This led to a change in the requirements for the training of specialists who are able to adapt successfully and define themselves in their future professional activity. Radical changes in working conditions, the emergence of new areas of activity contributed to the development of institutions of the system of additional education of adults, including the training of teachers.

In “The Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education” additional education of adults is considered as a type of additional education aimed at the professional development of the adult learner, trainee and the satisfaction of their cognitive needs (Кодекс Республики Беларусь об образовании, 2012).

Retraining, advanced training and internship programs are implemented in the system of additional education of adults. This article will deal with the training of teachers in the system of additional education of adults, which is carried out by retraining programs for managers and specialists with higher education.

The effectuation of teacher training in the system of additional education of adults in line with the ideas of student-centered training allows not only to adapt the educational environment to the individual characteristics, needs and interests of students. But it also lets to ensure freedom of choice and variability of education, to form the desire of self-education and development of skills of independent work, as well as contains many applications related to solving problems of personal development. Extrapolation of student-centered training into the system of additional education of adults will allow to prepare a specialist with modern thinking, focused on innovation and continuous self-development.

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Literature review

The ideas of student-centered training are not new in the theory and practice of education. Currently, this type of education is one of the priorities for the European Higher Education Area for the next decade.

Among the specific characteristics of student-centered training are:

- emphasis on active rather than passive learning;
- emphasis on critical and analytical study and understanding;
- increasing the responsibility and accountability of students;
- increased students’ autonomy;
- interdependence between a teacher and students;
- mutual respect in relations between students and a teacher;
- a reflexive approach to the learning process by both the teacher and students (Аттард, Ди Иорио, Гевен, & Санта, 2017).

The basis of student-centered training is constructivism as a theory, involving the construction and reconstruction of knowledge for effective learning. In this case, the training is more effective when, within the framework of a certain activity, the learner creates a meaningful product. Thus, “student-centered training is both a way of thinking and culture within a particular higher

education institution and an approach to learning, which is generally related to the theory of studying based on constructivism. This training is characterized by innovative teaching methods aimed at promoting learning based on the cooperation of teachers and students, the active role of students in controlling their own learning process and the development of personal skills such as problem solving, critical and reflexive thinking” (Аттард et al., 2017).

In the course of monitoring the Bologna process, V. Baidenko et al. defined the concept of student-centered training in the light of the competency approach as “the fundamental principle of Bologna reforms in higher education, implying a shift in emphasis in the educational process from teaching (as the main role of the teaching staff in the “translation” of knowledge) to study as an active educational activity of the student” (Байденко, Селезнева, Ворожейкина, Карачарова, & Тарасюк, 2009). The organization of student-centered training in practice of institutions of additional education of adults will have its own specifics.

The training of teachers in the system of additional education of adults as a process is a well-structured system of interrelated components: goals, content, methods, means and organizational forms of training, upbringing, results. The effectiveness of this process depends on the involving of adult learners in an active, significant for them learning activities. Through the organization of educational activities, they assign social and professional experience, develop mental functions and abilities and form a system of relations to the world and to themselves. Being carried out in the educational environment of the institution of additional education of adults, the training of teachers acts as a combination of various factors of the educational process and interpersonal relations that the subjects of education establish in the process of their interaction (Невдах, 2015). The structural components of the educational environment are used by its subjects for the development of professional activities, business communication and creativity in the course of polysubject interaction, which ensures the successful professional and personal development of future specialists.

The specifics of the organization of training in the system of additional education of adults are presented in the works of many researchers (Василькова, 2009; Змеёв, 2002; Колесникова, Марон, & Тонконогая, 2003). In the process of training teachers in this system adult learners should be provided with the help in:

- adapting to the conditions of training (group of adult learners, content, ways of working with information);
- making of intersubject interaction situations;
- creating conditions for a positive attitude and understanding of the prospects for professional and personal growth, etc.

Adult learners must be provided with the opportunity for self-actualization through the presentation of their positive experience, for mastering the competencies necessary for the implementation of the upcoming activities, for outlining the prospects for further progress in the professional sphere. In this regard, the adaptation of student-centered training tools for use in the process of implementing educational retraining programs for teachers will be of particular importance.

Methodology

Experimental work on testing methods of student-centered training in the system of additional education of adults was carried out at the Institute of advanced training and retraining of the Maxim Tank Belarusian State Pedagogical University (Minsk, The Republic of Belarus).

The experimental work was conducted with 72 adult learners (teachers, who decided to receive additional qualification), who were retraining in the following specialties: "Integrated education and training in school education", "Integrated training and education in preschool education" and "Speech therapy" from 2016 to 2018. The use of student-centered training tools was carried out in the process of conducting classes in the discipline "Pedagogical systems and technologies". The results confirming the effectiveness of the applied methods of training were obtained in the course of observing the work of adult learners in the classroom, analyzing the products of their activity, questioning, and polling.

Research results

The content of teacher training in the system of additional education of adults is determined by the logic of a particular science and the model of future professional activity. It is projected not as an academic subject, but as an object of educational activity, consistently transformed into an object of professional activity (Вербицкий, 1991). Training of adult learners should be organized using methods that stimulate their cognitive activity, involving each participant in mental and behavioral activity.

In the course of training teachers with adapted tools of student-centered training in the educational process, we can consider the practice of modeling, designing, using active and interactive forms of working with adult learners, conducting thematic discussions, training with "immersion", organized on the basis of new types of special institutions, training and introducing them elements in practical classes, scientific problem groups. Being a participant in the educational process, the adult learner acts as both an object and a subject of

pedagogical activity, which allows him to expand the scope of his actions in solving professional problems.

Special attention should be paid to the combined nature of conducting classes, where methods of lecture presentation and practical tasks are combined at the same time. Since the training of teachers in the system of additional education of adults is carried out in a relatively short period of time, the educational process should be more practically oriented. Increasing the number of practical and laboratory classes, gradual monitoring of the course of training in each class for timely correction of teaching, activization of adult learners' activities by introducing active teaching methods, problem and game situations, individualization of training and mutual learning, business games, rational organization of independent work will allow adult learners to form professional competencies necessary to perform the future teaching activities.

One of the ways to implement student-centered training in the process of training teachers is the use of adapted technology of educational design.

This technology ensures the inclusion of adult learners in project activities, the transfer of knowledge into the sphere of professional activity, development of the consciousness of the future specialist and influences his sense of purpose and life strategy. According to L. Orlova (Орлова, 2002), project activities are one of the most effective ways of organizing education based on the psychology of human relationships and interactions.

In the course of educational design conditions are created and adult learners independently and willingly find missing knowledge in various sources, learn to use acquired knowledge for solving educational and practical tasks related to the upcoming professional activity. These conditions also improve communication skills by working in different groups, develop research skills and system thinking.

The learning process in the context of the technology supposes the creation of a project. The choice of subjects of educational projects in different situations may be different. In some cases, the subject can be formulated by a teacher taking into account the learning situation according to his discipline, professional interests, interests and abilities of adult learners. In other cases, the subjects of projects can be offered by the adult learners, who are guided by their own cognitive, creative and applied interests.

During the classes in the subject "Pedagogical systems and technologies" the themes of the projects were proposed by the teacher and reflected the specifics of the upcoming professional activity of teachers in special education institutions for children with peculiar psychophysical development. The work of adult learners to create a project included preparatory, informational, constructive, generalizing and evaluative-reflexive stages.

At the preparatory stage adult learners concentrated on cognitive and research activity, the actualization of the problem to be solved and the organization of creative teams to work on the project.

Adult learners independently united in groups of 3-4 people. Each participant of the design was to contribute to the preparation of the project. Teamwork on a project becomes attractive only when a positive interdependence of project participants is created and constructive interaction is organized.

The informational stage assumed the planning of work on a project, the search and collection of information, its analysis. For the implementation of educational projects in the classroom adult learners could use both the available knowledge and experience on the problem being solved and the knowledge gained in the process of studying special disciplines. During the implementation of this stage the tasks of developing intellectual skills are solved, for example, to select relevant information from various sources, analyze, systematize and summarize it in accordance with the cognitive task, formulate reasoned conclusions, etc.

The constructive stage assumed the study of the problem, the creative, search activity of the adult learners, which is embodied in any product. Focusing on research requires a well-thought-out structure, selection of appropriate methods, organization of the research procedure and the availability of research skills of adult learners.

In the process of creating projects adult learners had the opportunity to conduct a micro research in a group, summarize and analyze the results, present them in a visual form. To save time, separate fragments of the task were distributed among the group members. In this case, it is very important that each participant contributes into creation of a common project.

The content of the generalization stage was the integration of theoretical and practical data, their correlation with the assigned tasks of the project. The adult learners made a conclusion on the possibilities of applying the obtained results in modern conditions and defined new problems for subsequent projects.

A mandatory component of the technology of educational design is the presentation of projects. The collected materials and the obtained results were presented to the jury at the final stage of the lesson and evaluated according to relevant criteria.

Further, within the framework of the assessment-reflexive stage, the analysis and assessment of the results of work on the project were carried out. This stage included the group reflection of the project authors, self-analysis of the process and the result of their activities, analysis and assessment of the project quality by other adult learners, the teacher.

For the successful implementation of educational design technology we needed:

- the presence of a problem that is significant in a research, creative plan, which requires integrated knowledge, research for its solution;
- practical, theoretical, cognitive significance of the intended results;
- independent (individual, in pairs, in groups) activities of adult learners;
- structuring the substantive part of the project (with indication of step-by-step results);
- use of research methods.

It should be also born in mind that adult learners' opinions on any issue may differ, you should not insist on one version. Everyone has the right to their point of view if he's able to reason it.

The implementation of the technology of educational design significantly changes the role of the teacher in the educational process of the institution of additional education of adults. The main tasks of his activities are to organize the project activities of adult learners, advising and providing support at all stages of project preparation, coordinating the entire process of working on a project, providing feedback, organizing project presentation and reflection.

The use of the technology of educational design in the practice of the institutions of the system of additional education of adults will contribute to the improvement of intellectual, research, communication and organizational skills of adult learners; the formation of socially important professional, cognitive and personal motives of educational activity; formation of their active life position.

The effectiveness of the use of student-centered training tools was carried out in the process of monitoring the cognitive activity of adult learners during the classes and in the course of their questioning and survey. The indicators showing the results of the educational process were:

- learning satisfaction;
- satisfaction with the form of training;
- satisfaction with the quality of teaching;
- level of formation of knowledge and skills (identified in the process of observation, reflection);
- quality of completed assignments;
- the need to study the scientific literature, the experience of colleagues;
- the possibility of extrapolating the gained experience into practice.

After the training classes adult learners were offered a questionnaire, including the following questions: Are you satisfied with the learning process? What is the use of active methods and technologies? What forms of work do you consider to be the most effective in conducting classes? What difficulties did you have during the assignments? How did you compensate for the missing knowledge and skills? and others.

Analysis of the results of experimental work on testing methods of student-centered training in the system of additional education of adults showed that 100% of adult learners were satisfied with the learning process. In the questionnaires it was noted that the form of conducting classes using active methods and technology of educational design allowed them to take a fresh look at practical activities. The exchange of experience with colleagues would improve the organization of work with children with peculiar psychophysical development. 86% of respondents indicated that it was the independent work with the literature on finding the necessary information that contributed to a better understanding of the material, its systematization and generalization. The answers of the adult learners in the classroom were distinguished by the proper use of appropriate terminology and the ability to back up theoretical positions with practical examples.

Due to the fact that adult learners had different levels of formation of mental operations (analysis, synthesis, generalization, abstraction, etc.), some of them experienced difficulties in selecting the necessary information (12%), formulating conclusions (17%). Lack of good communication skills, the fear of speaking in front of the group with the project presentation (23%) allowed the audience to choose the directions of self-improvement.

The use of adapted tools of student-centered training in the educational process also contributed to team building, shaping adult learners' socially significant qualities, mutual support, empathy, awareness of the prospects for professional and personal growth, the possibility of self-expression and self-affirmation among adult learners through the presentation of their positive experience.

The success of the organization of student-centered training in institutions of additional education of adults depends on the following conditions:

- context (presentation of tasks in relation to a specific context (contexts) of professional pedagogical activity, operating with interdisciplinary knowledge, reflecting a wide range of sciences);
- taking into account the needs of subjects of the educational process (value-semantic coordination of the positions and actions of all interested participants of the educational process, taking into account the cognitive interests and needs of different specialists, different groups of adult learners);
- activity of participants in the educational process (voluntary involvement of adult learners in the performance of independent work).

As a result of the experimental work, methodical recommendations were developed, the use of which will allow to optimize the implementation of retraining programs for educational specialists.

In the educational process it is necessary to ensure adult learners to experience their own success in the activity. At the initial stages, it is recommended to offer feasible tasks, creating a situation of success, so that the adult learner becomes more and more confident, does not experience anxiety and internal stress. In the case of constant failures, even if they are caused by objective circumstances, a person may even be disappointed with his abilities to achieve the desired goals, to control the results of his behavior.

For adult learners the example of other people is important. Observing how people act in difficult situations, changes the person's judgment about his own capabilities, helps him to acquire useful skills, creates the basis for discovering the self-fulfilling potential of an individual, reflecting the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with himself expressed in critical evaluations of his own activities.

Social conviction is no less valuable. When people (teachers, colleagues) significant for the adult learner highly appreciate his abilities and assure him that he is able to overcome difficulties, the degree of self-realization increases ensuring qualitative personality changes.

A major role in the process of retraining teachers is played by internal and external motivation. In different periods of a person's life the motivation for education changes, but in general, an adult learner is always capable of developing appropriate individual ways of optimal working with information. Understanding the need to continue (build up) his education is usually connected with the lack of the required level of education in the new situation. Every day of his education opens something new, enriches ideas and notions about reality and creates the basis for new motivations in mastering knowledge and skills necessary for the upcoming activities. For these people additional adult education is becoming one of the ways of self-realization in the profession and life.

Conclusions

Thus, the implementation of student-centered training methods adapted to the specifics of organizing retraining programs allows engaging adult learners in active independent work, helping them to master modern methods of searching, processing and using information, to master some methods of creative activity, to develop the ability to defend their point of view and to exercise reflection. Compliance with the presented conditions for the organization of student-centered training in institutions of additional education of adults, the use of methodical recommendations will optimize the implementation of retraining programs for educational specialists, ensure the variability and integrity of the academic process, apply adequate teaching methods and technologies for the

development of professional competencies and personality-relevant qualities of adult learners.

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