

THE POSSIBILITIES OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mūžizglītības iespējas profesionālajā izglītībā: profesionālās vidējās izglītības satura izvērtējums

Anita Zalaiskalne

Rīga Food Producers Vocational School State Ltd

Abstract. *The aim of the article is to evaluate the content of professional secondary education programs from the point of life-long education pedagogic aspect. Evaluation of professional secondary education program content is based on the pedagogic statements of life-long education and data of researched performed by the author. Analysis and interpretation of research results is the basis for conclusions about the realization of life-long education principles in the level of professional education program. Main conclusions: the element of professional education program such as lessons of own-initiative work is one of instruments for the realization of life-long education principles, which currently is not completely used; there is a lack of methodological argument about particular elements of the content such as lessons of own-initiative work or inclusion of the amount of content parts in programs; mutual cooperation between teachers of educational institutions and representatives of state institutions promotes development of more qualitative content of professional secondary education.*

Key words: *Content of educational programs, life-long education, professional secondary education.*

Introduction

Ievads

Briges Communiqué on closer cooperation of the European Union (EU) in the sphere of professional education and teaching for the period from year 2011 to 2020, the aim of professional education development is to promote options of inhabitants' employment and growth of state economics (*Briges Komunikē*, 2010). The main economic tasks for the countries of EU in the second decade of 21st century are the overcoming of consequences of economic and finance crisis. Due to the indicators of *Eurostat* on inhabitant employment in the countries of EU, total level of unemployment is 9,6 %, but among the youth - 20,3 % (*Eurostat* data). Number of inhabitants with low professional qualification or without education has reached 76 million for people from 25 – 65 years in the Europe. Those parameters serve as an indicator for the evaluation and improvement of secondary education. One of directions of realized reforms in professional education is turned to the accentuation of the role of life-long education – evaluation of the knowledge, skills and competences obtained by the individual during his life and acknowledgement within the scope of formal education. The role of life-long education is emphasized in essential

strategically planning documents of EU. Substantial changes in the sphere of LR educational classification and the quality of education are related to the process of Latvian Qualification Framework (LQF) development which was stated in 2010 (Self-assessment report of academic information centre, 2011). In the context of life-long education the role of the teacher also changes in the teaching process. If traditionally the teacher is the one who determines the aims of teaching, plans teaching process and develops evaluation methods and evaluation criteria of teaching results, than in the life-long education, teaching which is self-directed by the person is emphasized (Lieģeniece, 2002), thus the aims of teaching, the way they are achieved, as well as the evaluation of teaching result are the component of the teaching process for adults involved in respective teaching (Knowles, M. S., 1998). Integration of life-long education aspects in the content of professional education in the level of professional education programs are directly related to the understanding of this sphere and professionalism of the teacher.

Content of professional educational programs *Profesionālās izglītības programmu saturs*

This section includes the analysis of the content of professional secondary education programs as the element of professional education content. Insight in the development of professional educational programs is given.

One of the approaches for the development of educational programs, mentioned in scientific literature, is concept of needs. Educational program must meet (satisfy) the needs (students, employers, society). D. Pratt defines the need as “discordance between current and the better condition” (Prets, 2000.). The aims of educational programs evaluation process and the resources involved in this process also is defined as the essential factor (Allyn & Bacon (eds.), 1998.). Professional education programs as the part of educational content which includes the aims of general education and requests of labour market are characterized by S. Billet (Billet, S., 2011). Following transition is taking place in the education: from teaching paradigm, where the aim of educational institution is to provide teaching, to the learning paradigm where the educational institution is the organization which is able to learn (Barr, B., & Tagg, J., 1995). it also relates to the professional education. One of specific characters of the new paradigm is development of flexible teaching content and planning of teaching process. Simultaneously it is pointed that in the daily work of teachers, enough attention is not paid to the strategic aims of teaching and educational programs, as it is in the case with planning of teaching or development of handouts (Prets, 2000).

Development process of professional educational programs in the Republic of Latvia (LR) is regulated by legal acts: Law of education, Law of general

education, Law of professional education, profession standards, Regulations issued by the Ministers of LR, Internal regulations of Ministry of education and science (ESM).

Internal regulations No22 “Order for the development of professional educational program” issued by LR ESM in October 11, 2010, states realization forms of professional educational programs, their duration, amount and basic parts of program realization plans (they are theory, practice and examinations). In professional educational programs, theory part is formed by subjects of general education and professional subjects. Inclusion of the subjects of general education in professional secondary education programs is equated to general secondary education programs, division of included subjects is stated by the standard of state professional secondary education. Table 1 shows percentage of contact-hours of different professional education programs for subjects of general education and professional subjects.

Table 1

Percentage of contact-hours for subjects of general education and professional subjects in professional education programs

Vispārīzglītojošo un profesionālo mācību priekšmetu kontaktstundu procentuālā attiecība profesionālās izglītības programmās

Professional education programs	Subjects of general education (%)	Professional subjects (%)
Professional development program	0	100
Professional further education program	0	100
Professional elementary education program	0	100
Vocational education with previously acquired secondary education or elementary education from the age of 17	0	100
Vocational education with previously acquired elementary education	60	40
Professional secondary educational program with previously acquired secondary education	0	100
Professional secondary educational program with previously acquired elementary education	60	40

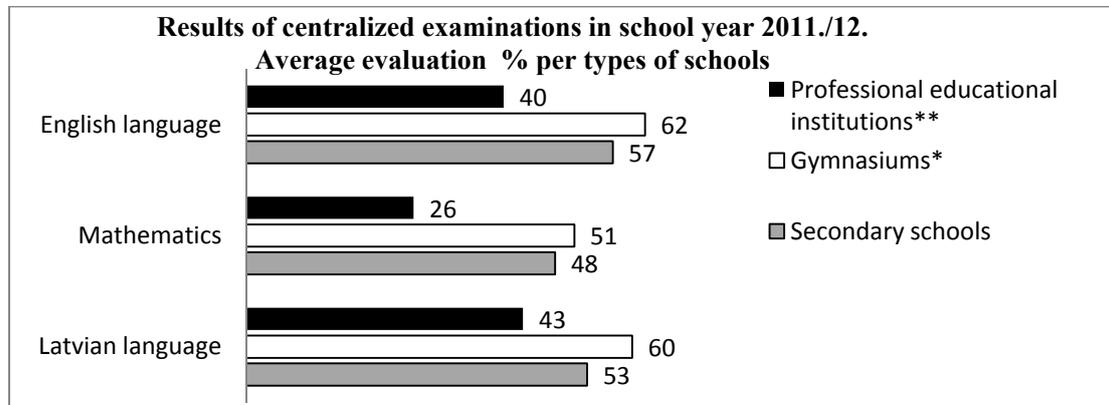
(Source: ESM internal regulations No22, 2010)

Clarification for such division as the most appropriate to achieve the aims of educational programs is not provided in legal acts; methodological materials of State educational content center also do not include such explanation. But teachers have varied opinions about this division what is proved by the data of author’s research. The author considers that evaluation of the extent of professional educational program content parts must be performed in a way of cooperation between teachers of educational institutions and representatives of

employers. Amount of professional education program realization also must be critically evaluated.

By the analysis of professional secondary education program content, balance of the amount of professional subjects and subjects of general education is examined. Interaction of professional and general secondary education is very essential factor. It is one of the preconditions for education succession (Laužacks, 1999).

Due to the valid legal acts of LR, lessons of own-initiative for students' are prevised in professional secondary education programs in order to increase the number of lessons in subjects of general education, especially in subjects where mandatory state examinations (centralized examinations) are taken. Total number of lessons of own-initiative work in the week depends on school year: 2 lessons per week for 1st year students, 4 lessons per week for 2nd year students, 6 lessons per week for 3rd year students and 8 lessons per week for 4th year students. Fact that it is necessary to determine own-initiative work as the element of the educational program and the content of subject program is described by the results of state examinations (centralized examinations). Study results in subjects of general education for the students of professional secondary educational institutions in general is lower than in general secondary educational institutions (see Figure 1).



* except state gymnasiums ** including schools of art (Resurce: State Educational content center statistical data on centralized examinations, 2012)

Fig. 1 Comparison of the average evaluation of centralized examinations for school year 2011/2012 in different types of educational institutions

1. attēls. 2011./12. mācību gada centralizēto eksāmenu vidējā vērtējuma salīdzinājums dažādu tipu izglītības iestādēs

On the opinion of author, in the context of life-long education and self-directed teaching of the person, lessons of own-initiative is the useful instrument for the achievement of teaching aims. Besides the approach to the educational process based on the problem where the main teaching methods are own-initiative work, work in groups are emphasized in the grade or higher education (in studies

process); in the own-initiative works the tasks help the students of professional education institutions to prepare for the further studies in higher education institutions.

In order to qualitatively, not in formal, realize lessons of own-initiative works teachers must take active part in the planning of such work content. It is the competence of teacher to plan the lessons of won-initiative in the content of subjects and educational programs, to choose the themes in which the work tasks will be given, as well as to develop the content and evaluation criteria for those tasks. Unfortunately at the moment the motivation for teachers to focus on the accurate evaluation of own-initiative works are obstructed by material factors. Since school year 2008./09 payment of own-initiative works is not included in the amount of tarified hours; before these hours were paid in the amount of 50%. From the side of state institutions necessity to realize own-initiative works and their quality has not been evaluated. Such evaluation would be necessary for the improvement of professional educational program content and promotion of the advancement of study results.

Table 2

Division of the amount of enrolled students in colleges and institutions of higher education per the education of applicants in academic year 2012./2013.
Augstskolās un koledžās uzņemto studentu skaita sadalījums pēc reflektantu izglītības 2012./2013. akadēmiskajā gadā

No	Institutions of higher education	Total number of enrolled students	Division of the number of applicants per level of previous education		
			with general secondary education	with professional secondary education	with higher education
1.	State institutions of higher education	15511	12606	1791	1114
2.	Institutions of higher education founded by legal persons	5639	4282	816	271
3.	State colleges	2875	1926	728	161
4.	Private colleges	2267	1700	430	137
	Total	26002	20574	3765	1683

(Source: *ESM statistical data on the higher education, Report of higher education 2012.*)

Succession of the education can be related also to the motivation of professional secondary educational institution graduates and the possibility to continue studies in colleges and institutions of higher education (Table 2).

Legally the diploma on professional secondary education prevides such possibility. Unfortunately, in the reality only small part of professional educational institution graduates choose to continue studies.

Such results are mainly explained by different level of applicants' training which indirectly points to the imperfections in the content of professional secondary education programs.

Practical evaluation method and results *Praktiskā pētījuma metode un rezultāti*

Within the time period from October, 2010 to June, 2011 the author has performed the research in order to clarify the opinion of professional education teachers about the content of educational program. Main group of research respondents is 3164 professional education teachers who are employed in principle work (ESM statistical data, school year 2010./11). Amount of selection groups with the result reliability 95% and selection mistake in the range of +/- 3%, is 798 respondents. Research instruments – the poll which includes 3 sections of questions. Data of the first section gives general information on teachers of professional educational institutions (teachers' age, gender, length of service), educational institution (region of its location, number of students), as well as realizable educational programs and subjects taught by the teachers. Major part of inquired teachers is of age 40 – 49, the second biggest age bracket is 50 – 62 years. Both teachers who teach professional subjects and subjects of general education participated in the research. Figure 2 describes the division of respondents per teachable subjects.

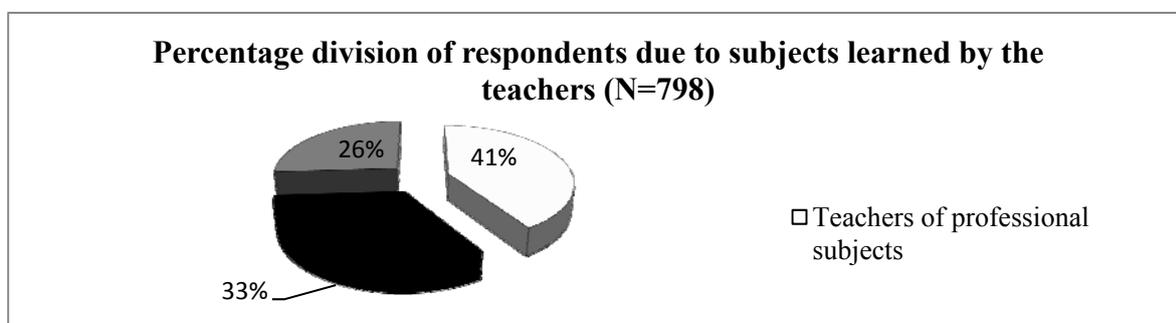


Fig.2 Division of research respondents per teachable subjects taught by the teachers
2. attēls. Pētījuma dalībnieku sadalījums pēc pedagoģu mācāmajiem priekšmetiem

The second group of questions gives information on the participation of respondents in the development process of professional education content (development of content for subject programs, professional secondary education programs and profession standards) and the evaluation of the content. Further layout of an article analysis the answers of teachers to the questions about professional education content, particularly, the content of professional secondary education programs. It is stated that the major part of teachers take part in the development of professional educational programs and most part of teachers are involved in the development of profession standards (see Figure 3).

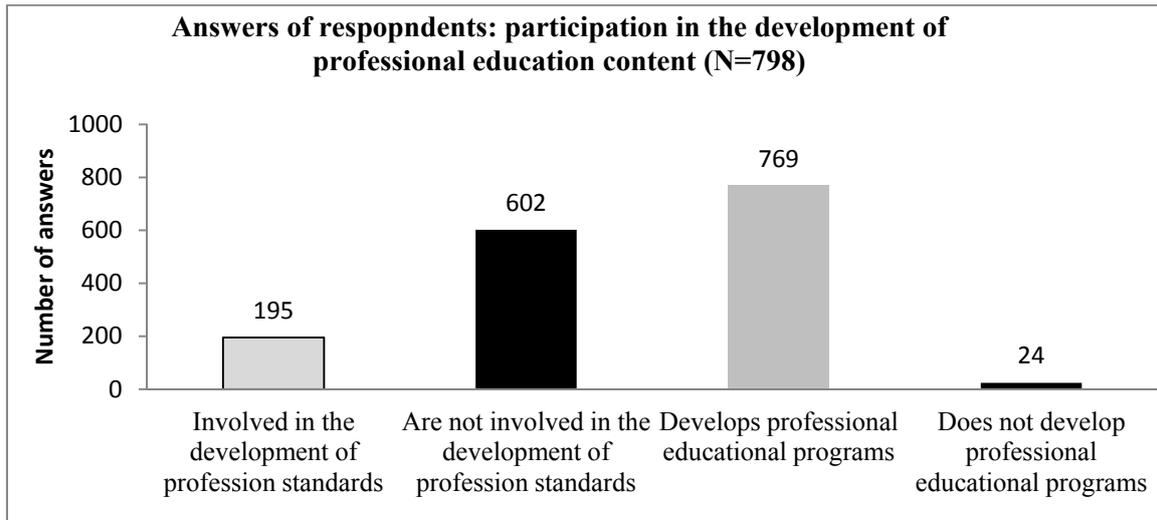


Fig. 3 Teachers involvement in the development of profession standards and professional educational programs

3. attēls. Pedagogu iesaistīšanās profesiju standartu un profesionālās izglītības programmu izstrādē

Due to the results of the poll, lessons of own-initiative work are included in the subjects taught by 741 teachers. Summary on the answers to this question given by teachers can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Lessons of own-initiative works in the subjects of professional educational programs: division of respondent answers.

Patstāvīgo darbu stundas profesionālās izglītības programmu mācību priekšmetos: respondentu atbilžu sadalījums

		Are lessons of own-initiative works prevised in the subjects		
		Yes	No	In total
	Teachers of the subjects of general education	239	24	263
	Teachers of professional subjects	311	13	325
	Teachers of the subjects of general education and professional subjects	191	20	209
		741	57	798

The answers to the question included in this poll: preferable percentage between subjects of general education and professional subjects in professional secondary education programs, show rather different opinion from the one that is stated in legal acts (60 % subjects of general education and 40% professional subjects). Revision on the answers of respondents is given in Figure 4.

Preferable percentage between subjects of general education and professional subjects

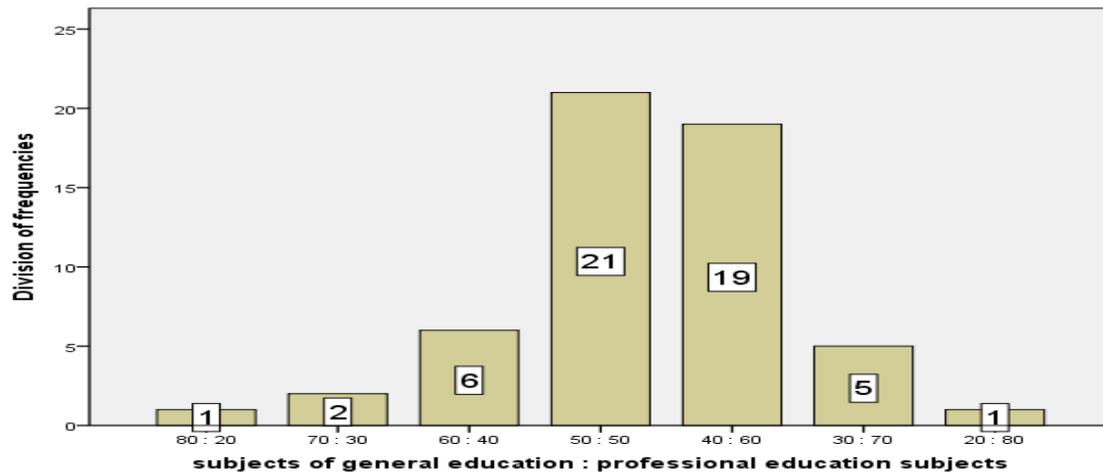


Fig.4 Data of teachers poll on preferable percentage between subjects of general education and professional subjects: division of frequencies

4. attēls. Pedagogu aptaujas dati par vēlamo vispārīzglītojošo un profesionālo mācību priekšmetu procentuālo attiecību: frekvenču sadalījums

Difference in results points to the necessity to evaluate the division of subjects of the professional secondary education programs, to justify the amount of subject of general education stated in legal acts. Teachers have different opinions about the necessity of own-initiative works what can be explained by above mentioned salary of teachers for the realization of this work. In the poll respondents gave answers to five statements about lessons of own-initiative works. Evaluation of each statement is expressed in the scale of 10 points where the highest evaluation is 10 (fully satisfactory), but 1 – the lowest evaluation (fully negative). Results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Teachers’ opinions about own-initiative works in professional educational programs: table of summary

Pedagogu viedokļi par patstāvīgajiem darbiem profesionālās izglītības programmās: kopsavilkuma tabula

Statement	Evaluation in the scale of 10 points									
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Lessons of own-initiative works positively influence study results	0	92	286	200	205	66	35	14	0	0
Lessons of own-initiative works create additional load for teachers	15	243	167	210	101	78	0	4	0	0

They are necessary only in subjects of general education	9	147	254	120	105	80	76	0	7	0
They are necessary only in professional subjects	67	23	204	244	58	74	60	54	8	6
Own-initiative works must not be included in educational programs at all	12	43	108	132	271	169	12	32	27	2

The answers of respondents to the question „Do You understand currently existing order for the development professional educational programs (ESM internal regulations No22)?” point to the insufficient cooperation between teachers and state institutions; 61% of respondents points that the order is partly understandable (see Figure 5).

As teachers are involved in the development of professional educational programs (see Figure 3), such results point to possibly formal approach to the development of professional educational programs. Better understanding of educational program and the process of subject program development and aims, promotes more qualitative development of the content of those programs and realization in professional educational institutions.

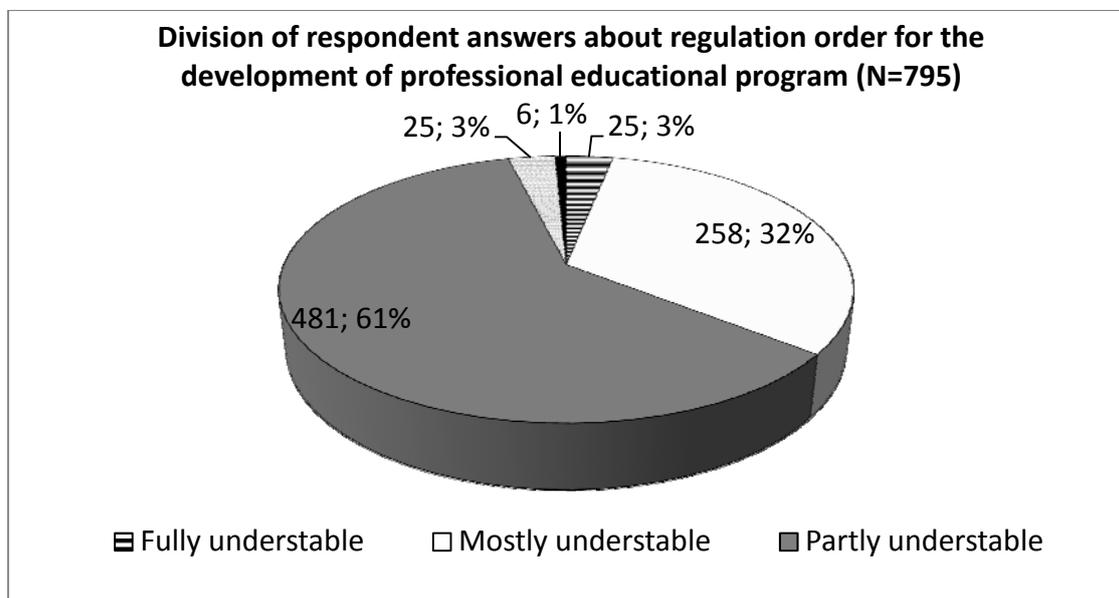


Fig.5 Evaluation of the regulating order of professional educational programs: answers of respondents

5. attēls. Profesionālās izglītības programmu reglamentējošās kārtības izvērtējums: respondentu atbildes

Conclusions *Secinājumi*

Life-long education aspects have essential role in the process of development of professional education content. The amount in which and how qualitative those aspects are included in the content of professional educational programs depends on the state education planning politics, as well as actions of teachers during the development of program contents.

Lessons of own-initiative work as the element of professional education program is suitable instruments for the realization of life-long education principles such as self-directed teaching and continuation of studies, during the process of professional program acquirement, which currently is not completely used.

By the evaluation of mandatory content of professional secondary educational programs (valid in LR), we can conclude that it does not include methodological justification about certain element of the content as the inclusion of lessons of own-initiative works or the scope of content parts in programs.

Teachers have different opinions about the development of the content for professional educational programs and subject programs; it is stated by results obtained in the research.

For more successful realization of the inclusion of life-long education principles in professional education content, closer cooperation between teachers of educational institutions and representatives of state institutions is necessary.

Kopsavilkums *Summary*

Viens no profesionālajā izglītībā īstenoto reformu virzieniem ir vērsts uz mūžizglītības lomas akcentēšanu – indivīda dzīves laikā iegūto zināšanu, prasmju un kompetences novērtēšanu un atzišanu formālās izglītības ietvaros. Mūžizglītības loma tiek uzsvērtā nozīmīgos Eiropas Savienības stratēģiskās plānošanas dokumentos. Mūžizglītības aspektu iekļaušana profesionālās izglītības saturā profesionālās izglītības programmu līmenī tiešā veidā ir saistīta ar pedagogu izpratni un profesionalitāti šajā jomā. Izglītībā notiekošā pāreja no mācīšanas paradigmas, kur izglītības iestādes mērķis bija nodrošināt mācības, uz mācīšanās paradigmu, kur izglītības iestāde ir mācīties spējīga organizācija (Barr, B., & Tagg, J., 1995); skar arī profesionālo izglītību. Viena no jaunās paradigmas īpatnībām ir elastīga mācību satura izstrādāšana un mācību procesa plānošana.

Profesionālās izglītības programmas tiek sastādītas, vadoties pēc Latvijas Republikas normatīvo dokumentu prasībām. Tiek noteikts obligātais profesionālās izglītības saturs. Analizējot profesionālās vidējās izglītības programmu saturu, tiek aplūkota profesionālo mācību priekšmetu un vispārizglītojošo mācību priekšmetu apjoma līdzsvarotība. Rakstā tiek uzsvērtā patstāvīgo darbu stundu nozīme, saistībā ar

mūžizglītības pedagoģiskajiem principiem. Izvērtējot LR spēkā esošo profesionālās vidējās izglītības programmu obligāto saturu, var secināt, ka trūkst metodiska pamatojuma par noteiktu satura elementu kā patstāvīgo darbu stundu vai satura daļu apjomu iekļaušanu programmās.

Autore veica pētījumu ar mērķi noskaidrot profesionālās izglītības pedagogu viedokli par izglītības programmu saturu, iegūstot 798 respondentu atbildes. Rakstā analizēti autores veiktā pētījuma rezultāti, kuri parāda, ka pedagogiem ir atšķirīgi viedokļi par profesionālās izglītības programmu un mācību priekšmetu programmu satura izstrādi; pedagogiem nav pilnībā izprotama līdzšinējā profesionālās izglītības programmu izstrādes kārtība. Patstāvīgo darbu stundas kā profesionālās izglītības programmu satura elements ir piemērots instruments, lai izglītības programmu apguves procesā īstenotu tādas mūžizglītības mērķus kā pašvirzītu mācīšanos un izglītības turpināšanu; šobrīd tas netiek pilnībā izmantots. Lai sekmīgāk īstenotu mūžizglītības principu iekļaušanu profesionālās izglītības saturā, nepieciešama ciešāka savstarpēja izglītības iestāžu pedagogu un valsts institūciju pārstāvju sadarbība.

Bibliography *Literatūra*

1. Akadēmiskās Informācijas Centrs (2011). „*Latvijas izglītības sistēmas piesaiste Eiropas kvalifikāciju ietvarstruktūrai mūžizglītībai un Eiropas augstākās izglītības telpas kvalifikāciju ietvarstruktūrai*”. *Pašvērtējuma ziņojums*, Rīga.
2. Allyn & Bacon (eds). (1998). *Curriculum Development in Vocational and Technical Education. Planning, Content and Implementation*. Fifth edition. Springer, London, 318 p.
3. Barr, B., Tagg, J. (1995). From Teaching to Learning - A New Paradigm for
4. Undergraduate Education. *Change, Nov/Dec*, 13-25.pp.
5. Billet, S. (2011). *Vocational Education: Purposes, Traditions and Prospects*. Springer, London, 111 – 134 pp.
6. *Briges Komunikē par ciešāku Eiropas sadarbību profesionālās izglītības un apmācības jomā laikposmam no 2011. gada līdz 2020. gadam*, available http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_lv.pdf, rewievered 05.02. 2013.
7. Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija. Statistika par profesionālo izglītību, available <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/registri-statistika/statistika-profesionala/4927.htm>, rewievered 27.01.2013.
8. Profesionālās izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes, available, http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/Izglitiba/Profesionala_izglitiba/IZMPam_231209_TA4628.pdf, rewievered 01.02.
9. Knowles, M. S. (1998). *The Adult Learner. The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*. Fifth edition, USA.
10. Laužacks, R. (1999). *Profesionālās izglītības satura reforma: didaktiskās iezīmes*. RaKa, Rīga, 107 lpp.
11. Mārtinsone K. (sast.) (2012). *Pieaugušo izglītība. Rakstu krājums*. RaKa, Rīga, 216 lpp.
12. Middlewood., D., Burton., N.,(eds).(2001). *Managing the Curriculum*. PCP Paul Chapman Publishing, 224 p.
13. Mocker, D. W. and Spear, G. E. (1982) *Lifelong Learning: formal, nonformal, informal and self-directed*, Columbus, Ohio: ERIC.

14. Mūžizglītības pamatnostādnes 2007-2013. gadam, Valsts Kancelejas politikas plānošanas dokumentu datu bāze, available <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/LoadAtt/file50773.doc> ,
retrieved 27.01. 2013.
15. Pārskats par Latvijas augstāko izglītību 2012. gads, available
<http://izm.izm.gov.lv/registri-statistika/statistika-augstaka/9495.html> , retrieved 07.02
2013.
16. Prets D. (2000). *Pedagoga rokasgrāmata. Izglītības programmu pilnveide*. Zvaigzne
ABC, Rīga, 378 lpp.
17. Valsts izglītības satura centrs, statistika par centralizētajiem eksāmeņiem, available
<http://visc.gov.lv/vispizglitiba/eksameni/statistika/2012/> , retrieved 2013.26.01.
18. Ziņojums par Mūžizglītības pamatnostādņu īstenošanas gaitu 2009.-2010. gadā, Valsts
Kancelejas politikas plānošanas dokumentu datu bāze, available
<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/LoadAtt/file4369.doc>, retrieved 27.01.2013.

Anita Zaļaiskalne	Rīga Food Producers Vocational School State Ltd 26 Nicgales street, Riga, LV – 1035, Latvia E-mail: zalaiskalne@inbox.lv Phone: +37126511684
------------------------------	---