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Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University

EDUCATIONAL AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AS A MEANS OF STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES FORMATION

Introduction

The formation and full development of the individual's personality, providing conditions for self-determination and self-realization is the main goal of education. Student's preparation for future professional activity involves an obligatory implementation of educational (face-to-face learning, independent, etc.) and practical activities in order to apply the acquired knowledge and formed skills in real conditions. Practical training at the workplace is an important factor that contributes to the formation of the ability to apply the studied theoretical knowledge in practical activities, and therefore contributes to the students' acquisition of professional competencies [3]. Underestimation of the training role in the educational process often leads to the student's inability to creatively apply and reproduce the acquired knowledge in practical activities, which complicates the process of graduates' adaptation in professional activities, reduces the quality of their work and even worsens employment opportunities [9].

The topicality of the studied problems is due to the fact that in the conditions of the labor market formation and its abundance of employees, it is difficult for a young specialist to take a worthy place in industrial relations. It determines that one of the main reasons is insufficient students' practical training, which would expand the scope of basic concepts and form professional thinking among future specialists. At the same time, the market is in want of qualified specialists. Therefore, the goal of educational establishments should be staff training not only with profound knowledge, but also deeply motivated specialists with developed professional skills, ready to perform relevant mental or physical actions and creative individuals who are able to analyze [7].

Purpose, scope and research method

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze the peculiarities of various types of trainings and their significance in the students' professional competencies formation. The subject of the research is educational and on-the-job trainings in higher education establishments. A set of theoretical and empirical methods is

used to implement a certain research goal. Quantitative and qualitative analysis and synthesis of national and foreign scientists' materials and scientific works are applied among the theoretical methods as well as induction, deduction and generalization to identify the peculiarities of educational and on-the-job trainings and their role in the professional competencies formation, critical understanding of other educational establishments experience and pedagogical facts on the research topic. Empirical methods include observation, dialogue with academic teaching staff, and student surveys. The survey has involved 3,186 students of the first, second and third years of study at Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University from three educational and research institutes and five faculties (Fig.1).

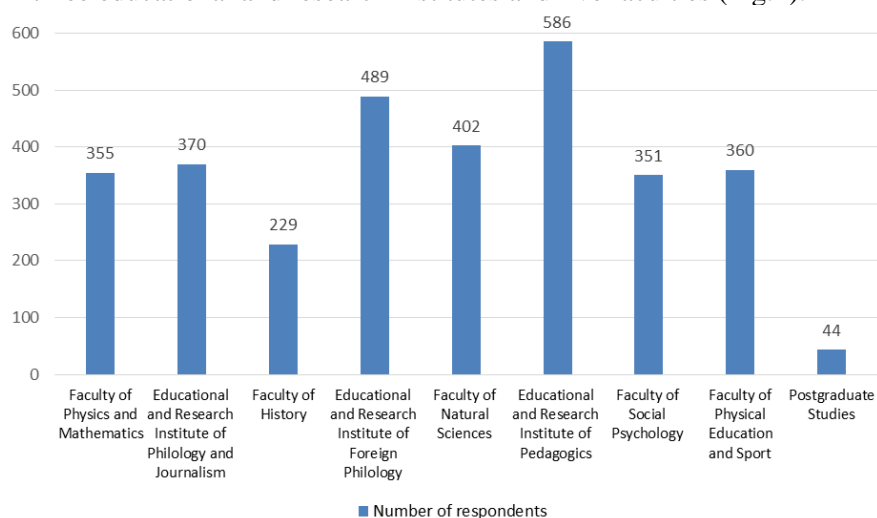


Figure 1. Number of Students Surveyed at Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University
Source: Survey of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Division of the Education Quality Monitoring

Results and discussion

The quality of students' education depends on many factors, in particular, independent work, performing laboratory and practical classes, passing educational and on-the-job trainings. During the training, students with the help of teachers mobilize thinking, attention, will, moreover, consolidate, improve, gain new knowledge and abilities, and synthesize them into a single system, while mastering their future profession [6].

The acquisition of student's professional competence is the professional growth result of the future specialist's personality and the development of their professional abilities, that is, the ability to successfully perform professional tasks and duties of the applied position [8]. The spread of the concept of competence in science is associated with professional activities, which is confirmed by the opinions of teachers, practitioners-managers and the experience of European

countries, namely: “the competency-based approach began to be studied and applied at the employers’ demand, who are not satisfied with the level of graduates’ practical training in the education system that is their inability to interact with people, create and work in a team, find the necessary information and use it in solving production problems” [1].

Educational activities as well as educational and on-the-job trainings form the student’s general and professional competencies, increase the competitiveness of the future professional. The quality criterion of a graduate’s preparation for professional activity is the developed competencies in the form of learning outcomes and successful employment in the chosen program subject area. It is impossible to become a highly qualified specialist just by sitting in the classroom and learning a theoretical course. Therefore, curricula at all qualification levels include such a type of professionals’ training as educational and on-the-job [6].

The purpose of the students training is to master modern methods, skills, abilities and ways of future professional activities organizing, to form their knowledge and skills obtained at the university for making independent decisions while working in specific socio-economic conditions, to foster the need to systematically replenish their knowledge and apply them creatively in practical activities.

At Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, the curricula determine the list of all types of trainings for each program subject area (educational program) as well as its duration, form and terms of implementation. The content and sequence are regulated by a comprehensive program, which is developed according to the curriculum by departments that provide students training, and approved at the University Academic Council Meeting. On the basis of a comprehensive training program, university departments develop curricula for all types of trainings that regulate the procedure for conducting relevant ones. The content of the training curricula reveals the specifics of its planning and regulates both the students’ activities and head of training during its conduction. According to the content and purpose of the training, depending on the field of study, program subject area, and educational program studied by students, it can be educational or on-the job.

Educational training is one of the training’s core elements that ensures the formation of individual competencies, the acquisition of elementary or primary practical activities experience of the future profession. It is the next stage of learning the required competencies after mastering the theoretical material in laboratory, seminar and practical classes, which confirms the transition from theoretical training to practical students’ activities. The task of educational training is to familiarize students with the peculiarities of the chosen profession, consolidate and deepen knowledge, form primary professional skills and abilities in the disciplines of general and professional training. Educational training is mainly conducted in the structural divisions of the university. Taking into account

the specifics of some program subject areas, it can be conducted in pre-school and secondary education establishments, enterprises, institutions, organizations, etc.

On-the-job students' training is an integral part of the educational process, which provides generalization of theoretical knowledge, as well as develops the ability to apply them in practice at appropriately equipped modern enterprises, in pre-school and secondary education establishments, higher education establishments, in institutions and organizations, etc. The purpose of on-the-job training is to enhance and increase knowledge, to obtain practical experience in the implementation of future professional activities, skills, abilities, to develop a personal attitude to the profession, to get acquainted with the production or work process directly in the institution, organization, enterprise, as well as to collect factual material for the course, diploma and qualification papers writing.

On-the-job training is carried out at enterprises, organizations, institutions, educational establishments on the basis of concluded contract with the arrangement of the main issues of organizing the trainee work. Students are sent to the on-the-job training by order of the rector of the university. Full-time students who study on an individual schedule undergo the on-the-job training at the principal place of work, if it corresponds to the qualification being obtained [5]. The vast majority of students, namely 57,3%, had the opportunity to independently choose the training base (Fig. 2). It should be pointed out that there were such students' answers as: "No" (19,7%), "I don't know" (15%) and "Other" (7,5%). Such survey results may be due to the fact that they were conducted for students from the first to fourth years of study and postgraduates. In the vast majority of program subject areas at the first and second years of study, the curriculum provides only educational training that takes place on the basis of structural divisions of the university or in organizations, institutions or enterprises that meet the requirements of the programs. Therefore, students of these years of study have not yet had the opportunity to independently choose the training base.

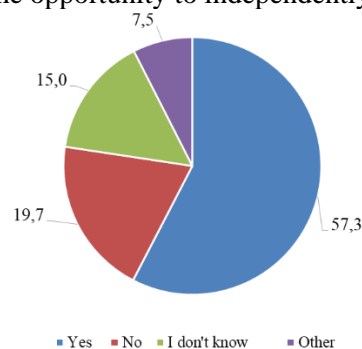


Figure 2. Question "Were you given the opportunity to choose the training base?"
Source: Survey of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Division of the Education Quality Monitoring

The fulfillment of the training programs is provided by the appropriate departments. Educational and methodological guidance and control over the accomplishment of the training program is carried out by the faculty or institute head of the training, head of the department and experienced teachers of the departments (heads of the training).

In order to assess the level of training organization, understanding and needs' awareness of making changes to the training programs, meeting the requests of the expectations and students' requirements in training, surveys are periodically conducted among students, for example, "Do you think the tasks of the training program correspond to your future profession?" (Fig. 3). The overwhelming majority of students, namely 81,8%, gave a positive answer. It gives reason to believe that the training programs do not require significant changes and they are drawn up professionally and provide for the peculiarities of current graduate training of a higher education establishment.

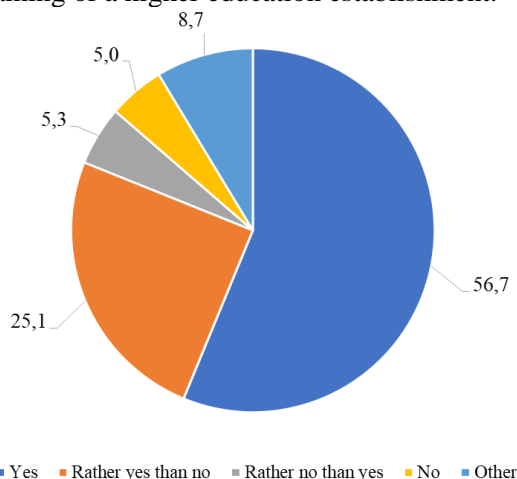


Figure 3. Question "Do you think the tasks of the training program correspond to your future profession?"

Source: Survey of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Division of the Education Quality Monitoring

There are a number of requirements for the head of the training. Specifically, the head of the training have to know its program and the material of the theoretical courses completed by students, to have a clear understanding of the training methodology and the requirements for the teacher and student; the form of reporting and requirements for reporting documents, assessment criteria, as well as the terms of the training and the procedure for its defense [2]. This information should be provided to students in an accessible way, since the quality of students training depends to a certain extent on students' awareness and on their strict compliance with the work program [6]. Before starting any of the types of

training, constituent meeting is held where students are introduced to the curriculum program of the training, its details, deadlines, reporting documentation, etc.

The conducted research among students of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University confirms that the vast majority of students (64,8%) were introduced to the curriculum program of the training by the heads of the trainings during the constituent meeting (Fig. 4).

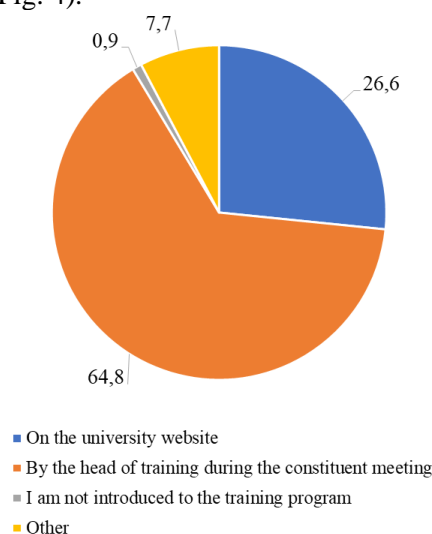


Figure 4. Question “How were you introduced to the training program?”
Source: Survey of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Division of the Education Quality Monitoring

Successful students’ completion of the training also depends on the head of the training at the establishment where it takes place. The student must be aware of and fulfill all the professional’s duties working in the position. Trainee should always be close to the supervisor and specialist, learn step by step from their professional experience. In addition to performing their direct duties, the student must be involved in all other forms of work performed at the enterprise, establishment or institution [2].

Communicating in a team with experts, participating in solving production problems, the student shows, develops and strengthens special skills and valuable moral qualities. It is in the process of an on-the-job training completing that students directly learn a certain system of norms, rules, social roles and values that will help them in the future to realize themselves as competent specialists in a certain field of activity [4].

A survey was also conducted among students on the role of trainings in the formation of professional competencies, practical skills, and improving their level of knowledge. Among the surveyed students, 80,1% of respondents believe that trainings play a significant role in shaping future specialist personality (Fig. 5).

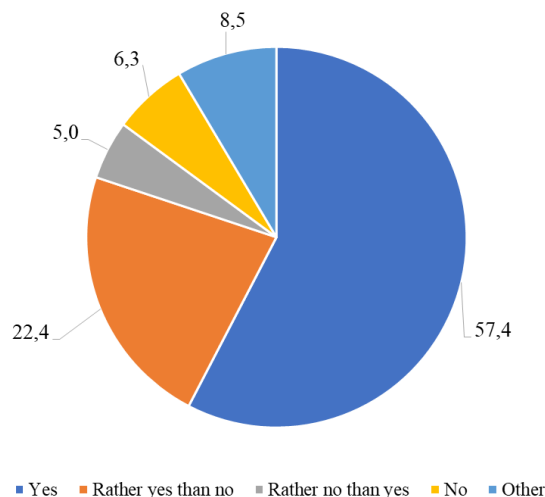


Figure 5. Question “Do you think that the training contributed to improving the level of your knowledge, professional competencies and practical skills?”

Source: Survey of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Division of the Education Quality Monitoring

At the end of the training period, applicants submit reporting documentation to the dean’s office of the faculty or directorate of the educational and research institute. The training final test takes place in the form of a public defense. Each trainee personally reports on the work done, answers questions from board members and students, demonstrates the prepared material and expresses wishes for the training and its organization.

Conclusions

Students’ professional competencies formation is one of the main educational establishments’ tasks. This can be done through educational and on-the job trainings. After all, practical training creates conditions for enriching life experience, expanding social contacts of the student, and developing self-government skills. Communicating in a team with professionals, participating in solving production problems, the student shows, develops and strengthens special skills and valuable moral qualities. It is in the process of completing an on-the-job training that students directly learn a certain system of norms, rules, social roles and values that will later help them to realize themselves as competent specialists

in their professional activities. In conclusion, the process of organizing professional training of future specialists is a means of developing their professional competences.

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Abstract

Educational and on-the-job training is an integral component of a student's professional training. The article deals with the importance of the practical orientation of the educational process in higher education establishments, as an essential component of a future specialist's professional

training. The paper determines the peculiarities of organizing and conducting educational and on-the-job trainings in higher education establishments and their role in the formation of students' professional competencies. The investigation considers the experience of conducting various types of trainings at Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University.

Keywords: educational practice, on-the-job training, professional competencies, students.