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**ADVANCED PROFESSIONALLY-ORIENTED PRACTICE
IN NEW MODULAR EDUCATIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS
IN THE FIELD OF "SPECIAL (DEFECTOLOGICAL) EDUCATION"**

Abstract. The article presents a new model of professionally-oriented training of teacher-defectologists developed in the framework of the project of teacher training modernization. It lays out the conceptual foundations of pedagogical practice design and describes the basic elements of the model.

Keywords: teacher training modernization, pedagogical practice, educational module, modular professional educational program, practice-oriented training, master's program, teacher-defectologist.

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Problem statement

The renewed aims of the system of general education in Russia multiply traditional and create new demands to the quality of pedagogues and to the level of their professional activity. The process of professional training should facilitate, in particular, mastering modern education technologies and methods of teaching and upbringing, knowledge, skills and habits in order to be able to carry out inclusive education of persons with special educational needs and to realize adapted educational programs [3].

The new requirements to the quality of education of children with special educational needs (SEN) formulated in the Federal State Educational Standards and the requirements to the professional competence of the

teacher presented in the Professional Standard of a Pedagogue call forth the necessity to make alterations in the results, content and organization of professional training of pedagogues [4].

Alteration "of the content of the programs of pedagogical training and learning technologies with the purpose of facilitating the realization of the new professional standard of a pedagogue and new standards of school education, practical training, enhancement of interaction between all components of the content of education (subject, psycho-pedagogical and information-technological) and the professional tasks of the pedagogue, introduction of a diversified system of practices and on-the-job training in the curricula, opportunity of direct training of not only teachers

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of different subjects but also pedagogues for different types of schools and categories of pupils by using mechanisms of school-university partnership constitute one of the problems the solution of which may improve the quality of education in the framework of realization of the process of pedagogical education modernization. Training personnel for a wide range of pedagogical activity “outside school and outside the system of education” [4]. These aims are directly connected with training at master’s degree courses teachers-defectologists with a good command of modern education technologies and methods of teaching and upbringing, with practical experience of using them in organization of inclusive education of persons with SEN and realization of adapted educational programs in various institutional conditions.

The current Federal State Educational Standard of higher professional education (FSES HPE) in the field “Special (Defectological) Education” is designed in such a way that it allows combining in-depth theoretical and practical training of teachers-defectologists for different kinds of professional activity including rehabilitation-pedagogical and scientific-research ones [8]. The Basic Professional Educational Program (BPEP) of training future teachers-defectologists for master’s degree presupposes 60 credits for theoretical training and 57 credits – for practice and scientific-research activity. This creates objective conditions for creation of new modular master’s degree BPEPs and variable educational mod-

ules realization of which can guarantee a high level of practical preparation of graduates for professional activity provided the necessary conditions have been created. Nevertheless the modular principle of design of the master’s degree BPEP has not become widely used, and the majority of master’s degree programs in the field “Special (Defectological) Education” still have discipline-based design. Only separate master’s degree programs formally have invariable modules, and the programs with variable modules are very rare. The master’s degree program “Education of Persons with Intellectual Development Problems” worked out and realized in the conditions of network interaction of higher education institutions in the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia and the Yaroslavl-the-Wise Novgorod State University is an example of such program. The modules are in-built in the variable part of the professional cycle and unite only those disciplines that provide practical training in the process of practical sessions the majority of which are held directly at educational institutions with participation of practical workers [7].

In this context, designing new nodules for master’s degree programs in the field “Special (Defectological) Education” (teacher-defectologist) in accordance with changing requirements to the content and conditions of their realization presupposing in-depth professionally-oriented students practice involving network interaction of education institutions becomes quite an urgent task.

In the course of realization of the

project “Design and Test of New Modules of the Basic Professional Education Program of Professional (Pedagogical) Master’s Degree Course” in the framework of the united group of specialties “Education and Pedagogy” in the training field “Special (Defectological) Education” (teacher-defectologist) on the basis of network cooperation of educational institutions realizing higher education and general education programs presupposing in-depth professionally-oriented students’ practice, model programs of six educational modules have been worked out: “Foundations of the System of General Education”, “Methods and Techniques of Organization of Academic and Pastoral Support for Children with SEN in General Education Institutions and in Special Schools”, “Individualization and Differentiation of Academic and Pastoral Support for Children with SEN in General Education Institutions and in Special Schools”, “Design of Academic Work with Children with SEN in General Education Institutions and in Special Schools”, “Assessment and Monitoring Basic Educational Outcomes of Children with SEN”, and “Fundamentals of Scientific-research Work in the Field of Special (Defectological) Education”. On the whole, these modules can make up the foundation of the uniform educational program of master’s degree course in pedagogy which would provide in-depth theoretical and practical training of teachers-defectologists for various kinds of professional activity.

Conceptual foundations of in-depth practical training of students

in the framework of a modular master’s degree program

In the context of solution of pedagogical education modernization tasks, the realization of in-depth professionally oriented students training is associated with the transition to the modular principle of program design (with inclusion of practice and scientific-research work in each module) which consists in targeting content and purpose of study of each module at the acquisition of the corresponding professional skills designated in the professional standard of a pedagogue [2; 5]. In this connection the educational module is considered to be a logically complete integrative complex of disciplines and practice aimed at the formation of the student’s concrete competences (professional actions).

Education results of the BPEP of master’s degree in the field “Special (Defectological) Education” are formulated according to the requirements of the Professional Standard the Federal State Educational Standards (FSSES) of children with SEN.

The structure of the module includes the following elements: academic disciplines (including practicum), practices (pedagogical and scientific-research ones) and scientific-research work, and final attestation on the module [2; 6; 7].

Prior to working out in-depth professionally-oriented students practice in conditions of network interaction in accordance with the master’s degree program in the field “Special (Defectological) Education”, we analyzed the approaches to the content and organization of practice within

the current master's degree programs. Analysis outcomes revealed the following main drawbacks of practice organization: loose connection of the practice tasks with the competences to be formed; absence of connection between the practice content and the needs of an education institution; outdated type of interaction with education institutions ("school – practice base"); inadequate involvement of students in research activity; irrational organization of the students' activity during scientific-research practice.

The practice model was worked out on the basis of the activity-competence approach presupposing reappportioning and increase of practical and scientific-research work of the students, interrelations between the content of the module disciplines, practice and scientific-research work, their orientation towards the development of professional actions of a pedagogue [5; 6]. Thus, while designing in-depth practice-oriented training we must ensure: interconnection of the content of practices and disciplines of the module; variability of practices in the module and their inclusion in the uniform system of practices in the structure of the BPEP; orientation of the content of practices towards the formation of concrete professional actions; and organization of network interaction between the university and the educational institution.

In-depth practice model in the master's degree program

Practice is "a kind of academic activity aimed at formation, consolidation and development of practical skills and competence in the process

of do certain kinds of work connected with the future professional activity" [9]. Consequently, practice gives the student an opportunity to acquire personal experience in various kinds of professional activity.

The purpose of the on-the-job training of the master's degree student in the field "Special (Defectological) Education" is to facilitate the development of general professional and professional competence of the student in the sphere of rehabilitation, diagnostic counseling, preventive, scientific-research and/or other kinds of activity through consolidation and expansion of theoretical training of the student and his acquisition of certain practical skills. The practice tasks in the module are formed taking into account the specificity of the master's degree program on the basis of the requirements of the current FSES and the professional standard.

On-the-job training has a special significance for the professional development of the teacher-defectologist. It does not only facilitate actualization and integration of knowledge, its practical application and development of professional and personal competences, but also creates the conditions for cooperation with colleagues and inclusion in the professional community. Practice ensures the development of professional thinking and the ability to make decisions in new situations with the help of specially organized reflection.

Thus, the main goal of the practical training of a modern teacher-defectologist may be formulated following A. A. Morgolis as "the for-

mation of ability to organize independent professional development, i.e. development of his/her activity in new and each time unique conditions” [5, c. 113]. It is possible to achieve this goal only when the student’s activity is constructed as “solution of pedagogical problems (tasks) aimed at finding a general method of professional action which can be further transformed into a number of professional actions unique and specific for different conditions” [5, c. 113].

In module-based master’s degree programs practical training of students is ensured, alongside with practical sessions and independent work in the disciplines, by pedagogical and scientific-research practices and scientific-research work which are built into the structure of the module on a par with disciplines.

The structure of practice in a module is common for all modules responsible for the formation of professional actions. Practices may have both disciplinary and interdisciplinary character. The volume and length of the practice is determined taking into account the specificity of the master’s degree program, but within a module each kind of practice is usually rather short (1-3 credits). This is connected, firstly, with the orientation of practice at the formation of a limited number of professional actions, and, secondly, with the fact that in its essence, it is a learning practice, and this should be kept in mind when defining the content and formulating the students’ tasks.

Thus, the master’s degree practice model comprises the following elements:

1) module practices (scientific-research and pedagogical practices, scientific-research work),

2) long-term complex pedagogical practice (methodological practice and on-the-job training – according to the module content and the BPEP on the whole),

3) scientific-research practice (according to the BPEP on the whole).

Correspondingly, the module practice is built into the general system of practices according to the BPEP on the whole making up one complex whole in the training of teachers-defectologists.

Organization of practices

The formation of professional actions takes place in the process of the students’ acquisition of the content of separate modules and the program on the whole. It is principally important that the sequence of practices in a modular master’s degree programs should be established on the basis of the logic of phase formation of the students’ professional actions and specificity of training masters in the field “Special (Defectological) Education”. Scientific-research work comes before on-the-job training in the process of formation of professional actions within an educational module.

Scientific-research work in the conditions of practice and acquisition of the content of disciplines is aimed at revealing theoretical questions and pedagogical problems (tasks) the solution of which is necessary for the successful accomplishment of the designated professional action, analysis of the causes and problems in the realization of a professional action and the

search of solutions of concrete professional problems. Consequently, organization of the scientific-research work facilitates, in the first place, rational acquisition of the theoretical material and its integration with real pedagogical practice, as well as the development of professional actions and a reflexive kind of attitude to them.

It is necessary to emphasize the reciprocal content relationship between scientific-research work and practices (scientific-research and pedagogical ones) within the module. Research problems arise in practical academic activity in the process of studying disciplines and are formulated together with the pedagogue and the teacher-supervisor taking into account the needs of the education institution. For example, a study of the school's experience in organizing out-of-class activities, a study of the school's evaluation policy, a study of the school's experience in designing academic and pastoral activity, investigation of the risks of inclusive education of children with SEN, etc. may become such problems in the context of the modules. The search of solutions of the revealed problems becomes the subject of the students' activity in the process of the scientific-research practice, and the implementation of these solutions become part of the process of the pedagogical practice.

The professional actions as pre-planned outcomes of training within modules and on the master's degree program as a whole are formed in a purposive and consistent manner in the process of all kinds of practice (practices in the modules, long-term

practices in the BPEP on the whole) and the scientific-research work. Their development is based on the knowledge and skills acquired in the process of studying a discipline which presupposes (according to FSES) a fairly large proportion of independent work (not less than 67% of the total amount of credits) and preference to practical sessions (not less than 67% of the total amount of credits) [9].

Module practice promotes the first stages of the student's acquisition of a professional action – learning the structure of an action and opportunities of its usage together with the pedagogue-supervisor, and attempts to use it independently. Organization of long-term pedagogical practices (methods practice and on-the-job practice) in the BPEP on the whole ensures integration of the module content in the formation in future teachers-defectologists of a certain number of professional actions. During long-term practices the student has an opportunity to include concrete professional actions (for example, working out and realization of discipline programs within the basic general education program, planning and conduct of classes, organization, control and evaluation of learning achievements, current and final results of acquisition of the basic general education program by the pupils, design and realization of pastoral support programs, etc.) into the general structure of professional activity of a teacher-defectologist, first under the supervision of a pedagogue of an education institution (methods practice) and then independently in the course of peda-

gical (on-the-job) practice.

Network interaction with an educational institution

Organization of network interaction with education institutions providing education for children with SEN constitutes a most important condition of enhancement of practical training of teachers-defectologists doing a master's degree course of study. No doubt, proper formation of professional actions is impossible outside education institutions because it is they that create real conditions of educational activity (subjects and medium) and provide examples of real professional actions and technologies demonstrated by the pedagogues.

Establishment of a direct bilateral relationship "university – education institution" (direct interaction) on the basis of an agreement on network interaction is the main mechanism allowing cooperation between employers and universities. This agreement formalizes and brings close partners' relations to a new level and designates the status of the education institution as a practice base and its teachers – as pedagogues-supervisors [5].

The network form of interaction gives an opportunity to create the necessary conditions for immersion into the professional environment, to carry out in-depth practice-oriented master's degree student's training for professional activity on the basis of co-usage of network educational resources, exchange of resources between universities and education institutions and application of education institutions potential in personnel, equipment and materials, academic-

methodological, information and social resources.

Acknowledgement of an education institution as a real partner in training teachers-defectologists presupposes not only the development of equal partner subject-subject relations but also the separation of responsibility for practical training between the university and the education institution and widening of the forms of cooperation [5].

Correspondingly, special role in practical training of students is given to the pedagogue-supervisor who create the conditions for the acquisition of the structure of the professional action by students, of the possibility of its usage in the course of the module practices and the transition to performing independent professional actions in the structure of professional activity of the teacher-defectologist during long-term practices. The pedagogue-supervisor provides student counseling, helps them analyze and understand their professional actions and professional behavior, and to single out its advantages and disadvantages. The content of the supervisor's work is defined by the interpretation of the notion of supervision as a form of counseling and, correspondingly, of the position of the supervisor as that of a counselor differing from the position of the teachers and the authority.

The pedagogue-supervisor carries out support of professional actions of the students-on-practice from the positions of a highly qualified specialist who tries to prevent and correct professional mistakes of stu-

dents, and gives recommendations about various aspects of professional pedagogical activity [5].

New experience of cooperation of design and realization of the programs of practice and scientific-research work was collected in the field of testing educational modules of master's degree programs. In the process interaction the school-practice base formulated its requirements to the content of research-oriented tasks to be completed by the students. Thus, students' practical activity outcomes acquired social significance – they did not only solve a concrete educational task, but also satisfied the needs of an education institution in the data necessary for improvement of pedagogical activity.

In terms of organization, the participation of employers is highly significant in the process of realization of the modules practical aspect, various forms of social interaction of students (roundtable discussions, master classes, counseling, discussion of urgent problems of development of the sphere of education of children with SEN, practice, etc.) with educational institutions personnel [1].

The main conditions ensuring in-depth practice-oriented training of master's degree students may comprise inclusion of students in professional environment; sensitivity of the program to the needs of an education institution; renovation of the forms and methods of work with pedagogical collectives; establishment of partner relationships with education institutions; activation of students' participation in solution of concrete educational

problems (tasks); organization of project and research students work at the request of an education institution; separation of responsibility for practical training between the university and an education institution.

Conclusions

Realization of the suggested model may allow creating a new system of practice-oriented professional training of teachers-defectologists in the field "Special (Defectological) Education" for activity in the sphere of teaching children with SEN in various institutional conditions. Such system should be characterized by:

- orientation of all master's degree programs at the formation of competences directly concerned with the satisfaction of the professional standard demands in reference to the corresponding professional actions;

- optimal use of the academic learning time of the master's degree BPEP for the realization of the students' pedagogical practice, including the long-term methods practice and on-the-job pedagogical training and ensuring interconnection of the content with academic disciplines;

- enhancement of the role and responsibility of the education institution – partner in the process of design and realization of practice programs and scientific-research work of master's degree students;

- ensuring flexibility and variability of practice programs taking into account the specificity of the content of the BPEP, as well as the peculiarities of the basic training of master's degree students;

- providing students an oppor-

tunity both to acquire experience of future professional activity during practice and get favorable results which would interest a prospective employer.

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