
PEDAGOGY

Specific aspects of preschool teachers` professional development. Organization of methodological activities

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Abstract. Organization of methodological activity is determined as an important factor of improvement the professional level of teachers of preschool educational institutions and one of the ways of reforming of education. It is noted that the main aim of methodological activity is scientific achievements and pedagogical experience as a complex system of interrelated measures, aimed at improving of qualification, professional skills and abilities of the teacher of the preschool educational institution and the entire pedagogical team. The content of methodological work in the preschool educational institutions is determined in accordance with the specific goals and objectives.

Keywords: *methodical activity, teacher's professional competence.*

The teacher's methodological training is the process and result of mastering the system of methodological knowledge, skills and abilities and preparedness for their implementation in professional activity. At the heart of methodological activities, there are scientific achievements and pedagogical experience. It is a complex system of interrelated activities aimed at improving the preschool teacher and the whole pedagogical staff's qualification and professional skills.

In the current conditions of education development in Ukraine, there is a reassessment of education professionals' methodological work. New models of methodological assistance that meet the demands of modern society are gradually being developed. New directions and forms are taking place, the content is qualitatively changing, and there is a tendency of this activity being variable and multilevel depending on educational institutions' requests and preparedness. The organization of methodological activities is an important factor in preschool teachers' professional development and is one of the ways of education reforming according to the Laws of Ukraine «On Education» [16], «On Preschool Education» [15], «Basic component of pre-school education in Ukraine» [3] and other regulatory documents. In the current conditions of education development in Ukraine, there is a reassessment of education professionals' methodological work. New models of methodological assistance that meet the demands of modern society are gradually being developed. New directions and forms are taking place, the content is qualitatively changing, and there is a tendency of this activity being variable and multilevel depending on educational institutions' requests and preparedness.

Methodological competence determines the ability and readiness for purposeful, systematic activity in performing professional tasks and solving problems. Independently chosen learned thinking and working methods or strategies are applied and improved for solving job-related problems and tasks.

As a component of professional pedagogical competence, methodological competence is the object of interest in the papers by V. A. Adolf [1], N. V. Kuzmina [10], A. K. Markova [11]. Some aspects of methodological

competence are defined in the studies by T. N. Gushchina [6] and I. A. Zimnia [19]. I. A. Knyazheva's research [8] is devoted to the formation of teachers' methodological culture. The improvement of teachers' scientific and methodological competence in professional activity was in the scope of A. M. Bogush's papers [5]. L. M. Mitin [12] and N. M. Murovan [13] investigate the problem of teachers' methodological training. Methodical activity organization issues are discussed by K. Yu. Bila [4], L. I. Illenko [18], K. L. Krutii [9], V. A. Slastonin [17] and others.

Despite a number of research papers, the problem of preschool teachers' methodological training on the basis of the competence-based approach as well as the organization of methodological activities in pre-school institutions remain urgent and need further research and substantiation.

The paper aims to consider the purpose, principles, functions, methods, and to determine the task of organizing methodological activities in pre-school institutions in the context of preschool teachers' professional development.

Methodological activity covers independent organization and assessment requiring the teacher's personal commitment and creativity as well as the definition of the main objectives of this activity type organization in pre-school institutions. Methodological competence development involves mastering practical activity methods aimed at meeting an individual's needs of a high priority for the given professional group. The increased level of needs as a result of professiogenesis, that is, the teacher's professional becoming and development, brings about the improvement of existing and the development of new innovative activity methods and, accordingly, an increase in the methodological competence level.

Methodological competence is considered as an integral multilevel professionally significant characteristic of the teacher's personality and activity based on the effective professional experience; methodological and pedagogical activity as a whole implying the optimal combination of professional pedagogical activity methods [2].

The purpose of organizing methodological work in the pre-

school institution is to create optimal conditions for continuing improvement of the level of educational process participants' general and educational culture. Methodological work in a preschool institution is a systematic collective and individual activity of pedagogical staff aimed at increasing its scientific-theoretical, cultural level as well as the level of psychological-pedagogical training and professional skills [14].

According to K. L. Krutii, the main task of methodological work is to create such an educational environment in an institution where the creative potential of the teaching staff and every subject, in particular, would be fully realized [9]. The review of methodological work with staff, educational process scientific and methodological support, and the creation of a new development environment is one of the important tasks of the preschool institution's innovative development [7]. That is why the general goal of methodological work lies in education quality assurance and continuing education system development for an educational institution teaching staff. It is determined by methodological work principles among which the leading ones are the principles of education democratization and humanization.

The main goal is to assist preschool teachers and the whole teaching staff in their professional competence upgrading and development to achieve good results in their teaching activities.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to identify the initial level of teachers' professional training, and then formulate a goal, plan and organize methodological work with them.

In general terms, methodological work objectives are formulated by V. A. Slastonin: formation of innovative orientation in teaching staff's activity which is manifested in the systematic study, generalization and spreading of pedagogical experience, in the work on the implementation of pedagogical science achievements; raising the level of teachers' theoretical and psychological training; inquiries into new educational programs, curricula, state educational standards; investigation of new normative documents, guidance materials; providing advisory assistance to teachers in self-education [17].

The following are the principles of methodological work organization contributing to the achievement of its key goal – improving professional activity (according to L. I. Illienko [18]):

- relevance, unity of theory and practice involving the practical implementation of the law «On education», taking into account modern societal demands for education, orientation to the child's social significance in today's difficult living conditions as well as pressing challenges for specific teaching staff;
- scientific character aimed at bringing the system of teachers' training to the conformity with modern scientific achievements in various fields;
- systematic character and complexity in terms of which methodological work is considered as an integral system which depends on the unity of objectives, content, purpose, forms and methods of working with educators as well as the unity and interconnection of all parties and directions of teachers' professional development;
- goal orientation, consistency, succession, continuity, a mass character, and collectivity involving the methodological work transformation into a part of the continuing education system, full teachers engagement

into various forms of methodological work throughout the academic year;

- creation of favorable working conditions – moral, psychological, sanitary, the availability of free time for the teacher's creative activity;
- efficiency, flexibility, mobility and an individual approach requiring methodologists to be able to quickly receive and transfer educational information, taking into account the educational institution educators' individual characteristics;
- creativity implying the creative nature of methodological work, the creation of a methodological work system in a preschool institution;
- continuing teachers' self-education, qualified assistance provision both in theoretical and in practical matters; improving teaching effectiveness.

A special place in the methodological work of the preschool institution is given to the principle of providing an individualized differentiated approach to educators' pedagogical activity. In modern conditions, methodological work with staff should be built on a diagnostic basis, taking into account each teacher's needs.

The implementation of methodological work, which is defined as individually-oriented, allows developing teaching staff's initiative and creativity by involving everyone in an active professional activity.

When formulating the methodological work objectives of a preschool institution, a group of its interrelated functions should be singled out.

The functions of methodological work from the standpoint of education system hierarchical levels (A. M. Moiseieva and O. M. Masovyi) are defined as: the functions of methodological work in relation to advanced pedagogical experience, pedagogical science in general – to the national education system; the functions of methodological work in relation to the educational institution's pedagogical staff; functions of methodological work in relation to a particular teacher [13].

P. I. Tretiakov considers the functions of methodological work through managerial tasks: information and analytical, motivational and target-oriented, planning and prognostic, organizational and executive, control and evaluation, regulatory and corrective [7].

The content of the methodological work is also considered in terms of the main functions:

1) the functions of methodological work in relation to the educational institution's pedagogical staff:

- improving pedagogical activity;
- updating educational process software;
- pedagogical staff's introduction to pedagogical science and practice achievements;
- implementation of advanced pedagogical experience in pre-school institutions.

2) the functions of methodological work in relation to a particular teacher:

- research on the level of preschool teachers' professional training, identification of teachers' problems and professional needs;
- organization of work on boosting teachers' professional growth: enhancement of social and psychological culture; improvement of special skills; knowledge of human and national culture.

Methodological work is defined as the process of

teachers' professionalism development which should be considered through internal and external factors. External factors are socio-cultural environment and the education system where it is necessary to take into account the current educational situation. Internal factors include the following: teachers' self-cultivation, self-education and self-development in accordance with the requirements of state standards.

There are several types of methodological activities: research, experimental, and corrective (according to S. Zh. Honcharova). The research type provides innovative processes, the experimental type ensures the transition from the development mode to the mode of functioning, the correction one facilitates functioning [12].

Priority methodological work directions as well-organized activity methods on the achievement of goals are methodological, scientific-methodological, didactic educational process support as well as the creation of optimal conditions for interaction of all participants in the educational process.

The most widespread is the following classification of methods:

1. according to the ways of information presentation: verbal (oral, printed), visual (illustration and demonstration methods), practical (workshops, trainings);

2. according to the degree of independence in knowledge acquisition: reproductive, partially-searching, searching, research;

3. according to the way of knowledge acquisition: explanatory-illustrative, programmed, heuristic, problem- and model- based.

In the first case, methods similar to those used in working with preschoolers are more commonly used.

However, in order to organize activities to improve preschool teachers' professional competence, the most appropriate ones are the methods given in the second and third groups. At the same time, new, nontraditional, interactive methods of work with the pre-school institutions' pedagogical staff are being increasingly applied – they enable to simultaneously solve learning and cognitive, communicative and orientation tasks due to the opportunity to organize educational communicative environment facilitating the professional knowledge and skill acquisition.

The competence-based approach allows to consider the development of preschool teachers' methodological competence as a gradual process of acquiring knowledge, practical skills of organizing methodological work in a preschool institution and the experience of emotional and value-based attitude to the teaching subject and methods that meet preschoolers' needs and the post-industrial society's requirements to the teacher's personality [2].

The creation of effective conditions for preschool teachers' professional development and children's continuing holistic development, the quality of interaction with the family determine the main methodological work objectives:

1. Teaching staff's training and development, as well as its skill enhancement management.

2. Finding out, research, generalization and spreading of the best teachers' pedagogical experience.

3. Methodological support development for its implementation in an educational process.

2. Activity coordination between preschool institutions and the family aimed at children's continuing holistic development.

3. Coordination of preschool institutions' actions with other institutions to ensure children's development as well as the institution's progress in general.

4. Analysis of performance quality in order to create the conditions for ensuring positive changes in preschoolers' personality development through improving teachers' professional competence.

Thus, methodological activity covers independent organization and assessment requiring the teacher's personal commitment and creativity as well as the definition of the main objectives of this activity type organization in preschool institutions. The variety of methodological work objectives and directions in preschool institutions requires the selection of the most effective interaction forms with teaching staff.

The content of methodological work in preschool institutions is determined according to particular objectives. It also has to be taken into account educational process outcomes, teachers' qualification and staff morale. The work is conducted in the following areas: educational – educators' professional development in theoretical aspects and mastering modern methods of interaction with children; didactic – gaining knowledge on improving preschool education efficiency; psychological – conducting classes in psychology (general, developmental, pedagogical); physiological – conducting classes in physiology and hygiene; technical – the educator should be able to apply information and communication technologies in their work; self-educational – reading special literature, attending seminars on relevant topics. Much attention is paid to such a pedagogical activity type consisting in development: preparation and implementation of training and education programs, modeling of situations and events developing the child's emotional and value sphere, creation of a psychologically dangerous and comfortable educational environment.

Implementation of methodological work allows developing the initiative and creativity of the teaching staff by involving each member in active professional activity. Creation of effective conditions for the professional development of teachers of the preschool education determines the main tasks of methodological work.

The main objectives of organizing methodological work in pre-school institutions are the following: boosting teachers' professional and cultural level; improvement of the methods and styles of interaction with children based on the principles of humanization and democratization; upgrading educators' skills in organizing children's creative, research and independent activity; developing skills in the analysis of the educational process as a whole and self-reflection on one's own efficiency; involvement of educators in research activities based on innovative methods.

Directions for future research on this issue lie in scientifically implement of children's education, upbringing and development goals.

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