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Training as a form of teachers’ professional qualifications improvement in the system of continuing education

Introduction

The improvement of qualifications is the basis for the development of continuing quality education. Declarative statements on reforming the practice of teachers’ qualifications improvement have been actively proclaimed since the early 2000s. However, only with the adoption of the Law of Ukraine “On Education” # 2145-VIII of 05.09.2017, which entered into force on 28.09.2017, as well as with the transformations of general secondary education in Ukraine, reflected in the document “New Ukrainian School”, specific changes began in the established, but outdated forms and methods of postgraduate pedagogical education.

The successful introduction of new mechanisms for the improvement of qualifications has been supported by a number of legal acts: On some organizational issues regarding the training of teachers to work in the New Ukrainian School (2018), On approval of the Standard educational program on organizing and training of teachers by the postgraduate educational institutions (2018). In addition, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted resolution # 800 “Which approved the order, the procedure, the types, the forms, the scope, the conditions, the payment mechanism, the qualifications improvement recognition procedure”, which approved the order, procedure, types, forms, amount, conditions, payment mechanism, qualifications improvement recognition procedure.

Therefore, in the latest period of the reform there is an urgent need to create the alternative qualifications improvement curricula and programs for the in-service ones in the institutes of postgraduate pedagogical education. Making conceptual changes in the content of curricula and programs necessitates the creation of new organizational mechanisms and the use of modern organizational forms in the practice of teachers’ qualifications improvement, taking into account the domestic and foreign experience.

Training as a form of teachers' qualifications improvement

One of such modern forms, which in recent years is actively used in the system of continuing education, is training.

Until recently, training sessions as a form of work were more common in psychological practice and were defined as a set of methods for the development of the ability to learn or gain the experience in any complex activity, including communication¹.

Modern scientific researches describe various fields of the use of training and the purpose of its implementation: to increase the motivation of self-improvement (L. Ann, D. Johnson, N. Pylypenko), to develop the future teachers' communication skills (I. Ziaziun, L. Kondrashova, O. Semenova), to develop the skills of teachers' democratic communication in the system of the qualifications improvement (S. Strilets)², to develop the reflexive abilities (O. Demchenko, T. Koval, Yu. Lyamar, I. Turchyna)³, etc.

During the training there is a purposeful and structured interaction of its participants in order to acquire new knowledge, develop skills, gain the experience of social interaction. The participants of the training reproduce or discuss a specific situation that may arise in their professional work. As a result, there is a formation or rethinking of their own position on a particular issue. The participants of the training learn, first of all, due to their active work and learn a lot from each other. Through synergies the group helps each participant to become on graduation more competent than at the beginning⁴.

That is why the format of the trainings was chosen (taking into account the teachers' requests) for the Innovative teacher training courses "Superheroes" (preschool and primary education) and "Superheroes 2.0", which took place in October 2019 and January 2020 on the basis of the Faculty of Preschool and Primary Education and Arts at T. H. Shevchenko National University "Chernihiv Colehium".

The courses were organized with the assistance of the Rectorate of T. H. Shevchenko National University "Chernihiv Colehium" and the support of the international project "The democracy culture development in pedagogical education in Ukraine, Norway and Palestine" (CPEA-LT-2017/10037). The course was

¹Матвійчук О.С. Психокорекційний тренінг як засіб профілактики девіантної поведінки підлітків. *Практична психологія та соціальна робота*. 1998. № 1. С. 20-23.

²Стрілець С.І. Інноваційні форми підвищення кваліфікації: реалії та перспективи. *Вісник Національного університету «Чернігівський колегіум» ім. Т.Г. Шевченка*. 2019. Вип. 4 (160). URL : <https://visnyk.chnpu.edu.ua/19-4-160-8/>.

³Demchenko Olena, Koval Tatiana, Vatso Mykhailo, Lyamar Yulia, Turchyna Iryna. Развитие рефлексивного компонента готовности будущих педагогов к работе с одаренными детьми во время тренинговых занятий. *Society. Integration. Education: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*. Volume I, May 22 th-23th. 2020. P. 119-132.

⁴ Ідеї. Натхнення. Рішення. Посібник для тренерів неформальної освіти. Київ, 2015. URL : https://www.sii.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Trainers_Handbook.pdf.

organized by the Department of Preschool and Primary Education, headed by the Head of the Chair, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor S. Strilets.

The purpose of the courses was to improve the teachers' skills in an innovative format, acquaintance with the educational trends from Ukrainian, Norwegian, Czech scientists, coaches, the opportunity of networking, acquaintance, inspiration, receiving state certificates by the teachers. The target audience was primary school teachers of the NUS (26 participants) and educators of preschool institutions (9 participants). The term of study was based on the accumulative system, so it provided for 3 modules – Module I – (3 days) October 2019, Module II – distant, Module III – (3 days) January 2020 (issuance of the Certificates).

The participants of the project “The democracy culture development in pedagogical education in Ukraine, Norway and Palestine” presented the topics of the trainings, which were conducted within the courses and were diverse and relevant. The following trainings aroused considerable interest among the primary school teachers – the participants of the courses: “Democratic principles of the innovative technical and multimedia means use of teaching Mathematics” – Professor S. Strilets, V. Kotok; “Mathematics as a tool for the development of democracy”, “Digital tools in the work of a modern teacher” – Associate Professor N. Striletska; “7 life hacks for the development of children’s critical thinking” – Associate Professor I. Turchyna; “Prevention of the professional burnout: stress management techniques” – Associate Professor Yu. Nosko; “Bullying in the classroom: what to do? Ways to overcome” – Associate Professor O. Kysla; “Primary schoolchildren’s ecological competence formation (general ecological problems of mankind)”, “Ecological projects: global challenges of mankind” – associate professor V. Koval; “Development of democracy in communication in education”, “Writing a scientific article – it’s not scary: what, where and how? Secrets, stages, support” – Associate Professor Yu. Lymar; “Implementation of the ideas of democracy in Mathematics” – senior lecturer T. Zaporozhchenko; “Techniques of creativity in the primary school teachers’ work”, “Training activity principles” – Associate Professor M. Konovalchuk.

The elaboration of the training topics was based on the analysis of modern approaches in teacher training for the New Ukrainian School teachers’ requests, the need to introduce the European democratic practices in the educational process of primary school and the system of continuing education.

When planning the content and structure of the trainings for primary school teachers, the need for the structural components of the training described by A. Katsero was taken into account, namely: the purpose and tasks; the principles of group work; the forms of organization; the role and functions of the coach; methodological means and ways⁵.

Thus, the content of the trainings (ideas, problems, questions, situations), proposed by the lecturers for the analysis and discussion during the joint work, is designed in such a way as to maximize the achievement of the goal.

⁵ Кацера А. Засоби психологічного тренінгу. Підручник для директора. Посібник з управлінської компетентності. Липень-серпень. 2010. С. 42-46.

The developed logical sequence of the stages of the trainings promoted thorough consideration of the declared topics, the account of the sequence of the situations, states, stages of the group development, the peculiarities of the training participants' interaction, their influence on each other, the account of the feedback.

It should be noted that the scientific and methodological literature describes a large number of methods, but we consider it appropriate to follow the recommendations of the coaching team "Other Education", which identified the methods without which training is impossible, namely: presentation, individual work, brainstorming, reflection and physical exercises (moving exercises or energizers). In addition, they selected the support methods that help optimize trainings and increase the effectiveness of their results, but are not compulsory. For example, role-playing games, which cover a wide range of topics, can be different in duration and allow to model real situations of the professional work in the field of education. Business games are methods of modeling the situations of joint decision-making in conflict situations. Usually these tasks are the author's ones and are developed by the trainers depending on the purpose of training and the set tasks, and also on the needs of the target audience⁶.

L. Liubchak also emphasizes the importance of organizing quasi-activities, the use of interactive teaching methods, which, in her opinion, promotes the active interaction and communication of all participants of the educational process, development of the motives and the ability for self-improvement, personal and professional experience⁷.

Among the methods used during the trainings, dialogic and group ones prevailed. In particular, explanations, dialogue, discussions, discussion of situations, role-playing games, creative tasks, "Brainstorming", "World Café", "Balloon", "Icebreaker", "Fair" and others.

In addition, lecturers Yu. Lymar and I. Turchyna used a philosophical dialogue during the trainings, the methodology of which is described in the works of Guro Helskog⁸ and presented by her to the lecturers of the Ukrainian higher educational institutions within the international project "The democracy culture development in pedagogical education in Ukraine, Norway and Palestine". Working out the training classes using a philosophical dialogue, we relied on the works of Yu. Lymar, O. Demchenko, I. Turchyna concerning its adaptation in the field of pedagogy, according to which the issues formulated for the discussion should not be purely

⁶ Ідеї. Натхнення. Рішення. Посібник для тренерів неформальної освіти. Київ, 2015. URL : https://www.sii.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Trainers_Handbook.pdf.

⁷ Любчак Л.В. Використання технології тренінгу в формуванні комунікативної компетентності майбутніх учителів початкових класів. *Сучасні інформаційні технології та інноваційні методики навчання в підготовці фахівців: методологія, теорія, досвід, проблеми* : зб. наук. пр. Вип. 47. Київ-Вінниця, 2017. С.70-75.

⁸Helskog, Guro Hansen. *Philosophising the Dialogos Way toward Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*. London: Routledge Publishing Ltd. 2019. 272 p.

philosophical, but philosophical and pedagogical⁹, because any question about education and training, about pedagogical facts has a philosophical basis, the answer to it requires the search for the fundamental reasons, appropriate argumentation and grounding.

The use of dialogic and group teaching methods during the trainings for teachers contributed to their better mastering of the training content, the development of the participants' personal and professional qualities. And the use of G. Helskog's philosophical dialogue – the teachers' democratic values formation and their democratic communication skills development.

The peculiarities of the use of training as a form of teachers' professional qualifications improvement

On the example of the training “Development of democracy in communication in education”, conducted by Yu. Lymar within the refresher courses for primary school teachers, we will analyze the possibilities of training as a form of teachers' professional qualifications improvement. The training was attended by 26 primary school teachers from Chernihiv, Slavutych, Chernihiv and Kyiv regions.

Consider the general structure of the training, its individual components and analyze its effectiveness.

The target group of the training: primary school teachers.

The purpose: on the basis of deepening and generalization of knowledge of the theoretical principles of democracy to form the primary school teachers' ability to realize democracy in communication with young learners, parents, colleagues.

The training duration: 4 hours.

The stages of the training

#	The name of the stage	Time (min.)
1	Introduction	18
2	The group work	
	2.1. What is democracy? What are its advantages, disadvantages, difficulties of implementation? (according to Edward de Bono's “Six Hats method”)	30
	<i>The moving exercise “The hand on the pulse”</i>	2
	2.2. The dialogic task “Democracy in communication in education”	30
	<i>The moving exercise “Pass the gift”</i>	10
	2.3. Discussion of situations	
	2.3.1. “Implementation of democracy in communication with pupils”	30
	2.3.2. “Implementation of democracy in communication with the	30

⁹Лимар Ю., Демченко О., Турчина І. Використання філософського діалогу у формуванні навичок демократичного спілкування майбутніх педагогів. *Інноваційна педагогіка* : зб. наук. праць. Вип. 16. Т. 1. Одеса, 2019. С. 110-114.

	pupils' parents"	
	2.3.3. "Implementation of democracy in communication with colleagues (teachers or the principal (deputy principal) of the school)"	30
	<i>The moving exercise "Touch..."</i>	5
	2.4. Use of Guro Helskog's dialogic tasks in the work with primary school pupils	40
3	The general reflection	10
4	The feedback from the training participants	5
	Total	240

After the presentation of the training topic and the trainer, the participants got acquainted.

The "*River of expectations*" task was used to identify the teachers' **expectations** from the training (the participants received stickers, wrote their expectations from the training on them and glued them "on one bank of the river"). Among the most common expectations were: "I expect a good mood, new impressions, new acquaintances", "I expect new interesting information", "I want to deepen my knowledge about democracy in general and democracy in education in particular", "I want to gain new experience", "I want learn democratic communication", etc.

After that the participants discussed and voted on **the rules of the training**.

The group work began with clarifying the question "**What is democracy? What are its advantages, disadvantages, difficulties of implementation?**" by Edward de Bono's "Six Hats method". To do this, the teachers were united into 6 pairs (based on the calculation from 1 to 6). Each pair chose "blindly" one "hat" from the "Six Hats" cards by Edward de Bono.

The participants of each pair analyzed the concept of "democracy" according to the color of the hat (10 min.):

1) "White Hat" ("a scientist"): providing factual information about the object ("What do we know about it?");

2) "Yellow Hat" ("an optimist"): determining the benefits of the object ("What are the benefits? What are the advantages?");

3) "Black Hat" ("a critic"): identification of the risks, warnings ("What can happen wrong? What are the disadvantages?");

4) "Red hat" ("an artist"): awareness of the emotions that arise when using the object ("What feelings does it evoke?");

5) "Green Hat" ("a creative person"): creative expansion of the potential of the object ("What are the alternatives in its application?");

6) "Blue Hat" ("a manager"): management of the research process of the object, collection and publicizing the information prepared by other "Hats".

After all participants discussed this concept from different points of view, a reflexive conversation was held, during which it was found out that carrying out of this task allowed the participants to analyze the advantages, opportunities, disadvantages of democracy.

Democracy in communication in education was discussed during **the dialogic task** based on Guro Helskog's task G 6¹⁰:

1. What is "democracy in communication in education"?
2. The participants gave the examples from their own lives when they carried out the communication in education on the basis of democracy.
3. They discussed this issue using all the examples given.
4. The participants gave their own answers to the questions in one sentence, individually.
5. The participants compared the answers in subgroups, formulating a general thesis and / or agreeing with one of the suggested proposals.
6. The participants wrote the suggestions on the flipchart paper.
7. The participants compared the proposals or left them as they are.

At the end, the participants wrote *the reflective notes*, answering the questions:

- 1) What have you learnt today about democracy in communication in education through this task?
- 2) What methods have you mastered that you will need to implement democracy in communication in education?

Discussion of the situation "Implementation of democracy in communication with pupils" took place during the group work.

The participants were united into groups of 4.

Give the example of the situation that happened directly to you or that you witnessed, in which you were democratic with your pupil (pupils). How did it influence them, you, your further communication with the pupils?

All participants took turns giving their examples in the group. The group members chose the best situation to present in the general group.

The "Surprise" technique was used to select the speaker: the one whose Birthday was before everyone else's in the group answers.

The selected participant presented the situation in the general group. All participants could ask him questions.

The representatives of all groups presented the situation in the same way.

The participants were proposed to think over the questions: "What do these situations have in common?", "What is different in these situations?". They wrote the answers on the piece of paper, divided in half, on the flipchart.

Discussion of the situation "Implementation of democracy in communication with the pupils' parents" took place during the pair work.

The participants were paired.

Give the example of the situation that happened directly to you or that you witnessed, in which you were democratic with your pupils' parents. How did it influence them and your further communication with them?

Each pair shared their example with the general group.

The participants recorded these examples on the flipchart.

All participants voted for one situation.

¹⁰Helskog, Guro Hansen. *Philosophising the Dialogos Way toward Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*. London: Routledge Publishing Ltd. 2019. 272 p.

The situation chosen by the majority of the participants was discussed in the general group.

Discussion of the situation “Implementation of democracy in communication with colleagues (teachers or the principal (deputy principal) of the school)” took place in the following way.

Each participant was given the task.

Give the example of the situation that happened directly to you or that you witnessed, in which your colleagues (teachers, school principal (deputy principal) or another school administration representative) were democratic to you. How did it influence you and your further communication with this person?

Each participant, if desired, gave the example of the situation, the brief name of which was written on the flipchart. By voting, the participants chose the situation to discuss in the general group.

After that there was *the reflexive conversation* – the participants answered the questions: “Do I want to be a democratic teacher, colleague?”, “What can I do for it?”.

The use of Guro Helskog’s dialogic tasks in the work with primary school pupils were taught while working in groups. The participants were united into 4 groups, each group chose one dialogic task from the proposed ones. Then they worked on the text describing the sequence of dialogic tasks D 1, G 2, G 6, I 6. The participants of each group worked out the dialogic task for primary school pupils. It should be noted that they took into account the content of the educational material, primary school pupils’ age characteristics. Then, in turn, the representative of each group announced the name of the worked out task to the general group and recorded it on the flipchart. By voting, they decided which task to work on. The participants of the group, on the topic of which the majority of the participants voted, conducted the task worked out by them with the general group (other teachers played the role of primary school pupils).

This was followed by *the reflective conversation* – the participants answered the questions: “What is the purpose of using dialogic tasks in working with young learners?”, “What should be considered when planning and doing dialogic tasks with young learners?”.

During the training, after doing several tasks, the participants performed the moving exercises. For example, “The hand on the pulse”, “Pass the gift”, “Touch ...” and others. It gave them the opportunity to rest, relax, communicate with other participants, adjust to further work.

At the end of the training there was **the general reflection**.

1. The participants viewed the sheets of paper posted on the walls, on which they wrote during the training.

2. The participants gave the written answers to the questions: “What new have you learnt today?”, “What methods have you mastered that you will need for your work with children, parents, colleagues?”.

Among the most common answers to the first question were: “I have learnt more about democratic communication”, “I have learnt that democracy in general and democracy in communication / education does not always have positive

consequences”, “philosophical dialogue / discussion of various issues based on the situations from the participants’ experience”, “the peculiarities of conducting the training”, etc.

Answering the second question, among the methods they mastered during the training, the teachers pointed out the following: “the methods of implementation of the democratic principles of communication in practice”, “the methods of organizing the democratic communication between teachers and pupils, parents, colleagues”, “the ways to establish the democratic communication between young learners”, “different ways of joining pupils into groups”, “organizing the discussions of life situations with the help of philosophical tasks”, etc.

3. Each participant found his own sticker glued to the Whatman with the “River of expectations”. If his expectations from this training came true, he reglued the sticker on the other “bank of the river”, if did not – left in the same. All participants of the training moved their stickers to another bank of the river, which testifies to the justification of their expectations from the training.

The participants could put their remarks and wishes for the trainer about the training into the “*Box of remarks and wishes*”.

Based on the analysis of the teachers’ reflective notes, observation of their work during the training, we can claim that the use of the forms described above and methods in the system of continuing education promotes the development of the democratic communication skills, analytical and critical thinking skills; communication skills; the ability to express one’s own opinion, to argue it; the ability to avoid conflict situations or solve them constructively.

At the same time, there were some **difficulties** in using the training format: during the discussion the culture of dialogic communication was sometimes violated, the participants did not listen to each other’s opinion to the end, interrupted each other; some participants found it difficult to find argued answers to the questions, to convince the audience of the correctness of their position, to recollect the successful examples of life situations.

During the final meeting of the participants and organizers of the refresher courses, the participants emphasized the effectiveness of their conducting in the format of trainings. Because, in their opinion, it is a “modern, interesting and effective form of work” that promotes “deeper mastering of the content of the material”, “practical skills formation”, “development of the professional qualifications”, “general emotional inspiration”, “establishing the contacts between the participants”, “development of the desire for the professional self-improvement.

Conclusions

1. The use of trainings in the system of continuing education ensures the involvement of all participants in different types of work: individual, small groups, frontal. It creates the opportunities for them to interact with each other, actively communicate, exchange the views, discuss situations, update their practical experience.

2. The observation of the teachers' work and the analysis of the results of doing the reflexive tasks by them testify that the use of trainings during the refresher courses helps to increase the motivation for the content of the training topic and the teachers' activity in the process of work on it; develop the ability to creatively use the psychological and pedagogical knowledge; develop the ability to analyze the pedagogical tasks and situations related to the pupils' development and education, to look for the alternative ways to solve them; develop the critical thinking; develop the democratic communication skills; and, consequently, improve the teachers' professional qualifications.

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