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Characteristic of Forming Social-Project Competency of the Bachelor of Economics

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Abstract: On the basis of integration of provisions and findings acquired in the framework of educational science, the urgency of social planning is shown, the concept of "social competency" and "social-project competency of Bachelor of Economics" is clarified together with the necessity and pedagogical conditions of the studied process, component structure and content of social and project competency. The author demonstrates the pedagogical potential of economic disciplines for social-pedagogical planning of learning activities for BA in Economics, providing the possibility to update the subject-subject interaction and project learning of economic laws. The set of pedagogical conditions that meet the task of mastering the social-project competency of BA in Economics within the specially organized system of social planning is grounded. The criteria and level indicators of formation of social-project competency of BA in Economics are presented in the paper; the experience of implementation of the developed educational technology for higher professional education is analyzed, using educational potential of the course "Economics theory" and creating the metadiscipline, including invariant and variative content on the basis of this course, to expand the semantic field of knowledge objects beyond the framework of traditional academic disciplines and position it at the metalevel. The article presents the empirical results on implementation of practically and socially oriented business projects, the most successful of which attracted the economic interest of investors, who decided to invest in this production.

Key words: Social project · Social-pedagogical planning · Social competency · Social-project competency · Project and module technologies · Metadiscipline content of the course

INTRODUCTION

Due to globalization and integration processes the profound changes occur in the field of economics, politics and social relations of the world. The leading analysts believe that competitiveness in the modern world depends on the volume and level of human capital, intellectual potential, project ability, skills and reliability of human capital. These processes have updated the social demand to the system of multi-level education of professionals with project thinking, universal project skills, who are ready to use properly the project knowledge in non-standard professional situations.

In modern universities the preparation of Bachelors in Economics has showed a contradiction between the available teaching potential in economic disciplines, shaping the project competency of students and predominant verbal methods of training. The systemic analysis of contradictions allows updating the solution to the problem of social-pedagogical projection of learning activity of BA in Economics.

Considering the main scientific concepts, the social-pedagogical project of learning activity as a specially organized process of creatively motivated activity of training subjects on the basis of values, common sense and project methodology, allows implementation of the innovative goal (formation of social-project competency).

In the first third of the XX century, the contribution to the development of academic support of the project activities in application to the social-educational field was made by the representatives of various fields of knowledge. In the beginning of the XX century John Dewey used the method of projects in pragmatic pedagogy for organization of appropriate activities for children on the basis of their personal interests; he proposed active education via student's rational activity, complying with his personal interest in this knowledge [1]. W.H. Kilpatrick has based the project concept on the pragmatic theory (J. Dewey, W. James and Ch. Peirce). According to W.H. Kilpatrick, the project method is based on satisfaction of cognitive interests and needs of a child [2].

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The authors consider social projecting as the staged activity, which includes procedures of research, project and, in fact, projecting [3]. It follows that the studied phenomenon has in its meaning some integration, i.e., it is composed of several components which have counterparts, similarity criteria and some degree of proximity.

The modern definitions of social project reflect its technological and social orientation [4]. The result of analysis of terms, defining social project, became generalization of concepts, which allowed the conclusion that social project covers forecasting, modeling and planning because implementation of a social project provides an opportunity to assess the reality of the forecast, work out the scientifically grounded plan for social development and test model performance.

According to researchers' opinion, the social-pedagogical project is the more ambitious approach in the project paradigm. This type of project is pedagogical by the application field (education) and social by its consequences (transformation of the situation in society); this type of project provides as a result the changes in the content and organization of pedagogical reality [5].

Investigations of the competent approach in various activities, including the professional one, have led to publication of a large number of definitions of "cognizance" and "competency". Without dwelling on the analysis of multiple domestic and foreign interpretations of these terms, we should note that in application to the system of higher professional education the competency may be considered as a set of professional and personal qualities of the worker, which ensure effectiveness in solving professional problems at the level of demands of the society, market and professional environment due to the constant updating [6].

First of all, the task of defining the essence of the concept "social project competency of BA in Economics" required consideration of the ratio between the terms "social competency" and "social and project competency".

Considerable attention of domestic and foreign researchers was paid to the problem of social competency. Thus, V.N. Kunitsyna considers social competency as a complete system of knowledge about social reality, social skills and behavior scenarios in the specific social situations, which allow a person to adapt successfully, make correct decisions, take into account the circumstances and take maximal advantages of the situation. According to V.N. Kunitsyna, the condition for successful activity of an individual under the changing social circumstances is development of behavioral scenarios, which meet new social reality and are expected by interaction partners [7].

In the studies of foreign authors the list of components in the structure of social competency is very significant. Thus, Judith G. Calhoun, Harrison C. Spencer, Pierre Buekens understand social competency as mastering the cognitive and emotional behaviors, which lead to favorable long-term correlation of positive and negative consequences under the certain circumstances [8].

Hutmacher Walo has developed a concept, which formulates seven characteristics of a social-competent individual [9]. According to his opinion, the social-competent individual has the following abilities:

- To make decisions about yourself and seek to understand your own feelings and requirements.
- To block negative feelings and uncertainty.
- To understand how to achieve goals more effectively.
- To understand correctly the desires, expectations and needs of others, to evaluate and consider their rights.
- To analyze the area defined by social institutions and organizations, the role of their representatives and build your own behavior on the basis of this knowledge.
- To understand how to behave, taking into account the particular circumstances and time, social restrictions and your own needs.
- To recognize that social competency involves respect for others.

In these works, social competency is presented as integrative characteristics of the individual without regard to his professional activities.

The following understanding of relationship between the concepts of "social competency" and "social-project competency" requires specification that in contrast to previously cited definitions of social competency, common to all people regardless of their professions, it is necessary to define the content of social competency as a part of professional competency of the future economist.

According to our opinion, social-project competency of the Bachelor in Economics is the result of social-pedagogical planning of learning activity and it is integrative quality of a person, characterized by formation of reasons for project activity, ability to develop

socio-economic projects, which allow economically grounded decisions in socially determined situation of knowledge economy.

In the framework of theoretical and experimental research, we have assumed that the process of social-pedagogical planning of learning activities for the BA in Economics ensures development of social-project competency at formation and implementation of the following pedagogical conditions:

- Nvolvement of the BA in projecting the individual educational way, providing project thinking and positive motivation to become a competent specialist;
- Nrichment of the essence of economic education by project knowledge on the basis of meaning actualization and goal of professional activity under the conditions of knowledge economy;
- Mplementation of humanitarian technologies that advance project skills in the process of education.

Practical experience allows the statement that the course "Economic theory" has significant educational potential in formation of social-project competency. The economic theory is the basic, fundamental science and the foundation of economic education.

In accordance with the level of criterial indicators of social-project competency of the BA in Economics, the theoretical and methodological analysis of the problem was carried out and learning activities of the Bachelors in Economics in Orenburg State University were analyzed.

At the first stage of the forming experiment (motivation-target) the main objective was the need for creation and development of positive motives for learning and project activities. To stimulate the cognitive and creative activity we have added to the content of economic disciplines together with the invariant component (base categories) other components: "activity in the field of knowledge economy", "investments in human capital" and "project". During the problem lectures we produced the interactive situations on the following topic: "Imagine a relationship between human capital and efficient economic growth". From the dialogues we proceeded to discussion on the topic "What has changed in the profession of economist today?"; and the students developed the programs of their own development. The students held the meetings and discussions with the experts (people, who have established in profession and organized successful business) and training excursions to the enterprises. The educational practice has set the requirements for the profession of economist, actualized the need for economic knowledge and revealed the specifics of economist work and character of unusual decisions made under the risky conditions. Moreover, this allowed determination of the problem of the search for the ways of successful implementation in profession and a choice of the project as one of these ways. In the process of learning, organized in this manner, the students understood the sense of professional activity and oriented in professional values. The professional position took the concrete shape, becoming more conceptual.

At the same time we attempted to create the conditions for the individual educational culture-conformable trajectory of the BA, according to qualifying characteristics of profession and professiogram of economist. We focused on the system of student expectations and giving the personal meaning to the activity. The latter facilitated the creation of the atmosphere required by the Bachelor at projecting.

The students have studied the logic and content of the course in detail; they scheduled their independent work on specific topics. In the content of education, we sought for efficient structuring of the course, which takes into account its basic and applied components, contemporary significance for society and particular region and individual needs of the students.

The bachelors were suggested to select the topics of the course, which may be interesting for discussions and scientific dialogues and they would like to explore in detail. The students were suggested the problem: to create the modules of self-education and develop the questions for self-testing of their knowledge. The right to select the option for interim control of knowledge: computer testing, defense of the project or classroom written work, was reserved for the Bachelor. The standards of evaluation at identifying the effectiveness of these tasks implementation were also defined for the teacher. According to this, the meaning, purpose, structure and content of education have been coordinated with the specifics of personal development of the bachelor involved in the project of his education, what ensured personal orientation.

Education at satisfaction of this pedagogical condition had the creative, not reproductive orientation, which runs not only through the educational process, but also through the system of monitoring and evaluation of educational results: this is the productive orientation of the learning process. The students have developed the individual educational way, based on personal meaning

and values, needs and motivations. The experience of value attitude to the future bachelor's profession, the objects and tools of project, influencing the emotional perception of facts and phenomena of social reality and characterizing the personal features, was formed: project thinking project mentality and aim at creative project work.

We have detected main dynamics in the motivation shift towards the target: keenness on project activities, updating the project and economic knowledge and desire to become a competent specialist.

As part of the forming experiment we developed the metadiscipline, comprising invariant and variative content, differing qualitatively from the content of usual educational course by the fact that the semantic field of the objects of knowledge was beyond the traditional academic discipline and it was located on a metalevel. Then, the variable components of the training programs in the disciplines were developed; content of these disciplines were supplemented with: knowledge about the project activity (its content and structure) and the ways of its implementation, experience in the project activities, involving practical application of project knowledge. We arranged the project actions in accordance with the theory of the gradual formation of mental actions of P.Ya. Galperin and N.F. Talyzina. The options included the selected ways of activity, technique, technology and key cognizance, which students need to master.

The implementation of this pedagogical condition involves the transition to the concept of "open educational content" as continuously changing environment, including economic and social media, most quickly reflecting these changes: it is the environmental approach to education.

The variative component was based on the use in education of promising advances in project technology, reflecting the invariance of types and methods of recognition of economic theory. Thus, it became possible to get the bachelor's personal educational product (in the form of a project), where not the volume of the studied material plays the main role, but the content and results aimed at improvement of learning motivation and efficiency of educational process. The result of leaning the fundamental economic objects is not reported to the bachelor as a material ready for mastering, but it is earned by each of them during organized heuristic activity; in our case, it is the project activity. Thus, bachelor education is a continuous movement towards fundamental educational facilities (key notions, images, symbols) through projecting.

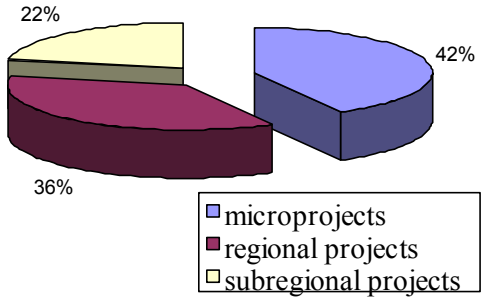

Fig. 1: Results of project examination.

Among more than 50 projects, examined in our experiment (including the fact that some projects were carried out in groups), about 42% can be attributed to microprojects by the scale criterion. They were a decision by a particular project method to the problems facing the region during the terms, close to the beginning of the project and did not result in the distant positive changes in the activities of society as a whole. As usual, the goal of projecting was improvement of the economic state of a single enterprise. In this kind of projects the prospects for continuation of project activities in this area were not often observed.

More than a third part (36%) of the projects was addressed to the larger target audience and was beyond the frameworks of individual economic subjects. Thus, in the framework of integration of training modules "Capital and investment decisions", "Business Planning" the highest evaluation was received by practically and socially oriented business projects on processing of household wastes, improving the environments, which caused not only the positive social impact for local residents, but also the economic interests of investors who decided to invest in this production.

Less than a third of the projects addressed the global economic problems, they had the prospect to be implemented at the level of the region or the entire country. Example of the projects, which we have attributed to the third type, is such practically oriented project as "Innovation and investment policy of the border region", which provides the opportunities for implementation of innovative projects with feasibility studies, forecasts and development outlooks.

Thus, training has lost its traditional features of artificial and external regulation and approached the natural conditions of life. Respectively, interaction between the subjects of learning activity lost its formality and functionality, acquiring the features of interpersonal, intersubjective and "culture-creative communication" [10].

The result of bachelor project activity was formation of a certain system of skills: goal setting and making choices; determination and formulation of the problem and finding the optimal solutions to this problem; organization of independent, staged project activity; search, analysis and processing of required information; participation in joint decision-making; self-reflection; responsibility for the decision. The main thing: there were situations that caused stress thinking, certain emotional mood, "emotional joy" caused by intellectual activity and independent discoveries.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of data of the pilot experiment allows us to conclude that the efficiency of formation of bachelor project competency is achieved by implementation of a set of proposed pedagogical conditions. Social-project competency allows the students to master the knowledge of modern economy; in the field of self-awareness it is the understanding of individual economic and social potential, the awareness of civil economic behavior; in the field of motivation it is a constant need for civilized business in economy and mastering social-project competency.

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