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The Role of Social Practice for the Development of Educational and Professional Standards

Abstract

The article describes modern development in education in the Russian Federation, tied to the development of professional standards. We will show that introduction of professional standards can not only start from a profession, but from an actively developing social practice. Using the example of alumni socio-educational support of all forms of care for orphans, (children left without parental care or in group homes), we will characterize a progression from the need in training such specialists to the formation of an educational environment. Peculiarities of the educational environment for specialists supporting alumni will be revealed, including the programs for professional training.

Keywords: professional standard, educational standard, alumni support, alumni support specialist, graduates from organizations for orphans and group homes

Introduction

Education is a necessary condition for systematic changes in every sphere of the life activity of a state. In the Russian Federation, a set of strategic tasks aimed at the development of education has been formed and is being implemented. The forecast of long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030, developed by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, provides a need to form a flexible and diversified vocational education system (Order of the Government of the Russian Federation, 2014). The need for such a system is connected with the requirements of the labor market and the needs of an innovative economy.

One of the strategic objectives of the development of education in the Russian Federation is to bring educational standards in line with professional standards. Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation” (2015), establishes a rule to formulate requirements for the results of mastering professional competencies based on the provisions of relevant professional standards (Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation”). At present, there is a gap between the requirements on the part of the production, and those competencies that employees acquire in a vocational education system. Also, this does not ensure the timely translation of the qualification requirements in the education system. The existence of an agreed chain of “practice – a professional standard – an educational standard” will improve the quality of vocational education.

Introduction into the system of professional standards

A professional standard is a characteristic of qualifications an employee requires to carry out a certain type of professional activity. The qualifications of an employee

include the level of knowledge, proficiency, professional skills, and work experience of an employee (The Labor Code of the Russian Federation, 2001).

The topic of professional standards in Russia was introduced in Russia for the first time in 1997, when this term was officially used in the Program of Social Reforms in the Russian Federation for the period of 1996-2000 (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation, 1997). Currently, more than 850 professional standards have been approved.

The professional standard contains requirements stating what an employee should know and can do in a certain area. It is based on the analysis of work activity; basically, on what a real specialist should know for the position he/she occupies in an enterprise of a particular industry.

The standard defines the type of activity, generalized labor functions, establishes for them a qualification level, labor functions and actions, requirements for knowledge and skills, education and work experience.

The development of professional standards involves a wide range of specialists and experts. The introduction of professional standards makes it possible to take into consideration demanded practices and moves away from the general level of preparation for core business. For example, in the social sphere – to a narrow specialization of work with different categories of the population. In addition, a professional standard, an independent qualification assessment aims at selecting an additional training program for an extended education.

The influence of the practice of social and pedagogical support on the content of professional and educational standards

The development of a professional standard could be done not only for an existing profession, but for the actively developing social practice. Thus, there was originally formed an internal tutoring. Later, domestic activity standard was formed on its basis. In turn, educational programs for the preparation of tutors were developed based on this standard. At present, the standard of tutoring has ceased to be internal and is part of the state professional standard of a specialist in the field of education.

The practice of social and pedagogical support is following a similar path. It began to develop actively in the national social pedagogy and social work since the 1990s.

Currently, the accompaniment is not an independent professional activity, but is an integral part of the activities of specialists in different professions: teachers, psychologists, social workers, etc. (Bobyleva & Zavodilkina, 2015).

Let us look at how support is currently presented in professional and educational standards.

The term “escort” is more often found in professional standards at the level of labor actions, reflecting the process of interaction of an employee with an object of labor, in which a certain task is achieved.

The specialist of the guardianship and trusteeship agency for minors accompanies families who took a child (children) for upbringing, interacts with various organizations, prepares materials for concluding and terminating contracts for accompanying families who accepted a child (children) for upbringing.

A teacher-psychologist (psychologist in the field of education) accompanies the implementation of programs for psychological correction of behavior and violations in the development of students.

The teacher of vocational training, vocational education and additional vocational education shall support the process and results of research, design and other activities of students under the higher education programs and (or) additional and assistant trainees; the work of graduate students (adjuncts) at all stages of the research.

The social worker accompanies a client to different organizations: trade, utilities, transport, communications, health, providing public services.

A specialist for rehabilitation work in the social sphere organizes maintenance and support of a rehabilitant at the end of the rehabilitation case. He also develops recommendations for handling the rehabilitant after completion of the rehabilitation of the individual route, and evaluates the resources of different services for the territory of residence of the customer organization of its support.

A psychologist in the social sphere develops a program of psychological support for individual clients, including the use of resources from various sources.

A specialist who works with families organizes support to the families, including replacement families; develops recommendations for supporting different types of families; and individual programs of support to different types of families with children.

A social worker organizes the provision of services for social support of citizens.

To carry out labor activities related to accompanying families, professional standards have distinguished necessary knowledge (the main approaches and trends in the field of support, principles of professional support, aims and objectives for support activities, peculiarities of organizing support, including the specifics of the particular high-risk groups, tracking methods) and skills (interacting with various experts and organizations, applying methods and technology support and help, organizing support, developing and implementing a program of support, and providing support).

At the same time, analysis of the federal state educational standards of higher education, currently in force, showed that support as a form of professional activity, which prepares graduates who have mastered the undergraduate programs and graduate specialties, practically does not occur.

The exceptions are areas of higher education programs for the preparation of “Special (defectological) Education” and “Psycho-Pedagogical Education”.

Graduates who have mastered the undergraduate training program, “Special (defectological) Education” are being prepared for the implementation of psycho-pedagogical support of socialization processes and professional self-determination of persons with disabilities. They should have: readiness to implement psychological and pedagogical support of the educational process, socialization and professional self-determination of students with disabilities, readiness for psychological and pedagogical support of families of people with disabilities, and interaction with those involved.

Graduates of Master’s in this area of training must be able to design and implement models of psychological and pedagogical support learning processes,

socialization and professional self-determination of persons with disabilities, as well as the design of individual routes of development, education, social adaptation and integration of persons with disabilities, based on the results of psycho-pedagogical study.

A bachelor in the field of training, “Psychological-Pedagogical Education”, has to be prepared for the following types of professional activities: a psychological and pedagogical support in pre-school, school, special and professional education; psychological and pedagogical support of children with disabilities in special and inclusive education.

The program of higher education, bachelor degree in the field of “Social Work” does not provide support as a kind of professional activity for its graduates, but focuses them on providing services and assessing their quality.

Thus, there is a discrepancy between basic professional training programs and requirements of professional standards.

At the same time, there is a group of specialists in social practice, for whom support is the main working function. An example of this is an expert, who accompanies graduates of children's homes and foster families during their adaptation to independent living.

The need for social adaptation of orphans, children left without parental care, and individuals like these, mentioned above, at the end of their stay in the organization for orphans and foster families, is due not only to a change in the social environment for them, but also by the following factors:

- the level of social maturity of graduates does not correspond to the full extent of the civil capacity that came into existence at the age of 18: the graduate is not a child anymore, but has not yet become an adult;
- the age-related tasks of upbringing and socialization, including the insufficient level of graduates' readiness for independent living and the readiness to adapt in new living conditions are not solved by the time of graduation from orphanages.

Given the limited capacity of graduates to adapt to changes on their own, related, inter alia, to the lack of family support, the state undertakes to facilitate their social adaptation.

State order to support graduates is formulated in three main strategic documents that define the state policy in the field of child and family protection: The National Strategy for Children for 2012-2017 (approved in 2012), The Concept of State Family Policy in the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 (approved in 2014), The Strategy for the Development of Upbringing in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 (approved in 2015).

However, specialists, for whom the accompaniment of orphans, children left without parental care, and graduates from orphanages, is their professional activity (support specialists), do not prepare educational institutions for professional education, and there is no professional standard for them. These factors make it necessary to create a system of additional professional education for support specialists.

Developing training programs based on practice and professional standards

Professional standards form the basis of a national framework for qualifications, which ensures the equality of all forms of lifelong learning. Actively developing social practice puts forward the requirements for the preparation of specialists necessary for its implementation. The need for specialists is mainly solved through professional development programs, purposefully bringing the competencies of specialists in line with the requirements of the ongoing activities.

Activities of a support specialist aimed at facilitating the adaptation of graduates:

- in a new educational institution obtaining vocational education;
- to conditions of full self-service, self-maintenance and self-organization;
- to having an unlimited amount of unsupervised free time;
- to expanding the network of social contacts, including blood relatives;
- to apply for a job for the first time at an organization;
- at a new place of residency when a new housing provided from the special stock or returning to previously occupied housing;
- to a family life.

Qualifications support specialist should enable him/her to cope with the tasks: reliance on the standard of a support specialist's activity allows development of a training program, which is aimed at mastering a new professional position, and new professional competencies that meet the requirements of the activity of accompanying graduates.

An effective training program is based on support specialists:

- considering innovations in pedagogical practice in post-institutional support: interdepartmental interaction and continuity, use of graduate activity and mobilization of its resources, a differentiated approach to support and individual character of its structure, a team approach to social and pedagogical support of graduates (a unified documentation, interdepartmental concilium), use the social environment of the graduate (online meetings, group conferences);
- a performance approach that allows listeners in the learning process to test a variety of technologies and techniques, to correlate them with the specifics of their professional activity and to introduce them into practice;
- a resource approach, involving attention to own resources and potential opportunities for students.

At the Institute of the Study of Childhood, Family and Education of Russian Academy of Education, a program of additional professional education (higher qualifications) "Supporting Graduates of Boarding Institutions and Substitute Families" was developed based on joint work with the charitable fund for social assistance to children "Spread the Wings!", implementing public projects aimed at the development of regional systems of graduates' support (Bobyleva & Zavidilkina, 2016).

The aim of the program: improvement of professional qualification of specialists engaged in social and pedagogical support of graduates of boarding institutions and foster families.

Specifics of the program:

- reliance on new professional standards;
- inclusion in the objective group of specialists from different professional fields: guardians and the board of trustees, educational organizations and organizations who provide social protection to the people;
- content, ensuring a qualitative change competencies;
- assessment tools that allow to make a conclusion about the changes that have taken place;
- practical orientation;
- prevalence (two-thirds of the study time) of interactive types of training sessions (workshop, master class, training, seminar, role-playing game, business game, etc.);
- independence of thematic modules, which can be used as independent educational programs, considering the contingent of students;
- a compound of remote and full-time study;
- the possibility of learning according to an individual curriculum;
- an approbation during pilot work aimed at the development of regional escort systems in several regions of the Russian Federation.

The content of the program addresses the following issues:

- support as an activity to manage changes in the life situation of the graduate;
- peculiarities of social adaptation of a graduate in the post-boarding school period;
- collection and analysis of data on the life situation of the graduate;
- professionally significant qualities of a support specialist;
- technology, methods, tools, expert support.

The program of professional development becomes the core of the educational space, by which we mean “the place of the educational movement of a person” (Tsuker, 2004). It not only packs educational material, but also cements the entire educational environment (Popov, 2017).

A necessary component of the educational space for support specialists is the methodological support of their activities in various forms of training: interregional workshop, communication training, supervision, workshop, pedagogical lounge, psychological-pedagogical workshop, case-method, individual and group consultations, webinars, round tables, conferences.

Conclusion

The practice of the last decade shows that the management of the quality of educational programs is inextricably linked with professional standards, which are the basis for the formation of criteria for assessing quality, both qualifications and educational programs.

In the Russian Federation, the introduction of a system of professional standards determines the current direction of the development of education. Timely transition of qualification requirements into the education system increases its quality.

Actively developing social practice influences professional and educational standards. Thus, the job of social and pedagogical support has become part of job

descriptions for the following: teachers, psychologists, social workers. The term “support” finds a reflection in professional and educational standards.

For specialists accompanying graduates from orphanages and graduates of foster families, support becomes the main labor function. In the absence of professional and educational standards, the need for the formation of a system with additional vocational education for graduate support specialists is escalated.

In the regions of the Russian Federation, innovative programs of professional development appear, aimed at tying professional competence with requirements for professional activities of social and pedagogical support of graduates. These programs become the core of the educational environment. The content and organization consider the needs of support specialists, motivating them and reflecting their life perspective. The educational environment provides many individual forms of development and a variety of educational opportunities.

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