

Innovation aspects of managing bachelor training program in the context of Bologna Process in Russia

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Abstract. Current economic reforms in Russia impose more serious requirements both to the level of education that the graduates of secondary schools should meet, and to skilled specialists. This article shows the innovative aspects of managing Bachelor degree training program. The main training program for Bachelor degree of Teacher of Economics in Nizhny Novgorod Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin is implemented based on the results of EU TEMPUS Project “Development and Introduction of Stable Structures for Entrepreneurial Spirit in Russia and Tajikistan”.

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Introduction

Modern society can be described as undergoing drastic economic changes in the economic life through the whole of the world. Under such circumstances, as Russian President

Vladimir Putin noted, what becomes very important is to ensure stable sustainable development of the economy: “...we need a new economy with competitive industry and infrastructure. The economy based on the modern technologies. Restoration of innovative nature of the economy should be started in universities that are looked at as both power houses of fundamental science and personnel supplying platform of innovative development” [1]. In this connection, growth of affordability of the quality education meeting the requirements of the innovative development of the economy, modern needs of the society and each individual citizen is a strategic goal of the Russian government policy in the field of education [2].

One of the top priorities of the current education programs is socialization of the younger generation, its adaptation to the changing social and economic conditions, which is closely tied with the level and quality of the economic education in the country. A significant role in finding successful solutions for this task belongs to a teacher of economics who should be competent both in pedagogy and methodology of training. Analysis of the current situation in the economical education in schools of Russia shows that in the framework of profile-based training program implementation most senior students are trained following the social and economic as well as economic and legal profiles (in Nizhny Novgorod this percentage is over 32.3%). That's said, most

teachers who teach economic profile subjects don't have special economic educational background [3].

In this connection, what has a special importance is training of a new kind of an economy teacher ready and capable of running entrepreneurial activity and coordinating entrepreneurial activity of his/her students.

In European community the problem of economic education is paid special attention which is evidenced and supported by a number of EU projects aimed at elevation of economic competency of the population, making education systems of different countries closer to each other, creating conditions to shape up universal global educational landscape and environment. Specifically, TEMPUS project “Development and Introduction of Stable Structures Aimed at Supporting Entrepreneurial Spirit in Russia and Tajikistan” that was focused on creating and updating of educational standards and curricula in economics course at schools (Goal 1), teachers of economics development programs (Goal 2), teacher of economics training programs (Goal 3).

The first stage of the project (2008-2010) was focused on implementing Goals 1 and 2, as a result of which a draft school economics program has been developed and proposed for the Russian education system that was oriented at different week load and length of training, as well as profile classes [1]. An issue of practical implementation of this program in schools is closely connected with preparation of a new-formation teacher which a task to be realized by teacher-training universities. So during the second stage (2010-2013) of the above project implementation, Goal 3 has been separately focused on, with task being to introduce and modernize economics teacher training programs that would meet

the Bologna process requirements in schools of Russia and Republic of Tajikistan. Two Russian universities became members of the Project Consortium that focused on Goal 3, they are Russian State Pedagogical University named after Alexander Herzen and Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin.

The start of work focused on Goal 3 coincided in time with a transition period when the Russian Federation higher education system has stepped over to dual-level system based on new educational standards and was focused on development of main educational program, development of new main educational programs.

This article shows the results of work completed by Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin focused on developing the main educational program (curriculum) to train economics teachers based on European trends in economical education.

Main Part

Federal State Budgetary Higher Education Institution - Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin is a licensed federally funded and operated higher education institution which has a status of legal entity that provides educational professional higher education, post graduate and additional training programs.

Training of Bachelor for Teacher of Economics degree in Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin is implemented within direction of "Pedagogical Education", profiles of Technology and Economics. The choice of this direction is feasible because it allows to combine subject-oriented training with effectively deep psychological, pedagogical and methodology-based training of Bachelor. The direction of Pedagogical Education enables Bachelor training for two profiles which elevates the level of competitiveness of a postgraduate student and his/her social protection. Two profiles have been selected, namely, economics and technology. The selection of these profiles makes the field of employment for a postgraduate student wider (as a teacher specializing in teaching technology, economics, basics of entrepreneurship etc.; field of economics – employment in the economic field, including industrial companies – in this case knowledge of basics of technology and technological processes enables faster and easier "embracing" of economic problems that industrial companies deal with), meets the requirements of the region, complies with recommendations by training and methodology association for pedagogical education.

The goal of Bachelor training under the direction of «Pedagogical Education» is to develop in students such personal qualities, shape up such general culture and professional competencies that agree with the Federal state educational standard for higher professional education [4] and Bologna Convention requirements. Synthesis of competency, interdisciplinary, practice-oriented and personality-oriented approaches serves as theory and methodology basis for pedagogical concept of professional training of future Bachelors within the direction of Pedagogical Education (Economics and Technology profiles).

Bachelor training process is based on the following main (positions) principles:

- a learner is a free, integrated person ready for getting educated under the selected directions of training;

- training is an integrated process of subject-to-subject relations between a teacher and learner allowing to master a set of economic, psychology, pedagogy and special knowledge and skills that are contents of competencies to be built that are necessary to implement interpersonal communications and work in the field of education and industry;

- training process is implemented through establishing interdisciplinary ties and connections, validating training programs contents, ensuring that disciplines are logically follow each other, theoretical knowledge is systematized and generalized, professional skills, economic thinking and professional self-determination of a Bachelor are developed.

Curriculum is developed based on Federal state education standard of professional higher education, direction code 050100.62 "Pedagogical Education" for two profiles, approved by Decree No.46 dated 17.01.2011 of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, and recommendations by training and methodology association in the field of pedagogical education [5]. The curriculum is aimed at training Bachelors for the above-mentioned profiles of Economics and Technology selected according to a list of profiles recommended by training and methodology association in the field of pedagogical education and taking into account the regional labor market needs.

The curriculum reflects interaction of the professional cycle disciplines that are covered by students (natural science and humanitarian, social, economic cycles). So micro- and macroeconomics, management are taught following covering mathematics, informatics and information technology in education, as well as foreign language and history.

Disciplines of the basic part of each cycle are defined by Federal state educational standard of higher professional education and are mandatory for learning. Disciplines of the optional part (where basics of management, marketing, micro- and macroeconomics, book keeping and taxation system, basics of forecasting and planning, entrepreneurship and business, current condition of the Russian economy, money, credit, banks, government finances, didactics of economy, audit and evaluation of companies, company management, advertising technologies, logistics and methods of teaching logistics) are aimed at expanding and deepening of knowledge and skills defined by the contents of the basic disciplines (modules), developing abilities and preparedness of a learner to successfully professional carrier and continuation of professional training on Master Program.

The disciplines selected by a learner account to over 30% of the optional part of all cycles; the percentage of interactive classes is 21.5% of classroom teaching which corresponds to the requirements by Federal state educational standard of higher professional education.

The curriculum provides for practical classes, laboratory practicums on the disciplines of the basic part (foreign language, culture of speech, information technologies, basics of mathematical processing of information, psychology and pedagogy etc.) and for disciplines of the optional part (micro- and macroeconomics, economics training methodology, logistics etc.), which working programs provide for building by learners of appropriate competencies (knowledge and skills).

Developers of the curriculum have taken into account the recommendations received from the Project coordinators in the course of TEMPUS Project implementation (Vienna Economics University, Prague Economics University); specifically, they have introduced as independent disciplines such subjects as logistics and methodology of teaching logistics; money, loans, banks; didactics of economics; government finances; methodology of teaching book-keeping and taxation etc. In the process of developing the curriculum, regular consultations took place with the project managers: Aff J., Fortmuller R., Geissler G. and Project Consortium members: Kralova A., Urbanova M.

Analysis of the key works by managers and consultants of the project [6,7,8,9] allowed to optimize the structure and implementation of the curriculum, as well as close interaction and elaboration of methodology materials (using interactive methods of teaching) taking into account the current trends in European education.

The main types of training students are supportive and innovation training focused on building general culture and professional competencies. The first type is related to retranslating and playback of knowledge and skills. The forms it is implemented are traditional: lectures, practical classes, workshops and laboratory classes.

Figure 1 shows the main methods and forms used by teachers when organizing classroom training of students.

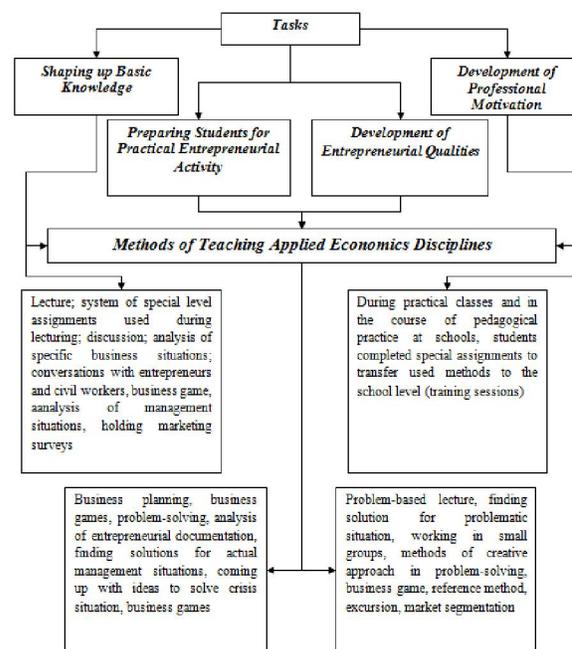


Fig.1. Tasks and methods of learning applied economics disciplines

Innovative training consists in organization of learning and educational activity that motivates search and research by student. The ways and forms it is implemented are constantly updated and improved by faculty. To be more specific, in order to activate the process of understanding and embracing the material on basics of entrepreneurship such methods and forms specific to the subject under investigation are use as business planning, company presentation, case study analysis, development of the ways to overcome crisis situations, conversations with entrepreneurs and civil workers, business game, marketing research of the market. In addition, the task of preparing future Bachelors for entrepreneurial activity requires to include more active methods and forms of training, among which the most important are business game, methods of creatively solving problems (brain storming method, note pad method, temporary connections method, free associations method etc.).

One of the most important forms of work used in students training process is independent work. In-class form of organizing student independent work includes tests, quizzes, control works, reports, testing, business games.

Organization of students independent work includes three stages: 1) motivation and goals; 2) technology; 3) creative.

Motivation and goals stage of organizing students independent work includes a whole set of activities aimed at maintaining students motivation for learning: understanding of motive and goal of getting education in a teacher training university, clarifying special features of students learning and identification of self-education attributes, self-reliance as drivers to improve the quality of preparation of future teachers of Economics and Technology. The main attention is focused on first-year students.

At technology stage, independent work of students is organized in the context personality-oriented education in order to shape up the targeted competencies identified in the discipline curriculum through gradual increase of complexity of types and forms of independent work, increase of amount and percentage of this type of learning, growth of creative assignments. The material selected to be used in independent work of the second-year students is characterized as significantly new, related to internship at schools, based on problemacy, contradictions and polarities.

Creative component in student independent work tends to grow for third- and fourth-year students. Involvement and participation of students in this creative component allows them to implement their creative potential while studying in university. Complex system of such work organization should ensure continuous involvement of students in creative work through the whole period of education. Year-to-year, department-to-department, discipline-to-discipline, class-to-class succession of its methods and forms is the main principle of this system.

The above required organizational and technical conditions have been created for students at the department; consultations with instructors are scheduled to cover questions that may arise during completion of assignments. Reports on independent work are individual in nature and represented with forms as reports, graphical works, presentations.

Thanks to competencies that are being continuously developed during the study process, starting as early as from the second year, students get involved in the project activity. This allows them to participate in different level competitions.

So during the previous years, 2nd- and 3rd-year students (Pedagogical Education, Economics and

Technology profiles) took an active part in such programs as: “The Wheel Business School”, “Your Contribution to Development of Your City”, GROWTH etc.

“*The Wheel Business School*” is three-month educational program (October to December, 2012) that provides for training technology focused on search of business-niche, their evaluation and launch with minimum investment, with step-wise project launch algorithm. During the classes students took part in trainings, “Your Contribution to the Present!” case-study, 5 workshops provided by “New Generation” President Program Association of Nizhny Novgorod Region and TOP managers of partnering companies of Nizhny Novgorod, simulation game “The WHEEL Business Trade Fair”. Students received certificates upon completion of this study program.

“Your Contribution to Development of Your City” project session organized by Administration of Nizhny Novgorod City together with the Young People WHEEL business center based in FGBOU VPO Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin (the Minin University). All participants of the session worked in teams. The teams were given real case studies for creative problem solving. The students have come up with interesting ideas to solve social problems in the city with support from commercial organizations.

Thanks to competencies that are being continuously developed during the study process, starting as early as from the second year, students get involved in the project activity. This allows them to participate in different level competitions. The regional contest of innovative teams called GROWTH “Russian-Responsibility-Strategy-Technologies” became one of such competitions held in the framework of implementation of ministerial program “Development of Education in Nizhny Novgorod Region in 2011-2013”, a joint project launched by Ministry of Education of Nizhny Novgorod Region and sponsored by Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation and methodically supported by Federal Agency for Young People Affairs.

In the framework of this competition in Nizhny Novgorod Pedagogical University an educational program was developed (its authors E.E. Egorov, T.E. Lebedeva) that included training modules “Fundamental of Project Management”, “Personnel Management”, “Search for Start-Up Financing”, “Business Plan and Its Presentation to Potential Investors and Partners”, “Protection and Use of Intellectual Property”, “Setting-up Innovative SME” [10]. The competition winners got an opportunity to

set up their own business with sponsorship from “business angles”.

The above-mentioned activities help unleash intellectual capital of the students, invest it in development of socially-oriented projects.

Conclusions

Bachelor training programs on the presented main education program has been implemented in Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin since 2011. Curriculum was discussed at consulting and coordination meetings, workshops held in the framework of TEMPUS Project implementation, was corrected taking into account recommendations from the Project managers in compliance with European trends of economic education. The developed training program allows to train a Bachelor who is capable and ready to promote and implement entrepreneurial spirit development in Russia, being competitive and mobile in labor market. Bachelor degree post graduate students can continue their education on the directions: Pedagogical Education (Economy Education) or Economics.

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