

Mentoring as an Effective Practice of Teacher Professional Development Managing in the Continuous Pedagogical Education System

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Abstract

Based on the analysis of domestic and foreign experience, as well as of own professional activity practice in the institution of supplementary vocational education, the authors reveal the mentoring advantages in the development of pedagogical and management staff professional skills. The authors note that the most important mechanism for the mentoring activities development in the system of teachers' and managers' professional development can be a regional electronic resource used for the gradual transition to e-mentoring technology — a modern project for working with human resources, as well as for organizing mentors' network interaction.

Keywords: mentor, project, supplementary vocational education, professional development, teacher.

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Introduction

Due to the constant and rapid updates of technologies, mainly informational, significant changes are taking place in the field of education because of social sphere transformation processes in the world and Russia.

The first national aim in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "National goals and strategic objectives development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2024" is "Ensuring global competitiveness of Russian education, the entry of the Russian Federation to the ten leading countries in quality of general education" (2018).

In this regard, one of the priority goals is to ensure the high quality of Russian education by means of teacher continuous professional development. A special place in this process is occupied by the supplementary vocational education system.

In Tatarstan, the "reconfiguration" of teachers' supplementary vocational education system is carried out within the framework of development global drivers, implementation of federal and regional projects, educational and professional standards — all this requires teacher's significant efforts for professional growth and, accordingly, determines the search for new approaches to the implementation of teachers' supplementary vocational education.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to reveal the possibilities of transformation of the supplementary vocational education system in accordance with the goals and objectives of teacher continuous professional development in the conditions of mentoring.

Literature review

The term "professional development" of a teacher refers to interdisciplinary concepts and is considered in different areas of knowledge through the prism of special emphasis.

In labor psychology, "professional development" is an active qualitative transformation of the teacher's inner world, an internal determination of the teacher's activity, leading to a fundamentally new way of professional life. At the same time, Mitina (2014) draws fundamental attention to the fact that there is absolutely no connection between the age of the teacher and its influence on professional development. The opposite position is taken by Zeer (2013), who in his concept of professional development is basing on the social situation, the level of implementation in the profession and the chronological age of a person. The theory of Rostunov (1984) is based on the concept of professional fitness, under which he understands the combination of individual psychological characteristics of a person that provide him with the greatest effectiveness of his socially useful activities and satisfaction with his work.

In pedagogy, teacher professional development is considered as a process of solving professionally significant tasks: cognitive, communicative, moral. During this process, teacher acquires the necessary set of business and moral qualities related to his profession.

The expert professional pedagogical community notes that professional development occurs as a result of systematic improvement, expansion and reinforcement of the range of knowledge; development of personal qualities necessary for the development of new professional knowledge, skills and abilities.

That is why professional development in pedagogy is associated not with a formality or obligation, but with the desire for constant self-development. In this regard, the need for professional development throughout whole life is being mentioned in recent times.

One of the most common ways of professional development is an advanced training provided by organizations of supplementary vocational education.

Currently, Russia has developed an understanding of the supplementary vocational education system as a self-organizing, dynamic, project-oriented system that develops in an advanced mode. This requirement was confirmed in the normative-legal documents: the National project of the Russian Federation "Education" (2018); the National educational initiative "Our new school" (2010); the Federal target program of education development for 2016-2020 (2015); the Federal law "On education in Russian Federation" (2012) and others.

Indeed, professional development as a mechanism of rapid response to deficiencies in the knowledge of teachers works quite effectively, since the activity of supplementary vocational education is based on the principles of advanced and regulatory nature of the training content, improving the teacher's personality, individualization of the educational process, humanization and democracy of education.

However, the system of supplementary vocational education still has to solve fundamental issues:

- how possible is it to build a new model of advanced supplementary vocational education in the situation of digital society global dynamics?
- how to implement the "life-long education" as the only opportunity to be in demand in any socio-economic conditions?

Today, there is an urgent need to develop a variable system of forming the trajectory of teacher continuous development, thanks to which a teacher will not only be a technically competent specialist, but also morally committed to his profession, possessing the full range of modern professional competencies. We believe that a mentoring is a variant of this system.

Methodology

The research was conducted based on the analysis of international and Russian experience of mentoring in organizations and on production sites, as well as through the mentoring implementation within the framework of the project "Regional system of pedagogical and management staff mentoring organization based on networked cooperation" of Tatarstan Institute of Education Development (2019).

Results

As shown by the analysis of international and Russian experience of mentoring in organizations and on production sites, as well as the experience of the own practical activity - mentoring has become an actual direction of teachers' professional development.

In the researches of modern scientists (Fomin, 2012; Luchkina, 2012; Masalimova, 2012; Falyakhov, 2018, and etc.) mentoring is considered:

- as a personnel technology that allows to carry out the transfer of knowledge and skills from highly qualified specialists to specialists interested in professional development;
- as a means of professionalization, professional adaptation, on-the-job training, professional development of specialists in various fields, individualization, building routes of personal and professional growth; as a mechanism for rapid response to professional deficits and requests of teaching staff.

Analysis of the mentoring experience of in educational organizations revealed the following problems:

- the lack of unified regulations for mentoring activities;
- the absence of network interaction system;
- low motivation of mentors;
- lack of complementary events system (formal and informal) for the development of mentors' special skills.

The solution of these problems in Tatarstan is carried out on the basis of the Tatarstan Institute of Education Development.

The Institute was awarded the status of an innovation platform of the Russian Academy of Education on the topic "Regional system for organizing mentoring of pedagogical and managing staff based on the network interaction" based on the Order of the Russian Academy of Education No. 03 "On awarding the status of an innovation platform of the Russian Academy of Education" to State Autonomous Educational Institution of Supplementary Vocational Education "Tatarstan Institute of Education Development", June, 2019 (2019).

The main idea of the project is to transform the system of supplementary vocational education in accordance with the goals and objectives of teacher's continuous professional development.

Today the need for mentoring stands out particularly sharply, as far as rapid changes in the education system, metamorphoses in organizational processes and the educational environment require an immediate response from teachers. Mentoring allows you to organically combine professional development and its personification and at the same time guarantees a comprehensive approach to each employee of education (Nugumanova & Yakovenko, 2018).

Mentoring implies a teaching system in which the transfer of knowledge takes place directly at the workplace in a real working environment — in the classroom or in the process of preparing for a lesson. The mentor builds the work in such a way as to eliminate the professional deficit of the ward. At the same time, the emphasis is shifted to the practical component (Nugumanova & Shaikhutdinova, 2018).

In other words, mentoring is aimed at the development of a person applied professional competencies and deserves special attention, since it is one of the most effective training technologies, proven over time and worked out by many generations (Novoselova, 2016).

This is confirmed by the results of a survey of educational organizations' heads in our Republic: 98 % of respondents note that the mentoring effectiveness is quite high and is manifested in the following:

- growth of teaching staff professional skills;
- following the general goals and interests of the educational organization;
- the development of personally-oriented relationships between fellow teachers;
- formation in an educational organization of teachers' category that is able to take responsibility for the rapid professional adaptation of young teachers;
- increasing the number of young teachers in educational organizations of the Republic of Tatarstan.

As part of the project, the Institute has created a regional electronic resource used for the gradual transition to e-mentoring technology — a modern project for working with human resources, as well as for organizing mentors' network interaction.

Any teacher or educational organization can become a participant of the network interaction. We work and promote our project based on the message "Everyone can be a mentor for everybody!" (Nugumanova, Shaihutdinova & Yakovenko, 2019).

Thus, even a young teacher can successfully teach others, for example, in the field of digital technologies, which will allow him to quickly form practical skills of methodological generalization experience.

Currently, network interaction is a modern powerful resource for including digital education tools in the daily activities of a teacher, i.e. a professional community of teachers-mentors based on network interaction is:

- a) an innovative form of methodological work results exchange;
- b) a modern form of communication;
- c) a form of networking that has long been successfully used in educational activities: forums, online seminars, round tables, conferences, discussions, webinars and other forms of partnership.

Discussions

The above-mentioned forms of methodological cooperation are most effective in cases when teachers have a problem with geographical distance from training centers, the need for highly specialized assistance and targeting, efficiency in obtaining the necessary information and knowledge. Herewith, such categories of educational organizations as schools with low performance, newly opened schools and newly built schools are primarily interested in networking.

What are the advantages of including teachers in the network interaction system? Currently, a network interaction is a modern powerful resource for including in the daily activities of a teacher digital tools of digital education, based on the following principles:

- the principle of personalization, which assumes the freedom of listener's choice in setting educational goals and designing an individual educational route;
- the principle of expediency, which requires the selection of digital resources, tools and technologies in accordance with the goals of the educational process;
- the principle of flexibility and adaptability, which involves adjusting the educational process and the digital tools used to the individual psychological characteristics of the listener;
- the principle of interactivity involves the teaching process organization in cooperation and interaction of listeners with each other, including on the basis of network telecommunications, and requires the widest possible use of group (team) forms of training.

It is important to note that in the traditional organization of methodological work, all teachers (single-profile) of the same municipal district are more or less know each other and communicate with each other, but, as practice shows, such communication is unproductive due to limited communication opportunities and the amount of information transmitted.

In the Republic of Tatarstan, the regional system of pedagogical and managerial personnel mentoring organization on the basis of network interaction will be implemented until 2021 inclusive. Even today, it is built taking into account the recommendations set out in the main provisions of the target model of mentoring trainees for organizations that carry out educational activities on general education, additional educational programs and programs of secondary vocational education, including the use of best practices for the exchange of experience between trainees.

When creating the republican model of network interaction, the results of best mentoring practices in the regions of Russia and foreign countries were taken into account. The Republic of Tatarstan has its own experience of effective motivation of the best teachers and educational organizations in the form of a grant support system to educational workers and leading cadres. The information about grants is available on the website of Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Tatarstan: "The best school Director", "Creation and support of regional innovation platforms", "Successful school", "The best employee in the field of upbringing and additional education of children", "Our new teacher", "Grant support for professional growth of teachers of the Republic of Tatarstan", etc. Grantees are determined by the Republican expert commission and approved by the order of the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Among the advantages of the regional system of network organization of teachers' interaction the following: the broad range of participants; a simplified and useful model for obtaining the necessary information through the Internet network resource; integration of virtual and real types of communication; acceleration of the communication process and transfer of experience through a network of professional dialogue between teachers, wards, educational institutions, social partners.

By visiting the Institute's website, the "Mentoring" page, each participant can use the mentor navigator, where tabs are located in an up-to-date state that allows to get information on any issues of mentors' activities and to meet the needs of each subject of this interaction. This electronic platform is a working mechanism of network interaction between the structural divisions of the Institute and the mentors of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Participation of mentors and mentees in an innovative project allows the following:

- to develop management skills, to improve the status in an educational organization;
- to gain a professional reputation and the trust of colleagues;
- to participate in the formation of a professional team of mentors in the educational organization;
- to receive timely assistance at the stage of integration in an educational organization and support in professional and career development;
- to contribute to the formation of a loyalty to the educational organization, thereby reducing the risk of staff turnover.

For the Institute, the introduction of the e-mentoring program is an opportunity to support the implementation of the project throughout the region through a digital format.

We believe that participation in our network professional community contributes to the formation of such qualities of a modern teacher as receptivity to pedagogical innovations, adaptability to a changing teaching environment, and constant development of professional competence.

Certainly, the professional community of teachers should develop in an open information environment, targeted, accessible, in which models of network interaction of educational subjects are implemented in a single information space through virtualization and real interaction.

Conclusions

Currently, 474 mentors are registered on the Institute's electronic platform. Of these, 47 % are winners of grant competitions.

Most of the project participants have experience in teaching and mentoring, and evaluate their mentoring activities as a desire to pass on the accumulated experience as a new opportunity for professional growth, investment in their future and the prospect of career growth.

Our regional system provides the following interaction models: traditional, partner, flash mentoring, reverse mentoring, and virtual mentoring. As the monitoring conducted by the Institute shows, the following interaction models are most often used among mentors of the Republic of Tatarstan:

- traditional (a successful and experienced professional works with a less experienced ward) - 27 %;

- partner mentoring (“peer-to-peer”) - 29 %;
- group mentoring - 15 %;
- flash mentoring (mentoring through one-time meetings or discussions) - 13 %;
- virtual mentoring - 10 %;
- reverse mentoring - 6 %.

At the same time, it can be stated that teachers do not have enough knowledge in the field of digital tools and distance education technologies and use them in the teaching process. The network platform can serve as a powerful resource for teachers to fill these deficits.

The result of the project’s first stage was the creation of:

- the regulations for mentoring activities;
- the database of mentors-grantees (both educational organizations and teachers);
- a system of complementary activities aimed at scientific and methodological support for mentors;
- the electronic platforms for broadcasting the best teaching and mentoring practices.

There is an increase in professional and publication activity of teachers. For example, project participants actively present their experience in the media, at conferences, seminars, and round tables.

In 2019 alone, more than 30 articles were published by teachers-mentors of educational organizations of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The mentoring practices were presented in the journals of the Tatarstan Institute of Education Development "Modern education: topical issues and innovations" and "Actual pedagogy".

In conclusion, it should be emphasized once again that no knowledge and skills are transmitted except from person to person. Every successful person in any field of activity always has a teacher, always has a mentor. Policy in the field of management of pedagogical personnel professional development is the most important activity of organizations of additional professional pedagogical education system. As an important segment of the Russian education system, additional professional pedagogical education serves as an important regulator of changes and filling professional deficits of the teacher.

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