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Models of the Contemporary Mentor in Supplementary Vocational Education

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Abstract

The problem under study is relevant due to the fact that mentoring in the system of supplementary vocational education implies a qualitative change in the traditional forms of advanced training in accordance with the goals and objectives of developing intellectual potential in a young teacher or a school manager.

In this regard, this article is aimed at providing insight into mentoring models that are relevant to the system of teachers' supplementary vocational education in order to provide their effective use in the area of advanced training.

Basing on both domestic and foreign experience and their own professional experience in the institution of supplementary vocational education, the authors describe mentoring models practicable in education. Emphasis is put on advantages of each model. Professional, special and general culture-related competences essential for mentors are determined based on questionnaire survey. The practical significance of the research results lies in the fact that knowledge of the models of mentoring activity will, on the one hand, improve the quality of the teachers and managers' practical training in real educational process; on the other hand, the process of young teachers' preparation and entering the profession will be targeted, mobile and effective, since the "mentor - young teacher" model takes into account the needs of young teachers and ensures the mentor's direct participation in the teacher's adaptation to professional activities.

Key words: mentor, model, supplementary vocational education, competences, teacher.

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Introduction

Today the mentoring is one of the problems most widely discussed not only in domestic, but also in the international pedagogy and other sciences. The latter fact is related to a number of reasons: the mentoring is one of the least expensive on-site modes of staff teaching. A team member more experienced or more competent in the field, in which the mentee has no or poor knowledge or competences, can become a mentor. Mentoring can be done both practically under real-life conditions, and remotely in various digital formats. Mentoring opportunities are almost boundless, starting from single consultations and training to multiyear collaboration and patronage to the mentee (Nugumanova, & Yakovenko, 2018).

It is well known that today the following forms of education are traditionally used in the system of supplementary vocational education of teachers: full-time training; in-service training; research work; training on their own program based on personal experience and practice; participation in conferences and seminars; business trips and internships with the aim of sharing experience, etc.

Mentoring as a form of teacher's professional adaptation and professional development takes a separate position among these forms. The fact is that this activity includes all of the above forms, complements them and fills them with new meaning - the provision of professional help and support to the teacher. (Barnett, J. 2008).

The advantages of this form of assistance are obvious: pedagogical mentoring has a wider focus, it is less theorized, has greater flexibility, is distinguished by a variety of forms and methods of working with specialists in the context of real work. In addition, in this process there are a close interpersonal contact between a mentor and a pupil, analysis of strong and weak professional positions of a particular teacher, and, consequently, there is a more focused interaction in order to provide real assistance in practical activities (Crutcher, B. 2007). Being in the center of the educational situation, it is obvious that today it is not enough just to develop teachers' skills, forming the traditional model of a teacher. Nowadays, it is necessary to develop in the teacher such new professional positions as: an expert, a mentor, a moderator, a facilitator, a coach, and also to help him develop his own software skills. For example, interpersonal communication, conflict management, stress and time management, as well as ongoing professional development.

That is why mentoring models differ nowadays. We shall discuss those models which are used by us at the institution of supplementary vocational education.

Objective

Provide insight into modern mentoring models effectively applied in domestic educational practice.

Research Methods

The research is based on analysis of international and Russian experience of mentoring in organisations and production companies, as well as on the mentoring practice implemented within the framework of the project "Regional system of mentoring pedagogical and executive staff based on the network cooperation", operated by Tatarstan Institute of Education Development.

Literature Review

Research on the problem of mentoring has several stages: in the Soviet period, problems of mentoring at work were developed (S.Ya Batyshev, 1985, etc.). In the post-Soviet period, the issues of

advanced training (V.V. Kraevsky, 2005, N.V. Kuzmina, 1990 and others), adult education (E.M. Dorozhkin, 2006, S.I. Zmeyev, 2003) were actively investigated. In the modern period, the problems of mentoring in intra-company education (S.V. Brodsky, 2006), corporate (A.R. Masalimova, 2015) education, issues of mentors' and industrial education masters' pedagogical competencies (I.I. Sokolova, 2012) are considered. In foreign studies, the conceptual foundations of mentoring were developed in the studies of American scientists Knowles, M., 1978; Williams, L., 2008 and others; differentiated assessment of mentors' competencies is presented in the works of American researchers Johnson, W. B. (2008a), Crutcher, B. (2007) and others; the role of pedagogical mentoring in universities in the development of scientific research and grants is considered in the works of American researchers Olian, J.D. (1988) and others.

Results

We have determined several mentoring models used in education. The traditional model of mentor implies teamwork of a more experienced teacher and beginner within a certain period of time. As a rule, a pedagogue with an extensive work experience, lengthy period of service, personal attributes fostering good and positive collaboration between him and his mentee based on individual approach becomes a mentor. In this case the primary focus is put on the mentee's professional growth. This model is most widely spread in almost all spheres of human activity. The following types of mentoring exist in education besides this model.

Situational mentoring model: this type of mentoring is required when the mentee needs assistance in a specific situation (for example, when preparing for a demonstration lesson or speech at a seminar etc.). This model is rather widely spread and effective.

Partner mentoring model: implies mentoring by specialists similar in their skill level or age, or period of service. In this case the mentor is a staff member who is equal to the mentee by his skill level, but has experience in the subject area which the mentee lacks. This model is applied in two forms: in the first case, collaboration is between two young teachers, but one of them already has some experience, while the other has just started his career. However, in the model considered the mentor evidently lacks lore and experience. That is why such mentoring requires support with other forms. A significant role here can be played by "School of Mentoring", an electronic platform available on the site of Tatarstan Institute of Education Development. In addition to teaching aids there one can find records of webinars and profession-oriented discussions, and get on-line consultations in real-time mode etc. (Lewis G. 1996)

The second form is based on collaboration between two teachers occupying equal positions. In this case the mentor is a teacher with a broader experience, who possesses skills and expertise in a certain subject field necessary for the other staff member. This model is used if the mentee had worked in a different educational organization and then became the employee of the organisation under consideration. (Jarvis, P. 1995)

The next model is group mentoring, in which one mentor works with a group of mentees. This model is used rather rarely, and only in newly established educational organisations, where an experienced leader or teacher undertakes patronage of several other teachers and periodically holds mentoring activities for them.

Short-term or goal-directed mentoring: the target of this model is to set goals ensuring short-term results. The mentor and mentee meet only to define a short-term goal and expected result. The mentee must achieve the set goals during the time period between their meetings. The problem here is lack of face-to-

face communication. For this reason the given model is unsuitable for new staff members who need a closer collaboration with the mentor, but can be successfully applied if the mentee already possesses some work experience, and his development can be organised in the form of self-improvement (Esaulova, 2017).

Swift mentoring is a model aimed at a multilevel approach to organizing a network of professionals in the educational organization and promoting development of mentoring relations, thus providing several staff members a ground for acquaintance. Swift mentoring implies single meetings of less experienced pedagogues with a mentor with a view to build relationships with other people united by common problems and interests. Such meetings help to state and set goals for personal development and career growth based on information obtained from reputable sources, exchange views and first-hand experience, and cultivate mentor – mentee ("peer-to-peer") relations. The given model helps building relations between pedagogues with common goals and mutual interests. (Williams, L. 2008).

Reverse mentoring, or inverted mentoring model, in which a younger teacher becomes a mentor for his experienced and elder colleague. This model is in high demand, as younger teachers usually become mentors for their elder teammates in the spheres of modern information technologies and computer-aided learning solutions. The reverse mentoring helps to establish strong and fruitful relationships between different generations of teachers in the educational organization. The both parties to this form of mentoring have to step out of their comfort zones and learning thinking, working and studying in a new fashion through tolerant perception of social, age and communicative peculiarities of each other (Kruglova, 2007).

To promote the above models into the system of teachers' advanced training, we have created an electronic platform "School of Mentoring", which is located on the website of the Institute of Education Development of Tatarstan Republic.

"School of Mentoring" electronic platform is hosting job-related discussions, webinars, experimental mentors schools of Tatarstan Republic, and other forms of interaction between mentors that are aimed at the continuous development of their abilities, their self-realization in different directions, communication with like-minded individuals on intellectual and professional issues, interaction with mentors of different directions and receiving comprehensive support from them. Over 185 teaching and management personnel and 20 schools have been registered for this project. One of the most universal models in education is the model: "Everyone can be a mentor for everyone"! Therefore, any teacher, regardless of age, can choose a mentor. First of all, a teacher must start with his personal needs. In the process of interaction, a route to eliminate professional problems and a joint project to present the outcomes are determined. The graph of professional growth presenting outcomes of the work of "School of Mentoring" can be found on the site. Work on the development of mentoring activities in education has shown that it is impossible to apply the same approach to all mentees. Therefore, the models of mentoring today are different. A special role is played by the model "mentor - young teacher". For its implementation, we identified the professional difficulties of a young teacher. The average age of the respondents was 24.8 years, and the average pedagogical work experience did not exceed 1.7 years. The study surveyed 556 respondents.

The rating of difficulties experienced by young teachers in their professional activities is fairly standard: maintaining reporting documentation, developing a syllabus of the course, planning and conducting a lesson according to Federal Educational Standard (20.7%, 18.8% and 18.7% respectively); difficulties in interaction with parents and classroom management (11% and 14.7%). In our opinion, this is related to the fact that in the process of professional training these areas of teacher's activity are not given enough attention. A young teacher learns this just in the process of professional activity, which creates

certain difficulties. In addition, monitoring showed that more than 50% of young teachers do not have a mentor.

So, how are we planning to develop young teachers in the framework of the "mentor-young teacher" mentoring model?

First of all, through the development and introduction of new personalized interaction formats, which include:

"TeachMeet" - face-to-face monthly workshops for sharing experience based on the interests of the participants themselves;

Design session - face-to-face meetings of representatives of network sites on various subjects held during holidays;

Trainings in soft-skills - trainings on key competences of the 21st century - communication skills, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking;

Secondly, we plan to create and promote open online courses of best teachers and university professors in basic and major subjects of middle school and senior school. (Burgess, K. 2007).

In addition, within the framework of this project, it is planned to create and support the activities of network methodological associations of teachers in various subjects in the form of design sessions, which summarize the work for the previous period and plan future activities.

Moreover, in order to find and promote the most advanced young teachers, in the framework of this innovative project we plan to hold the "Pedagogical Olympiad" - a new format competition for teachers of all directions. This model of mentoring has many prospects for development, the most relevant of which is securing young teachers in the workplace, in schools, since the statistics are currently sad: after one year 48% of young teachers leave school, in 2 years –29%, in 3 years - 23% do it.

The "mentor - young teacher" mentoring model is a platform that is not instructed from above, but is created and coordinated by the participants themselves, which are young initiative people and educational organizations. If the former are interested in personal development, mutual synergistic communication, comprehension of the new, which in itself creates positive motivation, the latter need just such personalities to implement the most advanced educational projects. That is why this model of mentoring contributes to the transmission of values, visions and missions of pedagogical activity to all its levels through close relations between the mentor and the mentee, helping them to understand and make the necessary changes to their individual work style and behavior.

Conclusions

We have determined the basic mentoring models existing in the contemporary educational environment. Variety of mentoring models confirms the fact that the educator's work cannot be monotonous. A creative approach and variability are its features (Shaykhutdinova, 2017). The knowledge about diversity of mentoring models permits an educational institution to select its own model, form its own approach to this problem and successfully meet the challenge of the teaching staff development.

Recommendations

In order to work as a mentor the educator must have certain competences in this sphere. Based on questionnaire survey the authors have determined essential criteria for selecting competences and sets of competences, which the contemporary mentor should be armed with:

Cognitive criterion: mental flexibility and thinking on feet, ability to see problems in pedagogical environment and solve them, knowledge of pedagogical work features, ability to creativity and self-development, competence in his subject area supplemented with the knowledge of student mind-set, pedagogical collaboration and self-exploration.

Motivating component: forms and increases motivation of the educator to development and self-actualisation in profession, owing to which he can demonstrate the best teaching practices in his pedagogical work.

Professional design component: formation and inclusion of the mentee in the professional developmental environment.

Communication component: the mentee is competent in specific features of communication with those who are involved in the teaching and education process; he is able to cooperate and render mutual assistance in professional development and self-education of the mentee, as well as to press his own point and persuade others during the discussion; avoids conflicts in his professional activity. (Falyakhov, I.I., 2017)

Diagnostic reflexive component: the mentee possesses analytical skills in pedagogical process study and pedagogic work reflection, as well as in self-reflection of his teaching activities.

Identification of the aforesaid criteria permits to group the core competences of the mentor in education.

Professional competences are basic competences required for professional pedagogical activity.

Special competences are competences required in the mentoring activity for fruitful and effective collaboration in different roles, such as: mentor – mentee, mentor – mentor, mentor – experienced teacher, mentor – group etc.

General culture-related competences are competences supporting the mentor's potential, namely: communicative, intellectual, research and managerial competences.

To be successful in the mentoring activity one has to combine all the above mentioned competences. In addition to the aforesaid competences the mentor must constantly practice self-improvement and professional growth, develop new competences in himself along with creative potential, study and analyse the available and innovative experience, improve his teaching practice.

The effect of the mentoring activity manifests itself as follows (Masalimova, 2015):

– firstly, capacity development and skill improvement in the teaching team, increase in its cohesion, and joint pursuance of common goals and interests of the educational organization;

– secondly, promotion of personality-centred relations between fellow teachers, contributing to effective assistance and support in pedagogical practice of the educational organization;

– thirdly, the educational organisation enjoys such a category of pedagogues who are able to assume responsibility for rapid professional adaptation of young teachers.

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