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The Methodical Maintenance of Independent Work in the Supplementary Professional Educational System

Summary

This article reveals the methodic foundations of the organization of independent work in the supplementary professional educational system. The independent work is regarded as one of the compulsory parts of learning process. The author describes the types of independent work, conditions and stages of its organization, principles of its implementation, its methodic and service maintenance. The following types of independent work are presented: studying separate questions, themes, sections, not considered at the lessons and lectures; preparing for assistance to the teacher/lecturer; drawing up a plan; taking a test; writing a review, an annotation, a thesis, a synopsis, an abstract, a thematic report, an essay, a project, a course paper and a diploma paper and others.

Key words: the supplementary professional educational system, independent work in the supplementary professional educational system, the methodical maintenance of the independent work

Modern education situation is characterized by reconsidering the meaning of the education, its functions and its growing role in the life of an individual and society in general. The introduction of the new content, new programs in the system of supplementary professional education brings on the necessity for the

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teacher's reorientation, the development of their highest pedagogical and human culture level common to all mankind. Therefore it is rather important to take into account the educational level that has already been reached by postgraduate students, their professional interests and their independent working skills [7].

Postgraduate students' independent work is a compulsory part and important condition for providing the quality of pedagogical process in the system of education specialists' retraining. Consequently, the independent work is aimed at providing the individual-oriented approach to education, which is one of its main tasks.

The independent work in the supplementary professional educational system implies well-planned students' activities, based on the conscious individual-team work which includes a systematic management of personal and professional knowledge skills, ways of their expression and acquisition, a close connection between learning and research work, improves the effectiveness of professors' and teachers' methodic work.

As part of learning process, independent work promotes:

- the deeper studies of theoretical material and acquisition of new knowledge
- accumulation and consolidation of the experience of solving professional practical problems
- mastering the necessary skills in working independently and acquiring the intellectual work culture [2]. In this connection, the independent work is a compulsory component of realization of pedagogical process organization model in which the learning process prevails over the teaching one.

In the supplementary professional educational system independent work should be regarded as the level of educational effectiveness defined not by the level of learning skills but by the ability to acquire new knowledge independently, to use changing knowledge and newly-acquired knowledge in order to set up and solve arising problems and tasks; to realize and formulate the ways of postgraduate students' actions [3].

There are two types of independent work: in-class and out-of-class activities. In-class independent work is to be held under the supervision of a teacher according to the schedule, out-of-class independent work is to be done beyond the schedule. Out-of-class activities are divided into compulsory (studying topics and the content of the program, preparing for seminars, practical and laboratory works, writing reports, course and diploma papers) and additional ones (a deeper study of the material with regard for students' personal needs and interests) [2].

The arrangement of the independent work has to meet general requirements for providing its effectiveness and to take into account the type of learners (full-time students or postgraduate students), the form of learning (full-time or correspondence), the type of specialization, and the specific features of the definite courses. The general requirements include: rational division between the volume

of out-of-class and in-class activities; efficiently-organized methodical work; providing students with learning and methodic materials; control and assessment of students' independent work [1; 4].

There are three main stages in preparation and maintaining the independent work:

Stage 1 – *preparatory* – stipulates thinking out all logical system of organization of independent work, includes formulating the program modules for study, preparation of learning and methodic materials, diagnosing the level of students' preparation.

Stage 2 – *organizational* – proposes the determination of the aims of students' individual and team activities, holding introduction tutorials, the determination of terms and forms of students' advancement on a certain number of the program modules.

Stage 3 – *attending, control and assessment* – ensures tutoring, control and evaluation of students' success in their independent work.

One of the principles of organizing students' independent work is its compulsory planning. The independent work is to be planned in accordance with the hours required by the educational standards (study of the topics and units of the program, given for independent work), as well as with the time necessary for preparing for seminar, practical and laboratory works, writing reports, projects, course and diploma papers. Tasks for independent work of postgraduate students must be interconnected, mutually correlated, logically flow from one into the other, thus they must present a system, oriented on the solution of the primary tasks of the pedagogical process [10, p. 7].

In the scholastic process of the retraining course different types of task are formed on the base of material of scientifically-methodical publications [6; 8; 9], normative documents [5] with due regard for experience of the functioning of the Institute for Refresher Training and Retraining of Education Specialists. The tasks are the following: studying separate questions, themes, sections, not considered at the lessons and lectures; preparing for assistance to the teacher/lecturer; drawing up a plan; taking a test; writing a review, an annotation, a thesis, a synopsis, an abstract, a thematic report, an essay, a project, a course paper and a diploma paper and others.

These are some general recommendations on the execution of the above-mentioned types of task for postgraduates' independent work. The first two are used when preparing for lectures, the others when preparing for seminars and lessons.

Studying separate questions, themes, sections not considered at the lessons, but related to the content of the course is one of the tasks for independent work in preparing for the lectures. Questions, themes, sections for independent work are suggested by the teacher/lecturer of a separate discipline. The execu-

tion of this type of task is aimed at making the learners get new information and deepen their knowledge. The results of their study can be presented in the form of a synopsis, an abstract, a report, etc.

Preparing for assistance to the lecturer involves a learner's independent study and his following presentation at the lesson of any question of the lecture material, except the introductory and conclusion. Questions for assistance are developed by the lecturer of a scholastic discipline and are offered for discussion among the students. Material for assistance is beforehand given by the student to the lecturer for familiarization and revision. When having difficulties the students can apply for consultation to the lecturer. This type of task allows the student to adopt deeper the material of the studied discipline, systematize the acquired knowledge, gain new knowledge and develop some skills in methods of teaching a certain course.

Performing the tasks for independent work in the process of preparation for seminars and practical lessons is directed at reaching the following goals: deepening, systematization and concrete defining of theoretical knowledge acquired by the student at the lectures; shaping the skills of interpretation and argumentation; production of one's own standpoints towards the understudy; teaching to use the theoretical knowledge in the process of solving practical problems; improvement of the skills to work with first-hand sources; writing plans, theses, synopses, abstracts, annotations, etc.

Drawing up a plan presents the execution of the skeletal record (the written verbal registration) of the collection of short worded thoughts-headlines. By the form of the division and record plans can be *simple* and *complex*. The simple plan is a list of points; the complex plan has sub-points to a part or to all main points. The plan of a generalized type reflects the content of the text and is used for recovering in memories the read material, helps to schedule the records.

Taking a test expects a written performing of the certain tasks. It is intended for undertaking the current qualification of the students on a determined scholastic discipline. The tests are planned in accordance with curriculums of the re-training course. The tests are conducted upon the completion of a lecture course or its main part. *In-class tests* are conducted according to timetables, *out-of-class tests* are executed by the students in the mid-term period. The test can be differentiated, contain the tasks of the different level which students execute at the option.

Writing a review involves preparing a critical written or spoken review about a product of one's activity. In reviews the objective views of the author must be reflected and their unrolled scientifically motivated merit attitude to the leading ideas of the reviewed source must be presented. Writing a review requires the preliminary analysis of the material, a careful study and proper writing

of a review. The review includes: interpretation of the author's views on the key questions of the problem under investigation; the interpretation of the reviewer's attitude to the problem under investigation; the critical estimation of the ideas, conclusions, proofs stated by the author; the findings of the reviewer.

Writing an annotation is a short record of the general content of a literary source. It is used in the process of making the list of the used sources under initial familiarization with literature. In annotations the main problems, reflected in the text, opinions, estimations, findings of the author must be fixed. The simple annotation can be formulated even at first-looks through the book, the complex annotation – only after attentive reading.

Writing a thesis is executed by means of recoding some positions, reflecting the essence of the text, and the ideas and findings of the author. The short theses can be formed by separations and estimations of the most important positions, generalizing the main content of the text. In unfolded theses these positions are complemented by the main thoughts in the main parts of the text and their estimation. Usually theses are formed in accordance with the plan, but include a vastly greater volume of information. The theses can be presented in the manner of abstract synopsis. For this it is recommended to use the following verbs: (the author)... *analyses, expresses* (the opinion), *proves, states, defines, notes, recommends* and others.

Writing a synopsis presents a logically bounded, short record of information, in which the main positions of the firsthand material are presented, which assists for more full assimilation of the material and accustoms to its consequent and clear interpretation. Writing a synopsis can comprise writing plans, extracts, quotations, theses, individual discourses. There are four types of writing a synopsis: *planned, textual, free, and thematic*. The planned synopsis is a consequent interpretation of the read made on the base of the beforehand formed plan. Each question of the plan corresponds to the certain portion of the synopsis. The textual synopsis consists of quotations and fragments of the original text, bound with each other as a chain logical transition. The textual synopsis is reasonable to use at studying the material requiring a benchmark analysis of the standpoints expressed by several authors on the cause of one subject. The free synopsis expects the independent wording of the main positions kept in the literary source and run on the base of the deep comprehension of the material. The thematic synopsis allows all-round studying the problem, analyzing different approaches to one and the same question with the use of several sources.

In a synopsis the main principle positions of the source, the new that the author contributes into the cause, the main methodological positions of the work, arguments, stages, proofs and findings must be reflected. At writing a synopsis it is recommended to leave some margin for contributing some necessary revision,

for expressing one's attitude to the presented material; for selecting the most important, reflecting the internal relationships in the stated material. When writing a synopsis, parts of the text and words which do not carry significant information, are not to be included, unfolded turns of the text are to be changed for more laconic ones.

Writing an abstract expects performing the written interpretation of the content of the group of recommended scientific, methodical sources. The abstracts are executed on a separate discipline in accordance with curriculums and schedules of the scholastic process. In an abstract the student must consecutively state its content in a rather packed and clear way and send its content in a greatly compressed and as far as possible a generalized form.

Writing a thematic report presents a student's spoken or written interpretation of the main content of the scholastic material on the problem coordinated by the teacher. In a report the information received at the preceding lessons is rendered as concrete and deep. At preparing a thematic report it is recommended to begin with the study of the synopsis of the lecture. Then different standpoints on the problem in scientific literature are analyzed and matched, and the plan of the report is formed. On its purpose the report can be of different types: *a report on the main question, a complimentary report, co-report*. Accordingly to the purpose reports have different structures. Those who give a co-report or a complimentary report must as far as possible avoid the repetitions and correct the plan of their report.

Writing an essay is a task of creative nature, requiring defining the author's standpoint on some subjects or phenomena, voiced in a free form. The important peculiarity of the given type of work is concluded in that the students can express their independent judgments on pedagogical facts, events which happened in their private lives, in a free form. They give their own interpretation, argumentation of their position on one or another problem. The essay does not require the plan, but in it there can be found the introduction and conclusion. It is obligatory to have in it a list of the used sources.

Writing a project is a task for independent work, specially organized by the teacher and executed by the student. It is a complex of actions, directed at the solution of the problem, having scientifically-practical value and requiring using the mastered knowledge and skills. In the process of performing the project students search for the necessary information; plan their activity working in team or individually; solve some practical problems on the project; generalize the results of their work; prepare and present the report.

Writing a course paper is provided by curriculums of all specializations of the refresher course on one of the disciplines. This type of task is aimed at systematization, consolidation and broadening the student's theoretical and practical

knowledge on the studied discipline; at using their knowledge in solving concrete scientific and practical problems. The themes of a course paper reflect the actual problems in modern science and pedagogical practical activity; can be elaborated with due regard for the professional interest and request of the students. The students can choose different levels of thematic complexity of a course paper and after defending their course paper they receive a differentiated mark. A course paper can be a basement for the further scientific research including a diploma paper.

Writing a diploma paper is permitted for the students, who showed the abilities in research work, instead of doing the state final exam. Working on a diploma paper is aimed at systematization and consolidation of the knowledge received in the process of learning. The diploma paper should reflect a student's level of erudition, his methodical grounding and management of his professional skills. The theme of a diploma paper must be actual and urgent. It must correspond to the up-to-date state and prospects of the science and practice.

The detailed recommendations on the execution of a course and diploma papers are provided in apart published handbooks [2; 5; 8; 11].

Another principle of maintaining graduate students' independent work is a full organizational-methodical and service provision which includes textbooks, handbooks and methodic materials on subjects, tasks for independent work and methodic recommendations on fulfilling them, didactic materials, tasks for current and thematic self-control, visual aids, special technical equipment. Methodic and service provision should be available for students to work independently both in class and out of class.

Methodic maintenance of students' independent work is advisable to be worked out as teaching-methodic complexes which are widely used nowadays in the supplementary professional educational system. The up-to-day teaching-methodic complex has a number of functions:

- to unite different didactic means in a whole, so as to follow the education and up-bringing aims and tasks;
- to fix and ensure the requirements for the contents of the studied course, for the postgraduates' knowledge, required by the educational standard;
- to function as a device for the systematic-methodic maintenance of the learning process in a certain course;
- to promote the development of students' self-dependence and creativity.

All above-mentioned functions prove that the up-to-day teaching-methodic complex is not only a source of information but a program of students' cognitive activities.

The control of independent work is accomplished by the teacher. The forms of the control can be the following: an oral presentation, discussion, an essay,

a report, an analytical report, a defense of a pedagogical project, a critical article, compiling stimulating materials, a test, a colloquy, an exam. The periodicity should be chosen by the teacher: daily or weekly, on topics, units and modules.

To sum up, the most important purpose of the independent work is to prepare graduate students for further self-education in the chosen professional field, to teach them problem-solving skills and to promote their competitive skills necessary for the development of their professional competence.

Резюме

В данной статье раскрываются методические основы организации самостоятельной работы в системе дополнительного профессионального образования. Самостоятельная работа является одним из обязательных видов учебной деятельности. Рассматриваются виды самостоятельной работы, условия и этапы ее организации, принципы реализации, методическое и сервисное обеспечение. Представлены виды заданий для самостоятельной работы слушателей: изучение отдельных вопросов, тем, разделов, не рассматриваемых на занятиях; подготовка к ассистированию преподавателю; составление плана; контрольная работа; составление рецензии; составление аннотации; составление тезисов; ведение конспекта; подготовка реферата; подготовка тематического сообщения; написание эссе; выполнение проекта, выполнение курсовой и дипломной работ и др.

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