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TEACHERS WORKING TOGETHER: A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Community of Practice exists to improve teaching practice, share experiences, develop digital competence, and promote universal design for learning among teachers. One thing all these teachers have in common is a desire to learn from each other and take the initiative in their own professional development.

The objective of the given research is to analyse how the community of teachers works to improve learning design.

According to a UNESCO report, there is a shortage of 44 million teachers in the world. Ukraine is among the countries on the list. The average age of teachers is increasing (according to the educational indicators dashboard, the average age of a teacher in Ukraine is currently 46), the younger generation is in no hurry to enter the profession, and only 20% of pedagogical university graduates work in schools. The situation has been exacerbated by the full-scale war, as many teachers were forced to evacuate [3].

Reforming the education system is one of the most important tasks of our time. The instrument of reform is innovation at all levels of education, which is seen as a process of introducing qualitatively new elements. At the present stage, there is a need to organize methodological work with teachers on an innovative basis.

The sphere of pedagogical activity, in which the teacher's creative activity is realized, is extremely wide. In it, professional and pedagogical activity is characterized by great heterogeneity and diversity in terms of its purpose, content, means, methods and final results. Each specific type of pedagogical activity has specific features and in each of them a teacher can reveal his/her

creative potential.

Methodological work is seen as an integral system of raising the scientific, theoretical and general cultural level of the teacher, psychological and pedagogical training and professional skills of teachers, and forming their readiness for creativity, self-education and development.

A modern teacher is a person with a high degree of social activity and civic responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of his or her work. He or she is characterized by high professionalism, fundamental scientific, theoretical, psychological, pedagogical and methodological training, and is constantly familiar with innovations in the field of methodology and pedagogy and uses them in his or her work.

"The teacher is a mirror of the school's transformation," and the future of the nation, its spiritual strength, intellectual and moral health, and the prosperity of the state largely depend on the properties of his or her self that he or she can pass on to students. Therefore, the education of the third millennium requires the training of a teacher with a high creative level of professional culture, an individual innovative style of pedagogical thinking and speech, capable of innovative activity, and this, as experience shows, is possible if effective scientific and methodological support is organized, and the entire teaching staff and administration of the educational institution are supported. The teacher should be helped to identify ways to self-improvement, to instill in him/her confidence in his/her own creative potential - and then the teacher will not be afraid to confess his/her doubts, admit his/her mistakes, see ways to overcome them, and this is a global step towards self-determination and professional growth.

In the context of the innovative development of society, there is a need to find more effective forms of professional development aimed at forming a highly qualified human resources potential in Ukraine; forms that would contribute to the quality performance of employees' duties, expand the boundaries of competence, the possibility of mastering new functional

responsibilities, encourage creative activity, and stimulate the need for self-education. This is especially true today, as the XXI century is characterized by the powerful influence of globalization and integration processes on life, which necessitate the formation of a mobile personality capable of adequate perception and creation of changes, rapid adaptation to them, and this, in turn, requires the formation of a creative type of thinking and innovative culture.

Thus, the school of the twenty-first century should educate an initiative, active, independent, purposeful, responsible, confident, competent person. In this context, the philosophical views on education of R. Kiyosaki, who wrote: "Education that does not teach you to live successfully in the modern world has no value. Each of us comes into life with a natural ability to live happily and prosperously. And we must enrich this ability with the knowledge and skills that would help us realize it as effectively as possible" [1].

Today, great attention is paid to the problem of implementing a competency-based approach in education and upbringing, but, in our opinion it is not enough to develop conceptual foundations and familiarize teaching staff with the scientific and methodological substantiation of the problem, first of all, it is necessary to equip teachers with a system of new interactive technologies, to teach them to harmoniously vary them in the course of the educational process, to awaken the desire not to be limited to the knowledge gained, but to live in constant search, to strive for self-improvement themselves and to teach their students to do so, because, only a competent teacher can educate a competent personality.

WHY DO WE NEED PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES?

The New Ukrainian School has changed its approach to the professional development of educators, with joint search for solutions, exchange of experience, and peer-to-peer learning gaining importance. The reform of school education laid the legal groundwork for uniting teachers into professional communities. The Regulation on the Center for Professional Development of Teachers, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

"Some Issues of Professional Development of Teachers" of July 29, 2020, No. 672, defines the concept of "professional community" as a society (association, group) of teachers united by common interests in the nature of their professional (labor) activity [2, c. 21]. Professional communities are a valuable resource that allows educators to constantly share experiences, support each other, discuss new ideas, be proactive, look for ways to overcome professional difficulties, and enjoy it, feeling that they are part of something bigger, despite possible differences in opinion. In the professional standard for teachers, the labor function of "continuous professional development" occupies a prominent place, which is closely related to such professional competence as the ability to learn throughout life. The content of this competence is revealed through the ability to identify conditions and resources for lifelong development and to interact with other teachers on the basis of partnership and support (within the framework of mentoring, supervision). It is assumed that the teacher should be able to identify effective forms of interaction with professional communities and actively participate in their activities.

Thanks to the TALIS study, we know that activities that involve teachers working in groups have a positive impact on their practice, and that teachers' participation in professional communities helps them not to feel lonely, promotes their professional growth, allows them to rethink their professional activities, and can improve student achievement. According to the data, 85.4% of teachers in Ukraine participate in various professional associations, which is significantly higher than the international average (36.9%), with the highest value in Croatia (63%) and the lowest in the Czech Republic (17%). The significant difference can be attributed to the fact that Ukrainian teachers traditionally organize themselves into methodological associations. At the same time, the share of Ukrainian teachers who fully agree that the majority of their school staff support each other in the application of new ideas is only 31.4% (partial agreement – 46.6%).

This situation is another consequence of the fact that methodological

associations (MAs) are a vivid example of a community with clear vertical ties, as the head of the MA is appointed by the administration of the educational institution; the topics of meetings are drawn up by the head of the MA; the head of the MA also reports to the pedagogical council on the work; teachers' participation in the work of the MA is taken into account during the certification process: in particular, the principal's profile includes data on participation in the work of the MA, which is often limited to a speech at a meeting of the MA in the year of certification. Now it's up to Ukrainian teachers to do their part, because professional communities of like-minded people with developed horizontal ties still need to be created.

Teachers collaborating in a community of practice play an important role in improving the quality of education. Their joint efforts facilitate the exchange of innovative practices, mutual learning and support. This community helps to improve pedagogical skills, develop creative approaches, and create a supportive learning environment. Interaction between teachers contributes to the growth of professional competence and the quality of education in general. This community of practice helps to improve student outcomes, develop teacher self-realization, and increase the school's credibility.

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