
TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONALISM IN THE SYSTEM OF POST-GRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION



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Abstract. *The article analyzes the application of the theory of transformative education in post-graduate teacher education. Professional development of teachers, which is based on the principles of adult education, is influenced by education reforms, innovation environment and the transition to a digital society. This creates a situation of uncertainty for teachers and encourages their acquisition of new competences. Transformational education, initiated by US scholars, has gained popularity in Ukraine to direct post-graduate education to the development of professional culture and professional consciousness of teachers. One of the key concepts of post-graduate teacher education as a component of adult education is professionalism, which is referred to as a set of teachers' competences that are formed in the system of university education and developed in the system of post-graduate education based on cultural, humanistic and democratic values to make teachers efficient in modern socio-economic conditions. Teachers' professionalism transformation, which is understood as a qualitative change in their professionalism, due to their readiness to work in the conditions of the digital world and knowledge society, is a result of transformative education in the system of formal and informal adult education. The author also discusses the teachers' professionalism transformation factors and the features, methods, objectives and outcomes of teachers' transformative education.*

Key words: *adult education; post-graduate teacher education; professionalism; transformative education; educators' professionalism transformation.*

INTRODUCTION. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Education reform in Ukraine has brought a new understanding of teachers' professionalism as their ability to work in an innovative environment. Consequently, the skills that make teachers efficient professionals should change rapidly. The educator of the era of digital technologies and the knowledge society keeps learning, improves as a professional, realizes his/her personal and professional potential, develops his/her professional culture and innovative professional thinking. Under such conditions, education becomes a value in itself, which influences the value system and civic position of educators.

The ideal of a knowledge society, proclaimed in the report *Education: A Hidden Treasure* by the International Commission on Education for the 21 Century, implies that knowledge must be quickly updated and applied to practice and be sought after by a person in the process of his/her personal and professional development and self-realization.

In this context, the key issue is the continuity of education. Adults, in particular, teachers, need not the knowledge itself, but the solution of important professional problems. Knowledge is a prerequisite for achieving goals in profession. Now the emphasis has shifted from the acquisition of knowledge to its application.

These factors determine the importance of the problem of continuous education of teachers, call for the search for new educational technologies that would accelerate and facilitate teachers' developing new values and skills and adaptation to new conditions under the education reform.

Such a potential, in our opinion, lies in the theory and practice of transformational learning, which can be used in postgraduate teacher education in Ukraine.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professionalism transformation implies that only a self-sufficient person can take responsibility and be effective in a market economy. This opinion is shared, among others, by V. Kurylo, N. Nychkalo, V. Oliynyk, O. Savchenko and O. Sukhomlynska who emphasize the need for establishing a stable democracy and civil society in the country. Educators have directly engaged in this process.

Considering continuous professional development on the principles of andragogy, O. Anishchenko, O. Bondarchuk, N. Klokar, L. Lukyanova, V. Oliynyk, O. Otich, N. Protasova and S. Sysoieva note that continuous education ensures the integrity and continuity of teachers' professional development and makes scientific knowledge a factor in updating teaching practice.

Lately, the number of studies into the problems of postgraduate teacher education has considerably increased in Ukraine. In particular N. Bibik, V. Kremen, N. Nychkalo, V. Oliynyk, O. Savchenko have substantiated the principles of professional and personal growth under the transition to a knowledge society; O. Pekhota, V. Putsov, S. Ryabova, M. Skrypnyk, G. Yelnikova, A. Zubko have clarified the scientific and theoretical foundations of andragogy and professional development based on the competence approach and postgraduate education; V. Baseliuk, E. Khrykov, M. Kirichenko, V. Maslov, L. Pokroeva have analyzed the principles and technologies of teacher postgraduate education; L. Pukhovska and R. Shiyani have investigated European approach to postgraduate teacher education; O. Adamenko, N. Chepurina, V. Gladush, S. Krisyuk, A. Kuzminsky have focused on the historical aspects of Ukrainian postgraduate education.

METHODOLOGY

The understanding of the education reform draws on the new philosophy of education formulated by V. Kremen (Kremen, 2010), which substantiates the concept and values of the knowledge society, humanism, competence-based training and principles of teaching. These theoretical and methodological principles determine the meaning and strategic goal of teachers' professional development of in postgraduate education.

One of the methodological foundations of our research is the concept of new Ukrainian school, which aims at increasing human capital in Ukraine. There is a great social demand for innovation in education, which necessitates the development of new principles of the interaction between pedagogy and practice. The concept of new Ukrainian school focuses on the child, their needs, interests and development. This is the humanistic foundation of modern Ukrainian education, which stems from V. Sukhomlynskyi's pedagogy and has been developed by N. Bibik, V. Kremen, O. Savchenko and A. Sukhomlynska, M. Vashulenko.

At first glance, it may seem that humanism personality development and care for the child's individuality are recognized by the teachers. However, these important categories, which determine the philosophy of change, require revisioning, deepening and new psychological and educational principles.

The concept of new Ukrainian school bases post-graduate teacher education on the values of modern education, which provides a sense and significance for updating the content and technologies of education.

Academician V. Oliynyk and his followers study the modern context, scientific and pedagogical foundations and technologies of post-graduate education as an important component of adult education. (Oliynyk et al., 2017). In particular, with regard to post-graduate teacher education, the researchers emphasize that during the years of Ukraine's independence, this system has been dynamically developing and changing in institutional, organizational, managerial, personnel, content and technological aspects. This provided a holistic, systemic support for the professional development of teaching staff and scientific and methodological support for the education reform. In this process, the national system of postgraduate teacher education in Ukraine faces the challenges of integration into the European educational space. Besides, there is a need to determine the place of postgraduate teacher education both in the life-long education, and in the national culture and education in particular.

The choice of the methodology of the study was also based on the current understanding of professional skills. The World Bank report "Skills for Modern Ukraine" describes three groups of skills that determine not only individuals' professional success but also affect the status of an organization in a particular professional field (Del Carpio, Kupets, Muller & Olefir, 2017). These include cognitive skills (intelligence, basic skills and complex mental activities, e.g. critical thinking), socio-emotional skills (behaviors, attitudes and personal attributes that allow being effective in personal and social situations), technical skills (special knowledge and skills required to complete professional work).

We used the above-mentioned ideas for determining the content and techniques of teacher training, which should be individualized (taking into account the level of every particular teacher's skills) and differentiated (focusing on the development of different skills).

MAIN RESULTS

One of the basic concepts of post-graduate teacher education as a component of adult education is professionalism, which is defined as a set of competencies that are formed in the system of university education, develop in the system of post-graduate education based on cultural, humanistic and democratic values and allow the professional to work efficiently in modern socio-economic conditions.

The profession of a teacher involves a certain range of professional responsibilities and competencies. In order to be carried out, the responsibilities must be based on professional skills. This explains the relationship between the concepts of competence and professionalism. Obviously, the better competence, the better professional efficiency is one of the key signs of professionalism.

From the perspective of the competency approach, post-graduate education is more specialized and differentiated in comparison with Bachelor's and Master's programs, which is supported by the fact that university students acquire basic education, which then becomes the basis for life-long learning and professional development that takes place in the post-graduate education system.

Consequently, the new economic and social realities of Ukraine call for the studies and technologies that promote teachers' professionalism.

The innovative adult education theories include the transformative learning proposed by J. Mezirow. According to J. Mezirow, transformation is a process of modifying personal activities based on the individual's understanding of how and why he/she has developed a certain world outlook and how this outlook and his/her behavior can be changed (Mezirow, 2003).

J. Mezirow and his followers (R. Boyd, S. Brookfield, J. Dirkx, J. Myers) consider that transformative education aims at changing attitudes, values, mentality, actions of the person in the psychological (change in the understanding of self), value (change in beliefs) and behavioral (change in lifestyle) dimensions. S. Brookfield emphasizes that only the education that focuses on solving fundamental problems, challenges the existing meanings, and/or alters the thinking and actions of a person can be recognized as transformative. Transformative learning, thus, is based not only on reflection but on critical reflection.

R. Boyd and J. Myers advocate a different view. They emphasize the psychosocial aspect of transformative learning and focus on logic (Boyd & Myers, 1988).

The idea of transformative education as a means of changing individuals' world outlook, i.e. mentality, and behavior, in particular, professional activities, suggests that modern adult education, including teacher education, should aim at transforming professionalism.

Professionalism transformation is a qualitative change in professionalism due to the improvement of individuals' readiness for profession in the digital world and knowledge society as a result of transformative education in the system of formal and informal adult education.

Individuals' transformative learning is triggered by a situation of uncertainty, their need to respond to intellectual, emotional, social and moral challenges. This situation can initially cause stress and insecurity, but then prompts the individuals to search for new solutions and approaches. Transformation begins when a person develops the ability to see the situation from a different perspective. Under such conditions, an individual doesn't need new information, but a new change-relevant experience. This is accompanied by a revision of beliefs and values from different points of view.

The factors behind the need for professionalism transformation include:

1. The entry of Ukraine into the digital world. The Ukrainian information society is in the process of harmonization with the European Community. Among the documents that direct this process, is the *Digital Agenda for Europe* initiative, which identifies the priorities for the development of the information society within the Eu-

European strategy for economic development *Europe 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. The Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers has approved the *Digital Agenda for Ukraine 2020* whose key objective is the introduction of digital education in Ukraine. In this context, the concepts of digital literacy, digital competence and digital intelligence are used.

The concept of digital transformation characterizes the transition of the economy to the *Industry 4.0* standard. The *Concept for the Development of the Digital Economy and Society in Ukraine 2020* was presented in January 2018. It stated that the driving force of the digital economy was human capital, which was understood as people's knowledge, talents, skills, experience and intelligence. At the labor market, digital skills, which are now considered the key personal skills, are in great demand.

So, post-graduate teacher education should aim at teaching educators to use digital resources and capitalize on these skills. This can be implemented through the wide use of digital teaching tools, cloud services, shared content and online courses. The concepts of digital competence, digital literacy and digital culture are becoming indicators of teachers' professionalism.

2. Introduction of leadership to various professional activities. Leadership is a concept that is based on human relationships, interaction and partnership. The leader occupies a special place among his followers (team) thanks to his/her recognized efficiency or ability to influence people. Teaching implies interpersonal interaction, therefore leadership joins individuals' efforts for the achievement of common educational goals. A leader teacher can make an adult audience his/her followers.

Thus, professionalism transformation implies that in the system of postgraduate education, teachers will develop leadership skills: to influence groups and individuals in order to achieve common educational goals; to bear responsibility for him/herself and others, as well as for the decision-making and implementation; to promote individuals' work commitment and success motivation.

3. Changed values. There is a transition from the values of a totalitarian society (obedience, monotony, equalization) to the democratic values (respect for personality, development, critical thinking, creativity, innovation). A new system of values has laid the foundation for transformative learning, because new knowledge and skills are the result of new professional self-awareness.

Post-graduate teacher education is an integral part of the adult education system. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers' professionalism transformation is based on the principles of adult education.

Meeting the requirements of Ukrainian legislation and based on the latest research findings, the institutions and organizations that provide formal and informal adult education undergo transformations. Unlike formal education, which was previously given priority, informal education offers broad opportunities for variation and readily responds to new social and professional challenge. The mission of formal and informal adult education is the introduction of the values of life-long education. This can have a great impact on people's lives and development, the labor market and society, which coincides with the key objectives of teachers' professionalism transformation.

The mission of adult education is accomplished via cherishing socially and personally important educational values, which include IT skills, culture, self-development and self-education, personal success and career. The labor market prefers those who are able to work in a digital economy digital workplace, which significantly changes the require-

ments for human capital. In the social context, adult education affects popular culture, civic activities, leisure activities, communication skills, which in turn prompts educators to transform their own professionalism.

Modern adult education is based on the principle of continuity, which in most studies is regarded as a determining, strategic benchmark for social progress. Continuity of education is a leading factor in the socio-economic and personal development.

However, in our opinion, continuous adult education is not a linear process, it has no a definite end in terms of the result or time. In this sense, professionalism transformation is also a continuous process.

Completing certain stages of adult education in different forms does not mean that the training is completed as a whole. Whereas formerly the law required periodic refresher/advanced training, which ended in attestation or promotion to higher professional categories or positions, etc., now the labor market and regulations encourage quick updating of knowledge and skills. Thus, the organizations and institutions that give refresher/advanced training have reduced the duration of refresher/advanced training courses from 3-6 months (in 1970s) to 2-5 days. This can be explained not only by the financial expediency but also by great information accessibility, advent of digital educational technologies and the demand for learning outcomes that can be applied here and now.

The result of continuous education is determined by the competences developed by a student. The rapid change in the demand for certain competences encourages their continuous development. Consequently, any set of any level competences cannot be considered as the ultimate result of adult education. Thus, professionalism transformation is a complex and person-oriented process that requires special technologies.

Education reforms are accompanied by the introduction of a large number of innovations in various spheres. However, innovative activity, besides administrative support, needs also technological support. Therefore, support for the development of innovative objects and providing them with resources for innovation is an important task of post-graduate education.

The main prerequisites for teachers' professionalism transformation in the system of post-graduate education include:

- Teacher's responsibility for the result, the change from the external control to the internal. Teachers' training should be realistic and practice-oriented, and teachers should know what and why they study and how this is related to their work;

- non-linear teaching forms to develop new work techniques and behaviors using case-studies, problem-solving, modeling, role play and team building exercises.

- flexible planning; each next stage is determined given the results of the previous stage. Here an experimental training (simulation) can be helpful.

- wide use of teachers' experience. Mentoring provides the opportunity for experienced teachers to share their experience with young colleagues. During training, teachers can teach their methods and techniques and discuss new approaches to problem-solving. The techniques used here include experience fixation or presentation (scribing, video, presentation, infographics), experience sharing (workshop) and experience development (practicum, training);

- small group work, counseling, individualized program training;

- project making, which is particularly effective in situations when a concrete result is needed for further use in practical work;

– feedback from the audience, which gives an opportunity to get information about the real and potential learning outcomes. Typically, the training session ends with the evaluation of the results, teachers’ reflections on their success and professionalism transformation, as well as with setting objectives for the next stage of training.

Note that the above-described methods should be used together as a system taking into account the objectives of the training, the levels of teachers’ professionalism and the prospects for its transformation.

CONCLUSIONS

Professionalism transformation implies the teachers’ transition from one condition to another:

– from perceiving oneself as “a small fry” who has no say in the organization to an efficient professional;

– from the use of a limited number of work techniques to using modern work technologies;

– from the role of a subordinate to the role of the leader;

from non-critical carrying out superiors’ orders to professional teamwork;

– from being under pressure to new work meanings, motivation, goals and objectives;

– from education “once and for all” to life-long learning;

– from knowledge and skills to value-based competences;

– from being controlled to responsibility;

– from prescribed actions to creative work.

The system of postgraduate teacher education carries out an important mission of training teachers of all types of education (from preschool to higher) to work in a reformed environment. The objectives of post-graduate teacher education used to be teaching skills, competence and creativity. Now post-graduate teacher education focuses on developing teachers’ professionalism, which includes high professional competence and professional efficiency. The transformation of teachers’ professionalism is the answer to the challenges of the innovative processes that take place in the education system.

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