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## MODERN REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF A FUTURE AGRICULTURE WORKER: COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

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### KEYWORDS

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### SUMMARY

The vocational training of a future agricultural worker is viewed in terms of the competency-based approach in the context of education content modernization, optimization of the organization methods and technics of the educational process, and redefining the goals and results of education, resulting in increased qualitative component.

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Today the competency-based approach is the innovation process in education, as presented in the educational standard accepted in most developed countries and related to the transition to the competency-based system in designing the education content and quality control systems. The professional changes correspond to the global task in the today`s world, and it is as follows: to ensure a person will join the professional social world, and his or her effective adaptation in this world.

The modern dynamically developed world makes new demands to the society. These demands deal with different spheres, and not only the sphere of economics or politics, but also the educational system, especially, the training of an agriculturist.

The analysis of research papers by B.G. Anan`ev, G.M. Andreeva, A.A. Bodal`ov, M.S. Kagan, A.A. Leontiev, B.F. Lomov, B.D. Parygin, A.V. Petrovskyi, V.M. Sorokovnin and some other researchers gives us a reason to distinguish the requirement for the vocational training of the future professionals.

The quality of the higher education is the level of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by a person that shows his or her professional competence in accordance with the higher education standards [1]. Consequently, the vocational training quality is a characteristic

of a professional, which largely provides his or her successful professional activity in the modern world with the globalized economy.

Therefore, in the current context the basic task of higher educational institutions is to provide the necessary level of the professional competence of specialists that are able to perform the effective professional activity, who are prone to rapid adaptation in the conditions of scientific and technological progress, the specialists possess modern technologies at their specialty, skills and abilities to use acquired knowledge while solving the quick-changing professional tasks.

In various literary sources the competence as a scientific problem still has not been thoroughly analyzed. Accordingly, there is a broad definition of the term “competence” within the literature. Most frequently it is used to describe really high level of qualification and professionalism. However, difference between a “competent” and a “qualified” specialist is that, the first one possesses not only knowledge, skills and abilities of a certain level, but also capability and willingness to implement them in work. The competence provides for the internal motivation of the individual to the high quality professional activity, as well as professional values and professional attitude towards the profession as to the value. A competent specialist should be able to go beyond the subject of his profession, and also he should have a creative potential for self-development. Moreover, the competency-based approach is based on the self-determination culture (building the capacity and willingness to the self-determination, self-realization, self-development, and self-improvement). Such specialist has an opportunity to create something innovative in his profession while dynamically developing (new methods, new techniques, technologies, etc.).

He is able to take on responsibility for the decision taken, and define the objectives, based on the values formed. In the European Union`s education practice the competence is a generally evaluative term, and it defines the ability to do the professional activity competently. This term is usually used for individuals of a particular social and professional status and it characterizes the degree of their suitability.

Unlike the term “competent”, by the “qualification” we mean the employee`s ability to take on responsible decisions, act adequately and in accordance with the requirements.

In the vocational training context of the agrarian alumnus the most appropriate definition of the competence is the one that was given by I.A. Zymniaia. By the competence, she means the integrated characteristic of personal qualities, the training result of the university alumnus for the further activity in a certain spheres (competences).

Competence is a contextual category, since it is reflected in the readiness to the activity in particular professional (problem) situations [7, p. 3]. Thus, this could lead to the conclusion that the competence is revealed through the person-centered approach. Therefore, it is estimated on the basis of a set of abilities (describe the competence integratively) and adequate behavioral reactions, which are reflected in different activity situations.

The professions of agrobusiness industry are very similar and lie “at the boundary” between different professional areas. A retreat from the traditional affiliation of the professions of the agrarian sphere “human – nature” is caused by a change of the agrarian specialists work aspect and an approximation to the system “human – human”. The increasing linkage between the work world, the development of a social dialogue, and the expansion of cultural borders leads to an increase in the professional activity of agrarians. Consequently, the personal and professional development of an agrarian specialist, his productive entry to the sphere of professional socialization depends greatly on the level of his versatile competencies.

L.V. Viktorova researches the development process of the professional and terminological competence of agrarian students. She was the first who revealed the scientific essence, content and structure of the professional and terminological competence of university alumni. The development model of the professional and terminological competence of agrarian students was suggested. This model provides result-based management of the development process of the student's personality and realizes the main factors of this process by using the following methods: the level diagnostics of the professional and terminological competence, the usage of the educational material content for the development of professionally significant qualities of future specialists, the improvement of teachers and curators pedagogical excellence. The professional and terminological competence criteria, indicators and levels were established for agrarian students. The pedagogical conditions for the development of such competence were substantiated and verified experimentally.

In addition, the definition of the term “competence” offered by M.A. Choschanov is very important while the training of the agrarian specialists. “First of all, the competence represents the interconnection of the traditional triad: knowledge, skills and abilities” and serves as a link between its components. In the broad meaning the competence can be defined as in-depth knowledge of the subject or acquisition of abilities. Secondly, the competence is best suited to describe the real training level of graduated from the vocational school specialist” [14]. In this sense, competence is more mundane and has a real goal. There is a certain difference between competence and perfection. The competence is a condition of an adequate

task completion. It means that a person is either competent or not competent in relation to the required level of completion, and not towards the achievements of others.

Some researchers distinguish three groups of requirements for the future specialist training (including the agrarian sector): “social requirements”, “employer requirements”, “state requirements” (depending upon who and for what purpose they are imposed, i.e., in the “area of immediate interest”).

**Society requirements.** It is difficult to overestimate the society role in the system of higher education. It requires highly skilled personnel that is able to solve theoretical and practical problems in various fields and to investigate. The society requires from an agrarian alumni not only to acquire the deep theoretical knowledge in the livestock and crop production, the technical devices and practical functioning of farming equipment, but also the situational orientation in their decisions and actions due to unpredictability of natural and climatic factors, different time of technological process etc.

The future agrarians specialist should not only have significant theoretical knowledge, but also be able to apply them in non-standard situations. It will help them to become competitive in the labor market with the possibility of making money.

**Employer requirements.** From the employer's perspective, an alumnus should have sufficient practical and theoretical knowledge and skills to provide high labor productivity, the developed competencies that are necessary for professional activity (initiative, proactive attitude to life, organizing skills), high capacity for work. The agricultural production manager should possess different strategies and tactics, the ability to gradually improve the production forms and methods. He should be interested in receiving the information about consumers' needs and interests, and have the ability to solve non-standard management tasks, without having some kind of formula for their solutions (these tasks are related to specific, sometimes even conflict situations). He should creatively approach to the senior management orders, and prove his own position accurately in case of no agreement. Most employers consider that an alumnus should have not only professional knowledge and skills, but also such personal qualities as responsibility, initiative, activity, drivenness, capacity for work, desire to develop and improve.

The future agrarian specialist will be able to succeed in his hard daily work only in case of having the full spectrum of all the personnel qualities mentioned. On the one hand, the agrarian businessman should be responsible, hardworking, but on the other hand, he should not forget that in today's dynamic society, it is necessary to show activity and initiative, to be a lifetime student in an ongoing effort to self-development.

State requirements. The primary goal of any state is to raise the citizens' quality of life. For this purpose, the higher education institutions should train highly skilled professionals that are capable to ensure the country's economic growth. At the same time the alumni and the learning services quality shall meet the requirements of national educational standards [6]. Today, the state needs educated, moral, innovative workers who can independently take responsible decisions in a choice situation, and provide projections and results. They are capable for work and characterized by flexibility, dynamism, and constructiveness.

The vocational training of future agrarian specialists has its own specific characteristic. It lies in the fact that most of the students are representatives of rural youth. Such students are sharp-sighted, detail-oriented, close to nature. At the same time, they have slow and deep response to stimuli. They have a large stock of specific submissions, but their language is less literary, full of dialecticisms, their vocabulary is limited. Agrarian educational institutions prepare specialists in different directions of vocational training: "human and nature" (natural orientation: Agronomy, Forest Management, Park and Garden Management, Ecology of the Environment); "human and sign system" (economic cycle: Accounting and Audit, Banking and Finance, Company Economics); "human and technique" (orientation to physical and engineering sciences: Engineering, Highway Transport, Transport Technologies); "human and human" (socio-humanitarian orientation: Business Management, Management).

Students are offered to study a different number of disciplines on different departments. This is a reason of their different level of vocational training as a future agrarian.

High requirements for a future university alumnus, the improvement of the education quality are the most pressing issues not only for Ukraine, but also for the whole world community. The solution to these problems is related to the modernization of the education content, the optimization of methods and technologies of the educational process and, of course, the rethinking of the goals and the result of education.

The agrarian university education does not stand still. In recent years, much has been done for improving the quality of agrarian education: the steering documents of disciplines are improved, professionally oriented specialized courses are introduced, special attention is paid to the practical training period, during which the obtained theoretical knowledge can be applied.

Modern age requires education to realize the following dimensions:

- successful development of the state and society;
- to ensure continuous development of the country on the basis of a high level of national education;
- to provide high-quality

education to everyone who wishes; - to ensure the development of analytical abilities and critical thinking of students, the ability to learn, to process the obtained knowledge without assistance, to monitor changes taking place in society.

In recent years, the competency-based approach becomes increasingly popular. According to E.V. Bondarevskaya, it is ceasing to be a local theory, and gradually turns into a social phenomenon, pretending to be the conceptual basis of education [3]. Thus, the emphasis is now placed not only on building knowledge, skills and abilities, since the successful and productive professional activity depends on the level of the development of professional competences.

Today the competency-based approach is a theoretical and methodological basis of the modernization of the national education, which offers the students do not acquire knowledge and skills separately, but in combination. In this connection, the system of teaching methods is determined differently. The main focus of the training is to provide conditions for meeting the needs of people, society, and labor market for a quality education. The structure of the respective competences and functions that they perform in education is the basis for the selection and making teaching methods.

The strategy of education modernization means that the “competencies” will lie in the foundation of the updated content of a specialist training.

In international educational practice, this concept serves as a “Node”, because the competence: firstly, combines the intellectual and skill components of education; and secondly, the education interpretation ideology is placed in the concept of competence, and is formed from the result (“standard at the end of this process”); and thirdly, the key competence has an integrative nature, since it absorbs a number of homogeneous and closely related knowledge and skills that are included into broad focus areas [5, p. 181].

Competences are interpreted as a single (coherent) language for describing academic and professional categories and levels of higher education. The language of competences is sometimes considered to be the most adequate and understandable for describing the results of education. According to I.A. Zymniai, the introduction of the competency-based approach to Ukrainian education is related to the world tendencies of integration and the economy globalization, the need to harmonize the European higher education system that takes place in recent decades, the educational paradigm shift, and the variety of the conceptual content of the term “the competency-based approach” [7].

A modern competent agrarian specialist should be able to express his or her own opinion logically, clearly, laconically and adequately; to put questions and give answers correctly; to

know how to formulate a good case; to take a proactive stance during the operational meetings, discussions, official meetings, disputes, seminars; to present proposals; to find adequate methods of professional communication with employees and colleagues; to speak in front of the audience; to make presentations; to know the speaking etiquette.

In view of the above, the updating of the competency-based approach in recent decades is resulted from the plenty of reasons.

I. The transition from the industrial society to the postindustrial society is connected with an increase of the environment uncertainty level, the dynamism of the processes, and the significant increase in the information flow. The market mechanisms began to function more actively in the society, social mobility increased, new professions appeared, demarcation of the former professions occurred, since requirements have been changed. They become more integrated. All these changes dictate the need for the formation of the personality who can live under uncertainty. And this is a very creative, responsible, stress-resistant personality that is able to act constructively and play a competent in various situations.

The requirements for the special entrepreneurial thinking of future employees comes to the fore along with professional knowledge and skills, on the other hand, the motivation to work, i.e., the constant search for a new quality (in the organization of work, results of work, relationships with colleagues), orientation towards the best results with minimum cost, the ability to feel a part of a team, a constant focus on self-development and learning. The entrepreneurial thinking in relation to the collective or the whole enterprise in general means the ability to understand and uphold the common interests, including the interests of the enterprise, the readiness to contribute to the colleagues' qualification, the desire to improve the image and strengthening the position of the enterprise in the labor market [7].

II. The usage of the competency-based approach for description of the educational process results both in European states and in Ukraine will have a positive impact on the comparability of diplomas and degrees issued by domestic and foreign universities. This will contribute to the establishment of the single labor market and will increase the employment opportunities of young professionals. Holders of the international diplomas will be able to study foreign languages professionally, to make business contacts in Ukraine and abroad [14].

III. The relevance of using the competency-based approach in training of future agrarian specialists is promoted, on the one hand, by the objective requirements of production (a variety of products produced, different time of technological processes and the need to build a system of direct and indirect communications (with the help of guidelines, instructions, etc.), the unpredictability of natural and climatic factors), but on the other hand, by the international

trends in the higher education development and the legally accepted form for higher education results in the competence language of the university alumni.

In this regard, there is a need for specialists of a new type in modern agricultural production. They do not only possess highly professional qualities, but also they are capable for management and entrepreneurship activity. They can easily make business contacts. They are with the highly developed intelligence and a high level of culture, with the ability to individual creativity and to live and work in the new information world, in the global information network. The reality today is that the competitive specialist is the one who does not act in accordance with the instructions, but he actively uses his own creative potential and personal experience [15].

The modern requirements for the vocational training of a future agrarian specialist leads to the conclusion that this process will be effective upon the condition of the competency-based approach in the context of the modernization of the education content, the optimization of methods and technologies of the educational process and the rethinking of the goals and the result of education. All these lead to the increase of the quality component.

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