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Work experience internship of the students pursuing master's degree in teacher education

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate the role and place of work experience internship of the students pursuing a master's degree in teacher education in the North Caucasus Federal University via analysis and abstracting of scientific, pedagogical and methodological literature. As a result, completing a graduate internship prepares master's students for independent work in their chosen profession. In conclusion, constant modernization of the content of graduate internship is required in order to ensure the motivational, personal and technological readiness of the students in the master's program in education for continuous and self-directed professional development.

Keywords: Work experience internship, Field activities.

Prácticas laborales de los estudiantes que cursan una maestría en formación docente

Resumen

El estudio tiene como objetivo investigar el papel y el lugar de experiencia laboral de los estudiantes que cursan una maestría en educación docente en la Universidad Federal del Cáucaso del Norte a través del análisis y la abstracción de literatura científica, pedagógica y metodológica. Como resultado, completar una pasantía de posgrado prepara a los estudiantes de maestría para el trabajo independiente en la profesión elegida. En conclusión, se requiere una constante modernización del contenido de las prácticas de posgrado para garantizar la preparación motivacional, personal y tecnológica de los estudiantes en el programa de maestría en educación para el desarrollo profesional continuo y autodirigido.

Palabras clave: Prácticas laborales, Pasantías, Actividades de campo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Practical experiences as a teacher in the process of students' pursuing master's degree in teacher education are diverse in purpose and content, and each of them, despite its specifics, makes its own contribution to the professional becoming of a teacher-to-be (TITOVETS, 2009; GADAMER, 2001; MARKARYAN & KHARCHENKO, 2017). And, first of all, graduate internship plays a dominant role in forming readiness of master of education for professional activity which includes a set of competencies that allow for successful carrying out of a number of complex activities such as training, learning, and teaching, educational, enlightening, research,

etc. (AYBATIROV, K., AYBATIROVA, M., ANNIKOVA, L., BAKHUTASHVILI, T., KOTOV, S., KOTOVA N., & KHARCHENKO, 2018; PANOVA, & KHARCHENKO, 2010).

An analysis of the literature (GROSHEVA, NAUMKIN, & KONDRATYEVA, 2015; BORLAKOVA, KLUSHINA, KLUSHINA, KOTOV, PETROVA, PIVNENKO, & KHARCHENKO, 2018) shows that the authors, on the one hand, note the important role of practices in the training system for various specialists, and, on the other hand, consider the existing contradictions and problems in the technologies for organizing internship and in their content. This circumstance allows for the assumption about topicality and practical relevance of the study and the need to write this article, which is related to the authors' aim at identifying syndromes that create problem fields in the Russian education system (BABAEVA, E., GULYAKIN, D., MAGOMEDOVA, R., PANOVA, I., PASHTAEV, B. & KHARCHENKO, 2014; PANOVA, & KHARCHENKO, 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to present the author's view of the role, place and content of work experience internship implemented as part of the master's program in Teacher Education.

2. METHODS

In the process of conducting the research, such methods were used as an analysis and abstracting of scientific, pedagogical and

methodological literature on research issues, the study of regulatory documents on the organization of higher pedagogical education at the master's level, and pedagogical modeling. At the experimental stage, questionnaires, observation, and analysis of the products of educational, industrial, and research activities of Master's Degree students were used. Questionnaires contained the questions related to five-point scale-based evaluation by graduate students of the technology of organizing and conducting productive practices, the work of teachers that organize practices and their own preparedness for professional activities before and after the graduate internship. At the final stage, the methods of statistical data analysis were applied, their graphic and semantic interpretation were carried out.

When writing the article, we used data from surveys of master's students (80 people), teachers (19 people) and course directors (methodologists for organizing practices, department heads, institute directors) of the university's structural units (12 people), aimed at identifying respondents' perceptions of the importance of on-the-job training programs, about existing problems and contradictions in their organization and conduct.

We also used data from observations of the authors of the article related to the organization and conduct of practical training and the development of relevant teaching materials.

The results of the pedagogical experiment were evaluated by the positive dynamics of indicator values:

- Motivational criterion (ambitious objectives for education and production activities; interest and emotional investment in research and learning and practice activities; striving for cooperation and interaction with teachers, other students, schoolchildren; target-setting, focus on self-education and results);

- Personal criterion (understanding the socio-pedagogical role of a teacher; knowledge and possession of their abilities; knowledge of the requirements for a modern teacher; subjectivity; reflexivity; sufficient subject matter expertise and ideas about professional-pedagogical behavior);

- Technological criterion (individual skills and skills of communicative professional-pedagogical interaction; skills to integrate theory and practice; skills to design, carry out and correct basic educational, training, learning and practice and research activities; skills to comment on these actions and demonstrate professionally-oriented behavior).

Each criterion is distinguished by three levels of manifestation: low level – master's student demonstrate an overt neutral (and, possibly, sometimes, negative) attitude to the internship (the internship is necessary to obtain a degree); intermediate level – master's students demonstrate a positive attitude to the internship; high level – master's students demonstrate an interest in the internship, show their creative sides.

3. RESULTS

The quality of a master's program of teacher education to a large extent affects the functioning of the sphere of socio-pedagogical practice. At the same time, the rate of change in socio-pedagogical processes is so high that the prescribed residence (2.0 years full-time and 2.5 years in absentia) of master's students at university is clearly not enough to ensure their readiness for high-quality professional activity and, moreover, not enough for training the ability to maintain professional form throughout the pedagogical career (TITOVETS, 2009; KASHER, 2005).

Therefore, it is unlawfully to consider the master's training process only as an adaptation to future professional activity, since maintaining their professional and pedagogical form increasingly depends on their activity, their preparedness for self-projecting their own career, on their ability to adjust their own professional concepts in terms of changes surrounding socio-pedagogical reality, readiness for self-change and openness to new ideas (TITOVETS, 2009; PANOVA & KHARCHENKO, 2010). All these are the elements of self-governing professional development, and a significant contribution to the solution of these problems can be made by a systematically organized graduate internship with targeted unity.

In this regard, the consideration of the problem from this angle required, first of all, the definition of scientific concepts used in the

study, such as work experience internship, teaching internship, professional becoming, and readiness for professional activity.

Work experience internship, in our opinion, is a normatively defined practical part of the learning experience at university, carried out in educational organizations in pursuing master's degree in teacher education in real-time professional activity. The training system for Master's Degree students of teacher education involves a number of practices, such as technological, educational research and pedagogical, pre-graduation and academic seminars (practice with built-in practical sessions).

Work experience internship, on the one hand, is aimed at developing and consolidating the theoretical knowledge and skills acquired during training necessary for conferring qualifications and final certification of a master, and, on the other hand, allows employers to choose potential employees.

Teaching internship, as well as research and teaching practicum in the master's program, are organizational forms of training at colleges of education that aim to teach graduate students to creatively apply pedagogical, methodological and research knowledge and skills in educational work.

Since any work experience internship integrates knowledge and skills from various subject areas and is also accompanied by an increased emotional-sensual background and personal-professional

experiences, the internship for master's students is a difficult and responsible stage of training.

Completing a graduate internship prepares master's students for independent work in their chosen profession and contributes to the implementation of the graduate qualification work. Hence, the readiness for professional activity of the future master of teacher education is an integrated system of subject-methodological, psychological, pedagogical and research knowledge, skills, humanistic values and ideals that allow the graduate student to successfully carry out educational and research activities.

Studying the experience of the formation of readiness for professional activity and professional development in the process of production practices at masters of pedagogical education existing in Russian universities (TITOVETS, 2009; PANOVA & KHARCHENKO, 2010) has defined the need for the following approaches:

- Motivational-value approach aimed at developing the motivational-value sphere of the master's student, their growth and self-improvement mindset, the formation of a value attitude to the profession;

- Personalized, or personality-oriented approach in which the stimulation is the understanding of work-study information for its correspondence not only with professional but also with

personal meanings, which determines the strategy for further self-education and self-development;

- The reflexive approach which involves reflexing by the graduate student their own thoughts, mental actions and behavior in order to develop a program of self-correction as a means of professional and personal development of masters;

- The technological approach which aims to form the knowledge and skills of self-projecting professional career among masters of teacher education, developing self-governing professional growth algorithms.

The application of the above approaches to the on-the-job training program, for the organization and pursuit of which curricular design sets aside almost half ($\approx 42\%$) of the entire curriculum, indicates that the master's student can make a significant contribution to their own professional becoming at the university stage of training.

We define the concept of professional becoming of the student in the master's program in teacher education as a constant, being throughout the entire period of preparation for independent teaching activities, qualitative transformation of the personal and professional culture of the teacher-to-be, which leads to the ideal of life and allows for the creative self-realization in the profession.

Based on the above considerations, the unity of goals, objectives, content, and results should be based on the technology of organizing and designing work experience internships for the students pursuing a master's degree in teacher education. The sequence of practices should be consistent with the logic of professional becoming of masters – extending professional-pedagogical and research knowledge and skills from practice to practice, which ends with the defense of the graduation thesis for a university degree. The author's logic of doing a work experience internship is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Place in Educational Process and the Content of Work Experience Internship in the System of Training Masters of Teacher Education

№	Graduate Internship	The Place in the Educational Process	Study Time	Content
1.	Scientific seminar (research activity, practical activity with practical studies)	Semesters 1, 2 and 3	9 credit points	- organization and scientific-methodological support of research activity within graduate qualification work
2.	Technological (project-oriented) practical training	Semester 2	9 credit points	- projecting an experiment and evaluating the methods of educational investigation; - projecting and holding experimental studies
3.	Teaching internship	Semester 3	12 credit points	- holding plan university or college classes; - organizing and performing ascertaining experiment on the topic of graduate qualification work; - preparing and publishing theses
4.	Educational research internship	Semester 4	9 credit points	- conducting plan classes at university;

				<ul style="list-style-type: none">- performing a formative educational experiment on the topic of graduate qualification work;- preparing and publishing scientific investigation
5.	Research internship	Semester 4	9 credit points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- presenting the results of the pedagogical research;- preparing a report and presentation for the defense of graduate qualification work

It should be noted that the results of the approbation of the author's approaches to the organization of work experience internship of the students pursuing a master's degree in teacher education are positive. Assessment of the effectiveness of the practices was carried out according to the indicators of motivational, personal and technological criteria for the readiness of the education master for professional activities. Each of the indicators was evaluated according to a 5-point scale, then, the values of the indicators of each criterion were summed up and the arithmetic mean value was found, which is illustrated in Table 2 and in Figure 1.

So, the motivational criterion was evaluated by the values of indicators: motivated, active, interested in professional development; personal criterion – in terms of the following indicators: confidence, their world views, creative approach, focus on professional development, and technological criterion in terms of the following indicators: knowledge of the preparation and conduct of training

sessions, knowledge of the methodology for conducting pedagogical research, knowledge of self-reflection and self-projection algorithms.

The graduate students who participated in the experiment were divided into 2 groups – the control undertaking the internship in the traditional condition, and the experimental completing the internship in accordance with the author’s intention. At the end of the experiment, we compared the values of the criteria indicators in both groups of the students (Table 2, Figure 1).

Table 2: The Results of the Educational Experiment on the Formation of Readiness of Master’s Degree Students for Professional Activities

Group	Criteria for readiness for professional activity, point average					
	motivational		personal		technological	
	before interns hip	after interns hip	before interns hip	after interns hip	before interns hip	after interns hip
Experimental Group	4,7	8,4	4,3	8,9	3,8	6,8
Control Group	4,8	5,7	4,3	6,0	3,8	5,0
Absolute difference:	0,1	2,7	0,0	2,9	0,0	1,8
Relative difference	2,0%	47,3%	-	48,3%	-	36,0%

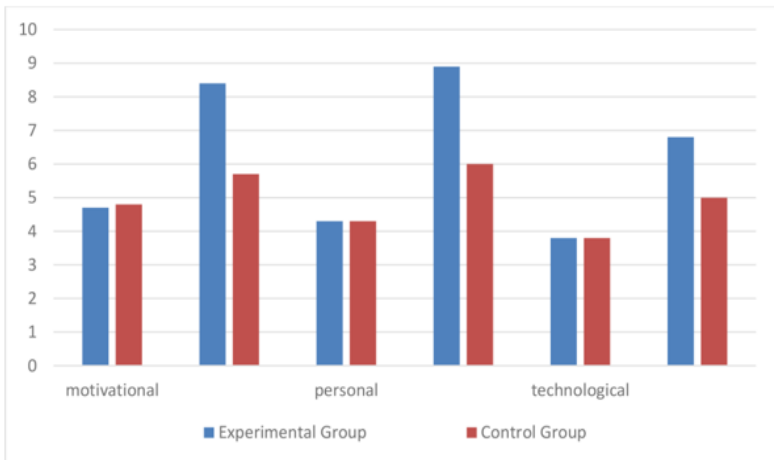


Figure 1: Readiness for Professional Activity of Master's Degree Students of the Control and Experimental Groups Before and After Completing Work Experience Internship

The values of the indicators of the criteria of readiness for professional activity before the experiment were almost identical in both groups. The completion of practical training by master's students, both in the traditional and in the experimental conditions, increased the values of all indicators, but in the experimental group of master's students, the growth was much more significant. The values of the indicators of the motivational criterion in the experimental group were higher than in the control group by 2.7 points or 47.3%, the values of the indicators of the personal criterion were higher by 2.9 points or 48.3%, and the values of the indicators of the technological criterion were higher by 1.8 points or 36.0%.

4. DISCUSSION

The theoretical analysis of the state of the organization of work experience internship of the students pursuing a master's degree in teacher education, as well as the results of the educational experiment, allow for the following generalizations.

A review of the background material has revealed that the professional becoming of the Master of Education will be successful if, in the process of theoretical training and during practical training, they have:

Professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills in the field of education, training, research;

– Mechanisms of reflection and enrichment with professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, values that underlie the teacher's self-education;

– Universal, general professional and professional competencies and the ability to self-evaluate the results of solving the arising educational-industrial and research problems, or the so-called mechanism for managing professional errors – their prevention, diagnosis, and correction;

The ability to find solutions for arising non-standard pedagogical or research problems based on the analysis of the effectiveness of the actions undertaken;

– The ideas about the concept of a profession – master of education, the ideas about its essence, its mission and, resulting from it, the ideal of professional and pedagogical behavior (KASHER, 2005; PANOVA & KHARCHENKO, 2010).

At the same time, the study allows to reveal the fact that in the process of training the students in the master's program in teacher education, it is necessary to avoid narrow pedagogical and research specialization since the division of work impedes the harmonious development of the individual, making the person partial, limiting their work activities to a certain range of specific functions.

Graduate internship within the framework of master's programs in education makes a significant contribution to the professional becoming of the future specialist in teaching, in the event, they are subordinated to a single goal – the start to successful professional becoming. Therefore, constant modernization of the content of graduate internship is required in order to ensure the motivational, personal and technological readiness of the students in the master's program in education for continuous and self-directed professional development.

Thus, the experience of organizing graduate internship to complete a Master's in Education at college of education shows that the algorithm for deploying practices, on the one hand, leads to extending pedagogical experience of providing learning activities, and, on the other hand, allows graduate students to master the teaching methodology research and systematically perform various types of work as part of the graduation work. This is facilitated by the differentiation and individualization of undertaking internship, which is ensured through the fulfillment of individual tasks offered to master's students in conformity with the subject of their pedagogical research.

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