

A Block-Circle System for the Improvement of Qualifications of Pedagogical Cadres in Siberia

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In forming of a new system for the improvement of the qualifications of pedagogical cadres we proceed from the principle that our system can't develop apart from societal processes. If schools have to demonstrate social movement — because our present school children will define tomorrow's fate of the country—the teacher and his culture and professional skill must be at the center. The renovation of our system for the improvement of qualifications of teachers must also be carried out on principles of humanity and democracy.

There are thus two main guiding principles. The first principle is the development of the individuality of the teacher, and as the result of it—the development of a schoolchild. The second principle is democratisation, the freedom of a teacher to choose the contents of the teaching process as well as its form and methods. We believe that through testing the teacher will get a full idea of the complex psychological and didactic theory and technology of teaching. In the framework of the training process the teacher must have freedom of choice of training technology, but the choice will be the richer the higher the level of general culture and the professional skill of the teacher.

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Block-Circle System

The Chita Institute for the Improvement of Qualifications, which employs about 120 specialist trainers for the whole of the southern Siberian region, considers that the most important aim is the humanist model of a specialist, who at the school level is able to help a teacher to realize creative possibilities. According to this aim, both in aspects of contents and in technological aspects we distinguish the following blocks of training preparation and improvement: humanistic, psychological, didactic, and methodological. The “block” refers to the combined subject matter specialities, and the “circle” to the cyclic nature of the process.

Let us consider two components of the application of this model to the training content:

Philosophical Block

Contents: Philosophy of general human value; philosophy of interaction of individual and society; philosophical aspects of education and of definite training branches; philosophy of self-realisation of individual; problems of economics and politics.

Methodology: Study of philosophical conceptions of individual, their comparison; study of philosophical problems of interaction of individual and society; system of forms and methods of active work of acquiring of problems of philosophy, economics, politics; acquiring of methodological foundations of science in aspects of integration; creative conclusion of self-education in given block.

Humanist Block

Contents: Problems of general culture (general human value of art, literature, music; other mental values); forming of ability of a teacher for comprehend values of culture and ability to pass it to children.

Methodology: System of special courses on cultural problems; establishing of the system of forms and methods of forming of intellectual background; requirements of acquiring of general cultural inheritance.

Psychological and Didactic Block

Contents: Psychology of self-perfection; self-realisation, knowledge of law of development of individual of a child; psychological foundations of training an educator, pedagogics of creative pedagogics; study, analysis, and generalisation of creative experiences; alternate pedagogics and alternate school; problems of modern theory and technology of training and education.

Technology: Technology of study of individuality of a child; analysis of social situation of development of childhood and child; system of psychological help to child; the technology of diagnostics; training forms of work, etc.; making models of lessons and educational work on a conceptual base; analysis of situational tasks

on bases of theory and technology; defence of projects (studying of the topic, courses , etc.)

Methodical Block

Aspect of Contents: Methodics of developing training and education.

Technological Aspect: Technology of conversational education; methodics of study of topics, courses on the base of definite theory and technology; making models; method of choice, etc.

The Block-Circle Model

In connection with these new contents of basic pedagogical education, the teacher must be a philosopher, a psychologist, a pedagogical specialist, and a subject connoisseur. These specialities make it possible to create a new school—a school for development of abilities of a child, a school of support and development of teachers with creative potential. These new attitudes toward the improvement of teacher qualifications require not only quality of work, but time too.

On the basis of educational and methodical theory, our Institute forms definite experiences for solving problems, using the block-circle model. We want to show an example these experiences using mathematics—we choose this subject not only because it is one of the best in our Institute, but also because it is better to demonstrate one subject, thus showing different attitudes to solve one problem by the enhanced psychological, didactic, and methodological preparation of the teacher. This model is like a mosaic of glass which can reveal both individual parts and the whole complex illustration. From the topical blocks of the improvement of qualification, we here take psychological, didactic, and methodological aspects.

Following are the stages of course development:

1. approximate definition of contents of the preparation in the courses; forming of the educational plan and programs of courses;
2. diagnosis of the teacher in the beginning of the courses; revealing of most substantial and typical and professional complications; on this basis correction of the educational plan and programs of courses;
3. providing courses including diagnosis of their pupils during the work, organization of control in the end; complex estimation of the level of professional preparation of the teacher according to results of work of courses;
4. working out recommendations for school children dedicated to work between courses on bases of the complex estimation;
5. planning of problematic seminars between courses on actual problems of the professional preparation of a teacher taking into account their requirements and the level of professional skills (forming of microgroups according to interests and level of preparation);
6. working out recommendations on organization of methodical and self-educational work, on generalisation of experiences of different problems.

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7. preparation and providing of subject conferences on bases of previous stages; generalization of experiences of work in solving of definite problems.

At the same time, in planning of the courses the logical approach is as follows:

diagnosis of the level of professional skill;
aim of education of school children;
planned results of education of schoolchildren;
means and methods to reach the aim;
training;
control;
analysis (comparison of reached results of training with planned ones);
correction of the work and again the whole circle.

Let us consider two examples of preparation of a teacher in one problem; they differ not only by their structures but also by categories of teachers.

Example

The best experiences approach is organised around problem courses based on recommendations of the well-known Russian pedagogical specialist, V. K. Diachenko. The groups consist of teachers of different subjects, heads of school, and methodologists.

The structure of courses was formed in three stages. First is a determining session (36 hours). The next session focuses on improvement of knowledge of participants according to their wishes (30 hours), on the basis of a teacher engaged in a creative work, on test sessions, and on analysis of results of home-tasks.

The content of the first stage was a diagnosis of the level of preparation of a teacher to understand methodology of the collective method of training through annotation and diagnostic play. The next step in the plan was defined in the following way: introductory summary lecture, theoretical reasoning of the collective method of training during lectures, followed during a didactic play by the demonstration of ways and methods of preparation of school children to the work in pairs. In the end, the determining session was concluded with practice on thematic planning and working out task-cards on the basis of acquired technology. Among instructions for individual work at home the participants received a set of descriptions of the collective method of training.

During the second stage, teachers studied the system of planning of the work of the pedagogical specialist on the basis of which was organized the improvement of knowledge, participation in lessons with analysis after them, and working out a set of task-cards on separate topics. The training was concluded with test lessons conducted by participants in classes, where the head of the course introduced methodics of the collective method of training.

The third stage was provided individual diagnosis of materials prepared during home work. The discussion was organised in microgroups with a focus on acquired

experience from the work on the collective method of training, and included correcting the program of each activity after the approval of the method in this collective method of training.

Conclusion

This block-circle form for the improvement of teacher qualifications has proven valuable, because by the presentation of materials in large blocks the teacher will get a basic idea of a concrete problem from the point of view of psychology, didactics, and methodology. During single courses there emerge possibilities to bring the theory to the level of practice by means of seminar lessons, a series of practices in planning and modeling of lessons by studying theory or technology. Short-time courses (30-36 hours) allow time to consider one problem. It is possible to provide a series of courses on one problem in order to form experiences by using theory or technology in concrete conditions. In longer courses, it is possible to study several theories and technologies of training in obligatory special courses, or on an optional basis, according to choice.