

Pedagogical Conditions for Developing Professional Competency in Convicts

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Abstract: The main task of vocational schools in the system of penitentiary authorities and institutions is to ensure the right of citizens to vocational training following their inclinations, interests and abilities to improve their adaptation after release from prison. The paper aims to experimentally verify pedagogical conditions for developing professional competency in students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine during their study of humanities and general professional disciplines. A total of 380 students from vocational education institutions of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine were divided into a control group (CG – 180 respondents) and an experimental group (EG – 200 respondents). It became necessary to introduce four pedagogical conditions (using the potential of a personality-oriented approach to boosting motivation towards learning; humanizing the relationships between teachers and students; reinforcing professional orientations of students by introducing innovative pedagogical technologies; improving personal and professionally important qualities based on the introduction of the specialized course, titled “Developing the Individuality of Convicts”) to enhance the effectiveness of developing professional competency in convicts. Diagnostic methods, standardized tests, specially designed author’s questionnaires and surveys, pedagogical consultative methods were employed to obtain reliable information. The number of EG respondents with a creative level has increased significantly, namely, from 18 (9.0%) to 53 (26.50%). In CG, however, these numbers are lower: from 14 (7.78%) to 18 (10.00%). The obtained results prove the effectiveness of the author’s approach to developing professional competency based on the introduction of pedagogical conditions.

Keywords: *resocialization of convicts, trainees, vocational education and training, state penitentiary service, vocational profession.*

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, the role of penitentiary institutions in returning a complete and efficient person to society is ever-increasing. Scholars in the field of penitentiary pedagogy indicate that the organization of convicts' learning activities is included in the context of general problems characterizing the conditions and trends in the development of the entire State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine. Besides, it is a thorny issue that needs special attention, considerable efforts and immediate solutions.

The transformation of an educational paradigm in prisons requires that scientific research in the field of vocational education should be expanded and reinforced. While serving their sentences, convicts can obtain a vocational profession and gain practical experience for further employment in the production of the institution. The main task of vocational education institutions in the system of penitentiary authorities and institutions is to ensure the right of citizens to vocational training following their inclinations, interests and abilities to improve their adaptation after release from prison.

Modern psycho-pedagogical literature widely covers psycho-pedagogical aspects of delinquent behaviour development and its prevention (Biletskyi, 2005; Kozubovska, 1998; Kryvusha, 2000; Orzhekhovska, & Pylypenko, 2007; Zmanovskaya, & Rybnikov, 2010), the mechanisms of resocialization (Hoshovskyi, 2009; Radov, 1997; Serova, 2010; Synov, 2002; Vasylchenko, 2013), the objectives of penitentiary pedagogy, as well as the principles and approaches of the penal legislation (Betsa, 2003; Chernenok, 2008; Kurliak, 2008; Ptashynskyi, 2004; Vasylchenko, 2013; Yahunov, 2009), practical approaches to re-socialization of convicts and training of penitentiary staff for psych-pedagogical activities with a special contingent (Borysov et al., 2010; Krasnova, 2012; Tretiak, 2012; Vashchenko, & Sulytskyi, 2003).

There is another reason behind the relevance of the problem under study, which is the active establishment of educational centres, namely, state educational institutions and state vocational education institutions, at the State Department of Ukraine on Penalty Execution, which aim to secure the rights of convicts to quality education. As of 2015-2016, the network of state vocational education institutions at the institutions of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine includes 65 training centres, 8 branches of vocational education institutions and 5 vocational schools. To date, there are 9971

persons without vocational qualifications in penitentiary institutions, including 6930 persons (69.4%) engaged in vocational training.

Such scholars as A. Bailov, & O. Severyn (2011), V. Bebenin (2008), O. Beznosiuk (2015), T. Butenko (2010), O. Karaman (2012) and N. Tiugaeva (1998) have devoted their studies to general aspects of educational institutions' activities at penitentiary institutions. However, the problem of developing professional competency in convicts during their study in vocational education institutions of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine has not been studied in detail, yet.

The paper aims to identify, theoretically justify and experimentally verify pedagogical conditions for developing professional competency in students from vocational education institutions of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine during their study of humanities and general professional disciplines.

2. Material and Methods

Research methods include the following: *theoretical methods* – a *bibliographic study on relevant research*, as well as a *comparative analysis of psycho-pedagogical studies* needed to clarify activities of educational institutions of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine; *an analysis of regulatory documents* on the organization of vocational education in the penitentiary system needed to study the content of educational services; *a comparative pedagogical analysis* needed to compare different theoretical approaches to the problem under study and determining research areas and its concepts and categories; *a structural systemic analysis* needed to ensure the complexity in justifying pedagogical conditions for developing professional competency in students in the system of vocational education of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine; *theoretical modelling* needed to develop a model of developing professional competency in convicts; *empirical methods* – *questionnaires, interviews, direct and indirect observations, tests, surveys, expert assessment* needed to identify the level of professional competency in convicts engaged in vocational education; *a pedagogical experiment* (ascertaining and formative stages) needed to verify the effectiveness of practical measures for developing professional competency in convicts; *methods of mathematical statistics* (criterion F) needed to process the obtained results and establish quantitative and qualitative relationships between the phenomena and processes studied and determine their validity, objectivity and statistical significance.

The ascertaining stage of the experiment was organized based on determination and effectiveness. It involved 400 students from five educational centres. Diagnostic methods, standardized tests, specially designed author's questionnaires and surveys, pedagogical consultative methods were employed to obtain reliable information. It is found that only one-third of the students are at productive and creative levels of professional competency by all indicators. These facts have confirmed the need to thoroughly work on this area.

A systemic approach was used to specify the pedagogical conditions. It involves a detailed analysis of legislative acts (The Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (1998); the Concept of Vocational Education Development in Ukraine for the period of 2010-2020); scientific pedagogical literature (Kokhanko, 1998; Nikolaienko, 2007; Nychkalo, 2010; Radkevych, 2012; Zahika, 2012; Zhukov, & Matrosova, 2013) on the organization of the educational process in vocational schools; a study of the basic principles of penitentiary pedagogy (Betsa, 2003; Kurliak, 2008; Litvishkov, 2004; Naboka, 2001; Orzhekhovska, & Pylypenko, 2007; Radov, 1997; Synov, 2002); a study of the legal framework on the educational process in penitentiary institutions (The Criminal Code of Ukraine (2001); The Criminal Executive Code of Ukraine (2003); Regulations "On the Educational Centre at Closed Penal Institutions" (2013)); a study of scientific works in the context of enhancing teaching activity in penitentiary institutions (Bailov, & Severyn, 2011; Krasnova, 2012; Ptashynskyi, 2014; Siur, 2010; Tretiak, 2012; Vasianovych, 2004; Yahunov, 2009) and discovering optimal ways of developing professionalism in future skilled workers from a special contingent (Avramenko, 2011; Bebenin, 2008; Butenko, 2010; Lovochkin, 2002; Serova, 2001; Tiugaeva, 1998); an analysis of the results obtained from the ascertaining experiment.

Pedagogical condition 1 (*using the potential of a personality-oriented approach to boosting motivation towards learning*) is based on providing appropriate conditions for the personal and professional development of students as the participants in the educational activity. It was important to include the maximum number of convicts in the system of practical situations of the subject-subject interaction which actively motivated them for professional success. The main emphasis is on stimulating personal activity (developing internal cognitive motivation and desire to gain a vocational profession), personal maturity (accepting oneself and understanding the possibilities of changing one's attitude; openness and ability to improve, develop responsibility, independence; striving for self-expression through a vocational profession; positive re-socialization; understanding the need to

achieve professional success); sociocultural competency (ability to cooperate constructively during the training; perceiving the possibility of a non-violent way of resolving all conflict situations; developing tolerance in relations with other convicts). The introduction of this condition was based on the introduction of such pedagogical techniques as advancing, confessions, eureka, analysis of past success, exhibitions, self-recognition.

Pedagogical condition 2 (*humanizing the relationships between teachers and students during their general professional training*) is caused by the fact that humanism in the criminal justice system is related to respecting human rights, treating a convict with respect and creating the right conditions for his or her correction. In practical terms, the humanization of relations between the teachers and the students was realized during their study of such three compulsory disciplines as “The Fundamentals of Industry Economics and Entrepreneurship”, “Information Technologies”, “Job Hunting Techniques”. The specially designed “success situations”, as well as adherence to the three R’s theory (re-socialization, reintegration, rehabilitation), which encouraged the students to increase their educational level, have activated the mechanisms of improving professional competency according to the content-related criterion and positively affected humanization. The following pedagogical techniques were used: “all students are talented”, “open perspective”, “highlighting any improvements”, “disclosing the strengths of students”, “repeating and consolidating success”, “minimizing the consequences of mistakes”, “showing belief in one’s success”.

Pedagogical condition 3 implied *reinforcing professional orientations of students by introducing innovative pedagogical technologies*. The project method, interactive learning and motivational pedagogical technologies were chosen for introducing into the educational process. The effectiveness of the project method is driven by a person-oriented approach, as well as the possibility to increase students’ cognitive interest and involve all of them in the educational process. Interactive training involved improving professional the students’ professional competency, developing their ability to justify their opinions and engage in partnership communication. Motivational pedagogical technologies have stimulated the development of the students’ internal focus on high-quality performance, increased their motivation towards independent learning and developed their ability to determine the potential of the acquired vocational profession.

Pedagogical condition 4 involved *improving personal and professionally important qualities based on the introduction of the specialized course, titled “Developing the Individuality of Convicts”*. The developed specialized course (10 classroom

hours) was introduced in the framework of ethics and psychology of business relations, which belongs to optional disciplines. It aimed at deepening the convicts' reflection of life experience, harmonizing the opportunities of working professions in discovering the personal meaning of life and understanding the importance of professional activities. It covers such topics as "The Role of Self-Education in Personality Development", "Self-Cognition as a Factor of Personality Development", "Developing Competency in Interpersonal Communication", "Personal Characteristics of Success", "Modelling Personal and Professional Success". The main focus of the course is on the implementation of such specific principles as ensuring communication with reality (an analysis of specific examples from life, life experiences, situations); systematization (theoretical and practical materials have much contributed to developing personal qualities); emotionalizing the acquisition of educational material (the information has been presented emotionally).

The pedagogical experiment on the development of professional competency in students from vocational education institutions of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine consisted of the following three *stages*: diagnostics and organization (2015-2017), the main work (2017-2018), analysis and results (2018-2019). The formative stage of the experiment involved 380 students, who were pursuing the qualification of a skilled worker in different fields at the State Educational Centre No 14 in Odesa. A total of 380 students were divided into a control group (CG – 180 respondents) and an experimental group (EG – 200 respondents).

The formative stage of the experiment also involved 25 teachers and masters of vocational training from the same educational institution. The main requirements for the teaching staff included professional and research competence and a positive attitude towards the experiment. Almost the same starting conditions (age, gender and bodies of crime) were provided at the beginning of the formative stage of the experiment.

Before the experiment, CG and EG respondents sat entrance tests in the first lessons of such disciplines as "Job Hunting Techniques" and "Ethics and Psychology of Business Relations. Final tests were written in the final lessons of these disciplines.

3. Results

The study of psycho-pedagogical literature, regulatory documents and penal legislation shows that the main ways of resocialization in the penitentiary system are penitentiary regime, socially useful work, social and educational work, general and vocational training and public influence. Such scholars O. Betsa (2003), O. Ptashynskiy (2004), V. Synov (2002), O. Tretiak (2012), P. Vashchenko & A. Sulytskyi (2003), O. Vasylychenko (2013), D. Yahunov (2009) state that learning activity of convicts is aimed at correcting deviations in personality development, providing social-psychological rehabilitation and social re-adaptation. Educational centres at the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine are established to ensure the right of convicts to obtain a vocational profession. Educational activities of these institutions have the significant potential for re-socialization, focus on morale-building, enhance the level of general culture, develop a sense of dignity and expand the prospects of successful employment after obtaining a vocational profession in the production of the institution. The training of students from the special contingent at the state educational centres is characterized by a binary target structure, which involves introducing corrective programmes preventing intellectual degradation and using pedagogical tools facilitating resocialization through the acquisition of a specific vocational profession (Lovochkin, 2002; Zamula et al., 2003).

The analysis of relevant scientific works (Bailov, & Severyn, 2011; Bebenin, 2008; Beznosiuk, 2015; Butenko, 2010; Karaman, 2012; Tiugaeva, 1998) proves that a competent worker from the special contingent must have fundamental professional knowledge, know how to perform specific professional activities, produce the products which require the use of a creative approach and choose ways of producing them independently. Professional competency of the students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine is considered as the result of professional education, which involves reaching a proper level of professional self-awareness and developing a holistic system of needs and abilities needed for self-determination and self-realization in professional activity. The content of such a professional competency is viewed in the context of the following three positions: as a prerequisite for purposeful activity and its regulation; as the individual's activity, which motivates him or her towards professional activity; as a personal quality that defines settings for solving professional situations and tasks. Its structure is represented by such components as motivation, content and activity, procedures and practice, personal results.

According to V. Biletskyi (2005), N. Kreidun, O. Laktionov, A. Soroka, & S. Skokov (2007), N. Nychkalo (2000), V. Radkevych (2012), a *criterion* is considered as a kind of standard, which contains specific characteristics, based on which one can determine the real level of these students' professional competency. There are *motivational, content-related, practical and result-oriented* criteria. In turn, *indicators* are viewed as qualitative and quantitative characteristics, which help one to determine the intensity of a particular criterion. In this research, three *indicators* have been singled out in each criterion to identify the level of professional competency in the students. *Levels* are interpreted as the ratio of higher and lower development boundaries of all indicators of professional competency. The level description is based on the approaches of G. Zhukov, & P. Matrosov (2013) and G. Kruglikov (2005), which have enabled the authors of the paper to single out four levels (creative, productive, generative, primitive).

The results obtained after the entrance and final tests prove the effectiveness of the author's approach to developing professional competency based on the introduction of pedagogical conditions. Indeed, an average performance indicator in CG is equal to 3.256, in EG – to 3.935. There was a significant increase in EG respondents with a creative level – from 18 (9.0%) to 53 (26.50%), compared to CG – from 14 (7.78%) to 18 (10.00%). The experiment proves a significant decrease in EG students who have a primitive level of professional competency by all criteria – from 56 (28.00%) to 2 (1.00%), compared to CG – 49 (27.22%) to 21 (11.67%) (see Table 1).

Table 1

The results from developing professional competency in students at the beginning and at the end of the formative experiment

Groups	Stages	Levels of professional competency								Average performance level
		primitive		generative		productive		creative		
		Abstract number	%	Abstract number	%	Abstract number	%	Abstract number	%	
CG (180)	Entrance test	4	27.2	89	49.4	28	15.5	1	7.78	3.039
		9	2		4		6	4		

)	Final test	21	.67	110	61.11	31	17.22	18	10.00	3.256
EG (200)	Entrance test	56	3.00	92	46.00	34	17.00	18	9.00	3.070
	Final test	21	1.00	62	31.00	83	41.50	53	26.50	3.935

The criterion F (F_{emp} -CG) for CG students is equal to 1.1824, which goes beyond statistical probability (from 1.3 to 1.6), whereas that (F_{emp} -EG) for EG students reaches 1.3831, being within the tabular data for such a mathematical sum and indicating the probability of the results.

The effectiveness of the introduced pedagogical conditions for developing professional competency in students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine has been proved based on the results of the final stage of the formative experiment. The analysis of the obtained results shows that EG students demonstrate some positive dynamics of growth of the average performance indicator up to 3.935, whereas only up to 3.256 in CG. One can also observe a significant increase in the number of EG respondents with a creative level – from 18 (9.0%) to 53 (26.50%), compared to CG – from 14 (7.78%) to 18 (10.00%), as well as a significant decrease in the number of EG respondents with a primitive level of professional competency by all criteria –from 56 (28.00%) to 2 (1.00%). The significance of the results has been proved by methods of mathematical statistics based on the use of the criterion F ($p=5\%$), namely, F_{emp} -CG is equal to 1.1824, which goes beyond statistical probability, whereas F_{emp} -EG reaches 1.3831 and indicates the probability of the results.

It was necessary to introduce four pedagogical conditions (using the potential of a personality-oriented approach to boosting motivation towards learning; humanizing the relationships between teachers and students during their general professional training; reinforcing professional orientations of students by introducing innovative pedagogical technologies; improving personal and professionally important qualities based on the introduction of the specialized course, titled “Developing the Individuality of Convicts”) to enhance the effectiveness of developing professional competency in convicts. The specificity of these pedagogical conditions is determined by the nature and content of the structure of professional competency, as well as the peculiarities of the educational process in vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine. The introduction of these pedagogical conditions was based on stimulating personal and professional development

of the students through their involvement in practical situations of the subject-subject interaction; the equal communication between the teachers and the students based on the use of the specially designed “success situations”, as well as adherence to the three R’s theory; the modernization of traditional disciplines through introducing humanities-oriented information and implementing the project method, interactive learning, motivational pedagogical technologies; the creation of favourable microclimate based on positive attitudes, the use of non-verbal means of pedagogical support, problematic practical situations, as well as the organization of collective reflection.

4. Discussion

The scientific value of the obtained results is as follows:

– the effectiveness of the pedagogical conditions (using the potential of a personality-oriented approach to boosting motivation towards learning; humanizing the relationships between teachers and students during their general professional training; reinforcing professional orientations of students by introducing innovative pedagogical technologies; improving personal and professionally important qualities based on the introduction of the specialized course, titled “Developing the Individuality of Convicts”) has been *theoretically justified and experimentally verified for the first time*;

– the study of humanities and general professional disciplines in vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine has been *improved*;

– the content, forms and methods of professional training of the students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine have been *further developed*.

The practical value of the obtained results consists of developing and implementing methodical materials for improving the process of developing professional competency in the students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine during their study of humanities (Ukrainian Business Communication; Ethics and Psychology of Business Relations) and general professional disciplines (Information Technologies; The Fundamentals of Industry Economics and Entrepreneurship; Job Hunting Techniques). The methods of educational work by introducing the specialized course, titled “Developing the Individuality of Convicts” have been improved. A special portfolio for studying the level of professional competency in the students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine has been prepared.

The obtained results can be used in the training of students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine, as well as in the elaboration of training programmes and teaching materials for developing their professional competency. The fundamental principles, generalizations and conclusions can be used by the researchers working on monographs, textbooks on penitentiary pedagogy, theory and methods of vocational education and developing the concepts of building a system of vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine; by the students working on dissertations, term papers, projects.

This paper does not disclose all aspects of developing professional competency in students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine. Therefore, further research should aim to study pedagogical mechanisms influencing the improvement of professional competency during vocational theoretical and practical training, as well as the comparison of the experience collected by European countries in developing professional competency in students from the special contingent.

5. Conclusions

The summary of scientific sources shows that one of the main ways of convicts' re-socialization is vocational training, which improves the overall educational potential; broadens the worldview; develops knowledge, skills, cognitive interests, intellect; cultivates activity and morale-building; enhances self-organization and self-development skills; improves social prestige; positively affects self-realization; enriches the personal experience. In vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine, the educational process is characterized by the following characteristics: the objects under influence (convicts) have significant deviations in moral and legal consciousness and demonstrate sufficiently pronounced originality of mental states and social roles; a pedagogically unfavourable environment regulated by the penal legislation; most activities are perceived as compulsory; the results of the educational process cannot always be analyzed. Vocational education in penitentiary institutions performs instructional, regulatory, career guidance, educational and communicative functions. Besides, they have the significant potential for re-socialization, focus on morale-building, enhance the level of general culture, develop a sense of dignity and expand the prospects of successful employment after release from penitentiary institutions. Working with convicts includes specifying professional orientations; organizing vocational training;

elaborating effective curricula and programmes under the state standards on vocational education; creating proper conditions for training and industrial placement, as well as performing professional functions; providing the necessary information, educational, methodical and research materials, facilities. The training of students from the special contingent at the state educational centres is characterized by a binary target structure, which involves introducing corrective programmes preventing intellectual degradation and using pedagogical tools facilitating resocialization through the acquisition of a specific vocational profession.

Professional competency of the students from vocational schools of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine is considered as the result of professional education, which involves reaching a proper level of professional self-awareness and developing a holistic system of needs and abilities needed for self-determination and self-realization in professional activity. It is transformed into professionalism based on performing practical activities under the standard of a specific vocational profession. The structure of professional competency implies stable relationships between the components (motivation, content and activity, procedures and practice, personal results) and criteria (motivational, content-related, practical and result-oriented) ensuring the responsibility of workers from the special contingent for the quality of professional activities and increasing the importance of vocational professions in re-socialization. The indicators of the motivational criterion include well-developed internal motives to increase the level of professional competency; a steady interest in future professional activities; the motivation towards professional success. The indicators of the content-related criterion are as follows: a conscious choice of which vocational profession to engage in; the quality of results from improving professional competency; the need to increase the educational level and interest in the chosen profession. The indicators of the practical criterion involve the ability to independently design the improvement of professional competency; the high-quality performance of professional practical tasks; the ability to identify potential opportunities from obtaining vocational education after release from the penitentiary institution. The result-oriented criterion is characterized by the development of professionally important and personal qualities; the reflection on the development of professional competency and personal achievements, self-awareness, forecasting and correction of self-development. The authors of the paper have singled out four levels (creative, productive, generative, primitive) of professional competency. At the ascertaining stage of the experiment, a generative development level of all indicators of professional

competency has been identified in the majority of the students from the special contingent.

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As for the number of authors, there was such a research need. This is due to the large number of the research sample and the wide geography of educational institutions located at prisons. The ascertaining stage of the experiment was organized based on determination and effectiveness. It involved 400 students from five educational centres. The formative stage of the experiment involved 380 students, who were pursuing the qualification of a skilled worker in different fields at the State Educational Centre No 14 in Odesa. A total of 380 students were divided into a control group (CG – 180 respondents) and an experimental group (EG – 200 respondents). The formative stage of the experiment also involved 25 teachers and masters of vocational training from the same educational institution. The results of the research were implemented into the educational process of Odesa Educational Centre No 14, the Southern Educational Centre No 51, Bucha Educational Centky No 85, Zhovtovodsk Educational Centre No 26 and the Synelnykove Educational Center No 94. Two or three scholars worked at each educational centre. Each author trained teachers from these centres and conducted research together with the participants in the experiment, namely, the convicts who were currently serving sentences in prisons. All the authors have also taken part in the development of pedagogical conditions for developing professional competency in convicts and have introduced the methodology into the educational process.

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