The Role of Academic Departments in Organizing Students’ Scientific Research Work in Psychological and Pedagogical Classes


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Abstract

The article substantiates the role of academic departments in organizing scientific research work of students in psychological and pedagogical classes. The essence of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes is characterized and defined as a certain structure within educational organizations demonstrating its own specific characteristics. The study identifies the need for organizing students’ scientific research work, which allows expressing their intellectual potential through participation in the project, creative, and scientific research activities. The role of the pedagogical university academic department members who develop the scientific and methodological support for the program in organizing the educational process in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes is determined. The specifics of the academic department’s organization of the scientific research work of students in psychological and pedagogical classes at different levels of training, the propaedeutic, pre-profile, and profile, are disclosed.

Keywords: Scientific Research Work, Learner, Psychological and Pedagogical Classes, Pedagogical University, Academic Department.

Introduction

One of the critical directions in contemporary Russian education is improving the prestige of the profession of a teacher. A modern teacher has to be universally educated, erudite, and creative, able to find an approach to the child, respect their personality, and properly assess their abilities. The formation of such a teacher with deep intrinsic motivation requires time and innovative approaches to their training.

The pedagogical community needs personnel. According to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Mordovia, schools are experiencing a shortage of teachers, there are more than 20 vacancies in pre-school and additional education institutions (Shukshina, Zamkin, & Miroshkin 2014). This is explained by the intensive increase in the number of educational organizations in the region, changes in the conditions of the pedagogical activity, and an acute need for young creative school teachers who are perfectly aware of modern educational innovations and ready to follow the trends of the time.
What we believe to have great potential in the development of a contemporary competitive teacher is the organization of scientific research work with students as early as at the stage of school education. In our view, one of the conditions for the realization of a successive transition from school to university to ensure professional and personal training at the pre-university stage is the organization of specialized lessons. This suggests that the idea of creating psychological and pedagogical classes allows to “raise a teacher from the school environment” (Kovaleva, 2006; Ahern et al., 1994). In this association, the Mordovia State Pedagogical University named after M.E. Evseev (MSPU) is conducting targeted work on creating favorable conditions for introducing students to the pedagogical research culture and stimulating their interest in the profession, organizing a space for future applicants to conduct research work and immerse in the pedagogical environment of the university.

What we consider an adequate response to the challenges of the time is uniting the efforts of educational organizations in the sphere of vocational guidance and motivating school students to obtain pedagogical professions by means of creating specialized psychological and pedagogical classes following the resource center model based on a pedagogical university and organizing students’ scientific research work in these classes for their development and the improvement of the obtained knowledge, abilities, and skills.

Literature Review


Every educational organization that has introduced the concept of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes provided a great contribution to the development of the problems of profilization of Russian education. Education has never been a frozen sphere of work, therefore, the main idea behind specialized psychological and pedagogical classes is the type of innovation that allows not only for the development of an educational organization but also for coordinating the direction of this development with the educational needs of society (T.I. Shukshina (2019), Z.A. Kasko (2019), I.S. Sergeev (2009), S.N. Chistiakova (2007), H. Orkibi (2012), A.V. Khutirkow (2000), N.A. Shkilmenskaia (2008)).


Methods

The study aims to determine the role of the academic department in organizing students’ scientific research work in psychological and pedagogical classes.

In accordance with the study goal, the following objectives are established: to characterize the essence of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes; to determine the need for organizing the scientific research work of students in profile psychological and pedagogical classes; to identify the role of the academic department of a pedagogical university in organizing the educational process in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes; to provide a characteristic of the specific features of the academic department organizing students’ scientific research work in psychological and pedagogical classes at different levels of training.

The experiment was conducted from 2020 to the present time. The experimental study is conducted based on the Mordovian State Pedagogical University named after M.E. Evseev. Eleven specialized psychological and pedagogical classes of the Republic of Mordovia took part in the experiment.

The study is conducted using theoretical (analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature, synthesis, summarization, systematization of material on the problem of training future teachers, prediction, comparison, etc.) and empirical methods (questionnaire survey, interview, observation)
Results and Discussion

Addressing the first study objective concerning the definition of the essence of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes, the latter are understood by us as a group of students in an educational organization characterized by the selective principle of student recruitment, profiling through the inclusion of psychological and pedagogical disciplines in the curriculum, the provision of the activity-based approach to learning through the active development and use by students of the elements of educational technology, as well as by the presence of a well-functioning structure of interaction between educational organizations and other social partners. The departments of the Mordovia State Pedagogical University successfully developed the concept of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes for 6-11-grade students of general educational organizations. The development of the content and design of the concept accounted for the requirements established by the following documents: the Federal Law On Education in the Russian Federation of December 29, 2012, No. 273-FZ; Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of May 17, 2012, No. 413, Moscow, “On Approval of the Federal State Educational Standard of Secondary General Education (as amended)”; the Federal State Educational Standard of Secondary General Education (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia No. 413 of May 17, 2012, as amended on December 29, 2014, December 31, 2015, and June 29, 2017); The concept of profile education at the senior level of education approved by Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia on July 18, 2002, № 2783; the Federal list of textbooks recommended for use in the implementation of educational programs of primary general, basic general, and secondary general education”; Letter No. 03-413 of the Ministry of Education of Russia dated March 4, 2010 “On Methodological Recommendations on the Implementation of Elective Courses”; Methodological Recommendations of the Ministry of Education of Russia No. 03-412 of March 4, 2010, on the issues of organizing profile training; Decree of the Chief State Sanitary Doctor of the Russian Federation of September 28, 2020 No.28 “On Approval of Sanitary Rules SP 2.4. 3648-20 ‘Sanitary and Epidemiological Requirements for Organizations of Education and Training, Recreation, and Health Improvement for Children and Youth” (Registered on December 18, 2020, № 61573)).

The second objective of the study concerns identifying the need for organizing the scientific research work of students in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes. Herein we should note that in such classes, many students are presented with the opportunity to show their intellectual potential through participation in the project, creative, and scientific research activities. Participation in research work under the teacher’s supervision provides for the abilities and talents of students in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes to be disclosed and developed in the appropriate time, shapes the student’s personality, engages them in systematic socially significant activities, as well as promotes their successful socialization and self-realization in modern post-industrial society. In this regard, the scientific research work of students in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes serves as a necessary precondition for the development of motivation and individual abilities, as well as for the improvement of the quality of the obtained knowledge and skills, such as the ability to react to a problem situation appropriately, make correct assessments and choices, the ability to work with large volumes of information, to find and utilize resources, and put the obtained knowledge and skills into practice.

As part of the third research objective, it has to be noted that the concept of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes is founded on the relevant triggers of professional self-identification and the professional markers of the identification of the educational and scientific trajectory, which resolves the strategic task of the region’s education policy – the creation of positive vocational guidance networking practices for the graduates of educational organizations in Saransk and the Republic of Mordovia.

In the meantime, a great role in the organization of students’ research work is played by the pedagogical university academic department functioning in the system of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes. For the effective organization of this type
of students’ work, the academic department together with educational organizations and authorities in the field of education develop scientific and methodological support for the implementation of the program of profile training for students of psychological and pedagogical classes. Within the framework of the scientific and methodical support, the pedagogical university in general and the academic department, in particular, provide support for upbringing programs, organize students’ project and scientific research activities, pedagogical practices (“pedagogical probation”), and mentoring, as well as monitor the learning outcomes of students in the specialized psychological and pedagogical classes.

Resolving the fourth objective of the study, we note that in the organization of the research work of students in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes, the academic department and the pedagogical university provide the human resources, material and technical, scientific-methodical, and educational support for the educational program of the specialized psychological and pedagogical classes, as well as the organization of project and research activities of students in these classes, hold scientific competitions and Olympiads for students of regional general educational organizations, while disseminating the experience obtained in the process (Kireeva, 2008; Shukshina et al., 2016).

It also has to be noted that students’ scientific research work in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes is organized by three levels of training: the propaedeutic (for students in grades 5-6), the pre-profile (for students in grades 8-9), and the profile (for students in grades 10-11). At the propaedeutic stage (6th-7th grades), students of psychological and pedagogical classes are familiarized with the teaching profession and involved in research and project activities. The pre-profile stage (8th-9th grades) focuses on the students learning the fundamentals of psychological and pedagogical work as part of extracurricular activities and mastering the “Project Workshop” elective course within the section of the curriculum developed by the participants in educational activities. At the profile stage (10th-11th grades), the scientific foundations of pedagogy and psychology are mastered by students in the propaedeutic disciplines “Fundamentals of Psychology” and “Fundamentals of Pedagogy”, the elective course “Individual project”, in mastering the professional training program “Specialist in the organization and support of children’s collective activities (counselor)”, in research and project activities, Olympiad and competition activities of psychological and pedagogical orientation, in the organization of professional tests, and social and pedagogical practice. Meanwhile, the interaction between university academic department and the students of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes is based on a system within the educational process, in particular, with the use of distance learning technologies (based on educational organizations), such as extracurricular activities or additional education (research associations, project activities, etc.): the propaedeutic, pre-profile, and profile stages, as well as educational shifts during vacation time (based on MSPU), which include research project activities (psychological and pedagogical and social projects): the propaedeutic, pre-profile, and profile stages (Shukshina et al., 2018).

The work of the academic department on the organization of the scientific research work of students in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes results in the social effect of the introduction of the model of psychological and pedagogical classes by the university academic department. This effect can be examined at several levels. The graduates of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes obtain the experience of living and functioning in the VUCA world, a world that is unstable, uncertain, ambiguous, and highly complex. A student gets the opportunity to develop competencies in the four spheres of personality development: hard skills, soft skills, self skills, and digital skills (Latona, & Browne, 2001). The results for the pedagogical university and the academic department include the activation of the socio-pedagogical context of students’ activities, the creation of a system of lifelong specialized learning, and social partnership between teachers in higher education and practicing educators. Benefits for the region include the improved quality of education in graduates who are motivated and oriented on future professional activity in education, and, accordingly, the reduced percentage of students who leave teacher training during their studies, as well as graduates who end up stuck in the profession. Further on, we can assume the shortage of professionally interested and qualified teaching staff being filled and the prestige of the teaching profession increasing.

Conclusion

The conducted study allows drawing the following conclusions:

A specialized psychological and pedagogical class is a group of students in an educational organization characterized by the selective principle of student recruitment, profiling through the inclusion of psychological and pedagogical disciplines in the curriculum, the provision of the activity-based approach to learning through the active development and use by students of the
elements of educational technology, as well as by the presence of a well-functioning structure of interaction between educational organizations and other social partners.

In specialized psychological and pedagogical classes, many students get the opportunity to show their intellectual potential through participation in the project, creative, and scientific research activities.

A great role in the organization of students’ research work is played by the pedagogical university academic department functioning in the system of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes. For the effective organization of this type of students’ work, the academic department together with educational organizations and authorities in the field of education develop scientific and methodological support for the implementation of the program of profile training for students of psychological and pedagogical classes.

Students’ scientific research work in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes is organized by three levels of training: the propaedeutic (for students in grades 5-6), the pre-profile (for students in grades 8-9), and the profile (for students in grades 10-11).

The work of the academic department on the organization of the scientific research work of students in specialized psychological and pedagogical classes results in the social effect of the introduction of the model of psychological and pedagogical classes by the university academic department, which can be examined at three levels: for the graduates of specialized psychological and pedagogical classes, for the pedagogical university and the academic department, and for the region.

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