

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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The article deals with the problems of theory and practice in international cooperation for increasing the graduates' competitive ability of vocational training institutions in Russia on the basis of implementation of adapted potential of international cooperation foreign experience in vocational education.

Key words: *international collaboration in professional education, adapted international professional education experience, integration of Russian professional education into international educational community, background and perspectives in professional education collaboration between Russia and America.*



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At present the importance of in-depth comparative investigation of foreign advanced educational practices and their interpretation in terms of Russian higher education has increases. From our point of view, the potential of comparative and international education has not been sufficiently used for development of national educational policy.

In the course of investigation the international organizations reports were used (UNESCO, CEDEFOP, ILO, OECD, World Bank, European Council, European Training Foundation etc.); scientific literature in vocation and personnel training (Cramer S., Herr E., Kutscha G., Plant P., Super D. and others); analysis of more than 50 periodicals including international ones: «Comparative Education» (London. UK); «Journal of Philosophy of Education» (Oxford. UK); issues of Comparative and International Education Society «Comparative Education Review» (Chicago, IL. USA) and so on; American: American Association of Educational Research «American Educational Research Journal» (Washington, DC); «Journal of Vocational Behavior» (Orlando, FL) and others; German: «Die Berufsbildende Schule», «Pädagogische Rundschau» and others, as well as Internet databases on vocational, engineering training and training for ERIC career, Web-pages of numerous training institutions; researches of Russian scientists in vocational training structures

in the countries involved, results of international educational projects in this field.

Nowadays, structure of general and vocational education has lost one of its major achievements – providing students with fundamental knowledge, development of their creativity. This fact is shown by the assessment results of training level of Russian university applicants. Secondly, the period of vocational training is reduced in Russia; there is no interaction in all levels of vocational training and industry that results in failure of native higher education to provide recruitment needs of labour market. It should be mentioned that in the modern world there is a tendency to increase but not decrease the term of apprenticeship in the structure of basic and vocational training. In general, basic education lasts 12–13 years, but in Russia only 11. The same tendency is peculiar to vocational training. For example, in the USA there is the system of vocational training «2 + 2 + 2»: elementary education lasts 2 years, secondary – 2 years and highest – 2 years. In Germany training at higher vocational training institutions lasts from 6 to 7 years.

Of particular interest is the experience in a number of international educational programs. Among them there is Russian-American program «Education. Business» initiated by the Center of Education and Training for Employment,

the Ohio State University and a group of researchers-teachers from Moscow, Kazan, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Barnaul, Khabarovsk, Kemerovo and other cities in 1990.

The team of researchers, managers, lecturers as well as businessmen was formed; they became permanent participants of the program. The Center of Education and Training for Employment, the Ohio State University (professor Chester K. Hansen, a supervisor of Russian-American program), having significant experience in international educational project implementation, presented a set of documents necessary for opening and working of joint schools, found partner school – Engineering Center Tolls in Plain city, Ohio, found sponsor for support of school with newest academic literature – «Glenco» edition, MacMillan – Macgro-Hill department.

In 1990–2001 Russian-American vocational schools, vocational centers and colleges of Ohio, Oklahoma, Visconti, Alaska worked as partners. There were issues of journals «Education. Business» (Russia) and «New Careers» (USA). Training of RAVS students and teachers was arranged in Tomsk, Yakutsk, Omsk, Barnaul, Khabarovsk, and Kemerovo and in partner-schools – Engineering Center Tolls in Plain city, Ohio and in Engineering college of Waukesha county, Visconti (residence in the USA was at the expense of American partners). The delegation exchange was based on self-funding. Continuation of cooperation and experience exchange among RAVS partners is supposed via seminars and training courses. In total, nearly 2000 Russian students and teachers, 150 lecturers were trained in the USA.

The results of research are publication of multi-author international monographs «Modern Tendencies in Vocational Training Development», «Comparative Analysis of Vocational Training Systems in Russia and Abroad: Structure, Organization, Content and Assessment», «Vocational Training in Russia and Abroad»; arrangement of experimental grounds in educational institutions of different types to study the problems of graduates' vocational training and their participation in educational programs in Russia and the USA; arrangement of language practice for students from Russia and the USA; arrangement of elective courses «Career

Planning», «Development of Students' Value System», «Communicative Culture» based on the foreign experience.

In the course of comparative-pedagogical research the educational potential of foreign experience in vocational and engineering education is implemented (colleges and universities of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, North Carolina) in the system of Russian Education. The dual system of engineering training is applied (Yurga Engineering Institute, TPU and Oldenburg University, Germany) for innovative production [1]; technique of bicultural education (kindergarten – elementary school “Cristina” complex, Tomsk) is used in cooperation with organization «Senior Experts' System» (Bonn, FRG). Experience of resource centers (on the basis of adapted experience of educational institutions of Great Britain (Eastern Birmingham College, Central Collage Wirell)) is introduced in the institutions of secondary and higher vocational education in Siberian region (Tomsk, Kemerovo, Omsk).

The most significant difference between native and foreign educational systems consists in the fact that students of eastern secondary schools, in addition to general secondary education, get initial vocational training. Every American school has training centers where students are trained in various jobs. The center facilities are funded by the enterprises which are potential employers for the graduates. In Germany the places for pupils to study are given directly at the enterprises. At present in FRG there are about 550 thousand of working positions for pupils at the enterprises where the basic vocational training is performed under a master's supervision. In this case the basic vocational training is supported both by employers and the government.

Another important problem of domestic education is the fact that professional training at senior secondary school does not assist in pupils' vocational self-identification and is only aimed at additional enhanced studying of this or that academic majors. There are not any engineering or vocational profiles in schools, cooperation between school and enterprise is absent, as a result of which the latter does not participate in development of school's material and technical resources. The item

of vocational training is extremely significant for our country. Today vocational education in Russia is reduced to in-depth study of definite subjects. But in eastern countries vocational training includes by all means vocational and pre-vocational training, i.e. preparation for professional activity and implies the beginning of professional career formation, sustainable vocational self-identification. According to the data of our research, only 40–45 % of secondary school leavers are ready for choice in professional career [3].

It is paradox that Russian school-leavers having passed USE (Unified State Examination) have the right to enter domestic university of any profile, whereas abroad in order to enter university of definite profile a school-leaver is to apply certificate of vocational training relative to the university profile and portfolio with achievements in the sphere relative to the university profile in addition to secondary school certificate. In the system of Russian higher education it influences negatively the pupils' vocational self-identification and motivation for study and vocational activity as well as the quality of their preparation for entering vocational university [1].

The alarming symptom is youth unemployment growth particularly among the graduates from secondary and higher vocational institutions [2]. According to the data of employment center (EC) of Siberia, the youth unemployment amounts 25–30 %. Therefore, there appears the need for registering some standards of youth employment government regulation in law.

In cooperation with state employment centers in Siberia area we are investigating the problems of youth unemployment that, according to the data, is still growing. One of the basic reasons for this is reduction of the number of elementary, secondary and higher vocational educational institutions (if 7 years ago 1,5 mln. students were trained in domestic institutions of basic vocational training, now they amount about 400 thousand). Suppose previously the Russian institutions of higher vocational training cooperate with services responsible for graduates' employment, now the graduates have to search for jobs by themselves. Unfortunately, in the

structure of Russian vocational education there is no complete interaction system of training institutions and employers. There are no legislative regulations for youth employment by employer. At present, as a rule, students' internship is not arranged at the enterprises. In this aspect the experience of Novosibirsk Installation College and employers' cooperation in arrangement of training center is rather interesting. Here the enterprises deliver modern equipment and technologies for construction, installation and low-height housing construction and provide vacancies for students and graduates of college. There appears a demand for development of new mutually beneficial relationship between training institutions, employers and regulatory bodies to solve the problem of youth's employment, the graduates of higher vocational training institutions, in particular. In the course of joint investigation in the given problem definite positive experience has been accumulated.

Nowadays, there is a problem of labour scarcity in specialists with secondary vocational training at the domestic labour market. Solution of this problem consists, first of all, in development of basic vocational training system, but not in its reduction or inclusion of basic vocational training into enterprises. The system of basic vocational training in Russia is to be incorporated into the system of secondary and higher vocational training in accordance with international tendencies. Besides, it is necessary to reach the prevalence of students' number in the basic vocational training system over their number in secondary and higher vocational training systems. At present comprehensive secondary schools in Russia are mostly focused on preparation of pupils for university entering, where about 80% school-leavers enter, whereas in the USA the part of university entrant school-leavers amounts 44%, but in Germany – 38%. Besides, after graduation from university more than 50% of Russian graduates do not work in their speciality [2].

The quality of vocational training is determined, first of all, by students' individual abilities and their motivation for vocational training that is necessary to take into account at enrollment into vocational training institutions apart from USE results.

Therefore, the significance of research practical resource centers development is growing. They are to integrate pilot training institution. The cooperation of theoreticians and patricians engaged in study of vocational training problems as well as teachers from different regions among themselves and with their foreign colleagues contributes to the development of vocational training system modernization in Russia and enables its further integration into international education cooperation.

One of the important problems is improvement in quality of competitive specialists' training, particularly graduates of secondary vocational institutions, the solution of which is teaching staff qualification upgrading and re-training.

To solve this problem the international program «Education and youth employment in Russia and abroad» has been developed in association with Institute of Theory and History of Pedagogy of RAE (Moscow), Kuzbass Regional Institute of Vocational Training Development (Kemerovo), Research Institute of Vocational Training Development (Moscow), Department of Organization and Technology of Higher Vocational Education (Tomsk Polytechnic University) and western Michigan University (USA), Munich Engineering University (Germany), Harbin Engineering University (China). Within the framework of the given project the colleges are created in Siberian region where students are trained in curricula approved by the foreign organizations: «Qualification Upgrading at the Enterprises», «Management in Research-Educational» and «Leader of Training». Performance of every program is accompanied by receiving of corresponding document (certificate). Both Russian and foreign specialists take part in the process of training. In this aspect the experience in drivers' training is interesting

in Kemerovo Vocational Engineering College, Tomsk Design and Service College, Novokuznetsk Information Vocational College, Belovo Engineering College etc.

At present the issue on possibility of internship in a number of foreign companies is being discussed (car service, service and design, construction etc.).

Hence, the multi-functional foreign center of applied qualifications is established that will allow teachers of secondary vocational training to enhance their job. In Siberian region experimental grounds are formed on the basis of RAE and Kuzbass Regional Institute of Vocational Training Development for performance the main tasks of the program (establishment of training centers in innovation technologies, students' and graduates' employment, production internship and teachers' qualification upgrade at profile enterprises, development of conditions for students to receive versatility training or additional qualification etc.).

Adapted training potential of the foreign countries' experience in the sphere of vocational training aimed at integration of Russian education into international educational cooperation is determined by the relationships of global tendencies and regional (national) peculiarities in development of training systems to employment; general approaches to modernization of organizational and didactic bases of lifelong vocational learning both at concept and institutional levels; reality and technology of foreign pedagogical innovation transfer stated in the process of research in the conditions of Russian education.

Support of vocational training institutions as a unique system of lifelong learning with prolongation of academic period, enhancement in vocational training is a perspective way to the sustainable development of the Russian society.

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