

MODEL OF ADVANCED TRAINING OF TEACHING STAFF IN THE CONTEXT OF INFORMAL EDUCATION

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Proceedings of the first stage of the 11th International Conference “Lifelong Learning: Continuous Education for Sustainable Development”, which was held in May-June 2013 in St. Petersburg, include the report “Education Project – relevant form of continuing professional development of teachers. The paper presents facts that reveal understanding of the educational project as a modern form of informal intercorporate training and continuing professional development of teachers by example of implementation of the two-year (2010 – 2012) Russian-Finnish project “ICT – Environment of Learning. Creating and Using together” [1, 2].

In addition to addressing the major challenges of the project the analysis of its basic concept has allowed the project team to implement the idea of creation of the international model of teachers’ advanced training aimed at the professional expertise development in creation and use of electronic study materials (hereinafter the ESM) in the educational process.

The work in the project has been organized as a process of informal learning, in which perception and implementation of the possibilities of using modern information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning took place and professional and social skills of teachers-developers of the ESM have been formed. Main point in this process takes not so much transfer of information from expert to teachers, as organized intensive activity of participants at all stages of the project: Planning – Development (piloting) – Assessment, in the course of which professional experience of the project participants was accumulated, comprehended, presented and shared, and specific skills, relevant to the professional activity of the modern teacher, were developed.

Model of advanced training was **based on the following principles:**

Education (for professional development) is considered as a process. During the project, the process of advanced training was implemented in informal learning. Recently, in the field of education the issue of the recognition of not only formal but also non-formal and informal education is becoming more and more important. Project

activity, which is accompanied not only by sharing of experience in the form of seminars but also by creation of useful product by the participants, provided that it is carefully organized and maintained, can be safely attributed to the process of informal education. In accordance with the rules of this process school teams a lot of time work independently, taking part in various activities: create a product, participate in workshops, interact with partners at virtual seminars, acquaint themselves with partners experience in the course of the study visit and discuss their experience in development with partner schools at workshops, visualize and represent their experience.

Educational activities of the project were carried out not so much in to transfer the theoretical knowledge, as to help in organization of the independent activities of its participants and demand further self-study of the topic with the help of materials, suggested by the experts, which were placed in the information-educational environment of the project, on the page of the member-schools. Workshops and seminars in the project were held to discuss a variety of approaches to the planning, selection and reasoning of pedagogical models, the development of the ESM, exchange of experience in creation of developmental tasks for students and the organization of assessment of their activities with the ESM.

Practice-oriented goal-setting. The learning process is aimed at solving practical problems formulated by the learners. The choice of the theme of the developed ESM exacted from school teams the analysis of their own teaching practice, the requirements demanded by operating educational standards, adequate determination of the informatization level and record of development programs of their schools.

Training and development through practical activities. The “ICT – Environment of Learning. Creating and Using together” project directed teachers towards participation in an organized, planned practical work. *Educational effect* was achieved through the phased implementation of the project activities with the use of activity-oriented educational technologies, the results of which were achieved with the help of pedagogically expedient use of various ICT tools. Step-by-step results of these actions were published in the developed ESM and presented in the framework of the workshops and other project activities. *Developmental effect* was achieved by piloting the ESM in the learning process, which made it possible to comprehend advantages and risks of the ready products, and make their adjustment for further development and use. The achievement of the developmental effect was reflected in the interiorization of the project activity of teachers, as any complex

action must be implemented outside, before it becomes a part of the mind. Teachers “felt” the right course to meet the changing demands of the profession, be in line with the society.

Cooperation and exchange of experience as a source of knowledge. The “ICT – Environment of Learning. Creating and Using together” project was based on co-operation between member-schools, which jointly look for answers to the raised questions concerning development, planning, and evaluation of the ESM. In order to establish and maintain interaction in the project the Moodle platform was used, where the activities of member-schools were carried out with the assistance of experts. Cooperation and interaction on the platform Moodle served as main source of information for school teams in the course of training. All the project activity was accompanied by an international team of experts (Russian and Finnish), which advised the school teams and provided assistance during individual meetings and school visits.

Self-development and self-assessment. Advanced training was based on the life-long learning concept and self-development. This approach to teaching required the use of other learning organization and knowledge assessment system, which is carried out not in order to control the end result or fixing of intermediate results, but helps the learner to see his progress and challenges, and most importantly, and mainly the further professional growth prospects, forming a key development skill – **impartial** self-appraisal. The proposed advanced training model places in the center of the training program the issue of formation of professional and social skills of teachers in the process of the ESM creation at three stages of the project: Planning – Development – Assessment. At the same time the entire work of the project team is aimed at the development of the school and the quality of its work as a whole, rather than development of one teachers or group of teachers. As mentioned above, the training took place through joint implementation of the project by school teams representing ten schools in Finland and Russia.

Throughout the project **two groups of competencies were developed:**

Professional capacity of teachers associated with the choice of the ESM theme, pedagogical model of its implementation and detection of its creation goals, in other words, competences required for the development of the ESM and organization of the educational process with the use of the ESM.

Social competences, which allow to work in the school team with fellow teachers, in a team of teachers with students, in an interna-

tional team with colleagues, taking a variety of opinions and showing tolerance, respecting the principles of interaction in a multicultural environment.

At each stage of the project a group of competencies, which were necessary for the performance of the project tasks, was formed, which later significantly intensified the educational process with the use of the ESM on various subjects. Competences formed cyclically, in accordance with quality cycle (Deming cycle) [3], where each phase of activity was interconnected with the subsequent and preceding phase. Planning was based on evaluation of existing conditions of school and its teams, and in accordance with the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards and priorities of the school. Development could not be performed without planning. And it was possible to estimate that which was planned and developed.

Monitoring of development. For organization of monitoring, the advanced training model was based on *the idea of formative assessment*. Monitoring and assessment in the project were carried out to help and support school teams at all stages of the project. Taking into account various problems of estimation, evaluation tools in which self-control method played a leading role were used.

The presented model of advanced training, which developed in the “ICT – Environment of Learning. Creating and Using together” project, can be spread and, if necessary, adapted to the conditions of formal education as an effective and attractive for the participants, who strive for professional development.

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