

The Organization of Teaching Process for the Development of Key Competencies (case study: Future Managers)

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ABSTRACT

This article is focused on the development of the organizational forms of future managers training for the development of their key competencies, namely, creativity and the ability to work in a team. The analysis of works of the researchers in the field of management and pedagogics shows that small groups as an organizational form has great potential for the development of the professionally significant creative abilities of future managers. The article shows methods of moderation and structuralization of small groups that are necessary for their effective functioning. The developed and well-grounded conditions of cooperative learning proposed in this study are universal and easy to use and can be used by teachers while training future specialists at different disciplines.

KEYWORDS

Key competence, professional activity of a manager, small groups, moderation, foreign language, creative abilities, cooperation, visualization

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Introduction

Urgency of the problem

The analysis of works in the professional field of management shows that managers have difficulties in problem apprehension, definition and their solving. This makes difficult the fulfillment of the most important professional task of a manager, namely, the provision of the profitability of the enterprise (Baklasova & Kazakov, 2016). The researches also say that managers are inert,

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do not work creatively as modern economic situation requires, are unable to react flexibly to the changes in the economic sphere (Sakhieva & Frolova, 2016).

Professional activity of a manager is a very complicated kind of human activity. The abilities of manager nowadays are the important element of his professional activity as well as his professional knowledge. Managerial labour is connected with the team management and is impossible outside the team. While task solving manager engages consultants and experts in different fields (law, technical, financial etc.). Creative manager works in small groups taking part in designing of innovational and investment activity, advertising strategy, connected with further development of entrepreneurial and commercial activity.

In this kind of activity manager bears responsibility of coordination and the analysis of its effectiveness. He must bring together and analyze work done by the work group and make effective decision on this basis.

Many management researchers try to determine skills that are characteristic features of the effective managers. "The team building" skill and "team work" are accentuated as key competences. Moreover, vice versa, the inability to create and manage team and to organize team work are pointed out as one of the main reasons of managerial failures.

Effective Organizational Forms for the Development of Future Managers' Key Competencies

The analysis of researches shows that small groups are the organizational form that has great potential for the development of professionally relevant creative abilities of students future managers. In the opinion of innovative teachers all innovations in educational process can be implemented only in the cooperation context. In the atmosphere of competition students' communication becomes minimal, mutual help is limited, false and inadequate information is communicated. Thus, the atmosphere of competition and individual training partly prevents active knowledge creation and talent development by isolating students and creating negative relations between students and teachers.

We use cooperative learning because it provides the atmosphere that enables the development of the students' talent. We follow the recommendations of the American authors who pay important attention to the preparational educational work where the important role is given to the size of the groups, procedures of the roles distribution for the provision of cooperation (Burenkova, 2000). Carefully structured cooperative learning creates conditions where students are cognitively, physically and psychologically actively engaged into the creation of their own knowledge that is a very important step into the change from passive and impersonal traditional character of the process of education. These methods and tools are original and innovative, with their help cognitive and social roles intercross that stimulates learning, creativity, cognitive and social development

Literature Review

Conditions, methods and tools of activation of creative abilities are well grounded in different works (De Bono, 1994; Buzan, 2012; Zinovkina, 1998; Sidelnikova, 2009). Different aspects of future managers creative thinking development are viewed in the works of O.N. Yarygin, S.S. Rudakov & E.S. Roganov (2012), I.I. Shelomentseva (2009), Kaplunovitch (2009). The questions



of development professional competency of future managers were viewed in the works of Ya.V. Vedomskaya (2013), V.N. Aniskin & E.V. Zamara (2011), L.V. Lazareva (2010). The problems of the efficiency of future managers training were viewed in the works of N.A. Barybina (2008), R. Glorier (2014), N.I. Sozontova (2013).

However, it should be noted that the potential of cooperative learning, namely, long term small groups for the development of key competencies (creativity) for future managers has not been used. The analysis of works of these and other authors shows that the problems of development of future managers' key competencies, namely creativity and teamwork, is very sharp and hasn't become yet a subject of special pedagogical research.

Methodological Framework

Methodological background of the research were general scientific objectivity concept, demanding integrated consideration of factors producing this or that phenomena supposing the exclusion of subjectivity, one-sidedness in selection and evaluation of facts; theories of systemic and personal activity approach to the study of pedagogical phenomena; trends of socio-economic development and scientific-technological progress; ideas of personality formation and training of future specialists.

Theoretical background

We use main and long-term groups with constant staff members because they have many positive moments for establishing creative friendly atmosphere of positive cooperation necessary for the effective development of creative process. The use of main groups improves classes attendance, the quality and quantity of the educational material, personalizes work and educational experience. Main groups unlike temporary groups (for example for one or two seminars) enable creation of long-term and mindful atmosphere with groupmates where students support each other's educational success. Mutual help of small group participants provides students' academic progress, cognitive and social development (Burenkova, 2000).

It is not enough to say «work together», «be a team», «cooperate» in order to create cooperative atmosphere. A special work order is required to create cooperation. The principles of cooperation structurization is not a set of elements but a regime and only its regular observance creates conditions for the effective cooperation (Burenkova, 2000).

It is necessary to note that some teachers are aware of the main elements of cooperation (moderation) as a rule. However, the potential of the efficiency of small groups is often not high because teachers do not use knowledge on achievements of cooperation on practice. That is why not every small group has all necessary features for the efficient functioning: positive interdependence, personal contacts, personal and cooperative responsibility, social skills of work in small teams, the discussion of the results of cooperative work, optimal quantitative composition and compensative character of the group members' abilities.

Moderation as the main element in the educational process

The use of moderation in the educational process helps to overcome the difficulties during the organization of education in small groups. In teaching foreign language the use of moderation enables to enlarge students' communicative culture, develops the ability to listen, to give reasons, to ask questions and give answers, enables to develop abilities that are necessary for students' professional activity. Moderation helps to comprehend and remember foreign language material more successfully because uses communication as a form of discussion, that results in the acquisition of the educational material's volume increase in comparison with lecture 10 times more (Yerofeev et al., 1998).

Moderation itself doesn't bring in something new into the contents of the foreign language but provides the achievement of the effective level of the group communication and development of everyone's abilities and helps to actualize the potential of every person enlarges the efficacy of every lesson (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994). The lecturer as an organizer of communication must have knowledge in the sphere of moderation in the educational problem but not necessarily to be a highly qualified specialist in this problem. "Moderator is the specialist in process but not in content" (Petrov, 2005).

Moderation in the lecturer's activity starts with small groups' organization. We form small groups with small amount of three or four participants. This increases the flexibility of cognitive activity controlling and the efficiency of every group member and the small group as a whole (Zinovkina, 1998). Other reasons are the following:

1. We give very short period of time for fulfilling creative tasks that is why small amount of students is more effective. The students will require less time to organize work, act more quickly and every member will have more free time.

2. According to American researchers the smaller the group the harder it is for students to act passively while fulfilling group task. Small size groups increase the visibility of students' efforts so the responsibility of all participants increases.

3. When group size enlarges the interaction between group members becomes more complex because the bigger the size the more skillful must be its participants. In group of two the students must manage two types of interaction. The group of four will have 12 types.

4. The larger the group the less interaction will its members have. As the result the group solidarity is smaller, friendship is weaker and personal support is weaker.

5. The smaller the group the easier it is to discover problems that students face while working together. The problems of leadership, unsolved conflicts among group members and waiting others fulfill their part of work and also many other problems are more visible when groups are small (Burenkova, 2000).

The teacher organizes the body of small group together with students because they have to work long time together and that is why every member has the right to say his wish about the composition of a small group. The opinion of students is taken into consideration because in case of formation of small groups according to the knowledge level or way of perceiving information there is a possibility that student can enter a group of those members with whom he will not have psychological compatibility. This fact can interfere the creation of



favourable friendly atmosphere of free communication and creative environment because “the heart of cooperative efforts is a positive connection” (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). In context of our research we should remember that creativity more than intellect is defined by the factors of the environment. Creativity depends on the opportunities that provides the environment for the realization of the potential that everyone has (Agisheva, 2011; Nurutdinova et al., 2016a; Nurutdinova et al., 2016b).

To organize small groups we use sociometry method. Every student with weak communicative skills (with whom nobody wanted to work with or he was chosen by small amount of students) is placed one by one by the teacher into the already formed according to the student’s preferences group. So, the teacher doesn’t form whole group of students with weak communicative skills (following Johnson & Johnson, 1994 ideas).

This fact allows to overcome the homogeneity of the group. As a rule, according to the researches, if students choose group themselves they form homogeneous groups (Burenkova, 2000). Self-chosen group is the least recommended by the American researches procedure. If students choose group themselves then it always happens that students aimed at high achievements work with the same students, weak students work with weak, male students work with male.

These groups are not recommended to be used for the development of creative abilities of future managers, because manager at work needs the ability of “diversity management”. Management researchers have found that managers must avoid the principle of similarity while recruitment, exclude from the staff those who differ from them. That is why manager must organize his team according to the same principle as the study of inefficient organizations shows that the loss of diversification in the staff leads to the sensitivity in the environment changes and the ability to take new non-standard decisions.

The advantages of heterogeneous groups (where students show different abilities) according to the American researchers are the following:

- 1) The diversity of ideas, perspectives and different tools of problem solving.
- 2) A cognitive disbalance is created that stimulates creativity, learning, cognitive and social development.
- 3) The students are involved into a more complex process of reflexing, finding cause-and-effect relations, more often they participate in the discussion of the study material that increases the depth of comprehension, the quality of argumentation and the accuracy of long-term memorizing.

Allocation of duties between students is the last preparatory stage of structuring of small group. The activity of a manager is multifunctional and connected with building up small work groups that unite specialists of different specialization (law, finance, technical sphere etc.), and involves innovational activity. As we have already noted, besides the ability to work in group, manager needs to fulfill the following complex functions: to coordinate the activity of workgroup, analyze its efficiency, to come to consensus and to bring together done by the workgroup and to make effective decision on this basis. Taking into account these peculiarities in managers’ activity we must organize the students’ work in small groups, fulfill different duties.

In order to realize this goal we use sequential execution of the following duties (roles) by students: manager, supervisor (knowledge acquisition, level of comprehension), consensus finder, minute-taker (secretary), who fulfill their different duties with the aim of training skills necessary for the manager in team work and specific for it.

In small groups the students are involved in the managerial activity etc. that helps students to master in practice the fundamentals of the managerial science, train managerial skills in team. The manager of the group gives special attention to the students with weak communicative skills. In order to help group managers we have designed the content of the organizational work of small group, formulate the duties of its manager and every member. For example: methodical and material supply of seminars, arrangements of projects, provision with hand-out materials, selection of methodological and referential literature, rendering timely advice in need thereof students, organization of business communication on the problem etc. (Zinovkina,1998).

In cooperative groups the forms of responsibility are divided into roles that help the group to achieve its goal – manager, supervisor, minute-taker, time-keeper. Such roles as manager, consensus finder help the participants of the group create efficient work relations with each other. These roles also improve the quality of learning. For example, the role of supervisor means that he asks his groupmates to explain the acquired material. By using the role of supervisor we follow the experience of the American researchers who have carried out many studies on learning efficiency and have founded out that “comprehension check” allows to acquire higher level of student’s knowledge and achievement (Perry, 1988). In normal conditions, the teacher doesn’t have the possibility to check all students, that is why the role of supervisor widens the control zone at the seminar.

The casting of roles depends on the level of group well-formedness. The duties of consensus finder we give out later when the group participants are used to their duties because this role is more complicated and doesn’t naturally occur in groups. That is why we introduce this procedure on a step-by-step basis looking at the maturity of the group relations and the degree of mental activity skills. So that every student can get practice of fulfilling of this or that role occurring at manager’s work the roles are distributed at every level of our designed model of the development of professionally relevant creative abilities of students future managers.

Participation in this kind of activity allows to develop professionally relevant creative abilities of students future managers. Sequential execution of managerial duties and supervisor develops emotional and volitional qualities and motivation for self-development; the duties of the minute-taker and consensus finder – the ability to bring together complex economic data in conditions of huge informational flow, gain information, the ability to organize and summarize the information offered by the employees.

In order to keep dynamism in relations of a small group we offer the group to give it a name and formulate five principles of cooperative work. After that students tell them to others in class. More often among the principles students name those of partnership: “to listen to the opinion of everyone”, “to use the vigour of argument”, “to be patient with other’s different opinions” etc., sometimes there is an authoritarian trend: “majority rule”, the principle of one-



man management: “the manager is always right”. Anyway, the group and every student get rather interesting information to think over (Sidelnikova, 2009). This allows student having the duties of consensus finder and the teacher to have extra means of influence on the groups in case of problems in cooperative work he can appeal to the worked out rules of cooperation (Pugachev, 2003).

In our research, small groups have didactic tasks during training process. For the teacher they are a support in the organization of creative research students’ work during seminars: they help to organize work on the tools of solving creative tasks, create multi authored mind maps and hold discussions. Small groups organize students’ communication in training process and beyond, their co-authorship, mutually enrich their knowledge of foreign language skills and abilities, culture that is, crucially for their creative thinking.

Selection criteria of optimization for the training process at foreign language classes

Verbalization is an integral feature of moderation (Petrov, 2005) and is featured by a discussion. For the effective functioning of small groups and discussion we use different tools offered by the American researchers. The tools selection criteria of optimization were training targets (efficiency for the training process at foreign language classes) and the aim of development of professionally relevant creative abilities of students future managers.

The first tool is used to develop the ability of the attentive listening and also the ability to hear what the speaker has really said and not just what they expected to hear:

- The student must paraphrase in his own words the question of the teacher.
- The student is given a task to summarize and give the main idea of the previous speaker before his own speech.
- Demanding previous speaker to agree that his point of view was understood right before going forward.
- Every speaker must show understanding of what the previous speaker was saying by developing his point of view.

For the group discussion, the ability to listen is very important part of group work. However, students often do not listen others attentively because this demands discipline. The reasons of the unwillingness to listen to the others can be the absence of the respect to the opinion of others, too much critical or hostile mood. All these facts do not create beneficial and friendly atmosphere of cooperation.

The second tool means the use of the following means of structuring personal responsibility:

1. Giving every student individual task.
2. The teacher himself chooses the member of small group who will represent the cooperative work of his group.
3. Observing every group and recording the frequency of every group member contribution to the group work.
4. The distribution of the supervisor’s role who asks the members of small group to explain the reasoning and the rational basis of the group answers.

5. To give students task to teach somebody what they have learned themselves.

We use these tools in order to avoid the situation when some group members can stay passive in the situation when the contribution of each member into the final group result cannot be identified clearly.

As a third tool we use visualization of the intellectual product created as a result of the cooperative work. We rely upon the A.V. Ivanov's research who proves the value of visualization in small groups work and notes: "just those ideas will be fundamental for the group work that will be transformed into images, symbols and words" (Petrov, 2005).

The use of visualization in group work does discussion more controllable because it provides the visibility of the group ideas. It is harder to lose or change the main idea that happens in spontaneous discussions; the presence of the alternative position already noted in the blackboard or paper helps to follow the arguments strictly and predict possible objections of the opponents. If the opinions of the participants are different this will help to keep the culture of the discussion because visualization will discipline the opponents (Sidelnikova, 2009). When all students are involved into the graphical visualization on the stage of group work, this fact keeps their interest also on the stage of discussion. This leads to better comprehension, remembering and determining one's own viewpoint.

The fourth tool: In order to develop reflexive abilities the students keep a "diary of a group" during the whole course. The students take notes in it during seminars and free time. In a "diary of a group" the students ask questions, also individual questions and put down their reaction on the tasks and events in small group.

The teacher writes his answers in margins. A very important fact that students must be sure that teacher will read and answer. The teacher shouldn't correct thoroughly mistakes in a written work when students share their emotions. Thus, the diary becomes the dialogue between the students and the teacher. The group can meet regularly (for example, every Saturday) and make notes in it. The students like to read the notes of the groupmates and make their own notes. The diary can be the summary of the events, feelings and discoveries of the group. The teacher can choose different comments from the diary write them anonymously give students and ask them to answer them and discuss the answers in group (Cooper & Muech, 1990). Besides reflexive abilities the diary favor the dialogue with teacher and give the ground for the attentive and successful dialogue with other group members and also allow feeling themselves appreciated and promote personal growth.

Conclusion

Thus, we have found out that the effective way to develop key competencies of future managers will be structuralization of small groups if we take into account student's wishes and use sociometry method for the creation of friendly atmosphere and if small groups are completed by the teacher according to the criterion of low communicative skills for the achievement of small group heterogeneity. That will create cognitive imbalance stimulating creativity, cognitive and social development that develops necessary for the manager ability ("diversity management") of managing heterogeneous team of employees.



The next step of structuralization is distribution of roles that are typical for the manager at work while managing a team and in innovative activity: to coordinate the activity of workgroup, to analyze its effectiveness, to find consensus and to bring together all work done by the team and make effective decision on its basis. During the training process every student fulfills in turns the duties of manager (group leader, supervisor of knowledge acquisition and the level of comprehension, consensus finder and minute taker) using the formulated duties.

In order to increase the efficiency of student's work in small groups and discipline the discussion we used the following moderation tools:

- tools that will strengthen the attention concentration and develop emotional and volitional qualities of managers;
- tools of structuralization of individual responsibility that develop motivation as one of key competencies of a manager;
- tool of visualization of the intellectual product as a result of cooperative work that develops the ability to organize and generalize the information found by the colleagues and the ability to develop strategies using the creative potential of the whole team;
- the use of a group diary that develop reflexive abilities of managers.

Thus, as the result of the above-mentioned activity the work in small group is not just fulfillment by every member part of his duties but namely becomes cooperation in small group and develops key competencies of future managers.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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