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## DEVELOPING GENERAL CULTURAL COMPETENCIES AS A CONDITION FOR FUTURE SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

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### Abstract

The paper considers the problem of training effective and successful specialists. The success of a specialist's professional activity depends on the development of general cultural competencies that ensure the specialist's ability to transmit, understand and analyze information. The necessity of developing the integrative trait of the specialist's personality (operational competence) as the basis for the successful implementation of professional functions, the ability to avoid professional risks and situations of uncertainty is proved. The components of operational competence are defined: cognitive, control and evaluation, and communicative. The paper describes the means of forming operational competence on the example of training guides-interpreters in the framework of additional education. The article proves the necessity of modular construction of the content for the development of the communication skills use. *The need for a creative process in the preparation of guides-interpreters is proved and implemented in the context of the use of interactive learning methods, namely: discussion; heuristic method; case method; role-playing game; brainstorming.* The article describes the results of an experiment on the operational competence development, as the basis for future successful professional activity.

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*Keywords:* Operational competence, successful professional activity, personality trait, guide-interpreter, interactive learning



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## 1. Introduction

The modern professional world requires from a specialist who has received a diploma of higher education conscious professional activity, readiness for changes and constant improvement. Increasingly, in society, a person is evaluated by their success in professional activities, and the person themselves strives to achieve professional success, considering this fact to be the main goal of life. However, the existing system of higher education does not pay attention to the issues of achieving success in specialists' future, does not discuss the factors that affect success, does not provide proper assistance to students in determining personal success factors in self-analysis and self-knowledge. This, in turn, leads to a situation in which a specialist makes a decision with insufficient information and an inability to predict the result of their actions.

## 2. Problem Statement

Today, employers and society as a whole expect from a specialist not only effective professional activity, but also successful one, considering that "efficiency" and "success" are not identical concepts. Effective activity is defined as high-quality and timely events management. However, the employer also is interested in subjective side, the specialist's personal interest in the result, the incentives for further actions and personal assessment.

In modern science, there are three philosophical categories that are connected with the achievement of success: activity, action, and will. Thus, according to Barkhatov and Pletnev (2015), success is the result of human action and activity. Activity in this case is understood as a personal property that provides self-organization, self-fulfilment and the ability to move along the path of life (Tulchinsky, 1990). Actions are aimed at a conscious goal and satisfaction of needs, and the result or success of an action depends on how active its subject is (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012). In turn, actions are possible under certain external and internal conditions: people, society, things, nature. As an internal or subjective condition, the personality itself (the subject of the profession) will have to act with their knowledge, skills and abilities, motives, orientation, temperament and character (Pomelnikova & Reznichenko, 2017).

## 3. Research Questions

The conditions for professional success are the professional knowledge, skills and abilities necessary in the implementation of professional functions. In modern higher education, they are considered as the competence of a specialist (Markova, 1996, p. 10). Competencies are divided into professional, general professional and general cultural, the totality of which provides the developed professional competence, "individual readiness of a person to perform work at a high level" (Kashapov, 2011, p. 31). According to the federal educational standard of higher education for the specialists training, four types of competencies are defined: general cultural, general professional, professional and professional-specialized. Along with professional knowledge, skills and abilities, the need for the development of communicative competence, self-actualization, spiritual and moral culture, the ability to self-organize as a way of personal and professional self-development are determined (Klementsova, 2016). Their partial formation is provided

by the development of general cultural and general professional competencies: general scientific, assuming basic knowledge in such areas as natural, socio-economic sciences and humanities; communicative competencies and basic linguistic skills, implying the skills of writing and speaking in their native and foreign languages and defining the professional space of a specialist. There are also social and personal abilities, such as the ability to criticize and self-criticize, the ability to work in a team, commitment to ethical and professional values, a common culture, the ability to adapt. The organizational and managerial abilities include the ability to analyze any type of information, the ability to plan and organize activities, the ability to apply knowledge and skills in practice (Nikolaeva, 2015). Thus, the professional activity of a specialist involves the implementation of operations for processing, evaluating and providing information (Shekhmirzova, 2020). This activity becomes the person's need for substance, information or energy, mentally imagined ideal result, an area of the individual's spiritual and physical forces application. However, the possible discrepancy between the ideal result and the real one makes the specialist feel the influence of uncertainty. If the necessary for decision-making information is limited, there appear such conditions when the specialist' actions can be complicated by errors that correspond to the risks of professional activity. These risks lead to a situation of "mismatch" of the expected result of actions with the real ones, i.e., to the lack of the expected mutual understanding in communication. The risks of professional activity prevent the mutual understanding establishment in the process of professional communication. The need to resist them is due to the importance of communication – the formation and development of general cultural competencies. The set of general cultural competencies that allow us to resist the risks of professional activity and solve the problems in the situation of uncertainty through the successful implementation of operations will be considered an integrative property of the individual - operational competence (Agureeva, 2016).

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the paper is a comprehensive analysis of the cultural competencies development and its necessity as the condition for the future successful professional activity of the specialists.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The study used a set of complementary methods that are adequate to the subject of the study: theoretical analysis of philosophical, pedagogical, psychological, sociological and methodological literature; analysis of pedagogical experience, empirical methods (including observation, questioning, self-assessment, testing, conversation, stating and forming experiments); modeling; methods of mathematical statistics (reliability of differences).

#### **6. Findings**

The definition of abilities integrated by operational competence requires reference to the effective characteristics determining experience that is similar in meaning. Thus, Lebedeva (2005), studying the pedagogical university students' training, identifies perceptual, intellectual, mnemonic and motor components in the structure of operational and technological competence. The structure proposed by the

researcher takes into account the main criteria for the successful activity of specialists: perception (perceptual component), understanding and content (intellectual component), memorization (mnemonic component), technique (motor component). Fedotova (2012) distinguishes knowledge, analytical, synthesizing and correction-evaluation components as part of operational competence. The unity of the proposed components involves the development of such activities as the development of professional knowledge, text analysis, translation, editing and evaluation of results, and is of scientific interest, including in the context of professional training of guide-interpreters.

Bearing in mind that it is necessary to develop operational competence in specialists of all professions, including technical ones, we will distinguish the following components of operational competence: cognitive, control and evaluation, and communicative. The cognitive component is responsible for the possession of organizational and managerial competencies; the control and evaluation component - for the social and personal abilities of the specialist; the communicative component - for the communicative and basic linguistic skills.

An example of the operational competence development system will be the proposed system of operational competence development for guides-interpreters during additional education. The principal characteristic of the professional training of guide-translators is the bi-directionality of their training program: the need to focus on language training, in unity with the development of professionally significant abilities of the guide-interpreters' personality. The students' activities activation requires the organization of collective and independent work in the process of solving problematic tasks. That happens within the framework of communication training by involving students in interactive cognitive activities in conditions of uncertainty. The uncertainty as the conditions under which the subject of the decision must be guided by the standard, their own level of independence and independence of thinking, responsibility, readiness for research activities (Ivkina, 2018). When making decisions in conditions of uncertainty, the specialist is faced with the need to perform multifactorial production tasks, which leads to the need to take responsibility for their results. Professional training for decision-making in conditions of uncertainty involves designing content in the form of modules aimed at creating a holistic image of professional activity (Ivanova, 2004).

The information element of the operational competence development system provides the trained guides-interpreters with information that reflects the specifics and features of their professional activities and is aimed at understanding professionally significant realities. The authenticity of the proposed information elements is a fundamentally important dominant, which is explained by the bi-directionality of the guide-interpreters' training: language and subject load. Developed modules are: "Module 1. Planning an excursion", "Module 2. Tours and excursions", "Module 3. Tour groups", "Module 4. Guide-interpreter, who is this?", "Module 5. Activity of a guide-interpreter: challenges", "Module 6. Speech of a guide-interpreter", "Module 7. Communication with tour groups". The performance element represents the practical professionally relevant information development in the form of exercises aimed at developing the ability to resist the risks of guides-interpreters' professional activity (risks of insufficient training, organizational risks, risks of ineffective communication). Exercises aimed at understanding the information are an oral discussion of a given topic in a foreign language; finding the best solution to a formulated problem; role-playing; performing and presenting an individual project (excursion). It is important to note

that the exercises should relate to integrative forms, which contributes to a holistic perception of the surrounding world (Ismagilova, 2018).

Considering communication as the subject of professional guides-interpreters' activity and the communicative dominant of their speech activity, we have developed the content of the operational competence development system with a focus on speaking as the main means of communication. The situational principle determines the situation through the integrated activity, role, social status and moral relationships of the communication participants, which allows us to achieve optimal use of training tools and prepare guides-interpreters for the act of communication.

The imitation of the professional activity of guide-interpreters is implemented within the framework of the special course program "Excursion to the Samara region in a foreign language" through groups of exercises aimed at practicing operations, the development of which contributes to countering the risks of the guide-interpreters' professional activity. The creative process of expressing personal meanings through the analysis of professional situations is implemented in the context of the use of interactive learning methods, namely: discussion; heuristic method; case method; role-playing game; brainstorming. The groups of exercises included in the modules of the special course represent an imitation of situations of professional reality (situations of preliminary training, accompanying groups, providing information) and involve the organization of the activities of student guides-interpreters. An organized discussion of the problem situation involves preliminary training of student guides- interpreters, implemented in the form of independent search and study of authentic texts. The basis for the successful application of the discussion method is the use of the heuristic method during the preliminary preparation of the guides-interpreters for the collective classroom discussion. The use of the "brainstorming" method is aimed at the implementation of communicative tasks through the analysis of problematic or controversial situations, but it involves greater involvement of participants – guides-interpreters, as it initiates a more rapid response and accuracy of the formulated statements.

The pilot work was carried out for three years in 2017-2019. In the course of the ascertaining experiment, the results were obtained, indicating a low level of the cognitive component. Thus, 67% of students showed an undeveloped ability to think critically (a low level in the assessment of critical thinking as a property of the guide-interpreter personality), an average level was revealed in 21% of students, a high level - in 12% of students. The study showed that the majority of trained guide-interpreters had an average level of emotional intelligence: 72% of students demonstrated an average level of ability to establish and maintain a communicative balance (in the assessment of emotional intelligence); 17% - a high level; 11% - a low level.

The study of the communicative component allowed us to conclude that at the stage of the ascertaining experiment, 79% of the trained guides - interpreters demonstrated a low level of the ability to instruct, inform and interpret (in the assessment of verbal creativity); 15% - an average level; 6% - a high level. The result of the implementation of the guides-interpreters' operational competence development system confirmed the formation of the components of operational competence. The conducted diagnostics of professionally significant personality traits showed that 57% of trained guide-interpreters had critical thinking; 62% of students demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence; 49% of students - a high level of verbal creativity (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Results of diagnostics of professionally significant personality traits

Component criteria	Stating experiment Criterion Level, %			Developing experiment Criterion Level, %		
	low	average	high	low	average	high
Cognitive (critical thinking)	67	21	12	10	33	57
Control and evaluation (emotional intelligence)	11	72	17	4	34	62
Communicative (verbal creativity)	79	15	6	5	46	49

## 7. Conclusion

Modern professional training of specialists of any professions in the higher education system should be guided by the trends occurring in the socio-cultural space of Russia and the world as a whole. The current contradiction between the existing training of specialists and the demand of the state and society for professionals who are able to successfully communicate, analyze and evaluate the information received needs to be resolved with a focus on changing the attitude of society to the social and cultural heritage of the countries of the world. The means of resolving this contradiction is the formation of operational competence as an integrative property of a person, a set of general cultural competencies that allow a specialist to perform operations of processing, evaluating and transmitting information. That provides resistance to the risks of their professional activity, set by the situation of uncertainty. Operational competence integrates cognitive, control-evaluation and communicative components, the growth of the values of the indicators of which were carried out in a holistic pedagogical process. Such training of specialists will ensure their successful professional activity in the future.

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