

PARTICULARITIES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENTS FROM THE AGRICULTURAL SPECIALITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF INITIAL TRAINING

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Abstract

The paper aimed to present the role and impact of International Fund for Agriculture on the development of the rural areas of the Republic of Moldova. Till the present the rural development are on the low level. The farmers were facing significant problems in running the business and a lot of poor people still lived in rural areas. These people could potentially be employed only in Agriculture as other economic activities are less developed in the rural areas. The Rural Financial Services and Agribusiness Development Project (RFSADP) is the fifth International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) program in Moldova and became effective on July 4, 2011. The implementation of the RFSADP was divided into four main components, to address various issues identified for reducing the poverty in rural areas. Each component and subcomponent describes a certain approach to improve business development in rural areas, with focus on agriculture and to improve the quality of lives for the people in rural areas. International Fund for Agriculture Development provided funding, consultancy and organized a set of activities to target poor people in rural areas to improve their living, to increase their knowledge about the most recent technologies in agriculture and to provide practical information about how to run their business and increase output.

Key words: rural development, project management, investment projects.

INTRODUCTION

Today agricultural higher education is an indisputable prerequisite for the innovative development of the economy of any country of the world.

Expanding opportunities for agricultural education institutions and strengthening their research potential in the Republic of Moldova are current problems. Theoretical and practical knowledge, acquired by students in agricultural technologies, ensure their employment in food and commerce sector, marketing and other fields, thus completing the deficit of qualified employers existing in these sectors.

That's why, *cognitive development and the implementation of new technologies*, which constitute a true revolution in the republic's agriculture, largely depend on the quality of education and contemporary specialist's knowledge. In this respect, the graduates from agricultural specialties of the State Agrarian University of Moldova are highly appreciated as specialists, most of them having their own businesses and actively contributing to the

economic development of the country. However, one of the major problems of agricultural higher education remains training and personal development of the contemporary student; its importance has grown considerably in recent years, due to the pace at which changes take place in the contemporary society, between the two phenomena there is a strong interrelation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material used to make this study consisted of research, analysis and the interpretation of the data both from specialty literature and from scientific studies. In this study the student agronomist and his cognitive development have an important place.

The information was gathered while studying the specialty scientific literature and other sources. In terms of theoretical and scientific aspect, the article was written in the context of complex and systematic approach to the concepts of cognitive development and its social effects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Educating the youth in the spirit of responsibility for their future is necessary because it is not fair from the point of view of the society and of the individual that the whole care for the formation of the young should fall on the educational agents, with family, school and society, the educated person is accountable to the society for what he will become in the future. This statement demonstrates once again that the factors of professional and socio-cultural development of the students in higher education institutions largely belong to the student himself. So, the training of a specialist, regardless of faculty and specialty, must be performed with his direct participation: the teacher issues the information needed for training young specialist and the student accumulates and processes this information, thus creating and refining his own personality.

In the curricula of Agronomy specialty of the total of 5400 hours (180 ECTS) 2700 hours are reserved for the initiation into specialty disciplines, while the same number of 2700 hours are reserved for individual study. All study subjects reserve the right to form professional skills that will help ensure the final studies and integration in professional field.

The potential European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is designed as a set of tools that meets the individual needs of citizens, it has principles and common procedures, providing guidelines, developed under the Work Programme „Professional Education and Training for cooperation in the fields of quality assurance, validation, guidance and career guidance and in the field of key competences”. The key objective of the EQF is to support lifelong learning and to ensure that learning outcomes are valued and used properly.

Cognitive competence (use of theory and concepts, of capacities for knowledge acquired tacitly and informally through experience) is one of the elements of the competence defined in EQF, along with functional competences, personal competences and ethical competences that improve knowledge development of agroalimentary field for the graduate of this specialty.

Such university courses as Plant Cultivation, Agricultural Consulting, Environmental

Protection etc. prepare the future agronomist to get sound knowledge of the business, which makes him distinct from an amateur by such specific topics as: basic biological laws of plants growth and development, methods of influence of human behaviour and engagement in consultancy etc. that aim to form skills to use the most advanced methods of individual and group counselling, they form the skills of modelling advanced technologies and processes, of quantitative and qualitative increasing of agricultural production. The same competence is also developed by socio-humanity and general disciplines. The contents of the Course „Professional Ethics” gets the student acquainted with such notions as the Code of ethics of the worker in the agrifood system, the focus of this discipline is to develop ethical competence. The humanity subjects provide personal development of the student.

An important aspect of personality development of any hard-working young man is the ability of self-government, which is the product of self-education and an advanced form of organization and management of own forces and knowledge in relation to the society. A guide for developing these skills is directing by university teachers for individual work. In these conditions there can be reduced the youth social passivity, lack of motivation, lack of social responsibility for the quality of the received education etc.

For the period of youth, the vast majority of authors distinguish two categories of tasks *traced by personal development*. The first category relates to the sphere of social relations which meets the needs for affiliation and privacy of the person. Here can be mentioned social skills for interaction and cooperation with others, focusing on the relations within the couple in love and the married couple.

Another category relates predominantly to *the formation and development of the skills specific to professional activity*, including the abilities necessary for economic independence, financial resources management, professional role shaping and professional achievements. Thus, the maturation of a person is the effect of the new roles that the person assumes in interpersonal relations and in vocational

training, youth is seen as a period of important decisions relating to these areas.

Psychologically, subjectively, the person lives as a teenager, although he has exceeded this stage of his evolution. He is a late teenager, having a certain stability of feelings and reactions. He slowly leaves the world of the same age group of teenagers where he felt really himself, away from family and school. He is still present in the group, but he chooses his teammates against other criteria, of which the most important is the inclusion of the opposite sex partner. In fact, he participates in group where he can congeal relationships with girls and boys for a university, scientific or social activity. This stage of age is characterized by the formation of such personality traits as:

- *emphasizing the conscious reasons of the behaviour (desires, tendencies grow faster than the will and character; following this law, the person acts under the motivations of moment and then analyses the consequences);*
- *activity and life orientation towards a goal;*
- *autonomy;*
- *perseverance;*
- *self-control;*
- *initiative.*

It is a period of self-analysis and self-esteem. The self-esteem takes place by comparing the ideal *ego* with the real one. But the ideal *ego* is not verified yet and may be accidental, and the real *ego* is not yet rated multilaterally by the person himself. Here occurs, therefore, an objective contradiction. That is why we often see mood changes.

Another problem of this age is **self-education** - human activity oriented to changing, transforming his own personality. Self-discipline at this age is carried out by means of various tools and techniques, the most common being autoresponsability or independent formulation of the formation of attributes; self-report or the retrospective of the past and the successful deeds during that period; self-analysis or reflexive processes that allow the student to know the causal regularities of success and failure, which serve as the basis for the advancement of new requirements to himself; self-control or fixing, permanent record of personal behaviour and states in order

to avoid unwanted actions and deeds. Self-assessment is the product of all the acts of self-knowledge.

From the point of view of *cognitive development*, agronomy students, like other students, develop their ability to identify problems to solve, to analyse their component parts, to develop strategies. They have a rational thinking which requires information changing and reorganizing. At their age, students are able to understand scientific theories, to critically examine them and to build new visions. The potential of thought and intelligence is expressed in-depth study of a certain domain and in the exposure of what they perceived and assimilated from the teacher - highly qualified specialist, basic court confirming the level of education and understanding of the issues of a science. It is specific for the student to orient to the profession consisting of: motivation for choosing profession, value orientations in the professional field, profession conceptions, social mounting for further study. Based on these characteristics, the contemporary students can be conventionally divided into 3 groups:

1. *Students with positive guidance for the profession*, they keep this guidance until the end of the studies - 68%;
2. *Students who have not clearly determined motivation and a definite attitude*, they do not possess full information about the profession, they are not active - 20%;
3. *Students with a negative attitude towards their specialty*, their views on specialty are amorphous, vague, they are not active across the entire training period ~10-12%.

The student is interested in knowing the environment and the society. He seeks the answers to the questions that arise from the examination of facts and ideas. He shows a great intellectual curiosity, not always focused on his specialty study. According to diagram, while getting older, the student is at the postconventional level. As Kohlberg demonstrated, only 10% of young people have proven they are at this stage of moral judgment. Students tend to express very severe examination of moral behaviour, primarily the behaviour of the teachers. Less prominently than in adolescence, students adopt a particularly harsh critical attitude when it

comes to the violation of the moral norms, as the young men understand them.

At this age period, the young man is preoccupied with the establishment of an intimate relationship with another person. It is a relevant problem of this age, some even marrying during the studies. Friendship relations are vital. According to Erikson, privacy associated with isolation is essential in this age period. The student, like other congeners, experiences intimate friendship being focused on one person, but in the context of group relationships.

Although the student has obtained social maturity (the ability of the young to acquire the social roles necessary for life in the society), he still feels himself a teenager, so he doesn't consider himself an adult and does not assume adult responsibilities. The student continues to be dependent on his family, though he makes efforts to live outside the parental home. In many cases this fact is explained by financial dependence. The relations with family members pass to a new level and become cooperative, parents representing closed persons.

Another aspect of the status change is that young people experience tension between themselves and the society, trying to maintain a balance between protecting their personality and effective involvement in the society. For the student preparation at higher level, deepening the study in a domain, reflexivity on what he learns, writing papers on the topics requested by the teachers are the ways of self-assertion, without being directly linked to the society, that can be indifferent or insignificant. At the same time, he wants the product of its work to have social value. It is obvious that the student is the person who always tends to change.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the above said, we can conclude that the primary mission of university agricultural education is to form, through interdisciplinary studies, highly qualified specialists, able to organize and lead productive business in the food sector.

In addition to the skills specific for the domain mentioned above, future graduates must also hold key competences of personal development: interpersonal and professional communication, knowledge of informational technologies, ability to lead and work in teams etc. This will ensure adaptability, mobility and flexibility on the labour market, success and the growth of personal and professional satisfaction being guaranteed.

Unlike other young people, the student's tension between himself and the world is more complex. He lives with the feeling that he could change the world. The future intellectual person is formed as a result of this balance between self and the social.

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