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THE INTEGRATION OF THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL LESSONS IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

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Annotation: The article examines the issue of integrating theoretical and practical training to effectively develop students' professional skills and competencies. Various existing approaches to integration, along with their advantages and disadvantages, are analyzed. Special attention is given to methods that promote a harmonious combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, such as project-based learning, applied research, modeling, and various types of internships (industrial, pre-graduation, research). Based on the analysis of relevant literature and practical experiences, the article offers recommendations for optimizing the integration process to improve the quality of vocational education and enhance graduates' competitiveness in the labor market. Furthermore, the effectiveness of different integration methods is evaluated in relation to learning outcomes, student engagement, and the results of their subsequent professional activities.

Keywords: theoretical and practical integration, professional skills development, vocational education, competency-based learning, educational technologies, active learning methods, pedagogical approaches, simulation modeling, internship programs, curriculum optimization, higher education, labor market readiness, project-based learning.

In the context of our country's development based on market relations, a number of positive reforms are being implemented across all sectors of the economy. These reforms are primarily aimed at advancing property relations that define the socio-economic progress of the republic, activating the investment environment, improving banking, finance, and taxation systems, and creating their legal frameworks. These efforts are closely linked to the training system for qualified specialists, the integration of modern information technologies, and other branches of the economy.

Today, the ongoing reforms in our country are expanding opportunities for the development of tourism, the service sector, infrastructure facilities, and the implementation of transport and communication projects.

Considering these changes, economic reforms are being carried out in all sectors of the national economy. The demand for highly qualified specialists is increasing in the process of implementing economic reforms. Therefore, one of the most urgent tasks is to train professionals who meet the requirements of the time and to continuously improve education and its structural components based on state educational standards.

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In this regard, the integration of theoretical and practical training plays a crucial role in the formation of students' skills and competencies. The acquisition of subject knowledge, combined with hands-on practice, is essential for comprehensive professional preparation.

Professional internship is an integral part of bachelor's degree training and is organized in accordance with state educational standards and curricula. It is considered a direct continuation of the educational process, carried out under real production conditions.

The main goal of the internship is to prepare students for independent professional activity in accordance with educational standards, to deepen and reinforce the theoretical knowledge they have acquired, to gain experience in organizational and educational work within a team, to study the structure and functional responsibilities of organizational units within enterprises, and to acquire practical skills in calculating and applying economic indicators relevant to their field.

The expected outcomes and key objectives of the internship include the following:

1. To develop practical skills and professional competencies in accordance with the student's field of study;
2. To familiarize students with the scope and system of work conducted in enterprises related to their field;
3. To teach students the flow and handling of documentation between the internship organization and other entities;
4. To introduce the internal rules and interpersonal relations within the internship organization;
5. To train students to make decisions and work independently;
6. To provide awareness of economic, social, and political changes both within the internship organization and in the broader industry context;
7. To instill the necessary knowledge for conducting socio-political, organizational, and educational activities.

Competency is considered one of the most important tools in the professional activity of future educators. In the educational process, it enables students to master the general scientific foundations of modern education, to understand rapidly changing technologies and constructions in today's environment, and to develop a creative attitude toward their chosen profession.

In pedagogy, the term "construction" is often used synonymously with the organization of the educational process. The concept of designing has entered almost all areas of human life and activity.

From our point of view, objects that integrate both functional and aesthetic requirements may be classified as part of a third type of design — one that synthesizes utility and beauty.

In this research, we consider various approaches to the formation of educational methods, which are based on the principles of **convenience**, **efficiency**, and **aesthetic appeal**.

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In the studies of Ya.I. Daly, the term technology (from the Greek techne – art, skill, ability, and logos – teaching, science) has been defined in numerous ways and characterized differently by specialists.

The modern interpretation of the term technology can be summarized through the following three main aspects:

1. **Scientific aspect**: Technology is the scientifically developed solution to a scientific-technical problem aimed at achieving a specific goal.
2. **Formal aspect**: Technology is a model — a structured system comprising goals, content, methods, and tools intended to achieve planned outcomes, including an algorithm for implementing activities.
3. **Practical aspect**: Technology is the process of executing an activity, which includes modifying and applying all its components — particularly the objects and subjects involved in the activity.

There are various perspectives and approaches in pedagogical and scientific literature regarding the concept of the **"future specialist model."** Many authors agree that this concept refers to a generalized image of a specialist in a specific field, reflecting the key qualities and characteristics of the object under study.

Another group of scholars emphasizes that a model must define a visual representation at a given point in time and include a specific "technology" for constructing it. A third group advocates that the concept of a "specialist model" should not only encompass the required competencies but also incorporate professional and personal qualities, cultural values, and other individual characteristics of the person.

N.F. Talizina developed a general methodological approach to modeling the professional training process of specialists. She emphasized that a model must reflect the unity between the expected outcomes and the ways of achieving them. According to her, the problem of defining a specialist model is crucial for determining the content of curricula, including syllabi and academic programs.

The process of training future specialists in higher education institutions is complex and multifaceted. In this process, it is essential to define the objectives clearly and to clarify the structural foundations of the specialist model.

According to **N.A. Muslimov**, the model of a specialist consists of the following three structural components:

1. Types of activity shaped by characteristics of the new social stage;
2. Types of activity with clearly defined professional requirements;
3. Types of activity formed based on the essence of the state's socio-political structure and its moral and ethical system.

N.A. Muslimov defines the concept of a specialist model as follows:

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"A specialist model is a prototype that reflects the qualities necessary for successfully solving problem situations in the production sphere, characterizes the essential attributes of the professional, and demonstrates their ability for autonomous learning and self-development."

In organizing cartography lessons at higher educational institutions offering technical specialties, the following teaching approaches were applied:

- **Systemic approach**: viewed as a comprehensive framework aimed at creating an organized and goal-oriented educational environment. It includes a set of essential teaching tools, methods, and processes based on holistic analysis;
- **Competency-based approach**: considered one of the most promising methods for evaluating the effectiveness of students' professional preparation. It defines the readiness criteria of future engineers for professional activity, focusing on the acquisition and development of core competencies;
- **Student-centered approach**: based on recognizing the student as an active subject in the learning process, taking into account their individual characteristics and learning needs;
- **Contextual approach**: involves aligning the student's educational activities with the context of their future professional work, making learning more meaningful and relevant;
- **Technological approach**: emphasizes designing the learning process in accordance with didactic objectives and pedagogical laws based on the study of educational facts, phenomena, their relationships, and interactions.

Among these, the **technological approach** stands out as the leading one, as it combines the advantages of all the other approaches.

Innovative teaching methods differ from traditional ones in that they are not limited to reinforcing previously acquired knowledge. Instead, they enable students to acquire new knowledge through **collaborative and active engagement**. This creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the **effective integration of theoretical and practical training** is a key factor in shaping competitive specialists. Analysis of the conducted study shows that there is no universal approach to integration — the optimal method should be chosen based on the specifics of the curriculum and the demands of future professional activity.

The use of active learning strategies, such as **project-based activities, applied research, and simulation modeling**, significantly increases student engagement and promotes deeper understanding of the subject matter. However, to achieve maximum effectiveness, it is necessary to improve **curricula, methodological resources, and the material and technical base**, as well as establish **close cooperation between universities and employers**.

Future research should focus on developing **innovative integration methods**, analyzing **long-term outcomes**, and designing effective mechanisms for assessing the **quality of professional training**. Only a **comprehensive approach oriented toward the practical needs of the labor market** can ensure a high level of professional competence among graduates.

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