

Peculiarities of teachers' pedagogical activity in higher educational system of the USA

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Problem of the article

The modern process of Ukraine's economy reformation, joining it to the civilized educational partnership is accompanied by the dynamic changes of its production relations, culture, education. The USA is the country with the developed economy, educational system. In this article we'll try to highlight the peculiarities of the American teachers' pedagogical activity who play a vital role in students' individual formation, their ideological and professional qualities.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Many scientists studied the peculiarities of the USA higher educational system formation, among them are: Georgieva T., Glotova G., Kalashnikov V., Parail V., Romanovsky A. and others.

Among american scientists involved in improvement of pedagogical activity of the USA teachers were: Christensen R., Cooper J., Felder R., Hodleski E. and others.

The objectives formation. The objectives of this work is a detailed study of the characteristics of teachers' educational activity in higher agricultural institutions of the USA with the aim of studying and adapting positive ideas in the educational system of Ukraine.

The main material of the research. It should be noted that higher education teacher plays a very important role in formation of professional and ideological peculiarities of a future specialist. Investigations prove, that creative approach to academic discipline, teacher's active lifestyle, broad outlook and interests, well-developed pedagogical skills stimulate positive students' attitude to the future profession, increase mental activity in educational process [1, 2, 4] .

Let's examine the peculiarities of teacher's pedagogical activity in higher educational establishments of the USA.

First, it should be mentioned, that the system of teachers' positions at each higher educational institution of the USA is established independently, but often it has the following positions: 1) assistant, 2) lecturer, 3) instructor, 4) assistant-professor, 5) associate-professor, 6) full-professor. We'll describe briefly the functions of these positions [3, c. 68].

Instructor, mainly, manages the laboratory practice, conducts classes. Positions of assistants are often occupied by post-graduate-students. Positions of lecturers as a rule occupy freelance teachers working part-time. Appointment to junior posts is done by the president of the University with recommendation of the Head of Department and Dean of the Faculty. In order to do this it is necessary to sign a short-term contract approximately for a year, that can be prolonged 5-6 times. It is done to prevent teachers from getting used to their stable working place. Teachers should understand that it is necessary to be competitive, to realize that their working places can be easily occupied by more talented workers, better scientists, teachers with better practical skills.

Only professor can work at the university continuously. Instructors and assistant professors have the right to work not more than 8-9 years. In future it is necessary to improve pedagogical skills or change another working place [3, c. 69].

It should be mentioned that the american educational system has the position, which does not have analogues in Ukraine. This is the position of academic supervisor, who helps students to make an individual curriculum for each week and term. Academic advisors help students to select their speciality, to manage time productively, to choose subjects and their order. [6, p. 104].

There is even a special academic supervisor's rating scale, which students have to fulfill (it is done in spring, and at the end of the term supervisors can receive results).

Academic supervisor's rating scale
(College of Engineering, Iowa University)

State	Questions	Rating scale
Knowledge	My academic supervisor is well informed about the rules, procedures and courses choice. If I need to learn some information, he (she) can direct me to the necessary service.	5.Fully agree 4.Agree 3.Difficult to answer 2.Do not agree 1.Fully disagree
Contact	My advisor is always at his (her) working place, he (she) can be easily found either by phone or email.	
Reliability	Supervisor always comes to meetings, tries to find answers to questions that I need.	
Availability	Supervisor encourages me to apply to him (her). Advisor is interested in my training progress, actively participates in problems solving.	
Advice	Gives me information about university changes. Helps to organize different meetings.	
Respect	Respects me, discusses strategies on problems solving.	
Students' achievement control	Controls fulfillment of my duties on educational tasks.	
General characteristics	How would you evaluate your supervisor's work?	5. Excellent 4.Good 3.Satisfactory 2.Unsatisfactory 1.Very bad
Supervisor's help	Most of all my advisor helped me in...	Give extended answer
Supervisor's strong points	One of the positive personal characteristics of my supervisor is	
Some pieces of advice to my supervisor	The advice that I would give to my supervisor is	
Other comments	Additional comments on your advisor's service or faculty consulting services in the whole.	

Advisors on their meetings discuss questions on changes in the curriculum, courses content, conduct special training for freshmen. Students should meet their supervisors to discuss academic achievements, academic plans at least once a month, otherwise they will not be able to sign for the next term courses. Very often after the first year of studying students change their advisor and choose that one (professor, associate-professor, assistant) who is specialized in their major [9].

While applying for the job at the university, teachers have to meet different demands, but the most important are: working experience, scientific publications, recommendations from other universities and institutions. Interesting, that general age for the professor of the USA – 50-53 years; associate-professor – 41-42; assistant-professor – 34-35; instructor- 33 years [3 , c. 70].

Today, scientific degree is a crucial factor that teachers should have if they want to work at higher educational establishments of the USA. For example, it is possible to work at the position of assistant-professor, if you have PhD degree, and at the position of instructor – when you are working at the PhD theses [7, p. 69].

Training and pedagogical activity of teachers are evaluated by special committees of departments. Those teachers who make great contributions to science, who use their research results at lectures are much appreciated. There is even a phrase which is popular among university teachers of the USA “publish or perish”. It should be noted that in american universities teachers with professional rank can have a creative paid holiday (6-12 months) [3, p. 72].

In higher education of the USA the quality of teachers’ practical skills is the principal criterion in evaluation of their training and educational activity. According to S. Riznychenko [5, p. 114], should be evaluated "... the most important academic functions ... that include training, research, participation in social activities." Control is based on complex studying of teachers’ activity, where the sources of evaluation are [5] :

- Systematic formal ranking by students;
- Informal ranking by students;
- Evaluation by the chief;

- Ranking among colleagues;
- Evaluation committee of teachers;
- Content of courses that are taught;
- Participation in workshops;
- Students' knowledge;
- Examination results;
- Popularity of elective courses (number of students enrolled in them);
- Self-assessment (final teacher's report);
- Evaluation by graduate students.

Evaluation of teachers' activity is variable. It includes the opinion of colleagues, university administration, students, graduates. The most important criterion in this evaluation are students' opinions and results of their studying. For example, completing the course students evaluate its importance, usefulness, logical order etc. Besides, students evaluate teachers' pedagogical skills, personal characteristics, attitude to students, define their strong and weak points.

It should be emphasized that the results of teachers' evaluation are available to others. In order to make a correct decision while selecting a course, students get acquainted with the content of the course, with the results of teachers' rating by predecessors. This information of students' attitude to teachers and their courses is also useful for development of teachers' competitiveness.

The problem of teacher's personality formation is very popular nowadays. Very useful are interviews of American students about the characteristics which a modern teacher should have. The answers were:

- The teacher should reasonably manage time during classes;
- To use humor and spontaneity in the classroom;
- To be careful with race questions;
- Be attentive to students, be ready to consult in extracurricular time;
- On exam to give only those questions that were discussed in class [10 , p. 42].

American students want their teachers to know not only subjects they teach, but also have deep knowledge in other fields, to use masterful interdisciplinary communications. Energetic, unpredictable teachers deserve more attention and respect. The language in which a course is taught should be vivid and available to listeners. It is advisable for a teacher to learn the names of students as quickly as possible [10, c. 125].

It is recommended to a teacher to get acquainted the students on the first class with organizational points: number of the classroom, time of the class, sources to the course, peculiarities of work during the class, peculiarities of taking a credit or exam [8].

So, approach on orientation of pedagogical activity quality is in the basis of employment policy of american universities. During research were highlighted the leading organizational and pedagogical peculiarities which define high level of agrarian teachers' pedagogical activity in the USA.

- Strict concretization of tasks for a definite working period of a teacher;
- Strict university administration control of implementation of duties by teachers;
- "Struggle" for students at teaching the course by several teachers (during each class teachers have to prove that they have high level of pedagogical skills);
- Direct influence of pedagogical activity assessment results on changing position of a teacher to a higher ranking, increase of payment, long-term agreement with the university etc.

Conclusions. We believe that highlighted material on experience of pedagogical activity of american university teachers can be a valuable source of ideas during improvement of future-agrarian teachers' training in Ukraine.

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Annotation

The author of this article describes the peculiarities of teachers' pedagogical activity at higher agricultural education establishment of the USA. Special attention is paid to teachers' pedagogical skills, their active life position. The author gives detailed duties characteristics of assistants, lecturers, instructors, associate – professors, professors. It was mentioned here, that teachers' work is evaluated by students, colleagues, by teachers' participation in seminars, by students' knowledge, tests results, university authorities, by people who were taught by those teachers before. It is very important for the university lecturers to use the research results in the content of their lectures. It should be noted that the american education system has the position, which has no analogues in Ukraine - a position of an academic advisor. The author describes peculiarities and duties of academic advisors, gives an example of fact-finding questionnaire on the work of american university advisor. In this paper you are able to see students' opinion about ideal university lecturers. The ideas highlighted in this paper are useful and can be applied to the educational system of Ukraine.

Key words: lecturer of higher educational establishment, pedagogical activity, american system of higher education, academic advisor, methods and forms of evaluation, pedagogical skills, knowledge control.