

УДК 37.013-022.332:332.1

Experience in coordination of regional cluster of continuing pedagogical education

N.G. NOVAK, U.A. BEIZERAU, Y.V. NIKITYUK

The article presents the experience of coordinating and implementing the work of the regional cluster of continuing pedagogical education in Gomel and Gomel region. The article describes the experience of organizing the activities of university staff with a network of pedagogical groups of Gomel region in order to attract them to enter the university for pedagogical specialties.

Keywords: cluster of continuous pedagogical education, pedagogical classes, career guidance, pedagogical activity.

В статье представлен опыт координации и реализации работы регионального кластера непрерывного педагогического образования в г. Гомеле и Гомельской области. Описан опыт организации деятельности преподавателей университета с сетью педагогических групп и классов Гомельской области с целью привлечения их к поступлению в университет на педагогические специальности.

Ключевые слова: кластер непрерывного педагогического образования, педагогические классы, профориентация, педагогическая деятельность.

The Concept of development of the national system of continuous pedagogical education implemented in the Republic of Belarus is a monumental, logical document defining the main directions for development of pedagogical education in the Republic of Belarus. The concept as a whole fulfills the main tasks – to identify ways to improve the quality and competitiveness of the education system of the Republic of Belarus in terms of its integration into the European educational space. The cluster approach to the construction of the education system has become the central postulate of the Concept of the development of the national system of continuing pedagogical education [1].

The term «cluster» is borrowed from the English language. Its active use in the Russian-language economic literature began in the 1990s and is associated with the translation into Russian of the works of Michael Porter (Harvard Business School), who became the founder and popularizer of the theory of clusters and cluster development [2].

The formation of a cluster allows the national industry to maintain and develop its competitive advantage, rather than giving it to those countries that are more inclined to upgrade. Cluster enterprises play not only the role of points of growth of the domestic market, but also a base for entering the markets of other countries.

An educational cluster can be defined as a flexible network structure that includes groups of interconnected objects (educational institutions, public and political organizations, scientific schools, universities, research organizations, business structures, etc.) united around the core of innovative educational activities to solve certain tasks and achieve a specific result (product). An educational cluster (like any other) has elements in its composition, has a certain infrastructure, routes of interaction. The main elements of an educational cluster are organizations as a whole (educational institutions – universities, schools, gymnasia, colleges, lyceums; business structure) or its individual parts (structures, divisions), a combination of structures that take part in solving the task. The composition of the participants of the educational cluster (its elements) may change, be supplemented depending on the circumstances. The infrastructure defines the dimensions and other topological properties of the educational space, which is characterized by the volume of educational services, the power and intensity of educational information. The route of interaction within an educational cluster is the route of building mutually beneficial relationships between individual cluster elements within a specific project and in a given time period [3].

Educational establishment *F. Skorina Gomel State University* is the leading coordinator of the activities of the regional educational, scientific and innovative cluster of continuing pedagogical education in the Gomel region. The cluster unites regional educational institutions belonging to various levels of education, other institutions and organizations that voluntarily interact on a contractual basis, participate in the formation of innovative approaches to teacher education and ensure the practical use of these approaches in the training of teachers.

The purpose of cluster is to integrate and develop educational, scientific and innovative potential of the institutions and organizations included in the cluster for training of teaching staff. For this purpose, coordinating council was created at the university, which included the heads of two universities and the education department of Gomel Regional Executive Committee, the rector of the Gomel Regional Institute for Education Development, the head of the regional center for testing and vocational guidance of students, the directors of four pedagogical colleges, the regional lyceum and the basic gymnasias, leading teachers of the university.

In accordance with the work plan of the regional educational, scientific and innovative cluster of continuing pedagogical education, the main areas of its work are: organizational, informational and regulatory support for the cluster's activities, updating the goals and content of continuing pedagogical education, modernization of forms, methods, technologies of the educational process of training future teachers, improving the organization of psychological and pedagogical research in the field of education and training of highly qualified scientists, improvement of the resource provision of continuing pedagogical education, organization of measures for the implementation of practice-oriented approach in continuing pedagogical education.

During the period of the cluster functioning, measures have been developed and implemented to strengthen the practice-oriented content of pedagogical education and improve continuous pedagogical practice. 93 branches of departments have been created and are functioning, including 65 of pedagogical orientation. More than fifty educational institutions of Gomel and Gomel region act as a base for branches of departments, which allows to organize pedagogical internship and conduct practical and laboratory classes in a number of academic disciplines using the facilities and equipment of institutions. Educational and industrial internships of students on the basis of branches of departments contribute to the improvement of practical orientation of the educational process.

Currently, in accordance with modern educational standards, the content of psychological and pedagogical disciplines and disciplines of the socio-humanitarian block has been revised, taking into account the principles of an activity-based and differentiated approach to the organization of training. Modern pedagogical technologies and innovative approaches described and tested in national pedagogical system and in the experience of foreign countries are being actively introduced into the educational process. The modernization of forms, methods, and technologies of educational process is regularly carried out on the basis of strategies of problem-research, active, and collective learning. Modular rating system has been introduced. The elective course «Pedagogical workshop» is included and conducted in the curricula of a number of pedagogical specialties.

On the basis of educational institutions, university students actively carry out volunteer activities, work on the prevention of negative manifestations in the youth environment, on the prevention of bad habits and addiction to dependent behavior.

The year-round methodological workshop «Higher Education and Synergy» has become an international one, organized for young teachers with the aim of spreading advanced pedagogical experience, teaching how to work with innovative methods and technologies.

Distance learning platforms of F. Skorina Gomel State University «Virtual University», «DOT», «Tutor» are actively used in the educational process.

Traditionally, the university pays great attention to the organization and strengthening of interdepartmental cooperation, which is facilitated by the participation of university teachers in the jury of district, city, regional stages and the final stage of the republican Olympiad in academic subjects, as well as competitions of students' research papers.

The University annually hosts the International Scientific and Methodological Conference «Modern education: continuity and succession of the educational system “school – university – enterprise”».

Much attention at the university is paid to career guidance. Schoolchildren and their parents can visit the faculties of interest during the «Open Doors Day». Subject Olympiads and university Saturdays are regularly held. During school vacations and the academic year, teachers invite students to excursions in online and offline modes, conduct quizzes and intellectual competitions, invite them to museums, the university exhibition hall. The project «University through the eyes of an applicant» deserves special attention, within the framework of which schoolchildren can feel like full-fledged students during the vacation period – attend lectures, practical classes, experiments in student scientific and educational laboratories.

The teachers and students of different faculties of the university regularly conduct career guidance events, training sessions both at the university and in educational institutions.

In 2022, an essay contest was initiated among students of pedagogical classes «Teacher is my future profession». The organizer of the Competition is the Faculty of Psychology and Pedagogy of the educational establishment *F. Skorina Gomel State University*. The partners of the Contest are the Gomel regional organization of «Belaya Rus», as well as other organizations not prohibited by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus. The competition is held in order to maintain interest in teaching profession, develop creative abilities of students of pedagogical classes (groups), create conditions for increasing motivation to obtain teaching profession through competitive participation. It is aimed at stimulating the activity and self-expression of students focused on obtaining teaching profession.

When organizing cluster's activities, special attention is paid to the activities of university teachers with a network of pedagogical groups and classes of Gomel region in order to attract them to enter the university for obtaining pedagogical specialties. In 2022–2023 academic year, pedagogical groups and classes operate in 52 educational institutions in Gomel and the Gomel region. Totally 596 students of grades 10 and 11 master the elective program «Introduction to the teaching profession».

Traditionally, students of classes with pedagogical profile take part in the Olympiad in psychology and pedagogy. In 2022, 43 teams of students from institutions of general secondary, vocational and secondary special education took part in the Olympiad, representing all the regions and the city of Minsk. The teams were divided into groups depending on the level of education.

During the informational meetings, a questionnaire was conducted, which was attended by 172 high school students (grades 10 and 11) studying in pedagogical classes of educational institutions in Gomel and the Gomel region.

The data obtained indicate that the primary motive for choosing a class with pedagogical profile is the desire to obtain higher education (in more than 80 % of cases, the degree of severity of this motive is above average). More than half of the respondents noted an interest in the subject and desire to study this subject. Half of the respondents believe that they have pedagogical abilities. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that more than half of the respondents believe that the teaching profession is prestigious, important at this stage of the development of society, that pedagogical activity makes it possible to realize the desire for material security.

As the main reasons for choosing to study in a pedagogical group, schoolchildren indicated «the opportunity to study necessary subjects at an advanced level» (36,5 %) and «the desire to connect their lives with the teaching profession» (30 %).

To the question «Have you previously participated in University Saturdays, career guidance events that are regularly held at *F. Skorina Gomel State University*» the respondents' answers were distributed as follows: «Yes, I liked it» – 14,5 %; «not yet, but I plan to visit» – 63,4 %. When answering the question about what events high school students attended on the basis of *F. Skorina Gomel State University* it was revealed that most of them attended «Open doors days» at different faculties of the university.

Half of the high school students answered that they would be interested in meeting with students (48,8 %) and teachers (46 %) of the university, some of the respondents would like to have the opportunity to meet with heads of departments (18 %) or representatives of the rector's office (5 %). For 20 % of respondents, meetings with psychologist would be interesting.

Answering the question about «What topics I would like to discuss during meetings at *F. Skorina Gomel State University*» the majority of schoolchildren indicated that they were interested in the admission rules, benefits for applicants, specialties and features of the organization of the educational process at the university, what activities there are for students, in addition to training sessions, how talented youth are supported, what difficulties students face, etc.

As the most acceptable form of interaction, students indicated conversation (37 %), training lesson (28,5 %), information about the specialties of the faculty (23 %), discussion (13 %), lesson in the form of a game (16,5 %).

When assessing the motives of internal self-improvement and self-development, it was revealed that most of the students of the pedagogical profile classes strive to self-study (67,5 %), regularly devote time to self-development (67,5 %), tend to self-reflection, to analyze their feelings and experiences (81 %), focus on feedback, as it helps to learn and evaluate themselves (72 %). The ma-

majority of boys and girls manage their professional development and get positive results (73 %), believe that in case of obstacles their activity only increases (64,5 %). The surveyed high school students read a lot (80 %), are ready to discuss interesting topics (68 %), believe in their abilities (86 %). Almost all schoolchildren strive to be more open (85 %). Many of the students in pedagogical groups (classes) enjoy learning new things (86,5 %), are not afraid of responsibility (66,5 %), have positive attitude to the prospect of promotion (78 %).

After graduation, most of the surveyed high school students studying in pedagogical classes plan to enroll in the Gomel State University. Among the specialties of the university for students of pedagogical classes, the most attractive are psychology, philology, foreign languages, mathematics, physical education. Also, high school students are interested in the following specialties: «History and intercultural communications», «Information technologies and software», «Computer Science and Programming Technologies», «Forestry», etc.

Thus, when analyzing the data obtained, we can say that more than half of modern high school students who choose to study in a pedagogical profile class are boys and girls who believe in their own capabilities, enjoy learning new experience, are inclined to self-knowledge and self-reflection, and are focused on career advancement.

According to the results of the survey, it can be concluded that high school students are focused on a two-way dialogue with students and university teachers, during which they will be interested in both information about specialties, the specifics of studying at the university, about attractive and difficult moments of student life, and the possibility of improving personal competencies, self-reflection and self-development skills, assistance in determining professional suitability (choice of faculty, specialty). Meetings with applicants should take place in the form of a training session with game elements.

In order to improve the activities of the cluster of continuing pedagogical education systematically, we are facing the following promising areas of development: more active promotion of teachers' achievements through the media (including electronic); regular questionnaires for the students of pedagogical classes (groups) at the beginning of the academic year in order to study the formation of pedagogical motivation and motives for self-development in the teaching profession; conducting an intermediate online survey for the purpose of timely monitoring of academic performance, interest and identification of possible difficulties for students of pedagogical classes (groups) when studying elective classes «Introduction to the teaching profession»; more active involvement of high school students in the educational process of higher education during school vacations; strengthening networking between educational institutions, maximizing the opportunities of regional and republican clusters.

Based on our work experience, we consider such proposals as promising – first, not to set limits on the number of participants (subjects) of the cluster, and secondly, not to limit (strictly not regulate) the forms and methods of forming and documenting cluster structures, as well as forms and methods of cluster management.

As a conclusion, it can be emphasized that the introduction of a cluster model of development makes it possible to increase the level of cooperation of subjects of the educational system engaged in various activities, to increase the competitiveness of the national economy as a whole and its individual components, and also makes it possible to concentrate resources and use the emerging synergetic effect.

Literature

1. The concept of development of the national system of continuous pedagogical education in the Republic of Belarus : project / A. I. Zhuk [et al.]. – Minsk : BSPU, 2014. – 24 p.
2. A dictionary of modern English usage. – Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2007. – P. 618.
3. Beizerau, U. A. Cluster approach to the development of educational systems as a way to increase the competitiveness of education in countries and regions / U. A. Beizerau // Proceedings of Francisk Scorina Gomel State University. – 2015. – № 5 (92). – P. 10–14.