

Training a Tutor at College for an Underfilled and Nomad School of the North and East of Russia: Contents and Specifics

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: Article describes the best practices in the development of an educational program for the teacher's vocational training for nomadic and small schools of the northeast of Russia. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** An ethnic and teaching education concept has been developed at the laboratory, demand and possibility of special training of teachers for underfilled and nomad schools of the North have been studied. For this research such techniques were used as studying laws and regulations, observing the educational process at underfilled and nomad schools and questioning students and teachers of today's nomad schools. **Findings:** More than 70% of general education schools in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) are rural, same as all over Russian Federation, some of them are nomad. The article reveals the contents and structure of new experience of the tutor training program at the North-Eastern Federal University. The multi-profiled teachers training of future elementary school teachers and tutor teachers of rural underfilled and nomad schools is focused on development of an active life style in the extreme camping conditions, knowledge of language, culture and traditional activity of the native small-numbered peoples of the North, readiness for teaching several disciplines, knowledge of cutting-edge information and educational technologies. A logic succession of modules, which aim at gradual development of common cultural, common occupational and special competencies of soon-to-be tutor teachers, was observed. A survey of students enrolled at this educational program justifies that soon-to-be tutors are more highly motivated and aware of employment at Northern distant schools than soon-to-be elementary school teachers lacking the extra profile. **Applications/Improvements:** Implementation of this educational program will allow for achieving positive outcomes such as maximum preservation of underfilled and nomad schools as the most important village-forming, social and cultural factor, providing life quality development in the national regions of Russia.

Keywords: Nomad School, Teaching Programs, Teachers Training Innovations in Russia, Underfilled School

1. Introduction

Introduction of a new-generation federal national standard against modernization of the Russian education required an innovative approach towards training teachers that would be able to implement fundamentally new tasks of such education. These tasks are derived from the innovative requirements of the FSES, such as: conducting inter-disciplinary research and implementing

modern teaching technologies, achieving competencies of a student of various kinds, considering national specifics of the domestic educational system, shaping competent personality of a teacher, priority of an educational function of the educational process, socializing students on the basis of the original conventional style of life and activity, spiritual and moral development, healthy lifestyle and environmental consciousness.

A rural school is the fundamental type of educational

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establishments in the Russian Federation. Almost 80% of all schools are located in rural areas and among which over 60% are underfilled. For example, rural schools take up 72.4% of general education schools in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), among which 200 schools are underfilled and 14 schools are nomad. The issue of development of an underfilled school is crucial in modernizing the Russian educational system. A pattern that is predetermined by severe nature and climate, specific conventional style of life and activity of the natives, perspectives of global economic and social and cultural development of the North, Siberia and Far East is a specific feature of such schools. This specific, which determines the activity of rural underfilled schools, is the one in need of an adequate high-priority solution, accurate scientific and methodological approach to this issue, and representativeness of experimental research and its theoretical and practical justification.

A 2015 project implementation plan for the Republic has been approved for the purpose of a complex approach towards implementing the Teachers of Arctic Region project on the territory of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and within the Memorandum of understanding between the government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education. The North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk Federal Autonomous Educational Establishment for Higher Vocational Education is one of those to implement the project. Ensuring quality of life in the North; preserving and developing the culture of Northern and Eastern nations have been determined as a high priority area of educational, scientific and research and innovative activity. There is a great perspective for the North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk to become a big investment and innovation high school in terms of unique complex international training programs in Northern country studies. In this case, a statement that educational policy of any country considers common integration processes, while reflecting national interests, to achieve a new quality of education has been made within the framework of the Bologna process (2003). Russia is also committed to this education development strategy, while preserving its national identity as a polyethnic country.

The specifics of the educational process of rural underfilled schools determines the necessity of modernizing the educational activity in terms of

developing a network of nomad and other specific models of schools in places of compact habitation and traditional activity of the natives for a greater access to educational services; developing variative concepts of training a rural school teacher to reflect basic requirements to the nomad underfilled school teacher, such as: ability to survive in extreme conditions; learning the language, culture and specifics of traditional activity of native small-numbered peoples of North; skills to perform in classes of different age groups; knowledge of modern teaching and information educational techniques; basic knowledge of medicine, food culture, crafts etc. With view to the above, one should conclude that the quality of implementing of general elementary educational standards will depend greatly on the inherent availability and capabilities of teachers to implement such standards in the spirit of modern requirements of the civilization.

With view to the identified regional specifics of the educational process, an educational program of high vocational training, awarding a bachelor degree in Elementary Education and Tutorship at a General Underfilled (Nomad) School of the North has been developed and introduced at the Teacher Training Institute within the framework of participation in the project. This program has been developed on the basis of the Laboratory for Rural Underfilled Schools within the Elementary Education Department of the Teacher Training Institute of the North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk (Neustroev Scientific School).

1.1 Review of Literature

A tutor profession is new for the Russian teacher community, despite the fact that functions of the tutor were performed by a classroom teacher, counselor, social teacher or school psychologist. The term 'tutor' it appeared quite recently and the contents of tutor activity are still not clearly understood.

Tutor means a historically formed and special teaching position that provides for the development of individual educational programs of students and accompanies the process of individual education at a school, college, and in the system of extended and continuing education. The phenomenon of tutorship is closely related of the history of European universities of the 12th century and it originates from the UK. It shaped approximately in the 14th century at classical English universities, such as: Oxford and Cambridge.

Edward and Elaine Gordon, who wrote the *Centuries of Tutoring: A History of Alternative Education in America and Western Europe*, reconstruct the history of teaching science through the history of tutorship, comment the function of tutors at different times and show their significant impact on the development of education technologies and institutions. That having been said, the authors neither isolate the tutor teaching position with respect to others, nor draw any solid demarcation line between the tutor, teacher, educator etc., while discussing historically formed tutorship practices. A resident tutor, private tutor, home teacher, or royal tutor may be a tutor, provided the culture, knowledge and values of development of the student (tutee) are considered. The authors consider the tutorship to be a position and the basis of any teaching activity, but not a job¹. Will Moore, a scientist and tutor from a college in Oxford, considers the tutor to be a constructive critic that helps to gain insight into information, explore any possible areas of focus and choose the right educational pathway².

The tutorship evolved as a separate teaching movement and was shaped at the end of the 1980s in Russia at the time of reforming the whole national educational system. A modern tutorship practice relies on the ideas and principles of L. Vygotsky's cultural and historical approach, D. Elkonin's development psychology, and humanitarian and technological approach in the philosophy and methodology, and person-oriented approach. There are various areas of tutorship studies in teaching science to be focused on available now, such as: studying processes of tutorship support, which are discussed by N. Rybalkina, T. Kovaleva, E. Sukhanova, P. Shchedrovitsky, tutor technologies that are applied to elementary school students, which are discussed by T. Bubiakin, E. Voloshyna and others³.

T. Kovaleva, the leader of tutorship movement and theorist of tutor support in Russia, speaks of three vectors of tutorship activity. The first vector is a social vector of tutorship activity and implies involvement with a vast number of educational proposals that are predetermined by the infrastructure of certain educational establishments, and also any available educational proposals that meet the demands of a student. This vector imposes very serious requirements on the level of information resources of the tutor.

The second vector is a cultural and disciplinary vector and means involvement with the disciplinary material that

is chosen by a tutee. The tutor fixes constantly progression of the student within the discipline of interest and assists the tutee, with the help of disciplinary consultants, in mastering a certain cultural tradition. Changing margins of the disciplinary knowledge is a special area of focus of tutor consults and introduces amendments into implementation of the individual program of every school student.

An anthropological vector of tutor activity is the third vector. While creating a personal educational program, a school student has to understand what he or is is required to do to implement such program; which qualities he or she may rely on and which qualities he or she must still develop. The tutor works here with individual characteristics of a student and facilitates clarification of such characteristics, as well as requirements of the educational conditions and program that is used as a guide by the tutor.⁴

2. Research Methods

Research techniques, such as studying laws and regulations, observing the educational process at underfilled and nomad schools and questioning current teachers of nomad schools and students were used to investigate the issue of training teachers for the North.

Federal Laws, such as Law on education in the Russia Federation, On guarantying rights of native small-numbered peoples of the Russian Federation, and regional laws On kinship, indigenous nomad community of native peoples of the North, On nomad schools of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) form the legal basis for launching educational programs and training teachers for nomad schools. At the moment, there are 14 nomad schools open in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). They also operate in the Khanty- Mansisk, Yamalo-Nenets, Dolgano-Nenets and Chukotka Autonomous Regions and Krasnoyarsk Territory. Target vacancies for training and material support are provided for graduates of teaching universities and colleges that are employed in remote locations.

An ethnic and teaching education concept has been developed at the laboratory, demand and possibility of special training of teachers for underfilled and nomad schools of the North have been studied. Moreover, an experience in educational and methodological support

of 14 nomad schools of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) within the international UNESCO program and based on innovative distance learning has been gained. A social request of the population regarding the development of a network of nomad schools within the elementary (1 to 4 years) and intermediate (5 to 9 years) stages of school education in the North has been studied. At the moment, we have been working upon creating a network community of nomad and underfilled schools of the North of Russia. Four more settlements declared opening nomad schools in the following nomad camps of our Republic: Tomponskii-1, Eveno-Bytantaiskii-1, and Bulunskii-2.

2.1 Empirical Techniques

While visiting nomad schools of the North, we were convinced that children with special educational needs that are associated with living in the extreme conditions of the North, traditional farming, such as deer farming, hunting and fishery, study there. These specifics are usually engrained from the childhood in the nomad living conditions. According to the observation of the educational process at nomad schools, teaching activity at such school has its specifics, when a person must have such competencies as complex support (tutorship) of education of children that live together with their parents in places of their traditional activity. These school teachers are bearers of culture of peoples of the North themselves, while they are adapted to the nomad living conditions and have a high value and motivation level. Nomad school teachers have trouble with management activity, such as: developing a curriculum, documenting rates, keeping financial records. Officials of municipal governing bodies or principals of basic schools are the ones performing management functions for such schools at the moment. This is due to the fact that school teachers do not have any educational management competencies. Distance learning is not introduced at the schools, because of poor Internet connection in remote regions and lacking interactive learning skills. 48 teachers of underfilled schools of the North acted as respondents, and 100% of them point out that tutor teachers, who were trained according to special programs, speak foreign languages and have competencies of teaching the mother tongue at elementary school, as well as middle school, i.e. multi-skilled teachers, are required for achieving the high education level at underfilled schools. Teachers also point

out that tutorship at a nomad school implies decision-making mobility (83.3%), multi-functionality (100%), familiarization with distance learning technologies (91.6%), skills for personal growth support in various age groups (100%) and propensity to innovative activity (95.8%). Thus, the necessity for training tutors that have the skills of complex teaching support of children in the specific nomad living conditions arouse as a result of the research, which is an important factor of improving education quality at underfilled schools of the North.

An innovative bachelor degree curriculum for a double degree in Elementary education and tutorship at a middle underfilled (nomad) school of the North has been developed in the 2012-2013 academic year, based on the elementary education department. Study groups (30 students) that study according to this program acted as an experimental group. Students that gain their bachelor degree in Elementary Education (22 students) act as a control group in this study. Questioning revealed a higher level of value and motivation component in the experimental groups vs. the control groups. Thus, there are by 24.8% more (55.6%) people willing to work at nomad schools in the experimental group than in the control group (31.8%). An attitude of students of the experimental and control groups towards an innovative activity was valued. A Teacher evaluation card and self-evaluation card for professional capabilities of a student of conducting innovative activity, developed⁵ was used. The following parameters were assessed: motivative and creative personal orientation, creativity, evaluation of professional capabilities of a student of conducting innovative activity. 53.3% of the tested in the experimental group exhibited a high level of motivative and creative orientation vs. just 45.4% in the control group, with creativity and capability of innovative activity at 43.3%, as compared to 40.9% in the control group. High performance, as compared to the control group, is predetermined by the contents of the new educational program. About 50% of the students are young people from the areas of compact settlements of peoples of the North, who made their conscious career, are found in the experimental group.

3. Results and Discussion

While understanding the urgent character of training a tutor for underfilled and nomad schools of the North and East of Russia, one should point out the presence

of the specifics of tutor's activity at such schools, and, consequently, their professional training. As has been noted above, qualification requirements of the tutor that are specified in current regulations are usually represented by duties of psychological and teaching support a child, providing assistance in developing capabilities of the child via developing individual educational programs. The tutor's activity in the conditions of the North and East of Russia cannot be conducted without regard to the regional specifics of the education system. Underfilling of rural schools in the conditions of North is a social and economic regularity, determined by the specific nature and climate and national and regional peculiarities of the historical development of the native peoples⁶. Therefore, the tutor job at an underfilled or nomad remote Northern school, where there is not any actual possibility for fully stuffed teachers in all disciplines, takes a special meaning. That is why the following is often observed in such schools: in particular, there are 1-2 experts working at a nomad school vs. 8-11 teachers at a basic school, who combine functions of a governor, teachers of certain disciplines and mentor (social teacher). Nevertheless, these schools are still the guarantor of preserving the village or settlement itself and traditional rural life style of native peoples of the North as a whole. Training multi-skilled teachers that know tutor technologies for school management, high-quality arrangement of the educational process with the students, development of curricula, keeping business and other records of the school are of the most immediate interest in these conditions. Analysis of teacher's activity at underfilled and nomad schools allows for the conclusion that such teachers do not have sufficient competencies at the moment.

While any tutor works with a large group of children and his or her main task is helping a teacher in individualization of the teaching process, from the conventional point of view, the environment forces the tutor, working in the conditions of remote rural underfilled and nomad schools, to perform broader functions. A graduate of the Elementary Education and Tutorship at an Underfilled (Nomad) School of the North program has a significant advantage, as long as he or she is trained to work with a group of students of various ages, where individualization is a mandatory condition of arranging the educational process, and knows tutor technologies, associated with creating conditions for gaining high-quality knowledge by the students, while using distance

technologies in the absence of a teacher in any certain discipline. At the same time, the tutor may combine, if necessary, duties of the school principal and accountant, as long as he or she is specially trained for management activity. Knowledge of information technologies for the tutor in the conditions of the North and East of Russia, known for a huge unsettled territory and remote location of schools as a result, is a must.

Moreover, the specific of training a tutor for Arctic schools involves a mandatory language and ethnic and cultural component of college education. Hard working conditions of a teacher at remote rural schools are not very appealing for modern college graduates. Students that are familiar with the social and cultural environment of the school know the language and ethnic culture of the peoples living on this territory are the only ones that will be able to not only perform their duties, but also facilitate further preservation and development of languages and cultures of peoples of the North and East of Russia. Then, the contents of multi-profiled training of bachelor teachers at an underfilled basic and nomad school of the North implies developing the following specific professional and ethnic and cultural competencies:

- Readiness for preservation and translation of a system of knowledge of culture, history, language, religion, customs, biophysical peculiarities and traditions of peoples of the North in terms of ethnic and cultural education and polycultural communication in the global community;
- The ability to demonstrate common intellectual and practical skills to transfer the fundamentals of the national culture;
- Readiness of the soon-to-be teacher for research and creative activity, while using folk traditions in the teaching and mentoring activity;
- The ability and experience of the emotional and volitional perception of the reality, formedness of a conscious professional position as a representative of the Northern ethnic group;
- The ability to express special inter-disciplinary, psychological and teaching, common didactic, and narrow-subject methodological preparedness of the teacher;
- Readiness for application of a range of innovative technologies, forms and methods that are adequate to the specifics of the teaching and mentoring activity at rural and underfilled schools, such as: small number

of students, small number of students in a class, groups of different ages, multi-disciplinary teaching; and

- Readiness for administrative management of an underfilled or nomad school, including arrangement of the educational process, with view to its specifics, and keeping financial records of the establishment.

A range of professional activity of a graduate: education system, succession of preschool and elementary school education, general elementary school education, general middle school education. This area of professional activity of a bachelor graduate is described by the support of integral teaching process, which involves the teacher combining teaching, mentoring and development of an elementary school child with tutor's activity in the specific conditions of a basic underfilled (nomad) school of the North. Functional activity of an elementary school teacher is extended broadly in the area of preschool education according to the Succession federal program project, and middle school as well.

The specifics of professional bachelor's activity, with view to their training profiles, consists in the following: an elementary school teacher is a broadly educated teacher in the area of general elementary education that teaches all basic disciplines during the first through the fourth years (Russian language, native language, reading, mathematics, the world around us, singing, arts) and also supports the educational activity of the students at a middle underfilled (nomad) school, while being familiar with the tutorship technology, which broadens the range of professional tasks of such teacher.

Types of establishments and institutions for conducting professional activity by the graduate in this area of studies and higher education training profile include the following: an elementary and general middle school, including an underfilled and nomad school, residential schools, Homes and Centers for children, private elementary schools, and private tuition in a family.

The tutor is trained in two training profiles (Elementary Education and Tutorship at an Underfilled (Nomad) School of the North) for five years. This basic educational profiled program includes the following new structural modular components: Arranging a teaching process at an underfilled school, Ethnic and teaching and ethnic and psychological specifics of child-rearing, Functioning of languages and cultures in a polyethnic environment, Teaching technologies of tutor's activity, Providing for the FSES of the elementary and general education as a result

of tutor's activity etc.

A modular program arrangement principle was used, which imply introduction of inter-disciplinary modules. A logic succession of modules, which aim at gradual development of common cultural, common professional and special competencies of soon-to-be tutor teachers, was observed. This common cultural and common professional training within the basic modules takes place during the first and second years of study. Familiarization with teaching techniques at elementary schools is done in combination with study of fundamental disciplines within the modules over the second and third years of study. Starting from the third year of study and based on the fundamentals of elementary school teaching, modules that familiarize with the specifics of tutor's activity at an underfilled school are introduced, and ethnic specifics of languages and cultures of peoples of the North are studied. Competencies of the soon-to-be tutor teacher are extended and broadened during the fourth and fifth years of study for activity at an elementary and middle school in the regional conditions.

According to the latest educational standard (FSES), bachelors are trained in two profiles only. We offer to alternate admission for certain additional profiled specialties subject to the demand. For example, the first year of study - additional training, the second year of study - mathematics and information technologies, the third year of studies - Russian language, the fourth year of study - biology, and the fifth year of study - a foreign language. In this case, the basic educational program and curriculum are still fundamental and universal, and modular system of certain newly introduced additional profession-oriented specialty is the only one to change.

Teaching practical training is an important link of the professional training of an elementary school teacher, and tutor teacher of an underfilled (nomad) school of the North. Practical training allows for a consistent and systematic combination, throughout the entire college education, of theoretical training of the students and their practical work at a underfilled and nomad school of the North. It facilitates reinforcing, deepening and enriching general teaching, methodological and special knowledge, mastering professional skills, developing and polishing professional individual qualities of the elementary school teacher and tutor teacher. The demand for teachers that know distance learning technologies, have high information culture and are familiar with the corresponding scientific basis of organization of the teaching process becomes actual in the specific conditions

of the North that are known by a low population density, remoteness from the center, poorly developed traffic infrastructure, low number of school students and multi-disciplinary teaching. An underfilled and nomad rural school takes up functions of a consolidating center, becomes a cultural center, while accumulating an intellectual, spiritual, creative and moral potentials of the national culture. This peculiarity enhances the necessity for developing a strategy of ethnic and cultural education that ensures a stable innovative regional development and activates deeper interconnections between peoples and cultures, while improving the process of inter-ethnic cooperation. Due to this fact, a teaching practical training program provides for deepening polycultural competency of bachelor graduates in matters of social and cultural, ethnic and cultural, cognitive and personal development of children and teenagers, cooperation with the community and family, and shaping a self-educational culture of a modern tutor teacher.

The specifics of running underfilled and nomad schools of the North impose certain requirements on the contents of the teaching practical training for this profile. The contents of the teaching practical training orient future elementary school teachers and tutor teachers of rural underfilled and nomad schools to develop an active life style in the extreme camping conditions, knowledge of language, culture and traditional activity of the native small-numbered peoples of the North, readiness for teaching several disciplines, knowledge of cutting-edge information and educational technologies. This teaching practical training aims at training multi-skilled teachers that are ready for arrangement of the teaching process in the conditions of integrating the education contents, know g professional growth technologies in the conditions of a closed space, and are familiar with methodologies and technologies of teaching at an underfilled and nomad school of the North.

A teaching practical training program in the Teaching Education in Elementary Education and Tutorship at an Underfilled (Nomad) School of the North involves 4 types of practical training, such as: summer mentoring practical training, teaching mentoring practical training, disciplinary teaching practical training, and graduation practical training. Students have their teaching practical training at their native nomad camps, villages, at underfilled and nomad schools. In the Northern and Arctic regions, such as: Srednekolymskii, Ust-Yanskii, Bulunskii, Tomponskii, Eveno-Bytantskii, they are

are introduced in the range of problems of teacher tutor occupation, and the duties of the teacher tutor are familiarized. An adaptive stage of professional competency development starts with summer mentoring practical training, where students face the teaching environment for the first time and take a short at being a teacher. Individualization, which involves expression of their own professional affections and capabilities, development of a positive self-position and development of professional self-consciousness and reflection, takes place. Key communicative and cognitive competencies, basic organizational and technological competency and social and teaching competency develop gradually over the second and third years of study. Skills of teaching communication of the teacher with elementary school students are polished, their own teaching leadership style, and communication skills with colleagues are developed, the ability to find solutions in extraordinary conditions, skills of planning, organization, self-control and reflection in the educational process are developed in the course of teaching mentoring practical training and disciplinary teaching practical training. Developing a key organizational and management competency and disciplinary methodological special competency of an elementary school teacher as basic ones is the objective of the governmental practice. Students polish their organizational skills, decision making skills, skills to apply methods and forms rationally in the educational process, deepen their disciplinary and methodological knowledge and skills in courses of a modern elementary school curriculum, improve their skills of self-analysis of their own activity in the conditions of an underfilled and nomad school of the North, while trying to act as a teacher of an underfilled (nomad) school.

This teaching practical training implies familiarization with the challenges of modern elementary education, primary school age and teenagers for the graduate to be fully ready for their activity at an underfilled elementary and middle (nomad) school of the North.

4. Conclusion

Implementation of the basic innovative educational program in the area of teacher training, combined profile of training Elementary Education and Tutorship at an Underfilled (Nomad) School of the North) that was developed by us will allow for achieving positive

outcomes, such as:

- A statement that dispersion of small-numbered settlements across the huge territory of North and underfilling (small-number of students, small number of students in a class) of rural schools are a historically formed social and economic regularity and specific of the original traditional life style of native peoples is justified;
- Feasibility and possibility of training a multi-skilled tutor teacher for rural underfilled and nomad schools of the North and East of Russia, using a bachelor degree system;
- A high organizational efficiency and high quality of the teaching and mentoring process is ensured based on the universal training of a tutor teacher, using a modular training system, modern information and educational systems and technologies in the specific working conditions of a basic underfilled and nomad school of the North with constant deficit of teachers observed there;
- A competent self-developing personality of a multi-skilled teacher and student is shaped based on traditions of the original ethnic and cultural development of peoples of the North;
- Conditions for implementing individual teaching and mentoring development trajectories of soon-to-be teachers and children in a rural society of the North are created;
- Ideas of the Our New School National educational initiative strategy are implemented, considering the specifics of activity of a basic underfilled and nomad

school of the North;

- A new-generation FSES is implemented successfully in the system of general elementary and general middle education in national regions of the North and East of Russia as a factor of national, social and economic, spiritual and moral and cultural prosperity of native small-numbered peoples; and
- Maximum preservation and extension of a network of underfilled and nomad schools as the most important village-forming, industrial, social and cultural and human factor, which ultimately provides for an active natural population growth as implementation of a demographic policy in national regions of the North and East of Russia.

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