

THE TRAINING OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS FOR PEDAGOGICAL INTERNSHIP DURING COVID-19: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Olena Semenog

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature, Makarenko Sumy State Pedagogical University, Ukraine
e-mail: olenasemenog@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0002-8697-8602

Kateryna Shamunova

Postgraduate Student at the Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature, Makarenko Sumy State Pedagogical University, Guidance Counselor, Educational and Methodical Department of Educational Activity and Professional Development Coordination, Sumy Region Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education, Ukraine
e-mail: Katherinapiers@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0001-7868-392X

Summary

The article outlines the essence of the key concepts of the study. Pedagogical internship is described as an original form of education in the process of professional and pedagogical training in tertiary school, aimed at gaining knowledge of the laws and principles of professional activity, mastering the methods of its organization, and thus, training of future teachers as professionally competent specialists. Future primary school teachers' professional and pedagogical training to the pedagogical internship is defined as a purposeful process focused on the development of a future primary school teacher professional competence and skills to perform professional duties within the frameworks of the New Ukrainian School reform. The article identifies the range of challenges as well as the means to carry out a pedagogical internship for the future primary school teachers in the distance learning under the quarantine conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemics in Ukraine. The most popular distance learning online platforms are distinguished.

Keywords: primary school teacher's professional competence, professional training, the New Ukrainian School concept, the state standard of primary education, educational process, primary school teacher, future primary school teacher, pedagogical internship, distance learning, quarantine.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23856/3866>

Introduction

A primary school teacher's role is exceptional. Abilities to percept, use, implement, and create innovations are of significant importance for the profession. According to the school programs in six fields of study (!), an integrated teacher forms young citizens' skill to analyse and interpret events and phenomena, adapt to learning conditions, and everyday life's activity. Whether senior school teachers will work with pupils who possess speech culture, critical thinking, and informational and media literacy depends on the primary school teachers' mastery.

Effective implementation of the primary school program requirements calls for the future primary school teachers professional training modernization in pedagogical higher education establishments. It is of critical importance to enhance the content of future teacher's training to

the pedagogical internship. Pedagogical internship is integrated into social reality and serves as a link connecting theoretical training and independent pedagogical activity. It gives possibilities to enrich life experience, expand social contacts, form and develop pedagogical erudition, intuition, ability to improvise, pedagogical optimism, and introspection. The educational and cultural dialogue during the pedagogical internship between a teacher-guidance counsellor and an intern student, an intern, a teacher, and a pupil is of a particular significance.

The quarantine was introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemics all around the globe and particularly in Ukraine. Subsequently, educational institutions switched to distance learning. This situation has exacerbated various problems related to the pedagogical internship and its realization. Among these problems are insufficient awareness of modern digital education tools; lack of motivation to use the latter; insufficient provision of students and teachers with the necessary computer and digital equipment; etc. Nowadays, the following requirements for higher education are of great relevance: accessibility and inclusiveness; an individual educational trajectory; digital literacy of educators; the assessment of educators and students readiness for blended learning; research of available educational and methodical materials and technological capabilities. Thus, higher education institutions have to carry out an important mission – to create appropriate conditions for pedagogical internship.

Analysis of scientific sources

The implementation of the New Ukrainian School concept (*Kontseptsia novoi ukrainskoi shkoly, 2018*) and the State Standard of Primary Education (*Derzhavnyi standart pochatkovoï osvity, 2018*) provide for the training of teachers that obtain comprehensive knowledge, can develop pupils' key competence, and promote their personal development. Works by N. Bibik, V. Bondar, S. Martynenko, O. Savchenko, A. Struk, L. Khomych, L. Khoruzha, etc. outline the theoretical and methodological foundations of the future primary school teachers professional training. Various aspects of pedagogical internship organization in higher education institutions were studied by O. Abdullina, N. Kichuk, V. Slastonin, etc. Pedagogical higher education establishments develop experience in future teachers training to pedagogical internship in the conditions of COVID-19.

Study Objective

The article outlines several aspects of the future primary school teachers training to pedagogical internship, including the COVID-19 conditions. The objective of the article presupposes the following tasks: to describe the essence of the key concepts; to outline the major challenges of the future primary school teachers training to the pedagogical internship; to define the ways to address the challenges within higher education institutions, including the Makarenko Sumy State Pedagogical University.

The research methodology is determined by the following **methods** – the analysis of legislative and normative and scientific sources in the field of education, generalization, and terminological analysis aimed to describe the key concepts and to study pedagogical experience.

Key concepts of the study

For the purposes of the study, the following key concepts are outlined “professional and pedagogical training of the future primary school teachers” “professional competence of a primary school teacher”, “pedagogical internship”.

Following the characteristics given by A. Struk (*Struk, 2020*), the future primary school teachers' professional and pedagogical training is defined as a purposeful process focused on the development of a future primary school teacher professional competence and skills to perform professional duties within the frameworks of the New Ukrainian School reform. The Professional Standard of the primary school teacher in general secondary education institutions (*Profesiynyi standart "Vchytel pochatkovykh klasiv zakladu zahalnoi serednoi osvity", 2018*) gives the following teacher's job description: to plan and implement the educational process (sixth level of the NQF); to provide and support the education, upbringing, and development of students in the educational environment and in the family (sixth level of the NQF); to create an educational environment (sixth level of the NQF); introspection and professional self-development (seventh level of the NQF); to conduct pedagogical research (seventh level of the NQF); to provide methodological assistance to colleagues on education, development, upbringing, and socialization of primary school students (seventh level of the NQF); to generalize personal pedagogical experience and to present it to the pedagogical community (seventh level of the NQF); to assess teachers' work results (eights level of the NQF). These functions promote the development of a professionally competent teacher.

Professional competence of a primary school teacher is defined as the dynamically integrated individual quality characterized by the level of professional education, experience, individual abilities, pursue to continuous education, self-improvement and self-development, communicative and verbal interaction, creative approach to the work, and gives a possibility to implement the professional activity in the most effective manner (*Semenog, Kozhemyakina, 2019: 12*).

Based on scientific sources analysis, personal pedagogical experience, and research and experimental work conducted on the pedagogical faculties of the higher education institutions, the pedagogical internship is characterized as an original form of education in the process of professional and pedagogical training in tertiary school, aimed at gaining knowledge of the laws and principles of professional activity, mastering the methods of its organization, and thus, training of future teachers as professionally competent specialists (*Semenog, Bazyl, Diatlenko, 2011: 44*). The special feature of a pedagogical internship is the possibility to create one integrated system of professional knowledge and skills based on theoretical knowledge in several subjects, to gain proficiency in up-to-date methods and forms of educational process management, to foster self-development and self-improvement.

Pedagogical internship in the "New Ukrainian School"

The analysis of the basic provisions of the New Ukrainian School concept (*Kontseptsiia novoi ukrainskoi shkoly, 2018*) and the State Standard of Primary Education (*Derzhavnyi standart pochatkovoï osvity, 2018*) shows that the New School is competence-oriented. The Law of Ukraine "On Education" (*Zakon Ukrainy "Pro osvitu", 2017*) defines new requirements to the teachers' training, viz. an integration of educational content based on key competencies; introduction of innovative teaching methods; a motivated teacher who has freedom of creativity and professional development; the pedagogy of partnership; modern educational environment based on information and communication technologies, child-centred learning.

The Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (2014) refers to the practical training of students as to the main form of the educational process organization in higher education, alongside with learning sessions, individual work, tests, and examination works. According to the Law, it is "carried out in a form of an internship at the enterprises, in establishments and organizations

under the concluded agreements or at the structural divisions of the higher education institution provided for the practical training” (*Zakon Ukrainy “Pro vyshchu osvitu”, 2014*). The guidelines on the internship management provide details on its goals, that are “to form and develop professional skills to make independent decisions on the job, to master modern methods, forms of organization and instruments relevant to the future specialty” (*Rekomendatsii pro provedennia praktyky studentiv vyshchyykh navchalnykh zakladiv Ukrainy, 2013: 2*).

At the same time, as it was noted by I. Ziaziun (*Ziaziun, 1994: 56*), contemporary priorities require to aim the future primary school teachers’ professional education for the training of a tutor, who can create a favorable atmosphere for individual learning. Such teacher is supposed to work closely together with the pupils, school psychologist, school social worker, librarian, parents’ community, etc. as well as to determine specific educational and pedagogical targets taking into consideration the age and special needs of pupils, social and psychological features of the participants of the educational process.

An important part of pedagogical internship is planning and realization of trial and test lessons. The personal experience of teaching in a primary school in Sumy affirms that an unconventional, original lesson based on the principles of academic integrity is a joint creative activity of a teacher and students.

The nature of difficulties in the process of performing internships, the degree of job satisfaction and quality of work, the degree of independence in performing tasks, relationships with students and teaching staff are the indicators that determine the level of professional skills development of an intern student. The pedagogical internship results provide for a clear understanding of whether future teachers are trained sufficiently for the professional work; competent in various fields of humanities; interested in their own professional and personal development (*Semenog, Bazyl, Diatlenko, 2011: 44*).

Pedagogical internship during the COVID-19

The rapid spread of the COVID-19 in the world and Ukraine gave rise to the new challenges for educational institutions in the education of primary school children and, particularly, for the requirements for pedagogical internship in primary schools. The Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine № 406 of 16 March 2020 “On organizational measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus COVID-19” (*Pro organizacijni zahodi dlya zapobigannya poshirennyu koronavirusu COVID-19: Nakaz MON № 406, 2020*) and the Official Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine № 1/9-176 of 25 March 2020 “On the peculiarities of the educational process organization during the quarantine” (*Shodo osoblivostej organizaciyi osvithnoho procesu pid chas karantynu: List MON № 1/9-176, 2020*) obliged educational institutions to operate in the mode of distance or blended learning. However, the analysis of the analytical reference on distance learning management in general secondary schools (*Analitychna dovidka shchodo orhanizatsii dystantsiinoho navchannia u zakladakh zahalnoi serednoi osvity v umovakh karantynu*), based on the survey results of the educational process participants, proves that most of the teachers experienced hardships while dealing with online instruments due to insufficient skills and knowledge. 47.5% of teachers (20590 individuals) indicated in the survey that they have never used the distance learning technologies in their educational work before.

The conditions of distance learning have initiated additional socially determined processes concerning comprehension and reinterpretation of humanistic values, the development of the moral world view on this basis, and, consequently, influenced the student’s learning behavior during the self-isolation (*Vaskivska, Kosianchuk, 2011*). The significance of pedagogical

technologies in the distance learning process grows exponentially. It is necessary to choose the most effective instruments for online learning, such as problem-solving tasks, projects, individually tailored tests, i.e., to implement an individual approach.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine approved a methodological handbook "Distance learning management in schools. Guidelines" (by A. Lototska, O. Pasichnyk) (*Oglyad platform ta instrumentiv distancijnogo navchannya, rekomendaciyi dlya organizaciyi distancijki u shkoli, 2020*). The handbook provides for the background information on the instruments and platforms for distance learning, schedule design algorithm, teacher's working routine management, communication with students, ways of assessment, as well as specific distance learning techniques for primary, secondary and senior school, issues on academic integrity and cheating prevention.

The Ministry of Digital Transformation has launched a free online course on distance learning management. The course consists of 6 video lessons featuring educators and experts. Speakers explain the algorithm of teachers-students communication during the distance learning and describe distinguishing features of Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, Zoom, Class Dojo, Classtime, and their usage.

The project "All-Ukrainian School Online" was launched on the 3 April 2020. It provided video lessons for the pupils. Pupils could also watch such lessons on Facebook, YouTube, and Ukrainian TV-channels. Gradually, various online-conferences, webinars, workshops, online courses, and educational platforms for educators' competence development have become more popular.

However, the analysis of statistical data (*Rekomendatsii shchodo vprovadzhennia zmislanoho navchannia u zakladakh fakhovoi peredvyshchoi ta vyshchoi osvity, 2020*) shows, that at the same time there was a large number of complaints from the numerous applicants of educational services or their parents. In the first place, the complaints claimed that such a diversity of online platforms was confusing and tiring.

A substantial drawback of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ukraine is the suspension of pedagogical internship in the educational institutions. In general, the students and teachers in foreign countries, including Poland, switched to the distance learning mode readily, as far as this form of education has been used for several decades, and the capabilities of the computer, multimedia, and digital support are sufficient. However, the analysis of Ukrainian higher education institutions' experience proves that it is possible to provide full mentoring support of pedagogical internships in educational institutions following the health standards. Nowadays, the fact that future primary school teachers have to be knowledgeable in the information and communication technologies of blended learning is apparent.

The higher education institutions' experience

The analysis of higher education institutions websites demonstrates that the Faculty of Preschool Education, Primary Education, and Arts of the Shevchenko National University "Chernihiv Colehium" (*Lymar, 2020*) have used the Google Classroom platform for teaching the most of the subject during the distance learning in the quarantine conditions. In particular, the full-time students of the third year of study of the specialty "Primary education" worked on the theoretical materials, performed practical assignments, accomplish tests and module works within the course "Pedagogical technologies in the primary school".

Yu. Lymar (*Lymar, 2020*) presents the new methods of work on theoretical materials for future primary school teachers. These methods include the implementation of the Six Thinking

Hats technology, the creation of a mental map, the analysis of advantages and disadvantages of a particular pedagogical technology, examples of a particular technology implementation by a teacher/student; description of a situation from the students' experience where a teacher used a particular pedagogical technology and its consequences (based on philosophy dialogue by Guro Helskog (Norway) (*Helskog, 2019*)).

In the Berdyansk State Pedagogical University, the students, who undertook a pedagogical internship in the educational institutions in Berdyansk, Zaporizhzhia and Dnipro regions as the teachers, experienced the peculiarities of distance pedagogical internship (technical and pedagogical requirements to the online classes; coordination of distance work routine with the administration of educational institutions; creation of correctional video classes and video consultations; participation in online meetings of educational institutions; adjustment and approval of trainees individual work plans; acquaintance of students with the schedule of online consultations).

The undergraduate practice of the fourth year students of the educational level Junior Specialist of the specialty "Primary Education" of the Shevchenko Humanitarian Pedagogical College of Uman was carried out in a distance mode and provided for preparing of an individual work plan; active usage of digital resources, in particular, watching (followed by analysis) online lessons, classes, educational and other activities (with mandatory indication of the date, author and time of the record); writing summaries of lessons, classes, educational and other activities; video recording of individually conducted work (at the beginning the student reported the section, topic and demonstrated the skills of independent realization); preparing the PowerPoint presentations.

The general secondary education institutions in the Sumy region have also gained experience in distance learning technology implementation. Municipal institution Shostka specialized school of I-III levels № 1 of the Shostka city council of the Sumy region, Municipal institution Maksym Savchenko Sumy specialized school of I-III levels № 7 of the Sumy city council, support institution "Krolevets Lyceum № 3" of the Krolevets city council have joined the All-Ukrainian pedagogical experimental project "Technology of Teaching Elementary School Students "Rozumnyky" (SMART KIDS)". The project allows children to study subjects using the multimedia resources both distantly and in person. Accessibility and control's simplicity provide for the pupils' independent work in the program, animated characters stimulate interest, and the soundtrack assists to memorize new material effectively. Most teachers use additional tools, such as Teach Infinity Pro and Intech IWB software, social networks and Internet applications, YouTube channels, educational portals super.urok-ua.com, novashkola.ua, online service for interactive assignments LearningApps.org, etc.

Junior students and teachers of the Municipal institution Sumy secondary school of I-III levels № 23 realized a creative project on academic integrity compliance during the distance learning. Particular results of the project were discussed on the Zoom conference in the frameworks of the International Scientific and Practical Conference of applicants of higher education and young scientists "Academic Culture of the Researcher in the Educational Space: European and National Experience" held in Makarenko Sumy State Pedagogical University.

Basing on the analysis of the online survey of educators and students of the Makarenko Sumy State Pedagogical University and the results of students' work it is possible to conclude, that distance learning is more effective when there is clear guidance on the methods of work with certain theoretical material and reporting forms; there are no strict time constraints for the accomplishment of tasks; there are psychological support and encouragement of the student.

Conclusions

Thus, the conducted analysis gives ground to conclude the following. Pedagogical internship is described as an original form of education in the process of professional and pedagogical training in tertiary school, aimed at obtaining knowledge of the laws and principles of professional activity, mastering the methods of its organization, and thus, training of future teachers as professionally competent specialists. Professional and pedagogical training of a future primary school teacher is defined as a purposeful process focused on competence and skills development to perform professional duties within the frameworks of the New Ukrainian School reform.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the quarantine conditions have displayed that future teachers are not sufficiently aware of modern digital education tools; teachers do not have enough motivation to use the latter; both students and teachers are not sufficiently provided with the necessary computer and digital equipment; etc. The pedagogical technologies in the distance learning are of great significance nowadays. It is advisable to develop methodical and methodological support for distance learning and create a digital version of the educational process within a particular educational institution, in particular, for the process of pedagogical internship. It is possible to provide full mentoring support of pedagogical internships in educational institutions following the health standards.

Prospects for further research lies in the development of a holistic model of the future primary school teachers professional training system in the process of pedagogical internship, particularly, taking into account distance learning during quarantine caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

- Analitychna dovidka shchodo orhanizatsii dystantsiinoho navchannia u zakladakh zahalnoi serednoi osvity v umovakh karantynu. [Analytical information on the organization of distance learning in general secondary education in quarantine]. Retrieved from: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?pli=1#inbox/KtbxLwGzcqVFBgkGMMBZkKvdMMWBBVDHBV?compose=Cllg-CHrfTKFfkCPBHBIWGCrbPdBNkXqXVjkThwrQMRfsnntQmpbWWGKkqSTzrLvFTfTHxbZ-jVq&projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>. [in Ukrainian].*
- Derzhavnyi standart pochatkovoï osvity (2018). [State standard of primary education]. Retrieved from: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/87-2018-%D0%BF#Text>. [in Ukrainian].*
- Helskog, Guro Hansen (2019). Philosophising the Dialogos Waytoward Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation. London: Routledge Publishing Ltd.*
- Kontseptsiia novoi ukrainskoi shkoly (2018). [The concept of a new Ukrainian school]. Retrieved from: <http://nus.org.ua/>. [in Ukrainian].*
- Lymar, Y. M. (2020). Metody opratsiuvannia teorytychnoho materialu maibutnimy vchyteliamy pochatkovoï shkoly pid chas dytsantsiinoho navchannia. [Methods of elaboration of theoretical material by future primary school teachers during kindergarten education]. Retrieved from: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ogbl#inbox?projector=1>. [in Ukrainian].*
- Oglyad platform ta instrumentiv distancijnogo navchannia, rekomendaciyi dlya organizaciyi distancijki u shkoli (2020). [Review of distance learning platforms and tools, recommendations for the organization of distance learning in school]. Retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/oglyad-platform-ta-instrumentiv-distancijnogo-navchannia-rekomendaciyi-dlya-organizaciyi-distancijki-u-shkoli-go-smart-osvita-ta-mon-pidgotuvali-posibnik>. [in Ukrainian].*

Pro organizacijni zahodi dlya zapobigannya poshirennyu koronavirusu COVID-19: Nakaz MON № 406 (2020). [On organizational measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus COVID-19: Order of the Ministry of Education and Science № 406 of March 16, 2020]. Retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/pro-organizacijni-zahodi-dlya-zapobigannya-poshirennyu-korona-virusu-s-ovid-19>. [in Ukrainian].

Profesiinyi standart "Vchytel pochatkovykh klasiv zakladu zahalnoi serednoi osvity" (2018). [Professional standard "Primary school teacher of general secondary education"]. Retrieved from: <http://nus.org.ua/news/zatverdzheno-profstandart-vchytelya-pochatkovykh-klasiv-nush-shho-potribno-znaty-ta-vmity/>. [in Ukrainian].

Rekomendatsii pro provedennia praktyky studentiv vyshchyykh navchalnykh zakladiv Ukrainy (2013). [Recommendations for the practice of students of higher educational institutions of Ukraine]. Kiev: Derzhavna naukova ustanova "Instytut innovatsiinykh tekhnolohii i zmistu osvity". [in Ukrainian].

Rekomendatsii shchodo vprovadzhennia zmishanoho navchannia u zakladakh fakhovoi peredyshchoi ta vyshchoi osvity (2020). [Recommendations for the introduction of blended learning in institutions of professional higher and higher education]. Retrieved from: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ogbl#inbox?projector=1>. [in Ukrainian].

Semenog, O. M., Bazyl, L. O., Diatlenko, T. I. (2011). Fakhova praktyka vchytelia-slovesnyka. [Professional practice of a teacher-vocabulary]. Lugansk: Noulidzh. [in Ukrainian].

Semenog, O. M., Kozhemyakina, I. V. (2019). Rozvytok profesiinoi movno-movlenniievoi kompetentnosti vchytelia pochatkovoї shkoly: teoriia i praktyka. [Development of professional language and speech competence of elementary school teacher: theory and practice]. Sumy: A. S. Makarenko State University Press. [in Ukrainian].

Shodo osoblivostej organizaciyi osvitnogo procesu pid chas karantynu: List MON № 1/9-176 (2020). [On the peculiarities of the organization of the educational process during quarantine: Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science № 1 / 9-176 dated March 25, 2020]. Retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/shodo-osoblivostej-organizaciyi-osvitnogo-procesu-pid-chas-karantynu>. [in Ukrainian].

Struk, A. V. (2020). Teoretychni i metodychni zasady formuvannia leksyko-narodoznavchoi kompetentnosti maibutnykh uchyteliv pochatkovoї shkoly (PhD thesis). [Theoretical and methodological bases of formation of lexical and ethnographic competence of future primary school teachers]. Ivano-Frankivsk: Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. [in Ukrainian].

Vaskivska, H. O., Kosianchuk, S. V. (2011). Rytorychni uminnia uchniv starshoi shkoly u konteksti tsinnisno-smyslovoi sfery. Ukrainska mova i literatura v shkoli. [Rhetorical skills of high school students in the context of the value-semantic sphere. Ukrainian language and literature at school]. Retrieved from: http://lib.iitta.gov.ua/26595/1/2011_UMiLS_08_VGO_KSV.pdf. [in Ukrainian].

Zakon Ukrainy "Pro osvitu" (2017). [Law of Ukraine "On Education"]. Retrieved from: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2145-19#Text>. [in Ukrainian].

Zakon Ukrainy "Pro vyshchu osvitu" (2014). [Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education"]. Retrieved from: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1556-18#Text>. [in Ukrainian].

Ziazium, I. A. (1994). Psykholoho-pedahohichni problemy profesiinoi osvity. [Psychological and pedagogical problems of vocational education]. Kiev. [in Ukrainian].