

The Main Determinants of Improvement of Model of Educational Training of Specialists in the Field of PR Based on Competency Approach

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Modern approaches to the study of issue of PR-experts training require rethinking in order to identify new prospects of improvement and development in training of specialists in public relations. An important aspect is that Ukraine has recently moved to training format, based on acquiring of knowledge necessary for professional life by students. This applies, in particular, to specialists in public relations. The key aspect is to determine the set of skills of PR-specialist meant to be acquired by him during study. Another important point is the transition to the European three-level educational model, aimed at democratization and improvement of the process of acquiring of necessary skills by specialists. The essential transformation should be done in the field of PR-education in order to allow experts, at every level of education (Bachelor-Master-PhD), to receive only a clearly defined and systematic set of skills. The author carried out the content analysis of educational training programs in the field of PR for the purpose of discipline component, the principles of programming and knowledge, acquired at each educational level. Investigated data was systematized, analysed and recommendations on principles of development of effective three-level model of training for experts in public relations at the university were given.

Key Words: public relations, PR-education, skills, comparative analysis, educational training program, and competency approach

Introduction

Ukrainian education system requires essential rethink from all points of view, it concerns the approaches to training of workers in different disciplines, including specialists in public relations. Nowadays, the first step to this at the level of the whole higher education system is made — the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education”, aiming to democratize education sector and make it more competitive.

In this article, we suggest to investigate the process of educational training of specialists in public relations by applying competency approach. In modern realities, HEIs should develop innovative educational programs, which can provide not only the acquisition by students of certain amount of knowledge and skills, but also their subsequent effective practical application in their professional activity. This approach to the development of educational programs will respond to the challenges, posed by “knowledge society” and therefore “knowledge economy”, for which generalized skills, based on the obtained fundamental knowledge, communication,

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resolution of professional problems, possession of the latest information technologies, the ability to continuously update the existing system of knowledge are the most important and effective.

Competency approach involves the willingness and desire of a man to apply his knowledge, skills and personal qualities in a certain field of professional activity [Baydenko, 2004].

Competency approach in educational activities is an important direction to ensure a close correlation between education and employers, as well as the direction of unification, on the one hand, the requirements of employers to future experts, and on the other — a means to develop educational programs for individual specializations of one discipline. Even as we speak, leading companies, government bodies, when developing demands on staff, describing requirements for certain categories of workers, widely use the concept of competencies, develop and implement the so-called “profile (or model) of competencies”, a set of competencies, i.e. knowledge, skills and personal qualities necessary for successful professional activity [Bolotov, 2003].

The most important indicators of the quality of acquired knowledge throughout the learning process are professional qualities of experts, formed on the basis of personal qualities in the information and communication sector, including the field of public relations, which involve consistent and analytic thinking, creativity, communicativeness, ability to teamwork, ability to use knowledge, skills and practical skills to analyse the situation and foresee its development, including the cases of complicated and unforeseen situations, the availability of rhetoric skills, including written and oral communication, negotiation, work with print and electronic media, social media and other communication channels of digital society, possession of the full range of Internet technologies, conducting special events, creation of promotional product of commercial or social orientation. The analysis of all these indicators allows us to draw a conclusion about deep relationship and interdependence between them [Saunders, 1998].

Here is a list of skills the PR-specialist should possess (Fig. 3).

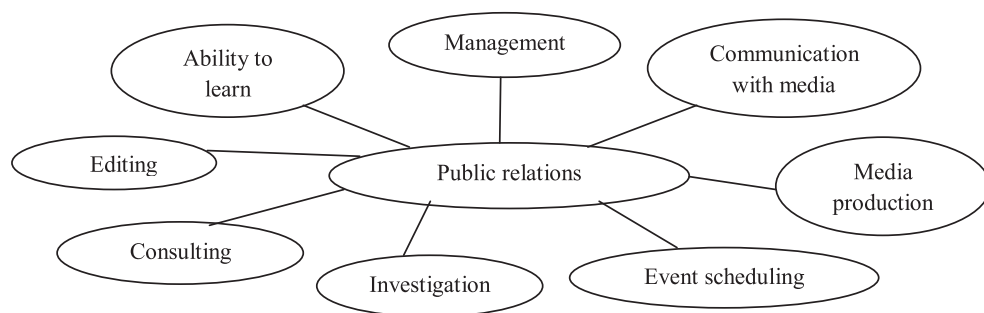


Fig. 3. The list of required competencies for PR-specialist

As we can see, the figure shows a wide range of competencies from various fields of knowledge. This is not the whole list of branches, to which the field of public relations is coherent. PR-specialist is versatile and he constantly develops new skills from other disciplines, because without such a development his professional level will fall. The main requirement for the student during study is to acquire the ability to learn. We emphasize that PR-specialist should constantly improve his skills [Fiske, 2014].

The aim of this article is to analyse the peculiarities of the formation of educational training programs according to three-level system by virtue of competency approach.

In the course of the work *two tasks* were performed: we carried out the comparative and content analysis of educational training programs in the field of PR and considered the ways to integrate this experience into domestic programs.

Literature review

It should be noted that today specialists of educational and scientific sphere and practitioners hold discussions about what character exactly should the training program in the field of PR-education have, including what nature the discipline content should have. Many of these professionals pay attention to the fact that a single international standard of education should be developed. Experts from many countries have already tried to improve the system of training in this area [Azarova, 2003; Ferrari, 2009; Ferreira, 2004; L'Etang, 2002; Pirozek, 2003; Sriramesh, 2002; Toth, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Zlateva, 2003]. In 2008, the University of Leeds [Tench, 2008] conducted the study of public relations programs around the world to form a unified standard of training in this area. Then, in 2009 an online survey of members of "Euprera" organization regarding programs of basic and full higher education was carried out [Cotton, 2009]. From this perspective, analysis of web sites and conduction of qualitative interviews of East European University [Watson, 2014], as well as study of the development of education in public relations in some countries seem to be very interesting [Goncalves, 2009; Xifra, 2007].

During the research, we pursued the objective to compare educational training programs for public relations in different countries and in the domestic training system. In the study, we relied on document analysis and content analysis to obtain statistically accurate survey data. Since recently we have implemented three-level education system, the research was conducted on the basis of three-level paradigm. That is why, for the analysis, we chose programs of "Bachelor", "Master" and "Doctor of Philosophy" degrees, which train specialists in public relations. 37 training programs of "Master" degree and 35 training programs of "Bachelor" degree were analysed. Considering that training system for "Doctor of Philosophy" degree is a new format for the domestic education system, we analysed five foreign training programs for "Doctor of Philosophy" degree in order to establish their discipline filling, content and duration. Data received will be used in the future to improve the national training system for public relations and to develop educational training program for "Doctor of Philosophy" degree. The investigation was aimed to carry out a comparative analysis of the programs in terms of repeatability of professionally oriented, social, and human disciplines and general credit load for each discipline separately; to determine optimal credit load for each discipline, based on the evidence found.

Research methodology

Studies of education programs of all three levels were carried out in several stages. On the first stage a comparative analysis of Bachelor and Master Education programs of the US, Europe, Ukraine and Russia on similarities of disciplinary and credit components was conducted. They were based on subjects of domestic educational and professional programs of "Bachelor" and "Master" degrees. The data was tabulated.

On the second stage, on the basis of data obtained a table was compiled, which contained information on the minimum, maximum and average number of subjects repeated, their list and the total number of credits of the education programs. Subjects were placed according to audience rating, which was measured by the number of frequencies in the list of universities. The data was entered into the primary data table.

On the third stage of the study, based on the table data for each of the universities, a number of subjects, which coincided with the domestic educational and professional programs, were calculated. On that basis, the program ranking was compiled.

On the fourth stage, on the basis of the third stage data, five the most effective educational programs of “Bachelor” and “Master” degrees, which structure is similar to domestic educational programs, were chosen. The main criteria for selection were the requirements for the duration of the program — 4 years for bachelor and 2 years for masters. In addition, it should include high scores in the ranking of subjects’ frequency and practice.

The fifth stage of the study included the comparative analysis of educational training programs of “Doctor of Philosophy” degree. But, since Ukraine has moved to a three-level model of higher education not so long ago, the domestic educational system for PhD degree does not have western model yet. Therefore, we have chosen five training programs for “Doctor of Philosophy” degree in order to compare them and to demonstrate their credit-disciplinary component for further integration into the domestic education system.

We have also identified ten subjects from each educational level according to the highest credit/number of frequencies in the educational and professional programs (EPP). Besides this, considering the best possible educational training programs for each educational level as an example, we have identified the one, which is the most appropriate according to relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators and will describe its construction principles and features, to be applied to build our own three-level training program.

Discussion of research results

Bachelors

The study analysed 37 programs for “Bachelor” degree, which train specialists in public relations, providing different training period. According to European and American programs, training often lasts for three years, not four, as it is customary in Ukrainian or Russian universities. Education in Western universities is usually single-disciplined, the list of disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, compared to domestic universities, is limited. The number of credit hours at universities in Europe and the US is almost twice lower than in Ukrainian. Educational programs at European and United States universities differed by variability of subjects’ choice. Educational programs of domestic and Russian universities hardly differed by name, but they were wide enough, that would be an advantage. It was found that training in public relations could be carried out with a focus on completely different disciplinary component. Six main fields of training in PR were identified. They are advertising and PR; communication; marketing; art and design; journalism and business and management. The study found that the average total credit exposure in Western universities is 133 credits, at universities of Russia the figure is 250 credits, and at domestic universities — 245 credits (Fig.1).

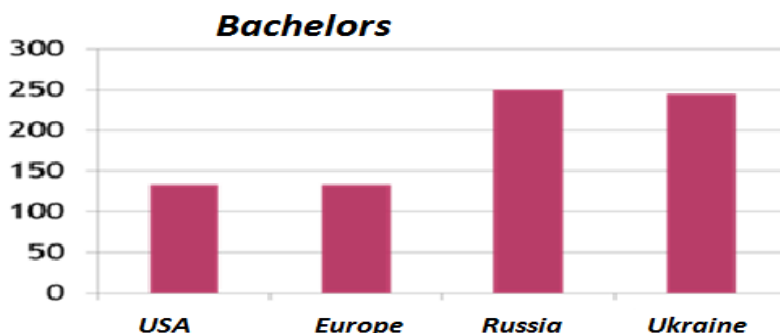


Fig. 1. The average amount of credits for EPP of “Bachelor” degree.

Therefore, it is clear that the training programs in Western universities are nearly half less according to credit component, yet at the same time, their efficiency is much higher. Here is a list of ten disciplines, which according to credit indicator and frequency at high schools showed the highest result: *Theory of Advertising and PR* 8.0k./33; *Fundamentals of Journalism* 7.5k./32; *Principles of Marketing* 7.0k./28; *Copywriting* 7.0k./28; *Fundamentals of Management* 6.0k./25; *Ethics in Advertising and PR* 5.0k./24; *Integrated Marketing Communications* 5.0k./24; *Speechwriting* 4.9k./2; *Branding* 4.8k./0; *Principles of Oratory* 4.7k./7.

We offer to consider the most appropriate, in our opinion, training program for experts in public relations for “Bachelor” degree.

At the University of Tampa (US), in the first year of study, the emphasis is laid on various aspects of marketing communications [Conestoga College, 2017]. Special attention is paid to such subjects as event marketing, branding and copywriting. The program includes also a large number of subjects related to economics (microeconomics, macroeconomics, fundamentals of economics and basics of economic research). This strategy of subject presentation was chosen for students to have a better idea of how advertising, marketing, and business are related between each other.

During the second year students have an opportunity to acquire more practical knowledge related to the preparation of advertising campaigns both through traditional means and through using electronic media. In addition, students are taught how to start and to operate their own advertising agency and how to use psychological techniques in work with clients. Other disciplines, such as consumer demand study, evaluation of campaigns’ effectiveness and planning and purchase of large media companies. Much attention is given to the objective component, related to work based on Web 2.0 technologies to develop creative and analytical skills in the field of electronic media.

In the last year students work mainly individually and conduct, researches related to branding, development of promotional strategies and integrated marketing communications. They complete degree work. Alternatively, they can be offered training module on production. This allows student to employ, gain more knowledge that is practical and receive credit for this activity. This module lasts for a year. The student is obliged to go to work and attend classes at the same time. The mark is put with regard to individual training schedule of a student, which is compiled at his place of work.

Masters

The study analysed 35 training programs for education level “Master” in the field of public relations. The analysis showed that in masters’ training in this field the same trend as in the bachelors’ training remained. Western universities offer different periods for training of experts — 1, 1.5 or 2 years. Domestic and Russian universities offer training period of 2 years; credit exposure is also different.

In general, training program for “Master” degree is more narrow than for “Bachelor” but domestic education system contains a large number of subjects of social and humanitarian sciences, which sometimes prevail in the ratio of professionally-oriented disciplines. The study, the same as for bachelors, divided them into four different categories: advertising and PR; communication; marketing; business and management. The amount and character of disciplines for “Master” degree differed significantly from “Bachelor” degree in Western universities. In Ukrainian, universities amount and character of disciplines almost had no differences with the disciplines of “Bachelor” degree. Western programs tend to have more administrative functions of public relations and to study subjects related to communications and research.

It was also found that the average total credit exposure varies in different countries. For example, in Europe and the USA the average total credit exposure is 90 credits, at Russian universities — 124 credits, and at Ukrainian universities — 108 (Fig.2)

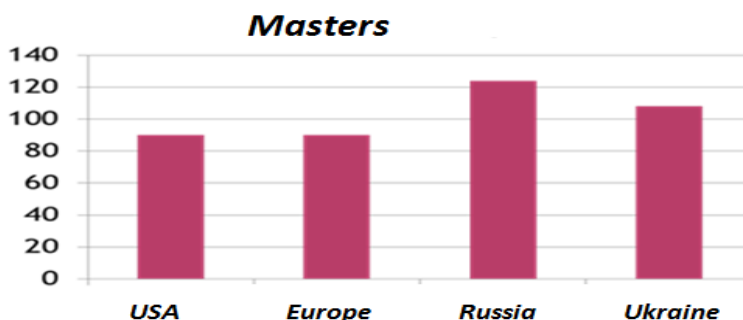


Fig. 2. The average amount of credits for EPP of “Master” degree.

In terms of these figures, we can conclude that the quality of training, but not quantitative content of the program plays an essential role. Master’s degree of education at the West provides high mobility of students with possible employment in the workplace and a lot of practical training, while domestic universities hardly change the approach to training of master’s degree. Here is a list of ten disciplines, which according to credit indicator and frequency at high schools showed the highest result: *PR in politics* 6.6k/25; *Crisis PR* 6.6/25; *PR in Business* 6.6/24; *Imageology* 6.4/23; *Information Wars* 6.2/22; *Media Planning*: 6.1/21; *Strategic Planning* 6.1/19; *Political Consulting* 6.0/18; *Strategic PR* 5.9/17; *Human Resources* 5.5/16.

We offer to consider the most appropriate, in our opinion, training program for experts in public relations for “Master” degree.

The program at George Washington University (USA) is based on the integration of disciplines that are intended to learn the work with customers, innovation management, and

to cultivate the skills of reputation management. The program is flexible, it consists only of seven mandatory and four optional courses and provides the opportunity to participate in a unique program of students' exchange (Global Perspective Residency GSPM). It was designed not only for young students, but also for the already experienced employees who want to get additional education. This program has an option of practice [Georg Washington University 2017]. The program itself is an alternative to MBA programs. The largest number of subjects is related to innovation management and public relations in the energy field.

Doctor of Philosophy

Since the EPP for "Doctor of Philosophy" degree in our country have been introduced recently, we have chosen five training programs of appropriate level to determine the educational content of these programs and principles of their educational training. Here is a list of the subjects that are the most often found at the third level of education in the field of public relations:

We have selected five training programs for "PhD" educational level for experts on public relations, advertising and allied branches that have similar disciplinary and informal content, but certain differences in the course structure [Educational program, 2017; Educational program, 2017a; Educational program, 2017b; Educational program, 2017c; Educational program, 2017d; Educational program, 2017e; Educational program, 2017f].

Training for PhD degree lasts from three to four years. Almost in all programs, graduate students are required to study, to be in parallel engaged in teaching and to work on their researches. In addition, all programs had common disciplinary framework that is related to communication studies, journalism, and media technologies and media researches. Some universities open access to certain subjects for the student only when he defends his academic paper. The fact that candidates to the PhD degree create their own advisory centres, where they, without assistance of senior colleagues, discuss their scientific achievements is atypical for our scientific environment. Due to this, they develop scientific thinking and skills to solve research problems. We offer to consider the most appropriate, in our opinion, training program for experts in public relations for "PhD" degree. Here is a list of ten disciplines, which according to credit indicator and frequency at high schools showed the highest result: The Stylistics of Writing of Scientific Texts 5.0k./5; Scientific Aspects of PR-activity 5.0k./5; Methods and Techniques of Scientific Research 5.0k./5; Seminars in Aid of Scientific Research 5.0k./5; Seminars Following the Results of Dissertation Research 5.0k./5; Statistical and Analytical Methods of Research 5.0k./5; Foreign Language Scientific Field 5.0k./4; Basic Methods of Research in PR 4.0k./4; Theory and Practice of Writing Research Papers 4.0k./4; The Psychology of High School 3.0/3; Main Approaches to teaching in Higher Education 3.0k./4; PR in Science and Education 3.0k /3.

Feature of the program for the degree of "Doctor of Philosophy" at the University of New York in the field of "Media, Culture and Communication" is the focus on the interdisciplinary study of the media and culture [New York University, 2017]. PhD candidates study disciplines, which include the structure of the media, science and culture, media history, visual culture, the science of sound, anthropology, sociology, political science, in order to attract interdisciplinary strategy of analysis. The focus in teaching and research is done on multi-methodological approach, which involves the use of different research methods, qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis, deep interviews, network analysis and other explanatory and critical approaches. At the university, they study historical perspectives through media

study, technology and culture studies in the historical context, comparative historical research, genealogy and history of media. PhD candidates actively explore global and comparative research methods in the context of cultural differences, forms of media, historic framework and theoretical paradigms.

During the education, there are many workshops, including two major theoretical seminars during the first year of study. The first seminar entitled “Introduction into communication studies” refers to the theme of philosophical and theoretical hypotheses for different methodologies, approaches, procedures of research, which include semiotics, discourse analysis, ideological analysis, political economic analysis, historical analysis, archival research, psychoanalysis, feminist analysis, networking analysis, transcultural analysis, ethnographic analysis, content analysis, in-depth interviews and analysis of audience perception.

In the view of the research component of the program, the seminar on proposals to the thesis work is of vital importance. It is carried out in the first semester of the third year of study to provide students with a proper theoretical and methodological foundation before they start working on their thesis works. The course is conducted as a workshop, and students must make first crude schemes for thesis work and the final versions should be prepared during the second semester of the third year of study. In addition, the faculty, inside or outside, gives lectures on basic theoretical and disciplinary courses with a volume of 12 credits. This list of disciplines includes the subjects of anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, computer science, social psychology, political science, law and politics, science about feminism, international science and science of regional development, the sciences of America, culture, film and performances, critical theory and others. These courses are selective. Another disciplinary component is optional specialized courses (minimum 8-10 credits, inside the faculty). They cover any important graduation courses offered at the faculty of media, culture and communication [Educational program, 2017e].

Recommendations

In modern education “the main condition for building a successful model of training is the principle of consistency, steadiness and continuity in education” [Delikatnyy, 1986]. Many scientific papers are dedicated to this issue [Batarshhev, 1996; Delikatnyy, 1986; Goncharenko, 1997; Hanaba, 2014; Gritsyuta, 2015]. Relying on the philosophical, psychological and pedagogical literature, we can say that throughout the development of pedagogical science the scientists have been actively holding searches of the most appropriate model to ensure continuity in education.

“Category of continuity in the literature can be considered in many aspects — scientific, philosophical, pedagogical and didactic. However, in order to understand this principle, we must consider some aspects of the interpretation of the concept of “continuity”. Speaking of continuity as a social process, here are two its components — transfer of values and their assimilation.” The nature of values to be delivered to the students also reflects the semantic component of continuity. Konstantin Delikatnyy, in his scientific work suggests that the process of continuity should involve a continuous connection between the past, the present and the future in the context of the acquisition of educational knowledge [Delikatnyy, 1986].

Another scientist Semen Godnik, considers the phenomenon of continuity as “the law of operation of all specially organized and controlled processes and believes that gradual

progressive development is impossible without continuity” [Godnik, 1981]. We agree with this statement and will add that during the analysis of academic textbooks on pedagogy the scientist had found the ambiguous interpretation of the term “continuity” and the functions that it must perform.

Semen Godnik found that scientificity is a training rule that ensures the implementation of principles of scientificity, accessibility and continuity in education. Also, the scientist stated that the category of continuity necessarily implies a connection between what has been studied and new knowledge, being the elements of an integrated system. He also draws attention to the interdisciplinary relationship in the context of continuity in education, which is the study of related disciplines in the context of lifelong education. The continuity is meant that teachers will build the learning process so that future teachers, who will lecture their subjects in the future, will also teach according to the principle of continuity.

In most cases, the phenomenon of continuity is considered in two aspects — methodological and common didactic. Nataliya Aleksandrova indicates that continuity, as a phenomenon, reflects the normative nature of didactics, it regulates the relationship between learning process and student, and this makes it one of the main principles of didactics [Aleksandrova, 2016]. Another scientist Olga Nezhyva considers continuity in learning as establishing of relationship between elements of learning process so that they could perfectly interact in the system [Nezhyva, 2016]. It is also meant that connection must be established between the elements of the system, between the forms and methods of learning, as well as between the procedures of material adoption. This connection must be constant at all stages of the material learning.

Continuity as a scientific and educational phenomenon enables to understand the major components of the educational process, such as objectives, learning, content, methods, forms and teaching means. “Namely with the help of such concepts as continuity, consistency and steadiness in education, the model of educational training of specialists in public relations can be improved and meet modern requirements of the labour market.”

The scientist Vitaliy Slastenin notes the following concerning continuity: “In general, principle of continuity, consistency and steadiness in learning is stipulated by objectively available knowledge stages, relationship between sensual, logical, rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious” [Slastionin, 2004]. A student, passing all stages of the educational process, should not only be intellectually prepared to move to the next stage of information digestion, but should be also ready psychologically and treat the learning process consciously.

Vitaliy Slastionin also says, “The principle of continuity concerns the issue of training content, sequence of its stages, forms and methods of implementation of the educational process, strategies and tactics of interaction in the learning process. It allows you to combine and build a clear hierarchy of individual learning situations into a single integrated process of learning and contributes to the gradual assimilation of laws, patterns and relationships between objects and phenomena” [Slastionin, 2004]. The principle of continuity helps to organize learning process, to build a clear sequence of individual acquisition of knowledge and to organize the training process as an organized algorithm of consistent actions.

In implementing the principles of continuity and consistency teacher has to solve certain specific tasks in a planned periods. In turn, the consistency and continuity also allow students to move from simple to complex forms of cognition.

The principles of continuity and consistency in training give the possibility to solve the contradictions between the necessity to develop a system of knowledge and skills according to disciplinary component and the principle of vision shaping and understanding of the

worldview. This approach is provided by systematic development of educational programs and training aids and by the establishment of inter and intra meaningful relationships.

System approach to education makes it possible to structure learning material more effectively, to create a system of training materials that would have consistent content and would be delivered in a clear hierarchy. System approach to structuring should highlight key concepts and categories in learning material and to combine them with other concepts and categories and to disclose their genesis.

In educational practice, the principles of consistency, continuity and steadiness are realized in the process of thematic planning, when the teacher draws a plan of training process and establishes the sequence of material presentation. A teacher should build curriculum so that basic concepts were studied previously with the theory, and after that training exercises followed.

It is also worth noting the basic principles to be followed in the drawing of educational process on the basis of consistency and continuity: a person receives certain knowledge, that he can use, only when his brain has a clear view of the outside world; the organized training is the only universal tool of development of a system of scientific knowledge; system of scientific knowledge is generated in the order determined by the content logic of material and cognitive abilities of students; the less breaks and illogical sequences the learning process has, the more effective it will be; if the process of learning is not constantly practiced and the acquired skills are not perfected, they will be lost; if students are not taught to think logically, they will always have difficulty in thinking; if you do not maintain a distinct system in the organization of educational process, the process will slow considerably [Shamova, 2002].

Here are the characteristics of the training concept for professionals in the field of public relations, necessary for competence training model to work during the process of knowledge acquiring: the process of education must be systematic, consistent and continuous; education should be socially humanitarian in the context of educational content with continual increase of professionally-oriented disciplines; training should be carried out with the account of peculiarities of creative nature of future profession; high-tech nature of education and training and quality technical support of the educational process on the basis of modern information technologies. In this context, we would like to point out that it is very important to conduct PR-promotion of high schools in the education market in order to attract more students to the educational process, and thus to increase university profits. This profit can be used to improve the financial security of the educational process. During the learning process, we should apply practical teaching methods that will nearer the student to the future realities of the profession. The terms of parity and simultaneity of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills acquired should be executed. In course of professional education, a comprehensive professional diagnostics, as a part of the final control of the degree of assimilation of necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies should be carried out. Regarding the formation of training model, it should be noted that it should be the most relevant and should meet modern requirements of society. According to French social engineer, philosopher and futurist, that model should be considered as the one being useful to society.

Considering all above mentioned approaches and principles of the educational process, we have developed three-level model of training of professionals in the field of public relations. The set of the necessary competencies was chosen based on components' study, which form a training program for professionals in public relations, international experience of educational programs drafting, scientific articles and reports on the results of research on PR-education

issues conducted by the US Commission on Education in the field of public relations. [Toth, 2010]. Let us note the basic principles of drawing educational training programs based on competency approach to training specialists in public relations.

In his study, we did not take into account the educational level “junior bachelor”, because this level is aimed to implement primary production functions and is unfinished education level in terms of approaches to the training of specialists in public relations.

Based on data of content analysis we compiled the list of ten disciplines, which are met the most frequently in all EPP of western model. These disciplines the most closely reflect the trends in modern PR-education. Also, relying on the list of these disciplines, we can establish a set of competencies that should be acquired by students at each level of education (Bachelor — Master — PhD)

“Bachelor” educational level provides basic social and humanitarian training of students. The emphasis is given to following subjects: fundamentals and theory of public relations, journalism, fundamentals of sociology. In addition, much attention should be given to disciplines related to the skills of speech and writing, psychology and the basics of communication. We should remember that full-range fundamental training should be carried out at “Bachelor” educational level.

At “Bachelor” educational level experts should know the basics of advertising and PR-activities and have the theoretical basics of the branch. Similarly, experts should have knowledge of the theory of journalism and marketing. It is rather important for future PR-specialists to master the basic principles of writing of speeches and texts. An important aspect of training is the mastering of fundamentals of management by bachelors. Moreover, we believe that the concept of management in this context is different from the concept of human resource management.

The primary objective is to promote ethical professional behavior of future PR professionals. With this in mind, it is important to introduce such disciplines as ethics in advertising and PR and business ethics. In this sense, it is necessary for experts to know the basic rules of business ethics and ethical standards of advertising and PR activities.

Great attention should be paid to the study of communication. For example, disciplines “Systems of Marketing Communications” and “Integrated Marketing Communications” allow students to acquire the necessary competencies in this area.

It is important that professionals receive solid training in the fundamentals of branding. Future PR managers must know the principles of brand formation and promotion. Special attention should be given to public speaking. As specialists in public relations are primarily communicators, they should master the skills of effective and persuasive public communication by means of oratory and rhetoric.

The purpose of training for “Master” educational level is to provide students with the opportunity to receive and develop the skills and knowledge of management, gain knowledge of crisis and strategic management. In addition, the scope of master degree includes branch disciplines related to PR (PR in politics, PR in business sphere or social sphere). Also “Master” educational level is the first step in preparation for the educational and scientific level “Doctor of Philosophy” and, accordingly, disciplines related to scientific component of education, such as peculiarities of scientific perception and research, as well as basics of protection of intellectual rights and PR-science are lectured there.

As for the educational competences of “Master” level, based on research data, we believe that the future PR-specialist should be aware of the specifics of promotion of any product and

in any field of PR-activities. It is important for students to acquire competences in the field of crisis response, to be able to counteract the aspects of the information war and to respond to any informational and communication threats systematically.

Training of PR-specialists at “Master” educational level is more single-disciplined than at “Bachelor” level. It should be based on professionally oriented disciplines. It is important that in this context, experts acquire all the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to develop and create the image. An important aspect of “Master” training is the ability to structure and form a competent media plan. In our opinion, qualified PR-specialist should be experienced in the field of political PR, political consulting and political technologies.

Special attention should be given to management competences. For example, with the help of such discipline as strategic PR student will acquire the knowledge and skills of management and organization in the field of public relations, will learn to understand and to predict the conditions and prospects of development of public relations/media markets, to carry out critical analysis of public relations and information material, will be able to exercise the managerial functions of public opinion formation, to plan strategic actions as to the PR-campaign organization, will possess methods of cooperation improvement and actions coordination inside the team of PR department, agency or media office. Also this list includes the abilities and skills of promotion and popularization of web sites, PR-projects in Internet, the ability to control the placement of PR material on advertising media and more. In this context, it is important to acquire purely managerial competences. Therefore, for example, it is appropriate to include the discipline “Human resources management” into the training program for public relations on “Master” educational level. Research has shown that exactly this training component is necessary for masters in the field of PR. Training at this level should be professionally oriented, giving lectures on single-disciplined subjects.

Speaking about “PhD” educational level in public relations, we should say that this level is theoretical, scientific and research. During the educational training PhD student shall develop theoretical, scientific and research skills necessary to supplement the range of scientific knowledge in public relations. Educational level “Doctor of Philosophy” is designated to prepare graduates for teaching, research and administrative positions at universities and to conduct applied research in the field of public relations.

Students, who have completed third level of education training, should be competent and ready to serve as managers and future teachers at universities and research institutions. PhD students must be able to explain simply the course content and to evaluate the work of students effectively; be aware not only of complex knowledge of public relations, but also of cooperation of PR-science with branches related to PR; have necessary skills to develop and contribute to their discipline, conduct researches.

As the part of the study, we have established that specialists in public relations have to be able to write texts in scientific language, conduct scientific researches, manage scientific and analytical methods of research. In addition, it is very important for students to speak foreign language and to be able to teach and share their knowledge.

Conclusions

Given to the fact that Ukrainian education recently moved to a new three-level model of education, it is of vital importance that educational training in public relations is based on the principles of continuity, steadiness and consistency. The principles of continuity and

consistency in training can solve the contradictions between the need to form a system of knowledge and skills according to disciplinary component and the principle of forming an integral vision and understanding of the worldview. Foremost, systematic development of educational programs and teaching aids and the establishment of interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary relations ensure this approach.

The systems approach, in turn, makes it possible to structure the training material more effectively, to create a system of training materials that would have consistent content and shall be taught in a clear hierarchy. System approach to structuring should highlight the main concepts and categories in training material, combine them with other concepts and categories and to disclose their genesis.

Based on the analysis of domestic and international approaches to the training of specialists in public relations, taking into account the educational and professional competencies, demanded by the labour market, as well as basic competencies, which are to be acquired as a result of learning content acquisition, a set of competencies of PR-specialist and professional competences that must be acquired at every level of higher education were conceptualized. For bachelors, these are the competences, related to operational functions and responsibilities in the field of social communications: knowledge and writing skills, features of promotional product creating, advertising budget establishment, graphic works, work with new media, marketing, journalism, conducting of communication research. The disciplines of social and humanitarian block are to be taught exactly at bachelor's level.

At the master's level, competences related to the managerial component of public relations, crisis management, and branch PR are to be lectured. In addition, this level is a transition level to educational and scientific, so the disciplines, which will help students, gain basic knowledge on the fundamentals of scientific activity, protection of copyright and philosophy of science should be available.

The third level, PhD, is educational and scientific level. Competencies of this level should be divided into three interrelated parts: 1) professionally and scientifically oriented; 2) research; 3) teaching skills.

The implementation of the above-mentioned provisions into domestic higher education will be gradual and will depend on many system factors (economic, political, and social). This applies particularly to the third level of higher education "Doctor of Philosophy." Therefore, as experience has shown, Ukrainian universities reform on new standards and approaches to education in high school considerably difficult.



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