

Medical Education

Modern Factors for Successful Work of a Teacher in Higher Medical Institution

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Abstract

Professional pedagogical activity of a teacher can be considered as a holistic dynamic system including continuous improvement of pedagogical skills. Modern trends in medical education pose new requirements for the teacher. Among them, knowledge of the English language (the main language of international scientific communication) at a level that would allow the teacher to work out the scientific literature and share the results of the research with a wider range of scientists is of critical importance. International internships at leading universities to study the best practices and enhance the scientific level of publications are important as well. Therefore, research work becomes the main component of the educational process - a factor determining the effectiveness of the teacher's work.

Keywords

Strategy for the Development of Medical Education in Ukraine; English; professional training; continuing professional development; scientometric databases

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The pedagogical work of a teacher in higher education establishment is a special form of highly qualified mental activity that includes creativity. It aims to teach and educate the students; to form their professional knowledge, skills and abilities; to shape their active life position [1].

Pedagogical activity in higher education institution is directed on training a highly qualified specialist able to find the job easily, and to be actively engaged in political, social, and cultural life.

Since the results of the teachers' work depend, to a large extent, on their pedagogical skills, they should be constantly improved.

The goal of medical education is to provide the public with quality medical care through a high level of medical specialist training. The patient's life and health should be the main personal and pro-

fessional values of healthcare practitioners. High-quality medical care is impossible without changing cultural paradigm and creating a new self-replicating and independent professional environment.

Nowadays, in addition to traditional aspects of teaching, the teachers of higher medical institutions face new requirements and tasks.

On November 13, 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Strategy for the Development of Medical Education in Ukraine [2] which included continuing professional development of teachers in higher education institutions (faculties) through:

- development and implementation of a comprehensive program to increase the level of English proficiency by teachers; the provision of sufficient resources to study English;

- creation of the program of continuing professional development for teachers in the branch of knowledge "Health Care" (searching for financing, developing the approaches, determining key directions of continuous professional development, organizing cooperation with partner organizations for training / professional development);
- development of the certification program for teaching staff of tertiary institutions;
- introduction of the program for study and internship in medical universities and institutions abroad; ensuring the participation of teachers and post-graduate students in the international conferences through open competitions;
- consideration of the level of English proficiency and the availability of publications in journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus during the process of applying for vacant positions of teaching staff.

In the system of higher education, such problems are encountered by both individual teachers (continuation of the contract, selection on a competitive basis, obtaining a scientific degree, obtaining an academic rank) and higher education institutions (licensure and accreditation, obtaining government contracts, quality rating, etc.).

The present is characterized by a rapid development of modern educational technologies, best practices and innovative teaching methods. Since a huge scientific evidence and knowledge base is formed every day, high-quality professional development becomes a mandatory requirement of modern education.

In general, the level of English proficiency in Ukraine is low. In the 2018 English Proficiency Index, Ukraine was ranked 43rd out of 88 countries included in the study - this result was worse than the indicator obtained in 2015 when Ukraine was ranked 34th, and 28th out of 32 European countries [3].

English is practically the second working language. Previously, knowledge of the English language was an additional requirement or advantage, while today, alongside with computer skills, it is

a must for everyone. According to Uliana Suprun, English now assumed a leading role as the international language of medicine rather than Latin. She assured that the knowledge of the English language at the level of reading will be mandatory for admission to medical institutions.

Students are expected to take Professional English exam alongside with profession-oriented exams. Moreover, teachers will be able to improve their level of English proficiency as well, as the Ministry of Health of Ukraine plans to introduce the programs of continuing professional development abroad.

Nowadays, being a true professional means a continuous learning new skills and knowledge as the needs of students learning English are constantly changing and teachers should be able to adjust to these changes.

Among scientific medical journals indexed in Web of Science or Scopus, English-language journals prevail. In addition, the participation in most scientific conferences envisages knowledge of English. Each modern doctor or teacher who wants to develop himself/herself and receive the latest information on treatment methods should know English well.

Teaching of professional disciplines in English is carried out in a fragmentary way, on the initiative of the departments, faculties and even individual lecturers. However, in the institutions, where a great number of foreign students (both English-speaking and non-English-speaking ones) study, the subjects, taught in English, are mainly compulsory.

Teaching of professional disciplines in English, namely the level of English needed for effective teaching of discipline-specific subjects has been recently studied by a broad-based British Council Research Project 25. According to the conclusions of this study, at present, there is no established standard for university teachers of English; however, they would like to meet a standard level of English language proficiency for teachers of discipline-specific subjects [4].

An internship is a form of pedagogical staff training aimed at enhancing their professional development.

The main task of internship is to form and to practice professional competencies, acquired by the teachers during the training, concerning their duties and responsibilities, mastering best practices, developing personal qualities to fulfill professional tasks at a new higher quality level within a certain specialty. The goal of continuing professional development and internship is the improvement of professional training of teachers through deepening and increasing their professional knowledge, skills and abilities, acquiring the experience in fulfilling additional duties and responsibilities within a certain specialty.

Today, all the university teachers are required to take professional development courses every five years. These courses are often outdated and are attended for the sake of appearance only. Today there is a need for new forms of professional development developed by the leading experts with modern international and national approaches and innovative teaching methods, namely trainings, masterclasses, distance learning courses, webinars, etc. being considered.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine emphasizes on high-quality professional development as one of the main directions of educational reform as well. An international internship will provide university teachers with professional advantages, namely:

- acquiring new capabilities and technologies introduced by leading European universities;
- exchanging experience with colleagues to share the results of their research with a wider range of scientists and to form advantageous relationships;
- expanding network of business contacts while communicating with foreign colleagues during lectures and tutorials;
- combining a work trip with pleasure as a prevention of professional burnout since training and travelling are the perfect combination.

International internship allows teachers to master and to successfully use the latest teaching methods, the results of the scientific research, information technologies as a means of innovative approach to the educational process and training of modern

highly competitive medical specialists.

Medical education should be based on the latest achievements of medical science. Ukrainian medical science can develop only as a part of the global one. We should use the greatest achievements of modern medicine, while our achievements should be highly competitive and recognized by the World Medicine Academic Society.

Due to a low level of academic mobility, as well as a lack of teachers' international experience, medical education and science in Ukraine are mainly isolated from global trends.

Today there is a disproportion between the contribution of Ukrainian doctors to the world science and the number of medical dissertations. It is not surprising that, in Ukraine, a large proportion of dissertations are defended in the field of medicine. During 1993-2001, doctoral dissertations for a scientific degree of the Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Pharmacy accounted for 20% of the total number of dissertations successfully defended. Since 2010, the proportion has reduced to 12% and less.

At the same time, the percentage of medical articles published in the international scientometric Web of Science or Scopus databases by Ukrainian authors is significantly less as compared to the total number of publications of Ukrainian authors. For example, Scopus indexed journals published 171,571 Ukrainian papers. Medical articles accounted for only 7% (9,942 (5.8%) papers on medicine, 2,048 (1.2%) papers on pharmaceuticals) of the total number of publications. There has been less than one paper per one Candidate or Doctor of Medicine in these databases over the past 5 years. Since, for successful dissertation defense, the Candidate of Sciences and the Doctor of Sciences are required to publish 5 and 20 scientific papers, respectively, it is obvious that most scientific works of Ukrainian authors are not "visible" in the international publications and make no contribution to the development of the world science.

Twelve Ukrainian medical journals are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (in July 2018, the total number of Ukrainian journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science was 99). According to the list of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, there are

221 journals of medical and scientific research in Ukraine today. Since Scopus and Web of Science index only 5.4% of Ukrainian scientific journals, Ukrainian publications are not "visible" to the international scientific community. In many journals, there is no independent peer review of publications. Frankly anti-scientific articles are published [5].

It is the publication in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science that has recently become a mandatory requirement of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine for obtaining a scientific degree and an academic rank. The need to publish scientific papers is the main reason why teachers of discipline-specific subjects improve their English proficiency level.

The implementation of the Strategy will allow us to create a legal basis for further development of medical education in Ukraine and to introduce comprehensive changes in this field. University teachers should use the latest achievements of medical science and best practices of modern medicine, while achievements of Ukrainian teachers and scientists should be highly competitive in a global market. The implementation of the Strategy will result in the improvement of the quality and competitiveness of healthcare professionals in Ukraine.

Modern requirements for teachers' work envisage the implementation of many reforms that will modify Ukrainian universities to comply with the Bologna agreement, recognize foreign education documents and implement education decentralization programs.

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