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CONTENT

PEDAGOGY	6
Perspective analysis of preschool specialists training peculiarities in France <i>N.I. Melnyk</i>	6
The prospects of developing art teaching in higher school <i>T.V. Panyok</i>	10
The use of the case-technologies in teaching Maritime English in a competency-based approach <i>V. Smelikova</i>	16
Cross-Cultural Communicative Competence in the Language Teaching of Future Translators <i>M. Vozna</i>	20
Організаційно-педагогічні умови здійснення посередництва (медіації) однолітків у шкільному середовищі <i>Н.М. Білик</i>	23
Застосування активних методів у навчанні професійно орієнтованого англomовного письма за інтегративним підходом <i>О.Ю. Гальченко</i>	27
Методичні рекомендації для підвищення рівня сформованості у підлітків мотиву досягнення успіху в процесі розвитку фізичних якостей <i>Д.Л. Нечипоренко, І.О. Дудник, Л.А. Нечипоренко</i>	31
Робота з заголовками газетного тексту під час викладання української мови іноземцям <i>С.В. Лазаренко</i>	35
Принципи краєзнавства в педагогічних поглядах Никанора Онацького <i>А.М. Никифоров</i>	39
Формування комунікативної компетентності в майбутніх учителів початкової школи в процесі фахової підготовки <i>Н.І. Опанасенко</i>	43
Використання словників як ефективного засобу навчання майбутніх документознавців української професійної лексики <i>О.М. Решетілова</i>	47
Педагогические условия формирования нравственных ценностей будущих социальных работников в процессе волонтерской деятельности <i>Д.В. Сай</i>	51
Науковий дискурс в історію вищої освіти Франції (на базі Імператорського університету) <i>С.В. Стискун, О.В. Плахотнік</i>	58
Застосування різноманітних методів навчання при факультативному вивченні хірургічних дисциплін <i>Т.В. Форманчук</i>	60
PSYCHOLOGY	63
Religion and religiosity in analytical psychology <i>N.M. Bulatevich</i>	63
Compositional method of person reseach <i>Yu. I. Madinova</i>	67
Теоретична модель формування деонтологічної культури майбутніх медиків засобами іноземної мови <i>І.П. Камінська</i>	71
Аналіз вивчення деформованої соціалізації як мотиву девіантної поведінки в умовах включення особистості до простору субкультури <i>В.Р. Павелків</i>	75
Творческое мышление в структуре хореографических способностей <i>Е.А. Русанова</i>	80
Чинники професійного вибору в структурі стратегій життєвих виборів працівників органів внутрішніх справ <i>І.А. Сербін-Жердецька</i>	85

PEDAGOGY

Perspective analysis of preschool specialists training peculiarities in France

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Abstract: The analysis of preschool teachers' professional training in France in the context of different aspects is presented in the article. Peculiarities of preschool specialists' professional education are characterised by the author. Characteristics of preschool specialists training and peculiarities of qualification in France allowed to determine main directions of educational policy in the field of preschool teachers training. These include: providing basic education workers in the sector, especially the public sector; ensuring level education according to the Bologna Convention; provide continuing professional development experts involved in educational activities in pre-schools; ensuring the implementation of common European training concept based on competence approach. Some historical events, which influenced on the professional pedagogical education system in France are pointed out, they are: trends in the content transformation into new European conception of teacher education and related reforms in 1989; integration into the European educational space, cooperation with European organizations and joining in education programs of west European countries; realization of generally accepted European concept of "lifelong learning". The perspective of further improvement of preschool teachers' professional training in France and the positive aspects for adaptation into Ukrainian system of preschool teachers' education are distinguished: increasing the emphasis on early childhood in pre-service and in-service training; training for inspectors assigned to primary schools should be enhanced with an early childhood module; focus professional development on meeting gaps in initial training—in particular, a focus on the two-year-olds, children with special educational needs and disabilities, outreach to families, and intercultural issues; to examine the possible mismatch between the numbers of students allowed to enter training programmes and the staffing needs of the field; in order for ECEC to be attractive to potential candidates, it must be viewed as a viable profession, with opportunities for salary and career advancement.

Keywords: professional training, preschool teachers, the system of pedagogical education, perspective of adaptation

The development and reformation of educational sector in Ukraine are characterized by the considerable influence of international integration, globalization and expansion of scientific and practical communication between participants of educational systems all over the world. In particular this applies to professional teaching sector, especially to preschool teachers, who ensure the full and harmonious development of preschool children. That's why the problem of professional training of teachers in the context of integration of national education in the European educational space, the search for mechanisms of adaptation of national teacher education generally accepted in the world demands training of teachers of different educational links clearly is urgent.

Special note is preschool teachers training, that requires not just reform and improvement, but also reformatting it like a European concept. All aspects of the reformatting training educators in Ukraine require careful study and generalization of international experience in solving this issue, namely mechanisms of building strategy development, improvement and search for further prospects of the industry development.

Analyzing preschool teachers' professional training it's important to mention that the problem of European teacher education is net new to Ukrainian scientific investigation. It has been the subject of research N. Abashkina, T. Vakulenko, V. Hamanyuk, N. Kozak (training and further training of teachers, teaching the basics of teacher training in Germany), J. Kishchenko, A. Løontiev, A. Parinova, A. Romanenko, N. Yatsyshyn (modern teacher education reforming, pedagogical skills formation of teachers in the UK), N. Lavrychenko, N. Leshchenko, L. Puhovskoyu, T. Sukhomlinska, I. Taranenko carried out studies that analyzed some aspects of training and of teachers in European countries. But these works were devoted to general teachers'

education, the problem of preschool teachers education was not the subject of separate scientific study.

The mentioned above proves that the problem of preschool teachers training in Europe can be widely and complexly analyzed, as to regional, national characteristics and traditions of education. That's why in this article the interest of this article will concern a part of the problem that is the preschool teachers' professional training in France, which is the *purpose* of the article.

France has an extensive system of early learning: nursery (crèche) or children's centers (childcare centres) for children from 0 to 3, administered social sector and "mother schools" for 2-5-year-olds to be that subordinate and controlled by state departments of education. Children enter primary school at the age of 6 years. "Parent School" was a structural part of the national education system of France from 1881. In 1975 and 1989 visits to preschool children 3-4 and 5-age, under the law was mandatory. In 2004-2005, all children aged 3-4 and 5 years and 26.1 percent of 2-year-olds were enrolled in such institutions. At present free public preschools visited by 80 percent of preschool children [1].

In 1989 the French government decided to merge the preschool and primary education, as a result the system covered children from 2 to 11 years and was divided into three-year training cycle: pre-school, basic or basic and development cycle. Under the new system 5-year-old children who graduate study in the "mother schools" last year combined education with the first two years of primary school, according to a new division it was already a basic cycle of general studying [2]. Modern system of preschool education in France can be shortly characterised in the Table 1.

An asset of ECEC in France, especially for infants and toddlers, is that there are a variety of professionals work-

ing side by side in the different services. In addition to the range of early childhood professionals (puéricultrices, auxiliaires de puériculture, éducateurs de jeunes enfants), there are doctors, psychologists, and other specialists affiliated with these settings. This diversity of professional backgrounds and areas of expertise can provide a rich set of skills and competences with which to support children's early development, health, and learning. However, several interviewees noted that the professional training tracks are rather rigid, meaning that it is difficult or im-

possible to transition from one role to another even with additional training. The lack of an integrated training and career lattice can provide barriers to improving the overall professionalisation of the early childhood workforce. There also is some concern that these professions have not adapted to the changing realities of families in France (e.g., unemployment, single-parenthood, poverty, disabilities and illness) and that the current training course do not emphasise the teamwork necessary to work in interdisciplinary staffing patterns [1; 4].

Table 1. Characteristics of the main forms of ECEC

Type	GROUP ECEC ARRANGEMENTS		INDIVIDUAL ECEC ARRANGEMENTS	
	Crèche	École maternelles	Assistants maternelle	Garde à domicile
% children enrolled under age 3 to 6 years	220 000 (10 %) Marginal	255 000 (34.7% of two-year-olds) 2 360 000 (almost 100%)	- 415 000 (20%) - 240 000	- 31 000 (1,5%) - 49 000
Supervision	Licensing and supervision by the département (child and maternal health – PMI)	Inspecteur de l'Education Nationale (IEN)	Licensing and supervision by the département (PMI service)	None
Regulations	Décret of 1/8/2000 and arrêté of 26/12 Education and social project, maximum capacity, facility requirements, role of parents, adult-child ratio group size, staff qualifications, affiliation with a doctor	Code de l'éducation Décret of 6 September 1990 regarding the organisation and operations of the écoles maternelles and elementary schools. Arrêtés of 25 January 2002: schedule of curriculum for primary education (Official Bulletin for Education BOEN of 14 February 2002).	Loi of 17/7/1992 and décrets of 1992 Licensing for 1 to 3 children for a period of 5 years; provider must be healthy, capable of assuring the child's well-being, safety of home	No regulation
Staff qualifications	Director: puéricultrice or éducatrice de jeunes enfants (bac + 4 or 3 yrs) Staff who work with children (auxiliaire de puériculture : brevet + 1 yr of training)	Recruitment by public exam Instituteur (bac + 2 yrs) Professeur des écoles : licence (3 yr college degree) + professional training at an IUFM 36 weeks of professional development over the teacher's career	60 hours of training within 5 years of receiving a license	No required training; possibility for voluntary training (with the agreement of employer)
Employer	Communes : 70 % Non-profit assoc. : 28 %	State (national gov't)	Parents	Parents
Global cost	≠ 2 billion euros (including haltes-garderies)	4 040 euros	1,7 billion euros (including 3-6 year olds)	€135 billion €, including 3-6 year olds)
Unit cost per child per year	12 700 euros		6 600 euros	17 200 euros
Cost sharing (financing)	CNAF, Communes Families	Staff : State Facilities and maintenance: communes	CNAF Families	CNAF Families
Methods of financing	Prestation de service CNAF Subsidies from communes	State Communes	AFEAMA allowance	AGED allowance
Ilrara	12 % of monthly income	N/A.	Cost – AFEAMA At least 222 euros/month	Cost – AGED 750 euros/month

Source: French Background Report, 2003

According to the development of preschool education there has been a change in the state strategy for preschool specialists training. Describing the system of teachers training in France it is important to note that it is closely linked with the general system of education. This is due primarily to the reforms of 1980-80's, which took place in the European teacher education systems were associated with a new concept of teacher education. There was a need to address discrepancies between the high demands of contemporary society to the teacher and his insufficient training, the need to update the content of higher pedagogical education to the requirements [3].

In France, the reform of education was marked by the implementation of the Law "On Education" dated by the 10-th of July 1989, under which only one educational institution of higher education was established - Institute of University teachers training (*instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres* - IUFM). With the establishing of IUFM such institutions as State Normal School where primary school teachers could get education (ENI), regional educational centers (CPR), which prepared teachers for secondary schools, normal schools of teachers'

professional training (ENNA), centers for training teachers of technical education (CFPT) were eliminated. These transformations in teachers' professional training in France enabled education of maternal and primary schools, colleges, secondary schools, technical and vocational schools for teachers in the walls of one institution of higher education for teaching professions – IUFM.

Before 1991-92 preschool teachers training, who worked in the "mothers' schools", was implemented by individual programs that differed from those of primary school teachers training. After receiving a high school diploma, students who were going to get a profession of preschool teacher, were enrolled in 2-year training courses of general professionally oriented colleges. After successful completion of these colleges graduates were allowed to work only in the area of preschool education.

With the adoption of the new system in the 1991-92 preschool and primary education, vocational preschool and primary education specialists training has become integrated. The reform of preschool and primary education implied that training of pre-school and primary school teachers had to take place primarily at universities within three years of

studding and further professional training for 2 years. At present no matter where a future teacher is going to get a job work, at the "mothers' schools" or at elementary schools, professional education totally lasts for 5 years of pedagogical universities, which is a prerequisite and accepted as a norm in Europe [4., c. 22-24].

Higher teacher education in France comprises two independent, but at the same time interrelated levels of future teachers training in universities and institutes of university type. In order to enter these institutions the person must have a diploma of a three-year university degree (licentiate degree in the chosen discipline) or equivalent national diploma of other university. Most candidates entering the IUFM, with a master's degree, which indicates the completion of their second-level higher education (4 years at university). The time for studding at IUFM is 2 years. The first course is mainly devoted to theoretical and practical training of students to one of six competition for getting one of the following diplomas: parent and teacher primary school

(CAPE); high school teacher (CAPES), which makes it possible to work as a teacher in high school or college, or teacher documentary centers Information and Documentation school institutions; teacher technological subjects in high schools or colleges of technology; Head of Academic Lyceum (CRCPE) [5].

As shown in Table 2 below, staff training and working conditions vary greatly depending on the type of ECEC. Characteristics of preschool specialists training and peculiarities of qualification in France, which are presented in Tab. 2, allows to determine main directions of educational policy in the field of preschool teachers training. These include: providing basic education workers in the sector, especially the public sector; ensuring level education according to the Bologna Convention; provide continuing professional development experts involved in educational activities in pre-schools; ensuring the implementation of common European training concept based on competence approach.

Table 2. ECEC Professionals: Summary table

Type of person	Initial training	Age group targeted	Professional domain	Employer	In-service training	Remuneration and status
Instituteurs	Bac + 2 yrs	2-6 yrs	Ecole maternelle	State	Professional development: 36 weeks over career	Cat. B State public employee
Professeurs des écoles	Licence (3 yr college degree) + raining at IUFM					Cat. A State public employee
ATSEM	Early childhood CAP (Curriculum Alignment Project)	2-6 years	Ecole maternelle	Communes or groups of communes		Cat. C local public employee
Puéricultrices	Nurse or midwife + 1 yr of specialisation	Children at all ages, especially those under 3	Crèches, haltes-garderies (and PM services, hospitals)	Collectivités locales (communes, départements) Non-profit associations	Right to professional development training; sometimes management training to become a director of an ECEC setting	Catégorie B local public employees (soon Cat. A)
Educateurs de jeunes enfants	27 months post-bac in a training centre	Children under 7	All setting serving children under 6 (crèches, haltes, etc)	Collectivités locales (communes, départements) Non-profit associations	Right to professional development training; sometimes management training to become a director of an ECEC setting	Catégorie B local public employees
Auxiliaires de puériculture	1 year post-BEPC	Children of all ages, especially those under 3		Collectivités locales (communes, départements) Associations		Catégorie C local public employees
Assistantes maternelles						

Source: French Background Report, 2003

There are several factors influencing education policy professional training of pre-school education in France, among them being:

- trends in the content transformation into new European conception of teacher education and related reforms in 1989;
- integration into the European educational space, cooperation with European organizations and joining in education programs of west European countries;
- one of the defining peculiarities of modern preschool teachers' training in France is realization of generally accepted European concept of "lifelong learning", which affects the following for the first two lines of educational policy. Implementing the concept will ensure competitiveness, flexibility and mobility of teachers of various parts [6].

Despite the coordinated system of training, presence in it of the flexible mechanisms of professional training of preschool education, preschool education experts and researchers have expressed concern that the preschools

prepare teachers to work with children of preschool age on the model of the school system.

The next problem of professional training of teachers of preschool establishments in France is non-compliance and the gap between the teaching profession preschool and other specialists who work in the service of pre-school sector, especially those working with children from birth to 3 years (e.g. care-workers, nursery (crèche). Typically, preschool teachers receive a 2-on academic university education; nursery staff gets a year of free training in childcare and are certified by the Ministry of Health. These differences in training as educational and hygienic orientation, duration of study in different groups of services concern the experts, sets new requirements for training specialists of preschool education to align educational and other services in pre-school sector.

As noted in our earlier analysis, the training of staff in early care settings would benefit from more emphasis on early childhood development and pedagogy to balance the health orientation of the current preparation programmes.

In addition, the lack of pre-service training and limited professional development opportunities for both "assistantes maternelles" and those engaged in "garde à domicile" need to be addressed urgently.

There is the necessity to encourage public authorities (national, departmental, local) to provide incentives for individual providers to join family day care networks (RAM), a crèche familiale, or establish forms of linkages with other centre-based settings (crèches, multi-accueil, halte-garderie), in order to reduce the isolation of providers and children and improve the quality of this form of provision in France.

The policy suggestions in the area of further improvement of preschool teachers of "écoles maternelle" professional training are as follows:

- increase the emphasis on early childhood in pre-service and in-service training; training for inspectors assigned to primary schools should be enhanced with an early childhood module;
- focus professional development on meeting gaps in initial training—in particular, a focus on the two-year-olds, children with special educational needs and disabilities, outreach to families, and intercultural issues;
- to examine the possible mismatch between the numbers of students allowed to enter training programmes and the staffing needs of the field;
- in order for ECEC to be attractive to potential candidates, it must be viewed as a viable profession, with opportunities for salary and career advancement.

Conclusions. The investigation of preschool teachers' professional training in France showed out peculiarities of preschool specialists' professional education: active integration and transformation into new European conception of teacher education and related reforms in 1989; integration into the European educational space; trends to the realization of generally accepted European concept of "lifelong learning".

Main historical events in preschool teachers' professional training in France are connected with the Law "On Education" dated by the 10-th of July 1989, under which only one educational institution of higher education was established – Institute of University teachers training (IUFM).

Positions of further improvement of preschool teachers' professional training in France and which can be used as positive aspects for adaptation into Ukrainian system of preschool teachers' education are concerned to: increase the emphasis on early childhood in pre-service and in-service training; professional development; ECEC to be attractive to potential candidates (carrier building).

The analysis does not provide a holistic view of the peculiarities of preschool teachers' education in France. The problem of educational services provision in the field of pre-school education and higher education institutions, where future employees of these institutions train, are to be on a discuss and analysis. These aspect demands separate investigation and is the *perceptivity* of our further scientific interest in this direction.

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