

VOLUME V

The Collection of Scholarly Papers

ADVANCED STUDIES IN SCIENCE: Theory & Practice

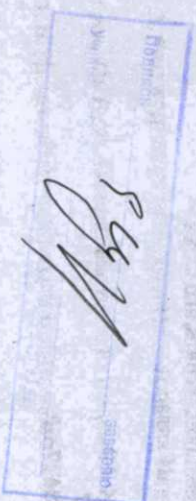


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ADVANCED STUDIES IN SCIENCE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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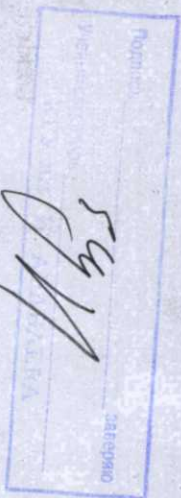
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CONTENTS

1. SECURITY STUDIES, POLITICS, AND GOVERNMENT IN MODERN SCIENCE

1. Grachyov, S. I., & Chikaldina, V. S. The problem of terrorism trafficking: The case of "Islamic State." 7
2. Kolomyts, O. N., & Kobozeva, E. M. Ranking municipal formations of the Krasnodar region in terms of investment attractiveness. 12
3. Malkhasyan, N. V. Activities of the Government in the fight against homelessness during the Great Patriotic War. 19
4. Rashidov, R. R. The role of non-governmental organizations in the formation of the modern state in Afghanistan. 22
5. Tarasova, T. S. Total control over the quality of the state (municipal) services in Russia. 26

2. LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

6. Khatsukova, R. A. Methodical system to improve the spelling literacy of the students in schools with Russian (non-native) and native (non-Russian) language of communication. 29
7. Kusanova, U. M. The problem of conversation in the English language. 40
8. Nurgali, K. R., & Orzabayeva, N. S. Binary opposition and their deconstruction as a way of the world perception by the authors with binetial thinking. 44
9. Nurmanov, A. T. Functional and communication techniques for training the students for effective communication. 49
10. Petrov, V. B. Features of the genre and the conflict in the play "Zoyka's Apartment" by M. Bulgakov. 53
11. Popova, L. G. About possible outlooks of the development of modern linguistics. 58
12. Samosinik, N. L. The flashback technique in the modern literature (based on the novel "American Pastoral" by Philip Roth). 62
13. Zvezulya, L. N. Linguocultural aspects of studying the concept of "rest" in modern linguistics. 69

3. FRONTIERS IN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

14. Abdalkadyrova, Zh. B., & Akhmetbekova, A. K. Intellectual origins of Arab feminism. 72
15. Balyrova, L. B. Photo message as a social transformation into the ethnographical discourse. 76
16. Narziyev, Z. I. The genesis of the tasawwuf philosophical outlook of Khujviri. 84
17. Popov, M. E. The view of the Indians of North America about the feat. 89
18. Ryazantsev, A. A., & Petunina, S. M. Physical culture as an important component of the competitiveness of the future architect. 93
19. Svetlichnaja, L. V. Hair as a dominant component of the everyday culture. 97

4. SOCIOLOGY AT THE INTERSECTION OF SCIENCES

20. Devilkamova, O. O. The Crimeans' state identities in the period of social transformation. 104
21. Trofimova, G. S. How income affects fertility: The case of Russia. 109
22. Zarubin, V. G., & Makartidina, V. A. Technology of express sociology. 113

5. ADVANCED STUDIES IN LAW

23. Gromov, K. A. Protection of the rights of purchasers while signing a license agreement on the use of a computer program. 117
24. Lomachenko, E. I., & Dudorov, T. D. Legislative amendments to the structure of the preliminary investigation in the context of the tendency to unification of the procedural form of the preliminary investigation and the inquiry. 120
25. Yushko, T. I., & Dudorov, T. D. Measures for suppression in the system of the criminal procedure law. 125

6. ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT:

26. Akseanova, O. A. Russia: Shared values of young professionals as cultural obstacles to economic development. 131
27. Babushkin, S. S., & Grebenshchikova, V. T. The role of Government and banking system in the development of small- and medium-sized businesses in the Russian Federation. 136
28. Kulchitskaya, E. V. Development of the internal enterprise environment: The logic model. 139
29. Otamurodov, K. K. The path of development of the banking system of Uzbekistan. 145
30. Sokolov, I. S. Prospects of small entrepreneurship development in Russia. 147
31. Vardanyan, N. B. Principles of effective assessment of the quality of personnel potential of the medical organization. 150

7. EDUCATION IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD

32. Ashynbaeva, T. A., & Amerkhanova, S. A. Content of the school social teacher's work in current conditions. 154
33. Brashovan, E. A. Test as Assessment in teaching English: Pros and cons. 159
34. Shuprikova, V. S. Musical activities as a means of optimizing the development of preschool children with disabilities in inclusive education system. 163
35. Slabko, I. S. Formation of social readiness of a child for school. 166
36. Tulinova, G. T., & Lebedeva, V. I. High school teachers' gender and age differences of mental health in professional activities. 171
37. Yortukov, K. Tasks of the educational system in the period of global financial and economic crisis. 177
38. Zader, M. I. From the experience of organizing the research on chemistry and fundamentals of microbiology for the students studying "veterinary science" and "food production technology." 179

8. TECHNOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY: FUNDAMENTAL AND APPLIED RESEARCH

39. Bazarov, J. T., Yodgorov, N., Xojiyev, Sh. G., Saidazimova, Z., & Mukolyants, A. A. New environmentally safe surfactants: Preparation and application. 183
40. Bazarov, J. T., Yodgorov, N., Amirkulov, N. S., Abdulkarimov, A. A., & Mukolyants, A. A. Synthesis and application technology of the effective reducers on the basis of the starch phosphate reagent. 190
41. Demenev, A. V. Information modeling on operation of buildings and structures. 195
42. Elkhina, I. A. Convergent technologies as the basis of the new technological order and the factor of transformation in the economy. 199
43. Gulchikh, I. N. Adaptation in the recommendation systems with the conclusion on the basis of precedents. 204
44. Krasiko, A. N. Selecting the optimal power mechanical vibrations in the creation of emulsions. 210
45. Tolobekova, B. T. Methodical basis of improving the complete extraction of subsurface resources during the development of ore deposits. 213
46. Turchiev, B. O. Distribution laws of atmospheric channels meteorological visibility range of open optical transmission systems. 217

9. MEDICINE & PHYSIOLOGY: NEW FRONTIERS

47. Kalish, Yu. I., Ametov, L. Z., Khan, G. V., Shayusupov, A. R., & Yigitbayev, S. Kh. Hernia recurrence after prosthetic plastics. 224
48. Khalmatova, B. T., Satibaldieva, N. R., & Yuldasheva, G. G. State of lymphocyte activation markers in children with acute respiratory disease against the background of thymus gland hyperplasia. 228
49. Tulinova, G. T., & Bodeev, M. T. The respiratory function of the high-class athletes depending on the sport (body type of energy supply). 231
50. Tobokalova, S., Zaitova, G., Nogoibaeva K., & Bekenova, D. Clinical and epidemiological characteristics of family foci of chronic hepatitis B. 234

10. ADVANCED STUDIES IN BIOLOGY & AGRICULTURE

51. Boymurodov, Kh. T. Bivalve molluscs of reservoirs of Uzbekistan as an object of environmental monitoring. 239
52. Karshiyev, A. E., Xayitova, H. I., Halimov, M. Z., Xayitov, I. Y., & Sattorova, L. V. Creating parent gardens of the newly created varieties of apricot, peach, and apple trees, propagating the seedlings and their introduction into production in the conditions of the Qashqadaryo region. 243

11. OP-ED

53. Nomonov, B. O., & Ergasheva, N. M. OP-ED: Upraising the new generation is upringing the nation. 247

Список литературы:

1. Инстратова Т.А. Методические и медико-организационные подходы улучшения качества ресурса качества медицинских услуг: акушерско-гинекологического профиля. Автореферат диссертации на соискание ученой степени кандидата медицинских наук. – Санкт-Петербург, 2011.
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CONTENT OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL TEACHER'S WORK IN CURRENT CONDITIONS

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This article deals with the basic directions of the social teacher's activities in the educational environment in the conditions of the Kyrgyz Republic. It analyzes a questionnaire survey conducted among school directors and students regarding ordinary activities of a social teacher in modern conditions of the school education development. A social worker is noted to be a significant figure in socialization of children's personalities, building communication channels among the children, their families, and the teaching staff.

Key words: educational institutions; social pedagogy; school social teacher; activities of the social teacher; areas of social teacher's activities.

The educational system aims at creating a comfortable school learning environment for children through improving curricula, introducing diversity into the learning process with the use of innovative technologies. At the same time, it is mindful to the characteristics of socialization of children in the educational institutions. The so-called Institute of Social Workers was introduced in the schools of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2011 in order to create acceptable conditions for students' socialization. School administrations accepted the introduction of the aforementioned service in the education system.

The questionnaire survey conducted among school directors shows that they believe that the position of a school social teacher to be important. 112 school directors participated in the survey in total. They explain their point of view by the fact that the social teachers act as a mediator between the students and the teaching staff. The reason why they were surveyed is that they could examine a social status of their students and had many opportunities to work with them on an individual basis. Also, there are many parents who externally or internally migrated to/in Kyrgyzstan; therefore, the social teachers have to cooperate with a number of different social organizations in order to uphold children's rights and help them in solving educational challenges. Their entire activities are aimed at ensuring that teachers fulfil their main function, which is to pay sufficient attention to the process of education. According to the school directors, various measures to prevent crimes among the students are the most important thing of any social teacher. Scope of the social teachers' work is extremely versatile, since they work closely with the parents, students, and the whole community. It is surprising that some directors think that the presence of a full-time employee with special education in social work is not necessary, because any teacher can easily cope with such duties. Of course, future teachers study psychology in the course of training in universities but not to the extent that is necessary for the social teacher.

Being engaged in personality development social pedagogy regulates system of relations in the family and in the school team. In the crisis conditions of the existence of the personality in the family or at school, the social teacher helps a child to find a place in society and adapt for changing conditions in life. Knowledge of child psychology and communication methods with children are very important in such a profession. In this case, social pedagogy analyses the impact of these relations on the family system, performing family functions by its members. Subject of the social pedagogy is, in the first place, an individual in childhood. Childhood turns out to be the most vulnerable, unprotected period.

Addressing current challenges, there is a growing understanding that the expertise and knowledge about the role of a person in society, the process of personality formation, individual socialization, and difficulties of the childhood in current conditions are required to ensure the efficient operation of the Institute of Social Teachers within the education system of Kyrgyzstan. For instance, DeYoung (2007) states, "Kyrgyzstan's social fabric continues to unravel, with unclear and contested understandings of free market dynamics, democratic processes, and how a multiethnic nation can collaborate now." (p. 254). The practice of social teachers aims to help children (adolescents) to achieve social and mental stability in society and establish new relationships. This predetermines the main goals of the social pedagogy, i.e. to help a child to navigate in the society's current crisis conditions, teaching how to overcoming difficulties. Society, along with individuals' inner circles and personal relations, is the main area of social teachers' activities. In addition, the sphere of relations in the family, immediate surroundings, and neighbourhoods is the priority, especially in current conditions.

Modern requirements for the social teachers include: (i) to work with the children from troubled families and orphanages; (ii) to work at different social educational centers and at the centers of social and psychological assistance (Smirnyagina, n.d.).

Work of the social teachers with children and families is a key element in all these institutions. Let's try to identify the core in social teachers' activities in any of the aforementioned social pedagogical and social educational institutions. Let's consider what common features the work of the social teachers has in these institutions.

1. Knowledge about a child (adolescent) will help the social teachers make right decision regarding the type of assistance they can provide to a child in the process of socialization. One needs to know about his/her health, relations in the family, at school, and among the peers. The social teachers are able to make any decision only after compiling "Identity Card" and "Environment Card." They get knowledge about children from conversations with their surrounding, analysing behavioural patterns and social networks;

2. The next stage in the social teachers' work is to understand the problem situation, in which a child finds him/herself in, paying attention to behavioural patterns. Having conducted a comprehensive analysis of the situation, the ways to overcome the crisis should be outlined;

3. Any social teacher should have pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact, communication skills, the ability not to violate personal boundaries, making an educational impact on the child. It is important not only to influence a child (adolescent), but also to coordinate the influence coming from the family, school, and the peers, deeply affecting the relations with him/her. Also, this is a step-by-step process: more ambitious goals might be set up once there is a clear progress has been achieved;

4. An ability of a social teacher to convince a child (adolescent) that only he/she can change his/her life and overcome the existing situation is very important in social teachers' everyday work. In addition, they need to establish an environment to ensure that a child (adolescent) is willing to settle down to a course of self-improvement and self-organization;

5. Social teachers' organizational activities aims at mediating between a child and the whole society, state, and public organizations, and most importantly at helping this child to constantly adapt to life new conditions (Nikitina, 2007).

In organizing their work, the school social teachers give the priority to creating a healthy microclimate in each team. They also invest in the humanization of interpersonal relations, encourage personal development, and promote protection of individual interests, organizing leisure and inclusive activities, inclusion in socially useful activities. More than that, professional social teachers also explore personal problems of students and teachers, taking all possible measures to address them. Also, they give special attention to the issues of child protection against cruelty, selfishness, and permissiveness of the parents.

What is the core in the social teachers' work, and how does it differ from the work of other school teachers, subject teachers, and even supervising their teachers or tutors? Usually, teachers have to work with a class or a group, and their methods are mainly focused on teamwork. The social teachers work with a person, an individual child (adolescent), or with a group of people, but a small one. If the social teachers work with a family, the work is carried out individually with each member. Also, they work in the field of child and adolescent protection, providing social or medical assistance. They should be able to organize education, rehabilitation, and adaptation for those who need this type of professional assistance.

Different countries have two approaches to social teachers' activities: a social teacher either cooperates with a school or is a full-time employee. In Kyrgyzstan, this is a full-time job. Working with children at school, the social teachers should visit students' families, providing assistance for parents and students in normalizing their relations and finding out the reasons

for students' absence. They also identify families that maltreat children, physically or mentally underdeveloped children, deprived children, and provide care to them. These are those children who cannot have a good academic standing due to their intellectual abilities, experience stress either within a group of peers at school or in their families, or have diseases and other health disabilities, being even addicted to drugs or alcohol. They are usually observed by a commission on juvenile affairs. In addition, the social teachers should work with the gifted children. In some cases, assistance to this group of children may include the understanding of their relations with others, while in other cases it goes further and consists of helping to learn how to control his/her actions, being a confident person. However, in both cases, the social teachers are required to be sensitive and warm-hearted.

The social teachers coordinate the teaching staff to work with difficult children, families, creating a positive social microenvironment, which is also important today. They regularly inform the school teaching staff about the psychological climate in classrooms, any problem a child. Also, they play a major role in preparing and drawing up a school social work plan.

Children who illegally work during school hours should get more attention from the social teachers, who deal with a range of issues regarding their education, checking whether the legal norms of child labour are fulfilled. This issue is very serious in current conditions and very relevant today. The social teachers make sure whether all those in need visit rehabilitation centres, and receive a number of social benefits, provided to all large families in Kyrgyzstan, such as free breakfasts at schools and free clothing.

Crisis in education and lack of funding resulted in staff shortage; in turn, the isolation of schools from dynamic social processes affected the education of the younger generation. According to DeYoung (2007), "Neither is it clear how schools will be able to implement whatever vespertine activities they are commanded to perform without additional resources and where most other public institutions also remain in shambles" (p. 254). Kabulov (2007) also states, "Kyrgyzstan teachers feel burdened by shortages of equipment and supplies such as paper, textbooks and other audio-visual materials; teachers rely on chalk and the blackboard" (p. 124). There are various negative processes in society, which affect the development of the Kyrgyz educational system; however, the social teachers take a worthy place in the educational environment.

This is proved by the questionnaire survey conducted in many schools of Kyrgyzstan. A total of 112 students were involved in the survey. When asked "Do you have a school social teacher?" 100% of the students said "Yes." This suggests that a school social teacher is not just a nominal staff member, but a person who is known by all students. When asked "Do you turn to him/her for support?" 78 students answered in the affirmative, which was 69.6% of the total number of the respondents, and 34 students (or 30.35%) answered in the negative. Comparing statistic data, only about 30% of the students appear to be trouble-free ones at schools. When asked "When did you turn to them?" the respondents listed a wide range of problems, such as (i) conflicts with classmates and teachers, (ii) racketeering, (iii) family conflicts, (iv) theft of money, and others. In all cases, the social teachers responded and held talks, training sessions, discussed the issues during advisory hours, and showed movies.

The next question was devoted to the level of satisfaction with the quality of social teachers' activities. When asked "Are you satisfied with his/her help, if you received any?" 50 students (or 64.1%) from those seeking assistance answered in the affirmative, while 16 students (20.5%) responded that the assistance from their social teachers was of low quality and did not change the situation. Eight students (10.3%) were partially satisfied with the help of the social teachers. What has changed after receiving the help? Children note the following positive aspects: (i) their conflicts with the classmates have been resolved; (ii) children could build

peacefull relations and become friends; (iii) a conflict girl learned to control her behaviour after participating in conflict management trainings. Additionally, through conversations and training sessions, racketeering decreased significantly, etc.

"What a social teacher should be like?" Here is the vision of the school students. A social teacher is a person, who can easily find a common language with children and adults, is fair, friendly, able to use the Internet, diligent, intelligent, kind, educated, humane, decisive, able to approach every individual student, active, able to read students' minds, cultural, easy, able to correctly solve problems, calm, knows psychology, protects interests and the rights of students, knows his/her business, can keep secrets, knows the ethics of behaviour. This is only part of children's description of a nearly ideal social teacher.

The last question in the survey was "Would you choose the profession of a social teacher?" A positive response was received from 50 students or 44% of the total number of survey participants, 52 students (46%) answered in the negative, and 10 students (8.9%) responded "I do not know". The students indicated the following reasons to choose this profession in the future. On the one hand, they were interested in such work, and they would like to help other students, visiting households with a purpose of establishing communication chances for resolving personal and educational issues effectively with both the students and their parents. On the other hand, they would like to organize educational programs, such as "Alylordo," a club of experts, etc. Students also want to be like their social teachers, because they admire their personal characteristics and understand the social importance of this profession.

Students indicated the following reasons that might prevent them from choosing this profession. They were of opinion that it was a very difficult, demanding, and poorly paid work. It should be stressed that young people believe that the current generation is uneducated, and this fact complicates the teachers' work at schools. Some of them said that they had already chosen their profession.

In sum, the social teachers are in charge of creating a situation that could enable children to cope with any crisis they find themselves in or to prevent such situations in life. Their professionalism and trust relations with children are of great importance here.

Acknowledgements

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TEST AS AN ASSESEMENT IN TEACHING ENGLISH:

PROS AND CONS

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The question of assessment appeared together with the processes of teaching and study. The relevance of it is indisputable due to its absolute necessity in the teaching process. It's quite understandable that any foreign language teaching has the aim of improvement and increase of students' skills of communication. Nowadays the most common used tools for assessment have become tests of different kinds. But the consequences of using them are not so good, especially when they take the first place without speaking. In my work with the help of investigations made on students' work with tests or without them it have proved that the usage of tests especially multiple choice tests or true false tests have to take the least positions in the process of stud, because they decrease students' abilities to speak and to communicate with each other. So it has been shown that in the process of foreign language study we can have tests as assessment but in very small doses and in combination with speaking.

Key words: assessment, tests, teaching English, skills, improvement, disadvantages.

From the time people began studying, there have always been a necessity to possess different ways of assessment. The question of assessment has a high level of relevance (and I'm sure will be constantly having for a very long period of time) due to its absolute necessity and indisputable role in the teaching process. Speaking about teaching English, it is absolutely clear that as any language it must be checked in all ways taking into consideration 4 types of activities: (i) listening; (ii) writing; (iii) reading, and (iv) speaking. And, of course, it goes without saying that in any kind of assessment, speaking should take the leading positions.

The first place in modern educational field is taken by different kinds of tests which year by year are regressing students' skills in English study. In one of my previous works I spoke about the educational investigation having been performed with my students. The investigation combined 3 groups of students that received either only tests as assessment or both speaking and multiple choice tests, and in the third group all the process was made in a communicative form, the results of which proved the negative influence and bad skills in those