Educational Matters
Научно-методически статии

DESIGNING A PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WORKING WITH GIFTED CHILDREN USING SOFTWARE OFFICE 365

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Abstract. This article describes the Master Program of professional training of specialists for working with gifted children using software Office 365. We justify the relevance and identify key ideas and content of the program. It includes activity-based learning based on modern educational technologies and digital resources, work with an empirical database with the results of leading educational centers which are focused on working with gifted children, with the identification of relevant problems and effective practices; attracting leading experts in the field of work with gifted children to conduct research etc…. The program is implemented in a face-to-face network format with the use of modern distance learning and Office 365 software, which allows us to organize collaborative work with documents in real-time regime using Word Web App, PowerPoint Web App or Excel Web App.

Keywords: professional training; gifted children; Office 365

To solve the global challenges for civilization, modern society needs leaders who can offer original ideas and ways to implement them. Gifted children, whose potential is now considered as a key factor in human progress, can be leaders of this type in the future. Gifted children, in turn, need adults who are ready and able to create an educational environment that will provide opportunities for identifying, developing and supporting giftedness. The actualization of the problem of professional training of specialists for the system of work with gifted children initiates the need to identify the key ideas that form the basis of appropriate educational programs.

We think that these ideas should be the following:

1. Refusal of one-sided understanding of the phenomenon of giftedness, consideration of a wide range of existing concepts and theories for their subsequent understanding and possible application.
2. Study and analysis of the accumulated international and domestic experience of working with gifted children in the context of a specific educational paradigm, taking into account the possibilities of new technologies.

3. Application an empirical base of the results of the leading educational centers focused on working with gifted children, with the identification of current problems and effective practices.
4. A harmonious combination of theoretical and practical components in the content of the educational program, which provides the acquisition of a range of competencies: analytical, research, expert, modeling, designing and communication.
5. Organization of active development of the educational program using modern methods of knowledge transfer and interaction of subjects of the educational process, including modern educational technologies and digital resources.
6. Implementation of step-by-step mastering of competencies and public presentation of research results in various formats with the participation of leading experts in the field of education and development of giftedness.
7. Involvement of advisers, social partners with unique experience in working with gifted children and talented youth, designing and managing educational systems, etc., who are trained in the field of child talent development

There is a demand in such programs from individuals who want to improve their competence, and from regional education systems interested in the emergence of specialists with understanding, professional knowledge and skills to create systems for working with gifted children.

Specialists: teachers, psychologists, and tutors who are competent in identifying, predicting and developing children's talents, as well as managers who can build a systematic work of organizations that supports multiple contexts: from the selection of highly qualified personnel, accounting for deficits and meeting the needs of key stakeholders to the formation of a safe development environment taking into account modern trends: informatization, labor market volatility, etc., are in very big demand.

Taking into account the current request for such programs, Moscow City University has developed the master's program „Development of children's giftedness" (hereinafter „the Program") (1), since 2018 university is implementing this program.

The choice of Master's degree level is not accidental; it is caused by the fact that to become a specialist in the development of children's giftedness, you should have a wide range of knowledge and competences that will be more productive based on master students' education.

The Program is focused on the global challenges of the XXI century and the Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development of Russia until 2025, which is currently transformed into the State program of the Russian Federation „Scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation" (Strategy, 2016, State program, 2019).

According to the mentioned strategy, 85 regional centers for the identification and support of gifted children are planned to be established in the Russian regions by the model of work of the Sirius Educational center (2), which was established by outstanding Russian scientists, sport and art figures on the initiative of the President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin. Currently, 16 such centers require staffing, which increases the importance of the Program.

The Program „Development of children's giftedness" includes 5 complex modules (Fig. 1).

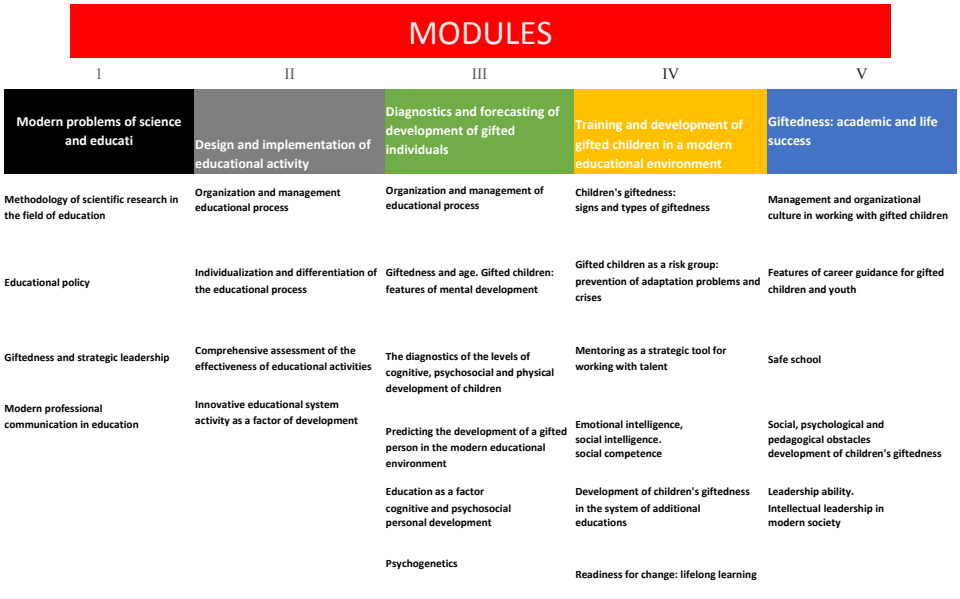

Fig. 1 Modules of the program „Development of children's giftedness

It is implemented in an intramural network format with the usage of modern distance education technologies, with the frequency of two contact distance days per week, which makes the Program available to students from different regions of Russia.

Using the remote format required the development of such forms of classes that would provide interaction between teachers and students in remote access. These features are provided by the Office 365 (3) software, which allows collaborating on documents in real-time: multiple users can simultaneously make changes and edit documents in Word Web App, PowerPoint Web App, or Excel Web App.

Joint work of undergraduates on the task, which ends with the creation of a common document, can be organized as follows:

– splitting the task into blocks, each of which is performed by a specific participant; the entire group of students will form a common document and discuss it.
– providing a comparative analysis of approaches, concepts, theories, practices, etc. i.e. setting of parameters for comparison, according to which participants consider certain documents;
– comparison of opposite points of view (for example, „optimist“ and „pessimist“) on the proposed problem to develop a solution taking into account the advantages and risks and its subsequent registration in the form of a document.
– using a „role-based“ approach to the problem under discussion from different stakeholders „managers“, „teachers“, „parents“, „social partners“, etc.
– also, using Office 365 software allows us to organize various formats of interaction between undergraduates in the process of completing various tasks: in groups, pairs, and individually.

Taking into consideration that the ability to work in a team is one of the key competencies of a modern specialist, we give enough time for working in groups in the course of teaching in classes. Also, this is due to the activities of regional centers for work with gifted children, which requires the teamwork of different specialists.

EduScrum (4) is one of the best technologies that meet teamwork formats. The essence of this technology is that the teacher chooses a problem and presents this problem to master students as an idea for a future project. It forms a list of sources required for the study, as well as requirements for results, the type, and timing of their submission. Students independently form teams, distribute tasks and choose a Scrum Master who coordinates the development of the project and, if necessary, seeks advice from the teacher. The teacher's assessment of the project includes not only its logic and feasibility but also the students' knowledge of modern approaches that form the methodological and theoretical basis of the project.

Special attention in the implementation of the program is given to various activities that are designed to develop the complex of general cultural, general professional and special competencies of master students. Such events include conferences and methodological seminars that have already become traditional, in which master students reveal key research ideas and, also, events where the conceptual framework of the study should be defended before leading experts in the field of child talent development and managers who are involved in the organization of this work.

Also, a good effect can be achieved by the organization of „inverted“ defense, when master students perform in pairs, and each protects not their conceptual framework, but also the framework of their partner. In this case, the overall rating is set and formed based on the results of both defenses.

The most important component of the program is the choice of the topic and preparation of the final qualifying work. Master students can choose either research or project work, although this division is quite relative. The research work is focused, to a greater extent, on the search for new knowledge about the laws of the development of giftedness, about the design of educational programs, forms, and technologies of working with gifted children. Project work involves creating a practical product that can be used in practical work with gifted children, such as an educational model, program design, diagnostic tools, etc. The common characteristic of research and project work is practical orientation and approbation.

Large flows of students studying at the Educational Center «Sirius», multi-vector nature of its activities, close interaction with regional centers that work with gifted children, cooperation with the country's largest research centers, leading educational institutions, and leading high – tech companies, all of this provides a wide field for identifying the most pressing problems and conducting relevant researches.

The recognition that these problems are dictated by the practice significantly increases the motivation of master students and gives greater importance to research.

Thus, the topics that are selected by undergraduates enrolled in 2019 can be divided into several groups. The first group is focused on the development of technologies for working with gifted children and includes issues of remote support, design of educational programs, and the formation of scientific communication skills. The second group of topics is related to the creation and evaluation of models of regional centers for work with gifted children. The third group is dedicated to the professional training of teachers working with gifted children. And finally, the fourth group focuses on psychological aspects of the development of giftedness: features of emotional intelligence of gifted children, research on the level of anxiety, attention development, etc.

The second recruitment for the Program, implemented in 2019, showed that interest in it is not only not weakening, but also growing in the Russian regions, which creates prerequisites for creating highly professional personnel to work with gifted children and its qualitative change.

NOTES

1. An official web site of the Moscow City University. (URL: https://www.mgpu.ru/sveden/education/).
2. An official web site of „Sirius", an Educational Centre. (URL: https://sochisirius.ru/).
3. Office 365 for education. (URL: https://www.microsoft.com/ru-ru/education/products/office)/
4. EduScrum. (URL: https://eduscrum.com.ru/ob-eduscrum/).

5. Strategy of scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation (2016). (URL: http://www.consultant.ru/law/hotdocs/48053.html/).
6. State program of the Russian Federation „Scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation" (2019).
(URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_322380/).

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