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THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH AS A METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF MUSIC THERAPY SPECIALISTS

The article is devoted to highlighting the problem of using the competence approach in the professional training of music therapists. The aim of the article is to substantiate the competency-based approach as a methodological base of musical therapists' professional training and education. The article presents the results of the analysis of the scientific and pedagogical literature which highlights the peculiarities of the application of the competency-based approach in the professional training of specialists, the experience of using the potential of music therapy in education, the use of a competency-based approach in the training of music therapists. It has been proven that the competency-based approach involves a shift of emphasis from the process of accumulating normatively defined knowledge to the plane of formation of future specialists' ability to act effectively as well as creatively use knowledge in various conditions and situations of professional activity. The competency-based approach directs the educational process to the development of the specialist's professional competence as an integrative characteristic of his/her personality, which combines knowledge, skills, value orientations, qualities, etc. and, on this basis, ensures readiness to successfully perform professional tasks and duties. It has been concluded that the application of a competency-based approach to the professional training of music therapists ensures a change in emphasis in the educational process, namely from the usual translation of knowledge from teacher to learner to the formation of the ability to actively search for knowledge and readiness for its creative application in the process of further professional activity. Its implementation contributes to the renewal of the goals and content of professional education programs for music therapy personnel, taking into account the professional direction and modern conditions of activity in the relevant field, which, in turn, will ensure an increase in the competitiveness of graduates of this field of training in the labor market and their chances for successful employment. At the same time, the implementation of this approach in the practice of professional education should be closely related to other methodological approaches, in particular, person-oriented, interdisciplinary, integrative, etc., in order to strengthen its positive effects and avoid potential risks.

Key words: *competency-based approach, educational process, future specialist, knowledge and skills, music therapy, music therapist, professional training, professional education.*

Introduction. The intensive expansion of music therapists' professional activity and the improvement of the scope of music therapy services provision today put forward qualitatively new requirements for the personality of specialists of this profile and the system of their professional training. Accordingly, the current stage of professional training is marked by an active search for ways and means of reform,

taking into account the current demands of society regarding the maintenance of the health and well-being of every person and the modern realities of music therapy practice. First of all, these searches are manifested in the active rethinking, reassessment of the established traditions of professional training of personnel in the music therapy and the justification of new methodological bases for its implementation.

Researchers from different countries analyze the peculiarities of the application of the competency-based approach in the professional training of specialists (Бургун, 2010, Заблоцька, 2008, Curry, & Docherty, 2017, Farnan, 2001, Fitzgerald, Burkhardt, Kasten, Mullan, & et al., 2016, Frank, Snell, Cate, Holmboe, & et al., 2010, Grant, 1999). The experience of using the potential of music therapy in education is analyzed (Добровольська, 2023, Куцин, 2021, Lim, 2019, Zanders, 2020). A significant number of publications are devoted to highlighting the use of a competency-based approach in the training of music therapists (Alley, 1978, Anderson, 1982, Braswell, Decuir, & Maranto, 1986, Bruscia, Hesser, & Boxill, 1981, Bruscia, 1986, Goodman, 2011, Iwamasa, 2023, Taylor, 1987).

The aim of the article is to substantiate the competency-based approach as a methodological base of musical therapists' professional training and education.

Research results. Nowadays, competency-based approach is one of the key methodological approaches to the professional training and education of music therapists, which is evidenced by the analysis of scientific literature (Braswell et al., 1986; Farnan, 2001; Wright, 1992; Goodman, 2011). In general, it involves a shift of emphasis from the process of accumulating normatively defined knowledge to the plane of formation of future specialists' ability to act effectively as well as creatively use knowledge in various conditions and situations of professional activity. This approach directs the educational process to the development of the specialist's professional competence as an integrative characteristic of his/her personality, which combines knowledge, skills, value orientations, qualities, etc. and, on this basis, ensures readiness to successfully perform professional tasks and duties.

Investigating the essence of the competence approach in general, Zabolotska (Заболоцька, 2008) substantiates it as one of the key educational innovations of recent decades, characterized by a number of features, including: "a) recognition of competence as the final result of education and its purposeful formation; b) shifting emphasis from the

awareness of students to their ability to use information to solve practical problems; c) assessment of the level of formation of students' competencies as a result of the educational process; d) student-centered orientation of education; e) focus of professional training on the future employment of graduates" (p. 67).

Also, Burgun (Бургун, 2010) sees the specificity of the competency-based approach primarily in shifting the focus of attention from the specialist's accumulation of knowledge, abilities and skills to the formation of his/her capacity for activity and readiness to constructively use individual experience and knowledge in various situations of professional and social practice. At the same time, the researcher notes that this approach "does not deny the importance of knowledge, abilities and skills, but it emphasizes the preparedness of the future specialist to use the acquired knowledge to solve problems that arise in professional and everyday life" (Бургун, 2010, p. 162).

Curry & Docherty (2017) define a key feature of the competency-based approach to education as its focus on results in the activity dimension: "Educational structures characterized as competency or outcome-based can be identified by various manifestations of functioning end points: educational objectives, outcomes statements, competency frameworks, task analyses, employability skills lists, performance and grading checklists. What is common across these tactics is the focus on endpoint behavioural competence and therefore on assessing direct indications of attained competence throughout the educational experience" (p. 62).

Instead, Olmos-Vegaa & Bonilla-Ramirez (2017) characterize the essence of the competency-based approach to professional education through the prism of opposition to the traditional – knowledge-centered approach. According to them, it is oriented to a greater extent on the final result of professional education, which is manifested primarily in the practical skills of a student: "The objective is not to acquire knowledge, but knowing how to use that knowledge" (Olmos-Vegaa & Bonilla-Ramirez, 2017, p. 129). Thanks to this, the competency-based approach enables him/her to realize himself/herself as an individual in the educational process, to influence its course and result, in contrast to the traditional approach, where a student is mainly a passive recipient of normatively determined educational information.

The aforementioned researchers associate the advantages of the competency-based approach in professional education primarily with the

wide possibilities of increasing its effectiveness through updating goals and objectives, improving the content and methods of training specialists in order to ensure the conditions for acquiring valuable practical experience in solving real problems and tasks of further professional activity, as well as the development of the ability to adapt to various typical and non-standard situations and independently find rational solutions. Therefore, the educational process based on the competency-based approach is primarily associated with the active search for knowledge by students of various professions and their practical application to gain experience in solving specific professional problems and tasks. Accordingly, its main value lies in strengthening the practical orientation of the educational process, which ensures readiness for action in various situations of professional life.

With this in mind, scientists (Alley, 1978; Bruscia et al., 1981; Taylor, 1987; Farnan, 2001; Goodman, 2011) have for decades noted the significant role of the competency-based approach within the methodological support of the professional training of a music therapy specialist due to the possibility of directing it to achieving practically significant results, namely comprehensive readiness to perform professional tasks and duties. Its implementation in the practice of music therapy education, according to the researchers mentioned above, contributes to the acquisition of a relevant profession by the students of professionalism based on the integration of knowledge, skills, and practical experience, which ensures the ability to perform professional duties efficiently and effectively.

The relevance of the competency-based approach to the professional training of music therapists is also emphasized by Lim (2019) in view of the multi-functionality of their professional activities at the present time. Accordingly, their educational program should provide for the possibility of acquiring and demonstrating a wide range of competencies: “Competencies require knowledge in a variety of areas such as psychology, special education, neurology/biology/anatomy, and music therapy principles as well as the ability to apply this knowledge in clinical settings. Successful application of knowledge requires additional abilities including music skills, scientific/analytical skills, interpersonal skills, professional work skills and behaviors, and good mental, spiritual, and physical health” (Lim, 2019, p. 221).

We agree with the opinion of Zanders (2020) about the broad possibilities of the competency-based approach in providing targeted training of music therapy specialists to perform professional tasks. The

scientist connects the need to implement this approach with the definition of a list of competencies that should serve as a measure of the readiness of students for independent professional activity: “As students progress through their education and training, the core competencies become an evaluative tool. Evaluation subsequently focuses on how well students have achieved competence and what students have learned, rather than what they have been taught. If the student has acquired these skills, it is presumed that they are ready for professional work” (Zanders, 2020, p. 20). Therefore, the importance of the competency-based approach is due, according to the scientist, to the establishment of clear target guidelines in the professional training of music therapists and the determination of specific prerequisites for their admission to professional activity (Zanders, 2020).

In this context, it is appropriate to cite the conclusions of Dobrovolska (Добровольська, 2023) about the key role of the competency-based approach to the professional training of music therapists in order to ensure their readiness to establish constructive relationships with patients and the effective performance of professional duties. In particular, the researcher indicated the logic of implementing this approach in the process of professional education of music therapy professionals, which requires a clear sequence of actions: 1) determination of the list of competencies of students in this specialty as goals and expected results of their training; 2) distribution, systematization of these goals in the form of defined competencies within the professional training program; 3) development of specific courses to achieve set goals, i.e. competencies, in accordance with the training program (Добровольська, 2023, p. 254).

Within the scope of our research, we ponder the constructive critical considerations of scientists regarding the competency-based approach to professional education and their calls not to absolutize it as the only way to solve all its problematic aspects. As an example, we can cite the position of Grant (1999) regarding the competency-based approach in the professional education of health care professionals (education in health sciences), which includes music therapists. In particular, the scientist points out the importance of considering such a potential risk during the application of this approach as a simplification of the health care personnel professionalism essence due to its identification with a set of skills to perform certain professional actions, the result of which may be the primitivization of the process of their professional training.

Objective critical remarks regarding the competency-based approach in the context of personnel training in the field of health care are also reflected in the work of Frank et al. (2010), in which along with the advantages (focusing on outcomes, emphasizing abilities, de-emphasizing time-based training, promoting greater learner-centredness) a number of risks are also identified (the threat of reductionism, logistical chaos, loss of authenticity, inertia and lack of resources, etc). In order to minimize them, it is worth considering competence as a multi-level, multi-aspect, dynamic characteristic of a specialist that is gradually formed and improved throughout his/her professional life, as well as a recommended algorithm for the implementation of the competency-based approach in the development of educational programs: “1) Identify the abilities needed of graduates. 2) Explicitly define the required competencies and their components. 3) Define milestones along a development path for the competencies. 4) Select educational activities, experiences, and instructional methods. 5) Select assessment tools to measure progress along the milestones. 6) Design an outcomes evaluation of the program” (Frank et al., 2010, p. 642).

Conclusions. In this context, we believe that the application of a competency-based approach to the professional training of music therapists ensures a change in emphasis in the educational process, namely from the usual translation of knowledge from teacher to learner to the formation of the ability to actively search for knowledge and readiness for its creative application in the process of further professional activity. Its implementation, in our opinion, contributes to the renewal of the goals and content of professional education programs for music therapy personnel, taking into account the professional direction and modern conditions of activity in the relevant field, which, in turn, will ensure an increase in the competitiveness of graduates of this field of training in the labor market and their chances for successful employment. At the same time, the implementation of this approach in the practice of professional education should be closely related to other methodological approaches, in particular, person-oriented, interdisciplinary, integrative, etc., in order to strengthen its positive effects and avoid potential risks.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Лі Шиньїн. Компетентнісний підхід як методологічна основа професійної підготовки фахівців з музичної терапії.

Стаття присвячена висвітленню проблеми використання компетентнісного підходу у професійній підготовці музичних терапевтів. Метою статті є обґрунтування основних особливостей співпраці та академічних обмінів між українськими та китайськими університетами. Метою статті є обґрунтування компетентнісного підходу як методологічної основи професійної підготовки та освіти музичних терапевтів. У статті представлено результати аналізу науково-педагогічної літератури, в якій висвітлено особливості застосування компетентнісного підходу у професійній підготовці фахівців, досвід використання потенціалу музикотерапії в освіті, використання компетентнісного підходу у підготовці музичних терапевтів. Доведено, що компетентнісний підхід передбачає зміщення акцентів з процесу нагромадження нормативно визначених знань у площину формування у майбутніх фахівців здатності ефективно діяти та творчо використовувати знання в різних умовах і ситуаціях професійної діяльності. Компетентнісний підхід спрямовує освітній процес на розвиток професійної компетентності фахівця як інтегративної характеристики його особистості, що об'єднує знання, уміння, ціннісні орієнтації, якості тощо та на цій основі забезпечує готовність успішно виконувати професійні завдання та обов'язки. Зроблено висновок про те, що застосування компетентнісного підходу до професійної підготовки музичних терапевтів забезпечує зміну акцентованості в освітньому процесі, а саме зі звичного транслювання знань від викладача до здобувача на формування в нього здатності до активного пошуку знань та готовності до їх творчого застосування в процесі подальшої професійної діяльності. Водночас упровадження цього підходу в практику професійної освіти має відбуватися в тісному взаємозв'язку з іншими методологічними підходами, зокрема особистісно зорієнтованим, міждисциплінарним, інтегративним тощо, задля посилення його позитивних впливів та уникнення потенційних ризиків.

Ключові слова: компетентнісний підхід, освітній процес, майбутній фахівець, знання та вміння, музична терапія, музичний терапевт, професійна підготовка, професійна освіта.