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## The “Turnkey School” project model for teacher team training

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to present a new model of professional training for teachers in educational institutions within the framework of the "Turnkey School" project within the Master of Education degree program at the Humanitarian and Pedagogical Institute of Sevastopol State University (SevsU). This study used a controlled research design method to validate the team concept through a proposed model based on the socio-constructivist and contextual paradigms in education. The model involves training in a master's program as part of team building for a new educational institution in which cohort groups are formed based on the specific needs of assigned schools, which are then evaluated by an independent community of experts, as well as with the writing of a final thesis as a result of cohort team collaboration. This study confirms that the cohort group formed through this model shows a better level of maturity and functioning than randomly assigned teachers. These findings support the effectiveness of a Master of Education degree in improving the training and performance of future teachers. This model emphasizes not only the creation of updated educational products but also the self-implementation of those products, which contributes to the overall improvement of educational institutions.

**Keywords:** master program, school, joint training, meta-competence, project development

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### INTRODUCTION

The scale and complexity of socio-economic transformations in the life of contemporary society cause cardinal changes in the education system, which actualize the need for conceptual and applied development to resolve the problems of professional training of pedagogical personnel (Gast et al., 2017; Piskunova, 2018; Serzhenko, 2021). As we navigate this changing educational landscape, it becomes imperative to uphold standards, content, and training models for future teachers while embracing modern trends in teacher education. The formation of teams in the school requires the development of group processing skills (Alberto Perez et al., 2023). In running effective meetings, consensus building occurs within the team and within the school. It is also in securing and utilizing resources, developing action plans, and evaluating outcomes. This includes emphasizing subject mastery, and effective presentation skills, as well as incorporating digital literacy, computer knowledge, and modern assessment methods to measure students' progress and knowledge. Within the realm of professional education, a notable trend is the emergence of team-based training approaches, inspired by the widespread adoption of collaborative practices across various economic and social domains in our society (Akimova, 2020; Aleksandrova, 2007; Cederlund, 2018; Smykovskaya, 2016; Sun et al., 2017; Zhukovsky, 2010).

The evolving landscape of education calls for specialized training for future teachers with diverse skill sets (Msweli et al., 2023). Educators should be equipped to effectively monitor and analyze the quality of education, adept at utilizing digital technologies in multitasking capacities, and attuned to their individual roles within group dynamics. They should not only develop

personalized educational trajectories but also guide aspiring teachers in making productive contributions to the overall growth of educational organizations and learning environments. Of particular significance is the training of teachers as catalysts for innovation within the educational process, capable of driving positive changes within specific educational institutions. The preparation of teachers for such roles becomes increasingly relevant when designing educational policies tailored to the unique circumstances of a particular region (Grishin et al., 2017). Therefore, it is imperative to undertake this research to address the future challenges in the field of education confronted by educators through meticulously planned and tailored educational programs that effectively meet their needs. This is especially true in situations where necessity requires, due to rapid population growth, that the construction of a new school necessitates the assignment of relatively inexperienced faculty to the school. This is caused by the refusal of more experienced teachers to accept reassignment or when such reassignment would necessitate relocation expenses to the school district.

It should also be noted that in the educational district for which teachers are trained, it is difficult to interest older teachers in the use of computers and similar technologies. Educators need to be comfortable with the use of technology (Kusuma, 2021; Miskiah et al., 2019; Thohir et al., 2021). The reluctance of older educators to embrace these technologies has forced greater reliance on younger, less technology-fearful generations. We are also mindful that the expectations of parents and students are that technology is embedded in the culture of the educational institution. If a school's faculty does not include a generous population of younger teachers, the culture of the faculty could become anti-technology or anti-innovative.

By comprehensively understanding the profound changes occurring within the education system and the emerging trends, this research aims to provide valuable insights into professional training for educators, ensuring their preparedness to navigate the complex dynamics of the educational environment. This research endeavors to contribute innovative and effective solutions for preparing high-quality educators who are well-equipped to confront the challenges encountered in the field of education through development of "Turnkey School" project using masters' degree program in Humanitarian and Pedagogical Institute of Sevastopol State University (SevSU) as a case study.

The idea of forming a cohort group of master's degree candidates to fully staff a new school was, and remains, a novel concept. The theory behind the attempt was to jump-start the maturation of the collective faculty and enhance their ability to advance student outcomes. We have not encountered any similar attempts to form such groups, perhaps because other districts do not encounter rapid growth while simultaneously having trouble in attracting and retaining mature staff members.

It is assumed that a portion of the original cohort group might have been eliminated for a variety of reasons. It was always the goal for the cohort group to be able to staff a new school fully or at least substantially. The reality is that there are always eliminations within the group that need to be backfilled by teachers outside the cohort. When this occurs, experienced teachers are recruited to meet the staffing requirements. However, the value of cohort training is what is in question rather than the ability of the program to simply meet raw numbers or to fully staff a school. The ultimate test of the value of the master's program is the efficacy of the cohort staff as opposed to random hires.

The following section explains the research methodology employed in this exploratory qualitative study. Subsequently, the findings along with a comprehensive discussion, serve as an elaboration of the conceptual development and implementation of the program. Finally, the concluding section will expound upon the achievements of this research, as well as the limitations and potential for future similar studies, enabling the replication and refinement of this conceptual model within different international contexts.

## **METHOD**

This research employed two distinct methods: formative and objectivizing methods. The formative methods focused on indirect structuring of command role communications, drawing

inspiration from Rogers' approach to establishing trust and fostering understanding among communicators (Moreira, 1993). By prioritizing areas of shared values and empathetically comprehending differing viewpoints, communicators sought to create an atmosphere conducive to open dialogue and constructive engagement. This form of argumentation, known as the Rogerian argument, follows an indirect structure to facilitate effective communication.

The second group of methods encompassed sociometry, product assessment, external independent expertise, and standardized observation (Gutiérrez et al., 2016). Sociometry, a form of action research, involved exploring the socio-emotional networks within groups by using predefined criteria. For instance, participants were asked to identify their preferred lab partners, seek assistance from group members on work-related issues, or recognize individuals suitable for leadership roles in specific projects. This network exploration approach delved into the dynamics of relationships within small or large groups, such as academic communities and organizational settings.

Product assessment involved evaluating students' creations, such as posters, drawings, or inventions, to gauge their level of ability and understanding. This form of assessment provided insights into students' performance and their application of acquired knowledge and skills. External independent expertise and standardized observations further augmented the research methodology. These methods entailed employing state exams administered by impartial entities unrelated to specific schools, overseen by external proctors or facilitated by online testing platforms. By employing a combination of formative and objectivizing methods, this research aimed to comprehensively analyze the research subject and gather data from multiple perspectives. These methodological approaches contributed to the robustness and reliability of the research findings.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

The studies presented in this article offer a compelling indication for the development of new effective training models and methodologies in the modern education system. Specifically, the focus of this research is on the model of professional training for educational personnel, namely the "product" master's degree in education program. This model has been developed within the framework of socio-constructivist and system-activity methodologies and has been implemented at Sevastopol State University (SevSU) as part of the "Turnkey School" project since 2019.

The principles underlying the organization of the educational process in this model differ significantly from traditional approaches to professional training for future teachers. The main ideas forming the basis of the Model for training pedagogical teams for a "Turnkey School" are as follows.

### ***Integration of the life cycles of the teacher and the school***

The training of future teachers occurs simultaneously with the construction and preparation of a new school, typically spanning an average of two years. Upon graduation, the student cohort forms a cohesive innovative core, working collectively in the newly established school. The master's curriculum is tailored to meet the specific needs of the functional educational institution. Students actively participate in the development of the institution, including the formulation of the Concept of Activity, the creation of the general education program, and the preparation of regulatory and methodological materials. This approach allows future teachers to develop as professionals in tandem with the formation of the future school.

### ***Formation of a team for a new institution***

The training process within the master's program is an integral part of team formation in the new school. Team interactions serve as a meaningful platform for the knowledge and skill development required for the implementation of the school's development project. Teamwork facilitates the emergence of new knowledge, professional competencies, and meta-professional competencies through a constant exchange of actual meanings and contexts related to professional

activities. As the team evolves, it functions as an informal mutual learning community, complementing the formal learning process. This collaborative approach enables participants to assume various roles, such as non-professional customers, pedagogical designers, moderators-mentors, and managers promoting their own educational products.

### ***Integration of formal and non-formal education***

The model emphasizes the integration of formal and non-formal education within a single training process. Non-formal education serves as a zone of proximal development for training future teachers, allowing for flexible experimentation with new educational interactions and technologies. Non-formal education provides students with freedom to practice professional decision-making skills and creative self-expression. It can be implemented in various formats, including full-time and remote, as well as synchronous and asynchronous. In this model, non-formal education plays a vital role in the formation of relevant competencies for modern teachers, and it is considered an equal and compulsory component of the integral educational process. Strategic sessions within the non-formal education framework play a crucial role in establishing the school's mission and developing ideas for growth. Without these sessions, the goals of the "Turnkey School" master's program would be unattainable.

The combination of formal and non-formal education creates a unique educational space and a scientific and cultural institution for the city, serving as a model for others to emulate. Engaging in educational activities within such a space cultivates the ability to adopt a supra-situational view of the school and its organization, as well as the willingness to gather diverse resources to support the institution's development. Developing such competence is of paramount importance. The findings presented in this chapter highlight the innovative nature of the "Turnkey School" model for professional training of pedagogical personnel and are condensed into Figure 1 and Figure 2. By integrating the life cycles of teachers and schools, fostering team collaboration, and blending formal and non-formal education, this model offers a promising approach to address the challenges faced in education.

In this paper, we prove the hypothesis that social interactions within our candidate teacher team are more efficient than in randomly assembled K-11 school staff members. First, we described the Sociometric status of the experimental group. The control group was comprised of existing school faculty members. The diagnostic environment was businesslike and friendly. Leader: Test subject A (by election). The nature of leadership is more emotional, with a high probability due to the subject's high competence in communication. Having only one emotional leader is a good prognosis for a group if the emotional leader does not usurp the power with the formal leader. We selected subjects Z, P, & R. The formal leader is not the emotional leader, but the formal leader was also chosen as a selected subject. This is acceptable due to the qualitative performance of his functional duties.

Subject K did not make negative choices, citing a positive attitude towards all members of the group, which is apparently ostentatious good-naturedness, which is noticeable to some members of the group (K has a negative total status). Subject P was never rejected. He was an emotionally comfortable member of the team. Repulsion stars are not supported by anyone in the group. They exist separately. In case of deliberate infringement of their interests, a conflict is possible.

Two questions were presented to the group but did not significantly change the configuration. The formal leader received a final neutral status through three negative elections, which can be seen as forecasting a small probability of local conflicts. The sociogram shows the average level of group cohesion: 11 mutual choices out of 25 possible, but mutual choices rarely come from centers of emotional attraction. Thus, the group should be considered as "gestating". At this stage of development, the organization of teamwork can cause difficulties for formal leaders, and training is required. Next, we moved to the experimental group, which involved the teacher training group in its entirety. The diagnostic environment was business-like and friendly. The teachers in training showed interest and punctuality.

The study of the sociometric status of the experimental group took place in a friendly atmosphere. The highest sociometric status is the head of the group. She didn't get a single

negative vote. Thus, in this study group, the formal and emotional leader coincide, which has a positive effect on teamwork. Subjects I. and M. had an acceptable sociometric status. Those group members can both replace individual functions of a formal leader and lead work in micro groups. Of these two, the subject I. did not receive a single negative choice, so he can lead a micro group with any composition.

Test subject K. is an outsider. More than half of the group's members marked him as their first negative choice. At the same time, Subject K. chose the formal leader of the group as his first positive choice, therefore, in the event of a conflict situation, moderation by the leader will be effective. The group has a "Star of Repulsion" with fewer points than K. That subject was Z, one of the latecomers who did not get in touch with the leader. As a hypothesis, low motivation can be considered as the cause of repulsion by the group. Half of the selections were reciprocal. The team is mature, capable of teamwork and overcoming possible contradictions.

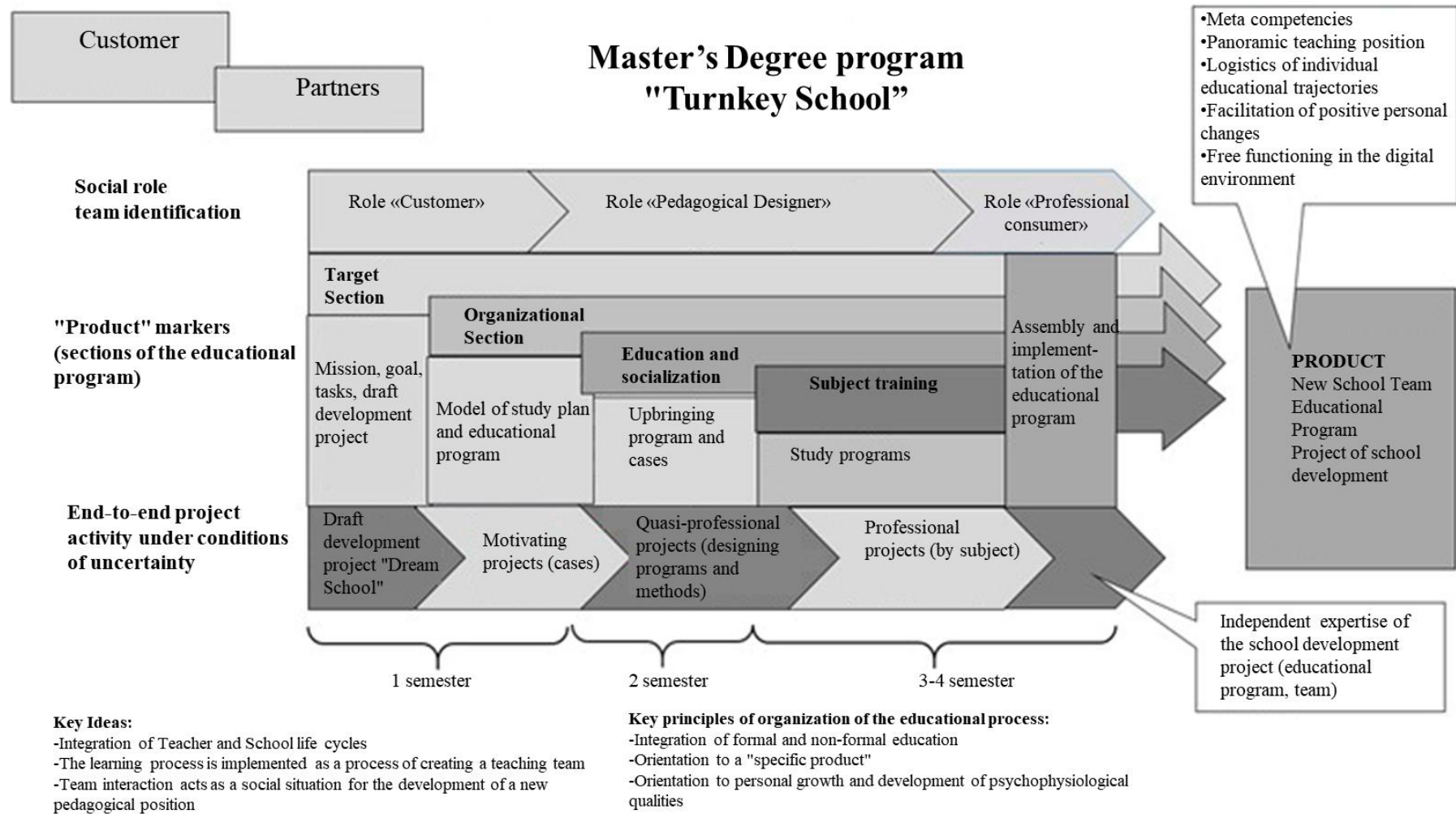
## **Discussion**

In contemporary scholarship, the discourse surrounding the evolving competencies of educators also encompasses the emergence of novel roles for education specialists. These roles, such as "coordinator" (pertaining to digital platform-based learning), "mentor" (in the context of blended learning), "practitioner" (focusing on students' practical skills), and "facilitator" (emphasizing individual student resources), reflect the growing necessity for competencies and specialized pedagogical expertise. This phenomenon is a response to the integration of scientific knowledge across various subject areas, consequently giving rise to new professional roles, including those of educational trajectory logisticians, curators of digital and soft skills, mind fitness specialists, and producers of educational events (Akhmadeeva & Kokaya, 2021; Avdeeva & Adonina, 2016; Baeten & Simons, 2014). Given these developments, it becomes imperative to establish educational conditions that facilitate teachers' flexible self-identification within these roles, thereby serving as a novel mechanism for mastering pedagogical positions.

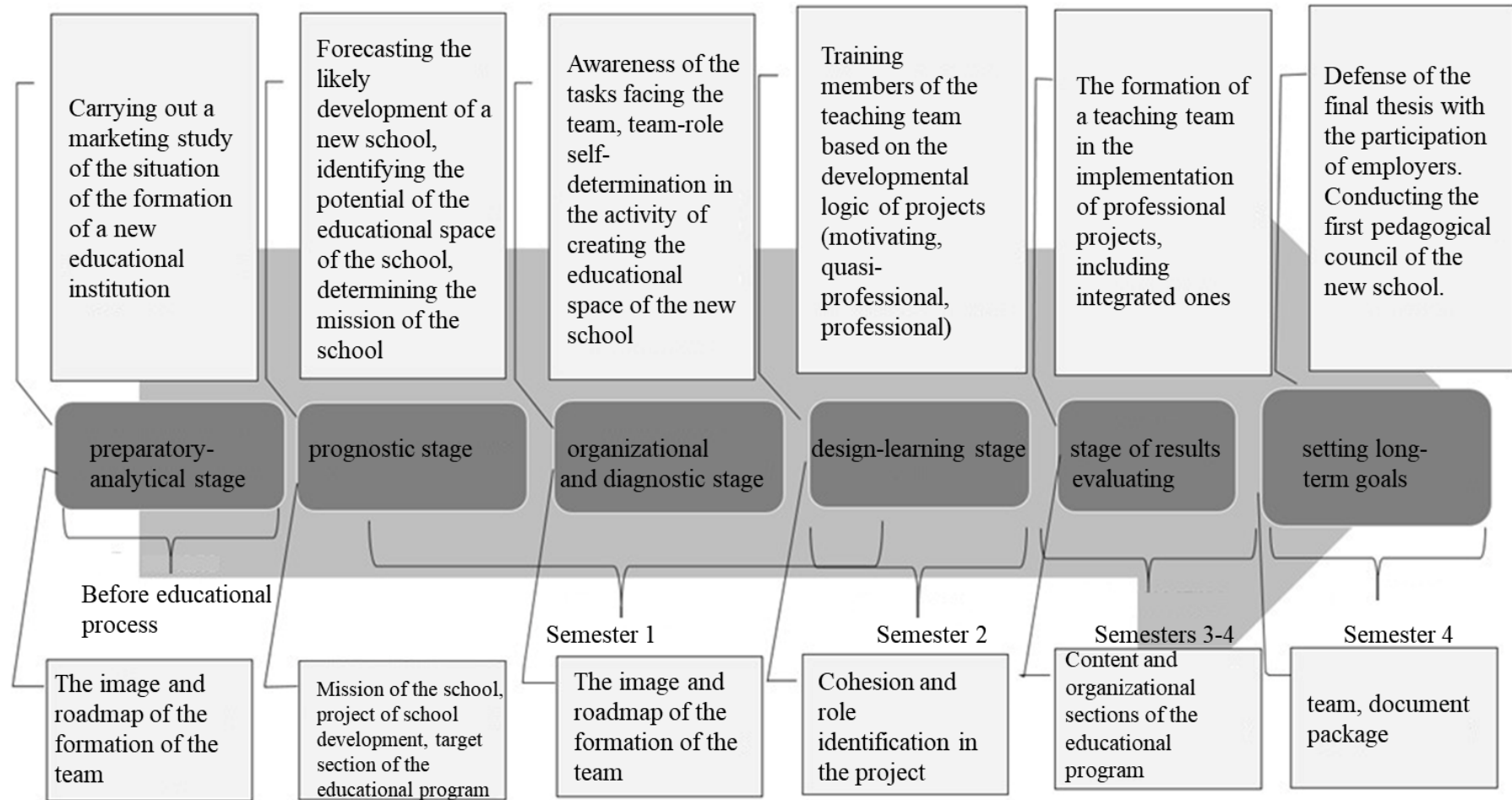
However, the current indicators of the quality of professional pedagogical education present challenges within the prevailing teacher training system. Despite the introduction of new-generation educational standards, the classical training system, predominantly employed in most universities, lacks compatibility with the acquisition of supra-professional skills. These skills hold paramount importance in advancing the modern technological order (Nechaev, 2019). Recent scholarly discussions, both domestic and international, have actively explored the substantial potential of group interactions in educational practice, including within teacher training (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Gast et al., 2017; Sun et al., 2017). It has been observed that profound team communications can yield improvements in advanced pedagogical knowledge (Gummer & Mandinach, 2015; Van Gasse et al., 2017), facilitate the implementation of data-driven learning in its entirety (Hubbard, 2014; Bertrand & Marsh, 2015), and effectively incorporate ideas of education, action learning, learning by doing, and social learning (Binkhorst et al., 2015). The concept of "in-depth team communications" refers to the process of progressing through different phases of team formation during the sequential implementation of a cycle of relevant training formats. For instance, training based on data analysis necessitates distinct preparatory stages, including discussion, data interpretation, problem diagnosis, solution design, and implementation (Hubbard, 2014).

Scholars in the field of teacher training have dedicated their attention to five primary models of team learning: the observation model, coaching model, assistant teaching model, equal status model, and the teaming model itself (Baeten & Simons, 2014).

These models share a common focus on addressing formalized pedagogical issues concerning the content, methodology, and challenges related to educational processes and student socialization. An analysis of existing research on team-based training and the enhancement of teachers' professional skills reveals that well-established group practices significantly enhance the effectiveness of professional education, particularly in highly specialized subject-methodical training for educators. These training methods are problem-oriented, involving the presentation of a problem followed by collaborative discussions and consensus to derive solutions.



**Figure 1. Educational Model of Training Pedagogical Teams within the Framework of the master's Program "Turnkey School"**



**Figure 2. Generalized Scheme of the Methodology of Personnel Training within the Framework of the master's degree Program (The "Turnkey School" Project)**

To develop a strategic understanding of pedagogical situations, it is essential to transcend the given problem scenarios and introduce elements of uncertainty and multitasking into the process of professional and personal development. Considering these considerations, it is our perspective that training models rooted in organizational and activity games, alongside open strategizing, hold tremendous potential. Within this framework, team and group activities are organized not merely to address immediate problems but to envision a desired future state. The educational context, in such cases, incorporates elements of uncertainty, thereby fostering the processes of professional and personal.

The systematic implementation of the ideas formulated in the organization of professional teacher training determines the distinctive features of the Master of Education degree program within the "Turnkey School" project. These features can be regarded as the guiding principles for organizing the educational process, shaping the requirements for designing the general education program, and selecting forms of educational activities. The main characteristics of the educational process in the "Turnkey School" project's master's program include an orientation towards a specific developmental project of an educational institution.

This orientation is evident through the following seven prerequisites as shown in Figure 1 that govern the organization of the educational process: First, teamwork in the mode of practice teaching allows you to create a full-fledged and stable social situation for the development of advanced pedagogical competencies. This is due to "giving obvious meaning to the educational process" (Verbitsky, 2021). At the same time, the student "directly penetrates the framework of his competence, participates in the functioning of the "working" profession, and understands its problems" (Verbitsky, 2021).

Second, constant external evaluation of the products (current and final) of the activities of the master's candidates by an independent expert community (customers). As future teachers progress toward the creation of the final "product," they undertake multiple projects, the results of which must undergo expert evaluation and legal protection. The panel of experts includes employers (such as the future school's director and the Department of Education and Science), representatives from the public, and the primary consumers, i.e., the students. The legally protected product encompasses collective and individual developments, including educational activity cases, additional education programs, and sociological monitoring, all of which are undertaken as part of the curriculum. Incorporating the format of "external expertise" into the training process creates an environment where future teachers develop the ability to present personal and team products to both specialized and non-specialized audiences. It also fosters a positive experience of innovative pedagogical activity, cultivates the willingness to conduct marketing analysis of various levels of pedagogical situations, and nurtures the capacity to manage dynamic work situations through the operational development of pedagogical projects within their subject and related specializations.

Third, planning the topics of the final thesis as components of a single comprehensive working pedagogical product. At the core of this product lies the complete package of course descriptions and study plans for the new school, which the master's candidates themselves develop as future consumers. This aspect of the degree program empowers students to actively manage the development of their own competencies, enabling them to plan their professional future within specific parameters. This includes determining the content of work situations, establishing reference groups, and independently designing school educational environments.

Fourth, reflection in the structure of disciplines and formats of the educational program of the ideology of the "life cycle" of the design object - the new school. This provision is implemented by building a curriculum in accordance with the stages of creating the main products (the course outlines, and study plans package) (see Figure 1). This creates conditions for future teachers to understand the "life cycle of the school" in the context of their personal professional influences on it. The theoretical study of the rules of the school's activities as a social institution in relation to the main trends in education and the analysis of the private social situation contributes to the theoretical study of the patterns of the school's activities as a social institution in relation to the main trends in education and the analysis of the particular social situation. In addition, the theoretical study of the patterns of the school's activities as a social institution in



relation to the main trends in education and the analysis of the particular social situation contributes to the formation of a "panoramic" (supra-situational) view of the future teachers on the possibilities of their own professional and personal growth. This view reflects the emergence of a new quality of thinking in the teacher - the ability to positively identify the imperfections of educational situations and the attitude to the search / invention for ways to improve them. During the practical implementation of the tasks of the curriculum, this ability is transformed into a willingness to designate and solve problems - the competence to manage changes in professional situations. Team forms of work get stronger and determine this pedagogical result.

Fifth, orientation of the educational plan to the "extended" professional standard (ensuring the formation of meta competences). This characteristic is expressed in the following fundamental attitudes of the education planning for the organization. Sixth, reliance in the content and technologies of teaching on new attitudes of pedagogical activity ("Presumption of acceptability"; "Dignity of distinction"; "Work in the space of opportunities"; "Reflection Together"; "Methodological variability"; "Contextual Interaction" (Avdeeva, 2016). These installations are mastered during facilitative special courses and training - within the framework of the variable part of the educational plan.

Seventh, developmental logic of projects (development projects, motivating, quasi-professional, professional). End-to-end project activity provides for consistent preparation and protection within the framework of strategic and foresight sessions of group and individual projects. It contains a) The draft project "School of the Future", in which future teachers develop the concept and roadmap for the development of a new school; b) Motivating projects, within the framework of which future teachers work out the skills of working on the formation of positive social attitudes in students, as well as the skills of persuasive speech influence; c) Quasi-professional projects in which future teachers implement the acquired knowledge of didactics in the practice of developing additional education programs for schoolchildren. The main feature of these projects is that their successful implementation is possible already at the basic level of professional methodological training, and the topic is formed based on personal preferences of the future teachers themselves. This supports the process of developing motivation for creative self-expression in professional activities ("fearless spontaneity of self-expression" – according to C. Rogers as explained in Moreira (1993); d) Professional projects, in the process of development and implementation of which future teachers test the acquired professional and meta-professional competencies; e) The sequence (developmental logic) of the projects corresponds to the psychological laws of the formation of personal neoplasms - in this case, professional and meta-competencies - within the framework of the phased implementation of the discussed methodology for training teachers; f) The characterized features of the educational process are reflected in the appropriate methodology for preparing a team for a new school, which includes changes to the curriculum and content of the educational program, introduction of new training technologies, including new formats of training communications, and integration of educational and extracurricular activities.

The methodology for training a team of teachers "Turnkey School" is based on the ideas of end-to-end project activity as a certain activity-content core, around which the entire educational process and ideas about the hierarchical structure of competencies of a graduate of the master's program are organized. An essential point of the training methodology is that as the team develops as an informal learning and developing community, its role in the formation of meta competences increases - by expanding the range of possibilities for implementing personal preferences in the solution. The meta competencies of the project participants, developing and complementing the complex of competencies presented governmental standards, include the following, 1) Logistics of individual educational trajectories; 2) Facilitation of positive personal changes; 3) Design of curricula and methods (including additional education, integrated with the disciplines of the basic curriculum of the school); 4) Design of working situations in conditions of uncertainty; 5) Marketing of professional educational products; 6) Free functioning in the digital environment. Digital mentoring.

For each of these meta-competencies, a description of its characteristics has been developed. The disciplines of the basic curriculum and the formats of project work, within the

framework of which the formation of appropriate competencies is ensured, have been determined. To objectively fix the process of formation of competencies, external markers of their manifestation in the teacher activities have been allocated and appropriate diagnostic maps of methodological control have been constructed.

Schematically, the methodology of training within the framework of the product master's program "Turnkey School" is presented in Figure 1.

Thus, the key features of the new methodology for training pedagogical personnel in the "Turnkey School" model (in contrast to the classical schemes) are the following, 1) The educational process includes new educational formats traditionally related to non-formal education: strategic and foresight sessions, cognitive and personal trainings, team building trainings, end-to-end project activities in the mode of sequential implementation of the project cycle (with mandatory implementation in basic school and with external examination of the results); 2) Training on the platform of the virtual professional community, director's laboratory etc; 3) The following key training modules are included in the curriculum; 4) An end-to-end two-year scientific seminar, the program of which is associated with the stages of preparation of the final product (package documents); 5) Thematic modules of the working program of the course, focused on the formation of meta competences; 6) Director's Laboratory. This module is implemented within the framework of the basic disciplines "Actual problems of science and education" and "Regulatory and legal foundations of modern education".

These disciplines are implemented in the mode of assistant practice, during which students, together with the director, form a document-package of a new school, in practice mastering the regulations of school documentation relating to both the formation of the school educational program and the organizational and legal support of the main school activities (for example, the pedagogical council, etc.). Training in the master's program on the "Turnkey School" model is being completed by defending the main "product" (the Basic Educational Program of the school) in front of independent professional experts. The expert commission includes representatives of the Department of Education and Science, the Institute for the Development of Education, the city parent association, (possible participation - online). The described model of the pedagogical master's degree program of the "Turnkey School" project is currently the subject of testing of the general concept of the "product" master's degree program implemented at SevSU. To date, three sets of pedagogical teams for new and renovated schools have been employed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The team model represents a highly promising format for the training of pedagogical personnel. It facilitates the systematic development of essential professional characteristics, including methodological variability, strategic thinking, and the ability to identify and redefine resources of varying levels and quality to address developmental challenges. Notably, during their master's degree program, students demonstrate certain personal outcomes resulting from team-based training. These outcomes include a deep personal engagement in school activities, coupled with a panoramic understanding of the school's potential and future directions. Furthermore, graduates exhibit swift and seamless adaptation to professional responsibilities and the capacity to leverage the resources of their reference group to manage changes at various levels (such as the class, parallel groups, stages, and the institution as a whole) and in diverse work situations. These characteristics, traditionally thought to develop over a long period of experience, enable graduates to enter the teaching profession swiftly and effectively, a crucial advantage in today's dynamically changing educational landscape.

The "product master's program" model of the "Turnkey School" project, designed to train teams tailored to the tasks and requirements of innovative institutional development, can be successfully implemented in other areas of social practice. By assembling a team of like-minded individuals equipped not only with professional competencies but also a comprehensive set of meta competencies necessary for integrated problem-solving at the strategic level, any organization can enhance its efficiency and competitiveness. Looking ahead, the "Turnkey School" project envisions the long-term outcomes of pedagogical teams, as well as the individual

career trajectories of its participants. From our perspective, the prospects of this project are highly promising.

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