

QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR ADULTS (A SOCIO-PEDAGOGICAL INTERPRETATION)

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Резюме. Quality and effectiveness are categories which have content and meaning of their own but they belong together. In educational practice, e.g. in vocational training for adults, the quality and effectiveness are interrelated. The effectively functioning organization delivers training of good quality. The article presents a socio-pedagogical (andragogical) interpretation of the training quality and effectiveness. Their presence or absence can be judged by the indicators which are grouped as follows: *training outcome; state of the process; training organization; innovation of training*. With a view to these characteristics the delivery of high-quality and effective training is a complex activity. This actually means achieving and maintaining a balance between the above mentioned indicators.

Keywords: quality of education and training, effectiveness of education and training, indicators for quality and effectiveness, factors for quality and effectiveness.

Introduction

Quality and effectiveness seem to be among the major theoretical and methodological issues in the field of vocational training of adults. Bulgaria's current experience has shown that the sole implementation of market principles and mechanisms in the field of education and training will not provide

a solution to the problems. International experience shows that high-grade vocational training of adults is ensured through systematic regulations and guarantees and through public – private partnerships, realized by governmental or non-governmental structures. In Bulgaria these structures are represented by special state bodies such as the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation in the field of Higher Education, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (responsible, in accordance with the Vocational Education and Training Act,¹⁾ for licensing vocational training centers and their curricula as well as for monitoring their activities), etc. Unfortunately, for the time being public – private partnership has not been developed in Bulgaria to the extent to which it can exert considerable influence on and control over the management of the organizations responsible for carrying out external evaluation of training quality. In accordance with their authorities, these organizations are accrediting, licensing, certifying and monitoring curricula and training activities as they are evaluating from the “outside” the capabilities of the institutions to deliver effective training of good quality. This is a significant part of management control function on the national and the regional level so called *external training quality evaluation*.

At the same time in more and more universities, colleges, centers for vocational training, socio-pedagogic and other institutions special structures are established for carrying out *internal quality evaluation*. They have the task to monitor “from the inside” the extent to which the criteria and indicators (standards) for quality and effectiveness of lecture courses, seminars, internships, etc. have been observed. Internal evaluation provides the opportunity for timely identification of any deviation from established standards, analyzing the reasons behind those deviations and making the necessary amends. Internal evaluation is of preventive nature and contributes to maintaining the achieved level of quality and effectiveness in the respective institution as well as for preventing problems that can lead to a withdrawal of accreditations or licenses. This is a part of management control function on the local level.

It seems that being relatively independent as systems and activities, the practices of internal and external evaluation are also closely interrelated. They complement each other in the overall process of managing the training quality and effectiveness.

For the last years efforts have been made in Bulgaria in the direction of reforming the system of education (including vocational adult training) as well as in the direction of ensuring the compliance of this system with EU standards, including the standards related to the quality and effectiveness.

training.²⁾ A number of initiatives have been undertaken (programs, projects, etc.) for the purpose of developing the practices of internal and external evaluation, improving the quality and enhancing the effectiveness. At this stage, however, no overall methodology has been developed for addressing the above mentioned issues which can be characterized by a high degree of social importance. The article shows some possibilities for development of this still missed methodology.

Defining Training Quality and Effectiveness

Quality and effectiveness are economic categories that have content and meaning of their own. The present article will not discuss in detail the issues and will use the following definitions: i) *effectiveness* measures or indicates the level to which training objectives have been met taking into account the resources, materials, time and efforts (human labor) used. In its essence the process of measuring the effectiveness is a process of comparing the outcomes achieved as a result of the training with its objectives and the resources used;³⁾ ii) *quality* is a concept with broader content and meaning. In economic terms, quality refers to the combination of properties and characteristics of a given product or service which determines its ability to satisfy customers' needs and expectations. In the field of education and in this particular case, quality can be defined as the level of correspondence between training as a whole, its separate components (curriculum, teaching, didactic tools, etc.), training outcomes and established standards, needs and expectations of its customers (Prokopenko, 1987, p. 230).

In practice it seems that the quality and effectiveness of training are interrelated. An effectively functioning organization delivers training of good quality. Effectiveness is a pre-condition and determines the quality of training. Along these lines, quality can be justified through effectiveness but quality is in the same time a real pre-condition and indication for effectiveness of the training.

The interrelations between quality and effectiveness can be observed in identifying their presence or absence. The presence or absence of quality and effectiveness can be judged by the indicators which can be grouped as follows: i) *training outcomes* corresponding to the specific needs of trainees (customers of the training). Training has to achieve its desired effect through developing the qualifications and competencies of trainees and through improving their abilities for social and professional adaptation and realization;

ii) *state of the process* corresponding to the conditions and requirements for delivering the respective type, level and form of training; iii) *training organization* corresponding to the conditions of the internal and external environment, to the main principles and requirements to the training system as a whole and to its individual components; iv) *innovation of training as a system and as a process* directed to developing, expanding and intensifying the training process through applying new methods, improving the equipment and facilities, organizing in a contemporary way.

With a view to the outlined characteristics, the delivery of high-quality and effective training is a complex activity. ⁴⁾ This actually means achieving and maintaining a balance between: the training outcomes, the state of the training process, the level of training organization and its innovation as a system and as a process (Table 1). Further down these four main groups will be discussed in detail as indicators and sub-indicators of the quality and effectiveness in the field of vocational training for adults.

Table 1. Indicators for quality and effectiveness of training

Training outcomes	State of the process	Training organization	Innovation of training
Satisfaction of the training needs	Training adaptability	Flexibility of training forms	Improving the organization of training
Durability and operability of knowledge and skills	Rhythmic of training	Interactivity of training methods	Intensifying the training process
Sustainable and strong motivation for learning and working	Creative nature of teaching	Effective implementation of didactic means (tools)	General (psycho-somatic) state of teachers (trainers)
Level of professional activity of trainees (performance of labor tasks)	Successfully learning		
General (psycho-somatic) state of trainees	Transition of training into self-training		

Indicators for Quality and Effectiveness of Training

Training Outcomes

Beyond doubt outcomes can be regarded as the main indicator for quality and effectiveness because they reflect the objective changes that have occurred in the overall preparation, motivation and behavior of trainees after they have completed the training. A training outcome refers not only to the knowledge and skills acquired by trainees during the training process, but also to the achievement of the necessary psycho-physiological state, motivation and readiness for work, professional improvement and social realization. The concept of "training outcomes" can be fully understood through the following sub-indicators:

Satisfaction of the training needs

This is the most important sub-indicator of this group. It is not by chance that in the UNESCO recommendations for the development of education and training the correspondence between training and trainees' needs has been identified as the most important principle.⁵⁾ An important indication of whether those needs have been satisfied is the ratio between those who started the training course and those who successfully completed it. A difference has to be made between two different types (levels) of needs: i) *general needs* which are included in the training objectives and reflect in an objective manner the knowledge, skills and other components that the respective target group needs and that lead to the respective vocational competence; ii) *individual needs* (of each single trainee) are identified by the trainers as a result of an initial test, interview or other methods of analysis, or are stated by the trainees and end-users before the actual start of the training.

The extent to which training has met the needs of trainees is determined on a differentiated principle through didactic control mechanisms: i) comparing exam results with the respective occupational standards and estimating the level of correspondence between them is a way of finding out whether the general needs reflected in the overall training objective have been satisfied; ii) questionnaires, monitoring and other suitable diagnostic forms provide means for identifying the extent to which the individual needs have been met. The results achieved on this level complement and specify the results achieved on the first level. Any contradictions that arise are indicative of the fact that training needs have not been determined or stated precisely.

Such inconsistencies are indicative of...
ing individual training needs, setting training objectives and...
have to be amended.

Durability and operability of knowledge and skills

This indicator covers the requirement for sustainable acquisition of knowledge and skills and their practical application. Durability and operability of knowledge and skills is ensured through high quality of teaching as well as of training as a whole.

Training is of good quality and effective only when continuous assessment results show that the acquired knowledge is durable and that on the basis of this knowledge the necessary skills have been developed. At the same time final exam results should be complemented and supported by continuous assessment results and should demonstrate full command of learning material and an established structure of the required competence. For the purpose of identifying the level of quality and effectiveness under this indicator as a follow-up the competencies of already trained people have to be evaluated some time after they have completed the training.

Sustainable and strong motivation for learning and working

Forming and developing motivation in trainees is an important function of every type of training, including the socio-pedagogical type. Motivation corresponds to the requirement for educating trainees in the process of training. The educational aspect of training is responsible for creating different attitudes, readiness and personal involvement in trainees all which should be regarded as extremely important due to the following reasons: i) overcoming difficulties, maintaining the rhythm of learning making progress in training; ii) further training, applying what has been learnt in practice and successful professional and personal realization development of training into self-training as well as continuing learning after the completion of the training.

That's why the level of motivation of learners is an important indicator for the quality and the effectiveness.

Level of professional activity of trainees

The measuring of professional activity shall not be mixed with economic indicators. For example, in the case of training oriented at acquiring a level of vocational qualification, the price of the product produced by the trainees for the period of training is of no importance.

What matters, however, is the quantity and quality of professional activity compared to the existing vocational standards and regulations for the respective professional activity.

This indicator is valid when the following requirements have been observed: healthy and safe working conditions, duration of study-working hours, use of resources and materials, appropriate exploitation of machines and instruments and other factors related to the quality of the workplace and the quality of professional activities.

General state of trainees

The general (psycho-somatic) state of trainees after the completion of the course is also an important indicator for quality and effectiveness. This indicator reflects the personal aspect of training. Each individual as somebody who possesses vocational competence is at the same time somebody who implements it in practice. That's why the feeling of each individual trainee after the completion of the training, his/her psycho-physical state and satisfaction shall not be underestimated. Training should contribute significantly to the professional, social and personal development of trainees. At the same time this indicator has another important aspect – certain psycho-physiological and personal qualities exert direct influence on the successful socialization and re-socialization in different fields – for example in the labor activities for many professions and specialties. After the completion of the training the qualities required for the specific profession have to be identified so that they can be further improved in the production process. This requirement is valid for all areas of public practice.

State of the training process

The state of the training process is an important indicator for quality and effectiveness. It can be judged by the presence or absence of four main characteristics (sub-indicators).

Training Adaptability

This characteristic reflects the need for meeting the main requirements related to the subject of training and the specificities of the target group. The state of the training process can be judged to a large extent by its adaptability, i.e. its full adaptation to the objective conditions, the subject of the training, the specificities of trainees and end-users along the following lines:

I) *As far as the subject of the training is concerned*, adaptability is expressed through flexible links. For example, in vocational and qualifica-

tion training this is the link between the training organizations and the users of the respective qualification – firms, enterprises, etc. For the purpose of establishing and maintaining this link the training organizations should implement the following activities:

- research the organization of production, newly introduced technologies and the level of their correspondence with the educational and qualification level of staff;
- identify in the appropriate way the training needs of the different staff categories ;
- keep a special card index of the staff with a view to carrying out systematic and timely training for expanding and improving the qualification in sequence and recurrence determined by the dynamics of training needs.

Training is not supposed to hinder production activities. It has to be delivered at a suitable time and in the right place.

II) *As far as trainees are concerned*, the adaptability of training is characterized by the lack of difficulties for trainees to perform many of their obligations – labor, family, social and other. Another important indication of adaptability is the accessibility of the training content and the implementation of the learning process without straining and overloading the trainees. In addition, the training procedures have to be successfully integrated into the complex of activities carried out, especially with disadvantaged or marginalized group of trainees – for the purposes of rehabilitation, re-socialization, etc. In this sense, training should support these activities and should contribute to the achievement of their objectives.

The quality and effectiveness according to this indicator should be measured through inquiry cards, monitoring and other methods and means.

Rhythmic of training

Rhythmic is an important indicator because it is related to time and time distribution within the curriculum. The success with which a curriculum has been implemented can be judged by learning outcomes (whether and to what extent they correspond to training objectives) as well as by the extent to which the temporal structure of training has been observed (lack of lagging behind in terms of acquisition of the training material as well as in terms of training sessions delivery, etc.). In this sense training rhythm can serve as a proof that training documentation reflects the actual training needs and that it complies with the specific training conditions and the abilities of trainees. In addition, the presence of rhythm is a proof that the training content is accessible; that the methodology used is of good quality and that the organiza-

tion of training is effective. In other words, rhythm is closely related to the other indicators for quality and effectiveness of training activities.

Creative nature of teaching

There is a direct link between the creative nature of training and its effectiveness which finds its expression in the two main training activities – teaching and learning. Nature and style of teaching – the creative style of teaching has to do with the implementation of active and interactive training forms, methods and means. It encourages the audience to be active and the trainees to think independently on the issues discussed.

Successful learning

They are preconditions that the trainers have created for quality and effectiveness of training have to be further developed in the process of learning. In practice it is very difficult to determine the borderline between teaching and learning because the two processes are dialectically linked. At the same time, active, conscious and creative learning is not only acquiring certain knowledge and skills and mechanical memorization. Creative learning is related to analyzing problems and tasks and finding solutions to those problems. The results that trainees have achieved in the field of employment, in the respective organizations, companies, enterprises as well as in other fields of life serve as a proof of high training results.

Transition of training into self-training

This indicator is closely linked to the previous indicator and is of significant importance to the state of the training process. It reflects the contemporary requirement that training should not only form the respective preparation, qualification and competence but should also develop trainees' skills to independently acquire new knowledge, skills and professional competencies, i.e. should direct them to active and conscious self-learning. The dynamic contemporary conditions put emphasis on lifelong learning. That's why throughout the training process, trainees should form attitudes, abilities and readiness to further improvement, training and personal development.

Training organization

The third group of indicators for determining the quality and effectiveness of training is related to the organization of training. By organization this case we understand a complex of training forms, methods and means that are

used by trainers for the purpose of creating a learning environment and establishing didactic relationships and interactions with trainees in implementing teaching and learning activities. As an indicator for quality and effectiveness the used forms, methods and means should correspond to contemporary conditions and requirements. Training adults is different from teaching and training children and youth. As a result, for the purpose of achieving quality and effectiveness an organization has to be applied that corresponds to the objective conditions and requirements of the representatives of the target group as well as of the end-users.

A number of sub-indicators can be differentiated in this group:

Flexibility of training forms

Flexibility is a contemporary requirement stemming from the assumption that each training should be adapted to a maximum degree to the actual abilities of the trainees, should not impede the performance of their daily tasks and should not create obstacles in front of their activities.

This indicator can be discussed from two different aspects:

a) Forms of organizing the learning environment

The use of training forms that create favorable training conditions and learning environment are indicative of the quality of training organization. The selected forms have to correspond to the requirements determined by the subject of the training, the level and specificities of the trainees, the preparation of trainers, the opportunities provided by the training facilities as well as other factors.

b) Forms of organizing the interaction between the participants in the training

(trainer-trainee; trainee-trainee; trainer-trainer).

The second important issue that relates to the organization of the training has to do with the way through which the necessary relationship between the participants in the training has been ensured. From the above-mentioned relationships the most important relationship is the one trainer-trainee. But, at the same time the importance of the relationships between trainees and trainers should not be underestimated.

Interactivity of training methods

The practical use of contemporary teaching and learning methods that ensure the synergy between the participants in the training, i.e. interactive training methods, is of significant importance to achieving training quality and effectiveness. By interactivity we understand the opportunity for an ac-

tive, targeted and useful interaction between trainers and trainees through appropriate selection and creative application of each single training method. The applicability of the separate methods depends on a large number of conditions: the specificities of the training area, training organization, level of trainees, etc.

That's why for the purpose of achieving quality and effectiveness under this indicator, the training methods have to be understood and applied in a creative manner and have to take into account the specific conditions and opportunities.

Effective implementation of didactic means (tools)

The use of contemporary training means (video, multimedia, computers, etc.) has to be regarded in close relation to the training methods. In this sense, the presence of such means in socio-pedagogic institutions is not that important. What is more important for the purpose of achieving quality and effectiveness is the provision of the training institutions with tapes, CDs, diskettes, access to the Internet and other factors that ensure the successful use of the contemporary training means. Didactic means are effective when they create positive socio-didactic effect and when their use takes into account the actual need of those means in the context of the specific conditions and requirements of training.

The same didactic means have different effectiveness depending on their correspondence to: the required objectives, the level of trainees, the preparation of trainers, the type of the training session, etc.

Innovation of training (as a system and as a process)

This is an important indicator for the quality and effectiveness of training and qualification activities which can be discussed in the terms of three sub-indicators:

Improving the organization of training

For the purpose of achieving and maintaining a high level of quality and effectiveness training forms, methods and means (training tools) and their implementation in practice should be improved. Quality and effectiveness can be evaluated by this indicator through monitoring and analyzing training forms, methods and means and the ways in which they are implemented in practice by trainers. It is normal for the analyses to show that in the course

of the training its organization has been improved. In practice, trainers need to look for, find and realize in practice unused opportunities for improving their work.

Intensifying the training process

This indicator is close to the previous one and its importance lies in the saving of training time which is a precondition for the realization of other types of savings.

Quality and effectiveness under this indicator should be regarded in two main directions:

a) *Realizing savings of training time* for one course, seminar or other form of training. The duration of the training should not be limited but the waste of training time should be avoided and good use of time through activities that facilitate the achievement of outputs and competence that meet the required standards has to be made.

b) *Limiting the waste of training time as a sustainable tendency.* In quality and effective implementing of socio-pedagogical courses, seminars and other training forms a sustainable tendency has to be outlined for more rational use of training time. For example after a cycle of courses the need should be realized for improving the indicators related to time and the structure of the training documentation for those courses.

General state of trainers

An important characteristic for the quality and effectiveness of training as a system and as a process is the overall condition of the trainers who, compared to the trainees, comprise a constant component of the training system. Whereas the trainees enter the system with a specific level of preparation which they raise, complement or change in the process of training and then leave the system, the trainers remain within the system. That's why the reflection of the completed training on the motivation of trainers and their attitude to the next training is of essential importance.

As far as this indicator is concerned, the presence of quality and effectiveness is characterized by satisfaction on the part of trainers from their work, with self-esteem and consciousness about the social importance of what they are doing, with satisfaction from the conditions and the incentives they get.

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Factors for quality and effectiveness

The criteria and indicators discussed reveal some of the main conditions and preconditions, i.e. factors, for implementing in practice the necessary level of quality and effectiveness in the field of education and training. The familiarity with these factors, their interdependence, characteristics and activity will allow trainers to organize their activities in such a way as to create the necessary training effects.

According to the strength of their action the factors can be divided in two groups (Table 2) as follows:

Factors of decisive importance for the quality and effectiveness

Involvement of the managing staff in quality and effectiveness issues

This involvement can be regarded in a broad and in a narrow sense as follows: i) in a broad sense, we are talking about the overall hierarchical management structure in the field of vocational training of adults which is supposed to create, approve and increase the training standards and requirements on all levels, to take the responsibility for the development of quality and effectiveness control systems, to improve the structures and links within the socio-pedagogical system, etc; ii) in a narrow sense, we are talking about the institutional management, namely rectors, deans, managers of research institutes, schools, vocational training centers, etc., which are supposed to be directly responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the training in the institutions they are managing. The presence of a person from the management who is responsible for quality, the presence of a system for internal control, the regular scheduling of meetings at which quality issues are discussed and meetings with the training staff are indicative of the fact that quality is taken into consideration in the respective institution.

Preparation of trainers

This factor is of primary importance. It relates mainly to the consistent socio-pedagogical preparation and competence of trainers and their skills to provide training under specific circumstances determined by the

trainees, the subject of the training, the learning environment, etc. It is important that the trainers are computer literate, familiar with the problems of quality and effectiveness of training able to use successfully the socio-pedagogic effects.

The collective concept of “trainers” includes not only trainers which are responsible for the actual delivery of the training but also organizers, methodologist, social workers and other people involved in the training process. All those people have to be well trained not only to be able to perform specific tasks on the workplace. They should be prepared to work in a team, to be flexible and to able to adapt to changes. The preparation of trainers exerts influence on training activities, on their scope, content and management. In the cases when the managers, the experts and the trainers do not have the required preparation (professional and methodological) they won't be able to perform their functions in the right way which will exert impact on the quality and effectiveness of training.

The current practice analysis shows that the lack of a sufficient number of trainers with professional socio-pedagogic preparation is one of the main reasons for the stills insufficient results in the field of training as well as for the relatively low level of quality and effectiveness in some cases. The importance of a preparation of this kind for the trainers is decisive for achieving the expected level of quality and effectiveness of socio-pedagogical activity.

The number of specialists in the field of social pedagogy who have graduated higher education in Bulgaria is still insufficient due to which there are trainers who do not have the necessary preparation. At the same time not enough efforts have been made in the direction of profiling the trainers and familiarizing them with the international best practices.

The importance of the factor “preparation of trainers” requires serious measures to be taken for its provision.

Orientation to trainees

The orientation of the respective institution to trainees exerts considerable impact as a factor for quality and effectiveness. The presence of this factor can be judged by the attitude of the administrative staff towards trainees as clients of the organization. Trainees are at the core of the training and they have to be regarded as the most important people in the organization. In this way favorable conditions are created for learning and development

of trainees, for high achievements on their part and respectively for good quality and effectiveness of the training process. The selection of trainees is becoming more and more important, i.e. the training process should involve people who have attained the required level of preparation and meet the specific for each training "entrance" requirements and standards. If this condition is observed, preconditions are created for improving the quality and effectiveness in the training process as well as for realizing savings in terms of time, efforts, etc.

The selection of participants has to include a process of determining their individual abilities through the use of tests, interviews, document analysis and other methods. The preliminary selection allows for differentiated training to be delivered as well as for an individual approach to be applied which further contributes to increasing the level of quality and effectiveness of training.

Training documentation

The training documentation (curriculum and syllabus) is an important component of the training system. It determines the objectives of the training, the training content and its structure, the time of the training and the methodology. That's why the quality of the training documentation is a precondition for achieving high quality and effectiveness.

According to Bulgarian and international experience, flexible and modular curricula have to be developed.⁶⁾ These curricula can be updated in accordance with the developments in the respective field and can be applied in all types of conditions and requirements of socio-pedagogical practice.

Table 2. Factors for Quality and Effectiveness of Training

Decisive factors	Assisting factors
<i>Involvement of managing staff</i>	<i>Training facilities</i>
<i>Preparation of trainers</i>	<i>Administrative services</i>
<i>Orientation to trainees</i>	<i>Number of trainers</i>
<i>Training documentation</i>	<i>Rhetorical skills</i>
<i>Encouraging both trainees and trainers</i>	<i>Others</i>

Encouraging both trainees and trainers

This is the third personal factor for improving the level of quality and effectiveness. Its importance is determined by the circumstance that training requires active, conscious and targeted activities on the part of trainers and trainees which depend on the presence of strong and sustainable motivation. Motivation is necessary for overcoming the difficulties in the socio-pedagogic process, for taking the necessary steps to accept the limitations imposed by training. In other words, strong motivation can be achieved through the use of a complex of well-selected stimuli as follows:

a) *Encouraging trainers.* The importance of encouraging the trainers as a factor for quality and effectiveness objectively imposes the implementation of a new approach corresponding to both the social and the market character of the socio-pedagogic services. Competition arises in the market conditions both between the training units and between trainers who aim at delivering training and related research and consultancy services with high quality. Their remuneration has to be linked to the quality of training and its outcomes, to encourage trainers to invest in improving their personal qualification, and to apply effective approaches to organizational activities, realizing economies, etc.

b) *Encouraging trainees.* As a bilateral process training requires the participation and partnership between trainers and trainees. In this sense, quality and effectiveness depend on the successful interaction between trainers and trainees. This means that both trainers and trainees have to be encouraged through explaining the objectives of the training, its practical use, making reference to trainees' achievements, etc.

Assisting Factors for quality and effectiveness

Training facilities

The concept of training facilities refers to a complex of didactic means: basic equipment and facilities such as buildings and terrains, rehabilitation equipment, etc.; assisting equipment such as computers, multimedia, instruments, training devices, materials, etc.; forms of presenting the training content – training materials, video and audio cassettes, software, schemes, models, etc.

Each one of the above listed didactic means has its place and importance in the activities of trainers and the trainees as subjects of the training process and exerts direct influence on the quality and effectiveness of training. That's why the level of didactic means and the overall condition of facilities and equipment can be determined as an assisting factor for quality.

Training facilities and equipment that comply with contemporary requirements, including the number of computers, make people more effective and the training more intensive. They exert a complex impact on the personality of both the trainers and the trainees. That's why the opportunities provided by the equipment and facilities have to be used in an efficient way.

The contemporary tendencies in the development of education show that the importance of training equipment and facilities will be growing in the future. A gradual transition is being implemented from training systems with two active components (trainer-trainee) to training systems with three active components (trainer – trainee – training computer complex). The training computer complex can perform a large part of the functions of trainers without totally displacing them from the training process.

This tendency determines the growing role of the training facilities as a factor which after a period of time will have a decisive importance for achieving quality and effectiveness, i.e. will become one of the factors from the first group of decisive factors.

Administrative services

Together with the main training activities with the framework of one course of training for vocational qualification, several overlapping activities related to the administrative services provided to trainees are taking place. These activities cover a broad range of needs that arise in the process of contemporary training: qualified administrative staff within the training center, modern contemporary accommodation; maintenance of facilities and equipment; library and copying center; phone and fax lines, mail and transportation services; medical care services; internal rules regulating the obligations of the participants in the training, etc.

Ensuring the above mentioned conditions facilitates to a great extent the activities of the participants in the training, exerts influence on their effectiveness and contributes to improving the level of quality and effectiveness.

Number of trainees

The traditional training systems regarded the number of trainees is an important factor. This can be explained through the limited psycho-physiological capacity of the trainer to provide training for a large number of

trainees. That's why as a general practice the number of trainees in training groups or courses is limited.

In the history of education different attempts have been made for overcoming this problem (Bell-Lancaster system and others). These attempts, however, have not lead to a sustainable increase in the level of quality and effectiveness.

New conditions were created with the introduction of contemporary training systems and means oriented to increasing the activity rate and the share of independent activities of trainees in the frame of total training time. Flexible forms, methods and effective computer and multimedia means were introduced for training and control purposes.

The research done in implementing such systems (for example the modular system and distance training) shows that the number of trainees per one trainer is increasing or decreasing within a wide range without this exerting considerable influence on quality or effectiveness.

Trainer's rhetorical skills

In the thousand-year old history of education, the ability of trainers to talk in front of an audience as well as to engage the attention of the trainees with the appropriate intonation, gestures and other means, was of significant importance for achieving high results.

The contemporary development of education, and more specifically it computerization, has created new conditions for teaching and has directed its functions and tasks mainly to managing trainees' independent learning activities. The traditional lectures and the teaching of new lessons have been limited and replaced by active learning forms – self-preparation with programmed texts related to consultations, discussion of problems, seminars, etc. In these conditions some changes have occurred in the training provided by trainers and as a result new requirements have arisen related to the preparation and qualities of trainers. Without denying or underestimating rhetorical skills, it has to be admitted that they are not very relevant to successful training in the new conditions, their influence and action as a factor for quality and effectiveness has decreased. Rhetorical skills have to be included in the preparation and improvement of trainers but in a way that corresponds to the needs of contemporary training. These skills can be regarded as complementing the overall teaching skills in active and interactive training forms.

Others

There are some others factors – systematic study of the economy and labor market needs, elaboration of national vocational qualifications, standards, transparency etc. which can support or dominate to a great extent the action of the rest and above mentioned factors.⁷⁾

Conclusion

The socio-pedagogical interpretation of the training quality and effectiveness problem is of practical importance and has to be researched further. In practice, the present paper can be used on two levels: *On the micro level* the structure of interrelated and interdependent indicators allows for each training organization to develop its own methodological instruments for managing quality and effectiveness. These instruments have to take into account the specificities of the training as well as the specific standards in the respective professional field. The development and use of these instruments will facilitate the implementation of effective approaches in practice and will contribute to increasing the level of competitiveness of those organizations on the market of training and consultancy services; *On the macro level* the present paper can support the implementation of the functions of the governmental and non-governmental organization responsible for the development of training activities. For the purpose of providing and ensuring the quality and effectiveness of training a complex approach is needed, including licensing of training institutions and carrying out systematic control (internal and external evaluation). In this relation some considerable progress has been made through the new legislation and through the projects aimed improving different aspects of the socio-pedagogical work.

The reforms in the field of education, the labor market and the social area in Bulgaria have to continue being implemented even more actively. The conditions for meeting EU standards can be ensured only through coordinated activities of the institutions responsible for development of different sectors. At this stage, however, a methodology for quality and effectiveness assessment of the training activities should be developed. This is a question which can be characterized by a high degree of social importance.

Notes

¹ Закон за професионалното образование и обучение. ДВ, бр. 68 от 30.07.1999 г. http://www.minedu.government.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/documents/law/zkn_prof_obucenieEU.pdf

² cf. Българското професионално образование с европейски стандарти. Проект „УПОО“ Министерство на образованието и науката, 1999 и Оценка на сектора за професионално образование и обучение по отношение на Acquis communautaire (работен документ на Европейската фондация за обучение), София, 1999.

³ *Glossary of labor market and curriculum development terms.* (1997). Turin: European Training Foundation.

⁴ Katansky, C., Delibasheva, A. & Penkova, D. (1999). Active policy at the labor market aimed at employment promotion and human resource development (p. 5–63) In: *Reports, articles, views* No. 10 of the Bulgarian National Observatory.

⁵ Hamburger Deklaration zum Lernen im Erwachsenenalter, Agenda für Zukunft, Fünfte Internationale Konferenz über Erwachsenenbildung, Hamburg, UNESCO, 1997.

⁶ Катански, Ч. (1997). Продължаващото професионално обучение в България (с. 31–39). В: *Доклади, статии, мнения* № 2 на Българската национална обсерватория.

⁷ Катански, Ч. & Доброславска, Л. (1998). Продължаващото професионално обучение в България. (с. 4–32). В: *Доклади, статии, мнения* № 6 на Българската национална обсерватория.

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