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**Experience in teaching the course  
“Theory and Methodology of Education”  
at the Rivne State Humanitarian University (Ukraine):  
good practices and challenges**

**Doświadczenia w nauczaniu kursu „Teoria i Metodyka Wychowania”  
w Państwowym Uniwersytecie Humanitarnym w Równem (Ukraina):  
dobre praktyki oraz wyzwania**

**Abstract.** Reforming the system of higher education in Ukraine has set requirements for changes in approaches, paradigms, content and forms of work with students, including pedagogical specialties. Forced changes in the teaching of future teachers took place during the Covid-2019 pandemic, and later during the full-scale war in Ukraine, which was launched by Russia in 2022. The authors of this study have analyzed the educational programmes of twelve Ukrainian pedagogical universities. The purpose and tasks of the «Theory and Methodology of Education» course are outlined, and the positive experience of its teaching at the Rivne State Humanitarian University is characterized. The challenges facing pedagogical universities today regarding the preservation and updating of the analyzed course are outlined. For this purpose, a survey was conducted among students – future teachers. The

paper presents the results of a pilot study to be continued in 2024/2025 at the level of state pedagogical universities in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** education reform, theory of education, competences, educational programme, quality of learning results.

**Introduction.** The reform and modernization of the higher education system in Ukraine, the entry into the Bologna process led to significant changes in Ukrainian higher education, such as: adoption of the European format of diplomas, degrees and qualifications; introduction of a two-level structure of higher education (bachelor's degree and master's degree); the use of a single system of credit units (ECTS – European Credit Transfer System) and annexes to diplomas of the European model; European quality standards of learning outcomes, etc. Therefore, higher education in Ukraine faced the task of developing and introducing professional standards as a basis for modernizing state educational standards with the aim of improving the quality of the professional education content and bringing it into line with the requirements of employers (Karpenko, 2005).

**The purpose of the article** is to present the results of a pilot study on the place of the course “Theory and Methodology of Education” in the system of future teachers training in Ukraine. To describe positive experiences and challenges in teaching the course on the example of Rivne State Humanitarian Pedagogical University.

**Basic content.** Today, the following standards of higher pedagogical education at the bachelor's level have been approved in Ukraine: 012 – Pre-school education, 013 – Primary education, 015 – Professional education, 016 – Special education (Zatverdzheni standarty vyshchoi osvity Ukrainy, 2024); the project of the higher education standard in the specialty 014 – Secondary education (by subject specialties) was presented for discussion<sup>1</sup>.

In the state standard of higher pedagogical education at the bachelor's level 013 Elementary education, the description of the subject area provides for «mastery of the theoretical and practical principles of the learning process, upbringing and development of younger students in the conditions of

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine proposes a proposal for a high school standard project 014 «Serednia osvita» at the first (baccalaureate) level of higher education from <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/mon-proponuye-do-gromadskogo-obgovorennya-proyekt-standartu-vishoyi-osviti-zi-specialnosti-014-serednya-osvita-na-pershomu-bakalavrskomu-rivni-vishoyi-osviti>

the elementary school educational environment» (Standart vyshchoi osvity 013 Pochatkova osvita, 2021, p. 6). Special competences, in turn, provide for the formation of «The ability to design centers of learning, upbringing and development of primary education recipients» (SK 5) (2021, p. 8).

In the project of the State Standard of Higher Education in the specialty 014 «Secondary Education» the professional competence common to all teachers is defined FC 3. The ability to set goals, plan and design the processes of teaching and upbringing students, taking into account their age and individual characteristics, educational needs and opportunities. To select and apply effective methods and technologies of teaching, education and development of students, learning outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

The reform of general secondary education initiated in the context of the «New Ukrainian School» (NUS) Concept prompts institutions of Higher Pedagogical Education (HPE) to shift their emphasis from a knowledge-based to a competency-based paradigm. To a large extent, changes in approaches and paradigms were implemented at NUS with the support of Finnish educators (Kosenchuk, Androshchuk, Bakhmat and Kosenchuk, 2023). The success of the implementation of the NUS Concept depends on the level of competence of the teacher, which, in turn, requires special attention to the subjects of the pedagogical cycle in the process of his preparation. The competencies that the teacher must possess are contained in the State Standard for the «Teacher» profession (Avsheniuk, Androshchuk, Hrynewych, Linnik, Sofij and Ivashniova, 2021). Compilers of educational programmes of pedagogical specialties focus on the list and description of competencies listed in the specified professional standard.

The subjects of the pedagogical cycle of Ukrainian universities include «Pedagogy», «History of pedagogy», «Theory and methods of education», «Pedagogical mastery», «Pedagogical creativity», «Ethnopedagogy», «Inclusive pedagogy», pedagogical practice, elective courses and others. Lets analyze how exactly the above courses are implemented by teachers of pedagogical universities of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, we did not manage to systematize information about all the active Educational Programs (EP) in higher educational institutions of pedagogical approach, since at the current stage of the development of higher education in Ukraine, in the conditions of increased autonomy of higher education institutions, there are no mandatory standard curricula. We conducted an analysis of the EP for the training of teachers of the

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<sup>2</sup> Just there.

following universities: Donbas State Pedagogical University, Ivan Franko Drogobych State Pedagogical University, Mykhailo Kotsiubinsky Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Ivan Franko Zhytomyr State University, Boris Grinchenko Kyiv University, V. G. Korolenko Poltava National Pedagogical University, Rivne State Humanitarian University (RSTU), Mykhailo Drahomanov Ukrainian State University, Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, Volodymyr Hnatyuk Ternopil National Pedagogical University, H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University.

Practically in each of the EP, among the mandatory educational components there are educational courses that provide for the formation of the professional competence of the education students; increasing the level of methodical training. Modern institutions of higher pedagogical education in Ukraine, especially now, in the conditions of a full-scale war between Russia and Ukraine, face the task of training not just a teacher, but an educator, a coach, a facilitator, a moderator, a person who has a high national consciousness *Theory and Methodology of Education* (Soichuk, Petrenko, Budz, Pustovit and Pavelkiv, 2022).

The analysis carried out showed that the course «Theory and Methodology of Education» today has somewhat different, but similar names: «Theory and Practice of Education», «Theory and Methodology of Educational Work», «Theory of Education», «Methodology of Educational Work», etc. As a rule, these courses are taught in 2-3 courses.

Particular attention is drawn to the fact of the different amount of study hours of the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education», as well as the heterogeneity of the course structure. Lectures are found in plans from 10 to 50 hours, seminar-practical classes – from 8 up to 36 hours, and laboratory, as well as seminar-practical, do not always appear in the curriculum. Such an imbalance in the volume and structure of study time and the forms of conducting classes indicates that the content is not clearly defined and justified, and the variety of methodological support for teaching the course is insufficient. Our analysis of subject syllabuses on the websites of leading higher education institutions of Ukraine shows that the academic course, as a rule, has two content modules, the content of which is consistent in almost all programmes.

Practically all syllabuses, among the basic literature, include programmes, textbooks and manuals authored by Rivne professors T. Demianiuk and S. Karpenchuk (Demianiuk, 2000a, 2000b, 2004b; Karpenchuk,

2005). This is logical, because since 1995 the only Department of Theory and Methodology of Education has been operating in the RSHU.

In particular, Professor S. Karpenchuk developed the course programme «Methodology of educational work» (Karpenchuk, 1993), which was approved and published by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (1993), compiled the first textbook in Ukraine «Theory and methodology of education» (1997), the experimental programme «Theory of Education» (2004).

In turn, Professor T. Demyaniuk was one of the first Ukrainian teachers who not only supported the European system of credit-modular education, but also tested this theory in the practice of teaching the courses «Theory and Methodology of Education», «Methodology of Education» and in the work of the Department of Theory and Methodology of Education of RSHU as its head (Polishchuk, 2019, p. 11–15.). She first developed the course, and later the educational manual «Theory of Education» (Demyaniuk, 2004b), as well as the programme of the course «Methodology of Education» based on the credit-module system of education (2004a).

We characterize the experience of teaching the course «Theory and Methodology of Education» at the RSHU. At the specified university, the educational course «Theory and methods of education» is taught in the specialties 013 Primary education, 014 Secondary education (by subject specialties), 015 Professional education (by specializations), 023 Fine arts, decorative arts, restoration, 024 Choreography, 025 Musical arts, 053 Psychology; 053 Practical psychology.

For example, in the educational and professional programme «Primary Education» future teachers of primary classes are taught the subject «Theory and Methodology of Education» as a mandatory component. The number of hours allotted by the initial plan for studying the course is 150 hours (5 ECTS credits), of which 20 hours are lectures, 16 hours practical, 24 hours – laboratory classes, 90 hours are allocated for independent work. The study of the course ends with an exam (Osvitno-profesiina prohrama «Pochatkova osvita», 2023). The work programme of the academic course is updated annually. The syllabus of the course is posted on the website of the Department of Theory and Methodology of Education of RSHU (Teoriia i metodyka vykhovannia. Syllabus, 2023).

**The purpose of teaching the academic course** – to form a system of knowledge of the educational course among students of higher education, to ensure their mastery of educational methods and technologies, to provide professional training for work in a secondary education institution.

The content of the educational course is divided into **two content modules**:

**1. Theoretical foundations of education** (The essence of the education process, its specifics, structural elements and driving forces; Laws, principles and new approaches in education; General methods of education, their classification and characteristics; Forms and means of education, their classification and characteristics; Content and priority directions of education in a modern institution of general secondary education: mental, moral, ecological, labour, economic; National-patriotic and civic education: essence, forms and methods.

**2. Methodology of education in modern school** (Class management in the education system. Planning educational work with younger schoolchildren; Methodology of work of primary school teachers to prevent delinquency by younger schoolchildren; Methodology of work of primary school teachers with parents; Out-of-school education and upbringing. Methodology of organizing educational work in children's associations by interests). Students of higher education do coursework in the field of study.

In specialties 014, 015, 023, 024, 025, 053, the content module «Theory and Methodology of Education» is included in the mandatory component «Pedagogy» with a different number of hours in different specialties and ends with a test/examination. All educational and methodological materials for the courses are posted on the website of the department (Navchalno-metodychne zabezpechennia, 2022). The process of studying the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education» is aimed at the development of certain competences in students: integral, general, professional. In addition, studying the course involves the development of programme learning outcomes for future teachers, which is reflected in the work programmes of the course (2022).

The realization of the goal, the tasks of the educational course, the development of competences and programme learning results takes place in lectures, practical and laboratory classes, in the process of independent work of higher education students. During the teaching of the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education», teachers of the Department of Theory and Methodology of Education of RSHU not only use traditional methods, but also introduce known innovative technologies into teaching practice (interactive, problem-searching, interpretive-analytical, information-communication, etc.).

When teaching the «Theory and Methodology of Education» course, the traditional form of education in higher education institutions – the lecture

– contains significant potential for achieving the set goal. Note that all course lectures are conducted interactively. At the very first lecture, students receive questions for the exam/test, a list of individual and independent tasks. In practical and laboratory classes, we widely use interactive teaching methods, in particular, the «case study» (case method), which plays an important role in activating the learning process of students, bringing them closer to the real practice of education.

The use of simulation game technologies is effective, because during their implementation at least three important tasks of professional training of future teachers are ensured: optimization of creative thinking; development of professional skills and modeling of practical professional activity. The mentioned and other active and interactive teaching methods in the process of training future teachers are thoroughly described by Professor Boguslaw Sliverski, a well-known Polish scientist (2022).

At the RSHU, the game «Defense of the scenario of an educational event» takes place quite emotionally, in which future teachers learn not only to publicly present their own work, but also learn to correctly evaluate the work of their classmates, learn to work in a team, learn to choose, because the game is freedom of choice.

The educational course also includes the implementation of individual research tasks (IRT). We offer, in particular, the following tasks: turn to the sources of Ukrainian folk pedagogy and analyze to what extent the wealth of universal and national moral and spiritual values is accumulated in them; withreturn to the work of V. Sukhomlynskyi «Parental pedagogy» and write down the teacher's reasoning about the peculiarities of family education.

During the last four years of distance and mixed learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine, we have been practicing the use of information technology. When teaching a subject, modern means of multimedia learning technologies are irreplaceable. They contribute to the improvement and diversification of the activity of the teacher and student, increase the productivity of the educational process. To organize the study of theoretical material in lecture classes on the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education», we use presentations created with the help of the PowerPoint programme, video recordings for better perception of information and its logical systematization (Petrenko, Tsipan, Stelmashuk, Hrynkova and Balika, 2020).

The level of assimilation of the necessary material by students of higher education is checked with the help of control tests both for each module and for the course as a whole. It should be noted that the analysis of the success

rate of students from the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education» over the past three years shows that, on average, the quantitative success rate is 96 – 100%, the qualitative success rate ranges from 56% to 78%, depending on the specialty. Moreover, in the last three years, the results are somewhat worse than five years ago, which we explain by distance learning, a significant number of students who migrated to other countries, combine it with studying in other institutions, with work, etc. In general, the same trends are clearly demonstrated by the results of a survey of higher education students at RSHU regarding the organization of the educational process in the conditions of war (Resultaty opytuvannia 2022/2023).

In order to carry out an objective analysis of the state of the educational course teaching «Theory and Methodology of Education» and its methodical support, in December 2023 we conducted a survey of students of higher education at RSHU who studied the course in the fall semester of 2023 – 2024. 66 respondents – second and third-year bachelor's students – completed the survey through the Google form. The research was conducted on the basis of a specially developed questionnaire of 8 questions, of which six were closed questions, the answers to which required the choice of one of the proposed options, and two multiple choice questions (Opytuvalnyk «Teoriia i metodyka vykhovannia», 2023).

This is a pilot study that will continue in the 2024/2025 academic year at the state level. Processing and analysis of the questionnaire results allowed for certain generalizations. To the first question about the need to study the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education», 62 students answered positively, and only 4 do not consider studying this course necessary (Figure 1).



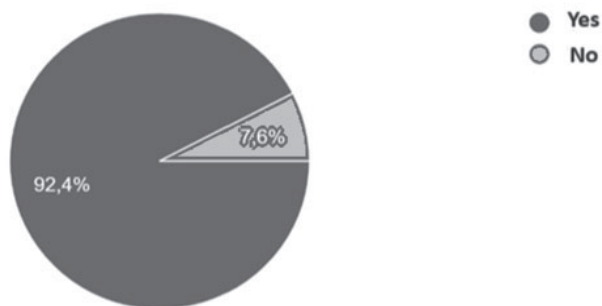
**Figure 1.** Display of answers to questions about the expediency of studying the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education».

The answers to the second question showed that 63 students out of 66 respondents were satisfied with the content of the «Theory and Methodology of Education» course (Figure 2).



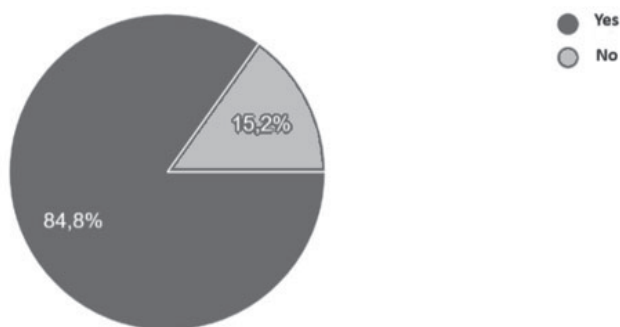
**Figure 2.** Displaying answers to questions about satisfaction with the content of the «Theory and Methodology of Education» course.

It is good that almost 94% of applicants consider the «Theory and Methodology of Education» course necessary for the effective training of a modern professional teacher, while only 3 applicants are not satisfied with the content of the course. At the same time, 61 applicants (92.4%) confirmed their satisfaction with the state of the educational course teaching «Theory and Methodology of Education» (Figure 3).



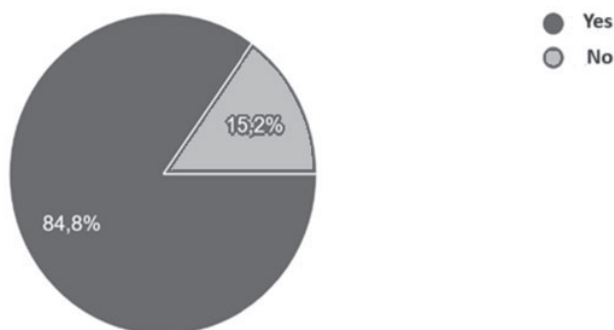
**Figure 3.** Display of answers to questions about satisfaction with the state of teaching the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education».

As for the number of hours for studying the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education», 56 students (84.8%) are satisfied with the number of hours allocated, and 10 people (15.2%) disagreed with the proposed statement (Figure 4).



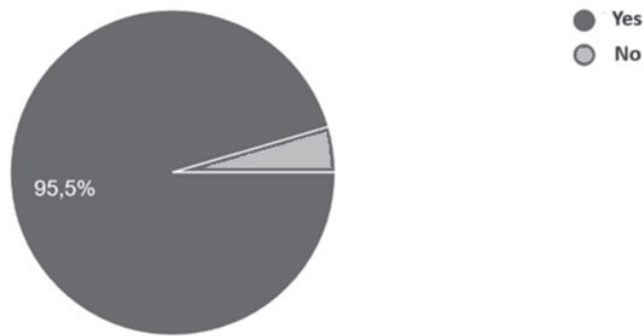
**Figure 4.** Display of answers to questions about the sufficiency of the number of hours allocated to the study of the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education».

It should be noted that 56 students (84.8%) who studied the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education» noted that they felt supported by the teacher while studying the course (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Display answers to questions about support from the teacher during the study of the course.

It is positive that 63 applicants noted that during the study of the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education» they received the necessary competences for practical work in educational institutions (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Display of answers to questions about providing the necessary competences for practical work in educational institutions during course study.

The applicants' answers to the question of what difficulties they encountered during the course were distributed as follows: a large amount of independent work – 31.8%; lack of sufficient feedback from the teacher – 9.1%; lack of sufficient methodological support – 10.6%; untimely informing about the content of the course – 4.5%; limited access to course materials – 3%; lack of electricity, Internet – 16.7%; air raid alert – 37.9%; a large volume of tasks – 31.8%; inflated requirements for education seekers – 16.7%; no difficulties – 27.3%; other – 15.2%. In general, the highest percentage fell on positions related to air raid alerts, a large amount of independent work from the course, a large amount of tasks (37.9%; 31.8%; 31.8%, respectively). At the same time, 18 respondents (27.3%) claim that they did not experience difficulties while studying the course.

We consider it positive that only two applicants reported limited access to the course materials and 3 people noted untimely information about the content of the course, which can be explained by the absence of the applicants themselves at the classes. It is also positive that only 6 applicants consider the feedback from the teacher to be insufficient and 7 applicants consider the methodological support of the course to be insufficient (Figure 7).

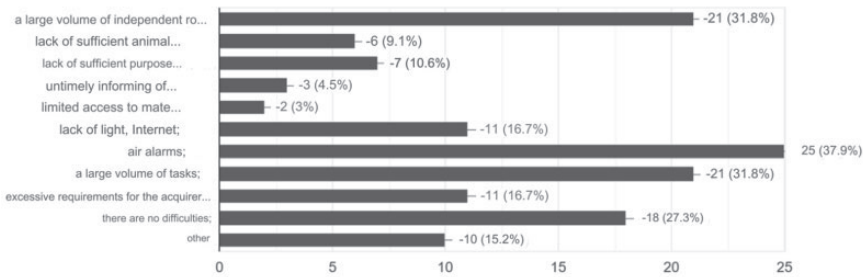


Figure 7. Displaying answers to questions about difficulties while studying the course.

Among measures to improve the teaching of this course, 23.3% of applicants consider it necessary to bring its content in line with the modern level of scientific knowledge, as well as to update and improve its content; 26.7% – to prepare a new generation of educational and methodical literature; 43.3% of applicants suggest improving the equipment of the course with modern technical means; 21.7% of applicants propose to develop and implement training technologies specific to this course; 30% – to strengthen its role in the system of pedagogical practice and increase the number of classroom hours for its study; 10% of applicants offer to increase the number of hours for independent work; and 5% of respondents indicate the need to improve the qualifications of teachers of this course (Figure 8).

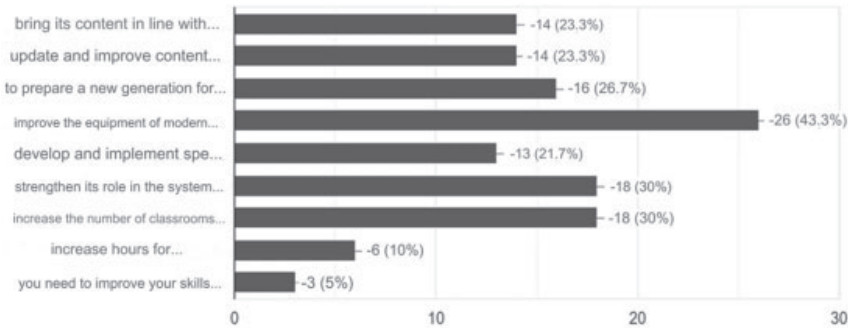


Figure 8. Display of answers to questions about the possibility of improving the teaching of the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education».

We explain the last indicator by the fact that individual laboratory classes in groups were conducted by master's and postgraduate students who were undergoing industrial (pedagogical) practice.

The conducted analysis gives reasons to assert that at the end of studying the educational course «Theory and Methodology of Education», future teachers not only demonstrate the formed competences (integral, general and special) and programme learning results, but also improve the skills of analysis, evaluation and the ability to express constructive wishes, which indicates that they have developed soft skills.

**Conclusions and prospects for further investigations.** The analysis of the experience of teaching the course “Theory and Methods of Education” gives grounds to conclude that the study of this course contributes to the training of highly qualified teachers. The results of a pilot study conducted among 66 second- and third-year bachelor's students at Rivne State University of the Humanities gave grounds to assert that the course “Theory and Methods of Education” is important for future teachers. In the 2024/2025 academic year, the proposals formulated by the students will be taken into account in the syllabuses and in the planning of the educational process by the teachers of the above-mentioned university.

**Promising areas for further research** include summarizing the best practices of Ukrainian pedagogical universities in training future teachers in the course “Theory and Methods of Education” and implementing the best practices of Polish universities in this area.

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