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Optimization of the Content and Methodology for Teaching the Theory of Traditional Artistic Crafts

Abstract. The article is devoted to understanding the problem of optimizing the content of education for masters at the Russian University of traditional art crafts in terms of improving the experience of research activities in theoretical professional disciplines (specifically, the theory of traditional artistic crafts). A comparative analysis of the features of student training at the bachelor's and master's degree levels is carried out; the dominant content of the course in the master's degree, its purpose and objectives are revealed; the main forms of work in practical classes focused on the development of academic literacy are described.

Keywords: theory of traditional artistic crafts, traditional artistic crafts, traditional applied art, research activities of students, academic literacy, academic reading, academic writing.

The need to optimize the content and methodology of teaching theoretical courses in the field of traditional artistic crafts to future artists is determined by external challenges posed by the modern education system and society to the level and quality of professional training, which is legally enshrined in the federal state educational standards (hereinafter referred to as FSES).

The analysis of the requirements of the FSES for the training direction 54.04.02 Decorative and Applied Arts and Folk Crafts (Master's Degree) allows us to conclude that the key feature of the content of master's education is not just the accumulation of experience in artistic and creative activities (as it was in the bachelor's program), but rather the provision of opportunities for its improvement in the process of developing communication skills with the scientific community on professionally significant issues, preparing for expert activities in accordance with their profile, and forming readiness to develop production and technological processes in the field of specific types of traditional artistic crafts.

It is logical that different requirements for the level of professional training of a master's graduate also lead to changes in the content of education, the organization of the educational process and the methodology of teaching, as well as in the logic of mastering theoretical and practical courses. For example, the understanding of the fundamental differences in the content of professional education at the bachelor's and master's levels in the field of artistic embroidery was revealed in the study by E.V. Saifulina [13].

Ultimately, the dominant feature of the content of master's education becomes the development of experience in research work (the prerequisites for which are

present in the bachelor's program [1; 14]), as a result – the improvement of creative activity and skills of performing mastery and the development of artistic initiative.

The formulated priority results in the predominance of theoretical courses over practical ones, as demonstrated by the curriculum [11; 12]. The quantitative ratio of academic hours is presented in Table 1. It is clear that the difference in the number of academic hours in the bachelor's and master's programs is related to the duration of study (4 and 2 years, respectively); but in the context of this study, the significant aspect is the proportional ratio of theoretical and practical courses at each level of training.

Theoretical disciplines in the master's curriculum are represented by various courses, which can be conditionally grouped into several areas (philosophical-art history, psychological-pedagogical, socio-economic, linguistic), designed to ensure the integrity of professional education.

In the context of this study, the main focus will be on the analysis of the content and methodology of teaching the discipline "Theory of Traditional Artistic Crafts," which was first introduced into the curriculum in 2020 and provides a logical continuation of the course "History of Traditional Artistic Crafts" studied at the undergraduate level.

Table 1.

Quantitative distribution of academic hours for disciplines
(in the bachelor's and master's programs)

	<i>Bachelor's degree program 54.03.02</i>	<i>Master's degree program 54.04.02</i>
Theoretical disciplines	996	1164
Practical disciplines	5808	1080
Elective disciplines	144	144
Practice	1620	1728
State final certification (GIA)	216	324

This continuity is still maintained today. However, the rethinking of the priorities in bachelor's degree preparation has led to adjustments in the content of the course "History of Traditional Applied Arts" by adding a new theoretical block (corresponding to the discipline "Theory and History of Traditional Artistic Crafts"). Its goal is "to form an understanding of the artistic essence, the specifics of the history of existence, the current state and the artistic and stylistic uniqueness of traditional artistic crafts of Russia as an essential part of the national cultural heritage" [9, p. 4]. Mastering the theoretical block, which serves as a preparatory stage, is intended to form initial ideas about the essence of the conceptual field of folk art theory and the logic of its historical development.

At the master's level, the priority will no longer be reproductive activity (the study of fundamental scientific works in the field of traditional applied arts), but the development of skills in interpreting theoretical and methodological approaches in one's own research activities as its fundamental basis [10, p. 4]. This is all the more significant because the master's students of the Russian University of traditional art

crafts are its potential postgraduate students, whose scientific dissertation research "grows" from the scientific searches of the preceding stage (as examples, one can cite the scientific and pedagogical activities in the field of jewelry art – A.V. Gulchenko, artistic embroidery – T.S. Pirogova, decorative painting – A.A. Solopova, lacquer miniature painting – M.Yu. Malyshev and others).

The content of this discipline includes 19 topics, correlated with specific types of traditional artistic crafts and dedicated to mastering the body of scientific research (dissertations, articles, monographs) in the field of theory and methodology of professional education in this area.

The first four topics are based on the materials of the theoretical block of the course studied in the bachelor's program (introduction, basic concepts of theory, folk art theory by M.A. Nekrasova, scientific and pedagogical school of V.F. Maksimovich): such a concentric principle of mastering the content helps to actualize existing knowledge, but at a new level of depth and breadth of coverage of the issues under study and to increase professional "capital." This is especially important because it allows for the leveling of the initial thesaurus of students who are not graduates of the Russian University of traditional art crafts and do not have basic ideas about the theory of folk art.

The remaining topics (5-19) are correlated with the logic of studying topics in the bachelor's program; however, in the master's program, the emphasis shifts towards scientific works on the current state of professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts, rather than their history of development, biographies of artists and craftsmen and stylistic features of works.

The new goals and content of the discipline in the master's program, as well as the importance of developing research activities among master's students in this field of art, dictate different teaching methods. This explains the shift from a priority on lecture-based classes to practical ones (236 hours of lectures / 36 hours of practical classes in the bachelor's program, 12/116 hours respectively in the master's program) [11; 12].

The priority of practical classes in the master's program, while working with scientific research, becomes the development of academic literacy. Academic literacy is a universal concept that represents a collective mastery of functional and information literacy, academic reading and writing, critical thinking and communication skills, all aimed at ensuring the ability to acquire scientific knowledge and create one's own cultural texts. Researchers believe that it is advisable to develop academic literacy specifically using the materials of specialized disciplines [5, pp. 160-161], which determines the main tasks of the practical classes of the course "Theory of Traditional Artistic Crafts" – the development of skills in academic reading, writing and oral communication.

Academic reading is based on a combination of critical and analytical reading techniques and involves the process of analyzing and synthesizing information while studying scientific texts in an academic context, as well as critically reflecting on them [6].

Researchers identify four main strategies for academic reading: scanning, note-taking (quick), deep (slow), and contextual [4]. When working with scientific

texts within the framework of studying the theory of traditional artistic crafts, it is advisable to use all four strategies, depending on the specific task. Let's comment on how the designated strategies "work" using examples.

Scanning reading – reading "on the diagonal" – is aimed at a general acquaintance with the source, assessing its necessity for the purpose and objectives of the research being conducted. Within the framework of the discipline, this strategy is relevant at the first stage of performing a referenced review of sources – searching for the necessary literature and compiling a bibliographic list.

Note-taking reading involves a more thoughtful engagement with literature, recording main ideas in the form of theses and noting down quotes. Within the framework of the course, note-taking reading is implemented during the process of mastering the main body of dissertation research by the scientific and pedagogical school of V.F. Maksimovich on the issues of professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts (studying dissertation abstracts). The dissertation abstract is structured according to a uniform matrix, which facilitates the perception of information regardless of the student's field of study. At the same time, identifying the key points of the research, analyzing the contradictions formulated by the author and the scientific problem being addressed and understanding the logic of the postulates of the hypothesis, objectives and propositions put forward for defense, ensures a comprehensive understanding of the essence of the dissertation being studied and, as a result, contributes to the growth of one's own professional "capital."

Deep reading is applied when working with complex sources, primarily philosophical or religious literature [4]. Within the framework of the theory and history of traditional artistic crafts, deep reading involves working with fundamental scientific works—monographs that delve into specialized problems of professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts. This reading strategy is significant for identifying the foundational methodological approaches of scholars and fundamental ideas that can and should later become the "growth point" for the master's students' own research.

Contextual reading is positioned as the "ultimate" strategy for researchers, as it involves, firstly, the ability to freely switch between different reading strategies and, secondly, it can only be mastered through prolonged, consistent and serious work with sources related to one's area of study. Therefore, developing the experience of contextual reading is what one should strive for while studying in a master's program.

It is logical that the use of academic reading strategies not only allows for a deeper understanding of the text, identification of key ideas, their interpretation and evaluation, but also to draw conclusions necessary for one's own research and to present and discuss them both orally and in writing. The latter determines the importance of developing skills in academic writing, which is considered the "core of academic literacy, a higher-order competence that involves the ability to create new knowledge" [15, p. 152].

As I.B. Korotkina believes, the "core" of academic writing consists of skills and abilities that are equally important for scholars of any specialization ("metalinguistic") [3, pp. 18-19]. Accordingly, the goal of academic writing is to

"teach how to express and justify one's own ideas through a concise, persuasive and conveniently organized scientific text" [3, p. 21]. The problem of developing experience in academic writing, but within the framework of foreign language preparation for students, has repeatedly become the subject of theoretical and practical reflection [7; 8; 15].

The goal of academic writing within the discipline "Theory of Traditional Artistic Crafts" is achieved through assignments aimed at creating original scientific texts of various genres—abstracts, annotations, reviews and ultimately—scientific articles (the publication of the latter is a necessary condition for admission to the state final certification and successful defense of the final qualification work).

The development of academic writing skills is primarily associated with working with scientific articles and using the strategy of deep reading, which allows for the creation of an article outline and the formulation of theses that capture key ideas.

As study material, articles from the net scientific publication "Traditional Applied Arts and Education" are used—research that reveals various aspects of the history, theory and methodology of professional education in the field of regionally-historical types of traditional artistic crafts.

Another form of work that contributes to the development of academic writing experience is the composition of an abstract. Despite its brevity, an abstract requires a deep immersion into the researched area and the ability to concisely present the essence of the problematic issues addressed in the article, as well as describe the main results obtained by the authors. It is important to make the abstract not only concise but also engaging, encouraging the reader to turn to the main material.

A significant component of academic writing, which is also connected to scientific communication, is the composition of reviews—on articles, textbooks, monographs, etc. Future master's students try their hand at reviewing scientific articles in their field of study, evaluating their relevance, theoretical and practical significance and scientific novelty, while identifying aspects that need correction. This experience allows them to look at the process of conducting scientific work from the outside, to reflect on the requirements for publications and, ultimately, to make the process of creating their own scientific research (a scientific article) clearer, more logical and more substantive.

Both theses and examples of abstracts and reviews are discussed during practical classes, as "discussion and the ability to convey one's position to others are essential characteristics of genuine scientific communication" [3, p. 10].

The final graded assignment within the discipline is the preparation of a referenced review of scientific sources in accordance with the topic of the master's final qualification work. This task allows for checking the level of developed academic literacy, i.e., both academic reading skills (all the mentioned strategies) and academic writing skills. Moreover, its execution enables immersion into the research question, which, evidently, begins with the study of the extent to which the scientific problem has been explored—existing monographs, scientific articles, educational and methodological literature, archival materials and other sources.

The result of the study of the dominants and the current state of professional education in the master's program in the field of 54.04.02 Decorative and Applied Arts and Folk Crafts at the Russian University of traditional art crafts was a revision of the content and methodology of teaching one of the fundamental theoretical professional courses – "Theory of Traditional Artistic Crafts." The proven significance of mastering a large body of specialized works justified the need to develop academic literacy by forming skills in academic reading and writing, which was successfully implemented in practical classes.

Mastering a set of professional practical and theoretical disciplines is a significant condition for the development of one's own research activities. It allows for ensuring a level of professional training for master's students that meets the realities of the current sociocultural situation and the challenges of the time.

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