



ПЕДАГОГІЧНА АКАДЕМІЯ:
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Foreign experience of future veterinarians' preparation for professional communication

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***Abstract.** The article analyzes foreign experience in preparing future veterinarians for professional communication. It has been established that the preparation of future veterinarians for professional communication is considered by foreign scientists to be on the same level of importance as a wide range of professional disciplines. The process of communication of specialists in the agricultural sector consists in the formation of skills and professional communication skills, in the exchange of information, in the content of the information itself, which is the main factor in the acquisition and formation of knowledge and skills of students.*

The work examines the achievements of some European, American, and Australian universities that pay significant attention to the communicative training of students of veterinary medicine. It is noted that this issue requires a more detailed study in view of insufficient dissemination of positive experience, existing practices and



effective models of training veterinarians for professional communication that already exist.

It was determined that the most attention is paid to communication between colleagues and management of conflict situations. It was found that communication regarding the treatment plan, work conversations, communication in stressful situations, business and professional communication are included in communicative actions in the work process. It has been studied that foreign institutions of higher education pay equal attention to the development of oral and written communication, which allows future specialists to avoid difficulties when communicating with colleagues and clients.

It has been established that role-playing games are considered one of the effective means of forming communication skills of specialists, in particular, communication situations with clients. Scientists will pay much less attention to communication with colleagues and other potential interlocutors. The results of the study will contribute to the discussion of ways to improve the organization and conduct of classes in professional disciplines in domestic institutions of higher education.

Keywords: *communication skills, oral communication, written communication, foreign scientists, professional disciplines, educational process, competence.*

Зарубіжний досвід підготовки майбутніх ветеринарів до професійного спілкування

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***Анотація.** У статті проведено аналіз зарубіжного досвіду у підготовці майбутніх ветеринарів до професійного спілкування. Встановлено, що підготовка майбутніх ветеринарів до професійного спілкування розглядається зарубіжними науковцями на одному рівні важливості із широким спектром фахових дисциплін. Процес спілкування фахівців аграрної галузі полягає у формуванні умінь та навичок професійного спілкування, в обміні інформацією, у змісті самої інформації, яка і є головним чинником отримання і формування знань та умінь студентів.*

У роботі розглянуті напрацювання деяких європейських, американців, австралійських університетів, що приділяють значну увагу комунікативній підготовці студентів ветеринарної медицини. Відзначається, що це питання потребує більш детального вивчення з огляду на недостатнє поширення позитивного досвіду, наявних практик та ефективних моделей підготовки ветеринарів до професійного спілкування, що вже існують.

Визначено, що найбільш уваги приділяється саме спілкуванню між колегами та управлінню конфліктними ситуаціями. Виявлено, що комунікація щодо плану лікування, робочі бесіди, спілкування у стресових ситуаціях, ділове та професійне спілкування входять до комунікативних дій у процесі роботи. Досліджено, що зарубіжні заклади вищої освіти приділяють однаково увагу розвитку усного та писемного мовлення, що дозволяє майбутнім фахівцям уникнути труднощів, спілкуючись із колегами та клієнтами.

Встановлено, що рольові ігри вважаються одним із ефективних засобів формування комунікативних умінь фахівців, зокрема ситуацій спілкування з клієнтами. Значно менше уваги науковці приділяють спілкуванню із колегами та іншими потенційними співрозмовниками. Результати дослідження сприятимуть обговоренню шляхів удосконалення організації та проведення занять з фахових дисциплін у вітчизняних закладах вищої освіти.



Ключові слова: комунікативні навички, усне спілкування, письмове спілкування, іноземні вчені, фахові дисципліни, навчальний процес, компетентність.

Formulation of the problem. The preparation of future veterinarians for professional communication is connected, on the one hand, with the general features of the professional activity of specialists in the agricultural sector. Therefore, the preliminary studies on these issues, made by domestic and foreign scientists, are valuable. On the other hand, the activity of specialists in veterinary medicine has its own specificity, which distinguishes it from other sub-branches, and therefore requires special attention and consideration in the educational process of future veterinarians' preparation.

In general, the training of a modern specialist for the sector of agriculture is a complex process. This is due to the fact that each specialist must be a multifaceted, developed individual who perfectly possesses knowledge, abilities and skills in a specific field, and knows how to use this potential in practical activities.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The problem of teaching professional communication attracted the attention of scientists at the end of the 20th century. As a rule, the origins of her research are associated with the work of E. Stones, A. Simon, N. Flanders and other scientists.

Australian scientists point out that mastery of effective communication skills is vital in veterinary education. In their opinion, clinical skills laboratories can provide a more enriching and engaging learning experience and can introduce students to communication with clients about choosing patient care options from the available spectrum. Students may be better prepared to consult with owners of sick animals if they are involved in clinical communication training [15].

Universities in the United States of America train future specialists in the main subject areas of veterinary technology and mostly focus their studies on a specific field



of research in the field of veterinary medicine. Preparation for professional communication is given as much importance as professional disciplines [14].

British universities also pay considerable attention to preparing applicants for professional communication. From the first semester of study, considerable attention is paid to the formation of communication skills. These skills continue to be practiced in subsequent semesters, considering various topics during seminar classes [4, 11].

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. The analysis of the state of research on the problem of professional communication in foreign educational institutions showed that a certain scientific base has already been formed, a range of ideas, provisions and approaches to the problem of preparation for professional communication have been formulated, but the scientific foundations of the system of training professional communication for future specialists in certain fields have not been sufficiently developed. In particular, a thorough analysis of the peculiarities of future veterinarians' preparation for professional communication in institutions of higher education in European countries and the United States of America has not been conducted yet.

Taking this into account, in our work we focus in detail on the importance of communication, as one of the main skills of a veterinarian, consider the main communication competencies of a future doctor, compare training programs for future veterinarians in different countries, and analyze the importance of effective interpersonal communication.

Formulation of the goals of the article. The article is devoted to researching the experience of future veterinarians' training for professional communication in foreign institutions of higher education.

The goal of the article is to analyze the experience of foreign researchers in preparation of future veterinarians for professional communication.



Presentation of the main research material. There is considerable interest in studying the experience of foreign higher education institutions in the future veterinarians' preparation for professional communication.

In this aspect, we consider the creation of such a document as Pan-European soft skills curriculum for undergraduate veterinary education to be important. This indicates the relevance of taking into account the so-called “soft skills”, in particular, communication skills, in the process of future veterinarians training. The goal of this project is to create a foundation that will enable veterinary students with these skills to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world and the enormous workloads of the profession. Consequently, they will be better prepared for the real challenges in their future work environment [11].

The developed SOFTVETS competency model is intended for veterinary medicine teachers, students, and regulatory bodies. The goal is to implement or integrate a list of recommendations for life skills in veterinary education. Educators can use this model to develop competency-based life skills education in their institution or in their curricula. Students can use this list to set their own educational goals in order to optimally prepare for their future careers. Background information is provided for each competency area, including relevant literature, to raise awareness of the demand and highlight the potential benefits of applying the competency model.

The project focuses on three different areas of life skills: communication, digital skills and entrepreneurship. At the same time, cognitive (knowledge) and practical (skills) aspects are considered. For each competency and for each aspect of the competency, a level (beginner, intermediate, advanced, expert) is defined that students must reach by the end of their studies or by the end of the veterinary education program.

Competencies are defined according to their application in the context of the veterinary profession, including the various roles and careers a veterinarian can pursue after graduation (e.g. practitioner, hygienist, scientist, veterinary officer, animal



welfare officer, licensed veterinarian, etc.). As emphasized in the preamble to this program, continuing professional development will be required after graduation in accordance with the field or role the student will occupy upon graduation.

The importance of professional communication is confirmed by the fact that this competence is presented first in the list of competences. Foreign researchers attribute communication to the basic skills of a veterinarian. It is a set of acquired skills that must be taught. The quality of communication between the veterinarian and the owner of the patient is of great importance for the loyalty and satisfaction of the client, as well as for the outcome of the consultation. A veterinarian's lack of communicative competence is a frequent cause of complaints and mistakes.

Therefore, the teaching, learning and assessment of communicative competence within the veterinary baccalaureate is extremely important. In Europe, as well as in Great Britain and America, teaching communication skills in veterinary education is already an integral part of many veterinary curricula.

Since the professional field of a veterinarian is very broad, communication training within a veterinary bachelor's degree should not be limited to communication between practicing veterinarians and their clients. During their studies, students must learn to communicate and adapt to different roles, situations and conditions. This means that students must adequately perform their duties and be able to establish relationships with their peers. They must be able to structure a conversation, receive information and provide relevant information adapted to the target audience in understandable language.

The following are included in the list of communicative competences:

- use the principles of non-verbal and para-verbal communication with a wide range of stakeholders in the veterinary profession.
- demonstrate empathy in veterinary professional situations (understand and relate to the client's point of view and express empathic concern).



ПЕДАГОГІЧНА АКАДЕМІЯ: НАУКОВІ ЗАПИСКИ

- reflection of one's own communicative behavior, skills and limitations within the veterinary profession, as well as the communicative situation in general.
- actively regulate one's own emotions, behavior and cognition within the limits of the veterinary profession, as well as in stressful communicative situations.
- check and ensure accurate understanding through active listening (receiving, listening and absorbing what is said) and respond accordingly in the veterinary profession.
- communicate clearly and structured with clients on the topics of the veterinary profession (gathering and providing information, consulting).
- recognize sensitive topics in the veterinary profession and communicate appropriately in difficult or problematic situations.
- communicate clearly and appropriately on the topics of the veterinary profession in an interprofessional and/or intercultural team.
- communicate on topics of the veterinary profession with veterinarians, as well as with external stakeholders (eg, professional colleagues, responsible authorities).
- communicate effectively on topics of the veterinary profession, using language appropriate for the public.

Western Carolina University offers training in the core subject areas of veterinary technology and allows you to focus your studies on a specific area of veterinary research, such as practice management or public health. A four-year Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Technology program developed in partnership with Banfield Pet Hospital, a leading provider of preventive veterinary care in the United States. The core curriculum includes, as mandatory, the following components: principles of veterinary pharmacology, veterinary anesthesia and analgesia, professional communication skills in veterinary medicine.

As you can see, preparation for professional communication is considered almost at the same level of importance as professional disciplines. The training course



for professional communication in veterinary medicine covers oral and written communication. Special attention is paid to effective interpersonal communication and conflict management. Communication skills include conversation, stress communication, professional and business communication, and treatment plan communication. Simulations of communication with customers will be used for active training.

Auburn University, one of the leading institutions in the field of veterinary education and science, provides for the formation of professional communication skills in veterinary medicine. Students develop communication skills with faculty, staff, peers, pet owners, and the community sector through lectures and interactive lab sessions. The developers of the program are confident that these skills can be immediately applied in everyday student/academic life, clinical practice and team building. Topics include using non-verbal and verbal communication skills during discussions, de-escalating conflict situations, expressing compassion and empathy, creating a safe space for shared decision-making, and discussing medical errors.

When considering the educational program for the training of veterinarians at the Ross University of Medicine, we make sure that among the main courses that are included in its content, there is also preparation for professional communication. It belongs to the list of nine competencies that students must acquire during the study period, namely:

1. Comprehensive diagnosis of the patient (problem solving skills), appropriate use of diagnostic tests and documentation.
2. Comprehensive treatment planning, including referral of the patient according to indications.
3. Anesthesia and analgesia, patient care.
4. Basic surgical skills and patient management.
5. Basic skills in medicine and patient management.



6. Emergency care and intensive care.

7. Understanding of health promotion and biosecurity, disease prevention and control, including zoonoses, and food safety principles.

8. Ethical and professional behavior; communication skills, including those that demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to how the diversity and individual circumstances of clients may affect health care

9. Critical analysis of new information and research results related to veterinary medicine.

Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine of Oregon State University imposes some preliminary requirements on applicants, among which there are those directly related to language training. Those planning to begin a veterinary program must meet the following general requirements:

- English – at least 4 semester or 6 quarter credits in English writing (e.g. composition, technical writing).
- Public speaking - at least 1 semester or 1 quarter of the public speaking course.
- Humanities/Social Sciences – at least 8 semesters or 12 credits in the humanities or social sciences.

As you can see, the main focus of American universities on the formation of professional communication skills is focused not so much on the communication of veterinarians with colleagues, but on communication with clients. Communication in conflict situations and finding ways to resolve conflicts is an important component of communicative training.

Recently, a number of publications by foreign scientists have appeared, dedicated specifically to the preparation of students of veterinary faculties for professional communication. In particular, R. Tsimlich from Lincoln Memorial University describes how veterinary students acquire professional communication skills during their studies. As the scientist notes, the formation of communication skills



begins in the first semester, when students are introduced to basic communication skills and the Calgary-Cambridge consultation model at lectures. Then students practice in laboratories under the guidance of a teacher-trainer. Students also practice interacting with a simulated client who is taught to assess their ability against specific criteria and provide specific feedback. The simulated meetings are videotaped so the student can self-assess.

In each subsequent semester, students continue to practice communication skills with a wide range of topics and situations, including angry customers, difficult team members, routine health prevention, medical errors, obesity, quality of life, and more. Workshops rotate throughout the semesters and include topics on end-of-life care, the medical team, resilience, compassion fatigue, and other professional topics. In each workshop, students have the opportunity to interact, practice their skills, and receive feedback from each other [1].

Australian scientists I. van Gelderen, R. Taylor point out that mastering the skills of effective communication is vital in veterinary education. “Public trust, accreditation mandates, and science-based methodologies emphasize the critical role of communication skills in ensuring optimal animal welfare outcomes, making them a cornerstone of veterinary education. However, proven “best practices” for teaching and assessing communicative competence in real-world settings are not well known” [15]. The authors propose to consider several strategies for the development of communication skills in the curriculum of veterinary education. In their view, these strategies improve the ways in which learning and assessment are contextualized. Clinical skills labs can provide a more authentic, enriching, and engaging learning experience and introduce students to communicating with clients about choosing patient care options from the available spectrum. Students may be better prepared for telemedicine consultations if they are involved in clinical communication training. In addition, veterinary schools must monitor the coherence and integration of



communication elements in the curriculum and understand the student experience to ensure that all graduates of veterinary programs are prepared for a smooth transition into practice.

The authors believe that communication skills cannot be considered only as an individual competence. They substantiate their opinion with the results of a study devoted to the study of factors that lead to the occurrence of complaints and lawsuits in the veterinary profession, which testified that communication issues played a role in 80% of cases. On this basis, the authors state that organizational systems and team communication must be taken into account when teaching and assessing communication skills. This should underlie the development of simulations (case studies, facilitator prompts, environments, distractions, etc.) used in communication training. For example, during role-plays, limit students' time when they perform routine actions expected during counseling (e.g, giving a pill to a cranky cat owned by an elderly and frail client). This will challenge the student to think about how they will communicate with the client and their team to ensure that the consultation is completed in a timely manner, while achieving the desired outcome, maintaining the client's trust and maximizing the client's adherence to the treatment plan, and the chances of the client adhering to the treatment plan.

Scholars conclude on the importance of a dynamic, ever-evolving curriculum, and the presented strategies for developing communication competence offer practical ways for veterinary schools to ensure that graduates are not only well-prepared for current challenges, but also able to meet the changing demands of the future [15].

So, after considering the achievements of some American, European and Australian universities, it is possible to state a significant increase in their attention to the communicative training of students of veterinary medicine. Scientists note that this issue requires detailed study in view of insufficient dissemination of the positive



experience, existing practices and effective models of training future veterinarians for professional communication that already exist.

Note that foreign researchers emphasize both oral and written communication. In addition, all of them offer to simulate in the educational process, in particular during laboratory classes, situations of communication with clients. At the same time, conversations can have different thematic content: explanation of the treatment plan, expression of empathy and sympathy, counseling (including remote), resolution of conflict cases.

Summary. It was established that the training of future veterinarians for professional communication is considered by foreign scientists to be almost at the same level of importance as professional disciplines. Special attention is paid to effective interpersonal communication and conflict management. Communication activities include conversations, communication in stressful situations, professional and business communication, and communication about the treatment plan. Foreign researchers emphasize both oral and written communication. They consider role-playing and simulation of industrial situations in the educational process, in particular situations of communication with clients, to be one of the effective means of forming communication skills. To a lesser extent, scientists concentrate on communication with colleagues and other potential interlocutors.

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