

UDC 37.091.4(481):005.591.4  
DOI: 10.52534/msu-pp.6(1).2020.44-50

**Natalia V. Lalak\***, **Mariana V. Hrab**

Mukachevo State University  
89600, 26 Uzhhorodska Str., Mukachevo, Ukraine

## Current Trends in Norwegian Education Reform

### Article's History:

Received: 05.01.2020

Revised: 11.03.2020

Accepted: 18.04.2020

### Suggested Citation:

Lalak, N.V., & Hrab, M.V. (2020). Current trends in Norwegian education reform. *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Pedagogy and Psychology"*, 6(1), 44-50.

**Abstract.** The reform of the Ukrainian education system is one of the key tasks of modern national policy, as a result of which the issue of considering and borrowing positive foreign educational experience is updated, which determines the relevance of scientific research. The purpose of the work is to analyse and identify the characteristic features of the process of development and modernisation of the Norwegian educational system. In the study, the author used a number of general scientific theoretical research methods, in particular, the analysis and synthesis of scientific and methodological literature, and the comparison and generalisation of the developed source base. The paper deals with the problem of analysing the current educational reform in Norway. It was established that the country belongs to the leading developed countries in the field of educational policy, and its level is an important factor in intellectual, economic, social, scientific and technical, innovation, technological, and cultural development. The main reasons and consequences of reforming the Norwegian educational space are substantiated. The author's vision of Norway educational reform is presented. It was determined that focusing on the modern labour market, Norwegian education priorities today include: the ability to operate with innovative technologies and knowledge; a combination of conventional and alternative education, public and private; increasing the role and importance of education in the life of society, turning it into a real production and social force, the central connecting link of the system "science – technology – man – production – culture". The practical value of the paper lies in the structural analysis of the Norwegian experience of reforming the educational system, which allows reviewing the problematic aspects of Ukrainian education and find relevant methods for solving them

**Keywords:** Norway, educational system, retrospective analysis, current reform trends, competency-based approach

\*Corresponding author

---

Наталія Володимирівна Лалак, Мар'яна Василівна Граб

Мукачівський державний університет  
89600, вул. Ужгородська, 26, м. Мукачево, Україна

## Сучасні тенденції реформування системи освіти Норвегії

**Анотація.** Реформування української системи освіти є одним із ключових завдань сучасної державної політики, внаслідок чого актуалізується питання розгляду та запозичення позитивного зарубіжного освітнього досвіду, що й зумовлює актуальність наукового дослідження. Метою роботи є аналіз і виокремлення характерних особливостей процесу формування та модернізації системи освіти Норвегії. У дослідженні автором було використано низку загальнонаукових теоретичних методів дослідження, зокрема аналіз і синтез науково-методичної літератури, та порівняння й узагальнення опрацьованої джерельної бази. У статті порушено проблему аналізу сучасної освітньої реформи Норвегії. З'ясовано, що країна належить до провідних розвинених держав у сфері освітньої політики, а її рівень є вагомим чинником інтелектуального, економічного, соціального, науково-технічного, інноваційно-технологічного і культурного розвитку. Обґрунтовано основні причини та наслідки реформування норвезького освітнього простору. Представлено авторське бачення освітньої реформи Норвегії. Визначено, що орієнтуючись на сучасний ринок праці, норвезька освіта до пріоритетів сьогодення відносить: вміння оперувати інноваційними технологіями та знаннями; поєднання традиційної та альтернативної освіти, державної і приватної; підвищення ролі і значення освіти в житті суспільства, перетворення її на реальну виробничу та соціальну силу, центральну з'єднуючу ланку системи “наука – техніка – людина – виробництво – культура”. Практична цінність наукової роботи полягає в структурному аналізі норвезького досвіду реформування системи освіти, що дає змогу переглянути проблемні аспекти української освіти й знайти актуальні методи їхнього вирішення

**Ключові слова:** Норвегія, система освіти, ретроспективний аналіз, сучасні тенденції реформування, компетентнісний підхід

---

### Problem Statement

Over the past decades, Ukraine has been undergoing changes in the social paradigm – from technocratic to Industrial, from industrial to informational. The development of education is influenced by social integration processes, globalisation, democratisation, the creation of a single information space, etc. Changing the structure of the educational system, content, forms, and methods of teaching has become a priority area of national policy. For Ukrainian pedagogical science, to intensify the process of integration into the global educational space, it is advisable to study the experience of reforming education in European countries, in particular, attention should be focused on the educational practices of Norway.

Currently, Norway is developing quite rapidly in the field of education and occupies an acting place among developed countries. Focusing on the modern labour market, Norwegian education prioritises the implementation of a competency-based approach, the ability to operate with innovative technologies and knowledge that meet the needs of the information society and create an effective base of labour resources. Notably, in 2020, Norway will start school reform, which will be implemented until 2032. As the Norwegian minister of education and research I. Sunner notes, educational reforms primarily concern the content of education since the process of transferring and forming

knowledge, skills and abilities, acquiring values, and mastering the necessary life competencies depends on its components and implementation mechanisms [1]. The attention of the younger generation is aimed at developing critical thinking, cultural discussion, and media literacy, which are extremely relevant today for life in a modern democratic society. In this context, the analysis and generalisation of the positive experience of Norwegian educational reforms is of great importance for Ukraine during the reform of the new Ukrainian school.

### Analysis of Recent Research and Publications

General aspects of the educational system functioning of the Scandinavian countries are covered in the works of S. Wiborg [2], O. Rovde [3], C. Ydesen, K. Ludvigsen, C. Lundahl [4], I. Palmberg, S. Kärkkäinen, E. Jeronen, E. Yli-Panula, C. Persson, [5]. L. Sigayeva [6], N. Andriichuk [7], A.A. Roliak [8] and others have devoted their research to the characteristics of continuing education in these countries. The problem of professional education is covered by S. Nazarova [9], V. Sitarov [10], N. Abashkina [11], A. Shelten [12]. The problem of the quality of school education in Norway is covered in the thesis of N. Vyshnevskaya “Reform of school education in Norway in the 80-90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” [13], V. Semiletko “The system of training teachers

in Norway” [14]. The analysis of educational regulatory documents that form the legislative platform for ensuring the quality of education in Norway is valuable for the research.

### The Purpose of the Study

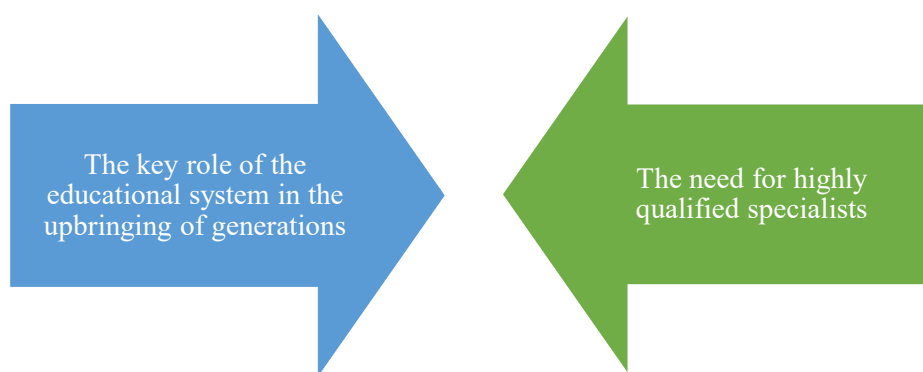
To analyse and highlight the key characteristics of the development and reform of the Norwegian educational system.

### Research Results

Norway is one of the most economically developed European countries, which has recently shown positive results in various indicators. In the ranking of states according to the Global Competitiveness Index (compiled annually by the WEF), it has held high positions in recent years [15]. In addition, Norway is a world leader in research and development. The level of the educational system that has been achieved in the country nowadays is a considerable factor

for further intellectual, socio-economic, scientific and technical, innovative, technological, and cultural improvement. Over the past decades, Norway has undergone considerable changes in the living conditions of the population and leisure activities of young people; the state follows its own path of development, relying on needs and opportunities, national and cultural traditions, however, not avoiding the influence of pan-European or global trends in the development of schools and pedagogy. It is worth noting that Norway was one of the first countries to introduce the Bologna educational system. This shows not only the desire to make higher education compatible with education in other countries but also demonstrates a serious attitude to education in general.

Norwegian educators and sociologists have identified two main reasons that led to the reforms of the educational system (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Reasons for reforming the Norwegian educational system

As can be seen from Figure 1, the first reason is that the school and educational system of the country in general take on the main role in the education of the younger generation, the second – due to the higher social and technological level of development of Norwegian society, the need for highly educated specialists has increased. To solve these problems, rapid reforms were carried out in the educational system according to the requirements of the time [16]. In particular, the purpose of the reforms of 1994 and 1997 was to create a more flexible educational system that would provide broad opportunities for the country and prepare society for the perception of constant changes [17; 18]. According to these reforms, the following tasks were set: providing students with theoretical knowledge and practical training for the use in various spheres of public and entrepreneurial activity; preparing students for the “revolution in knowledge” and for life in the conditions of internationalisation of all spheres of society; providing students with a reasonable balance between theoretical knowledge and specialisation, basic knowledge and professional qualifications; creating continuing education [14].

General education reforms have covered all levels of the Norwegian educational system. Let us look at the main results of innovations. The Norwegian school curriculum differs from the Ukrainian one in the number of subjects

studied – there are only 10 of them. Such sciences as physics, chemistry, biology, and geography are combined into one subject – Natural Science. History, geography, law, and sociology are combined into one academic discipline – social studies. As practice shows, the integration that dominates today in the new Ukrainian school is end-to-end. However, many hours are devoted to such activities as music, drawing, handicraft lessons, physical education, and household chores. Much attention is paid to English, which is a mandatory foreign language at school [19]. It is unusual that there is no such separate subject as computer science but almost every lesson requires working with a computer. At the same time, the Norwegian Ministry of education and research has created a national institution “Norwegian Centre for ICT in education”, which monitors the development of various aspects of digital competence of educational applicants [20]. In addition, a characteristic phenomenon of Norwegian education is family education, the essence of which is that several families, working together, can teach their children together independently, and not send them to school. This is allowed but is mainly used where there are no educational institutions nearby, so as not to send the child to boarding school. As a rule, this educational process is practiced in the north of Norway and on the islands. Since the autumn of 1994, all young people between the age of

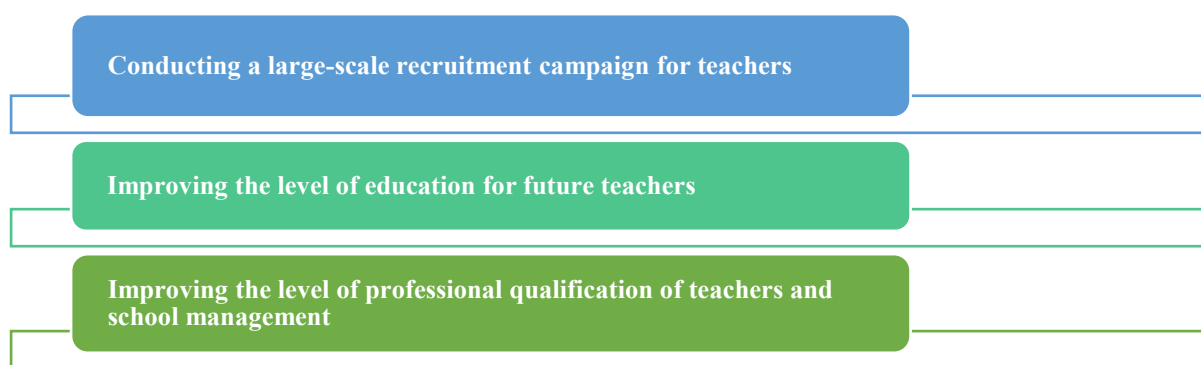
16 and 19 have been eligible for three years of general professional education. This approach allows students to gain relevant theoretical knowledge, acquire professional skills, and continue their studies at colleges and universities [14].

It is worth adding that to meet the requirements of the time in competently trained school graduates who are ready for adult learning, work, and life, Norway has recognised the need to provide appropriately trained teachers. The Ministry of education and research from 1996 to 2000 put into effect the so-called plan “development of teachers’ competencies”, the idea of which was to provide additional methodological and pedagogical support to young professionals [20]. As comprehensive measures were implemented, it became clear that special attention should be paid to the level of teachers working in primary secondary schools. Thus, as part of the reform “for the development of knowledge”, a number of organisations and institutions, such as teachers’ unions, the Ministry of education and research, the Norwegian Association of local and regional governance, proposed a “strategy for the development of competencies for primary and secondary education” to the government, the name of which conveys the essence and purpose of the entire learning process (“Skills for Quality 2009-2012”) [21].

Future teachers in Norway receive teacher training at universities that offer a four-year training programme. Since 2010, Norway has introduced a new training programme for specialists, which provides that students retain the right to choose to teach in grades 1-7 or 5-10. The new programme allocates more hours for teaching practice, provides for more in-depth training in individual academic subjects (integrated courses) since in Norway there are no subject teachers, only teachers who teach from grades 1 to 7 or 5 to 10. In addition to university education, there are other training programmes that qualify participants to work

at school, namely “practical-pedagogical education” PPE. It is designed for one year for students who have received a bachelor’s degree and continue to acquire the profession of a teacher. PPE involves the study of subjects or professional training (practice and professional theory), and is aimed at teaching in high and low secondary schools. At the same time, it is possible to choose a four-year or five-year plan for integrated training for the teaching profession, where pedagogy, didactics of individual subjects are studied, and practice is conducted. The problem that has long existed in Norway is related to the transition period from studying and mastering the profession of a teacher in theory to real work in school. The country also recognises the need to introduce a national system of teacher certification, which is carried out to ensure that the professional level of a young specialist meets the needs and requirements of working at school [22; 23].

As is evident, the issue of ensuring the quality of teacher training is important for Norway. “GNIST” is the name of a five-year collaboration project of organisations such as the Ministry of education and research, the Norwegian Education Union, the Norwegian Association of local and regional administration, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the Norwegian enterprise Confederation (Nho), students of pedagogical institutions in the Norwegian Education Union, the Norwegian student association (StL), the Norwegian Teachers’ Association, the Norwegian School Workers’ Union (SL), the Norwegian Association of school leaders, and the National Council of education for teachers (NRLU). Such strategic alliances are designed to raise the status of the profession and help to attract qualified specialists to work at the school in the future. The main points of the programme are (Fig. 2) [22]:



**Figure 2.** Key elements of the innovative GNIST educational programme

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above: firstly, the scale of the programme involving a large number of institutions and organisations indicates the seriousness of the problem of ensuring an adequate level of training for professionally qualified, competent teachers. Secondly, a versatile approach to the current situation can guarantee that the views of all parties are considered, both

at the level of students and schools, as well as at the level of teachers, school administration, and state and local authorities. Norway’s experience shows that changes in the educational system in a short time are possible with political support for reforms; a clear distribution of responsibilities between national, regional, and local authorities; solving issues related to planning and implementing all changes at

the national level by coordinating the actions of the Ministry of education and the government; considering public criticism [14].

Considering the ideological foundations, approaches, historical experience, and pedagogical traditions of Norway, educational reforms have acquired different specific features, depth and pace of transformation. The most important trends in the development and improvement of educational systems are:

- increasing the role and importance of education in the life of society, turning it into a real productive and social force;
- development of a holistic and flexible permanent system of education and upbringing that can quickly respond to constantly changing social and personal needs;
- a combination of conventional and alternative education, public and private;
- the desire to highlight the basic content of education, variable additional courses, introduction of new methods and forms of teaching into practice;
- differentiation of learning considering the cultural, ethnic, social, and individual characteristics of students, internationalisation of the content and learning process in general;
- modernisation of the educational and material base, updating of equipment, creation of educational complexes to ensure the harmonious development of the individual and requirements for the future employee, on the one hand, and on the other – the use of educational capabilities of modern computer and audiovisual equipment, pedagogical technologies that are based on the latest achievements of philosophy, sociology, psychology;
- mass professionalisation of schoolchildren based on a fairly high level of general development training; the

desire to identify particularly gifted children early, create appropriate support for them in obtaining education;

- democratisation and humanisation of the organisation and management of education, integration of academic disciplines, ensuring broad and comprehensive cultural training of educational applicants;

- development of modern pedagogical thinking, building a “teacher-student” relationship based on cooperation pedagogy, etc.

## Conclusions

Consequently, in Norway, considerable funding for the education sector is provided at the state level, which largely ensures the country's stability, and the evolutionary nature of development allows improving the way of life and deepen democratic processes. Today, the analysis of the positive experience of the educational reform of this state is becoming important for Ukraine. The need for its deep study is largely conditioned by the urgent demand of the time – to reach the highest world level of development of science and technology, as well as the fact that Ukrainian education has returned to the ideas of humanisation and democratisation, cooperation, the development of innovative activities in solving educational tasks, the search for new forms of interaction in the educational environment. However, it is worth noting that mechanical and blind borrowing of the experience of foreign educational reforms and the introduction of innovative educational technologies without considering the specific features and socio-economic conditions of Ukraine's development in modern conditions will not benefit Ukrainian education.

The authors see prospects for further research in a thorough study of the Norwegian Higher School Reform and the system for assessing the quality of future teachers' work.

## References

- [1] Norway's government to upgrade digital in school curriculum. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252476995/Norways-government-to-upgrade-digital-in-school-curriculum>.
- [2] Wiborg, S. (2013). Neo-liberalism and universal state education: The cases of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1980-2011. *Comparative Education*, 49(4), 407-423.
- [3] Rovde, O. (2012). All instruction in the elementary school should be adapted to the pupils' reality as close as possible. Primary and secondary education in rural Norway – From the Education Acts of 1889 to the Education Act of 1959. *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 91(1), 65-92.
- [4] Ydesen, C., Ludvigsen, K., & Lundahl, C. (2013). Creating an educational testing profession in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, 1910-1960. *European Educational Research Journal*, 12(1), 120-138.
- [5] Palmberg, I., Kärkkäinen, S., Jeronen, E., Yli-Panula, E., & Persson, C. (2019). Nordic student teachers, views on the most efficient teaching and learning methods for species and species identification. *Sustainability*, 11(19), article number 5231.
- [6] Sigayeva, L.Ye. (2017). Foreign experience of higher education management: Basic tendencies. *Bulletin of the Cherkasy Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University. Series “Pedagogical Sciences”*, 10, 106-113.
- [7] Andriichuk, N. (2016). General description of the Nordic countries education system: Comparative aspect. *The Sources of Pedagogical Skills*, 17, 12-18.
- [8] Roliak, A.O. (2018). Organisation of life-long professional education: Danish context. *Young Scientist*, 5(57), 79-82.
- [9] Nazarova, S.I. (2013). Theoretical and methodological reasons for continuous vocational education in the design sphere. *St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University Journal. Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2, 114-120.

- [10] Maralov, V.G., & Sitarov, V.A. (2019). Positions of non-violence and non-interference in students: Comparative analysis. *The Education and Science Journal*, 21(4), 115-138.
- [11] Abashkina, N.V. (1998). *Principles of development of vocational education in Germany*. Kyiv: Vyshcha shkola.
- [12] Shelten, A. (1996). *Introduction to Professional Pedagogy*. Ekaterinburg: Izdatelstvo UGPPU.
- [13] Vyshnevskaya, N.Yu. (2000). *Reform of school education in Norway in the 80-90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century* (Candidate thesis, Institute of Pedagogy of NAPS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine).
- [14] Semiletko, V.I. (1996). *The system of training teachers in Norway* (Candidate thesis, Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University, Luhansk, Ukraine).
- [15] The Global Competitiveness Report 2019. (2019). Retrieved from [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf).
- [16] The Royal Ministry of Education, research and Church Affairs. Core curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education in Norway. (1997). Retrieved from [http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/generell\\_del/Core\\_Curriculum\\_English.pdf](http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/generell_del/Core_Curriculum_English.pdf).
- [17] Bertrand, M., Mogstad, M., & Mountjoy, J. (2019). Improving educational pathways to social mobility: Evidence from Norway's Reform 94. *NBER Working Paper Series*. Retrieved from [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25679/w25679.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25679/w25679.pdf).
- [18] Reform 97. (1997). Retrieved from <https://www.nb.no/nbsok/nb/f4ce6bf9eadeb389172d939275c038bb?lang=no#0>.
- [19] Aas, M., & Paulsen, J.M. (2019). National strategy for supporting school principal's instructional leadership: A Scandinavian approach. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 57(5), 540-553.
- [20] Krumsvik, R. (2011). Digital competence in the Norwegian teacher education and school. *Högere Utbildning*, 1(1), 39-51.
- [21] The education system of Norway. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/grunnopplaring/the-norwegian-education-system/id445118/>.
- [22] Nusche, D., Earl, L., Maxwell, W., & Shewbridge, C. (2011). *OECD reviews of evaluation and assessment in education*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- [23] White paper on teacher education "The teacher – the role and the education". (2009). Retrieved from [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/stortingsmeldinger/teacher\\_education\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/stortingsmeldinger/teacher_education_factsheet.pdf).

### Список використаних джерел

- [1] Norway's government to upgrade digital in school curriculum. URL: <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252476995/Norways-government-to-upgrade-digital-in-school-curriculum> (accessed date: 15.02.2020).
- [2] Wiborg S. Neo-liberalism and universal state education: The cases of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1980–2011. *Comparative Education*. 2013. Vol. 49, No. 4. P. 407–423.
- [3] Rovde O. All instruction in the elementary school should be adapted to the pupils, reality as close as possible. Primary and secondary education in rural Norway – From the Education Acts of 1889 to the Education Act of 1959. *Historisk Tidsskrift*. 2012. Vol. 91, No. 1. P. 65–92.
- [4] Ydesen C., Ludvigsen K., Lundahl C. Creating an educational testing profession in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, 1910–1960. *European Educational Research Journal*. 2013. Vol. 12, No. 1. P. 120–138.
- [5] Nordic student teachers' views on the most efficient teaching and learning methods for species and species identification / I. Palmberg et al. *Sustainability*. 2019. Vol. 11, No. 19. Article number 5231.
- [6] Сігаєва Л.Є. Зарубіжний досвід управління вищою освітою: основні тенденції. *Вісник Черкаського національного університету імені Богдана Хмельницького*. Серія: «Педагогічні науки». 2017. Вип. 10. С. 106–113.
- [7] Андрійчук Н. Загальна характеристика системи освіти скандинавських країн: порівняльний аспект. *Витоки педагогічної майстерності*. 2016. Вип. 17. С. 12–18.
- [8] Роляк А.О. Організація неперервної професійної освіти: Данський контекст. *Молодий вчений*. 2018. Т. 5 № 57. С. 79–82.
- [9] Назарова С.И. Теоретико-методологические основы непрерывного профессионального образования в сфере дизайна. *Научно-технические ведомости СПбГПУ. Гуманитарные и общественные науки*. 2013. Вип. 2. С. 114–120.
- [10] Маралов В.Г., Ситаров В.А. Позиция ненасилия и невмешательства у студентов: сравнительный анализ. *Образование и наука*. 2019. Т. 21, № 4. С. 115–138.
- [11] Абашкіна Н.В. Принципи розвитку професійної освіти в Німеччині: монографія. Київ: Вища школа, 1998. 207 с.
- [12] Шелтен А. Введение в профессиональную педагогику: учеб. пособ. Екатеринбург: Издательство УГППУ, 1996. 288 с.
- [13] Вишневська Н.Ю. Реформування шкільної освіти в Норвегії у 80–90-х роках ХХ століття: автореф. дис. ... канд. пед. наук: 13.00.01. Київ, 2000. 20 с.

- [14] Семілетко В.І. Система підготовки педагогічних кадрів у Норвегії: автореф. дис. ... канд. пед. наук: 13.00.01. Луганськ, 1996. 24 с.
- [15] The Global Competitiveness Report 2019. URL: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf) (accessed date: 22.02.2020).
- [16] The Royal Ministry of Education, research and Church Affairs. Core curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education in Norway. URL: [http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/generell\\_del/Core\\_Curriculum\\_English.pdf](http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/generell_del/Core_Curriculum_English.pdf) (accessed date: 22.02.2020).
- [17] Bertrand M., Mogstad M., Mountjoy J. Improving educational pathways to social mobility: Evidence from Norway's Reform 94. *NBER Working Paper Series*. 2019. URL: [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25679/w25679.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25679/w25679.pdf) (accessed date: 22.02.2020).
- [18] Reform 97. URL: <https://www.nb.no/nbsok/nb/f4ce6bf9eadeb389172d939275c038bb?lang=no#0> (accessed date: 22.02.2020).
- [19] Aas M., Paulsen J.M. National strategy for supporting school principal's instructional leadership: A Scandinavian approach. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 2019. Vol. 57, No. 5. P. 540–553.
- [20] Krumsvik R. Digital competence in the Norwegian teacher education and school. *Högre Utbildning*. 2011. Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 39–51.
- [21] The education system of Norway. URL: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/grunnopplaring/the-norwegian-education-system/id445118/> (accessed date: 22.02.2020).
- [22] OECD reviews of evaluation and assessment in education/D. Nusche et al. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2011. 164 p.
- [23] White paper on teacher education “The teacher – the role and the education”. URL: [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/stortingsmeldinger/teacher\\_education\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/stortingsmeldinger/teacher_education_factsheet.pdf) (accessed date: 22.02.2020).