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PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: EXPERIENCE AND ARGUMENTATION

COMPETENCIA PROFESIONAL DEL PROFESORADO UNIVERSITARIO: EXPERIENCIA Y ARGUMENTACIÓN

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews various approaches to organizing the educational process and evaluates them in the context of improving the higher education system and the quality of teaching at the university. Various sources, such as research papers and official documents, were examined to explore the methodology of the educational process. The analysis of current methodologies revealed their effectiveness and competitiveness, as well as a high pace of development and the generation of new techniques that apply new technologies and scientific research. Results indicate a positive impact of these methodologies on the teaching quality and university environment, promoting a collaborative culture and the integration of digital technologies. The conclusion underscores the increasing significance of continuous faculty development and the alignment of educational standards with societal values, emphasizing a practical, competency-based approach to university teaching.

Keywords:

Professionalization, Quality of Higher Education, Teacher Professionalism, Student Motivation for Learning.

RESUMEN

Este artículo revisa varios enfoques para organizar el proceso educativo y los evalúa en el contexto de la mejora del sistema de educación superior y la calidad de la enseñanza en la universidad. Se examinaron diversas fuentes, como trabajos de investigación y documentos oficiales, para explorar la metodología del proceso educativo. El análisis de las metodologías actuales reveló su efectividad y competitividad, así como un alto ritmo de desarrollo y generación de nuevas técnicas que aplican nuevas tecnologías e investigaciones científicas. Los resultados indican un impacto positivo de estas metodologías en la calidad de la enseñanza y el entorno universitario, promoviendo una cultura colaborativa y la integración de las tecnologías digitales. La conclusión subraya la creciente importancia del desarrollo continuo del profesorado y la alineación de los estándares educativos con los valores sociales, enfatizando un enfoque práctico y basado en competencias para la enseñanza universitaria.

Palabras clave:

Profesionalización, calidad de la enseñanza superior, profesionalidad del profesorado, motivación de los estudiantes por el aprendizaje.

INTRODUCTION

The modern world, with its ever-increasing complexity of work processes, demands heightened attention from educational institutions to general key skills and a redefinition of basic education. It emphasizes the need for the formation and content of professional competencies (Syzdykova et al., 2022; Yessenova et al., 2023). Importantly, it is not just about acquiring knowledge but, above all, critically filtering it. Equally important is the ability to confidently navigate the growing diversity of information and learn to assess which knowledge appears crucial for individual current and future situations. Educational institutions, particularly universities, are losing their information monopoly while simultaneously facing new complex challenges (Stavruk et al., 2023). Educators who bridge the gap between the present and the future are not merely knowledge bearers but initiators and advocates of active and reflective educational processes essential for mastering and, most importantly, applying the influx of information that is gaining global prominence and demand.

Ensuring the quality development of a university becomes a topic of discussion regarding the professionalism of faculty actions and the effectiveness of the institution. One cannot deny the significant role of educators in the success of students, which is attributed to the quality of teaching and the professionalism of the teaching staff (Amirbekova et al., 2013; Akishina et al., 2023). To enhance the effectiveness of educators' work, freedom in their individual teaching processes is necessary. This forms good, developmental skills and teaching competence since each lesson involves continuous contemplation, awareness of successes and failures, and the constant adjustment of a differentiated personal theory of effective learning. This theory is formed only through multiple and controlled transitions between teaching actions, on the one hand, and careful consideration of the consequences of these actions, on the other (Radushinsky et al., 2023).

The characteristics of pedagogical design and interpersonal working relationships with students have a positive impact on their learning outcomes, academic performance, motivation, well-being, and validate teaching strategies and behavioral criteria.

One can attempt to identify the fundamental basic conditions for effective teaching and learning that enhance competency. For example, it is justified for all subjects and all stages of education that purposefulness, supportive learning, pedagogical guidance, and a positive learning atmosphere are essential conditions for effective education.

Article's Objective: To explore various methods of organizing the educational process and teaching aimed at improving the quality of teaching and student learning in the university.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on the most comprehensive and forward-looking approaches and methods of teaching in universities, which contribute to the improvement and optimization of professional education. It involves the use of digital technologies and traditional psychological-pedagogical, competency-based, systemic, social, and comparative approaches to obtain professional-educational and socio-pedagogical insights and practical recommendations.

The development, modification, construction, and synthesis of these approaches within various forms of teaching and educational activities lead to the formation of a comprehensive experience. The applied corresponding approaches imply that through ontological, psychological, and pedagogically organized processes, a universal sequence of learning stages is created, leading to flexible, practically interconnected knowledge and ultimately to the development of the desired competencies.

A specific university faces the task of utilizing individual factors such as faculty collaboration and interdisciplinary coordination of educational programs to achieve common goals while maintaining a culture of leadership, which influences the quality and success of higher education institutions. Inherent to this are jointly developed curricula and coordinated performance requirements, personal initiatives, as well as consideration of the relevant educational environment, which are important for further development and control in addressing issues of teaching and learning quality. This requires significant efforts not only from the leadership but also from the entire faculty.

These efforts may include the ongoing development of skills in management and organizational development, the cultivation of competencies, gaining experience in innovative teaching methods, and ensuring the necessary motivation for both students and faculty members and university leadership through recognition of achievements. Additionally, embracing self-assessment techniques, developing educational programs and resources, and effectively utilizing new digital information technologies both online and offline are all integral aspects of this endeavor.

The didactic content requires pedagogical support and a well-thought-out design of the educational process that combines pedagogical intervention in the development of the professional culture of both teachers and students.

This should take into account the increasing complexity of the educational process. Following this scenario, the university's educational course aims to equip teachers with the ability for internal control and management of the subject matter they are entrusted with, as well as improving the quality of their activities. The goal is to ensure that the boundary between personal education, moral and value convictions, and changes in universal values and educational innovations, as well as organizational changes, is promising and based on societal values that are widely accepted and bold.

"The process of professional training at the university implies the deliberate development of the system of socio-professional qualities, deep convictions, and worldviews in future specialists, which forms the foundation for professionalism. Furthermore, professional interest, unburdened by universal moral values, can lead to professional narrowness, so moral education should become a significant component of professional training". (Ivanov & Iskakova, 2010, p. 174)

In formulating definition of the relationship between knowledge and skills, active cognitive construction within the educational process should be emphasized. It involves fostering an understanding of the necessity for active engagement among its participants, the exploration and analysis of problems and challenges, the filtration of accumulated information, and the expansion and differentiation of one's own knowledge and capabilities. This understanding is not devoid of subjectivity and certain prerequisites but is always built upon existing prior knowledge. Existing knowledge structures are adjusted and expanded through the accumulation of both knowledge and skills, and they are never truly completed, instead constantly flowing in a dynamic process of accumulation, analysis, control, rejection, and restoration.

Such a careful selection of skills and knowledge provided to students is critically important as it should enable them to engage in future competitive professional activities and lead independent and responsible lives. It should also allow them to bridge theory and practice within the context of subject-specific instruction and, more broadly, in the context of university education.

Attention is directed towards specific aspects of pedagogical design after preliminary scientific-theoretical analysis, which is grounded in previous experience, knowledge, practical skills, and the expansion of argumentation models that form the basis of analysis. Subsequently, a perspective for modeling the subject of instruction is developed based on an empirical view of the key requirements for educators, using the proposed approaches and methods.

Before presenting the results of the assessment on this matter as of today, it is necessary to outline the structure of the specialized educational course and its target audience. For this purpose, pedagogical and subject-didactic practices were organized to create conditions for enhancing the professional qualifications of educators. This involved the implementation of individual feedback mechanisms, encompassing various social formats (reports and materials from seminar participants, including invited experts, individual work, group work, elaborated and in-depth small projects, participant presentations, and more).

During thematic discussions, participants share their interests and engage in developmental work. Working groups are led by the same experts and are primarily intended for the exchange of professional experiences and practical consultations. These exchanges are meticulously documented and analyzed in written form by the participants. This elective work aims to expand, deepen, and disseminate the content of mandatory subjects with information enrichment to the planned extent, while accommodating individual preferences in their teaching practices to further enhance its quality.

Each participant presents their own vision of the completed course, which culminates in a commission-based assessment/examination interview. Quality standards have been developed and correspond to the following criteria: posing a question relevant to the further development of teaching activities; clearly formulated research question; new tools and methods for its resolution; a well-understandable and readable description; reflections on personal learning experiences, including emotional aspects, evaluations, cross-references to other personal experiences; references to relevant literature; feedback from critically minded colleagues.

In this way, participants receive overall support for their initiatives, enabling them to utilize them in their future endeavors.

The characteristics of a complex professional activity of a teacher and its interrelatedness with practical activities may seem theoretical, but they are vital in modern pedagogy. Teachers need to be prepared and competent in constructive and purposeful, self-reliant, systematically questioning, critical work that is fully initiative-driven, self-organized, and responsible for their own work and their students' development. They must also possess the competence and ability to coordinate and collaborate, justifying the relevance and compliance with the specific demands of "modernity" in pedagogical science.

"In the conditions of intensifying needs within the framework of pedagogical activity, the modern university

teacher can no longer rely solely on a simple knowledge of the material, its content and structure, as well as teaching methods and forms. Instead, the focus of the educator should be on facilitating students' electronic, media-based perception of material and information". (Zakharova, 2015, p. 115)

Teacher practice, as well as interactivity and institutional aspects of teaching, goals, content, and the learning process have gained immense importance. The learning process requires collaboration and coordination, which is why decision-making and interdisciplinary collaboration, aimed at ensuring information sharing and communication, are justified. The importance of interconnectedness in all educational processes within the university context is emphasized here.

This applies, for example, to the development and improvement of curricula and the enhancement of their practical orientation, as well as the quality and interconnections between pedagogical, didactic, and specialized competencies (Baimurzina et al., 2019; Skripak et al., 2022). Until recently, the focus was mainly on the organizational aspects of university development. However, in recent years, there has been renewed attention to the quality of teaching. Initiatives related to teaching run parallel to personnel policies, the content of the educational process, and the strategy and tactics for implementing new content programs.

"The professional activity of a teacher, as a criterion for assessing their workability and consistency; a university teacher is a subject of its policy; the university must provide its teachers with the necessary conditions for their activities to meet the required level of intellectual work effectiveness (systematic retraining and training, raising the level of qualification, publishing relevant scientific and methodological materials, applying or expanding the resources of the electronic library, and more, the development of other educational environment quality attributes); it is quite logical that this also includes the teacher's compensation system". (Tsekhovich & Shevchenko, 2021, p. 251)

Undoubtedly, to achieve results, independent and autonomous work by the teacher is necessary in such an interconnected approach to teaching, which ensures reflexivity, motivates the search for feedback, encourages discussion of problem areas within the educational environment, and promotes interaction (Shapauov et al., 2023). There may sometimes be a cognitive dissonance related to conflicts and differences in opinions when integrating new content with distinct substantive, personal, and social characteristics. These are resolved through productive collaborative discussions.

"The awareness of the problem must be developed, primarily by discussing the problem. During this initial problem confrontation, a common goal is developed, and cognitive conflicts arise, contributing to motivation. The solution to the problem is formed from the beginning, linking all its components together, which leads to understanding. The problem-solving structure is built in the questioning-developing teaching conversation because it requires knowledge that is not yet available at this stage; hence it must be developed first. According to the modern understanding of teaching and learning, the accumulation of new knowledge should also be actively self-discovered". (Aebli, 1994, p. 7)

These data are used as an additional resource for acquiring professional competencies in the process of learning and teaching, filtering them as needed for urgency, importance, relevance, and more. It is important as it focuses on *"identifying the problems of students' professional development, developing the content of students' professional development in the educational (professionally oriented) environment, and more"*. (Asadullin & Frolov, 2017, p. 53)

CONCLUSIONS

This research essentially focuses on developing, in addition to methodological skills, didactic and social skills, the enhancement of competency-based activities within one's specific subject area. The space for maneuvering in this approach is centered on the formation of concrete individual successful outcomes. Such an approach has a positive impact on teaching, and through the alignment of various educational requirements and intensive collaboration, a "team spirit" has emerged. One of its strengths is evident in the collaboration between teachers and the audience, as well as among students themselves.

Close integration and the use of available digital technologies enhance readiness for learning, free up additional time resources under the motivation of "practice-oriented engagement," and create a synergistic effect in a well-functioning team. This means collaboration in the initiation and implementation of complex, systemic-functional pedagogical projects.

Despite complex internal and external political and economic conditions and certain framework conditions in the educational sphere of universities, the topic of quality development, control, and assessment will likely continue to gain increasing importance in the future. Therefore, we should be interested in the professionalism and competitiveness of teachers and university graduates, in the continuous improvement of staff qualifications to meet new challenges and engage in their strategic development. This way, they can excel in the face of growing competition, pressure, and, overall, derive a higher degree of

satisfaction from teaching and learning, which is mutually beneficial.

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