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THE PEDAGOGICAL ESSENCE OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN PREPARING FOR MILITARY SERVICE

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Abstract: This article looks at the theoretical and pedagogical basis of the competency-based approach used in today's military education systems, why it came about, and how it is put together. It covers the idea of military-professional competence, the parts that make it up, and the set of factors that shape the quality of education. Drawing on both international and local scholarly sources, the article explains why military education needs to move away from a traditional, knowledge-focused model toward a results-focused, competency-based model. The subject chosen for the study is the training process preparing 60 students in grades 10–11 for military service at general secondary school No. 1 of the MMTB in the city of Termiz, Surkhandarya region.

Keywords: competency-based approach, military education, military-professional competence, quality of education, cadet, competence components, military pedagogy.

Introduction.

Today's globalization, the fast growth of information technology, and the deep changes in the nature of military threats are placing new, higher demands on how military specialists are trained. A modern service member can no longer be someone who simply holds theoretical knowledge — they must become a person able to make independent decisions in complicated, fast-changing situations, someone with the ability to think strategically and who is socially and psychologically stable. [1]

The standing of any state in the international arena, its social stability, and its prospects for strategic development are shaped, above all, by its level of science, culture, economy, and public well-being. These factors, in turn, depend directly on society's intellectual capacity — that is, its ability to create new knowledge, absorb it, and put it to use. The education system sits at the heart of this process, which is why both the world community and individual states treat raising the quality of education as a strategic priority. [2]

A look at how military education actually works shows that a traditional model aimed only at absorbing a body of information cannot fully meet the goal of training a genuinely competent professional. This is why introducing a results-focused, competency-based approach into higher military education has become a pressing scientific and pedagogical problem.

Literature review.

The theoretical and pedagogical foundations of the competency-based approach in military education have been studied abroad by Abbe A. (2021), Reigeluth Charles M. and Bell Herbert H. (2014), Fletcher J.D., Chatelier P.R., and Raven J. (1984), among others. [3]

Within the CIS countries, this subject has been addressed by Dolomanyuk L.V. (2011), Kalashnikov V.L., Bauzina E.N., Oksyukovskaya V.N. (1999), Lenitsky K.S. (2015), Petrachkov O., Kyslenko D., Mykhaylov V., Shostak R., Polyvaniuk V. (2024), and others. [4]

During the years of independence, the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of the competency-based approach within Uzbekistan's military education system have been studied by Umarov I.O. (2025), Islamova M.Sh. (2023), Akhmedov O.G., Alimardonov Z.Sh. (2016), and others. [5]

Research methodology.

In reviewing the scholarly sources on this topic, the following research methods were used: theoretical analysis and synthesis of the scientific literature; comparative analysis of relevant foreign and domestic sources; and the generalization and systematization of existing pedagogical concepts.

The subject chosen for the study is the teaching process that prepares students for military service — specifically, the training process covering 60 students in grades 10–11 at general secondary school No. 1 of the MMTB in the city of Termiz, Surkhandarya region. The theoretical and pedagogical analysis presented below is discussed with a view to how it can be applied within this exact group of students.

Analysis and results.

The rise of the competency-based approach is tied to a number of real social and economic factors: the shaping of a new economic model, the rapid growth of information technology, how quickly the world of professions keeps changing, and the growing share of creative work. Under the pressure of these factors, a specialist's worth is no longer measured by how much information they know, but by how well they can put that knowledge to work in a real situation.

In the military field, this process took its own particular course. Research carried out by Allison Abbe shows that in the early 2000s, foreign-language skills and cultural knowledge were formally written into strategic military documents as important competencies for the armed forces as a whole. [6] This directly led to the introduction of new training modules within military education.

At a 2004 hearing before the U.S. Congress, General Robert H. Scales Jr. shared a real example from a brigade commander: even with excellent technical intelligence, the lack of cultural understanding significantly reduced the effectiveness of operations. [7] This example is widely seen as clear, practical proof that military training needs a competency-based approach covering not just technical skill, but social and cultural understanding as well.

The strategic importance of this direction was confirmed again in 2007, at a special summit led by Department of Defense representative David S. C. Chu, dedicated to building regional and cultural competencies among military personnel. [8]

The findings of the study show that the idea of "quality" in education has many sides to it. In its plain sense, quality is the set of key features that sets one thing apart from others; in a philosophical sense, it is seen as the precise trait that defines the inner nature of an object. [9]

In education, the idea of quality carries its own special meaning. It reflects not just the amount of knowledge or the numbers behind learning outcomes, but also how effective the teaching process is, how well it serves its purpose, and how well it matches the needs of society. [10] In the scholarly literature, the term "quality of education" is understood in four main ways: how fully the aims of education are achieved; how well learning outcomes match what society needs; how ready a graduate is for professional work; and an integrated picture of the teaching process together with its results.

The quality of education comes together through three parts working as one: the quality of the process (how effective the teaching technologies and methods are), the quality of the conditions (the level of material, technical, staffing, and methodological resources available), and the quality of the results (how well a graduate has developed the needed knowledge, skills, and competencies). [11]

The factors that shape the quality of education fall into two groups. Internal factors include an applicant's starting level of preparation, their motivation, and their personal intellectual development. External factors include how well the educational institution is managed, how up to date its curricula are, its teaching methods, its system for monitoring and grading, and the overall social and educational environment. Internal factors have a direct effect on the outcome, while external factors provide the conditions that make that outcome possible.

Military-professional competence is an integrative trait — it reflects a cadet's ability to solve real professional problems independently and effectively under actual service conditions. The competence of a military specialist has a complex, layered structure and includes the following five main components: [12]

Cognitive component — the body of general military and specialized knowledge, understanding of the basics of military science, and awareness of how technical equipment works.

Practical-operational component — practical skills and abilities, including the capacity to make quick decisions in tactical situations.

Motivational component — interest in the profession, the wish to serve the Motherland, and a sense of duty.

Personal component — qualities such as leadership, discipline, responsibility, resilience under stress, and strength of will.

Reflective component — the ability to review one's own actions, correct mistakes, and keep working to improve oneself.

These components are closely tied to one another, and if any single one is missing, the overall level of competence drops. This is why, in military education, all of these components need to be developed together, each one reinforcing the others. [13]

The study identified and substantiated six key pedagogical conditions that shape the competence of a future officer.

First condition — introducing a step-by-step, comprehensive training program. Working together, the academic office and departments should refine the curricula so that the content of each subject is clearly tied to a specific competence component.

Second condition — combining theoretical and practical training. When the content of a lesson is chosen to match the parts of the final competence being built, knowledge turns into practical skill much faster.

Third condition — building up professional experience early on. A cadet's practical experience develops steadily through trying out junior command roles, training and situational exercises, role-play, and hands-on internships.

Fourth condition — studying each individual's personal traits with purpose. Knowing a cadet's individual psychological traits, motivation, and abilities gives the basis needed to tailor the teaching process to that person.

Fifth condition — selecting applicants on a scientific basis. Applicants who already have a good sense of what the profession involves, and whose personal qualities suit command work, go on to reach a higher level of competence.

Sixth condition — building a system of profession-oriented motives. The study shows that strong motivation can even make up for a shortage of ability, serving as a factor that helps ensure success.

The findings of the study also confirm how important innovative teaching methods are for successfully applying the competency-based approach. In particular, problem-based learning, situational modeling, interactive sessions, training techniques, and computer simulators were found to be highly effective methods. These methods turn a cadet from a passive listener into an active participant, helping knowledge stick and be quickly carried over into practical work. [10,14]

Grounding military education in national values also matters a great deal. Qualities such as patriotism, selflessness, and a sense of community form the moral foundation of a service member's character, showing that the competency-based model needs to cover not only professional but also moral and spiritual components.

Moving toward a competency-based approach in military education is an objective necessity. This conclusion is backed up by a number of international studies as well. In particular, research on the changing paradigm of military education also stresses the need to move from a traditional, knowledge-focused model to a results-focused, competency-based one. [15]

At the same time, it is also true that many educators find it difficult to put the competency-based approach into practice. The reasons identified include: the tradition of setting integrated

learning outcomes as the actual goal is still not well established; certain questions within competence theory have not yet been fully worked out; and current curricula do not yet have well-developed mechanisms for applying the competency-based approach. [16] As a result, a certain tension arises between the education system and the real needs of practical work, and this is especially noticeable in the military field, where actual service conditions are always changing and complex.

International research on physical training also confirms that motivation plays a special role in a military specialist's competence, which fits closely with the motivational component and the need to build a system of profession-oriented motives identified in this study. [17]

Conclusion

The analysis carried out leads to the following main scientific conclusions.

First, the pedagogical essence of the competency-based approach in preparing for military service is taking shape directly under the influence of today's globalization, the fast growth of information technology, and the changing nature of military threats. It was confirmed that the traditional, knowledge-focused model cannot fully meet the requirements for training a genuinely competent professional. [1]

Second, the quality of education was found to be a complex, many-sided phenomenon that comes together through the close interplay of process, conditions, and results, shaped by both internal and external factors.

Third, military-professional competence takes shape through the close unity of the cognitive, practical-operational, motivational, personal, and reflective components, and it reflects an officer's ability to make independent, responsible decisions in complex situations, to command a unit, and to carry out combat tasks effectively.

Fourth, developing competencies step by step, combining theory with practice, building professional experience early, selecting applicants on a scientific basis, and strengthening a motivating environment were identified as the key conditions for achieving high pedagogical effectiveness in military education. [18]

Fifth, moral and ethical upbringing grounded in national values was recognized as an important factor that strengthens a military specialist's professional and social stability, showing that the competency-based model must cover both the professional and the moral-spiritual sides of a person. [11]

In short, the competency-based approach serves as the scientific and methodological foundation for renewing the content of military education, raising its quality, and ensuring that graduates are ready for military-professional work. Applying this approach consistently and comprehensively across military educational institutions will make it possible to noticeably raise the quality of officer training going forward.

The theoretical and pedagogical conclusions set out above show how they can be applied within the context of this study's subject — the teaching process that prepares 60 students in grades

10–11 for military service at general secondary school No. 1 of the MMTB in the city of Termiz, Surkhandarya region — and they provide the scientific and theoretical grounding for testing this approach in practice with this same group of students in later stages of the research

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