BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

DIDACTIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AMONG PROSPECTIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Qosimova Muattar
Master's student at Namangan State Pedagogical Institute
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20532819

Annotation: This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of developing professional competence among prospective primary school teachers and analyzes the didactic opportunities of this process in the context of contemporary educational requirements. The study elucidates the essence and significance of the competency-based approach and highlights the role of innovative pedagogical technologies, interactive teaching methods, and learner-centered educational approaches in enhancing the professional preparation of future educators.

Keywords: professional competence, competency-based approach, didactic opportunities, pedagogical technologies, innovative education, interactive teaching methods, pedagogical practicum, professional development, methodological preparation.

Introduction:

The development of professional competence among prospective primary school teachers is currently regarded as one of the most pressing issues in both pedagogical theory and educational practice. Ongoing modernization processes within the education system have significantly increased the demands placed on the teaching profession. Given that primary education serves as the foundation for learners' subsequent educational development, the professional preparation of teachers working at this stage is of particular importance. A contemporary teacher is expected not only to possess thorough subject-matter knowledge but also to demonstrate the ability to effectively organize the educational process, apply innovative pedagogical technologies, and establish productive communication with students. From this perspective, professional competence is understood as an integrated system encompassing a teacher's theoretical knowledge, practical skills, professional values, and reflective abilities.

Main part:

The concept of professional competence has been continuously refined by researchers, with its constituent components being reconsidered and updated in accordance with the evolving needs of contemporary education. Consequently, the competency-based approach has been recognized as a leading methodological framework in the preparation of prospective primary school teachers.

The didactic potential for developing professional competence is primarily determined by the content and methods of instruction implemented within higher education institutions. In this context, didactic opportunities refer to the capacity of the objectives, content, methods, tools, and organizational forms of the pedagogical process to contribute to professional development. An essential prerequisite for competence development in teacher education is the effective integration of theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Therefore, contemporary didactics places particular emphasis on instructional methods that promote active student engagement, foster independent thinking, and encourage the resolution of problem-based situations.

The application of interactive educational technologies contributes to the development of students' abilities to make professional decisions, conduct analysis, and perform evaluative judgments. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the didactic process is also determined by the

establishment of subject–subject relationships based on collaboration between instructors and students. These factors collectively serve as important pedagogical mechanisms in the formation and enhancement of professional competence.

Innovative pedagogical technologies possess significant didactic potential for the development of professional competence among prospective primary school teachers. The integration of digital technologies, multimedia tools, and electronic educational resources into the learning process expands students' opportunities for knowledge acquisition. The use of modern information and communication technologies enables the visualization, simulation, and interactive assimilation of educational content. This, in turn, facilitates a deeper understanding of theoretical knowledge and enhances students' ability to apply such knowledge in practical contexts.

Moreover, the utilization of distance learning platforms contributes to the improvement of prospective teachers' self-directed learning skills. An educational environment organized on the basis of innovative technologies fosters the development of creative thinking and professional adaptability among students. As a result, the contemporary competencies required for effective teaching practice are developed in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Pedagogical practicum plays a crucial role in the formation of professional competence. Through practical training, students are provided with opportunities to apply and evaluate their theoretical knowledge within authentic educational settings. Furthermore, pedagogical practicum serves as an important factor in shaping the professional identity of prospective teachers.

During practical activities, students acquire essential skills related to lesson planning, communication with learners, and classroom management. At the same time, they gain valuable experience in analyzing diverse pedagogical situations and developing effective solutions to educational challenges. By fostering reflective processes, pedagogical practicum activates the internal mechanisms of professional growth and self-improvement. It is through practical experience that a meaningful connection between theoretical preparation and professional expertise is established, ensuring the holistic development of future teachers.

A learner-centered educational approach provides substantial didactic opportunities for the development of professional competence among prospective primary school teachers. This approach is based on taking into account students' individual characteristics, needs, and abilities. As a result, it becomes possible to identify and support each student's unique trajectory of professional development. Learner-centered education ensures the active participation of students in the pedagogical process and strengthens their sense of responsibility for learning outcomes. Under such conditions, students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge; rather, they become active subjects who independently acquire, process, and apply knowledge.

In the higher education system, the competency-based approach has gained particular significance in improving the quality of professional training. In the field of primary education, special attention is being devoted to the development of prospective teachers' general cultural, specialized, professional, and personal competencies, while educational content is increasingly being organized in accordance with international standards. The quality of the educational process is no longer assessed solely on the basis of curricula and program content; it is also evaluated according to the extent to which students' acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies meet the requirements of national educational standards.

To become an effective educator, a teacher must possess the ability to plan and organize lessons, prepare instructional materials and educational resources, communicate effectively with learners and colleagues, exchange professional experiences, engage in continuous professional development, and remain informed about current educational innovations and advancements. These

competencies enable teachers to respond effectively to the diverse challenges of contemporary educational practice. Therefore, the development of professional competence among prospective primary school teachers is a multifaceted process that requires the integration of professional knowledge and practical skills with continuous personal and professional growth. Such an approach ensures the preparation of competent educators capable of meeting the evolving demands of modern primary education and contributing to the overall quality of the teaching and learning process.

Conclusion:

The pedagogy of the twenty-first century necessitates the integration of innovative teaching methods into the educational process. From the perspective of competence development, active and interactive teaching approaches occupy a particularly significant place. In particular, methods such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, role-playing and business simulations, as well as discussion- and dialogue-oriented activities, contribute to the development of students' creative and critical thinking skills while preparing them to make informed decisions in real pedagogical contexts.These examples demonstrate that innovative instructional methods—including tasks designed to foster critical thinking, games and projects that encourage creativity, and learning situations that promote collaborative problem-solving—serve not only as effective tools for student learning but also as important catalysts for the professional growth of prospective teachers.

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