

IMPROVING THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF PRE-SERVICE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IN UZBEKISTAN: A TECHNOLOGY-BASED APPROACH TO DEVELOPING METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

Preschool education represents the foundational stage of lifelong learning and plays a decisive role in children's holistic development. Ongoing educational reforms in Uzbekistan have increased professional demands on future preschool teachers, particularly regarding their methodological competence. This study examines the development of a technology-based approach aimed at enhancing methodological competence in pre-service preschool teachers. Emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary continuity, the integration of theory and practice, and the use of innovative educational technologies in teacher preparation programs. A qualitative and analytical research approach was employed, including literature analysis, pedagogical observation, and reflective practice. The findings indicate that systematic, technology-driven training enhances professional readiness, methodological flexibility, and creative pedagogical thinking. The study underscores the importance of competence-based and innovation-oriented approaches in preparing highly qualified preschool educators capable of meeting contemporary educational standards.

Keywords: pre-service preschool teachers; methodological competence; teacher education; educational innovation; preschool education

INTRODUCTION

Preschool education is recognized as the initial and essential stage of the continuous education system. In Uzbekistan, preschool education is legally defined as an integral component of lifelong learning and serves as a key factor in children's physical, cognitive, social, and moral development. In recent years, the expansion of preschool education coverage and the implementation of large-scale reforms have significantly increased the demand for professionally competent preschool teachers.

Modern educational policies in Uzbekistan emphasize not only the institutional development of preschool education but also the professional growth of educators. Within this context, the concept of human capital highlights the importance of investing in early childhood education and teacher preparation. Consequently, the development of methodological competence among pre-service preschool teachers has become a priority for higher pedagogical education.

Methodological competence is essential for effective teaching, encompassing pedagogical knowledge, practical skills, innovative thinking, and the ability to adapt to diverse classroom situations. The development of this competence ensures that future preschool teachers can plan, implement, and evaluate educational activities effectively, fostering holistic child development.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

Methodological competence is a multifaceted professional attribute, integrating theoretical knowledge, practical skills, reflective capacities, and innovation-oriented thinking. Teachers with high methodological competence demonstrate enhanced ability to organize educational processes, implement age-appropriate teaching strategies, and respond flexibly to students' learning needs.

Previous research highlights that fragmented teacher education programs and insufficient interdisciplinary integration negatively affect professional readiness. Therefore, the integration of pedagogical, psychological, and subject-specific disciplines is critical for developing holistic professional competence. Interdisciplinary continuity strengthens the link between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering sustainable professional growth.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTINUITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Interdisciplinary continuity is a core condition for improving preschool teacher education. Integrating disciplines such as pedagogy, child psychology, early childhood development, and educational technology enables pre-service teachers to connect theoretical concepts with practical classroom applications. Such integration enhances analytical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and adaptive skills.

Research shows that weak interdisciplinary integration can result in limited professional motivation, insufficient pedagogical reflection, and reduced methodological preparedness. Conversely, continuous and coherent education strengthens professional identity and enhances creative pedagogical thinking. Therefore, the implementation of interdisciplinary approaches remains highly relevant in modern teacher preparation programs.

CONTENT OF THE TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

The proposed technology for developing methodological competence is a systematic, structured pedagogical process aimed at improving professional readiness. Its components include:

1. Theoretical Component: This component focuses on building foundational knowledge in pedagogy, psychology, didactics, curriculum design, and educational standards. Students gain understanding of child development principles, teaching methods, and contemporary trends in preschool education.

2. Practical Component: Practical training develops skills in lesson planning, interactive teaching methods, classroom management, and effective communication. Teaching practice, project-based tasks, and problem-solving activities are central to this component.

3. Innovative and Digital Technologies: The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT), multimedia tools, virtual learning environments, and electronic methodological resources enhances methodological flexibility and professional adaptability. Students learn to incorporate digital tools to enrich the learning environment and promote children's engagement and creativity.

4. Reflective and Self-Development Component: Reflection encourages pre-service teachers to evaluate their professional performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and plan continuous professional development. Reflective journals, peer feedback, and guided mentoring support this component.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative and analytical research design. Data were collected through:

- Literature review of national and international research on preschool teacher education and methodological competence.
- Observation of pre-service preschool teachers during pedagogical practice in preschool settings.
- Reflective analysis of students' professional activities, lesson planning, and classroom interactions.

Comparative and descriptive methods were used to identify key factors influencing methodological competence development, while thematic analysis highlighted patterns in professional behavior and reflective practices.

DISCUSSION / RESULTS

The study found that methodological competence develops most effectively when theoretical instruction is combined with practical experience and innovative educational technologies. Interdisciplinary continuity strengthened professional motivation and creative thinking.

Key findings include:

- Pre-service teachers with structured, technology-based training demonstrated improved lesson planning and classroom management skills.
- Integration of ICT and interactive resources enhanced students' adaptability and methodological flexibility.
- Reflective practices promoted critical thinking, problem-solving, and continuous self-improvement.

These findings align with global research emphasizing competence-based, practice-oriented, and innovation-focused approaches in teacher education.

CONCLUSION

The development of methodological competence in pre-service preschool teachers is a systematic, long-term process requiring integrated theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and innovative pedagogical technologies. The study concludes that structured educational technologies, interdisciplinary integration, and reflective practices significantly enhance professional readiness.

Strengthening these components contributes to preparing competitive, adaptable, and highly qualified preschool educators capable of meeting the challenges of modern educational standards. This approach supports the sustainable development of preschool education in Uzbekistan and provides a model for teacher preparation programs globally.

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