

# COMMUNICATION-COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF THE TEACHER IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

## ABORDAGEM BASEADA EM COMPETÊNCIAS DA COMUNICAÇÃO NA ATIVIDADE PROFISSIONAL DO PROFESSOR NO SISTEMA DE ENSINO SUPERIOR

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**Abstract:** The reform of the higher education system is associated with the introduction of a competency-based approach in education, which determines the relevance of considering the communication and competency-based approach in the professional activity of a teacher in the higher education system. The authors of this work indicate that a modern teacher of higher education must meet the qualification requirements that are dictated by the federal state educational standards of higher education of a new type. That is, a modern teacher needs to have such a complex of abilities to carry out his professional activities that will affect the quality of education: actively develop the creative abilities of students and form their universal values. The quality of the educational process of higher education depends mostly on the possession of communication competencies.

**Keywords:** higher education system; competence; communication-competency-based approach; interpersonal and business communication.

**Resumo:** A reforma do sistema de ensino superior está associada à introdução de uma abordagem baseada em competências na educação, que determina a relevância de considerar a comunicação e a abordagem baseada em competências na atividade profissional de um professor no sistema de ensino superior. Os autores do trabalho indicam que um professor moderno de ensino superior deve atender aos requisitos de qualificação ditados pelos padrões educacionais estaduais federais de ensino superior de um novo tipo. Ou seja, um professor moderno precisa ter um complexo de habilidades para realizar suas atividades profissionais que afetarão a qualidade da educação: desenvolver ativamente as habilidades criativas dos alunos e formar seus valores universais. A qualidade do processo educacional do ensino superior depende em grande parte da posse de competências de comunicação.

**Palavras-chave:** sistema de ensino superior; competência; abordagem baseada em competências de comunicação; comunicação interpessoal e empresarial.

## Introduction

The radical social, political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural changes taking place in Russia affect and complicate social life conditions. In the context of the ongoing transformations, several reforms are also being carried out in the Russian higher education system, which is aimed at modernizing the existing education system and creating conditions to enhance the competitiveness of the Russian education and science system, both at the national level and in the international arena.

The education system's modernization consists of a change in the educational paradigm (Lubsky & Kovalev, 2020). As part of higher education, we are witnessing a reorientation of the educational paradigm with the predominant transfer of knowledge and the formation of skills to create conditions for mastering a set of competences that emphasize the potential and reveal the graduate's abilities for successful work in a modern multi-factorial socio-political, socio-economic, and information space.

The constantly changing demands of the labor market, as well as the emergence of new technologies and a focus on a competency-based approach, are pushing higher education institutions to transform basic professional educational programs in accordance with changing economic and social needs. Changes in educational programs are based on federal state educational standards in areas and levels of training, which fix the basic curricula's corrections. They consolidate the competency-based approach through the development by students of the full range of required competencies and note the presence of high-quality material and technical security and a high level of staff, implementing the main educational programs.

Higher educational institutions' important task is to maintain and increase the personnel potential, which will meet the qualification requirements currently set for the teaching staff of higher education.

The new model's educational standards contain very clear requirements for the teaching staff of higher educational institutions, which consist of high-quality lecture work of the teacher and the staff of the high skills in the performance of methodical, organizational, scientific, and research work.

Thus, the modernization of the higher education system and the transition from a knowledge-based paradigm to an activity-oriented education paradigm affect the increase in the quality requirements of higher education, which primarily concerns the increase of claims to professional requirements for higher education teachers, and actualize the interest of domestic researchers in the competencies of a higher education teacher.

## Methods

The current state of higher education in Russia, the directions of its modernization are an actual area of research in the framework of the sociology of education (Antonova, 2018; Astakhova, 2003; Chikaeva et al., 2019).

Currently, scientists have noted the problem of the crisis of higher education in Russia. Research interest relates to the functions of the higher education system, which are actively transforming in the context of the new educational paradigm (Antonov, 2018). The process of globalization and the development of information and communication technologies lead to the fact that the most significant role is played by the exact and natural sciences, and humanitarian knowledge is being squeezed out of the educational space, dehumanization of knowledge takes place, which causes great concern among researchers (Tishkov, 2013).

A modern university is considered as a driver of the country's economic development, where human capital plays an important role (Karpov, 2017). The quality of higher education is becoming a central issue in many studies (Vasiliev, 2019). The quality of education is often associated with implemented technologies and mechanisms that are used in the learning process. Research on online technologies in education is relevant (Lubsky & Kovalev, 2020). The global information society is a new reality for modern society, leading to the introduction of information technology in the university's educational space (Artyukhov & Molotkova, 2015).

In the conditions of the new information society and the introduction of new techno-

logies in higher education's educational space, the teacher's professional activity is changing, filled with new meanings associated with the development of new competences. The faculty's activities in changing conditions are becoming an urgent topic for scientific research in the social and humanitarian direction. It is also important for scientists to understand what educational trajectories students have under changing conditions (Cherednichenko, 2012), and how their adaptation to the new educational space proceeds (Kasyanov et al., 2019).

The analysis of the scientific literature on the subject field of research captures the diversity of directions in the field of educational sociology (Zotova & Bandurka, 2017). The higher education system's reform does not stop even today, which requires a sociological reflection of the professional activity of the teaching staff of the higher school in transformational conditions. Of particular importance in this issue's framework is the communication-competency-based approach of the teacher's professional activity in the higher education system.

Education is primarily a social institution, which determines the use of institutional theory in our study, based on E. Durkheim and M. Weber's theoretical principles. The structural-functional theory allows us to trace the functioning of the higher education system and determine the main features of the current education system (T. Parsons and R. Merton). A. Maslow's theory of the determination of human behavior makes it possible to evaluate a higher education teacher's professional activity, and the competency-based approach allows us to consider the process of professional activity, which depends on the professional ability of the teacher to organize training.

Thus, we note that the modernization of domestic higher education is taking place against the backdrop of intensive socio-political and socio-economic transformations in the country. Globalization and informatization of society are adjusting the education and professional activities of higher education teachers. Given that the requirements for the level and quality of education are changing, the nature of the educational process becomes innovative, and the importance of the communication and competency approach in the professional activity of a university teacher is growing.

## Results

The quality management system of higher education is largely determined by the quality of the faculty's professional activities. The need for higher education in qualified teaching staff dictates special requirements for the university teacher and his competency.

As part of the analysis of the communication-competency-based approach in the professional activity of a teacher in the higher education system, it is necessary to formulate the categorical apparatus that we will use clearly. First, let us turn to the definition of competence and competency.

In the scientific literature, there are many definitions of these concepts. It should also be noted that there is no single interpretation of these terms. The widespread use of these terms is justified in connection with the need to modernize education content.

Considering the strategy for the modernization of the content of general education, we see that competency includes the intellectual and skill component of education, ideology, and interpretation of education content. Competency is "a combination of personality's properties (characteristics) that allow it to carry out qualitatively certain activities aimed at resolving problems (tasks) in any field" (Reznik & Vdovina, 2015). That is, competency means what the specialist has achieved professionally. Competency is a measure of mastering competence, which is determined by the ability to solve tasks prescribed by the "position". Competence also means "some internal, potential, hidden psychological novelties (knowledge, perceptions, programs (algorithms) of actions, value systems and relationships), which are then revealed in a person's competency as relevant, active manifestations" (Zimnyaya, 2004).

In the framework of the competency-based approach to learning, a person is the main goal of the educational process. The competency-based educational paradigm is aimed at acquiring system analysis skills in studying experience. Within this paradigm, the student's activity is aimed at independently obtaining knowledge, the student also learns to form personal knowledge on the basis of heterogeneous information, to set goals, to integrate ideas, to work

with information by classifying it (Gafiatulina, et al., 2019). A competency-based approach teaches us to use pedagogical technologies and new information technologies to get the necessary information in professional activities. The symbiosis of the knowledge and competency paradigm serves the complete formation of a higher education teacher's competencies.

Since we are talking about the competences of a higher education teacher in this work, we turn to the definition of "professional competency of a teacher" – the ability of a teacher to carry out his professional activities, which is expressed in a competency-based approach in the development of students' creative abilities, the formation of their universal human values (Sergeev, 2010). That is, the teacher's competency lies in the system of knowledge, skills, and abilities that form the basis of his professional activity as a teacher and scientist with a high level of verbal communication (Chikaeva et al., 2019).

In his professional activity, a higher school teacher goes through the following stages of the educational process: at the preparatory stage, there is goal-setting, pedagogical diagnosis of students, pedagogical forecasting associated with the prediction of the results of his activity, pedagogical projecting, and planning of educational activity, then comes the stage associated with the direct organization of educational activity, the implementation of pedagogical decisions and the control and correction of educational activities in the form of a system of assessment tool funds, including various forms of current and midterm control, as well as intermediate and final certification.

Passing the indicated stages in the educational process fixes the professional competency of a higher education teacher, which includes the following components: in-depth knowledge of the subject; pedagogical skill; broad scientific outlook; craving for innovation and scientific creativity; the presence of a degree, knowledge of scientific research methods; innovative mobility (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Professional competencies of a university teacher

Groups of teacher's competences	Grades	The content of competences
Deep knowledge of the subject	I	Knowledge of the frontiers of science and practice of disciplines
Pedagogical skill	II	Ability to transfer knowledge to students, inculcate the need for its constant updating
Broad scientific outlook	III	Erudition, ability to be interesting, readiness for continuous professional and cultural development
Craving for innovation and scientific creativity	IV	The constant pursuit of progressive changes, creative approach to problems
Scientific research skills	V	Ability to conduct scientific research
Innovative mobility	VI	Knowledge of foreign languages and computer technology

Thus, the following can be attributed to basic pedagogical competencies:

- 1 - Projecting-constructive – the ability to project and construct educational activities;
- 2 - Information technology - the ability to work with information flows;
- 3 - Communicative-regulatory – the ability to achieve the goals of the educational process using the designed technology of professionally oriented training;
- 4 - Control and evaluation – the ability to organize an effective monitoring system of the educational process;
- 5 - Autopsychological – the ability to carry out an objective analysis of one's own activities;
- 6 - Scientific – the ability to carry out scientific activities.

All of the competence groups of a higher education teacher that we have listed should

be supported by communicative competence, which acts as an integrative characteristic of a person, represented as a combination of knowledge and skills in a specific situation, demonstrated in behavior and allowing one to perform tasks effectively. This competence means the teacher's readiness for professional activity in many contexts of his social communicative interaction, reaching agreement with other interaction participants (Novgorodtseva, 2007).

The communicative nature of the educational space in the interaction of the teacher-student actualizes the teacher's ability of empathy, the ability to understand the subjective world of the student, and to form his learning trajectory. That is, thanks to effective communication with the teacher, students are ready to comprehend aspects of social and cultural experience.

The quality of the educational process of higher education depends largely on information and communication technology competency of university teachers. The competent use of ICT by the teacher increases the pedagogical impact on the formation of the student's creative potential.

The communicative competency includes the following components (Snegovaya et al., 2019):

- the cognitive component, which is knowledge and possession of basic communicative competences, as well as the improvement of these competencies in the process of interpersonal and business communication in the framework of professional activities;
- the value component allows us to perceive the teacher's communicative competence as one of the essential values of the teacher's professional culture in higher education. Within this component, the teacher must understand that this competence is a resource that helps him build interaction with students and colleagues, as well as solve professional problems;
- the behavioral (functional) component is manifested in the functions carried by communicative competence.

Communicative competency in the professional activities of a higher education teacher performs a social and communicative function. That is, it provides the exchange of information (knowledge, skills) in the process of interpersonal and business communication between actors of communication: teachers and students, teachers and faculty, teachers and school management. The teacher's communicative competency also includes a socio-perceptive function, which clearly shows the process of the perception of the higher education space by its subjects. In addition, the communicative competence of the teacher helps to build a dialogue between the actors of interaction in the educational space.

A university teacher's communicative competency in professional activities is primarily based on the knowledge of the language the discipline is taught in. Within the framework of this competency, the teacher must have a competent oral and written speech, as well as the ability to speak and listen to the interlocutor. The possession of communicative competence shows the ability of the teacher to analyze the speech situation of communication and, in accordance with the situation, choose a program of speech behavior, taking into account the various areas and situations of communicative interaction.

Competency is always manifested in activities. In solving professional problems, a higher education teacher shows professional competency. The dynamism of reforms in education implies that a university teacher's professional activity is not predetermined for the entire period of his professional career and provides for the need for continuing education, the process of constantly improving his professional competency.

Technological progress and globalization have contributed to changes within the Institute of Education, leading to the emergence of new knowledge and the use of new technologies in the educational process, to which we can attribute the spread of distance learning. These changes stimulate higher school teachers to use information and communication technologies in the educational process and encourage teachers to more thoroughly develop communication skills that will help them to better teach online courses, create interesting assignments for students and monitor students' independent work in a distance format.

In our opinion, it is communicative competence that allows the teacher to clearly and concisely present theoretical material to students and correctly conduct reflection of classes. Thanks to communicative competence, a teacher can freely feel himself in a virtual educational space.

The communicative-competency approach also assumes that a higher school teacher has not only ways of interacting with close and remote people, group work skills, but also has knowledge of foreign languages. A high level of knowledge of foreign languages will allow a higher school teacher to develop a course in a foreign language or implement an international program within the university, as well as open up the possibility for international mobility of the teaching staff of a higher school and will maintain the high status of the institution.

The teacher's communicative competency indicates that he knows how to see the needs of students, delves into their essence, receives and gives feedback. The teacher is able to understand the feelings and moods of students, and also understands the nature of the relationship of others to himself and can predict the behavior of people and is able to resolve conflicts.

## Conclusions

Our analysis showed that the competency-based approach in the educational process involves the development of skills that allow a person to act effectively in the future in situations of professional, personal and social life. The formation of the competences of a higher education teacher is a set of teacher competences – a specific model. Within the framework of this model, special importance is attached to skills that allow one to act in new, uncertain, problematic situations for which it is impossible to develop appropriate means in advance. The teacher needs to find such skills in the process of resolving uncertain situations and achieve the required professional results – high quality education in higher school.

The professional readiness of a higher education teacher for his activities is not limited to the acquisition of fundamental theoretical knowledge. For the educational process, the ability to transmit knowledge is important.

The successful implementation of major educational programs and the organization of educational process in the educational space of higher school, based on the communication-competency-based approach is evaluated by analyzing the competences possessed by the students in the process of learning. The analysis of students' competences is in demand, since one of the requirements of employers in the labor market is the development of communicative competence in full.

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