

The Formation of Flexibility and the Foundations of Metacompetence in Students of Professional Development Courses

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Abstract: The article considers the development of flexibility competence in students of advanced training and professional development courses as one of the main tasks of modern vocational education. Based on the analysis of theoretical approaches and characteristics of the target audience, the need to form flexibility as an integrative metacompetence, including cognitive, behavioral and emotional components, is justified. Pedagogical technologies that contribute to the development of flexibility (project-based learning, problem-based communication forms, modeling of professional situations and reflexive practice) are described. A conclusion is drawn about the need to systematically introduce mechanisms for developing flexibility in advanced training programs to ensure sustainable professional growth of teachers in the conditions of rapidly changing requirements of the educational environment.

Keywords: flexibility, competence, advanced training courses, teacher, andragogy, project-based learning, reflection, pedagogical technologies.



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INTRODUCTION.

Modern challenges facing the education system require teachers not only to have deep professional knowledge, but also to be able to adapt to rapidly changing conditions, effectively respond to uncertainties, and work in a multi-tasking environment. In such conditions, the development of the so-called “adaptive competencies” (soft skills), in which flexibility occupies one of the main places, is especially relevant. Flexibility as a competency implies the teacher’s ability to constructively perceive changes, quickly restructure their professional activities, and be ready for self-learning throughout their lives.

Developing flexibility in advanced training courses attended by adult specialists with different professional experience and levels of motivation requires the use of specially organized methodological approaches based on the principles of andragogy, listener-oriented education, and reflex pedagogy. Thus, the topic of developing flexibility competence within the framework of professional development and advanced training courses is of practical importance for ensuring not only timely, but also sustainable professional development of pedagogical staff.

The problem of developing flexibility as a key component of metacompetence is especially relevant in the context of advanced training courses, where the trainees are specialists with professional experience who are faced with new requirements and working conditions. Modern research emphasizes that flexibility ensures the successful restructuring of professional activity, the effective assimilation of new knowledge and technologies, as well as resistance to stressful situations arising as a result of changes in the educational or professional environment [1, p. 77].

The development of flexibility in advanced training courses involves not only the transfer of relevant knowledge, but also the creation of an educational environment that simulates uncertainty, rapid response and decision-making in conditions of information scarcity.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

In the scientific literature, adaptability is interpreted as an integrated personality trait that includes cognitive flexibility, emotional stability, readiness for change, and the ability to self-regulate [2, p. 34]. Research in the field of pedagogy and the psychology of vocational education emphasizes that the development of adaptability is an integral part of the formation of metacompetences - higher professional skills that provide independent planning, meaningful reflection, and decision-making in conditions of uncertainty [3, p. 114].

According to the concept of andragogy by M. Knowles [4], adults develop adaptive abilities more effectively in the context of problem-based learning, project activities, and reflective practices aimed at comparing new material with their professional experience.

Domestic author M.Kh. Ismoilova emphasizes that flexibility is manifested not only in the level of readiness for learning, but also as a form of manifestation of personal flexibility, emotional intelligence and self-control, which are necessary for successful work in a rapidly changing professional environment[5].

V.A. Slastenina states that flexibility is “a dynamic personality trait that manifests itself in the ability to change behavior and professional actions depending on external conditions without losing value orientation and professional identity” [3, p. 42].

Analysis of scientific literature allows us to conclude that the development of flexibility as a component of metacompetence within the framework of advanced training courses requires the integration of interdisciplinary approaches, the use of modern educational technologies and taking into account the individual characteristics of the trainees. The development of flexibility should be considered a priority in the system of professional development and advanced training.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. The article considers the development of students' flexibility in professional development courses as a metacompetence component. To achieve the research goal, we effectively used such methods as statistical research, comparative literature analysis and hypothesis substantiation methods, comparative analysis, systematic and logical approach.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS.

Flexibility as a personal and professional trait is widely considered in the psychological and pedagogical literature, where it is interpreted as an integral quality that includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral components.

In the context of professional development and advanced training courses for teachers, flexibility has acquired the status of a metacompetence that is the basis for mastering new knowledge and technologies. It is necessary to perform professional functions in the conditions of digital transformation, the introduction of new educational standards, as well as constant organizational and managerial changes in the education system.

The components of adaptability include:

cognitive adaptability, which is manifested in the ability to shift attention, generate new ideas, and rethink problems;

emotional adaptability, which reflects the ability to maintain psychological balance and resist stress;

behavioral adaptability, which consists in the readiness to change habitual patterns of behavior and adapt to new conditions [2, p. 117].

M.Kh.Ismoilova notes that the theoretical and methodological foundations of the formation of adaptability competence are:

humanistic pedagogy (K.Rogers, A.Maslow), emphasizing the importance of personal growth and self-realization;

activity approach theory (A.N.Leontiev, L.S.Vygotsky), in which learning is considered as an active process of changing reality;

andragogic approach (M. Knowles), the characteristics of adult learners, the desire to self-determine their own destiny[5, p. 23].

Adaptability should be viewed not as a static quality, but as a process that can be formed and developed in the presence of favorable pedagogical conditions. These conditions include the presence of a motivational environment, opportunities for modeling non-standard situations, active participation in project and team activities, as well as regular reflection on educational experience.

The participants of advanced training courses represent a diverse group of learners with different lengths of teaching experience, motivation for learning, levels of professional skills and life experience. These characteristics significantly affect both the perception of educational material and the ability and readiness to develop new competencies, including adaptability.

First, the majority of learners are adult specialists at an active professional stage, which makes their experience an important source for mastering new content. At the same time, the presence of persistent stereotypes and professional attitudes can make it difficult to perceive changes and prevent rapid adaptation to new educational paradigms. In this case, flexibility acts as a means of overcoming the inertia of thinking and a condition for successful adaptation to changing requirements [7, p. 89].

Secondly, the specificity of adult education is determined by high selectivity in relation to the content and forms of presentation of the material. An adult listener tends to view educational information through the prism of his professional situation, which requires the teacher to take into account the principle of personalization of education. From this point of view, the development of flexibility is possible only in the presence of individually oriented tasks based on professional situations and modeling of real pedagogical situations[8].

Thirdly, adult listeners often show internal resistance to innovations due to professional burnout or a sense of self-sufficiency. Therefore, the development of flexibility in this category of listeners is impossible without stimulating their internal motivation for development, which involves creating conditions for understanding the value of change and identifying the potential benefits of professional growth. An important factor in this process is reflection on one's own experience and personal obstacles as a mechanism for understanding. Methods for developing thinking skills, in particular, keeping professional diaries, participating in group discussions and analyzing one's own situations, allow you to increase awareness and form a flexible attitude towards the profession, one's own actions and external demands[9].

Successful development of flexibility in trainees of advanced training requires a comprehensive approach that combines motivational-value, cognitive and activity aspects. This process should be included in the content of training, the structure of lessons and the assessment system, taking into account the active involvement of trainees in creative, research and communicative activities.

The development of flexibility as a pedagogical metacompetence requires a systematic approach to organizing the educational process aimed at activating the subjective position of the trainee, developing his ability to understand professional changes and search for alternative solutions. The most effective pedagogical technologies that ensure variability, interdisciplinarity, problem-solving and reflection in the conditions of advanced training are considered. One of these technologies is project-based learning, which involves solving problems of professional significance with the result of a specific product.

Working on a project requires the trainee to take initiative, responsibility, work in a team, negotiate and, if necessary, change the strategy of activity. In the process of developing and implementing complex solutions, flexibility of behavior, the ability to switch between different types of activities and adapt to uncertainty are manifested and developed [11, p. 58].

Another effective tool is the technology of problem-based communication, which allows you to create a space for professional thinking and critical analysis. By solving situations in educational practice and discussing conflicting or conflicting situations, course participants develop a strategy of flexible behavior, learn to take into account opposing points of view, and also independently find non-standard ways to solve professional problems[9].

Special attention should be paid to the modeling of professional situations, especially the use of digital simulators and game formats (EdTech). Such approaches allow you to create conditions that are as close as possible to a real professional environment, where participants have to make decisions in conditions of limited time, incomplete information and rapidly changing input data. This format develops cognitive and emotional flexibility, helps to eliminate the fear of mistakes and forms an attitude towards development [10, p. 77].

A special role is played by the methodology of reflective practices, aimed at helping participants understand their educational and professional paths. The systematic introduction of elements of reflection in classes (for example, the “Inspection” method, the “Reflective Circle”, the creation of maps of personal and professional growth) contributes not only to a deeper assimilation of the material, but also to the development of the ability to self-observe, internal dialogue and reassess professional beliefs [11, p. 95].

The effectiveness of these technologies increases significantly if the following didactic conditions are met:

the presence of modules in the curriculum aimed at developing flexibility as a competency;

the active use of interactive forms of work: trainings, seminars, debates, practical workshops;

maintaining a safe learning environment that encourages openness, experimentation, and acceptance of the right to make mistakes;

individual support for the learner by the educator or coach.

It should be noted that adaptability does not develop in conditions of strict regulation or authoritarian pedagogy. Only in conditions of partner interaction, meaningful participation, and recognition of subjective experience can a professional consciousness be transformed that is capable of ensuring the teacher's sustainable adaptation to the challenges of the modern educational environment.

CONCLUSION.

In connection with the need to ensure sustainable professional development of teachers in a dynamically changing educational environment, the development of flexibility competence in trainees of advanced training courses is an urgent direction of the system of professional development and advanced training courses. Flexibility is not only a personal quality, but also acts as a professionally significant metacompetence that determines the effectiveness of adaptation to new requirements, innovative approaches and problems of the time.

Analysis of the theoretical and methodological foundations showed that flexibility is a complex integrative formation that includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral components. Effective development of this competence is possible based on andragogic principles, taking into account the characteristics of the target audience and using modern pedagogical technologies.

The characteristics of trainees of advanced training courses - their life and professional experience, their tendency to selective perception and reflection - require flexible, personalized and motivationally rich approaches. Only with the active participation of the trainee himself, creating conditions for a meaningful change in professional experience, can high-quality results be achieved in developing flexibility.

The pedagogical technologies considered in the work - project-based learning, problem-based communication forms, modeling of professional situations, reflective practices - demonstrate high efficiency in forming flexibility as a stable characteristic of professional behavior. Their integration into the content and structure of advanced training courses allows not only to formally update knowledge, but also to truly develop the trainees' professional skills.

Flexibility should be recognized as one of the priority goals of modern additional education. A systematic approach to its formation will not only increase the flexibility of teachers, but also ensure the quality of the educational process in conditions of constant change.

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