Implementation of Competence Approach in the Professional Education of Prospective Teachers in the Higher Education Conditions

Nina Mikhaylovna Stukalenko1*, Saule Ashotovna Murzina2, Boris Vasilyevich Kramarenko3, Zhadyra Kerimbaevna Ermekova4, Gulmira Madievna Rakisheva5

1Kokshetau State University of Sh. Ualikhanov, 76 Abaya Street, 020000 Kokshetau, Kazakhstan, 2Kokshetau State University of Sh. Ualikhanov, 76 Abaya Street, 020000 Kokshetau, Kazakhstan, 3Kokshetau State University of Sh. Ualikhanov, 76 Abaya Street, 020000 Kokshetau, Kazakhstan, 4Eurasian National University of L. Gumilev, 5 Munaytpasova Street, 010008 Astana, Kazakhstan, 5Eurasian National University of L. Gumilev, 5 Munaytpasova Street, 010008 Astana, Kazakhstan. *Email: nina.m.stukalenko@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Current pedagogic science states that the new paradigm of education in XXI century is being developed through the increase of personality culture of a prospective teacher, which has to include a system of knowledge, skills, abilities, as well as cultural and moral values, accumulated by the humankind, which are necessary for the development of a competent personality and its professional maturity. Authors of present article define competence as a way of the existence of knowledge, skills, abilities and education, which facilitates personal self-actualization and placement in the world. Due to these reasons, professional training of the prospective teachers becomes a personality-oriented educational process, i.e., the process, which provides the highest demand for the prospective teacher’s personality potential during the realization of pedagogic tasks.

Keywords: Professional Education, Pedagogic Education, Competence Approach in Education

JEL Classifications: I210, I280, Z180

1. INTRODUCTION

The tendencies of modern society development define the need to rethink the role of education, as well as the creation of new approaches in it. Innovative transformations in the society, new strategic goals in the economic development, society’s openness and its rapid information expansion and dynamics have radically changed the requirements towards education. Education systems in the majority of leading countries in the world have reacted to these challenges by creating goals, content and technologies of education based upon the results expected from it. The main aim of education became not only the simple summation of knowledge, skills and abilities, but the personal, social and professional competency, which is based on them, - the ability to independently obtain, analyze and successfully use the information, the ability to live and work rationally and efficiently in the rapidly changing world.

Competence approach in the field of higher education is a new phenomenon for the professional didactics. The nature of competency is that the competency, being a product of education, does not directly generate from it but becomes a consequence of personality self-development. Analysis of the competence structure of prospective teachers has scientific, theoretical and practical significance. This issue lies between personality and pedagogic culture development. Unfortunately, the practice of higher education does not necessarily demonstrate the results of a very high level of professional preparation in the pedagogic colleges’ graduates. Obviously, the reasons for the lack of competence in teachers’ education consist of the fact that competence approach...
has not been provided with sufficient scientific, theoretical and methodic support. This explains the special significance of present study.

2. METHODS

During the conduction of the study we used the following types of methods: Theoretical (analysis, synthesis, classification, generalization, deduction, induction, analogies and modelling); empirical (observation, interview, questionnaire, talk); experimental (pedagogic experiment - stating, developmental and diagnostic); and statistical (statistical analysis of the data, qualitative and quantitative analysis of the study results).

Methodological basis of the study consists of fundamental statements of higher education pedagogics about the professional activity (Babanskiy, 1992), theory of professional education (Ilyina, 2001), theory of competence approach in education (Bashirova, 2003), theory of competence development in education (Kenzhebekov, 2002) and theory of integral pedagogic process (Bespalko, 2004). Psychological and pedagogic aspects of teacher’s personality development are described in the works of Abdulina (1995), Ilyasova (2006) and Karaseva (2006), who described the task of a pedagogic college as the creation of an educational system for the prospective teacher, which has to define his intellectual, spiritual and professional development and the foundation of an active and creative personality.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Theoretical Part of the Study

Theoretical interpretation of the concept of “competence” led to the following conclusions. Firstly, competence requires constant updating of knowledge and obtaining the information for the optimal use in the specific conditions, i.e., having operative and mobile knowledge. Secondly, competence is not just mastering the knowledge, but it is also being ready to solve the tasks, according to that knowledge. Due to this, competency includes the content (knowledge) component, as well as the process (skills) one, i.e., a competent person not only has to know the essence of the problem, but also to be able to solve it with adequate methods. Thirdly, a competent specialist has to have critical thinking, which allows making decisions according to his own independent problem evaluation. Considering everything mentioned above, the content of competence concept includes the following general characteristics: Knowledge mobility, flexibility of the problem solving method and critical thinking. Significance of such approach is defined by the need to adjust the education results to the parameters, required by the contemporary society, as well as the person’s mobility, skill to quickly react to the change of conditions and social reality and the humanistic direction of the behavior.

In current professional education system the update of content and the development of new generation of standards are directly related to the realization of competence approach. Modern pedagogic paradigm states that a competent graduate is a self-actualizing personality responsible for the organization for their own activity, armed by the cognitive skills for self-education, able to act in a group and a community, to solve primarily new tasks on the basis of reflection and creativity, having a rich experience of implying the obtained and independently acquired knowledge in educational and life situations and aiming at life-long learning. Such person has the bases of informational culture as a personally- and professionally-significant quality, which provides efficient, rational and ethically balanced interaction with informational environment. In order to actualize that result, the education system has to solve a number of new tasks: To provide new quality of education, the value of which is evaluated by the graduate’s social and professional success; to create the conditions for diverse education; to provide the equal availability of obtaining an education for all social groups. Thus, in light of global transformations of the modern civilization, acknowledging the need to develop the graduates’ competency and viewing it as a new educational quality allows considering the competence education to be the most significant, multi-directional and contemporary type of development and self-actualization of a modern person in the education system.

The fact that modern pedagogics refer to the concept of “competence approach” may be explained by a number of reasons. Firstly, major social changes and the acceleration of social and economic development define the search of a new education paradigm, which would reflect these changes and aim at recreating the personality qualities, required by the new century - mobility, dynamics, constructiveness and professional, social, personal and routine competence. Secondly, the goals of updating general and professional education, the need of its coherence with the personality needs, as well as the society’s requirements, demand a new approach towards defining its goals, content and organization. Thirdly, the development of informational processes leads to the fact that the professional education system is not able to keep up with the expanding information flow; it is necessary to develop a new approach to constructing the content of pedagogic education, which would be able to motivate a young teacher for constant self-development, reflection upon the quality of their pedagogic activity, its self-assessment and correction. Fourthly, professional education of a prospective teacher should be aimed at using the opportunities of their subject to develop not only the subject, but also the extra-subject social, communicative, cognitive and informational competencies in their students. Naturally, the teachers themselves have to possess those qualities on a relatively high level.

Developing the set representations in the science, the competence approach should be understood as a whole system of goal setting, content selection and organizational and technological support of the teachers’ training process, based on defining his main competencies, which guarantee a high efficiency level and results of the professional pedagogic activity. First of all, competency approach allows precisely defining the nomenclature and logic of the development of the professionally significant knowledge and skills, which are coherent with the contemporary concepts of “pedagogic culture” and “pedagogic skill.” Based on that, it is possible to set the goals in the construction of pedagogic education content, while defining the key competencies allows developing a more precise and diagnostically proven system of
measures for the level of professional pedagogic competence of a prospective teacher on all stages of his training. Because of the facts mentioned above, competence approach, which reflects the ideas of professionalism and business qualities of a contemporary teacher, is able to have a positive impact in the development of innovative processes in the pedagogic education system. Moreover, the competence approach principles include the following: Diagnostic power (orientation on obtaining the diagnosed result, which manifests in the behavior and thinking); complexity and inter-disciplinary approach (consideration of the educational and external, environmental factors and influences); multi-functionality (the complex of not only the knowledge and qualities, but also of the ability to solve a wide range of tasks).

Competency approach may be considered not only as a mean of updating the pedagogic education content, but also as a mechanism of making it coherent with the requirements of the present reality. It makes significant changes in the teachers’ education process organization and gives the process an activity, practically-oriented direction. This approach is highly significant for the development of pedagogic education system in colleges, because it allows excluding the non-essential material and focusing on the development of professional pedagogic culture of the student. Prospectively, the competence approach would allow developing a completely new model of a specialist, which would be needed by the pedagogic education subjects (students and teachers), education services customers (students and their parents) and the modern society. Such model can be attributed to the social-personality models, i.e., the models that satisfy the requirements of a person, who obtains pedagogic education, the society, which needs competent pedagogic workers, and the state, which is able to provide competitive education, content with the world standards, on the bases of this approach.

The facts, described above, show that competence approach is a significant, but only one of the many plans of exploring and organizing such complex phenomenon, as professional education. Moreover, it is impossible not to state that competence approach in its initial version, which was proposed by the developers of key competencies, mostly enhances practice-oriented tools and the need to increase the focus on the operational, skill aspect of the result. In present psychological and pedagogic science, which is oriented mostly on the axiological, essential, content and personality education components, competency approach, not opposing the traditional knowledge-oriented approach but regarding the need of enhancing it with practice-oriented tools, significantly broadens its content with personality aspects, which makes it humanistic-oriented. Therefore, it becomes obvious that the global goal of providing a person’s integration the society and his productive adaptation in that world predetermines the need of posing a question of educational support of a more integral personal and social result. A general definition of such integral social, personal and behavioral phenomenon, as the education result, along with the sum of motivational, axiological, cognitive and activity components is the concept of “competence.”

The main result of the studied process of prospective teachers’ professional education is their competence in organizing the pedagogic work and solving the pedagogic tasks of education and fostering, i.e., the pedagogic competence. The concept of “competence” as a characteristic of professional training level is a relatively recent term. Zimnyaya (1990) proposes the following classification of competencies: (1) Competencies, attributed to oneself as a personality and an activity subject; (2) competencies, attributed to interpersonal communications; (3) competencies, attributed to the person’s activity, manifesting in all of its types and forms. In her work “Key competencies - The new paradigm of the modern education result” the structure of competence is presented by four blocks of different levels:

1. Basic level - Competencies of this level have are cognitive. They imply mastering such mental actions, as analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematization, decision-making, prognosis and comparison of the action result with the suggested goal.
2. Personality level - A person should possess such qualities, as responsibility, structure, determination, etc.
3. Social level - Among the competencies of this block a graduate should be able to follow the values of being, culture and social interaction in his behavior; to cooperate and manage people, as well as to follow the orders; to use the knowledge during the creative decisions of social and professional tasks; to find the solutions in unconventional situations; to obtain, process and spread the information (library catalogues, information systems, the Internet, electronic mail, etc.).
4. Professional level - This block provides the adequate execution of professional activity; the graduate has to be able to solve the tasks of his specialty.
5. Modern scientists have various points of view upon the interpretation of the “competence” concept in the education aspect. Raven (2002) defines competence as a specific skill, necessary for the efficient execution of a certain action in a certain object area and including highly specific knowledge, actions of a certain kind, objective skills, and ways of thinking and understanding of the responsibility for one’s own actions.

Kozberg (2000) notes: “To be competent means to be able to mobilize the acquired knowledge and experience in a certain situation.”

In the opinion of Adolf (1998), “competence is a general evaluation term, which represents the ability to do something ‘knowingly’; it is usually used for the people of a certain social and professional status to characterize the extent of the coherence between their comprehension, knowledge and skill with the real content and complexity of the solved tasks and problems.”

Lukyanova (2001) understands competence as “the personal resources of an official, his qualification (knowledge and experience), which allow him participating in the development of a certain range of decisions or making decisions on his own due to the presence of certain knowledge and skills.”

Gershunskiy (1997) thinks that “competence is a category, which allows interpreting the education result in a system of cognitive, motivational, axiological and social components.” Exploring the concept of “competence” they define it as...
integrated characteristic of personality qualities and a result of a graduate’s training.

Kuzmina (1990) defines competence as “a quality of a person, who finished their education of some stage, which represents in the readiness (ability) for productive (efficient) activity, based on it, with regard to its social significance and social risks, which can be related to it.”

Lukyanova (2001) comes to the conclusion that competence should be understood as “a general skill and personality readiness to act, which are based on the knowledge and obtained experience as a result of education.”

Markova (1996) understands teacher’s competence as “a psychological state, which allows acting independently and responsibly.” She proposes a five-level competence model. In the pedagogic aspect the essence of the model components is: Special competence (highly-skilled use of professional activity and the ability for professional development); social competence (an ability for joint professional activity based on cooperation and mutual understanding); individual competence (characterized by the personality development in the professional activity and by the ability of individuality self-preservation); personality competence (knowledge and use of personality self-presentation and self-development, abilities to resist professional deformations); extremal competence (provides the opportunity for highly efficient execution of professional tasks in new conditions and in sudden change of conditions). Markova (1996) notes that the weight of separate teacher’s professional competence components is not equal. More significant are the professional competence components that allow evaluating the work results, while the process-related characteristics of teacher’s work show the means of getting the result, which is the students’ level of education and politeness.

In the opinion of Savostyanov (2007), competence is the level of personality skills, which reflects the coherence with a certain competence and allows acting constructively in the changing social conditions. In his opinion, execution of pedagogic activity requires the following types of competence from the teacher: (1) Expertise, knowledge of education process, interest towards it and the ability to change it with regard to the demands of time; (2) methodic competence - Knowledge of methods of teaching the subject, urge to update the methodic instruments and individualize it during the work with certain students; (3) diagnostic competence - mastering the means of studying the characteristics and opportunities of the students during knowledge acquirement; (4) scientific competence - urge and skill to conduct a pedagogic study and participate in the search and experiment. During the development of these competence types in pedagogic activity the teachers acquire professional positions as a stable attitude towards the work, students, colleagues and themselves - the positions of subject teacher, methodic specialist, expert, diagnostic specialist, innovator, scientist and experimenter.

Having all of the listed competence types is not a requirement for any teacher, because each of them may have their own certain advantages and competence types, on which they rely in their work. Knowing different types of pedagogic competence might facilitate the process of understanding their presence or absence in oneself and the ways of their development. The proportion of different competency types might change in one teacher during his professional development. Teacher’s professional level increases when he masters new competence types and becomes an all-rounded specialist in his job.

Thus, the analysis of the various points of view on the interpretation of “competence” concept allowed us to make the following conclusions. Competence integrates various qualities of the person, who finished a certain educational level, and becomes his holistic characteristic. Competence presents in the readiness (ability) for the successful activity. Competence is a new type of educational result, which is oriented at the readiness for productive work. In present study the pedagogic competence of a prospective teacher is defined as an integral characteristic of his qualities, which presents in the readiness to organize the education and mentoring. Currently there is a need for teachers, who are coherent with the modern education requirements, have high level of professional knowledge and are able to creatively represent them, and who also get high results in their professional activity. Moreover, such teachers have to be competent in setting and solving the problems, related to mentoring and education. In other words, competent teacher has to combine theoretic and practical training, improve his knowledge and skills, and master the organizational forms, methods and means of planning and controlling the pedagogic work results.

Such understanding of pedagogic competence lies in the basis of the result of prospective teachers’ training process. In accordance with this characteristic of the prospective teacher’s competencies, the following criteria are defined as the most significant: Motivational, goal-setting, cognitive, processing and managing. We will describe the essence of each criterion of a prospective teacher’s pedagogic competence.

1. Motivational and goal-setting criterion includes the prospective teachers’ readiness for the pedagogic work, understanding its goals, the presence of positive motivation, aspiration of self-development and professional growth in that field. As the main representations of motivational and goal-setting criterion we can name teacher’s personality orientation on the realization of mentoring and educational tasks, interest in his profession and believe in the need of mentoring and education.

2. Cognitive criterion includes the presence of special professional knowledge and skills for organizing the mentoring and education, the ability to use them in practice, as well as the ability to analyze, obtain the newest experience of pedagogic work and creatively choose the means for the work improvement. A significant characteristic of a teacher’s competence is the knowledge of the fundamentals of pedagogic work, child psychology, mentoring methods, etc. In the teacher’s pedagogic skills his knowledge is connects with the practical actions and operations; therefore, in pedagogic skills and abilities of the teacher his skills naturally interconnect with cognitive factors and personal - with
professional. Moreover, teacher’s pedagogic competence is impossible without the developed skills and abilities to diagnose and plan pedagogic work. In practical conditions the skills to choose new ways to influence the student, abilities to solve educational and mentoring tasks and the abilities to predict the results of one’s own job are also significant.

3. Processing and managing criterion includes various operational skills, which influence the efficiency of pedagogic work. It also includes practical implementation of new pedagogic achievements, realization of differential and individual approach towards the students, planning one’s own activity, pedagogic interaction, presence of analytical and reflexive skills (self-control, self-esteem, etc.) and the ability to conduct analysis and self-analysis. In the modern pedagogic the main function of the teacher is managing the education processes, mentoring and developing the personality of the students. The requirements towards teacher’s pedagogic competence, related to the tendencies of education humanization, democratization and individualization, point to the significance of managerial skills and abilities.

Thus, the process of prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development should be defined as goal-oriented, specially organized pedagogic process, which is characterized by their involvement in the active competency acquisition process in the conditions of professional education.

3.2. Experimental Part of the Study

During the conducted study we organized a pedagogic experiment, which tasks were: Exploring the state of professional education of prospective teachers, the characteristics of their pedagogic competence development and improvement of the prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development process in the college conditions by introducing a special course “Scientific bases of pedagogic work.” The conditions of pedagogic experiment and the solution of the aforementioned tasks required appropriate experimental sites and respondents. These requirements defined the preparation and conduction of pedagogic experiment. In order to increase its conclusiveness and to reach the highest reliability of the results possible we provided the representative subject samples of experimental and control groups. Efficiency of the experimental projects was established on the stage the developmental stage of the pedagogic experiment, which was preceded by the exploratory and stating phases.

During the exploratory stage of the experiment we studied the state of prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development. The results of the conducted study lay in the base of not only the verification of the studied problem’s significance, but also of the development the conditions for improving the process of pedagogic competence development in college education. They also define the development of special elective course for prospective teachers, the establishment of its content and exploration of the opportunities of implying modern pedagogic technologies in this process to develop prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence. The following questions were taken in account during the study of prospective teachers’ education content in the conditions of higher professional education: Definition of the main ideas and tasks of professional education of the teachers; assessment of the opportunities for their realization and statement of the expected results; development of a studied process model based on the competence approach and new pedagogic technologies, and its approbation; analysis of the obtained results. During the analysis and the obtained data generalization we addressed: Information about each of the components of the developed prospective teachers’ education model; content, methods, types and means of education during the model realization; results and efficiency of the studied process; students’ motivation and behavior. During the analysis of all prospective teachers’ education aspects we considered the problem questions, which occurred during its implementation. These questions were: Increase of the prospective teachers’ education quality, optimization of the studied process, etc. Addressing these questions reflected the following elements: Search, generalization of the frontier experience and its implementation in theory and practice of the studied process; accumulation and improvement of the prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development experience.

During the stating stage of the experiment we conducted the initial control of the prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development level. Stating experiment revealed insufficient effort in pedagogic competence development. Due to this, as a part of present study we used a range of methods, such as questionnaire, expert evaluation method, interview and testing, which contained control and open questions. For example, the questioning of prospective teachers included the questions, which revealed the knowledge of basic concepts, related to pedagogic competence, level of interest towards pedagogic activity, knowledge of its various methods and forms, etc. Expert evaluation method included questions, reflecting the representations of pedagogic work, which define the main means of pedagogic knowledge and skills development in prospective teachers and characterizing the level of personal involvement in the problem of pedagogic influence on the students. The interview method allowed obtaining the answers to questions, which demonstrated the presence of interest towards pedagogic work in prospective teachers and the connection of interest and the quality of professional knowledge. The method of observation upon the prospective teachers’ activity during their pedagogic internship, together with the questionnaires and interviews, allowed assessing the efficiency of various means of stimulating the interest of prospective teachers towards the pedagogic interaction with the students. Moreover, during the period of pedagogic internships observation and talks helped revealing various techniques, used by the prospective teachers on the lessons.

During the study we conducted a sociologic questioning of prospective teachers, which included the questions that allowed defining the level of their pedagogic competence development, sufficiency or insufficiency of the key competencies obtained in college, the level of pedagogic training during college education and the level of prospective teachers’ interest towards the pedagogic activity. The overall data are presented in Table 1.

The Table 1 shows that 55.2% of prospective teachers rank their pedagogic education as insufficient in the theoretical aspect and
57.5% - In the practical one. Critical self-esteem of prospective teachers is confirmed by the results, obtained during their solving of the tasks, assessing the pedagogic competence level. More than 46% of surveyed students do not have complete representations of pedagogic work methods. Moreover, the answers to the survey questions show that the problem of pedagogic interaction with the students does not leave them indifferent. Furthermore, 62% of the students regularly experiences trouble in satisfying the need to find the necessary methodic recommendation on pedagogic questions during the period of their pedagogic internship.

Because of this we developed and introduced in the study process an elective course “Scientific bases of pedagogic work,” the efficiency of which was defined during the developmental experiment. Experimental work was conducted in Kokshetau State University of Sh. Ualikhanov. Participants in the study were 140 people - 132 students and 8 teachers.

During the experiment, in order to obtain a more complete characteristic of the results, we defined three levels of the prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence - high, medium and low, which are described in accordance with its criteria.

For the motivational and goal-setting criterion: The low level - Pedagogic goals (tasks) are represented only in general features and there is no interest towards pedagogic activity; the medium level - There is a certain awareness of motives and goals, the interest towards pedagogic activity is episodic; the high level - The interest towards pedagogic work is completely developed, there is goal-oriented development of pedagogic knowledge and skills.

For the cognitive criterion: The low level - Weakly developed pedagogic knowledge in the field of mentoring and education, prospective teacher does not master the creative approach towards this type of activity; the medium level - Prospective teachers has partial knowledge, pedagogic knowledge improvement is eventual; the high level - Prospective teacher has complete knowledge on pedagogic work and actively self-educates about pedagogic questions.

For the processing and managing criterion: The low level - Prospective teacher does not have complete pedagogic knowledge and skills, has trouble in pedagogic questions and does not strive for self-education; the medium level - Prospective teacher has the pedagogic knowledge but has trouble with its practical implementation; the high level - Knowledge and skills of pedagogic interaction management are completely developed, prospective teacher efficiently uses the pedagogic techniques.

During the experimental work we observed the dynamics of prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development; the overall results are presented in Table 2.

### 4. DISCUSSION

Present study was conducted at the Department of Pedagogics of Kokshetau State University of Sh. Ualikhanov and the Department of Social Pedagogics and Self-cognition of Eurasian National University of Gumilev. The results of the conducted study were discussed during the meetings of those departments, the scientific seminar “Actual problems of psychological and pedagogic science and modern education” and on the international scientific and practical conferences: “Valikhanov’s readings” (Kokshetau, Kazakhstan), “Current problems of contemporary education and pedagogic specialists training” (Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan), “Introducing new educational technologies and principles of educational process organization” (Singapore), “Modern education: Problems and solutions” (Bangkok, Thailand), “Innovative technologies in higher and professional education” (Majorca, Spain), “Education and Science without Borders” (Munich, Germany), “Actual Problems of Education. Experience of Realization of Bologna Agreements” (Amsterdam, Netherlands), “Current problems of science and education” (Moscow, Russia), “Problems of international integration of national education standards” (Paris, France). The generalized results of the conducted study are being published for the first time.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Analyzing the results of the conducted study, it can be concluded that the obtained data demonstrate higher scores in the experimental group students. Positive dynamics, which was revealed, according to the obtained results, in the experimental group in comparison with the scores in the control group, shows the efficiency of the prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development process by the use of elective course “Scientific bases of pedagogic work.”

Theoretical significance of the study is explained by the fact that, based on the theoretical and methodologic analysis, we present the characteristic of the competence approach to the...
teachers’ professional education; we generalized the “pedagogic competence” concept; we studied the conditions, which promote the competence approach realization during the process of prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development; we defined the criterions that allow evaluating the level of the competence development. Practical significance of the study contains of the developed special course “Scientific bases of pedagogic work,” which may be used by the college teacher to work with the pedagogic specialty students, as well as by the teachers of post-degree education courses for college, school and pre-school teachers. As a result of the conducted study we prepared the recommendations on the development of prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence.

The validity of the obtained results was provided by the use of a range of methods, coherent with the study object and the set tasks, by the conductance of experimental work and by integration of qualitative and quantitative analysis of its results.

The conducted study does not aim at the exhaustive solution of the problem of prospective teachers’ pedagogic competence development; it can be considered as one of the possible solutions for the studied problem. The study perspectives consist of searching for new ways to improve the educational process in colleges by implying the competence approach, as well as other personality-oriented approaches and innovative education technologies in accordance with the increasing rate of professional education development. We hypothesize that the further exploration of this problem is possible by the means of interactive methods and new information and communicative technologies. The results of present study might be implied in the work of teachers and psychologists, along with master-and doctoral students, who study the problem of competence approach in education.

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