

Ways Of Self-Awareness And Professional Self-Development Of Future Educators

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Abstract

This article analyzes the processes of self-awareness and professional self-development among future educators. Self-awareness is considered a key factor in both personal and professional growth within pedagogical activity. The study highlights modern methods of professional development through self-assessment, reflection, and mentoring. Additionally, the importance of psychological training and innovative pedagogical approaches in enhancing personal skills and professional competencies of educators is emphasized.

Keywords: Self-awareness, professional development, pedagogical activity, reflection, self-assessment, personal growth, professional competence, psychological training, innovative methods, pedagogical skills, educational process, professional change, personal skills, teaching methods, professional mastery, self-improvement, professional growth, quality of education.

Introduction

Nowadays, the professional qualifications and personal development of educators hold significant importance in the education system. Pedagogical activity is complex and constantly changing, requiring not only knowledge and skills but also the abilities of self-awareness and professional self-development to achieve success. Self-awareness is the ability of an individual to recognize, analyze, and modify their own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. This process is one of the main factors ensuring both personal and professional growth of the educator.

Professional self-development refers to the continuous improvement of a teacher's or educator's professional activities, mastering new pedagogical methods and technologies, and enhancing professional competencies. In modern education, these processes are closely interconnected, and their effective organization plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education.

This article analyzes the processes of self-awareness and professional self-development among future educators, highlighting modern methods applied in these processes, including self-assessment, reflection, mentoring, and psychological training, as well as their

significance. Additionally, it examines how innovative pedagogical approaches contribute to improving personal skills and professional competencies of educators.

The aim is to deeply study the personal and professional growth processes of future educators and to contribute to the improvement of the educational process by identifying effective strategies. The research results confirm the importance of self-awareness and professional development in pedagogical activity and demonstrate the necessity of introducing innovations in this field.

Methodology of the Research

Issues of self-awareness and professional self-development in pedagogical activity have long been the focus of many scholars. In particular, J. Dewey's [1] theory of reflection became a theoretical foundation for educators to critically analyze their professional practice and strive for personal and professional growth. In his work *Experience and Education*, Dewey emphasized the importance of reflective thinking in the learning process.

Donald Schön [2] introduced the concept of "reflective practice," highlighting that educators continuously analyze their own activities and actively engage in the process of self-improvement. According to Schön,

teachers need to deeply understand their professional competencies and rely on reflective thinking aimed at solving problems that arise during the teaching process.

Additionally, Kolbs [3] experiential learning model provides future educators with a systematic approach to self-awareness and learning in practical activities. According to Kolb, learning is a continuous process involving experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation, which is essential for professional skill development.

Uzbekistani scholars also pay special attention to pedagogical reflection and professional self-development. For example, N. Omanova [4] analyzes methods for developing reflective abilities of future educators, emphasizing their effective application in the educational process. According to her, reflection is a key tool for enhancing both personal and professional competencies of educators. Similarly, S. Karimova [5] explores the processes of self-assessment and self-awareness in increasing professional competencies, stressing the importance of mentoring and psychological training in developing these skills.

At the international level, countries such as Finland, Germany, and the United Kingdom use reflective approaches and mentoring systems as primary tools to support teachers' professional growth. For instance, Finnish educators have incorporated continuous reflection and self-assessment as a regular part of their pedagogical practice (Hakkarainen) [6-7].

Research Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that self-awareness and professional self-development play a vital role in enhancing the quality of education among future educators. Self-awareness serves as a central mechanism that stimulates both personal and professional growth in pedagogical practice.

To assess attitudes and the practical application of self-reflective approaches

and self-assessment among prospective educators, the research employed specially designed surveys and semi-structured interviews. Participants included third- and fourth-year students majoring in Early Childhood Education at Navoi State University.

Among the 100 respondents surveyed:

47% reported maintaining a reflective journal and noted that it helped them identify their mistakes, analyze lessons, and better prepare for future classes.

24% stated they regularly evaluated their professional strengths and weaknesses—either in writing or verbally—indicating active self-assessment behavior.

18% indicated that, based on feedback from mentors or tutors, they revised their reflective writings.

11% said they filled in a “Self-Assessment” section after weekly sessions, which helped reinforce a sense of personal responsibility. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 proactive students to gain deeper insights. Most emphasized that reflection boosted not only their professional competence but also their personal resilience. For example: “Maintaining a reflective journal taught me to acknowledge my mistakes. Previously, I was sensitive to criticism, but now I see it as an opportunity to grow,” said fourth-year student M. Khasanova.

Another student shared how weekly mentor interactions and self-assessment helped them refine their teaching techniques:

“During my practicum, my mentor always asked, ‘What did you learn from this lesson? What did you change?’ Answering these questions forced me to analyze myself,” they explained.

These empirical observations reveal that self-awareness, self-assessment, and reflective journaling are becoming integral to the professional preparation of future educators. These methods enable prospective teachers to deeply analyze their performance, develop critical thinking, make independent decisions, and shape their professional identity.

Mentorship also emerged as an essential component. The experience and support provided by mentors significantly contributed not only to theoretical knowledge, but also to the development of practical competencies among young educators.

Additionally, psychological training equipped participants with critical skills such as stress management, effective communication, and conflict resolution. These competencies bolster pedagogical success and emotional stability.

Innovative pedagogical approaches—specifically reflective journals and portfolios—proved effective in enhancing self-awareness, professional analysis, and development. These methods not only reinforce theoretical knowledge but also foster deep practical reflection, independent critical thinking, and evaluative practices.

A reflective journal—used daily by prospective educators after practice, observations, or lessons—typically includes sections for:

1. Description of the activity (topic, method, student engagement);
2. What went well and what issues arose;
3. Emotional responses;
4. Areas for future improvement.

At Navoi State University, second-year Early Childhood Education students were engaged in maintaining reflective journals during practicum. After each session, they recorded their thoughts in a structured format. At the end of each week, their university mentors reviewed these journals, provided feedback and guidance. As a result, students became more aware of their mistakes, actively sought improvement, and developed self-assessment skills and reflective thinking.

A portfolio is a collection of documents, work samples, achievements, and reflections that trace a prospective educator's professional growth. Portfolios may include:

1. Personal introduction (brief bio, motivation);
2. Lesson plans and session scenarios;

3. Practicum accomplishments (photos, certificates, recommendations);

4. Reflective entries and self-assessment tables.

Throughout the semester, students maintained individual portfolios, systematically documenting all their professional activities. Mentors reviewed these portfolios monthly to assess professional growth dynamics. This approach nurtured students' sense of responsibility, self-improvement, and a culture of documentation.

In Uzbekistan's higher education institutions, the phased integration of reflection and self-assessment elements has significantly enhanced pedagogical competence and personal development. These efforts have had a marked positive impact on the quality and effectiveness of education.

However, this study revealed that to further strengthen self-awareness and professional development, continuous professional development systems for educators must be reinforced. Moreover, broader implementation and regular monitoring of innovative methods is essential.

Finally, specific strategies must be formulated to integrate mentoring, psychological training, and reflective approaches into a cohesive framework for developing both personal competence and professional competencies.

Overall, the study confirms that by systematically incorporating self-awareness and professional self-development practices into educational institutions, teacher qualifications can be enhanced, professional growth can be promoted, and educational quality can be significantly improved.

Conclusion

The self-awareness and professional self-development of future educators have become key components of the modern education system. This research has shown that personal and professional growth processes are closely interconnected, and

their effective integration plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education.

The analysis revealed that innovative methods such as reflective approaches, self-assessment, mentoring, psychological training, portfolios, and reflective journals significantly contribute to future educators' ability to understand themselves, analyze their activities, and make sound professional decisions. In particular, surveys and interviews conducted with students demonstrated an increasing sense of responsibility and independent thinking through self-reflection practices.

Moreover, a comparative study of leading international practices (e.g., Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom) and the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan's higher education institutions highlighted the importance of systematically integrating reflective approaches into the curriculum. Reforms such as competency-based education, modular systems, and the development of psychological support services are of great importance in this regard.

Theoretical perspectives used in the study — including Dewey's theory of reflection, Schön's reflective practice, and Kolb's experiential learning model — were found to be applicable and effective when adapted to local pedagogical contexts. These approaches equip future educators not only with knowledge but also with the mindset of critical thinking, self-awareness, and readiness for continuous growth.

Thus, by developing self-awareness, future educators gain a deeper understanding of the essence of pedagogical activity. Through professional self-development, they strive for ongoing improvement. This, in turn, serves as one of the fundamental factors in ensuring quality, sustainability, and competitiveness in the education system.

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