

PEDAGOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF DEVELOPING TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES

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Abstract: This article treats a teacher’s professional qualities not as something given all at once, but as a dynamic phenomenon that forms gradually, stage by stage, over the course of an entire professional career. Drawing on the classical ideas of K.D. Ushinsky, N.V. Kuzmina, A.K. Markova, and E.F. Zeer, the work of L. Shulman and L. Darling-Hammond, the findings of the OECD TALIS international study, and the studies of Uzbek scholars N. Azizxojayeva and R. Mavlonova, the article examines the stages of professional formation and the interaction of pedagogical and psychological factors at each stage.

Keywords: professional qualities, pedagogical skill, stages of professional formation, pedagogical culture, professional self-development, international pedagogical experience

In the nineteenth century, the great Russian pedagogue K.D. Ushinsky wrote: “In education, everything should be based on the personality of the educator. No statutes or programs can replace the personality in the work of education” [2]. Although a century and a half has passed since these words were written, they have lost none of their relevance: even today, the quality of education is determined above all by the teacher’s personality and professional qualities. Uzbekistan’s Presidential Decree No. PF-73 of 28 April 2025 is devoted to precisely this issue, renewing the system of training pedagogical personnel on the basis of international experience [1].

But professional qualities do not appear in a teacher all at once. From the day a student enters a pedagogical institution to the day they become an experienced mentor, they pass through several stages, and at each stage different qualities come to the fore. For this reason, this article approaches the issue differently, through a stage-based lens: it examines how professional qualities form at each stage, and how pedagogical and psychological factors interact with one another throughout this process.

The purpose of this article is to present professional qualities not as a static list, but as a dynamic process that develops over a teacher’s entire professional life, and to propose practical recommendations on that basis.

The idea that a teacher’s personality shapes the profession can be said to begin, in Russian pedagogy, with K.D. Ushinsky. He insisted that no program or methodology could replace the personality of the educator [2]. This idea was later developed in scientific depth by N.V. Kuzmina, A.K. Markova, and V.A. Slastyonin. N.V. Kuzmina regards the professionalism of pedagogical activity as an integral characteristic of the personality [4], while A.K. Markova, who studied the psychology of teachers’ work, identified the composition of the most important professional qualities [5]. V.A. Slastyonin and his co-authors interpret professional formation as a continuous process [6].

E.F. Zeer was among the first to show systematically that this process unfolds in stages. He describes the acquisition and practice of a profession as a sequence of successive stages, in which the transition from one stage to the next involves a change in the developmental situation, that is, a renewal of the content of the leading activity [3].

In the Western tradition, L. Shulman’s idea of “pedagogical content knowledge” occupies an important place. As he writes, “Mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as

content-free skill” [8, p. 9]. L. Darling-Hammond, drawing on large-scale research, concludes: “Students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers in a row have significantly lower achievement and gains in achievement than those who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in sequence” [9, p. 3]. At the international level, the OECD’s TALIS study offers an important conclusion in the same vein: “If we expect teachers and school leaders to act as professionals, we should treat them as such” [10].

L.S. Vygotsky, in his work on pedagogical psychology, treated the teacher’s activity as the key factor shaping the child’s zone of proximal development [7].

Uzbek pedagogical scholarship has addressed this issue extensively in the work of N. Azizxo‘jayeva and R. Mavlonova. N. Azizxo‘jayeva systematically examines the foundations of pedagogical skill, the types of a teacher’s pedagogical activity, and questions of pedagogical relations and pedagogical culture [11]. R. Mavlonova and D. Abdurahimova describe the content of pedagogical skill as follows: “Pedagogical skill encompasses broad knowledge about children, their psychology, the school, and the organization, content, and methods of the educational process” [12]. The authors also note that a teacher who possesses pedagogical skill achieves great results with comparatively little effort [12].

The composition of professional qualities and the requirements placed on them have thus been well studied in the scholarly literature. What remains less fully explored, however, is how these qualities take shape at different stages of a teacher’s career, and which factor takes the lead at which stage, particularly within the context of Uzbekistan’s current reforms.

The concepts of “professional quality” and “pedagogical skill” are closely related but not identical. A professional quality, as discussed above, is a discrete trait of the individual, such as responsibility, erudition, or empathy. Pedagogical skill, by contrast, is the integrated phenomenon that emerges when all of these qualities come together and work in harmony in practice. As N. Azizxo‘jayeva notes, pedagogical skill manifests itself through a teacher’s types of pedagogical activity, their pedagogical relations, and their pedagogical culture [11].

In other words, professional qualities are the bricks of skill, and skill itself is the building made from those bricks. As R. Mavlonova and D. Abdurahimova write, a teacher who possesses pedagogical skill achieves great results with comparatively little effort, because their knowledge, abilities, and personal qualities complement one another and function as an integrated system [12].

From this standpoint, developing professional qualities is, in essence, the path toward pedagogical skill. But this path is not covered all at once; it is traveled stage by stage.

Drawing on E.F. Zeer’s model of professional formation, a teacher’s career can be conditionally divided into four stages [3].

The first stage, the stage of professional preparation, covers the years of study at a pedagogical institution. At this stage, the main focus is on acquiring subject knowledge and basic pedagogical-methodological skills, though professional motivation and self-confidence also begin to take shape during this period.

The second stage, the stage of professional adaptation, covers the first year or two of a teacher’s work. During this period, the gap between theoretical knowledge and the realities of the classroom becomes sharply apparent, and as a result young teachers often experience self-doubt and even stress.

The third stage, primary professionalization, usually begins after three to five years of experience. At this stage a teacher develops their own style, learns to assess pedagogical situations more quickly and accurately, and their pedagogical intuition matures.

The fourth stage, the stage of pedagogical skill, emerges from many years of experience combined with sustained self-directed work. A teacher at this stage is able to analyze not only their own practice but also that of their colleagues, and often takes on the role of a mentor.

At the stage of professional preparation, the pedagogical factor, that is, the curriculum, the quality of instruction, and the organization of practical training, plays the leading role. Yet, as A.K. Markova shows, it is precisely the intrinsic motivation that forms during this period that becomes the foundation for every subsequent stage [5].

At the stage of adaptation, by contrast, the psychological factor, namely the young teacher's confidence, resilience to stress, and professional self-awareness, becomes decisive. As N.V. Kuzmina notes, it is at this very stage that collaboration with colleagues and support from experienced mentors has a marked effect on a teacher's subsequent development [4].

At the stage of primary professionalization, pedagogical reflection takes center stage: the teacher learns to draw conclusions from every lesson and to identify their own mistakes independently. This is, in effect, the transition from external control to internal self-monitoring.

At the stage of pedagogical skill, the idea of professional self-education emphasized by V.A. Slavyonin comes fully into play [6]. At this stage a teacher becomes less dependent on external incentives, because, as Ushinsky wrote, their own personality itself becomes the instrument of education [2].

The OECD's international TALIS study, having examined teachers and school leaders across dozens of countries, stresses the need to recognize teaching as a genuine profession [10]. According to its findings, teachers' need for professional development varies considerably with their years of experience: newly qualified teachers need mentoring above all, while experienced teachers benefit more from opportunities for collaborative research and the exchange of experience with peers.

This conclusion resonates with the reforms currently underway in Uzbekistan. The professional certification system for graduates and the external diagnostic mechanisms envisaged in Decree No. PF-73 make it possible, in effect, to identify which professional stage a teacher is at and to provide support tailored to that stage [1]. In other words, both international experience and national reforms are converging on the same direction: organizing professional development in a way that is differentiated according to career stage.

The analysis carried out in this article shows that a teacher's professional qualities are not a static list but a dynamic phenomenon that develops stage by stage over an entire professional career. The work of K.D. Ushinsky, N.V. Kuzmina, A.K. Markova, and V.A. Slavyonin reveals the substance of these qualities, while E.F. Zeer's model reveals how they unfold across stages. L. Shulman, L. Darling-Hammond, and the OECD TALIS study provide international evidence for how this process affects the quality of education, while N. Azizxojayeva and R. Mavlonova develop these ideas within the context of the Uzbek education system.

From a practical standpoint, several points matter. Professional-development programs should not be uniform for all teachers, but should be differentiated according to career stage: early-career teachers need mentoring and psychological support, while experienced teachers should be offered opportunities for collaborative research and mentoring roles of their own. It would be worthwhile for educational institutions to introduce dedicated support programs for teachers at the adaptation stage, and to draw on experienced teachers at the mastery stage as mentors for their younger colleagues. In shaping the external diagnostic system envisaged by Decree No. PF-73, it is likewise advisable to apply this same stage-based approach.

In sum, developing a teacher’s professional qualities is a long, multi-stage, and psychologically complex process. Managing it effectively requires a scientifically grounded approach that takes into account the distinct needs of each stage.

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