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## EFFECTIVE WAYS TO DEVELOP HIGHER-GRADE STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

### Annotation

This research investigates effective ways to develop students' professional competence at the secondary school level, by emphasizing soft skills, real-world applications and career-oriented learning. The role of digital tools, interdisciplinary teaching and active listening methods in providing learners with essential skills, such as critical thinking, teamwork and communication. Secondary school language learners of Genius international school were involved in the study, using interactive - methods approaches with pre – and post-test measuring improvements in professional competence. With the help of career-oriented learning activities, significant gains were realized in students' knowledge, communication and problem - solving skills through the findings.

**Key words:** Professional competence, secondary education, career readiness, soft skills, project-based learning, interdisciplinary teaching, long-term effects.

## ЭФФЕКТИВНЫЕ СПОСОБЫ РАЗВИТИЯ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ СТАРШЕКЛАССНИКОВ В СРЕДНЕЙ ШКОЛЕ

### Аннотация

Данное исследование рассматривает эффективные стратегии развития профессиональной компетентности учащихся старшей школы, акцентируя внимание на карьерно-ориентированном обучении, развитии гибких навыков и их применении в реальной жизни. Особое внимание уделяется междисциплинарному обучению, цифровым устройствам и активным методам обучения, которые помогают ученикам развивать такие важные навыки, как коммуникация, критическое мышление и командная работа. Исследование, основанное на смешанных методах, включало учащихся средней школы. Для измерения уровня профессиональной компетентности были проведены предварительные и итоговые тестирования. Результаты показывают значительный рост знаний учащихся, а также улучшение их навыков решения проблем и коммуникации после участия в карьерно-ориентированных учебных мероприятиях.

**Ключевые слова:** Проффессиональная компетентность, среднее образование, профессиональная подготовка, гибкие навыки, проектное обучение, междисциплинарное обучение, долгосрочные последствия.

## UMUMIY O 'RTA TA'LIM MAKTAB YUQORI SINF O'QUVCHILARINING KASBIY KOMPETENSIYASINI RIVOJLANTIRISHNING SAMARALI USULLARI

### Annotatsiya

Ushbu tadqiqot umumiy o'rta ta'lim maktab o'quvchilarida kasbiy mahoratni rivojlantirishning samarali strategiyalarini o'rganadi. Tadqiqot kasbga yo'naltirilgan ta'lim, insoniy fazilatlar va real hayotga tatbiq etiladigan bilimlarga e'tibor qaratadi. O'quvchilarning kommunikativ, tanqidiy fikrlash va jamoaviy ishlash ko'nikmalarini shakllantirishda fanlararo o'qitish, raqamli vositalar va faol ta'lim metodlarining o'rni ta'kidlanadi. Interfaol metodlardan foydalangan holda o'tkazilgan ushbu tadqiqotda "Genius" xalqaro maktab o'quvchilari ishtirok etdi. Tadqiqotdan oldin va keyin o'tkazilgan testlar natijalari kasbiy mahorat tadqiqot davomida qay darajada o'sganligini namoyon etdi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, kasbga yo'naltirilgan ta'lim faoliyatlaridan so'ng o'quvchilarning bilim, muammolarni hal qilish va muloqot qilish ko'nikmalari sezilarli darajada oshgan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Kasbiy kompetentlik, o'rta ta'lim, kasbiy tayyorgarlik, insoniy fazilatlar, loyihaga asoslangan ta'lim, fanlararo o'qitish, uzoq muddatli natijalar.

**Introduction.** In the 21st century, secondary education plays an important role in preparing students for professional competence and fostering their confidence. It should be considered what is professional competence and what skills it does include? Professional competence means having the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to do a job effectively. It involves valuing yourself in both academic and work settings. Professional competence is essential for helping students set up their professional skills with confidence and necessary knowledge. A combination of career - oriented learning, real-world experiences and skill development require fostering professional competence at the secondary school level. Students are able to develop their knowledge, mindset and abilities needed for professional success with the help of

these techniques and effective methods which are described below:

### 1. Integrating Career-Oriented Learning into the Curriculum

Students can understand the practical implementation of their academic subjects through career-oriented learning which prepares them for future professional atmosphere. Thus, career-related topics can be integrated into the curriculum by implementing project-based learning; students work on real-world challenges which related to their field of interest. Organizing career fairs and mentorship programs at school, students are able to interact with experts and know about different career paths.

## 2. Enhancing Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Problem-solving and critical thinking skills are important for professional development. Students can analyze situations, make informed decisions and evaluate solutions with the support of these skills. One of the most effective methods is case study analysis, which enables students to practice real-life professional challenges, and make reasonable decisions. By means of this approach, students can learn how to think logically and use the knowledge to tackle the problem and analytical thinking can be improved effectively by structured discussions and debates.

## 3. Strengthening Communication and Interpersonal Skills

For professional success and collocation, interpersonal skills and strong communication are considered as the most necessary abilities. These skills can be fostered with public speaking exercises, where students present topics to the small audience, at least to their classmates. This technique can be very useful to improve students' ability to express their ideas confidently and clearly [1]. Professional communication in real-world scenarios can be practiced with role-play activities, such as workplace simulations and mock interviews. Furthermore, teaching students how to negotiate, listen to each other and work effectively with colleges, peer collaboration and group projects encourage teamwork.

## 4. Cultivating Ethical and Responsible Professional Behavior

A key aspect of professional competence is a strong sense of responsibility and ethics. Through ethical discussions schools can establish this value, especially students are able to discuss and analyze moral difficulties that they may come across in workplaces. Environmental responsibilities, workplace honesty and fair treatment of colleagues, for example might be discussed. Team-based challenges, such as cooperative leadership tasks can be integrated by schools to teach students collaboration and accountable. Combination of real-world experience, skill-building exercises and academic integration is required to develop pupils' professional competence

**Literature review.** In today's rapidly evolving world, preparing students for future careers requires more than just academic knowledge. Professional competence - the ability to apply skills, knowledge, and critical thinking in real-world scenarios is essential for students' success in higher education and the workforce. Secondary schools play a crucial role in fostering this competence by integrating career-oriented learning, practical skills, and personal development into their educational programs. Professional competence includes both technical skills and soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork [9]. This article examines effective methods for developing pupils' professional competence and ensuring they are ready for future challenges. Pedagogical professionalism is mainly linked to a high level of personal development and the ability to create a unique teaching style [4]. However, many hesitate to share their concerns and ideas with management due to fear. Having the right amount of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities is essential for shaping a teacher's work, communication, and identity as someone who represents certain values. This is known as professional pedagogical competence, which is a key characteristic that combines both professional and personal qualities of a teacher [6]. Whether it's improving the curriculum or securing better resources and support, having the confidence to voice concerns is essential for fostering positive and effective learning environments. According to N.M. Muslimov, the English word "competence" directly translates to "ability," but the term itself encompasses knowledge, skills, and abilities [8]. The role of communicative

competence is also important to develop professional competence that refers to a specialist's acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for professional activities and their effective application at a high level [2]. Competence involves continuously expanding professional knowledge, learning new information, understanding key social needs, and being able to find, process, and apply new knowledge in one's work [3; p.465]. Professional competence is demonstrated in some situations: handling complex processes, completing undefined tasks, managing conflicting information, developing contingency plans and knowledge [7].

Moreover, professional competence is a combination of personal qualities, strong professional skills, and advanced scientific, theoretical, and practical knowledge that work effectively with others using modern technologies to achieve excellent results [5; p.244].

The cognitive aspect of professional competence develops mainly through vocational education and self-learning, reaching a certain level of knowledge. The operational aspect includes skills such as anticipation, self-regulation, decision-making, professional creativity, communication skills, and realistic self-assessment [10].

E. Zeyer defines professional competence as a combination of professional knowledge, skills, and methods for carrying out work tasks. He identifies several key components:

Social and legal competence – knowledge and skills for interacting with public institutions and people, as well as proficiency in professional communication.

Special competence – the ability to independently perform specific tasks, solve common professional problems, assess work outcomes.

Personal competence – a commitment to ongoing professional development and self-improvement, as well as personal fulfillment within the profession.

Self-competence – an awareness of one's own social and professional qualities and the ability to use strategies to prevent professional burnout [5].

At secondary schools, students are prepared for future career via developing their professional competence from various aspects.

**Research Methodology.** This research was carried on to investigate the development of professional competence among secondary school students can be positively impacted through various educational strategies. Especially, integrating career-oriented learning and critical thinking activities to enhance students' professional skills were addressed by this study. To achieve this, a group of thirty secondary school students of Genius International school participated in the research. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection to analyze comprehensively the impact of these strategies. Pre- and post-tests to gather quantitative data were used to measure students' professional competence, while weekly observations for qualitative insights were utilized to record their experiences and progress.

Both a broad statistical overview and a clear understanding of the effectiveness of various Instructional methods were provided by this very combination. Lesson plans, worksheets, pre- and post-tests, and various interactive activities were carefully selected and designed to support professional competence development during the preparation stage. The implementation period consisted of twelve 45-minute sessions, and during this time students worked on problem - solving activities, career - oriented learning and skill-building exercises like role-playing, case studies, teamwork exercises and topic-based discussions. To foster students' participation and motivation, each session began with engaging introduction, interactive warm-up activities and

quick assessment. Practical and hand-on activities such as ethical discussion-making exercises, workplace scenarios and cooperative projects were utilized throughout the study. Learning objectives were clearly introduced, materials were demonstrated, students were randomly split into experimental and control groups, and their performances were recorded for further analysis.

This research demonstrates new approach to develop students' professional competence by concentrating on the significance of soft skills like teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, interpersonal communication and leadership in secondary school. Analysis and results. The analysis of students' pre-test and post-test scores provides insights into their performance improvement.

Paired Samples T-Test									
Measure 1			Measure 2		t	Df	P	Cohen's d	SE Cohen's d
pre-test		-	post-test		66.768	29	< .001	12.190	0.395
Note. Student's t-test.									

Table 1

Students' average score in the pre-test was 58.03, while the post-test mean score increased to 76.90. This suggests an overall improvement in students' abilities after the intervention.

Descriptives									
		N	Mean	SD	SE			Coefficient of variation	
pre-test		30	58.033	5.209	0.951			0.090	
post-test		30	76.900	5.904	1.078			0.077	

Table 2

The standard deviation (SD) for the pre-test was 5.21, while for the post-test, it was 5.90. This indicates that while scores varied slightly more in the post-test, the overall performance still showed a positive trend.

The coefficient of variation decreased from 0.090 (pre-test) to 0.077 (post-test), indicating that students' scores became more consistent after the intervention.

Bar Plots (pre-test - post-test)

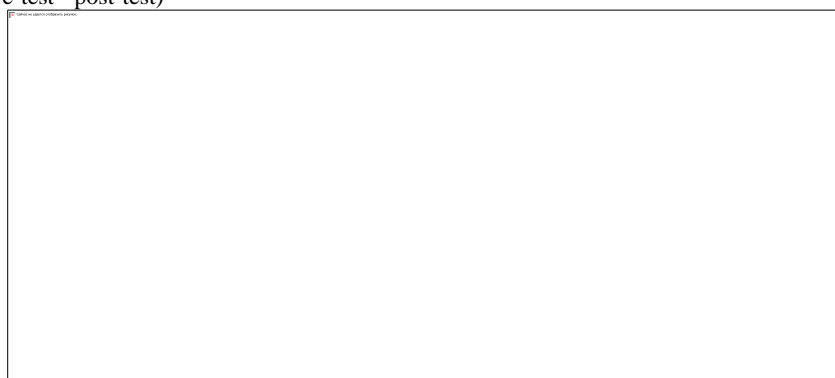


Table 3

The bar plot visually represents the increase in students' scores. The post-test scores are significantly higher, reinforcing the statistical findings that the intervention was effective in enhancing students' performance that demonstrate a substantial improvement.

**Conclusion.** This study explores the importance of secondary school for students' professional competence and career readiness. The results show that integration of career-oriented learning, skill-based activities and hands-on experiences significantly develop students' ability to use knowledge in real-world situations. In fostering essential skills like teamwork, critical thinking, and communication, this research proves the effectiveness of different Instructional techniques, such as problem-solving exercises, project-based learning, and role-playing. Educators can connect theoretical learning and practical implementation by incorporating

industry visits, service-learning projects and mentorship programs. To sum up, this study supports the importance of integrating skill-based education and experiential learning into the secondary school curriculum. Schools can play a crucial role in students' long-term success and it is recommended for teachers:

1. Long-term studies: examining the long-term effects of professional competence should be addressed by future studies. As this short-term study showed quick improvements, it does not explain whether these changes last over time.

2. Bigger and more diverse sample: future research should include a larger and diverse group of students to make the results more applicable and reliable. A clear picture of professional competence approach could be given by a bigger sample size.

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