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PROFESSIONALISM AND CAREER COMPETENCIES OF TERTIARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Ursula Ordon

*Institute of Elementary and Secondary Education
Jan Dłuhosh University of Chestokhova
Poland*

The paper substantiates the importance of professionalism and career competencies of higher school teacher as an initiator and participant of qualitative transformations in higher education. It considers the higher school teacher's key competencies: content, psychological and pedagogical, pragmatic, information and medial, creative, speech, social and interactive.

Key words: higher school teacher, professionalism, career competencies.

A modern tertiary school teacher as an initiator and creator of quality changes in education and society should stand out with full professionalism, competence, creative and active attitude, responsibility and other skills obtained during the process of career preparation and practical pedagogical activity [7]. The teacher in a contemporary European tertiary education is 'the creator with thorough activities who inspires to act and search, teaches how to be open to a different person, he is an animator of educational life' [4]. What is demanded from teachers are the skills to pass the knowledge effectively and abilities which allow to function successfully in a contemporary civilization [12]. Teachers play an important role in creating the system of knowledge, developing personality as well as interpersonal and communication skills among the students. That is why, it is essential that the teachers have the required formal and ethical qualifications.

As Z. Ratajek writes – there are many reasons for searching new perspectives of tertiary teacher professionalism [10]. The author counts radical change of place of tertiary education in society, the need to improve the ethos of academic society and improvement in quality teaching at tertiary schools. Care about proper career preparation of academic teachers and their personal development should be the object of attention of education authorities. A special meaning is ascribed to the issue of career competence.

Professional competence of contemporary teachers is usually described in the literature of the subject as the individual abilities, skills, system of knowledge, experience, attitude and career activity as well as personal characteristics. From

their level depends, to a great extent, effectiveness of activities which are expressed in a realization of specific standards. M. Czerepaniak – Walczak [2] defines career competence as a special ability which is characterized by demonstrating, at society defined level, the ability to behave adequately and to take responsibility for one's behavior. Competence allows not only to assess and reflect upon one's work in an efficient way but also to take responsibility for the results of the work.

In the dynamically changing education processes, career competence must have a changing character and it has to be demonstrated by the teacher's openness towards the needs of the students who are the education subjects. The teacher has to be creative and innovative, he needs to be able to deal with situations which require dialogue, compromise and agreement [3]. Career competence is the basis of teacher's responsibility, the feeling of being an expert, specialist and master in realization of accepted career tasks. A competent teacher is a person who is reflective, independent in action, creative, tolerant and critical.

Career competence, as the analysis of the subject literature shows, among the contemporary teachers can have different level as far as various indices are concerned. The basis for career competence development is the starting competence represented by the general humanistic knowledge, high personal culture and intellectual competence of a teacher. The starting competence is the point of departure for developing key career competence of a teacher. The indicator is the ability to realize complex functions and education tasks, independence and creativity in selecting the methods of teaching, creating individual program conceptions, designing appropriate ways of pedagogical activities and assessing them. Key competence is the basis for effective pedagogical activity. What is rated here is cooperation, factual knowledge, psychological-pedagogical, pragmatic, computer-media, creative, language, social competence.

To the factual knowledge competence belongs detailed knowledge about the subject in question and good knowledge of related disciplines.

Psychological-pedagogical competence includes complex knowledge of psychology and pedagogy and other defined skills and knowledge needed to realize the intended functions and pedagogical tasks.

It needs to be emphasized that the profession of a teacher requires a constant renewal and reconstruction of knowledge and skills in the process of improvement and career self-study both in the sphere of subject specialization and in the field of pedagogy and psychology. The importance of this type of competence and the need of its constant development is emphasized in many European Union studies and documents [8].

An important type of competence characteristic for a contemporary teacher is the cooperation competence. This competence is expressed by the ability to

organize cooperation with various subjects of education process, including the learned team, in order to realize the commonly accepted tasks.

Social-economic changes and the changing reality form expectations connected with showing off social competence of the teachers, which means the ability of planning, organizing and realizing the integrated activity and developing active pro-social attitudes. The newly formed teachers' functions demand competence in the sphere of creating proper education area, educational social climate in which the basic principle is the social activity and cooperation. What is expected from a teacher, is the appropriate level of efficiency in forming equal terms with the students, initiating common activity with society understood in a broad meaning of this word [5]. A contemporary tertiary school demands preparation for making decisions together and solving important problems connected with institution functioning, such as selecting education programs, designing, realizing and evaluating of pedagogical activity, designing education tasks, choosing forms, methods and means of didactically-educational work. This type of skills should be developed in the process of practical activity, in the form of classes, courses and workshops. Skills concerning cooperation with the school society should be developed mainly among the teachers working in the country society [13].

An important type of teachers' competence is pragmatic competence involving the knowledge of education technologies, efficiency and abilities in designing, setting the initial and final conditions of action, evaluating the results of the performed tasks. Pragmatic competence also means the ability to use various elements of methodological techniques in a correct way. This means principles, forms, methods and pedagogical means of activities.

An important group of competence of an academic teacher is made by communication competence involving skills connected with forming correct interpersonal relations, which can be characterized by skillful, undisturbed communication and the appropriate information flow. Communication is a process involving the exchange of messages and information with other people. According to E. Skoczylas-Krotla [11] what is needed in communication are the constant aspirations of the teachers to have the highest language correctness manifested in the clarity of statements and their agreement with the binding norms.

A model of a contemporary teacher who is a professional is complemented to creative competence which means a complex of skills for using modern methods and teaching techniques which emphasize activating and creative methods of functioning. They are connected with taking responsibility for the decisions and designed concepts of changes [2].

A contemporary tertiary school demands creative, responsible teachers who can draw up various education strategies, create concepts of individual development and programs supporting individual, creative development of

individual students. As E. Piwowarska writes ‘many scientists, teachers, class tutors try – within a popular program of education for work – to find optimal principles which would effectively allow to realize an aim which is set for contemporary creative school.’[9]. So an academic teacher needs a fixed level of creative skills, thanks to which he is able to activate independence, original thinking and group activity.

Creativity in academic work means the ability to prepare the original teaching programs and to create one’s own conceptions. The teacher who has developed creative competence is the author of individual ideas, he draws up forms and methods of didactic and scientific work and popularizes them in the pedagogical society. Creative competence means the ability to reflect, diagnose, analyze and examine one’s own pedagogical work. On this basis one should build personal system of knowledge and career experience.

Creative competence requires some personality predispositions and intellectual abilities: openness, flexibility and independent thinking [3]. They are used in the practical realization of various, original projects such as: preparing career plans and programs, evaluation tools, creating plans and concepts of one’s own development.

While creating the modern model of career competence of a tertiary school teacher one should take into consideration particularly important computer-media skills which condition the effective usage of the latest information technologies and they allow to exchange achievements and thoughts as well as distance learning. Computer-media competence involves the ability to use the latest sources of information in the education process, exchange knowledge and experience nationally and internationally and to get in touch with academic and school circles from different countries.

While characterizing the system of career competence of tertiary school teachers, one cannot omit the group of ethical-moral competence which is the basis for career functioning. A teacher is a person who is a social example based on the commonly accepted, socially recognized system of values. He performs a special kind of career tasks which are connected with developing personality of other people and influencing them [14].

What complements the image of a tertiary school teacher are the following characteristics: professionalism, communicativeness, objectivity, understanding, cooperation, consequence, authority, high personal culture [6]. A tertiary school teacher should be an authentic specialist in the arts; who teaches scientific knowledge and is responsible for it, he is critical and independent in thinking but at the same time kind and tolerant, respecting and obeying the laws of students and other people. Solid formal qualifications, developed competence and skills of various kinds, faultless ethical-moral conduct are the factors which determine the professionalism of a contemporary tertiary school teacher.

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**ПРОФЕСІОНАЛІЗМ ТА ПРОФЕСІЙНІ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ
ВИКЛАДАЧА ВИЩОЇ ШКОЛИ**

Урсула Ордон

*Інститут початкової і середньої освіти
Академії ім. Яна Длугоша, Ченстохов, Польща*

Обґрунтовано важливість професіоналізму та професійних компетенцій викладача вищої школи як ініціатора та учасника процесу якісних перетворень у системі вищої освіти. Розглянуто ключові компетенції викладача вищої школи: змістові, психолого-педагогічні, прагматичні, інформаційно-медіальні, креативні, мовленнєві, суспільні та компетенції взаємодії.

Ключові слова: викладач вищої школи, професіоналізм, професійні компетенції.

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