

METHODOLOGY OF PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH

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Master's Students' Capacity for Scholarly Inquiry as a Theoretical Construct

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Abstract

Drawing on an analysis of scholarly literature, this article examines master's students' capacity for scholarly inquiry as a theoretical construct. The discussion compares three interpretations of research competence: a set of personal attributes, a combination of knowledge and skills required to conduct research, and readiness to undertake scientific investigation, disseminate findings, and apply them in educational practice. These perspectives are explored in relation to independent knowledge acquisition, intellectual engagement, and creative activity.

Capacity for scholarly inquiry is conceptualised as an integrated personal characteristic that combines individual dispositions with research capabilities developed through education. Its components are considered transferable across professional and pedagogical contexts, while their specific content reflects the discipline, degree programme, and research focus. Particular attention is paid to the role of the master's thesis in developing specialised research skills.

The article outlines six approaches to organising research training at the master's level. The competence-based approach emphasises the development of key competencies through problem-based learning and relevant academic tasks. The adaptive approach focuses on engagement with unfamiliar learning formats and the creative use of distance learning environments. The critical and creative approach prioritises the reflective examination and creative application of educational content. The environmental approach highlights the provision of conditions conducive to scholarly inquiry within the broader development of higher education. The andragogical approach addresses professional thinking, while the person-centred approach emphasises personal development through inquiry and reflection. Literature-based papers, coursework projects, and thesis preparation are discussed as forms of academic work that support the development of master's students' capacity for scholarly inquiry.

Keywords: research competence; competence-based approach in education; theoretical construct; professional development of master's students; development of research competence

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Дослідницька компетентність магістрантів як теоретичний конструкт

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Анотація

У статті на основі аналізу наукової літератури розглянуто дослідницьку компетентність магістрантів як теоретичний конструкт. Зіставлено три підходи до її трактування: як сукупності особистісних якостей; як поєднання знань і вмінь, необхідних для здійснення дослідницької діяльності; як готовності до проведення наукових досліджень, поширення їхніх результатів і впровадження в освітню практику. Зазначені трактування проаналізовано у взаємозв'язку із самостійним здобуттям знань, пізнавальною активністю та творчою діяльністю.

Дослідницьку компетентність визначено як інтегративну характеристику особистості, що поєднує індивідуальні схильності та дослідницькі здатності, сформовані в процесі навчання. Розкрито можливість застосування її складників у різних видах професійної та педагогічної діяльності. Встановлено, що їхнє змістове наповнення залежить від галузі знань, освітньої програми та спрямованості дослідження. Особливу увагу приділено ролі підготовки магістерської роботи у формуванні спеціалізованих дослідницьких умінь.

Охарактеризовано шість підходів до організації дослідницької підготовки магістрантів. Компетентнісний підхід передбачає формування ключових компетентностей засобами проблемного навчання та виконання відповідних навчальних завдань. Адаптивний підхід спрямований на опанування нових форм навчання і творче використання можливостей дистанційного освітнього середовища. Критично-креативний підхід акцентує увагу на рефлексивному осмисленні та творчому застосуванні змісту освіти. Середовищний підхід передбачає створення умов, сприятливих для наукового пошуку, у контексті розвитку вищої освіти. Андрагогічний підхід орієнтований на розвиток професійного мислення, а особистісно орієнтований — на особистісний розвиток через пошукову діяльність і рефлексію. Розглянуто підготовку рефератів, виконання курсових і магістерських робіт як форми навчально-наукової діяльності, що сприяють формуванню дослідницької компетентності магістрантів.

Ключові слова: дослідницька компетентність; компетентнісний підхід в освіті; теоретичний конструкт; професійний розвиток магістрантів; формування дослідницької компетентності.

Statement of the problem. The development of research competence is an important component of master's-level education. Clarifying its meaning and constituent elements provides a theoretical basis for organising research training and supporting independent scholarly inquiry.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Ukrainian scholars who have addressed this subject include O. Bida (the meaning of research competence in Ukrainian and international literature); O. Shtonda, S. Biletska, and O. Proskurnia (the development of research competence among master's students at pedagogical universities during research placements); O. Luchaninova (contemporary approaches to developing research competence among master's students in

vocational education through thesis preparation); V. Barabash (research activities in the development of professional competence among students in information-related disciplines); V. Onopa (a model for developing research competence among master's students in technical disciplines); S. Arkhypova (the development of research competence among prospective social work master's graduates during professional training); and M. Holovan (the nature and content of the concept of research competence).

The purpose of the article is to provide a theoretical analysis of the development of research competence among master's students as a conceptual category.

Summary of the main material. Drawing on an analysis of scholarly literature, O. Shtonda, S. Biletska,

and O. Proskurnia identify several interpretations of research competence: a system of personal qualities; the possession of knowledge and skills required to conduct research; and readiness to undertake research, subject its findings to scholarly scrutiny, and implement them in educational practice. The authors consider the following definition to be the most appropriate: research competence is an integrative personal characteristic encompassing methodological literacy, proficiency in research procedures and techniques, recognition of the value of research, and the ability to apply research skills in professional practice. They identify the components of research competence developed specifically through master's-level education as readiness to conduct independent research, the ability to analyse research findings, and readiness to apply these findings in educational practice (Shtonda, et. al., 2022).

Based on a review of scholarly literature, O. Bida identifies differences in emphasis across definitions of competence. For example, UNESCO publications interpret competence as a synthesis of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values with clear practical relevance. In the Sectoral Standards for Higher Education, the competence-based approach encompasses the unity of knowledge and understanding, knowledge as action, and knowledge as being. It also covers the subject area in which an individual is knowledgeable and able to demonstrate readiness to undertake a particular activity. The author further notes that I. Bekh does not equate cognitive abilities, knowledge, and skills with competencies. Instead, he understands competence in terms of an individual's experience, emphasising practical experience rather than merely being informed about various areas of life. O. Bida's interpretation of research competence depends on the underlying understanding of competence itself. Most authors classify research competence as a key competence and associate it with innate personal qualities, or regard it as an integral personal quality manifested in readiness to acquire knowledge independently and the capacity for autonomous cognitive activity and creative transformation (Bida, 2017).

O. Shtonda, S. Biletska, and O. Proskurnia examine the development of research competence among master's students at pedagogical universities during research placements. They understand research competence among master's students in educational sciences as an interrelationship between competencies at different levels of content: key, basic, and specialised. The authors identify the applicability of key competencies across different forms of professional and

pedagogical activity as their distinctive feature. Basic competencies are characterised by their alignment with the field of study and preparation for a specific profession, including its research dimension. Specialised competencies among master's students in educational sciences are developed through the preparation of a master's thesis, with their particular characteristics determined by the research field and the educational and research orientation of the programme. Their literature review leads the authors to identify several perspectives on the position of research competence within the broader system of competencies: most scholars classify it as a key competence; some equate it with methodological competence; and a substantial number consider it a basic competence alongside competence in teaching methods (Shtonda, et. al., 2022).

O. Luchaninova investigates contemporary approaches to developing research competence among master's students in vocational education through thesis preparation. According to the author, higher education develops within several educational paradigms. The cognitive paradigm regards thinking as the foundation of cognition. The developmental paradigm emphasises an individual's active and independent engagement. The functionalist paradigm addresses societal demands on education, the individual's functions in society, and preparation for professional practice. The cultural paradigm recognises education as a value and the individual as an agent of culture.

The author considers the following paradigmatic approaches central to organising the development of research competence among master's students. The competence-based approach promotes the development of key, professional, and general competencies through problem- and activity-based learning and competence-based education. The adaptive approach involves active adjustment to new forms of learning through the creative use of distance learning environments. The critical and creative approach conceptualises the educational environment of an institution as educational content. The environmental approach is viewed as a strategy for developing higher education. The andragogical approach addresses the development of professional thinking and the reintegration of the cognitive domain. The person-centred approach seeks to foster the personal development of prospective master's graduates through problem situations, paradoxes that challenge their worldviews, crisis case studies, original instructional tasks, cognitive games, hypothesis formulation, and

reflection on the logic of presentation, among other methods (Luchaninova, 2022).

In their investigation of student research activities as a means of developing professional competence, V. Barabash, L. Hliebova, and A. Mekheda emphasise the importance of students possessing an appropriate body of knowledge for the development of research competence. Equal importance is attached to the ability to use available information effectively by acquiring specific skills, including searching for information, transforming and storing it, using relevant information, and producing new information. Student research is regarded as the principal means of developing research competence, as it fosters specific skills and a distinctive mode of thinking. The authors identify the following forms of student research that contribute to this development: writing literature-based papers; preparing coursework papers; delivering presentations in seminars; completing individual problem-based assignments; presenting at student research conferences and conferences reporting research outcomes; and participating in student research groups, among other activities (Barabash, et. al., 2020).

The scholarly literature presents a model developed by V. Onopa for fostering research competence among master's students. The model is grounded in a combination of methodological approaches: competence-based, systems, interdisciplinary, and learner-centred. It conceptualises the development of research competence as a purposeful and guided process whose effectiveness depends on collaborative activity between the lecturer and students. External factors shaping the model's objective include the objective need to prepare competitive professionals with well-developed research competence and professional standards reflecting employers' requirements (Opora, 2022).

S. Arkhypova examines the development of research competence among master's students. The author establishes that this process holds a central position within master's-level professional training and that research competence is manifested in a value-based attitude towards professional activity. Personal qualities are particularly important in its development, including the capacity for inquiry, strategic planning in professional practice, and the analysis of future prospects.

The literature review leads the author to conclude that research competence is defined in multiple ways. It is understood as knowledge acquired as a cognitive

learning outcome, combined with proficiency in research methods and appropriate motivation; as an integral personal quality that includes readiness to acquire professional knowledge independently; and as a holistic, integrative personal quality encompassing a value-based attitude towards professional training, relevant personal attributes, and the ability to resolve problematic situations in practice. In the author's definition, research competence among master's students in social work is an important integrative personal quality that determines their ability to conduct scientific research and apply methodological knowledge and research principles in the social sphere (Arkhypova, 2018).

M. Holovan and V. Yatsenko examine the nature and content of research competence and identify its constituent elements. These include a systematic understanding of current research directions in contemporary science; proficiency in a foreign language for professional and interpersonal communication; familiarity with philosophical schools of thought and concepts within a particular scientific field; a command of scientific methodology, knowledge of underlying regularities, and readiness to apply fundamental professional knowledge in practice; the ability to define a research problem, formulate its aim, objectives, and hypothesis, and develop an experimental programme; proficiency in scientific research methods; and the ability to analyse and present research findings and draw conclusions.

According to the authors, research competence is "a holistic, integrative personal quality that combines knowledge, abilities, skills, research experience, value-based attitudes, and personal attributes, and is manifested in readiness and the ability to undertake research to generate new knowledge by applying methods of scientific inquiry and adopting a creative approach to goal setting, planning, decision-making, and the analysis and evaluation of research outcomes" (Holovan, & Yatsenko, 2012).

Conclusions. The development of research competence among master's students is currently regarded as an important pedagogical issue within the professional preparation of future specialists. This development is grounded in an integrated approach to designing the content of professional education. Further research may address the organisation of project-based research activities for prospective master's graduates and the incorporation of research components into course curricula.

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