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UNIVERSITY–SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AS A MECHANISM FOR ENHANCING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN DUAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: This article investigates university–school partnership as a pedagogical mechanism for developing the communication competence of pre-service teachers within a dual education model. The integration of higher education and school-based professional practice is considered an important condition for transforming theoretical communication knowledge into practical professional competence. Particular attention is given to mentoring, classroom observation, microteaching, supervised teaching, reflective dialogue, collaborative lesson planning, and systematic feedback. A developmental sequence consisting of observation, guided interaction, supervised practice, independent communication, feedback, reflection, and improvement is proposed. The article also identifies organizational and pedagogical conditions for effective university–school cooperation, including continuity of practice, clearly defined responsibilities, common assessment criteria, mentor preparation, and systematic reflection. It is concluded that a structured partnership between universities and schools can contribute to future teachers' confidence, empathy, adaptability, pedagogical tact, communication culture, and ability to manage diverse professional interaction situations.

Keywords: university–school partnership, dual education, pre-service teachers, pedagogical communication, communication competence, mentoring, teaching practice, reflective practice, professional development.

Introduction

The professional preparation of future teachers requires a close relationship between theoretical learning and practical experience. Higher education institutions provide students with pedagogical, psychological, methodological, and subject-specific knowledge, while schools provide authentic environments in which this knowledge can be applied and evaluated.

The connection between these two environments becomes particularly important in the development of pedagogical communication competence. Effective teacher communication requires practical experience in interacting with students of different abilities, personalities, interests, and emotional characteristics.

Future teachers must also develop professional communication with colleagues, mentors, school administrators, and parents. These abilities cannot be formed completely through lectures or textbook-based learning.

The dual education model creates opportunities for systematic cooperation between universities and schools. Such cooperation enables pre-service teachers to develop professional communication gradually through observation, participation, teaching practice, feedback, and reflection.

University–school partnership in dual education

University–school partnership should be understood as coordinated cooperation in which both institutions share responsibility for preparing future teachers.

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The university provides theoretical knowledge and methodological guidance, while the school provides authentic professional situations and experienced mentors.

The interaction between the two environments may follow this sequence:

University preparation – school observation – guided practice – mentor feedback – reflection – independent practice – evaluation.

This process enables theoretical knowledge to be repeatedly connected with practical experience.

Unlike short-term teaching practice, dual education can provide continuous exposure to the school environment. This continuity allows future teachers to observe how communication changes across different lessons, learners, situations, and professional responsibilities.

Observation as the first stage of development

Before conducting independent lessons, future teachers should systematically observe experienced teachers.

Observation should have specific objectives. Students may analyze:

how a teacher begins communication with the class;

how questions are formulated;

how students are encouraged to participate;

how incorrect answers are addressed;

how conflicts are managed;

how feedback is provided;

how verbal and non-verbal communication are combined.

Structured observation helps future teachers recognize professional communication strategies that may not be evident during ordinary classroom participation.

Guided interaction and supervised teaching

After observation, students should gradually become active participants in classroom communication.

At first, they may conduct a short discussion, explain a task, work with a small group, or provide feedback to learners.

The mentor can observe the process and provide immediate or post-lesson recommendations.

As students gain experience, they can assume responsibility for larger parts of the lesson and eventually conduct complete lessons.

This gradual transition reduces anxiety and allows communication skills to develop according to the student's professional readiness.

The role of mentoring

Mentoring is one of the central mechanisms of dual teacher education.

An experienced teacher can serve both as a professional model and as a source of constructive feedback.

Effective mentoring includes observation, discussion, analysis, and recommendations for future action.

Feedback should be specific. For example, instead of stating that a student teacher's communication was ineffective, a mentor can identify a particular issue:

"Some students did not participate in the discussion. Try using more open-ended questions and allow additional time for responses."

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Specific recommendations help future teachers understand what should be changed and how improvement can be achieved.

Microteaching as a preparation method

Microteaching can be used to prepare future teachers for complex communication situations before they work independently in real classrooms.

Students can practice:

introducing a lesson;

explaining new information;

asking different types of questions;

responding to incorrect answers;

organizing group discussion;

giving instructions;

providing constructive feedback;

resolving simulated conflicts.

The activity can then be discussed with peers and mentors.

Where appropriate and ethically permitted, video recording may also be used for self-analysis.

Professional communication beyond the classroom

Pedagogical communication competence is not limited to interaction between teachers and students.

Future teachers should learn how to communicate professionally with colleagues, school administrators, specialists, and parents.

Communication with colleagues requires cooperation, respectful exchange of professional opinions, collaborative planning, and willingness to receive feedback.

Communication with parents requires additional professional sensitivity. Teachers should be able to discuss students' progress and difficulties respectfully, listen to concerns, avoid inappropriate judgments, and maintain professional ethics.

Dual education can provide supervised opportunities for future teachers to observe and gradually understand these forms of professional interaction.

Assessment of communication competence

A common assessment framework can improve cooperation between universities and schools.

The following criteria can be used:

Component	**Assessment indicator**
Verbal communication	Clear, logical, and learner-appropriate speech
Active listening	Attention to learners' opinions and responses
Questioning skills	Effective use of open and guiding questions
Feedback	Constructive and motivating response
Empathy	Understanding learners' needs and emotions

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Pedagogical tact	Respectful and ethical interaction
Adaptability	Adjustment of communication to different situations
Classroom interaction	Effective organization of dialogue
Conflict management	Constructive response to disagreement
Reflection	Ability to analyze and improve communication

The same criteria can be used by the university supervisor, school mentor, and pre-service teacher for self-assessment. This makes the assessment process more consistent.

Pedagogical conditions for effective partnership

Several conditions are necessary for university–school partnership to contribute effectively to communication competence.

First, cooperation between the university and school should be systematic and continuous.

Second, the professional responsibilities of mentors, university supervisors, and pre-service teachers should be clearly defined.

Third, school mentors should understand the learning outcomes expected from the dual education program.

Fourth, common assessment criteria should be established.

Fifth, students should receive regular feedback.

Sixth, practical experience should be discussed and analyzed during university-based learning.

Seventh, communicative tasks should gradually increase in complexity.

These conditions help transform school practice into an organized professional learning environment.

Reflection and self-development

Reflection enables pre-service teachers to understand their own professional communication.

After a lesson, students may analyze questions such as:

Which communication strategy was most successful?

Which students were difficult to involve?

How did I respond to unexpected situations?

Did my feedback motivate learners?

What would I communicate differently next time?

Reflective journals, self-assessment, peer discussion, mentor consultations, and lesson analysis can be used systematically.

Through reflection, future teachers become increasingly responsible for their own professional development.

Practical recommendations

Universities and partner schools should develop a common plan for developing pedagogical communication competence.

Observation sheets can be introduced for school-based practice.

Mentors should organize regular feedback sessions with pre-service teachers.

Microteaching should be used before independent classroom teaching.

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Students should maintain reflective portfolios documenting communication experiences, difficulties, and progress.

University seminars can include case studies based on real communication situations encountered during school practice.

Common assessment rubrics should be used throughout the dual education period.

These measures can ensure continuity between theoretical preparation and practical professional development.

Conclusion

University–school partnership is an important mechanism for developing the pedagogical communication competence of pre-service teachers within dual education.

The university provides theoretical and methodological foundations, while the school creates authentic conditions for applying and improving professional communication.

A systematic sequence of observation, guided interaction, supervised teaching, independent communication, feedback, reflection, and improvement enables future teachers to develop professional communication gradually.

Mentoring, microteaching, common assessment criteria, reflective practice, and continuous university–school cooperation strengthen this process.

Therefore, the development of an effective university–school partnership should be considered an important organizational and pedagogical condition for preparing future teachers who can communicate professionally, demonstrate empathy and pedagogical tact, respond flexibly to educational situations, and establish constructive relationships with participants in the educational process.

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