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PEDAGOGICAL POSSIBILITIES FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE THROUGH A RETROSPECTIVE APPROACH

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Abstract. This article examines the theoretical foundations and pedagogical possibilities of using a retrospective approach to develop students' professional competence. Retrospection is understood as a purposeful return to prior experience, knowledge, cultural resources, and professional practice in order to interpret them in the light of present tasks and future action. Drawing on the ideas of Dewey, Schön, Kolb, Gibbs, and competence-oriented education, the article argues that retrospective learning can connect theory with practice, strengthen reflective judgment, support professional identity, and make cultural knowledge educationally meaningful. In the context of music education, the evolutionary history of Karakalpak music offers material for listening, analysis, performance, comparison, and pedagogical design. A practical sequence is proposed: encounter a professional or cultural experience, document it, analyze it, connect it with concepts, redesign an action, and evaluate learning. The article is theoretical and does not report experimental results; its proposed mechanisms can inform the design of subsequent empirical research.

Keywords: retrospective approach, professional competence, reflective learning, teacher education, music education, Karakalpak music, cultural heritage.

1. Introduction

Higher education is expected to prepare students not only to recall disciplinary knowledge but also to make sound decisions, communicate effectively, solve unfamiliar problems, and continue learning in professional settings. These outcomes depend on the integration of knowledge, practical skills, values, and the ability to judge one's own action. Yet learning can remain fragmented when lectures, practical work, cultural content, and professional experience are treated as separate parts of a programme. A retrospective approach offers a way to reconnect them: students revisit what they have learned or experienced, interpret its meaning, and use that interpretation to plan more capable action.

Retrospection in education is more than remembering past events. It is an organized process of inquiry in which learners identify what happened, examine why it happened, relate experience to concepts and standards, and decide what to do next. This perspective is especially relevant to teacher and music education. Students can study how a professional practice has changed over time, compare

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historical and contemporary approaches, and consider how cultural heritage can inform present teaching. In a study grounded in the evolution of Karakalpak musical art, historical musical materials can become a resource for developing both professional understanding and culturally responsive practice.

The purpose of this article is to clarify the theoretical foundations of the retrospective approach and identify pedagogical possibilities for its use in developing students' professional competence, with particular attention to music education and Karakalpak musical heritage. The discussion is conceptual: it synthesizes established theories and proposes a learning sequence that can later be tested in classroom research.

2. Theoretical foundations of the retrospective approach

The first foundation is reflective thought. Dewey (1933) describes reflection as active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or form of knowledge in relation to the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads. In education, this means that students should not merely recount an experience; they should investigate it. A rehearsal, lesson observation, performance, or analysis of a historical recording becomes educational when students ask what they noticed, what evidence supports their interpretation, and what alternative explanations are possible.

A second foundation is the reflective practitioner perspective. Schön (1983) distinguishes reflection-in-action, which occurs while a professional responds to a situation, from reflection-on-action, which occurs after the event. A retrospective approach primarily structures reflection-on-action, while preparing students to make better judgments during future action. For example, after leading a listening activity, a student may review learners' responses, identify where understanding faltered, and redesign the prompts. The review is useful because it leads to a changed professional decision rather than remaining a general expression of approval or regret.

Experiential learning provides a third foundation. Kolb (1984) presents learning as a cycle involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Retrospection links experience to reflection and conceptualization, while planning a new lesson or performance creates an opportunity to test revised understanding. Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle similarly guides learners from description and feelings to evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and an action plan. Both frameworks suggest that effective reflection needs structure, evidence, and a forward-looking outcome.

Competence-oriented education complements these theories. Competence is not a single skill; it is the integrated capacity to mobilize knowledge, skills, attitudes, and resources to respond appropriately to complex demands (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Retrospective work can support this integration because it asks students to connect what they know with what they did, the context in which they acted, and the consequences of their choices. It also makes progress visible through evidence such as lesson plans, annotated recordings, performance notes, reflective journals, and revised teaching materials.

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3. Pedagogical possibilities for competence development

The first possibility is to connect historical knowledge with professional action. Studying the evolution of Karakalpak music can help students examine how musical forms, instruments, performance contexts, and transmission practices have developed. The educational task is not to memorize a chronology alone. Students can compare selected examples, identify continuity and change, and explain how historical and social contexts shape musical meaning. They can then translate this understanding into a listening guide, a lesson sequence, or a culturally grounded performance task. This process supports disciplinary knowledge, interpretation, planning, and communication.

The second possibility is to develop reflective and analytical competence. Students may keep a structured portfolio containing a short account of an activity, evidence from the activity, an analysis linked to course concepts, and a proposed next step. In music education, evidence might include a recording excerpt, a score or rhythmic transcription, peer feedback, or a student response. The teacher educator can guide analysis with questions: What was the intended learning outcome? What evidence shows whether it was achieved? Which decisions helped or hindered learning? What would you change, and why? Such prompts help students move from unsupported opinion toward reasoned professional judgment.

The third possibility is to build pedagogical and methodological competence through redesign. After reviewing a past lesson or performance, students revise one element: the objective, sequence, explanation, choice of musical example, differentiation strategy, or assessment criterion. They explain the reason for the revision and, where possible, try it again with peers or learners. The cycle of planning, enactment, review, and redesign makes theory actionable and cultivates problem-solving, adaptability, and self-regulation.

The fourth possibility is to strengthen cultural and communicative competence. Work with Karakalpak musical heritage can encourage students to treat cultural materials respectfully, distinguish documented information from personal interpretation, and explain musical ideas to audiences with different levels of prior knowledge. Interviews with tradition bearers, when ethically and practically appropriate, can be compared with archival or scholarly sources. Students can reflect on whose perspectives are represented, how context affects interpretation, and how heritage can be taught without reducing it to a static symbol. This supports intercultural awareness and responsible professional communication.

A fifth possibility is collaborative learning. Peer review of portfolios, lesson plans, and performance reflections allows students to encounter alternative interpretations and receive feedback. To keep feedback constructive, educators can provide shared criteria: accuracy of musical and historical information, clarity of learning objectives, alignment between activity and assessment, inclusiveness, and quality of evidence-based reflection. Students should also respond to feedback by documenting what they accepted, adapted, or questioned. This makes collaboration part of professional learning rather than a one-way evaluation.

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4. A practical pedagogical sequence

A retrospective learning cycle can be organized in six connected stages. First, students encounter a relevant experience, such as observing a lesson, performing a musical work, analyzing a recording, or preparing a teaching activity. Second, they document the experience through notes, audio or video where permitted, a score, or learner feedback. Third, they reconstruct the event and identify a focused question rather than attempting to reflect on everything at once. Fourth, they analyze the evidence using theoretical concepts, professional standards, and historical or cultural context. Fifth, they formulate a revised action—for example, a clearer explanation, a different listening task, or a more inclusive assessment method. Sixth, they test or simulate the revised action and evaluate what changed.

Assessment should value the quality of reasoning and development, not only the final product. A concise rubric may assess: (1) accurate use of disciplinary and cultural knowledge; (2) use of relevant evidence; (3) depth of analysis; (4) connection between analysis and proposed action; and (5) professional communication and ethical awareness. Educators should provide time for reflection, model how to analyze evidence, and create a supportive environment in which students can discuss difficulties without treating every difficulty as failure. Reflection becomes meaningful when it is specific, dialogic, and followed by an opportunity to act differently.

5. Conditions and limitations

The approach requires careful selection of materials and tasks. Historical accounts and musical examples should be reliable, appropriately contextualized, and suitable for the students' level. Cultural heritage should be presented with attention to diversity within traditions and to the people who sustain them. When recordings, interviews, or community knowledge are used, permissions, attribution, and respectful representation matter. Retrospective work can also become superficial if it is reduced to a diary entry or an unstructured "what I liked" discussion. Clear prompts, feedback, and links to professional standards help prevent this problem.

A further limitation is that reflective writing alone does not prove the development of competence. Students may describe insight without being able to apply it in practice. Therefore, future empirical work should combine reflective portfolios with observation, performance or teaching tasks, peer assessment, and pre- and post-intervention measures. Any claim about effectiveness should be based on such evidence. The present article proposes a theoretical rationale and pedagogical design, rather than reporting measured outcomes.

6. Conclusion

A retrospective approach can contribute to students' professional competence by turning prior experience and cultural knowledge into resources for informed future action. Its theoretical basis lies in reflective inquiry, professional reflection, experiential learning, and an integrated understanding of competence. In music education, the evolutionary development of Karakalpak musical art can support disciplinary analysis, lesson design, cultural awareness, communication, and reflective judgment when students engage with it actively and contextually. The proposed cycle—experience, documentation,

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analysis, conceptual connection, redesign, and evaluation—offers a practical framework for teaching. Its value should ultimately be examined through classroom implementation and evidence of students' performance, not assumed from reflection alone.

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