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DIDACTIC POTENTIAL OF FOLK PEDAGOGY MATERIALS IN DEVELOPING THE PROFESSIONAL CULTURE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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Abstract. This conceptual and methodological article examines how materials drawn from folk pedagogy can become a purposeful resource for developing the professional culture of prospective teachers. Rather than treating proverbs, oral narratives, community practices and traditional educational norms as self-evidently effective teaching tools, the study proposes a procedure for their contextual interpretation, ethical appraisal and transformation into assessable professional tasks. The discussion draws on cultural and axiological approaches, research on culturally relevant pedagogy and funds of knowledge, and the five-component conception of professional culture developed in the author's dissertation research. A six-stage instructional cycle is adapted to work with culturally situated cases: initial diagnosis, contextual and value analysis, dialogic design, simulated action, reflective revision and transfer to a new situation. A hypothetical teaching case illustrates the distinction between respectfully interpreting a tradition and uncritically reproducing it. The proposed evidence matrix links value-based reasoning, pedagogical knowledge, action design, ethical communication and reflection to observable student products. The outcome is an instructional design framework requiring subsequent classroom validation, not a report of a separate experimental intervention.

Keywords: folk pedagogy; prospective teachers; professional culture; cultural heritage; pedagogical decision-making; reflective learning; values education; didactic design

Introduction

The professional preparation of teachers cannot be reduced to mastery of subject content or a repertoire of instructional methods. In complex educational situations, a prospective teacher must justify a choice, take account of the dignity and needs of learners, interact constructively with others and review the consequences of an intervention. The professional culture examined here refers to the functional unity of these values, forms of knowledge, actions, relations and reflective judgments. For teacher education, the crucial question is not merely whether students can reproduce rules of conduct but whether they can interpret and apply them in a pedagogically defensible way.

Folk pedagogy constitutes a particularly demanding context for such learning. Proverbs, oral histories, customs, intergenerational practices and narrative models of upbringing convey socially accumulated knowledge and expectations concerning responsibility, cooperation, respect and the education of children. Their cultural familiarity can create a meaningful starting point for discussion. However, familiarity is not proof of pedagogical appropriateness. A traditional practice may express a valuable concern for solidarity while simultaneously containing assumptions that require reconsideration in a contemporary inclusive classroom. The educational value of the material therefore depends on the quality of its selection, interpretation and teaching use.

The relevance of this distinction is reinforced by UNESCO's recognition of cultural diversity as a resource to be protected within the boundaries of human dignity and rights [1]. Its Framework for Culture and Arts Education also encourages meaningful connections between cultural expression, educational participation and contemporary competencies [2]. Neither document provides a ready-

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made lesson plan for folk pedagogy; rather, both support the view that cultural content should be handled with contextual understanding, participation and ethical responsibility.

The aim of the article is to substantiate and operationalize the didactic potential of folk pedagogy materials for developing the professional culture of prospective teachers. Three tasks are pursued: to identify criteria for selecting educationally relevant cultural material; to propose a coherent sequence of learning activities that transforms material into professional decisions; and to specify observable evidence for formative assessment. The analysis is focused on university-level pedagogy courses and pedagogical practice, not on measuring children's adherence to customary norms.

Theoretical and methodological foundations

Culturally relevant pedagogy locates classroom learning at the intersection of academic achievement, cultural competence and critical consciousness, rather than asking teachers merely to decorate lessons with familiar cultural images [3]. Research on funds of knowledge similarly calls attention to the knowledge accumulated in everyday social practices and to the possibility of connecting this knowledge to formal teaching [4]. Gay likewise emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching requires serious attention to cultural knowledge and instructional decisions, rather than occasional celebration of difference [5]. These approaches originated in specific empirical and sociocultural contexts. Their transfer to Uzbek teacher education should therefore be analytical: the concepts inform questions about learners' knowledge and cultural participation, while local educational content must be studied on its own terms.

Within the present study, folk pedagogy designates a body of educational meanings and practices transmitted through communities, family narratives, oral creativity, customary interaction and informal learning. It does not denote a uniform national doctrine or a set of universally applicable prescriptions. The object of didactic transformation is not the tradition as a finished answer, but the educational problem embedded in it: What value is being advanced? For whom and under what circumstances was the practice meaningful? Which features may be pedagogically useful today, and which require revision? These questions prevent romanticization and preserve the teacher's responsibility for evidence-based judgment.

The author's wider dissertation distinguishes five interdependent components of professional culture: axiological-motivational, cognitive-professional, activity-technological, communicative-ethical, and reflective-developmental. These are treated here as analytical dimensions of one professional situation rather than five independent personality traits. A cultural narrative can activate the first dimension by presenting a value conflict, the second through theoretical interpretation, the third through the design of an action, the fourth through discussion and negotiation, and the fifth through revision after feedback. The contribution of folk pedagogy is consequently not confined to students' knowledge of heritage: it lies in a structured transition from cultural meaning to responsible professional action.

Methodologically, the article uses conceptual analysis, comparison of educational approaches, and didactic modeling. It interprets selected research and institutional documents and develops a sequence of possible learning tasks. No new sample was recruited, no classroom intervention was conducted specifically for this article, and the illustrative case below is constructed for methodological demonstration. This limitation determines the status of the results: they are design propositions suitable for piloting and subsequent empirical verification.

3. Selecting and transforming folk pedagogy materials

A source is didactically promising when it contains a recognizable educational issue, provides sufficient context for interpretation, permits comparison with contemporary norms, and can lead to a task in which the student produces an observable decision. Four safeguards must be observed. First, provenance should be identifiable wherever possible: a recorded narrative or attributed collection is

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preferable to an unattributed quotation. Second, geographical and generational diversity should not be collapsed into a single authoritative tradition. Third, the educator must distinguish a practice's historical descriptive content from a normative recommendation for present-day teaching. Fourth, instructional use should not humiliate, stereotype or exclude the cultural groups whose experiences are under discussion.

These safeguards lead to a material-selection algorithm: source identification; contextual description; extraction of an educational value or dilemma; comparison with current pedagogical and ethical expectations; and formulation of a student task with explicit evidence of learning. The following matrix illustrates how different genres may support distinct professional operations. It is a design guide, not a claim that every item in a genre will necessarily produce the indicated outcome.

Folk pedagogy material	Didactic transformation	Observable student product
Proverb or aphorism	Compare its implied norm with a classroom dilemma	Short justified value judgment
Oral tale or biographical narrative	Identify actions, motives and consequences	Evidence–value–decision map
Community cooperation practice	Reframe mutual assistance as inclusive participation	Collaborative lesson design
Traditional game or ceremony	Audit accessibility, consent and developmental fit	Adapted activity plan and rationale
Intergenerational recollection	Compare viewpoints and limits of generalization	Reflective comparative commentary

The matrix also reveals why a cultural resource cannot be assessed by quantity alone. A lesson containing ten proverbs but no demand for interpretation may produce superficial recall. Conversely, a single carefully contextualized narrative can generate a sustained professional task that integrates theoretical reasoning, decision-making, dialogue and self-correction. The decisive unit of instructional planning is therefore a pedagogical problem with an assessable student response, not the number of cultural references inserted into the syllabus.

A six-stage contextual-reflective instructional cycle

The process proposed here follows the six-stage contextual-reflective logic presented in the author's dissertation manuscript [8], while specifying how the stages may work with folk pedagogy materials. At the diagnostic-target stage, the lecturer elicits students' initial interpretations of a cultural episode and records what evidence they use, whether they distinguish description from recommendation and what aspects of the educational problem they overlook. The outcome is an initial position and a personal learning question, rather than a moral label assigned to the student.

At the contextual-value analysis stage, students locate the genre, audience and circumstances of the material, distinguish observations from assumptions and consider the interests of all parties. They investigate how a stated virtue—for example respect for elders—may coexist with the right of a learner to ask for clarification. Their product is a concise evidence–norm–value map. During the project-dialogic stage, students compare at least two possible responses and justify a feasible pedagogical plan in small groups. The lecturer requires reason-giving, responsible disagreement and explicit criteria for choosing among alternatives.

At the practical-performance stage, teams test their plans through microteaching, a role-play or a short scenario-based task. Observation focuses on what the teacher candidate actually does: explains expectations, listens to a learner, makes a fair decision and adapts language to the participant. Schön's account of reflection in professional action supports the need to examine decisions in the context of

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their enactment [6]. During reflective-corrective work, the initial plan is revisited against peer comments, observation notes and the candidate's own analysis. Revision must address the substance of the decision rather than only its style. Finally, the transfer-assessment stage introduces a new context with altered participants, constraints or cultural expectations; the candidate independently explains which principle is retained and what requires modification.

The cycle need not occupy six separate classes. For a substantial project, the stages may unfold over several sessions; for a compact seminar, selected stages may occur within one case-based workshop. What must remain stable is the logical connection between outputs. A contextual analysis should inform the designed action; the observed action should provide the evidence for reflective change; and the revised rationale should be tested under a non-identical situation. Without these links, six named stages become a timetable rather than a pedagogical mechanism.

Illustrative case: respect, participation and fairness

Consider a hypothetical seminar in which prospective teachers discuss a community maxim emphasizing that a younger person should not interrupt an elder. One student proposes that the rule be applied to all school discussions. Another argues that the rule could prevent pupils from asking necessary questions. The lecturer does not instruct the group to reject the maxim or to accept it unconditionally. Instead, students first reconstruct the social purpose of courteous listening and identify a possible tension between orderly communication and meaningful learner participation.

Groups receive a classroom scenario: a pupil raises a hand to question a teacher's explanation, while another pupil complains that questioning adults is disrespectful. Candidates must design a response that retains the value of respectful interaction but does not silence a legitimate question. They prepare a thirty-second teacher statement, a dialogue plan and criteria for evaluating their solution. In the simulated lesson, one candidate acts as the teacher, two as pupils and others as observers. Observers note whether the candidate acknowledges the cultural concern, protects the right to ask, prevents ridicule and gives a clear pedagogical explanation.

Afterwards, each candidate compares the initial interpretation with the performed response and formulates one substantive improvement. The transfer task changes the setting: a parent asks the school to prohibit all disagreement with adult instructions during a group project. Candidates must now explain to the parent how respectful speech, evidence-based disagreement and school responsibility can coexist. This shift tests transfer rather than memory of a rehearsed phrase. The entire case is an instructional illustration; it is not reported as an event observed in the author's experimental sample.

Assessment of professional-cultural learning

The evaluation of such learning should avoid inferring a student's stable character from a single response. Multiple evidence sources are required: a written case analysis, a lesson plan, observation of communicative behavior, peer feedback and a reflective revision. The five criteria below align with the dissertation's diagnostic dimensions, while the descriptors specify what may be observed in work with cultural material. For each criterion, the teacher may use an analytic rubric adapted to the local course; numerical thresholds should not be invented without piloting, inter-rater review and a transparent scoring rule.

Criterion	Evidence in a folk pedagogy task	Risk to monitor
Value-based justification	Explains the value and interests behind a choice	Rewarding conformity rather than reasoning
Scientific/contextual accuracy	Distinguishes source, context, fact and assumption	Presenting a local custom as universal
Action design and	Offers and tests an appropriate	Equating a polished script

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Criterion	Evidence in a folk pedagogy task	Risk to monitor
enactment	pedagogical response	with real performance
Ethical communication	Listens, responds without humiliation, protects participation	Confusing quietness with respect
Reflection and correction	Revises a decision using identifiable evidence	Counting cosmetic edits as development

A formative rubric is especially useful when students understand the criteria before discussion and have an opportunity to act upon feedback. Hattie and Timperley's synthesis emphasizes that feedback effects depend on its type and use [7]. In the present framework, productive feedback identifies a discrepancy between an intended value and an observed action, names the evidence and specifies a possible next step. For example, “you stated that every pupil may ask questions, but you interrupted the second pupil; how could you amend the rule?” is more informative than a general judgment such as “your communication was good.”

7. Discussion and limitations

The proposed framework offers three related benefits. It turns culturally familiar material into an opportunity for analytical rather than reproductive learning; it makes cultural sensitivity compatible with critical and rights-respecting judgment; and it provides a common task within which the five components of professional culture can be observed in relation to each other. The framework also invites collaboration between specialists in pedagogy, history, ethnography and language, because the accuracy of cultural interpretation is as important as the quality of the eventual teaching technique.

Several limitations prevent stronger claims. Folk pedagogy materials differ across communities, languages and generations; any curated sample may omit competing perspectives. Classroom discussion may elicit socially desirable answers rather than deeply held commitments. Role-play supports observation of a limited professional performance but is not equivalent to a teacher's sustained conduct in school. Finally, the framework has not been separately validated in a controlled implementation within this article. Future research should document source selection, develop and calibrate rubrics, collect successive student products and examine whether improvements persist in new practicum contexts.

8. Conclusion

The didactic potential of folk pedagogy lies not in its automatic authority but in the possibility of transforming culturally situated educational meanings into problems of professional judgment. An effective instructional design moves from a reliably identified source through contextual and value analysis to reasoned decision-making, ethical enactment, reflective correction and transfer. This sequence connects the axiological-motivational, cognitive-professional, activity-technological, communicative-ethical and reflective-developmental components without reducing any one of them to memorized cultural information. The proposed matrices and case may serve as a methodological resource for university seminars, independent work and teacher practicum. Their effectiveness, however, must be demonstrated through transparent empirical evaluation rather than presumed from the cultural significance of the material.

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