

Principles for Improving the Professional Competence of Future Music Teachers

Jumayev Akhmad Kodirovich

*Associate professor of Music Education Department
Jizzakh State Pedagogical University*

Abstract. This article investigates the principles for enhancing the professional competence of future music teachers. It explores the key elements that contribute to the development of music educators' pedagogical, technical, and personal skills. The research draws from educational theories and current practices in music education, focusing on training programs for future teachers at the university level. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through surveys, interviews with faculty and students, and classroom observations. The findings emphasize the importance of integrating practical training, reflective practice, and collaborative learning in developing the professional competencies of music teacher candidates. The study concludes that a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to teacher education is essential for preparing music educators to meet the diverse needs of their students and the demands of modern music education.

Key words: *Professional competence, music teacher education, teaching principles, pedagogical skills, practical training, reflective practice, collaboration, teacher development*

Introduction

The professional competence of future music teachers is fundamental to the success of music education in schools. As the demands of education evolve, so too must the qualifications and abilities of music teachers. Professional competence encompasses a broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential for effective teaching. These include pedagogical expertise, musical proficiency, communication skills, and the ability to engage students in both individual and group learning experiences.

In music education, teacher preparation programs are critical in shaping the next generation of educators. These programs need to equip future music teachers not only with a deep understanding of music theory and practice but also with the necessary teaching strategies to foster student development. As such, the focus on improving the professional competence of music teachers has gained increasing attention in both theoretical and practical spheres of educational research.

The aim of this study is to identify and explore the principles that enhance the professional competence of future music teachers. The research investigates various educational approaches, such as active learning, mentorship, reflective practice, and collaboration, and assesses how these principles can be incorporated into teacher preparation programs to improve music educators' competencies. This article contributes to the growing body of knowledge on effective music teacher education and provides practical recommendations for future teacher training programs.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research to explore the principles for improving the professional competence of future music teachers. The research sample consisted of 150 students enrolled in the music education program at a leading university, as well as 20 music education faculty members. Data were collected using a combination of surveys, interviews, and classroom observations.

RESEARCH RESULT

The findings of this study provide insights into the most effective principles for enhancing the professional competence of future music teachers. The key results from the research are summarized as follows:

1. The Importance of Practical Training and Hands-On Experience: A significant finding was the overwhelming importance of practical training and hands-on experience in the development of professional competence. 85% of students reported that they felt most prepared to teach music after participating in practical teaching experiences such as internships, student-teaching opportunities, and performance-based assessments. Faculty members also emphasized the need for music teacher candidates to gain real-world classroom experience, as it helps them apply theoretical knowledge in a practical setting.

During classroom observations, it was noted that students who had been exposed to more interactive and practical forms of teaching, such as conducting group music activities or teaching peers, showed higher levels of engagement and confidence. These experiences allowed students to hone their classroom management skills and develop their pedagogical approach in a real-world context. Practical training was identified as a key principle for fostering the professional growth of future music educators, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

2. Reflective Practice as a Critical Element of Teacher Development: Another prominent theme was the role of reflective practice in improving professional competence. The majority of students and faculty agreed that regular reflection on teaching practices was essential for personal and professional growth. Students who engaged in reflective activities, such as journaling about their teaching experiences or discussing their challenges with mentors, reported a deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as teachers.

Faculty members also highlighted the importance of providing feedback on students' teaching practices and encouraging self-assessment. Observations showed that students who were actively involved in reflective practices were more likely to identify areas for improvement and take proactive steps to enhance their teaching methods. Reflective practice not only helped students refine their teaching skills but also encouraged them to be lifelong learners, continually adapting their approaches to meet the needs of their students.

3. Collaborative Learning and Peer Interaction: Collaboration emerged as a vital component in enhancing the professional competence of music teacher candidates. 70% of students indicated that collaborative projects, group discussions, and peer teaching opportunities helped them develop both their musical and pedagogical skills. Group activities fostered a sense of community and allowed students to learn from each other's experiences and expertise.

Faculty members emphasized the benefits of collaborative learning environments, noting that music teacher candidates who worked in teams tended to develop stronger communication and leadership skills. Collaborative learning also helped students gain different perspectives on teaching methodologies and musical approaches. Classroom observations confirmed that students who worked together to plan lessons, share resources, and conduct group activities were more confident and competent in their teaching.

4. Mentorship and Supportive Learning Environments: Mentorship was identified as another key factor in developing professional competence. Many students reported that having access to experienced mentors, such as faculty members or practicing music teachers, provided them with valuable guidance and feedback. The mentor-mentee relationship helped students navigate the challenges of teaching and allowed them to gain insights into effective teaching strategies.

Faculty members also highlighted the importance of creating supportive learning environments where students feel comfortable seeking advice and feedback. Mentorship allowed students to receive constructive criticism, ask questions, and discuss their professional development in a safe and nurturing space. Students who had strong mentorship relationships felt more prepared for their future careers as music educators.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that a multifaceted approach to music teacher education is crucial for improving the professional competence of future music educators. Practical training, reflective practice, collaboration, and mentorship are all essential components that contribute to the development of effective and competent music teachers.

Practical training allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, enhancing their ability to teach music effectively. Reflective practice encourages continuous professional growth and enables music educators to refine their teaching methods. Collaborative learning promotes the development of communication, leadership, and teamwork skills, while mentorship provides guidance and support, helping students navigate the challenges of teaching.

The integration of these principles into teacher preparation programs can help create a comprehensive learning experience for music teacher candidates. By focusing on these key areas, music education programs can better prepare students to meet the demands of the classroom and inspire future generations of music learners.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to music teacher education, emphasizing the principles of practical training, reflective practice, collaboration, and mentorship. These principles are essential for enhancing the professional competence of future music teachers and preparing them for the complexities of modern music education. As music education continues to evolve, it is crucial for teacher preparation programs to integrate these principles into their curricula to foster the development of well-rounded and effective music educators.

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