

Scientific and Pedagogical Analysis of The Concept of Creative Competence and Its Role in Vocational Education

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Abstract: This article outlines the theoretical foundations for the development of creative competencies among students of vocational education institutions. It analyzes the essence of creative competence, its structural components, as well as psychological and pedagogical approaches to its development. It also substantiates the role and significance of creative competence in vocational education.

Keywords: Creative competence, creativity, vocational education, competency-based approach, divergent thinking, innovation.

Introduction: In the first quarter of the twenty-first century, the rapid transformations taking place in the global community and the world economy, particularly the transition of human civilization from an industrial society to an information society and a knowledge economy, are placing entirely new and unprecedented demands on the vocational education system. Today, in all spheres of economic and social life, the demand for competitive specialists who can think creatively and find non-standard solutions is steadily increasing. For this reason, the issue of developing creative competencies in students of vocational education institutions has become one of the most pressing problems of modern pedagogy.

In order to fully understand the essence of the concept of “creative competence,” it is first advisable to analyze separately its constituent categories, namely “creativity” and “competence.” The interpretation of these concepts in scientific and pedagogical literature, their evolutionary development, and their modern understanding are discussed in detail in the following sections.

The concept of “creativity” as a philosophical and psychological category has undergone a long historical

development. Beginning with the philosophers of Ancient Greece, creativity was explained in relation to divine inspiration, genius, and individual talent. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, the psychology of creativity emerged as an independent field of scientific inquiry. In this regard, the contribution of the American psychologist J. P. Guilford is invaluable. In his 1950 address to the American Psychological Association, he introduced the concept of “creativity” into scientific discourse for the first time and developed the theory of divergent thinking. In his work *The Nature of Human Intelligence* (1967), Guilford identified four main components of creative thinking: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. These components later became the main criteria for assessing creative competence.

E. P. Torrance further developed Guilford’s ideas and created a methodology for diagnosing and measuring creative thinking. His *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking* (1974) remains one of the most widely used tools for assessing creativity. In his work *Guiding Creative Talent* (1962), Torrance developed a methodology for identifying and nurturing creative talent in education, emphasizing the decisive role of

the educational environment in the development of creative abilities. Torrance's research laid the foundation for understanding creative competence not only as an innate characteristic, but also as a pedagogical outcome that can be purposefully developed in the educational process.

Competence is a social requirement placed in advance on learners' educational preparation so that they can perform effectively in a particular field.

Creative competence is a person's ability to solve complex professional and social tasks through an innovative approach, the core of which lies in generating and applying new ideas in practice. In pedagogical theory, it is closely connected with the individual's cognitive processes, intellect, motivation, and social activity.

Educational approaches identify three main structural components in its formation:

1. Cognitive component: mastery of knowledge and theoretical foundations necessary for creative activity.
2. Practical component: the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to solving real-life problems.
3. Personal component: psychological readiness for creative activity, personal motivation, and a sense of social responsibility.

The analysis of the above literature shows that the concept of "creative competence" has been interpreted from different perspectives by various scientific schools and researchers. By systematizing the existing approaches to this concept, three main directions can be distinguished.

The first direction is the psychological approach. According to representatives of this direction (J. P. Guilford, E. P. Torrance, D. B. Bogoyavlenskaya, R. J. Sternberg), creative competence is mainly determined by the psychological characteristics of the individual, such as divergent thinking, intellectual activity, and creative potential. In this approach, creative competence is viewed more as an individual psychological phenomenon, and its innate and acquired components are differentiated. The strength of the psychological approach lies in its ability to explain the deep psychological mechanisms of creative competence, but pedagogically it has not sufficiently

developed clear methods and tools for its formation.

The second direction is the pedagogical-didactic approach. Representatives of this approach (A. V. Khutorskoy, V. I. Andreyev, A. V. Tutolmin, Ye. V. Vostroknutov) view creative competence as an educational outcome and emphasize the role of didactic conditions, pedagogical technologies, and the educational environment in its formation. This approach treats creative competence as a pedagogical category that can be taught and measured, which is highly important for its implementation in educational practice. However, in some cases, this approach does not sufficiently take into account the psychological depth of creative competence.

The third direction is the socio-economic (contextual) approach. Representatives of this approach (M. Csikszentmihalyi, T. M. Amabile, R. Florida, K. Robinson) interpret creative competence as a phenomenon shaped within a socio-cultural and economic context. According to this approach, creative competence is not only an individual trait, but also a complex system formed as a result of environment, motivation, culture, and social influence. This approach demonstrates the necessity of designing an educational environment for the development of creative competence in vocational education.

A comparative analysis shows that although each approach is effective in highlighting certain aspects of creative competence, none of them fully reflects the essence of this concept. The psychological approach reveals the internal mechanisms of creative competence in depth, but it has not sufficiently developed clear didactic ways for its purposeful formation in the educational process. The pedagogical-didactic approach is effective in practice; however, it sometimes does not take into account the deep psychological nature of creative competence. The socio-economic approach analyzes a broad context, but it does not offer concrete diagnostic and formation mechanisms at the level of an individual learner.

For this reason, our research adopts an integrative approach that combines the strongest aspects of all three directions. The integrative approach is based on the following key ideas: first, creative competence is formed on the basis of an individual's psychological characteristics (divergent thinking, intellectual activity,

creative potential); second, it develops and can be purposefully formed through targeted pedagogical influence; third, the formation of creative competence is directly dependent on the socio-cultural environment, motivational factors, and the quality of educational organization.

In our view, creative competence is an integrated set of knowledge, skills, abilities, personal qualities, and motivational orientations necessary for creative thinking, solving problems in non-standard ways, generating new ideas, and implementing them in practice within both professional and everyday activities. In the context of vocational education, creative competence reflects a learner's ability to solve professional tasks creatively, apply innovative technologies, generate new ideas in professional activity, and implement them in practice.

To determine the role of creative competence in vocational education, it is necessary to analyze its interrelation with other professional competencies. Today, the competency-based approach is widely applied in vocational education, and there are various classifications of professional competencies. According to I. A. Zimnyaya, competencies are divided into three groups: personal, social, and activity-based. A. V. Khutorskoy, on the other hand, classifies them into general (key) and subject-specific competencies. In our study, creative competence is classified as a general (key) competence, since it manifests itself in all types of professional activity and enriches other types of professional competencies.

The role of creative competence in the activities of vocational education institutions is of particular importance. The Resolution No. 900 of the Cabinet of Ministers dated December 28, 2024, outlines measures to improve the system of organizing industrial practice for students of vocational education institutions, which includes the development of students' creative approach and their ability to make independent decisions. The integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills within the framework of dual education creates a favorable environment for the formation of creative competencies, as solving real-world problems in production settings requires creative thinking.

To visually represent the structure of creative

competence, the model developed in our research can be illustrated as a scheme. In this scheme, four main components of creative competence and their interrelations are reflected. At the center is "creative competence," from which four directions extend: motivational-value, cognitive, activity-based, and reflective-evaluative components. Each component is interconnected, forming a unified system.

Determining the role of creative competence in vocational education also requires identifying its position within the system of professional competencies. Our research shows that creative competence performs two functions within this system. First, it acts as an independent competence, indicating a learner's readiness for creative activity. Second, it functions as a transversal competence that enhances the quality of all other professional competencies; in other words, any professional activity becomes more effective when enriched with a creative component.

Scientific-pedagogical research and the analysis of international experience indicate that the role of creative competence in vocational education is manifested in several key directions: first, in developing students' ability to solve professional problems through non-standard solutions; second, in forming skills for applying innovative technologies and methods in professional activity; third, in developing the capacity to create new products, services, and technologies within professional practice; and fourth, in fostering motivation for self-development and continuous professional growth.

Creative competence is one of the key skills of learners in the modern vocational education system. Research results show that it is formed through the interaction of psychological characteristics, pedagogical influence, and the socio-cultural environment. Creative competence is important not only as an independent competence but also as a transversal factor that enriches other professional competencies. Therefore, it is necessary to apply integrative pedagogical approaches aimed at developing students' creative potential in vocational education.

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