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### PROFESSIONALLY SIGNIFICANT COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS AT HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN THE USA AND UKRAINE: (comparative aspect)

*The significance of indicator of education level of the young population of country and its impact on the state of integration into the world education space is emphasized in this article. It reveals the essence of the most important professional competencies of modern teachers at Higher Learning Institutions in the USA and Ukraine (in content comparison); it is indicated the necessary for changes of higher education field, its reforms related to the need for training specialists who are able to compete in the labor market of strict selection; it is focused on its modernization at the expense of improving the knowledge quality, development of students' abilities; it is proved the importance of timely response to the students' requests, the lecturers' methods of teaching, their methodological and research work at Higher Learning Institutions for providing students with the necessary information, data of their personal research. The text of the publication devotes considerable attention to the interpretation of the term "competence", the analysis of its content in American and Ukrainian scientific sources and the problem of the teachers' language competence. It is highlighted the American students' evaluation of the teachers' competence, their attitude to the lecturers' professionalism, pedagogical activity, skills, subject knowledge, awareness of the subject content and the possibility of placing this information with the evaluation results at widely available Internet sites, journals and other informational resources. This article deals with the distinct interpretation of the concepts "pedagogical competence", "professional competence", types of professional competence of the teachers' activities by individual scientists. It is underlined the importance of teacher's professional competence not only in his/her professional knowledge, but also in his/her professional skills, professional expertise, professional positions and attitudes, individual characteristics, etc.; it is noted about the importance of teachers' competent to realize not only his/her age-old features and ability to present the education material but the students' age-old features as well, in particular their ability to study and master the learning material, creative using the gained knowledge in their further professional career. The new definition of pedagogical competence, that we have created in the process of our science work, is represented in this article.*

**Keywords:** Higher Learning Institutions; lecturers; competitiveness; reform; competence; "pedagogical competence"; "professional competence"; students; pedagogical activity; comparative aspect.

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### ПРОФЕСІЙНО ЗНАЧУЩІ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ ЗАКЛАДІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ США ТА УКРАЇНИ: (порівняльний аспект)

*У статті наголошено на значущості показника освітнього рівня молодого населення країни і його вплив на стан інтеграції у світовий освітній простір. Розкривається суть найважливіших професійно значущих компетентностей сучасних викладачів закладів вищої освіти США та України (в змістовому порівнянні); вказується на необхідність змін у сфері вищої освіти, її реформ, пов'язаних із потребою підготовки фахівців, здатних конкурувати на ринку праці в умовах суворого відбору; акцентується увага на модернізації за рахунок поліпшення якості знань, розвитку здібностей студентської молоді; доводиться значення вчасного реагування на запити студентів, спрямування викладацької, навчально-методичної, науково-дослідної роботи викладача вищої школи на забезпечення їх необхідною інформацією, даними своїх персональних наукових досліджень. Пріоритетна значна увага трактуванню терміна "компетентність", аналізу його змістового*

## PROFESSIONALLY SIGNIFICANT COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS AT HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN THE USA AND UKRAINE: (comparative aspect)

*наповнення в американських і українських наукових джерелах та проблемі мовної компетентності викладачів.*

*Ключові слова: заклади вищої освіти; викладач вищої школи; конкурентоспроможність; реформування; компетентність; "педагогічна компетентність", "професійна компетентність"; студентська молодь; педагогічна діяльність; порівняльний аспект.*

**I**ntroduction. Education and civilization processes are now in a close relationship. The modernization of Ukrainian society depends on the education level of the younger generation, which has deep knowledge and is able to compete in the labor market of strict selection. It is impossible to disagree with the fact that the education level of the country young population is the significant indicator that influences the state of higher education and its integration into the world education space. Over the past decades, this has caused many changes in its field that need to be understood. First of all, we mean those that occurred due to the use of modern innovative technologies in the system of teaching subjects and the diagnosis the competence of scientific and pedagogical workers at Higher Learning Institutions, the students' knowledge quality level. Reforms aimed at harmonizing the modern society needs with changes in the education sphere have become significant in the development of the education system in Ukraine. A special place is given to its modernization by expanding accessibility and improving the quality knowledge level, developing the teachers' creative abilities and the students as well.

Based on similar positions, we draw attention to the teachers' pedagogic competence, which includes their ability to explain the learning subject material, to assess the qualitative level of students' knowledge, to behave professionally in the audience and to keep the students' attention, to select skillfully the new learning material, to use the newest technologies in the learning process, to communicate ethically, to evaluate critically their own pedagogic activity. In general, to satisfy the students' demands. It should be noted that lecturers' teaching work, their methodologic and research work have to be directed to provide students with the necessary information, source base, data of personal scientific research. The interactive nature of the teachers' interactions at Higher Learning Institutions with students should be based on value, pragmatic and business components.

**Aim of research.** It is necessary to highlight the comparative aspect of the professionally relevant teachers' competences at Higher Learning Institutions in order to realize their importance professional growth and the quality of the education process at universities and to reveal the essence of professionally significant teachers' competences at Higher Learning Institutions.

The comparative aspect of professionally

significant competencies at Higher Learning Institutions in the USA and Ukraine

Modern education forms new requirements for the development of teachers' competences, since the problem of the teaching subject's quality and the assessment of teachers' professional activity is one of the leading places in the system of education renewal, therefore it becomes necessary to introduce new ideas, methods, approaches both in the system of teaching and in the system evaluation, in particular competence.

The term "competence" has used widely in the second half of the XX-th century, in particular in the US education programs aimed at the further development of Higher Education throughout the lives, and which define the main ideas: comprehension the competence culture, its task and the sphere of a competitive global economy, the development of creativity, innovation thinking, active participation in education, raising the learning subject standards and assessing the students' knowledge level and teachers as well, promoting the creation of a highly developed cultures with the knowledge highest standards.

In the US programs, the term "competence" is interpreted as a complex of relationships, values, knowledge and skills, the person's ability to accomplish tasks and work successfully, to succeed and respond the individual and social needs. One of the leading places in the education renewal both countries of the United States and Ukraine is the problem of teachers' competence. Evaluating the lecturers' competences, American students often use "smileys" – symbols in the PowerPoint to characterize the teachers' competences better, their ability to demonstrate the learning subject materials, in particular, the competence level of pedagogic activity and professionalism. They send pictures with the image of "chili pepper" and various humorous inscriptions such as "hot message" or "axes to grind" with the subtext of "making fun of lecturers", which usually relate to teachers with a low level of their competence.

Particularly, the expression "chili pepper" is very interesting. In English, "chili" is a red pepper, which is very hot and bitter in taste and "pepper" is the black ground pepper. The expression "chili pepper" is "bitter hot pepper" has interpretations with the following meanings: "to cause heat or flute", "a spoon of tar in a barrel of honey", "cold as a fan in warm weather". The above possible interpretations to a

certain extent cover the teacher's temperament, his attitude to the students and to the learning subject. In general, they relate to a competent teacher who at high level conducts classes, respects students and colleagues, that is, "deserves attention" and studying the new experience, teaching methods. Such teachers are able to point out the students' mistakes and other teachers professionally, with great skill to eliminate the difficulty in mastering the learning subject, to have a thorough and relevant humor in the process of teaching.

The signs in the form of red chili pepper, this message is with spicy details at the teacher's name, testify that it is this teacher who can intrigue them in the process of teaching the learning subject with new materials or with known to them information.

In general, marks near by the teachers' names to a certain extent indicate their language competence level, subject knowledge and encourages of using the new methods and approaches in the teaching process.

The "smileys" can be obtained even by those teachers who have long enjoyed the students respect and have proved themselves highly skilled. This is the certain degree characteristic of their professional training, level of competence and professionalism. Often, there are cases when students highly evaluate the teachers' language competence, present them positive scores and assessments, but at the same time they attach the "smiley" with "chili papers" of a jolly facial expression. This expression becomes meaningful as "a spoon of tar in a barrel of honey" and points to a certain lack of a lecturer.

Determining the teachers' level competence, students send the pictures with "chili peppers" to the lecturers with shadow meaning "to heat or swell". This applies to the experienced teachers who are skillful and accessible to represent the learning subject materials and notice the disadvantages in the learning process quite tactfully, forcing students to master the content of learning subject thoroughly and attitude to the process of mastering knowledge with great responsibility. Such teachers respond to the students' quality knowledge level on time, they also pay attention to the fulfillment of necessary tasks and can express their comments on any changes in the students' attitude towards the learning subject. The number of letters received from the students during the semester with "chili pepper" and "hot message" at the teacher's name on the Internet web sites indicates the teacher's attitude to his professional duties, his subject knowledge level, methods of pedagogy and teaching, etc. Students often use the messages "chili pepper" and "hot message" adding the same certain intricacies in determining the lecturers' knowledge level and the level of their

competence [1]. Getting such marks on web pages of Internet sites, teachers are thinking about their competence level, and their knowledge quality level, methods of teaching subject, requirements for students to master knowledge.

The students can freely express their own teachers' competence evaluation, their pedagogical activity, skills, and awareness on the informational and widely accessible Internet site. At the USA Higher Learning Institutions this method of determining the lecturers' knowledge level is sometimes called "axes to grind". We have studied and researched the meaning of this phrase and it could be truly noticed that "axes" means "tools for cutting down the trees or splitting logs and they are made of solid metal", and the verb "to grind" means crush to grains or powder between millstone, pass through a meat grinder, polish, shape, rub harshly. The expression "axes to grind" or "have the axes to grind" – means reasons to quarrel – "claws for kneading, polishing" refers to the teachers involved in the evaluation process, can be interpreted as "pursuing personal beneficial goals, being an interested person" [6]. It is in the process of diagnosing the professional activity, determining the teachers' competence take a difficult path of debate and discussing among official representatives of Universities, administration, colleagues, students and nobody cares that someone's style or handwriting will be recognized. Taking into account the rich experience of teachers, their knowledge level of the learning subject, their skills and attainments, and the need to assess the pedagogic activity and competence, we can suggest the author's version of interpretation the expression "axes to grind" means lecturers (teachers, professors) whose competence is appreciated".

The following "smileys" – characters often appear on the information websites "The Rating of My State Professors" or "RateMyProfessors": a smiling and cheerful face near by the teachers' names who have a high and positive rating in the evaluation process of their pedagogic activity and professional competence, determining the his/her knowledge level; barely smiling face near by the surnames of those lecturers whose work was valued on a mixed type with positive meaning and negative shadow one; gloomy face nearby the surnames of teachers who have negative students' feedback about their work and very low rating evaluation. Students are disrespectful to cruel, unjust and biased teachers, to those who cannot explain the learning subject material or don't know it completely well by themselves [8].

On the Internet website of the "My Professors Rating" students send interesting pictures and make a corresponding presentation at Power Point to

evaluate the professional activities of all teachers who teach subjects in a particular Universities. For example, teachers who constantly complain about insomnia or that it's time to have a snack or have a cup of coffee, they send "smileys" with a man fluttering whip and ordering to sleep, and for those who make them to do the same work at every lesson several times sending "torture" and "tormentor". Thus, the students are often aware of the gaps in teaching discipline, the level of teachers' professionalism sending "smileys", and it's a way of tactfully pointing teachers about of necessity to improve the quality of their professional activities and competences.

It is equally important for teacher educators to see themselves through their students' eyes in order to continually strengthen their own practice. Through gathering data on [www.ratemyprofessors.com](http://www.ratemyprofessors.com). This site is criticized by teachers. Nowadays, a website that allows students to review their college professors has dropped a long-standing "chili-pepper" rating from its site after facing criticism on social media that the rating was used to objectify professors, particularly women [5]. But students are still using this website.

In the scientists' research, including Ukrainians ones, devoted to the teachers' professional activity in the field of education, assessment and their achievements.

T. I. Svrydenko pays attention to the pedagogical competence and highlights that pedagogical competence reflects a scientifically sound set of thorough teacher's knowledge, his skills and abilities, which includes: ensuring the effectiveness and quality of his/her work; harmonization of scientific-visual and ideology and methodology, didactic and psychologic knowledge; the ability to organize the education process as a pedagogical interaction aimed at the development of the student's personality; readiness for creative search, self-development, assimilation and introduction of new information technologies; high moral qualities, physical and psychological state of health, which make it possible to perform official duties [9, 5 – 6]. Such definition provides a wider understanding of pedagogical competence, but it does not cover the ability of people with a poor health or older age to teach the subject professionally and conduct a diagnosis of a high level of students' knowledge. If the teacher's state of health does not allow him to perform the appropriate authority, then it is desirable to realize that students should not feel unprofessional teaching because of the teacher's health, his mood or age characteristics. Proceeding from the above, we consider that it is worth agreeing with the scholar's opinion, that the pedagogic competence include: subject meaningful knowledge,

ability to present the learning subject material skilfully, searching the scientific thoughts constantly to self-improvement and increase own scientific and professional level.

A. K. Markova correlates professionalism with different types of teachers' activities and distinguishes four types of competence: special, social, personal and individual. She refers her own qualified skills and the ability to design further professional activity to the special competence; she imputes the ownership of professional activity (group or cooperative) to the social competence, cooperation, as well as appropriate methods of professional communication that correspond to certain occupations, social responsibility for the results of own professional activity; she attributes to personal competence the possession of personal self-expression and self-development methods, means of confrontation with professional personality deformation; to individual competence she relates possession of self-realization methods and development the personality within the profession, readiness for professional growth, the ability to individual self-preservation, non-predisposition to professional aging, the ability to organize their professional activities without overload and fatigue, without straining and even with the effect of vivacity [7, 98].

Taking as a basis the scientific approach of A.K. Markova, consider these four types of professional competence in the teacher's activities. If the competence relates to the pedagogic sphere of activity, it is quite logical to call it – pedagogic competence. We will try to analyze pedagogic competence according to the specified types: special, social, personal and individual. To the special competence of the teacher, we will relate the teacher's mastering activities with high professional level of teaching the subjects and the assessment of students' assessment quality knowledge level, the availability of sound knowledge of the subject, knowledge of the latest technologies and scientific achievements, a broad outlook on modern transformations and news in the world, harmonious combination of process training and education at Higher Learning Institution and the ability to apply acquired knowledge, skills, experience in their practical activities.

It could be find out the meaning of the adjective "special" according to the dictionary, which states that this adjective is used for a special purpose, when someone, or something is celebrated more than usual, by the measure of his expression; refers to a specific branch of science, technology, art and has a destination for professionals in this field [4, 370].

Thus, it is possible to say that the teacher's

professional knowledge relates only to a certain subject, and professional activity is a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities from a subject, the mastery of them enables teachers to work in production and at Higher Learning Institution of different levels of accreditation. However, the lecturer can have subject meaningful and advanced knowledge, comprehension the being studied problem, being knowledgeable in the field of scientific achievements, but not able to find contact with students. A such teacher has a high specialized competence and is considered a good specialist in the narrow profile because he/she lacks the relevant knowledge, skills, attainments to master the learning subject. Consequently, his/her social and personal competence is quite low.

In order to determine the teacher's social competence, it can be found out the meaning of this word. The adjective "social" comes from the Latin word "*socialis*", which in translation means sociable, social and related to life and relations between people in society [4, 779]. According to the dictionary of contemporary, its meaning is expanded and the adjective social is interpreted as a social, public; generated by the conditions of social life, a certain environment, order; existing in a certain society, due to the division of society into classes [4, 1360]. Thus, to the social competence of the teacher we refer to the teacher's professionalism to carry out the education process, the possession of modern methods and techniques to represents the material of learning subject, the ability to perform research and education work, based on high moral principles of education and upbringing, a friendly culture of communication among students and colleagues.

To the personal competence of teacher, we attribute the lecturer's own approaches to the self-improvement of knowledge, skills, attainments, subject experience, justification of new progressive ideas and methods for improving the education process, the ability to plan their professional activities and make own decisions. To the individual teacher's competence, we include methods of self-regulation and their possession, readiness for professional growth and the presence of stable professional motivation.

In addition, the teacher's academic activity involves organization skills, which include mobilization, information, developmental, orientation and communicative, perceptual, constructive. The organization skills are needed to involve students in learning the cognitive activities and co-living in a team: the mobilization skills are necessary for formation knowledge; the information ones are necessary for the presentation the education information in the process of learning the subject, work

with sources, interpretation and adaptation the information tasks of students' training and education; the developing skills are necessary for the knowledge development, feelings, emotions, stimulation the cognitive autonomy and deep thinking; orienteering skills are needed for the formation the scientific outlook, moral value systems, acquisition of professional skills, organization of joint students' creative activity. The communicative skills have the important role in the process of education, particularly in the process of gain knowledge and the assessment as well, because they provide an opportunity to establish a pedagogically expedient relationship between the teacher and the students. Such communication is a system of methods the socio and psychology interaction, the content of which is seen the information exchange, the organization of relations with help of communicative means. The very important for lecturers are the perceptual abilities, which consist in the teacher's skills to penetrate into the students' inner world, their soul to capture their internal state with smallest changes in the subject learning process.

S. D. Druzhylov emphasizes that the teachers' professional competence is the multifactor phenomenon, which includes the system of teachers' theory knowledge and the way of their application in specific pedagogic situation, the teachers' knowledge level assessment as well as the integrated indicators of his/her culture: communication, linguistic style, attitude towards oneself and its activities, to the adjacent spheres of knowledge. On the basis of own definition, the scholar identifies the main components of the teacher's competence: motivational and volitional, functional, communicative and reflexive [3, 28].

He relates to motivational and volitional components of the teacher's competence: the motives, goals, valuable guidelines, the necessity to stimulate the teacher's personality to creativity and suggests an interest to professional activity. The functional components are the availability of the necessary subject knowledge to carry out the teaching process and, at the same time, the assessment the quality of students' knowledge level. The scholar includes to the communicative components the ability to express own opinions clearly and brightly, to argue, assert, analyze, transmit rational and emotional information, to establish the connection between persons, to coordinate their actions with the work of colleagues, to choose the style of communication in different business situations, to organize and maintain dialogues [3, 29].

S.O. Demchenko notes that professional competence is a basic characteristic of teachers' activity; it includes a semantic (knowledge) and

procedural (skills) components and has significant major awards, namely, knowledge mobility, flexibility, methods of professional work and critical thinking. He said that professional and pedagogical competence of the teacher is a part of multi-resistant structure of his/her mental traits that formed as a result of integration experience, theoretical knowledge and practical skills which are important for a teacher personal qualities and has outlined the essential features (mobility, flexibility, critical thinking) [2, 6].

The scholar opinion is important and therefore it is necessary to analyze the following definitions scientist to figure out their differences and appropriateness of using the terms, professional competence and professional pedagogical competence of the teacher. In the dictionary, it is emphasized that the adjective professional is related to a certain profession; united people of one profession or close professions [4, 1177]. If the term is professional in relation to the teacher's profession, then it is quite logical that it relates to his/her teaching activity and the educational process at Higher Learning Institutions. The occupational and pedagogical adjectives are used in the learning process and to a certain extent characterize the teacher's personality, his ability to teach a subject and to diagnose a student's knowledge level.

S.O. Demchenko states that the teacher's professional and pedagogical competence is his/her ability to act expediently for the successful resolution of educational tasks [2, 7]. This definition is somewhat limited and needs some extension. It is necessary to find out the meaning of the noun "ability". According to the dictionary, it emphasizes that the ability has properties adjective "capable", it is the one who can able to exercise, perform, do something, do certain way; suitable for someone or something, for something fitting, who has the ability; gifted [4, 453].

Having studied the research of Ukrainians and Americans scholars we tried to give the own definition of teachers' competence, particularly, pedagogical one.

Therefore, the teachers' pedagogical competence as being a harmonious combination of all the professional features of the teacher or lecturer, his/her experience, knowledge, skills and aptitudes that are fully applied in the educational, organizational, methodological, scientific, cultural activities of the educational process and which are based on high moral and democratic principles of educating and training students, beneficial culture of communication, a creative scientific pursuit, availability of basis for new progressive ideas and implementation of new educational technologies, personal responsibility for the quality of the educational process and the

implementation of the authority to determine the qualitative level of the students' knowledge and that of the professional level of the teaching professional staff at Higher Learning Institutions.

Thus, the teacher should have the ability to teach the subject appropriately and determine the students' knowledge level, to carry out the scientific and methodological work effectively for the successful program implementation of the studying subject at Higher Learning Institutions.

**Research results and discussion.** The research has been carried out at Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics. The results are presented.

There are 20 teachers of foreign languages of European Languages Modern Department have taken part in the evaluation process of lecturers' professional activity, in particular competencies. The evaluation criteria of pedagogical activity and competencies were as follows: presentation the subject teaching materials available and clearly; applying the latest learning technologies; informing students about the current learning outcomes systematically; shaping the task clearly; contributing to the general development of professional competences; attracting students for scientific activity; assessing the students' knowledge quality level objectively and transparently; being benevolent and tactful in the learning process; adhering to the classes schedule.

There are points from 1 to 5 for each of these criteria. It is calculated for each criteria and divided the total number of points by the number of questions (criteria). For example: the teacher has got 43 points in the process of assessing his/her competences, which is divided by the number of criteria 9. Thus,  $43: 9 = 4.7$  is the teacher's rating in the process of diagnosing. The teacher in the process of evaluating his/her pedagogical activity, in particular competencies, can get the 5 points, if all criteria will be exposed 5. Thus,  $45: 9 = 5$ . It will be the best results in the processes of assessment the teachers' knowledge level by students.

Having analyzed the teachers' pedagogical activities and their competencies by students, it is appropriate to note that students highly appreciate the lecturers' professionalism, in particular, his/her professional skills to represent the subject teaching material available; shape the task clearly and apply the latest technologies of learning in the process of subject mastering. These criteria point to the teachers' professionalism, his/her ability to teach the subject on a high and accessible level for students using the latest learning technologies that contribute to the overall development of students' professional competencies.

In the second place, the students place the results of their own knowledge level assessment quality, teachers' clarity and transparency in the process of evaluation, and then the teacher's tactfulness and kindness in the process of subject learning. Thus, it's logical, that the first place is for obtaining knowledge, and the second place is for the verification of the quality level of the acquired knowledge and the acquisition of skills and attainments for their further professional activities, indicating their readiness for employment.

The third place is for points which indicates the teachers' professionalism to interest students of taking part in the scientific activities, in particular, writing scientific research papers. The students respect those teachers who are not late for classes and do not change the classes schedule in the own way, and have the lectures according to the established schedule.

Thus, students prefer the professional lecturers with deep subject knowledge and those who are constantly improving own knowledge level, skills, experience and interest to scientific advances and the information technology development; professionally and objectively evaluate the quality level of students' knowledge level, their skills and abilities in particular, their readiness for further professional activity.

**Conclusions.** Summarizing our thoughts above, it would be emphasized that at the present stage of society development, higher education in Ukraine varies according to the programs developed for its further functioning. It should be brought to the level of education to the most world developed countries by reforming the conceptual, structural and organizational principles. The socio and economic changes in the state, the economy reorientation into the world labor market, the reformation and competitiveness of Higher Learning Institutions are crucially dependent on the teachers' professional competence who can well navigate in the modern information space, the field of economic transformations, and the rapid development of the labour market. Their competence manifests itself in the perfect fulfillment of their duties, sufficient possession knowledge of the learning subject, experience of work. It takes place in the personal teacher's capacities based on the ability to independently and qualitatively ensure the goals of the knowledge transfer process to the students as a result of possession the teaching theory and practice

of its implementation during classroom and other students work. In the professional teacher's competence, we see not only his/her professional knowledge, but also professional skills, attainments, positions and settings, individual characteristics, etc. All of them characterize the teacher as a specialist with an individual style of work, only to him/her the inherent features that are based on the awareness of the students' age-old features and their ability to master the education material, the creative application of the formed knowledge on the methodological, theoretical, methodological, technological levels.

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