

TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL MASTERY AND PROFESSIONAL SELF-DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT:

This article explores the critical relationship between a teacher's pedagogical mastery and their commitment to professional self-development. It emphasizes that effective teaching goes beyond mere content knowledge; it requires a deep understanding of pedagogical strategies, student engagement, and adaptive learning environments. The article discusses various dimensions of pedagogical mastery, including lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment techniques. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of continuous professional development through workshops, peer collaboration, and reflective practices. The integration of technology in teaching and the necessity for teachers to stay updated with educational research are also examined. Ultimately, the article argues that ongoing professional self-development is essential for teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, improve student outcomes, and adapt to the evolving educational landscape.

The diversity and complexity of the tasks involved in shaping a new personality make the problem of pedagogical mastery especially relevant for modern educational theory and practice. The prominent Russian scholar and educator A. S. Makarenko once stated: "No control, no program can radically change the direction of education if it is determined by the teaching staff. Unfortunately, there are no exact recipes for achieving pedagogical excellence. However, the modern concept of pedagogical mastery primarily involves creating conditions for the development of future specialists' creative abilities, which ultimately lead to academic achievement and professional pedagogical training. The growing interest in issues of education is caused not only by the need to determine optimal conditions for children's comprehensive development, but also by the difficulties that teachers face daily in practice. According to some statistical data, a teacher performs up to 258 different types of work just to prepare lessons based on new curricula. Checking notebooks takes 4–5 hours, while self-service, duty shifts, and organizing extracurricular activities require 10–12 hours per week. A teacher constantly encounters the rapidly changing world of students, which demands immediate decision-making and action. From a scientific and methodological point of view, these difficulties are usually associated with the ability to establish contact with children in any type of activity: educational, organizational, labor, artistic, or sports-related. Often, during speeches, seminars, or professional discussions, it is stated that every teacher must develop pedagogical mastery. However, what exactly is meant by pedagogical mastery?

Some believe that pedagogical mastery is a special state of a person whose profession is teaching—a quality that can be imitated and aspired to. Others view mastery as continuous searching, constant self-education, and the ability to combine traditional experience with new technologies. The art of teaching is one of the oldest and most complex forms of art. Yet, it begins with something surprisingly simple: accepting and loving a student for who they are. If a lesson is not merely an educational activity but an art, if life is not measured in lesson hours, then teaching becomes a true vocation. According to S. I. Ozhegov's Dictionary of the Russian Language, the word "master" is defined as:

1. the head of a specific branch of production or workshop (e.g., shift master, assembly workshop master);
2. a highly skilled worker in a particular field (e.g., a violinist, a skilled shoemaker);

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3. a specialist who has achieved high artistry in their field (master of art, master of sports, master beekeeper); a person who excels in a certain activity (e.g., a master of artistic literature, a master storyteller).

In a broad sense, mastery is characterized as an exceptional ability of a specialist to achieve the best results in a particular type of activity with minimal expenditure of labor, time, and materials. Pedagogical mastery can rightfully be considered one of the most important qualities of a teacher's personality. It is determined by a high level of psychological and pedagogical training and the ability to optimally solve pedagogical problems [1, p. 3]. Without the external manifestation of an experienced teacher who has mastered the art of influencing students and shaping their needs, beliefs, abilities, and practical skills, it is impossible to define a person's spiritual world. Pedagogical mastery is the professional ability to optimize all types of educational activities, directing them toward the comprehensive development and improvement of the individual, the formation of worldview thinking, and the purposeful orientation of socially significant activity. Pedagogical mastery is a complex of personal qualities that ensure a high level of self-organization in professional pedagogical activity. Reflecting on the problems of forming pedagogical mastery, A. S. Makarenko said: "Mastery is something that can be achieved. Just as one can become an excellent turner or a highly qualified doctor, a teacher must also become a true master."

Components of a Teacher's Pedagogical Mastery

1. Teacher's spirituality. A teacher must have a strong desire to teach and communicate with students; this should be the main source of joy in their life.

2. Deep subject knowledge. A teacher should integrate knowledge within their subject and possess broad interdisciplinary knowledge, including historical facts, interesting examples, and modern developments in the field.

3. Understanding lesson goals and objectives. Without this, teachers merely transmit information, and students fail to understand why the subject is studied and how it contributes to their worldview.

4. Ability to select educational material. Often, a teacher knows the subject well but cannot teach it due to the inability to select appropriate material for a specific lesson.

5. Knowledge and mastery of teaching methods. Teaching methods must change depending on lesson objectives, content, and expected outcomes.

6. Understanding the choice of instructional forms. Teachers should not rely on only one form of teaching but skillfully combine various forms to achieve maximum effectiveness.

7. Teaching aids. The competent selection and rational use of teaching tools reflect a teacher's mastery.

8. Clear understanding of expected learning outcomes. Learning objectives and outcomes must correspond, and each lesson should contribute to the overall educational result.

9. Learning motivation. Creating an environment that motivates students to learn is a key component of pedagogical mastery.

10. Artistry. This is expressed in sincere communication with students, deep humanism, and a constant awareness of educational goals.

11. Directing skills. Every teacher is the director of their lesson, planning and subordinating all activities to a clear objective.

12. Improvisation. Without the ability to improvise and adapt plans, a lesson cannot be successful.

13. Understanding students' real capabilities and developing their abilities. Believing in each student's potential is essential.

14. Ability to expect results from every student. Patience and faith in students help even the weakest learners achieve success.

15. Patience. A teacher's patience must be limitless in awaiting learning outcomes. A teacher's self-improvement includes not only self-education but also self-discipline—active work on developing positive traits and eliminating negative ones such as lack of confidence or inability to control oneself in certain situations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the more information, methods, and tools a teacher uses in their work, the higher the effectiveness of their teaching. However, the most important factor is the teacher's desire for self-improvement and their ability to create, learn, experiment, and exchange experience during the process of self-development. The success of a teacher's independent work largely depends on their effort and motivation. Self-education yields positive results only when it is purposeful, systematic, and continuous. Therefore, advanced teachers consider it advisable to have a personal creative plan that includes specific actions for self-development throughout the period between professional development courses. The form of such a plan is not regulated or approved by anyone; it is entirely individual. Such teachers are characterized by the ability to build their own methodological system,

continuously improving it based on scientific data and advanced pedagogical experience. This represents the highest level of pedagogical mastery—its peak.

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