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Innovative Approaches in Postgraduate Teacher Education: Current Trends and Challenges for Teacher Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

This article examines innovative approaches in postgraduate teacher education, focusing on current trends and challenges for teacher professional development in the context of rapid technological advancement and educational reform. The research analyzes the organizational and pedagogical conditions necessary for effective continuous professional development of educators, emphasizing the importance of digital competencies in the post-COVID educational landscape. The study draws on international experiences from countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Norway, and China to identify best practices in teacher education. Key findings highlight the need for more personalized, continuous, and practice-oriented professional development models that integrate digital tools, collaborative communities, and mentoring programs.

The research identifies significant challenges in postgraduate teacher education, including unequal access to resources, insufficient funding, traditional mindsets resistant to change, and the lack of systematic

approaches to professional development. The paper emphasizes that effective teacher development must go beyond technical skills to encompass ethical education, critical thinking, and adaptability to prepare educators for guiding students in a technology-driven world. Recommendations include creating national platforms for professional development, implementing effective monitoring mechanisms, ensuring equal access to learning resources, and adopting more flexible and accessible training programs. The integration of innovative approaches to postgraduate teacher education is essential for improving educational quality and preparing teachers to meet the demands of 21st-century education.

KEYWORDS: postgraduate teacher education, professional development, digital competencies, educational innovation, continuous learning, mentoring programs, pedagogical strategies.

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1. Formulation of the problem. The problem in the field of postgraduate teacher education lies in identifying and implementing innovative approaches that effectively enhance the professional development of teachers in a rapidly changing educational landscape. While there is increasing emphasis on integrating new teaching methods, technologies, and pedagogies, many educators face challenges in adapting these innovations to meet the specific needs of diverse learning environments. The rapid evolution of educational technologies, alongside shifting expectations for teaching quality, calls for a rethinking of traditional teacher training programs.

In particular, the integration of modern digital tools, such as online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and interactive content, presents both opportunities and challenges for educators. The question arises of how to best incorporate these tools into postgraduate programs while ensuring that they align with educational objectives and promote meaningful, long-term professional growth. Additionally, there is a need to balance these innovations with the essential principles of pedagogy, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative skills among teachers.

Another challenge is the professional development gap that exists between more experienced educators and those who are just beginning their careers. With new technologies emerging and global education trends constantly evolving, many educators struggle to stay up-to-date with the latest advancements. This issue is compounded by the varying levels of access to resources and training opportunities across different regions and institutions.

Thus, the focus of the problem is to identify effective pedagogical strategies that can bridge the gap between traditional teaching practices and emerging educational trends, ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared to navigate the challenges and opportunities of modern education. The integration of innovative approaches into postgraduate teacher education is essential for fostering a professional development model that is adaptive, inclusive, and capable of meeting the needs of today's dynamic educational environment.

The impact of these innovations in teacher education is of national significance, as they influence the quality of education, the preparedness of teachers, and ultimately, the educational outcomes of future generations. The ability of a country to stay competitive in the global educational landscape depends heavily on how well it equips its educators with the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary for success in the classroom. The development of a robust and adaptable teacher training system is key to ensuring educational excellence and societal progress.

2. Analysis of recent research and publications. Recent research on teacher professional development highlights the increasing need for educators to adapt to the digital age and evolving pedagogical practices. Nebelenchuk et al. (2024) focus on the organizational and pedagogical conditions necessary for the continuous professional development of teachers in postgraduate education, emphasizing the importance of a supportive environment for teachers' skill enhancement. M. Anis (2024) addresses the impact of digital technologies on teacher development, particularly post-COVID, and discusses strategies for meeting the evolving needs of educators.

Ventista and Brown (2023) systematically review the link between teachers' professional learning and students' outcomes, noting that continuous development is crucial for improving educational quality. Yermolenko, Kulishov, and Shevchuk (2020) examine how innovative competence in teachers can be developed to meet modern educational challenges, highlighting the need for educators to adopt new teaching strategies. De Wever, Vanderlinde, Tuytens, and Aelterman (2016) discuss the challenges faced by teacher educators and student teachers in the context of professional learning.

Voitovska and Tolochko (2018) investigate trends in the development of teachers' skills in the US, showing the importance of incorporating digital tools into professional development. Paska, Moiseenko, and Shapka (2022, 2024) discuss the integration of innovative teaching technologies into education, emphasizing the importance of fostering creativity and critical thinking in students through modern teaching methods. These studies reflect the growing focus on digital transformation and professional learning.

3. The purpose of the article. The purpose of this article is to explore innovative approaches in postgraduate teacher education, examining current trends and challenges in teacher professional development. The article aims to investigate the evolving needs of educators in the context of modern

educational reforms and digital transformations. It seeks to identify key factors that influence the effectiveness of professional development programs, with an emphasis on the importance of continuous learning and adaptation to new pedagogical methods. Additionally, the article provides recommendations for enhancing postgraduate teacher education to better prepare educators for the demands of the 21st century, promoting their professional growth and improving the overall quality of education.

4. Presenting main material. Modern challenges associated with rapid technological progress, globalization, and increased requirements for the quality of education are forcing us to rethink traditional approaches to postgraduate teacher education, which makes it important to study innovative methods of teacher professional development that meet the needs of the modern educational environment. In particular, researchers are studying the problem of continuous professional development of teachers in Ukraine and identifying key conditions for its effectiveness (Nebelenchuk et al., 2024).

The researchers emphasize the need to modernize postgraduate teacher education in Ukraine to meet technological changes, globalization, and growing demands on the quality of education. Despite the reforms, the system remains ineffective in providing professional development for teachers due to unequal access to resources, poor adaptability of programs, and insufficient funding. Successful continuous development of teachers requires a support system that includes access to up-to-date resources, professional communities, mentoring, and reflection. The experience of countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, Spain, and Australia emphasizes the importance of integrating ICT into the educational process. Key challenges include inequality in access to education between urban and rural areas, lack of a systematic approach, and imperfect assessment mechanisms. Recommendations include the creation of a national platform for professional development, mentoring support, ICT implementation, effective monitoring, and sufficient funding. Providing the right conditions will facilitate the continuous professional development of teachers and improve the quality of education.

I. Nebelenchuk, H. Skrypka, J. Fedirko, S. Burtovyi, and A. Drobin emphasize the importance of self-education, noting that self-education and knowledge acquisition by each teacher in a convenient mode play a significant role in obtaining education. Also, a modern teacher should have a number of professional qualities, such as awareness of the role in society, the ability to self-learn, knowledge of various pedagogical techniques, leadership skills, a positive attitude to work, and a focus on ways to acquire knowledge rather than on the transfer of ready-made knowledge. Scientists emphasize the importance of studying and implementing international experience in the system of postgraduate education in Ukraine, believing that familiarization with the best practices of other countries will help improve the quality of education in Ukraine. The researchers emphasize the important role of information and communication technologies in the

professional development of teachers. Also, knowledge of foreign languages and digital technologies are important for modern teachers, as they open up access to wider opportunities at the international level and contribute to improving the quality of education (Nebelenchuk et al., 2024). Thus, the continuous professional development of teachers is one of the most important problems of modern education, and its solution requires systemic changes and reforms in the system of postgraduate teacher education in the world and in Ukraine.

In the context of current trends and challenges in the professional development of teachers, it is also important to consider the impact of digital technologies on the development of pedagogical skills (Bilous, Demianiuk, & Krychkiwska, 2022). Changes in educational practices due to global challenges increase the importance of developing pedagogical skills in the digital era, which becomes the main topic of the study proposed by M. Anis (2014). Anis (Anis, 2024). This allows us to better understand how digital tools can support teachers' professional development, responding to the new needs that have emerged after the pandemic. The author focuses on the challenges and opportunities that have arisen as a result of technological progress and emphasizes the need to adapt pedagogical approaches to the requirements of the digital era.

M. Anis emphasizes the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, which has led to a rapid transition to digital learning. The pandemic has become a catalyst for rethinking the role of technology in the educational process, emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development of teachers to ensure quality education in the new environment. Traditional models of professional development, such as seminars and conferences, have been criticized for their limited impact on the sustainable growth of teachers. The researcher emphasizes the need for more personalized and continuous approaches that would take into account the individual needs of teachers and ensure their continuous professional development. The digital era has had a significant impact on education, and teachers face challenges in adapting to digital learning, including the need to improve technological competencies, pedagogical changes, and the impact on emotional and mental well-being. The scientist emphasizes that in order to successfully integrate digital technologies into the educational process, teachers need not only to have technical skills, but also to have a deep understanding of how technology can be used to improve learning outcomes. Effective models of professional development for teachers include individualized learning plans, online courses, collaborative communities, and coaching and mentoring programs (Anis, 2014).

M. Anis emphasizes that successful examples of professional development in the digital age emphasize the importance of personalization, ongoing support, integration of technology and pedagogy, as well as collaboration and community building. Analyzing the trends in teacher professional development after COVID-19, which include the use of digital platforms and tools, the spread of microlearning, and the

integration of social and emotional learning, the scientist emphasizes that professional development should be a continuous process that takes into account the individual needs of teachers and provides them with support at every stage of their professional career. He notes that implementing effective professional development faces challenges such as limited resources, resistance to change, and time constraints. Therefore, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating digital tools, microlearning, incorporating social-emotional learning, and addressing implementation challenges for future professional development. It also identifies future directions for professional development, which include investment in resources, creating a culture of change, flexible and accessible professional development, and a holistic approach that combines technological skills with social and emotional learning. M. Anis emphasizes that successfully navigating the digital era in education requires a dynamic and adaptive approach to teacher professional development that includes technology integration, microlearning, socio-emotional aspects, and overcoming implementation challenges (Anis, 2014).

M. Anis emphasizes that successful adaptation to the digital era in education requires a dynamic and adaptive approach to teacher professional development. This involves the integration of technology, microlearning, consideration of social and emotional aspects, and overcoming implementation challenges. The author notes that professional development should be a continuous process that provides support to teachers at every stage of their professional activity and contributes to their successful adaptation to the requirements of the digital era (Anis, 2014).

Current trends in the development of teacher training in the United States in the system of postgraduate teacher education are driven by changes in the paradigms of social development, as well as new personal and social requirements for the professional education of teachers. O. Voitovska, & S. Tolochko note that continuous professional development of teachers is a prerequisite for their effective work. In this regard, the system of postgraduate teacher education is being modernized, including advanced training and professional retraining (Voitovska & Tolochko, 2018).

The main trends in the development of teacher education in the United States at the beginning of the twenty-first century include a focus on higher education as a key condition for mastering the profession of teacher, strengthening psychological and pedagogical training, expanding the range of specialized areas of study, improving the system of professional development of teaching staff and the possibility of simultaneous professional development in different educational institutions. According to scientists, the system of continuing teacher education in the United States is adapted to the country's socio-cultural conditions, which explains its active development in recent decades (Voitovska & Tolochko, 2018).

The scholars note that American society needs a teacher who is a subject of continuous professional development, a researcher and a creator responsible for the intellectual, social and physical development of his or her students, regardless of their socioeconomic status or ethnicity. In this regard, the teacher education system in the United States has undergone transformations aimed at shaping pedagogical thinking, professional reflection, and the ability to apply new knowledge and skills throughout life. After all, the concept of postgraduate teacher education in the United States is interpreted broadly and covers not only professional development, but also the continuous professional and personal growth of teachers. The main goal of postgraduate teacher education in the United States is to familiarize teachers with the latest achievements in pedagogical theory and practice, improve their professional skills, and develop their ability to learn independently. According to scientists, the most effective forms of in-service training are individual training within the school, methodological seminars, conferences, curriculum development, participation in research projects, etc. (Voitovska & Tolochko, 2018).

The scientists emphasize that the system of postgraduate teacher education in the United States is a complex network of interaction between various organizations, including public and private institutions, NGOs, foundations, and teacher unions. Foundations such as the Carnegie Foundation, Kettering Foundation, and Ford Foundation play a significant role in financing and determining the direction of this system. It is important that organizations involved in postgraduate education are not subordinated to the US Department of Education, and their activities are autonomous (Voitovska & Tolochko, 2018).

Scientists note that there are two main organizational models in the American teacher training system: training at higher education institutions and directly in schools. The peculiarity of this system is the variety of short-term courses that are specialized in nature. Modern in-service training programs include flexible curricula, distance learning, the creation of special professional assessment boards, and the introduction of certification procedures. In the United States, the main responsibility for teacher development lies with professional commissions and committees that work to unify approaches to teacher professional development. At the same time, the absence of a single methodological center complicates the standardization of educational programs, which requires the development of more general approaches to teacher training. An important feature of the American system is its focus on preparing teachers to work with students from different ethnic and cultural communities. The introduction of the principles of multicultural education promotes tolerance of diversity and the development of humanistic approaches in the educational process (Voitovska & Tolochko, 2018).

Therefore, the study of trends in teacher training in the United States is important for improving the Ukrainian system of postgraduate teacher education, as it opens up new opportunities for improving the quality of qualifications and retraining of teaching staff.

O. Ventista, & C. Brown emphasize that modern teachers should become “high-level knowledge workers” and schools should become learning organizations. Effective professional development of teachers has a positive impact on teaching, although its impact on student achievement remains limited. An analysis of 125 research papers found that only 11 had an experimental design that directly assessed this impact. The most effective strategies are long-term training, mentoring, and professional communities (Ventista & Brown, 2023).

Modern challenges such as artificial intelligence, automation, and climate change require the development of critical thinking and creativity in education. Professional communities (PLCs, PLNs) play an important role in facilitating knowledge sharing and reducing teacher stress. Studies using the PRISMA methodology have found that the most common approaches are trainings, mentoring, on-the-job training, and peer observation. Most attention is paid to the development of STEM teachers.

A key factor in effective training is its duration and integration into pedagogical practice. Long-term programs with mentoring and coaching have a greater impact than one-time trainings. An important challenge is the lack of time for teachers and the mismatch of programs with their real needs (Ventista & Brown, 2023). The authors emphasize the need for further research to assess the effectiveness of professional development approaches. They conclude that schools should create conditions for continuous learning for teachers through long-term, interactive, and contextualized programs.

The development of innovative competence of vocational school teachers is a key condition for the modernization of education in Ukraine. They should not only master the latest technologies, but also effectively implement them in the educational process, adapting to economic and socio-cultural challenges.

A. Yermolenko, V. Kulishov, & S. Shevchuk emphasize that innovation competence includes information and methodological literacy, pedagogical skills and creativity. The main problems are traditional thinking, insufficient preparation for new technologies, and low motivation for self-development. Continuing professional development, critical evaluation of educational innovations, and their effective use are important. A teacher should not only be a carrier of knowledge, but also a mentor who promotes the development of critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills of students. An innovative culture in education implies openness to change, self-development, and willingness to cooperate (Yermolenko et al., 2020).

The modernization of vocational education requires new strategies focused on the labor market, European standards, and the training of competitive professionals. The authors conclude that the success of the reforms depends on the readiness of teachers to change, continuous learning, and professional development.

L. Rebukha highlights modern approaches to the development of educational technologies in the context of global changes, the classification of pedagogical innovations, their patterns and stages of implementation. The author emphasizes that technological innovations have a significant impact on education, contributing to its efficiency and interactivity.

Considering various types of educational technologies (traditional, programmed, problem-based and interactive), the scholar notes that innovative teaching involves the development of creative thinking, adaptation to change and improvement of teaching activities. Analyzing foreign experience, the scholar emphasizes the role of distance learning.

L. Rebukha notes that successful management of innovation processes is based on forecasting, providing resources and motivating participants. An innovative approach is a key factor in the development of education and its competitiveness in the world (Innovative, 2022).

S. Smolina, N. Grytsyk, N. Antonenko highlight the importance of ethical education in preparing teachers for the challenges of the technological world. The scientists emphasize that critical thinking, empathy, and adaptability are key for teachers in modern society. Their research shows that future teachers face difficulties in fostering ethical values and critical thinking in students due to the excessive amount of information and rapid changes. The researchers emphasize that the teacher should be a moral guide in this process.

The central theme of the study is holistic education, which involves not only the transfer of knowledge but also the development of the student's personality. Teacher professional development (TPD) is also important, including professional development, innovation, and autonomy. Integrating ethical education, critical thinking, and adaptability into teacher training is essential to educate citizens capable of sustainable development in the face of technological change.

Therefore, a holistic approach to teacher professional development that combines ethical education, critical thinking, and adaptability is necessary to prepare students for life in today's technology-driven world. Pedagogy plays a crucial role in shaping civic ethics and ensuring sustainable development of society (Smolina et al., 2023).

T. Paska, I. Moiseenko and I. Shapka analyze innovative approaches to teacher training that promote the introduction of modern educational technologies and the development of students' creative potential.

They note that technological progress requires new teaching methods from the educational system that would contribute to the harmonious development of the individual, critical thinking and independence of students (Paska et al., 2024).

The study examines such innovative technologies as mobile learning, AR/VR, interactive platforms, and artificial intelligence. They make the learning process flexible and accessible, adapted to the individual needs of students. Gamification and interactive methods increase motivation and interest in learning. The authors emphasize that teachers should not only impart knowledge, but also be mentors who help students develop their creativity.

The researchers also draw attention to the challenges of implementing innovations: insufficient training of teachers, lack of resources and methodological support. They emphasize the importance of support from management and the involvement of experts to assess the effectiveness of new technologies (Paska et al., 2024).

Thus, innovative approaches to teacher training are key to ensuring quality education that meets modern challenges. Further research should be aimed at adapting international experience to Ukrainian conditions and developing practical recommendations for the effective implementation of innovations in the educational process.

We are impressed by the position of O. Hudzenko and other scientists about the importance of innovations in modern education, which contribute to the development of critical thinking, the creative potential of students and the training of a new generation of teachers who can work effectively in the face of constant change and technological progress (Hudzenko, 2024), (Hudzenko, 2022), (Boychuk et al., 2024).

H. Dadi analyzes the professional development of teachers in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Sudan, emphasizing its importance for ensuring quality education and socio-economic development. The scientist emphasizes that professional development should be a continuous process that begins before the start of teaching (pre-service training) and continues throughout the teacher's professional life (in-service training). It should be based on a constructivist approach, where teachers are active participants in learning, and include collaborative methods such as group work, action research, and portfolios. The author identifies three key factors that influence professional development: contextual (organizational and social conditions that determine opportunities for teacher development), procedural (ways of organizing learning activities), and content (new knowledge, skills, and experiences that teachers acquire) (Dadi, 2015).

The study shows that in Tanzania, the professional development system includes pre-service and in-service training, but faces challenges such as shortened training duration and lack of effective supervision. In

Sudan, professional development is limited to short-term courses and workshops that are mostly theoretical, and a lack of funding makes them difficult to implement. In Ethiopia, the professional development system combines traditional approaches with cluster-based learning models that allow teachers to share experiences, but also faces challenges, including insufficient funding and low teacher motivation. H. Dadi also believes that the Chinese experience can be useful for African countries. The Chinese model involves study groups, lesson studies, and exchange programs between universities and schools, which makes professional development more effective and accessible. The researcher recommends improving teacher training in the countries studied, including expanding pedagogical courses, introducing induction programs for young teachers, and focusing seminars and workshops on practical aspects of teaching.

Thus, H. Dadi emphasizes the importance of high-quality professional development for the educational system and suggests ways to improve it, taking into account international experience and local characteristics (Dadi, 2015).

5. Conclusions. For the successful development of teachers' professionalism, it is necessary to implement innovative approaches, integrating digital technologies, flexible training programs and international experience, which will allow teachers to better adapt to the modern requirements of the educational process:

Continuous professional development of teachers is critical to ensuring the quality of education in the face of rapid change, including through digital transformation, globalization, and technological advances. Modern educational reforms require a rethinking of traditional approaches to postgraduate teacher education, particularly in Ukraine, where there are significant problems in the organization and accessibility of professional development.

The successful integration of new pedagogical methods and technologies requires flexible and ongoing professional development programs that take into account the individual needs of teachers. Models that include mentoring, mentoring programs, and reflection significantly increase the effectiveness of teacher professional development:

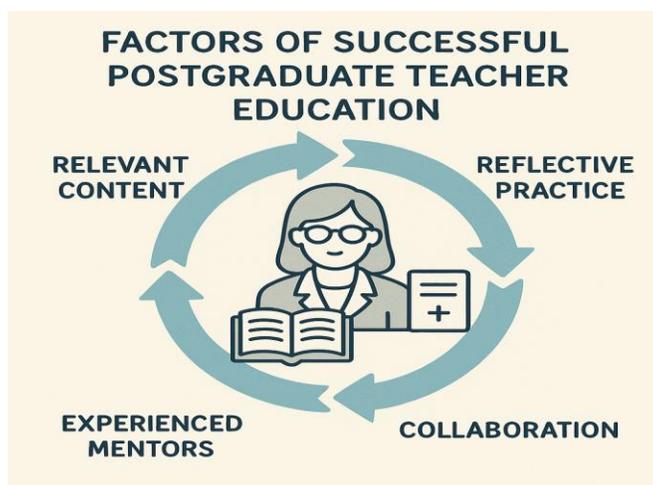


Figure 1. Factors of successful postgraduate teacher education

Note. Created by the authors.

The introduction of information and communication technologies is an important aspect for the development of pedagogical skills. Teachers must be prepared to adapt their approaches to digital learning, which has become relevant due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prompted a shift to distance learning.

An analysis of international approaches to teacher professional development, such as in the UK, Norway, and the US, confirms the importance of multicultural and inclusive approaches, the development of innovative competencies, and the implementation of practices that address the real needs of teachers and students.

Table 1

Key innovative approaches to teacher professional development

Innovative approach	Characteristics	Benefits
Use of digital technologies	Online courses, platforms, virtual classrooms	Accessibility, flexibility, interactivity
Mentoring and mentoring	Support of experienced teachers for newcomers	Faster adaptation, exchange of practical experience
Integration of social and emotional learning	Development of emotional intelligence, empathy in teachers and students	Promotes mental health, teamwork
Personalised development programmes	Individual learning trajectories according to the needs of the teacher	Increases motivation and efficiency

Innovative approach	Characteristics	Benefits
Continuous self-study and micro-learning	Short intensive courses, training modules	Flexibility, adaptation to the pace of work

To improve the system of postgraduate education in Ukraine, it is necessary to create a national platform for professional development, implement effective monitoring and funding mechanisms, and ensure equal access to learning resources. It is important to create favorable conditions for the continuous professional development of teachers, which will improve the quality of education in general.

Therefore, the integration of innovative approaches, continuous professional development, digital technologies, and ethical education, along with the introduction of international experience, are necessary to modernize postgraduate teacher education. These efforts will not only improve the quality of education, but also provide teachers with the skills and competencies necessary to work effectively in the challenging conditions of the twenty-first century.

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