# DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

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**Abstract:** This paper presents a theoretical and planned practical study on developing social competence among future primary school teachers through innovative approaches. The study is designed to explore the relationship between innovation-based teaching methods and the growth of social, emotional, and communicative competence in pre-service teachers. The research aims to implement a pilot program that integrates reflective learning, cooperative methods, and digital pedagogies into the teacher preparation curriculum. The expected outcome is the creation of a sustainable model for enhancing teachers' social competence that aligns with Uzbekistan's educational modernization strategy.

**Keywords:** social competence, innovation, reflective teaching, emotional intelligence, teacher training, educational modernization.

## Introduction

In the 21st century, the teaching profession demands not only subject expertise but also advanced social and emotional competencies. Social competence — the ability to interact effectively, empathize, and communicate within diverse contexts — is considered a critical skill for modern educators [1]. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory emphasizes that personal and professional development occurs through social interaction and collaboration [2]. Dewey's experiential learning model also highlights the importance of active participation and reflection as key drivers of social growth [3].

In Uzbekistan, teacher training reforms outlined in the "New Uzbekistan – Development Strategy" (2022) emphasize developing innovative, socially responsible educators [6]. Therefore, integrating innovative pedagogies into teacher education is not only desirable but necessary for shaping future teachers who can lead inclusive classrooms and support students' emotional well-being.

## Literature Review

The concept of social competence includes communication, empathy, teamwork, responsibility, and conflict resolution [4]. Goleman (1995) relates it to emotional intelligence, arguing that emotionally aware teachers build stronger relationships and more effective learning environments [5]. Bandura's theory of social learning posits that individuals acquire behaviors through observation and modeling, underscoring the teacher's role as a social example [8]. Similarly, CASEL (2024) identifies five dimensions of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making [3]. European educational frameworks also recognize social competence as an essential life skill for democratic participation and intercultural understanding [10]. Reflective teaching

[13], cooperative learning [14], and technology-based education [15] are found to be the most effective strategies for enhancing these skills.

Uzbek researchers such as Xojiyeva (2024) and Ahmedova & Narmetova (2023) emphasize that incorporating ICT tools and interactive practices in teacher training improves communication and emotional adaptability among future educators [11][12].

## Methodology (Planned Practical Framework)

The planned research will employ a qualitative and developmental design, aiming to pilot an innovation-based training model for social competence development in future primary school teachers.

## Purpose of the Study:

To develop and test an innovative training framework that strengthens pre-service teachers' social competence through interactive, reflective, and digital learning practices.

## Participants:

The planned study will involve approximately 60 undergraduate students of primary education from Bukhara Innovative Education and Medicine University. Participants will be divided into experimental and control groups.

## Research Instruments (Planned):

- Self-assessment questionnaires on social competence development.
- Reflective journals for recording students' learning experiences.
- Observation checklists during group activities.
- Digital learning platforms such as Padlet, Mentimeter, and Kahoot for cooperative interaction.

## Research Procedures (Planned):

1.    Pre-assessment of students' social competence levels using standardized scales.
2.    Implementation of innovative pedagogical sessions (reflective learning, cooperative tasks, and digital collaboration).
3.    Post-assessment and comparative analysis to measure improvements in social and emotional competence.

The practical phase is scheduled for the spring semester of the 2025–2026 academic year and will last for 10 weeks.

## Expected Results and Discussion

Based on theoretical and prior empirical studies, the researcher anticipates that the integration of innovative teaching strategies will significantly enhance the following aspects of social

competence:

- Reflective Awareness: The ability to analyze one's actions and adapt behavior constructively [13].
- Collaborative Interaction: Improved teamwork, empathy, and communication in group-based settings [14].
- Digital Socialization: Strengthened online communication and cooperative engagement through educational technology [15].
- Emotional Regulation: Development of empathy, tolerance, and self-management consistent with SEL frameworks [3].

It is expected that the experimental group exposed to innovation-based teaching methods will demonstrate a noticeable increase in communication confidence, self-awareness, and emotional stability compared to the control group.

Additionally, aligning the program with Uzbekistan's educational reforms [6] will help produce teachers who embody both professional competence and social maturity.

**Conclusion**

This planned research aims to establish an innovative pedagogical model for developing social competence among future primary school teachers. Integrating reflective, cooperative, and digital learning strategies is expected to contribute to:

1. Strengthening emotional and interpersonal intelligence;
2. Enhancing collaborative and communicative skills;
3. Supporting the professional identity of socially responsible educators.

Further implementation and evaluation will help adapt this framework into the national teacher education system. The project's success will depend on institutional support, teacher motivation, and the integration of global best practices into Uzbekistan's pedagogical training programs.

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