

## **Competence building of basic secondary education students**

The New Ukrainian School constitutes a key reform of the educational system. The concept of ‘competency’ has been introduced quite recently, but despite its novelty it has already become an important focus of modern scientific research.

Competency is defined as a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, ways of thinking, views, values, and other personal characteristics, which determines a person’s ability to successfully socialize and pursue a professional path.

The development of students’ competencies results from the implementation of appropriate educational content revision as well as the adequate teaching methods and technologies.

The secondary school competencies, consisting of fundamental skills necessary for the students’ success in school environment and beyond, rank first in the system of core competencies which include communication, critical thinking, collaboration and leadership.

Having completed primary school studies, most students are unlikely to understand what is meant by competency, while others are completely unaware of the term itself. According to I. Pidlasyi, it is advisable to address the fifth-graders with a short speech on the topic: "I want to become competent." To make things clear, the teacher should choose some simpler synonyms or replace the word ‘competent’ by less ambiguous words instead.

It has been argued by some researches that a more productive competencies development requires a new environment which will provide students with the opportunity to study outside the school, i.e. in contemporary museums, laboratories, observatories, with open access to free training courses and other resources. Thus, museum pedagogy occupies a prominent place and can become an effective tool for the development of particular competencies.

Children tend to show a keen interest in the events which enable them to not only see the museum exhibits or rarities, but also touch or handle them. The very fact of a student trip to a museum fills them with great pleasure.

The students in Denmark practice the so-called 'Projekt Edison', an exciting learning method designed for the six- and seven-graders and based on ingenuity. While doing the project, students learn to develop theoretical concepts and make their own products in real life. Stimulating students' curiosity is one of the major program goals.

The development of competencies for 1-6 and 7-9 graders with regard to the Finnish school education also deserves attention.

According to the Finnish approaches, tackling the challenges of the future requires that schools should focus on the development of interdisciplinary competencies, whose elements should be included into the study of each subject. These include the ability to learn, communicative competencies, analysis and critical thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship, ability to organize independent work.

The reform of the national curriculum has provided for the considerable emphasis to be placed on the implementation of joint classroom practice. The new program has also introduced interdisciplinary experience-based teaching projects where several teachers can work with students while mastering the same subject. Under the new curriculum, all schools must plan accordingly and provide for at least one period of the above-mentioned practice per academic year.

If the teacher decides to conduct a regular lesson, it is advisable to do so by explaining the material three times. First, the material is presented extensively and in detail, then concisely in the abridged manner, and finally only the main ideas and the connections are provided. This follows from the fact that the grade may comprise children with different perception types who do their studies there.

Developing core competencies of 8-9 graders requires that personally significant life values should be identified, since at this particular age young people tend to reflect on their future and their niche in life.

Researchers argue that children of this age are more interested in the sciences. They form a broad outlook on learning outcomes as the prerequisite for success in adulthood, which necessitates teaching staff modernization.

In this day and age, people in different parts of the world are engaged in the experiments on various ways of integrating and measuring the 21st century skills.

The so-called PISA test is conducted in Shanghai, as the world's largest competency study for 15-year-old secondary school students, which is essential for meeting real-life challenges which students may face in their adulthood. Ukraine participated in this 2018 study for the first time.

Modern scholars, including the foreign ones, draw the focus of their attention to a teacher as a specialist who does not only teach a particular subject, but also embodies and represents the world of values, encourages students' activity and supports them. The main requirements of a good teacher should include high morals and spirituality, honesty, responsibility, decency and integrity.

There are also tests designed to evaluate teacher's competencies by measuring basic skills, general knowledge, subject expertise and pedagogical knowledge. Most countries consistently apply the ETS (Education Testing Service) called Praxis, which measures basic knowledge of math, reading and writing.

Therefore, it is crucially important to test both students' and teachers' competency, because the contemporary world provides considerable opportunities for personal development and self-fulfillment of each individual.