THE NEED TO DEVELOP ASSESSMENT COMPETENCE IN FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AS A SOCIO-PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEM

Majidova Hilola Eshquvat kizi
Teacher, Department of Mathematics
and Native Language in Primary Education
Faculty of Preschool and Primary Education
Termiz State Pedagogical Institute

Abstract: In the modern educational landscape, the quality of teaching and learning is directly linked to the teacher's ability to assess students effectively. The development of assessment competence among future primary school teachers is a crucial socio-pedagogical issue that influences not only the learning outcomes of students but also the professional formation of teachers themselves. This article analyzes the theoretical and methodological foundations of assessment competence, its role in teacher education, and the social-pedagogical necessity of developing this competence in pre-service teachers. The paper also examines the challenges and strategies for improving assessment literacy in teacher training programs, emphasizing the integration of formative and summative assessment techniques, reflective practices, and digital tools.

Keywords: assessment competence, primary education, formative assessment, summative assessment, teacher training, socio-pedagogical problem, reflective practice.

Introduction. Education today demands that teachers not only deliver knowledge but also monitor, guide, and support the development of learners through effective assessment. In this context, **assessment competence**—the ability to design, implement, and interpret various assessment methods—has become one of the most essential components of teacher professionalism. For future primary school teachers, this competence determines their readiness to meet the diverse needs of young learners and ensure high-quality learning outcomes.

The issue of developing assessment competence is not merely pedagogical; it is **a socio-pedagogical problem**, as it affects the broader educational system, social equity, and the formation of an educated society. Assessment influences motivation, self-esteem, and the long-term academic success of students, which in turn shapes the nation's human capital.

The topic focuses on one of the most important issues in modern teacher education — the formation of *assessment competence* among future primary school teachers. In contemporary education, teachers are not only responsible for teaching academic content but also for assessing students' progress fairly, objectively, and effectively.

Assessment competence refers to a teacher's ability to plan, apply, and evaluate various methods of assessing students' learning achievements. It includes skills in designing tests, analyzing results, giving constructive feedback, and using assessment data to improve teaching and learning.

Developing this competence is considered a **socio-pedagogical problem** because it affects both the educational and social dimensions of schooling. Pedagogically, weak assessment skills lead to ineffective teaching, poor feedback, and limited student growth. Socially, they can result in inequality, demotivation, and a lack of trust in the education system.

Therefore, teacher education institutions must pay special attention to improving the **assessment literacy** of future teachers. This includes integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience, applying formative and summative assessment strategies, encouraging reflective practice, and using digital tools for evaluation.

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The topic emphasizes that without developing assessment competence, it is impossible to achieve quality education, fair evaluation, or effective teaching in primary schools. Thus, the preparation of competent, reflective, and socially responsible teachers becomes a key priority in modern pedagogy.

The Essence of Assessment Competence Assessment competence includes a set of interrelated skills, knowledge, and attitudes that allow teachers to evaluate students' progress objectively and effectively. It consists of several key components:

1. **Theoretical knowledge** – understanding of assessment principles, standards, and methods.
2. **Practical skills** – the ability to design valid, reliable, and fair assessment tasks.
3. **Analytical and reflective skills** – capacity to interpret results and make data-driven decisions.
4. **Ethical awareness** – ensuring transparency and fairness in grading and feedback.

For future teachers, these components must be developed during their university training, where assessment becomes both a subject of study and a practical experience.

The Socio-Pedagogical Nature of the Problem The problem of insufficient assessment competence among pre-service teachers has social and pedagogical dimensions. Socially, inadequate assessment practices can lead to unequal educational opportunities, bias, and decreased trust in the education system. Pedagogically, teachers without strong assessment competence may fail to identify students' learning gaps, provide constructive feedback, or adapt teaching strategies to individual needs.

Moreover, the digitalization of education and competency-based curricula have made assessment even more complex. Teachers must now master **digital assessment tools**, online testing, and data analytics, which require continuous professional development. Thus, developing assessment competence has become an urgent socio-pedagogical need that determines the quality and inclusivity of education

Strategies for Developing Assessment Competence Effective strategies for fostering assessment competence in future primary school teachers include:

1. **Integrating assessment theory and practice** – ensuring that teacher education programs provide balanced training in both conceptual understanding and classroom application.
2. **Using formative assessment methods** – encouraging future teachers to apply ongoing, feedback-oriented approaches such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and observation.
3. **Promoting reflective practice** – teaching pre-service teachers to analyze their own assessment decisions critically.
4. **Applying digital technologies** – introducing platforms such as Google Forms, Kahoot, and LMS tools to design interactive and efficient assessments.
5. **Mentorship and practicum** – engaging teacher mentors to guide students during teaching practice in schools.

These strategies help bridge the gap between theory and real-life classroom challenges.

Challenges in Teacher Education Despite growing awareness, several challenges remain in developing assessment competence:

- **Insufficient training content** in university curricula related to assessment methodology.
- **Traditional grading systems** that emphasize summative over formative assessment.
- **Limited opportunities** for practice-based learning and reflective feedback.
- **Lack of digital readiness** among teacher educators and students alike.

To overcome these barriers, higher education institutions must reform their teacher education programs, introduce competency-based assessment models, and create continuous professional development opportunities.

Conclusion The development of assessment competence in future primary school teachers is a pressing socio-pedagogical problem that requires systemic and integrated solutions. It is essential to prepare teachers who can not only measure learning outcomes but also support and enhance them through fair, reflective, and innovative assessment practices. Building such competence will contribute to the overall improvement of educational quality, social justice, and the development of an active learning society.

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