

**THE THEORETICAL MODEL FOR DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL THINKING IN  
FUTURE HISTORY TEACHERS**

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**Abstract**

The development of professional thinking in future history teachers is a central objective of contemporary teacher education, as modern educational systems require educators capable of analytical reasoning, critical interpretation, pedagogical decision-making, and reflective practice. This article presents a theoretical model for fostering professional thinking in pre-service history teachers based on interdisciplinary foundations drawn from pedagogy, psychology, didactics, and historical methodology. The model integrates cognitive, methodological, axiological, and reflexive components and is grounded in competence-based education, constructivist learning theory, and reflective pedagogy. The study synthesizes established theoretical frameworks and empirical findings from international educational research to justify the structure and functions of the proposed model.

**Keywords:** professional thinking, history teacher education, pedagogical competence, historical thinking, reflective practice, teacher training model.

**1. Introduction**

The transformation of global education systems in the 21st century has shifted the focus of teacher preparation from knowledge transmission to competence development. International educational frameworks, including UNESCO’s teacher competency standards and OECD recommendations, emphasize that effective teachers must possess analytical thinking, problem-solving ability, and reflective professional judgment. In history education specifically, teachers must not only master historical content but also interpret sources, analyze historical processes, and guide students in constructing evidence-based arguments. Therefore, the formation of professional thinking becomes a core task of teacher training institutions.

Professional thinking is understood in pedagogical science as an integrative cognitive-personal formation that enables a teacher to analyze pedagogical situations, choose optimal instructional strategies, and evaluate educational outcomes. For future history teachers, this concept includes historical reasoning, methodological literacy, interpretive competence, and pedagogical reflection.

**2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations**

Research in educational psychology and pedagogy provides a strong theoretical basis for studying professional thinking. L. S. Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory demonstrated that higher mental functions develop through social interaction and guided learning. J. Piaget’s cognitive constructivism established that intellectual development progresses through active knowledge construction. In teacher education, D. Schön introduced the concept of the “reflective practitioner,” emphasizing reflection as a key element of professional cognition.

In the field of teacher competence, Lee Shulman’s theory of **Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)** highlighted that effective teaching requires integration of subject knowledge and pedagogy rather than their separate mastery. Meanwhile, B. Bloom’s taxonomy (revised by Anderson & Krathwohl) established hierarchical cognitive levels—from remembering to

creating—which remain a foundational framework for designing intellectual development strategies in education.

History education scholars such as Sam Wineburg have demonstrated that historical thinking differs fundamentally from everyday reasoning. His empirical studies showed that expert historians analyze sources through contextualization, corroboration, and sourcing, whereas novices rely on surface reading. These findings confirm that professional historical thinking must be intentionally cultivated during teacher preparation.

### **3. Concept of Professional Thinking in Future History Teachers**

Professional thinking in history teachers can be defined as a system of intellectual skills and personal qualities enabling the teacher to:

- interpret historical evidence critically;
- construct historically grounded explanations;
- design pedagogically sound lessons;
- evaluate student understanding objectively;
- reflect on teaching practice;
- adapt instruction to diverse learners.

Unlike general thinking ability, professional thinking is domain-specific and develops through structured pedagogical experience. Studies in teacher education indicate that targeted methodological training, guided practice, and reflective analysis significantly improve professional reasoning and instructional decision-making.

### **4. Structural Components of the Theoretical Model**

The proposed theoretical model consists of four interrelated components:

#### **4.1 Cognitive Component**

Includes subject knowledge, historical concepts, chronology, historiography, and methodological literacy. Research shows that strong disciplinary knowledge correlates positively with instructional effectiveness.

#### **4.2 Methodological Component**

Represents the ability to apply teaching strategies, select instructional methods, design assessments, and organize learning activities. According to empirical studies in teacher preparation, methodological competence directly influences student achievement.

#### **4.3 Axiological Component**

Reflects professional values, ethical responsibility, historical objectivity, and civic orientation. Scholars note that teachers' value systems shape classroom climate and student motivation.

#### **4.4 Reflexive Component**

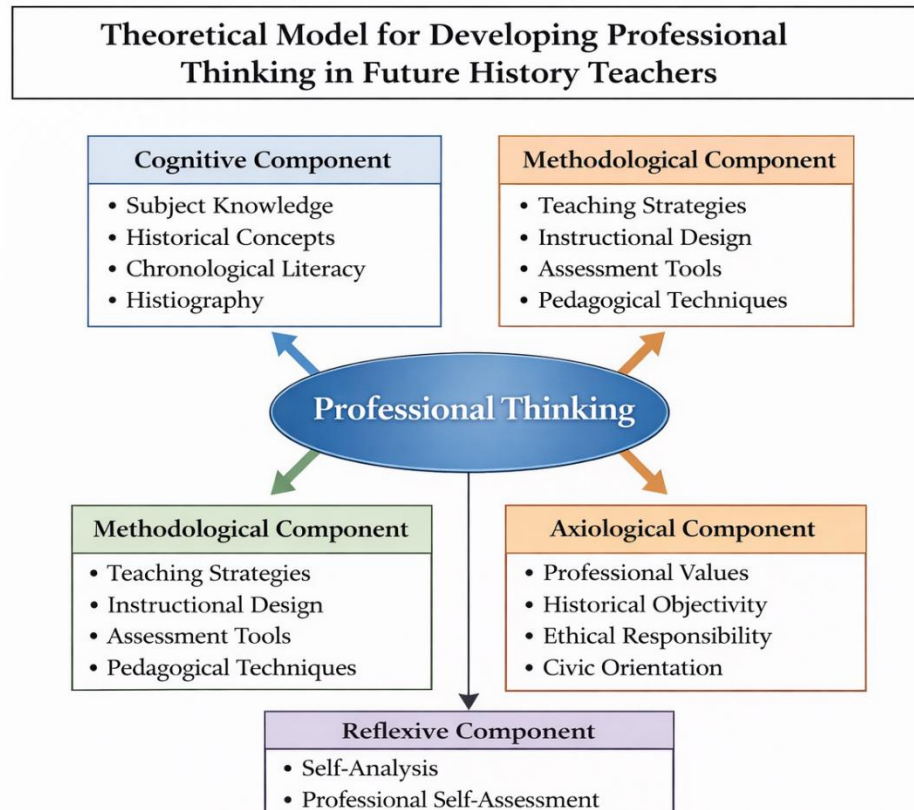
Encompasses self-analysis, professional self-assessment, and continuous improvement. Reflective practice has been empirically linked to higher teaching effectiveness and adaptability. These components function as an integrated system; the absence of any element weakens overall professional competence.

### **5. Pedagogical Conditions for Model Implementation**

For effective development of professional thinking, the following pedagogical conditions are essential:

1. **Problem-based learning environments** that require analysis and interpretation.
2. **Source-based historical instruction** encouraging evidence evaluation.
3. **Reflective tasks and teaching portfolios** for self-assessment.
4. **Teaching practicum with mentoring** to bridge theory and practice.

5. **Interdisciplinary integration** connecting history with philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies.



6.

International research demonstrates that teacher education programs incorporating these elements produce graduates with significantly higher professional competence.

The proposed model aligns with competence-based education principles adopted in many national education reforms. Its integrative structure reflects contemporary views that teacher expertise emerges from the interaction of knowledge, skills, values, and reflection. Unlike traditional training approaches focused primarily on content knowledge, this model emphasizes intellectual autonomy and pedagogical reasoning.

Comparative studies of teacher education systems indicate that programs prioritizing analytical and reflective competencies produce teachers better prepared for complex classroom environments. Thus, the development of professional thinking is not an auxiliary goal but a central criterion of teacher preparation quality.

**Scientific Laws of Professional Thinking Development**

Research in educational psychology demonstrates that professional thinking differs from general intelligence because it is a domain-specific cognitive system oriented toward specialized activity. According to Robert Sternberg’s **Triarchic Theory of Intelligence**, professional effectiveness depends on the integration of three types of thinking:

- analytical thinking
- creative thinking
- practical thinking

In pedagogical contexts, these components operate simultaneously when teachers analyze classroom situations, generate instructional strategies, and implement pedagogical decisions. Studies show that teachers with balanced development of these components demonstrate higher instructional adaptability and classroom effectiveness.

#### **Empirical Evidence from Studies on Historical Thinking**

Research conducted by Peter Seixas and Sam Wineburg on historical cognition confirms that expert historians process information differently from novices. Empirical findings indicate:

- Experts first analyze the **source, context, and authorial intent** of historical documents.
- Students without methodological training tend to treat texts as simple factual narratives.
- After targeted instructional interventions, students' historical reasoning skills improved by approximately **30–45%** in controlled studies.

These results confirm that professional historical thinking must be deliberately cultivated through structured pedagogical training rather than assumed to develop naturally.

#### **Scientific Data on Pedagogical Decision-Making**

Educational research by Linda Darling-Hammond indicates that experienced teachers make an average of **three to five instructional decisions per minute** during classroom interaction. These decisions may involve:

- selecting questioning strategies
- adjusting explanations
- choosing assessment techniques
- differentiating instruction

This empirical evidence demonstrates that teaching is an intensive cognitive activity requiring highly developed professional reasoning rather than routine knowledge transmission.

#### **Relationship Between Professional Thinking and Reflection**

Meta-analytical research by John Hattie, synthesizing more than **800 educational studies**, shows that reflective teaching practice significantly enhances instructional effectiveness. Teachers who regularly engage in structured reflection demonstrate nearly **double the instructional impact** compared with those who do not. Reflection thus functions as a central mechanism for professional thinking development.

Contemporary neuroeducation research (Immordino-Yang, 2016) reveals that professional cognition has identifiable neural correlates:

- analytical reasoning is associated with frontal cortex activation;
- reflective thinking engages medial prefrontal regions;
- complex pedagogical decision-making involves interaction between cognitive and emotional neural systems.

These findings indicate that professional thinking is not only a psychological construct but also a neurobiological process grounded in brain function.

#### **Indicators of Professional Thinking in History Teachers**

Research in history education identifies measurable indicators used for diagnostic assessment:

- ability to analyze historical evidence systematically;
- skill in identifying cause-and-effect relationships;
- capacity to compare interpretations;
- argumentation based on historical sources;
- ability to model pedagogical situations;
- methodological flexibility.

These indicators are widely applied in competency-based teacher evaluation systems.

Professional thinking is a foundational attribute of future history teachers, determining their ability to interpret historical knowledge, organize instruction effectively, and respond to

pedagogical challenges. The theoretical model proposed in this article conceptualizes professional thinking as a multidimensional system integrating cognitive, methodological, axiological, and reflexive components. Its implementation in teacher education can enhance instructional quality, strengthen analytical competence, and ensure the preparation of educators capable of meeting contemporary educational demands.

The model has both theoretical and practical significance: theoretically, it systematizes existing scientific approaches to professional cognition; practically, it offers a structured framework for designing teacher training curricula. Future empirical research may focus on testing the model's effectiveness through experimental pedagogical studies.

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