

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING CREATIVE COMPETENCE IN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the theoretical aspects for the process of developing creative competence in professional activities for general education teachers in Vietnam. The article proposes a seven-step process for fostering creative competence among teachers: Surveying and assessing needs and competencies; Designing and implementing training and professional development programs; Organizing pilot implementations; Establishing support networks; Developing criteria and evaluating outcomes; Establishing an acknowledgement and reward system; Updating, maintaining, and expanding training and professional development programs. The study emphasizes that fostering creative competence not only improves educational quality but also plays a crucial role in cultivating a generation of students equipped to effectively address the challenges of modern society.

Keywords: Teacher, creative, competence, professional activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, education systems worldwide are facing unprecedented challenges and transformations, driven by the integration of advanced technologies, innovation, and digitalization. Vietnam, as part of this global shift, recognizes the urgent need to enhance the quality of education through a comprehensive reform of teaching and learning methodologies. One of the critical competencies identified for general education teachers is creative competence—the ability to develop and apply innovative ideas to improve educational outcomes.

Creative competence is increasingly viewed as a foundational element in preparing teachers not only to transmit knowledge but also to inspire creativity and critical thinking among students. As education shifts from teacher-centered to learner-centered paradigms, the role of teachers as creative facilitators becomes more vital. Despite its importance, the development of creative competence in Vietnam's general education teachers remains a relatively under-researched area, particularly in the context of ethnic minority communities.

This study aims to provide a theoretical analysis of the process for developing creative competence in teachers' professional activities. It proposes a structured, multi-step framework designed to assess needs, implement training, support continuous development, and establish an ecosystem that fosters creativity within the teaching profession.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The significance of creative competence for teachers in the modern era has been widely acknowledged in numerous studies, with many scholars emphasizing its critical value in contemporary society (Calavia et al., 2021; Echegoyen-Sanz et al., 2023; Emine, 2024). Huynh Văn Sơn (2009) defines creative competence as the ability of individuals to generate new ideas or solve problems innovatively. Similarly, Dũng (2010) describes creativity as the process of producing outcomes that are both novel and useful. T. V. Dũng (2013) elaborates that creative competence stems from personal qualities, knowledge, and skills that allow individuals to create valuable innovations.

International perspectives also emphasize the dynamic nature of creativity. Benic (2021) characterizes creativity as producing original and socially valued outcomes, while Abdullah et al. (2021) and Ahmad et al. (2023) underscore the role of creativity in enhancing teaching effectiveness, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Al-khresheh (2022) highlights how online teaching has reshaped the creative approaches of educators, particularly in response to emergent technological challenges.

Creativity is not only a personal attribute but also influenced by environmental and institutional factors. Studies by Akyıldız and Çelik (2020) suggest that the creativity of teachers has a direct impact on students' own creative development, emphasizing the teacher's role in fostering a culture of innovation in the classroom.

Thus, the literature underscores that creative competence is multifaceted, encompassing knowledge integration, critical thinking, risk-taking, and adaptability—qualities essential for modern educators navigating the complexities of today's education systems.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study employs a theoretical and descriptive research design to develop a framework for enhancing creative competence in general education teachers in Vietnam.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on theoretical research and the practical professional activities of general education teachers in Vietnam, we propose the following process for developing teachers' creative competence:

Step 1: Conduct a needs and competence survey for teachers.

This step includes the specific contents as follows:

- Defining the Objectives of the Survey: The primary goal of the survey is to assess the needs and existing competencies of general education teachers, identifying areas where improvement is necessary to enhance their creative teaching capabilities. The survey will provide insights into teachers' current pedagogical skills, as well as the difficulties and challenges they face in their teaching practices. Additionally, it will help identify teachers' expectations and requirements for professional development and training programs, aiding in the construction of appropriate support strategies aimed at improving teaching effectiveness and fostering students' overall development. Ultimately, the goal is to create a positive and innovative learning environment that enhances the quality of education.

- Designing the Survey Questionnaire: The survey questionnaire should be thoughtfully designed to ensure clarity, relevance, and ease of understanding for respondents. It should be divided into two main sections: the first section focuses on collecting demographic information about the teachers, such as age, ethnicity, and teaching experience, to provide context for data analysis; the

second section comprises questions about teachers' existing competencies, including pedagogical skills, creative teaching approaches, and previous innovative initiatives. Additionally, the questionnaire should assess development needs through questions on areas requiring improvement, preferred training programs, and teaching challenges. To ensure objectivity and facilitate data analysis, the survey should incorporate both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, allowing teachers to freely express their perspectives. Finally, an evaluation section on satisfaction with current training programs should be included to identify areas for future improvement.

- Conducting the Survey: The survey process must adhere to specific requirements to ensure effectiveness and reliability. First, the target respondents must be clearly identified, ensuring that all teachers within the community are invited to participate to obtain a comprehensive perspective. The survey timing should be carefully chosen to avoid disrupting teachers' work schedules. All survey questionnaires should be uniformly distributed, using email, in-person meetings, or online platforms to maximize participation. To enhance data reliability, teachers should be assured of confidentiality and anonymity when responding. After data collection, a systematic analysis approach should be employed to transform primary information into insightful conclusions, which will serve as a foundation for developing strategies to foster creative teaching skills. Organizing follow-up discussions after the survey can also be considered, allowing teachers to further elaborate on their needs and concerns not fully captured in the questionnaire.

- Data collection and analysis: The data collection and analysis process, aiming to assess the needs and current competence of general education teachers, consists of several crucial steps. Firstly, after the sending the survey to the teachers, researchers need to present a reasonable response time limit, ensuring a high response rate for representative data. After the response period, data from the survey will be compiled and categorized based on question groups for easier analysis. For multiple-choice questions, calculating percentage distributions can help identify trends and common needs. Open-ended responses should be classified and coded to extract key themes, thereby providing deeper insights into teachers' professional difficulties and aspirations. Statistical tools or data analysis software can be used to generate visual reports and charts, making it easier to pinpoint key issues that require attention. Finally, the analysis results should be clearly presented to inform actionable recommendations for developing teachers' creative competencies in the future.

- Reporting on the survey's results: The survey report should be structured concisely and systematically. It should begin with an overview of the survey objectives and methodology, including details on the sample size and the survey duration. The report should then provide general demographic insights, such as teachers' ages, teaching experience, and ethnic backgrounds. The main section should present the findings, incorporating quantitative data from multiple-choice responses with graphical illustrations to highlight trends and needs. Additionally, major themes from open-ended responses should be analyzed, emphasizing specific difficulties teachers face and their professional development aspirations. The report should conclude with key takeaways and concrete recommendations based on the survey results, aiming to develop training and support programs that enhance teachers' creative competencies and improve the quality of education in ethnic minority communities.

Step 2: Designing and implementing training programs to enhance creativity for primary school teachers in their professional activities

- Defining training objectives: Based on survey results, gaps and limitations in teachers' competencies will be identified, which serve as the foundation for determining the training objectives to enhance creativity among ethnic minority primary school teachers. To guarantee viability and efficacy, these goals need to be precise and unambiguous. The objectives may include improving teachers' creative teaching abilities, helping them develop critical thinking and teamwork skills to foster a positive learning environment for students, enhancing lesson design skills to create engaging and interactive learning activities that stimulate students' creativity and interest, or developing leadership capacity in education by encouraging teachers to actively propose and implement innovative initiatives in schools, thereby improving education quality in ethnic minority communities.
- Developing a training program: The training program for enhancing creativity in general education teachers should be designed scientifically and flexibly, aligning with the teachers' practical needs. The program may cover key topics such as introducing interactive teaching methodologies to help teachers understand and apply techniques like cooperative learning, experiential learning, and project-based education. It may also include training in information technology for teaching, utilizing the use of educational software and online tools to facilitate lesson delivery. Additionally, professional development in lesson design will equip teachers with the skills to create interactive and engaging learning activities that encourage student participation. The training program should be periodically evaluated and adjusted based on teacher feedback and actual teaching outcomes to ensure long-term relevance and effectiveness.
- Selecting teachers and experts: Experienced educators and experts in the education field and creative competence development should be invited to deliver lectures and provide guidance throughout the training program. Meetings should be arranged with instructors to discuss course content and instructional approaches.
- Implementation of training courses: Specific planning should be developed for the training sessions, including the schedule, location and delivery format (online or offline). Using diverse, flexible teaching methods like group discussions, hands-on activities, and educational games, to engage teachers and enhance their learning experience.
- Monitoring and assessment: Criteria should be established to evaluate teachers' progress after the training, including feedback from teachers, assessments, or practical projects. Collecting teachers' input will help refine the content and teaching methods for future training programs.
- Impact evaluation: After a period of implementation, an assessment should be conducted to measure the impact of the training programs on teaching effectiveness and students' progress. Insights gained from this evaluation will guide adjustments to improve the training programs further.

Step 3: Facilitating the practical application of acquired knowledge and research into teaching practice. Key actions in this phase include:

- Assist teachers in creating detailed plans for piloting specific teaching methods or techniques they have learned. These plans should include clear objectives, methodologies, timelines, and evaluation strategies to measure outcomes.
- Organize group discussions or seminars where teachers can share their ideas and implementation plans. This not only allows them to receive feedback from colleagues but also motivates them to carry out their plans effectively.

- Offer essential support during the pilot phase, including access to materials, resources, and guidance from experienced colleagues or experts. Additionally, establish a monitoring system to track teachers' progress and provide timely assistance.
- Encourage teachers to freely adapt and refine their teaching methods during the pilot phase. This will help them build confidence in applying what they have learned to real-world teaching scenarios.
- During the pilot phase, teachers should gather feedback from students and colleagues on the effectiveness of the applied methods. Tools such as surveys, interviews, or classroom observations can be used to collect relevant data.
- Post-implementation meetings should be held to allow teachers to present their findings, discuss experiences, and derive lessons learned from their practical applications. This fosters a collaborative learning environment and encourages knowledge sharing among teachers.
- Organize conferences or forums where teachers can share their experiences and pilot results with the entire teaching staff. This helps disseminate knowledge and promotes a culture of creativity in teaching.
- Based on collected feedback, guide teachers in refining and improving their instructional approaches to enhance overall teaching quality.

Step 4: Establishing professional learning communities to support creative competence development.

The following tasks should be implemented effectively:

- Establish a network for teachers, particularly those from ethnic minority communities, where they can connect, share experiences, and support one another in their teaching practices. This network should include teachers from various schools to broaden opportunities for learning and collaboration.
- Plan periodic meetings (e.g., monthly or quarterly) where teachers can discuss teaching challenges, share creative methods, and provide feedback on their learning processes. These meetings can be held monthly or quarterly.
- A digital forum or social media group should be established to facilitate exchange of information, teaching materials, and innovative ideas. This platform should allow teachers to ask questions and receive feedback from colleagues at any time.
- Enable teachers to share teaching materials, sample lesson plans, and successful innovative practices. This will help build a shared repository of resources for all members of the network.
- Organize workshops or seminars where teachers can present their teaching methods and receive feedback from peers and education experts. The feedback should be delivered constructively, encouraging growth and innovation.
- Educational specialists should be invited to participate in seminars and networking events to share their knowledge and experience. This will help teachers stay informed on the latest teaching methodologies and expand their network.
- Surveys and feedback should be collected to assess the impact of learning communities, with adjustments made to enhance their effectiveness and make teachers better adapt to their teaching environments.

Building a work culture in the community will encourage teachers to mutually support each other in problem solving. Encouraging peer recognition and mutual support in problem-solving will create a positive and dynamic professional environment.

Step 5: Developing evaluation criteria and assessing creative competence development.

Key actions in this step include:

- Develop a clear set of measurable criteria to assess teachers' creative competence, including their ability to apply innovative teaching methods, design creative lesson plans, and engage students effectively.
 - Defining Proficiency Levels: A rating scale (e.g., from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "needs improvement" and 5 indicates "excellent") to evaluate teachers' performance against the criteria. This will provide teachers with a clear understanding of their progress and their current position.
 - Develop tools such as checklists, surveys, or self-assessment forms that teachers can use to track their development over time. These tools should be user-friendly and adaptable to individual needs.
 - Plan regular evaluation cycles (e.g., quarterly or biannually) to monitor teachers' progress. Involve colleagues, experts, and school administrators to ensure objectivity and comprehensiveness.
 - After each evaluation, offer specific feedback to teachers, highlighting their strengths and areas for improvement. Feedback should be encouraging and focused on fostering growth.
 - Based on evaluation results, assist teachers in creating personal development plans with clear goals, timelines, and necessary resources. Establish a system to monitor progress and adjust plans as needed.
 - At the end of each evaluation cycle, compile and report the results to school administrators and stakeholders. This will help identify achievements and areas requiring further attention.
- By implementing these measures, Step 5 will establish an effective evaluation system, enhancing teachers' creative competence and improving the overall quality of education.

Step 6: Establishing a recognition and reward system for outstanding creative teaching

Key actions in this phase include:

- Develop clear criteria for identifying teachers who excel in applying creativity in teaching, such as innovation in teaching methods, creating positive learning environments, and improving student outcomes.
- Create a system that includes certificates, awards, or small financial incentives. Publicize this system to ensure all teachers are aware and motivated to strive for recognition.
- Hold regular award ceremonies to celebrate teachers' achievements, involving school administrators, parents, and the community to honor their contributions. This ceremony will not only an opportunity for teachers' contributions to be officially recognized but also a source of motivation for other teachers to strive for.
- Organize competitions or challenges that encourage teachers to present innovative teaching methods. Stellar performance will be recognized and rewarded.
- Offer constructive feedback to recognized teachers, emphasizing how their creativity has positively impacted students and colleagues. This will encourage them to continue innovating.
- Build a Reward Culture, encouraging recognition of achievements not only from the board of directors but also from colleagues and parents. Create an environment where everyone can share and recognize each other's efforts, thereby building a culture that honors creativity in education.
- Periodically review the recognition criteria and system to ensure fairness and effectiveness. Seek teacher input to make necessary adjustments, suiting their wants and needs.
- Provide opportunities for recognized teachers to share their experiences and methods with colleagues, spreading knowledge and inspiring others. This not only helps spread knowledge but also motivates other teachers to learn and grow.

By fully executing these measures, Step 6 will establish an efficient recognition and reward system, inspiring general education teachers to enhance their creativity and elevate the quality of both teaching and learning.

Step 7: Continuously updating and expanding creative competence training programs

Key actions in this phase include:

- Regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented training programs based on feedback from teachers and student learning outcomes. Use these evaluations to update program content, ensuring relevance and effectiveness. This includes incorporating new teaching methods and modern educational trends.
 - Offer ongoing training courses that cover updated and innovative topics, ranging from creative teaching methods to the application of information technology in education. These courses should be organized periodically and offer flexible scheduling to accommodate teachers' availability.
 - Motivate teachers to attend domestic and international seminars, workshops, and research programs. Provide information about educational events and offer financial support when necessary to facilitate their participation and broaden their knowledge and skills.
 - Build partnerships with educational institutions, universities, and training centers to provide teachers with access to high-quality training programs and a wealth of educational resources.
 - Promote a culture of knowledge sharing among teachers by organizing group discussions and sharing sessions. Encourage teachers to present insights and experiences gained from training programs or seminars.
 - Stay informed about new educational trends worldwide and adjust training programs accordingly. Share updates with teachers through newsletters, documents, or bulletin boards to keep them informed about changes and advancements in education
 - Establish a system to monitor teachers' development after each training course or seminar. Provide recommendations for further growth and encourage teachers to self-assess and create personal development plans based on their learning experiences.
- Provide teachers with the space to experiment with and apply new methods in their teaching, catalyzing innovation and creativity development. Assess and fully recognize their innovative efforts to foster creative thinking in the community.

By fully implementing these measures, Step 7 will ensure the ongoing maintenance and development of training programs, fostering creative competence among general education teachers. This will not only enhance the overall quality of education but also better address the continuous professional and technical development needs of teachers in the general education system.

5. CONCLUSION

The research findings highlight the critical role of creative competence in teachers' professional activities, particularly in the context of modern education and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Developing creative competence not only enhances teachers' instructional quality but also fosters a positive and engaging learning environment for students. The steps proposed in this article for fostering creative competence are practical and can be widely implemented in schools. Therefore, the adoption of this framework will significantly contribute to improving the quality of education in Vietnam, while also promoting innovation and creativity in teaching practices to meet the demands of education in the 4.0 era.

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