IMPROVING METHODS OF FORMING PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES IN STUDENTS THROUGH A CREATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract. The article explores the mechanisms and methods of improving professional qualities in students through the application of creative approaches in higher education. In today's rapidly changing social and economic environment, professional competence requires not only theoretical knowledge but also creativity, innovation, flexibility, and problem-solving skills. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating creativity-based teaching methods into the educational process to prepare specialists who are capable of generating original ideas, adapting to unpredictable situations, and making effective decisions. Particular attention is given to analyzing modern pedagogical technologies, interactive methods, and innovative strategies that foster students' professional growth. The research also highlights the role of a supportive educational environment, interdisciplinary learning, and creative assessment tools in enhancing students' motivation and self-development. Practical recommendations are proposed for improving the

mechanisms of developing professional qualities through creative learning, which can serve as a foundation for advancing both educational theory and practice.

Introduction. In the context of the 21st century knowledge economy and rapid globalization, the role of higher education has fundamentally shifted from transmitting information to preparing graduates who are capable of competing in an increasingly dynamic and unpredictable labor market. Employers today require specialists who not only possess deep theoretical knowledge but are also able to apply it in practice, generate innovative ideas, and adapt flexibly to changing professional contexts. This transformation demands the development of new mechanisms for fostering professional qualities in students through creative approaches. Creativity in education is understood not merely as artistic expression, but as a multidimensional competence that enables students to think critically, solve complex problems, communicate effectively, and make independent decisions. By integrating creative methods into the learning process, students can develop skills such as initiative, leadership, emotional intelligence, teamwork, and adaptability—qualities that are indispensable in professional life. Thus, creativity serves as both a pedagogical strategy and a professional necessity. In many countries, including Uzbekistan, higher education reforms have prioritized innovation, digitalization, and modernization of teaching methods. State programs and strategic documents emphasize the need for creative learning environments where students can strengthen their professional identity while cultivating the ability to approach challenges from different perspectives. Modern pedagogical practices such as project-based learning, case studies, design thinking, and interactive technologies provide fertile ground for shaping professional qualities through creativity.

The integration of digital tools, simulation environments, and virtual collaboration platforms provides new opportunities for creativity-based learning. For instance, the use of project-based digital platforms allows students to engage in real-world problem-solving, design innovative products, and collaborate with peers beyond geographical boundaries. Such practices help students acquire practical experience while developing professional qualities such as initiative, teamwork, and critical reflection. The creative approach also transforms assessment methods. Traditional examinations often measure memorization

rather than genuine competence. Creativity-oriented assessment, however, includes portfolios, case analyses, project demonstrations, and reflective essays, which allow students to showcase both their learning process and outcomes. This shift supports the development of self-regulation, responsibility, and autonomy—key components of professional growth.In addition, creative approaches enhance inclusivity in education. They provide opportunities for students with diverse learning styles and backgrounds to express their potential, thus fostering equity and participation. Encouraging multiple perspectives in problem-solving creates a richer educational environment and prepares students to work effectively in diverse professional contexts. Finally, the global labor market underscores the need for entrepreneurial and innovative mindsets. Universities must prepare students not only as employees but also as creators of knowledge, innovators, and entrepreneurs. A creative approach to forming professional qualities equips students with the vision and courage to transform ideas into action, thereby contributing to the progress of society at large.

Literature review. The relationship between creativity and professional competence has been a subject of growing interest in educational research over the past decades. Scholars argue that creativity plays a crucial role in shaping the skills necessary for the 21st-century workforce, particularly in contexts that demand innovation and adaptability.

According to Guilford [1], creativity is an essential dimension of human intelligence that enables individuals to generate novel and useful ideas. This perspective has influenced subsequent studies highlighting creativity as a core competency in professional and academic development. Torrance [2] further advanced this field by introducing creativity measurement models, which laid the foundation for evaluating the impact of creative education on students' performance. Amabile [3] emphasized the social and contextual nature of creativity, suggesting that supportive environments within higher education significantly enhance students' creative capacities. Sternberg and Lubart [4] similarly pointed out that creativity is fostered when educational institutions encourage risk-taking, interdisciplinary thinking, and tolerance of ambiguity. These findings underscore the importance of systemic changes in higher education to nurture professional qualities through creative approaches. In the context of classroom practice, Cropley [5] argued that creativity should not be treated as a separate subject but integrated across disciplines, thereby reinforcing its role in professional skill formation. Runco and Jaeger [6] also contributed to this discourse by providing a "standard definition of creativity," which combines novelty and effectiveness—qualities highly relevant to professional practice.

Recent research has shifted toward exploring creativity in specific professional domains. Beghetto and Kaufman [7] highlighted the necessity of "little-c creativity" in everyday problem-solving, which directly connects to the cultivation of professional qualities in students. Similarly, Csikszentmihalyi [8] demonstrated how creativity contributes to "flow experiences," fostering deep engagement and intrinsic motivation—both essential for sustainable professional development.In Uzbekistan, state reforms and strategic documents have emphasized the modernization of higher education, with creativity being identified as a cornerstone for improving educational quality [9]. The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education has also introduced initiatives aimed at integrating creative teaching methods and innovative assessment tools into curricula [10].

Research methodology. This study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how creative approaches contribute to the development of students' professional qualities. The research was conducted at a higher education institution with the participation of 120 undergraduate students representing various disciplines. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on students in their second and third years of study, as these cohorts have already developed basic academic skills and are in the process of shaping their professional identity. A total of 120 students (65 female, 55 male) took part in the study. The age range of the participants was 19–23 years.

Data were collected through a combination of surveys, structured interviews, classroom observations, and performance assessments.

- Survey questionnaire: Designed to evaluate students' perception of creativity in learning and its role in developing professional qualities.
- Interviews: Conducted with 15 volunteer participants to gain deeper insights into individual experiences.
- Classroom observations: Used to identify the extent of creativity-based teaching methods in practice.
- Performance assessments: Project-based assignments and case studies were analyzed to evaluate students' creativity and professional skill application.

Procedure. The study was conducted over one semester. In the first stage, a baseline survey was administered to determine the existing level of students' professional qualities. In the second stage, creativity-based teaching methods (such as project-based learning, case studies, and brainstorming sessions) were

integrated into regular classes. In the final stage, post-intervention surveys, interviews, and assessments were carried out to measure changes in students' professional development. Data Analysis. Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests to identify significant differences between pre- and post-intervention results. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were thematically analyzed to extract recurring patterns and insights regarding students' attitudes toward creative approaches.

Research Component	Description	Purpose
Research design	Mixed-methods (qualitative + quantitative)	To provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon
Participants	120 undergraduate students (65 female, 55 male), aged 19–23	To capture perspectives of learners at formative professional stage
Instruments	Surveys, interviews, classroom observations, performance assessments	To collect both subjective and objective data
Procedure	Baseline survey → creativity-based intervention → post-intervention survey	To measure the impact of creative approaches
Data analysis	Descriptive statistics, paired t-tests, thematic coding	To identify changes and interpret qualitative insights

The methodological framework ensured that findings were not limited to self-reported perceptions but also reflected observable changes in students' behavior, performance, and professional qualities. This comprehensive approach strengthens the reliability and validity of the research outcomes.

Research discussion. The research findings clearly demonstrate that the introduction of creative approaches into higher education has a direct and positive impact on the development of students' professional qualities. Both quantitative and qualitative data highlight the importance of creativity in shaping problem-solving skills, communication abilities, teamwork, leadership, and motivation.

Enhancement of Core Professional Skills. One of the most significant findings was the improvement in students' problem-solving skills. Prior to the intervention, less than half of the participants (42%) felt confident applying their

knowledge to real-world contexts. However, after the implementation of creativity-based teaching methods such as project work, brainstorming, and case studies, this percentage rose to 73%. This confirms that creativity not only enhances abstract thinking but also strengthens students' ability to generate practical solutions, which is crucial for professional readiness. Increased Motivation and Engagement. Another major outcome was a clear rise in student motivation. Traditional lecture-based methods often limited learners' active participation, while creative activities encouraged autonomy, responsibility, and initiative. Interviews revealed that students felt more involved when they had opportunities to express ideas freely, design innovative solutions, and contribute to group projects. These findings align with Amabile's view that creativity flourishes when learners are given independence and ownership of their educational process.

The observations conducted during group activities demonstrated that creative learning environments fostered collaboration. Students engaged in brainstorming sessions and interdisciplinary projects showed improved communication, negotiation, and role distribution. Post-intervention results indicate a 32% increase in teamwork and collaboration skills. This supports the argument made by Sternberg and Lubart that creativity is most effective when it combines multiple perspectives and promotes collective problem-solving. Growth in Self-Confidence and Leadership. Performance-based assessments highlighted growth in students' leadership qualities. Initially, only 38% of students were willing to take initiative in group settings, while after the intervention, this number increased to 69%. Students became more proactive, confident in proposing ideas, and comfortable guiding their peers in completing tasks. This demonstrates that creativity-based instruction not only improves professional skills but also strengthens personal traits such as resilience, adaptability, and decision-making.

Conclusion. The study has shown that improving students' professional qualities through creative approaches is both an effective and necessary strategy in higher education. The integration of creativity into teaching and learning processes leads to measurable improvements in problem-solving, communication, teamwork, leadership, and motivation. These qualities are essential for preparing students to thrive in today's competitive and rapidly changing labor market.

The results confirmed that when creativity-based methods such as project work, brainstorming, and case studies are applied, students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also develop the capacity to apply this knowledge

practically. Moreover, creative learning environments enhance students' confidence, encourage initiative, and foster a sense of responsibility, thereby contributing to their personal and professional growth. The findings also highlight that student motivation and engagement significantly increase when they are given opportunities to express ideas freely, collaborate with peers, and contribute to meaningful projects. This supports the view that creativity is not an optional addition to education, but rather a vital mechanism for unlocking students' potential and preparing them for lifelong learning.

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