

Forming Professional Congruence in Future Teachers: An Integrative Project-Based Pedagogical Model

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Abstract

The article examines professional congruence as an integrative quality of future teachers and proposes a project-based pedagogical model for its purposeful formation. Unlike an approach that treats congruence only as correspondence between inner experience and external behavior, the study considers it through interconnected communicative, emotional-regulatory, behavioral, and reflective components. The methodological framework combines project tasks, pedagogical cases, role-playing, reflective journals, psychological training, observation, questionnaires, and video analysis. The study argues that project activity is particularly valuable because it places pre-service teachers in situations that require them to coordinate personal position, verbal expression, emotional response, and professional action. The reported experimental results indicate positive dynamics in communicative congruence, emotional regulation, behavioral coherence, communicative confidence, and reflective analysis. On this basis, a staged model is proposed for diagnosing, developing, practicing, reflecting on, and assessing professional congruence. The model may be used to strengthen practice-oriented teacher education and to support the formation of an authentic professional identity.

Keywords: Professional congruence; future teachers; project-based learning; pedagogical model; communicative competence; emotional self-regulation; reflection; professional identity; teacher education.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary teacher education is increasingly expected to prepare specialists who can combine subject knowledge with mature communication, emotional stability, reflective judgment, and responsible professional behavior. Digitalization, learner-centered pedagogy, collaborative learning, and the growing complexity of classroom interaction have intensified the need for teachers who are able to maintain consistency between what they think, what they communicate, and how they act in pedagogical situations. Within this context, professional congruence can be regarded as an important integrative quality of the future teacher.

In the present study, professional congruence is understood as the coordinated manifestation of the teacher's internal position, emotional state, verbal communication, non-verbal behavior, and pedagogical decision-making. Such coordination is especially important in situations involving conflict, uncertainty, public speaking, assessment, teamwork, or emotional pressure. When these elements are inconsistent, students may perceive the teacher's communication as artificial or contradictory; when they are aligned, conditions for trust, clarity, and constructive interaction are strengthened.

The original article on which this revised version is based emphasized the role of the project-based approach in developing congruence and reported improvements in

communicative, emotional, behavioral, and reflective indicators. The present version shifts the focus from the general effectiveness of project-based learning to the design of an integrative pedagogical model that organizes congruence development as a staged professional formation process.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate the structure of professional congruence in future teachers and to describe an integrative project-based model for its development through diagnostic, practice-oriented, reflective, and evaluative activities.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical interpretation of congruence is closely associated with the humanistic tradition. Rogers [1, 2] described congruence as correspondence between inner experience, self-perception, and outward expression, linking it with sincerity and constructive interpersonal relations. For teacher education, this perspective is significant because pedagogical communication requires not only technically correct speech but also credibility, openness, and consistency of professional behavior.

The broader psychological foundations of congruent professional behavior are connected with emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and personal development. Goleman [6] emphasized the role of recognizing and regulating emotions in effective interpersonal interaction, while Maslow [14] considered personal growth and self-actualization central to mature functioning. These perspectives make it possible to interpret teacher congruence not as a single communication skill but as a multidimensional competence involving emotional awareness, behavioral regulation, and reflective self-understanding.

The experiential and activity-based foundations of the proposed model are related to Dewey's concept of

learning through experience [7]. Project-based learning creates situations in which learners must define a problem, distribute responsibilities, make decisions, present outcomes, justify their position, and evaluate their own contribution. The works cited in the source article on project-based and reflective learning [9, 10, 12] support the use of such activities for developing communication, independence, reflection, and professional action.

National pedagogical sources included in the original article also connect teacher professionalism with pedagogical mastery, communicative culture, reflective competence, and project technologies [11–13]. Taken together, the reviewed approaches suggest that congruence development should combine psychological, communicative, competency-based, reflective, and activity-oriented foundations rather than rely on a single method.

3. Methods

The study uses an integrative methodological framework combining humanistic psychology, competency-based education, learner-centered pedagogy, project-based learning, reflective pedagogy, and emotional-intelligence theory. The methodological logic is organized around four components of professional congruence: communicative congruence, emotional-regulatory congruence, behavioral congruence, and reflective congruence.

The source study employed observation, questionnaires and reflective surveys, project tasks, pedagogical case studies, role-playing activities, reflective journals, psychological training, and video analysis. In the revised model, these methods are not treated as an undifferentiated set; instead, each is assigned a specific function within a staged developmental process.

Stage	Core activity	Primary function	Expected development
1. Diagnostic	Observation, questionnaires, self-assessment	Identify initial strengths and inconsistencies	Baseline profile of professional congruence
2. Problem-project	Pedagogical cases and project tasks	Place students in authentic decision-making situations	Communicative and behavioral coordination
3. Interactive practice	Role-play, teamwork, presentation	Practice emotional and interpersonal responses	Self-regulation, empathy, communicative confidence

Stage	Core activity	Primary function	Expected development
4. Reflective correction	Reflective journal and video analysis	Compare intention, speech, emotion, and behavior	Self-awareness and behavioral correction
5. Integrative assessment	Project defense and criterion-based evaluation	Assess transfer to professional action	Stable professional congruence and reflective autonomy

The staged organization allows diagnostic methods to establish the initial state, project and interactive methods to create developmental situations, and reflective methods to transform experience into conscious professional learning. This sequence also makes it possible to assess congruence as a dynamic competence rather than as a fixed personality trait.

4. Results and Discussion

The experimental findings reported in the source article indicate positive dynamics across the principal components of congruence. Communicative congruence increased by 32–38%, emotional regulation skills improved by 27–35%, behavioral coherence and communicative confidence increased by 30–40%, and reflective analysis skills increased by up to 40%. The source also reports statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups using a t-test ($p < 0.05$). These numerical results are retained here as reported data; the source document does not provide the underlying sample size, raw dataset, test statistic, or full statistical table, so they should not be interpreted beyond the evidence presented in the original study.

From a pedagogical perspective, the most important implication of these results is the interconnected nature of the observed changes. Improved communication cannot be separated completely from emotional regulation, because public speaking, conflict resolution, and project defense require the student to regulate emotional reactions while maintaining a coherent professional position. Similarly, reflective analysis supports behavioral congruence by enabling future teachers to compare their intended message with their actual verbal and non-verbal behavior.

Project tasks are particularly relevant at the developmental stage because they reproduce the complexity of professional activity. A student must negotiate with peers, defend decisions, respond to questions, manage disagreement, and assume responsibility for a shared result. These conditions make

internal–external inconsistencies visible and provide opportunities for correction. Role-playing and case studies further strengthen this process by introducing emotionally and ethically complex pedagogical situations.

Video analysis and reflective journals serve a different but complementary function. They enable students to observe discrepancies that may remain unnoticed during immediate interaction—for example, a mismatch between verbal confidence and non-verbal hesitation, or between a declared pedagogical position and an emotional reaction. Reflection therefore acts as a mechanism linking experience with conscious professional change.

The proposed model suggests that congruence formation is most effective when development proceeds from diagnosis to action, from action to reflection, and from reflection to repeated professional practice. This distinguishes the model from approaches in which project-based learning is used only as an instructional technique. Here, the project becomes a structured environment for coordinating personal position, communication, emotion, behavior, and professional responsibility.

Scientific Novelty and Practical Significance

The scientific novelty of the revised approach lies in conceptualizing professional congruence as a four-component integrative competence and organizing its development through a five-stage project-based pedagogical model. The model specifies the functional role of diagnostic, project, interactive, reflective, and assessment methods and explains how they can be combined to move students from awareness of incongruence toward more stable professional self-regulation and authentic pedagogical behavior.

The practical significance of the model is associated with its possible integration into teacher-education courses, pedagogical practice, professional communication

modules, and project-based training. It may also provide a framework for designing assessment criteria that consider not only the final project product but also the consistency of communication, emotional regulation, behavior, reflection, and professional decision-making during the learning process.

5. Conclusion

Professional congruence should be developed as an integrative competence rather than reduced to a single psychological characteristic or communication technique. Its formation requires the coordinated development of communicative coherence, emotional self-regulation, behavioral consistency, and reflective awareness. The project-based approach offers a suitable environment for this purpose because it places future teachers in authentic or simulated professional situations in which these components must operate simultaneously.

The proposed five-stage model—diagnosis, problem-project activity, interactive practice, reflective correction, and integrative assessment—systematizes the methods described in the source study and gives them a clearer developmental sequence. The reported experimental dynamics support the potential effectiveness of this approach, while the absence of detailed sample and statistical information in the source document indicates that future publications should present the experimental design, participant characteristics, measurement instruments, and statistical procedures more fully. Further research may test the model across different teacher-training specializations and examine the long-term stability of professional congruence during pedagogical practice.

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