Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională
ISSN: 2066-7329 | e-ISSN: 2067-9270
Covered in: Web of Science (WOS); EBSCO; ERIH+; Google Scholar; Index Copernicus; Ideas RePeC; Econpapers; Socionet; CEEOL; Ulrich ProQuest; Cabell, Journalseek; Scipio; Philpapers; SHERPA/RoMEO repositories; KVK; WorldCat; CrossRef; CrossCheck

2020, Volume 12, Issue 3, pages: 388-403 | https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/12.3/327

Social Competency: the After-Degree Development

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Abstract: The system of graduate teacher education is intended to respond promptly to the most pressing problems of society, whose relevance increases due to teachers' "ageing" and professional burnout, as well as the reluctance of most university graduates to practice their profession. The research aims to justify and experimentally verify the theoretical and methodological principles of developing social competency in teachers in the system of graduate teacher education. The control group included 116 teachers and the experimental group – 65 teachers. The following research methods were used: pedagogical observation, pedagogical experiment, questionnaires, tests, self-analysis and self-assessment. The formative stage of the pedagogical experiment has enabled a complex prolonged (five-year) development of social competency in primary school teachers in formal, non-formal and informal education. A comparative analysis of data at the ascertaining and control stages shows a significant positive dynamics in the levels of social competency in primary school teachers in the experimental group (a high level – 26.9% at the beginning of the experiment and 64.5% at the end of the experiment; a sufficient level – 39.9% and 25.3%, respectively; an average level – 21.2% and 8.9%, respectively; a low level – 12% and 1.3%, respectively). The developed scientific and technological system of complex prolonged development of social competency in primary school teachers in graduate teacher education is effective and can be promoted.

Keywords: *prolonged development, course and in-between course period, media information support, innovative environment, teacher motivation, social information, students' self-development.*

How to cite: Varetska, O, M., Babko, T, M., Babkova, O, O., & Khaustova, O, T. (2020). Social Competency: the After-Degree Development. *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională, 12*(3), 388-403. https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/12.3/327

1. Introduction

Society increases the requirements for teachers' social and professional development, competencies and abilities to comprehend the essence of social processes, build strategies for interaction with other people, choose ways to achieve goals in social reality, anticipate the consequences of their activities, respond flexibly, provide socio-pedagogical support to socialization and develop key and subject-specific competencies of primary school teachers, among which social competency plays a significant role.

The system of graduate teacher education is intended to respond promptly to the most pressing problems of society, whose relevance increases due to teachers' "ageing" (the number of teachers with more than 20 years of working experience and retirees increased on average from 40% in 2000 to 76% in early 2015)), their professional burnout, as well as the reluctance of most university graduates to practice their profession.

The existing practice of advanced training, its content and forms are mainly aimed at updating subject-specific knowledge, which does not contribute to solving the problem of developing social competency in teachers. During a five-year in-between course period, they constantly find themselves in ambiguous socio-professional situations. Therefore, it is essential to shorten this period, provide teachers with the opportunity to contribute to socially-oriented information, create conditions for positive changes, maintain and restore social health and further education, develop social competency, which should take place in a comprehensive prolonged manner. There is a need for new research and methodological support of such development.

This paper theoretically analyzes the coverage of the problem of developing social competency in primary school teachers, in the philosophical, research-and-methodological, psycho-pedagogical and acmeological literature. It finds that this particular problem has been in focus since ancient times (Bekhterev, 1990; Makarenko, 2014; Mamontov, 1924; Piskunov, 1971; Radul et al., 2010) and has been reflecting the existing social system. Also, it can be associated with lifelong learning, teachers' grasp of social roles, ability to build interpersonal relationships, respond flexibly to social changes and change accordingly, development of skills in using resources of the social environment, acquisition of competency in civil, legal, economic relations, the right to freedom of conscious choice that ensures adequate responsibility to oneself and society.

Those researchers who study graduate education often deal with the problem of developing of professional (Saiuk, 2007), methodical (Ivashnova, 2010), informational (Nikulochkina, 2009), legal (Oliinyk, 2008), informational-and-technological (Chernikova, (2012), economic (Shpak, 2001)) and other competencies. However, the problem of developing social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education has not been sufficiently disclosed yet. Such a situation does not meet the requirements of the present and does not reflect it holistically. Therefore, there is a need to discover effective ways to solve this problem, which will make it possible to justify the theoretical basis for updating graduate education.

The research aims to justify and experimentally verify the theoretical and methodological principles of developing social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education.

2. Material and methods

The methodology for developing social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education consists of the following three stages: the analytical-ascertaining-searching stage, the experimental stage and the summarizing stage. Relevant methods were selected for each stage to solve certain research objectives taking into account developmental, historical, terminological and systemic-and-structural principles. The time of their application was determined based on the complexity of solving specific problems (their number varies at each stage).

The study was conducted between 2014 and 2020 and covered three stages of pedagogical research.

The analytical-ascertaining-searching stage (2014) involved collecting and studying literary sources on advanced teaching experience, analyzing teaching experience in the system of graduate teacher education, justifying works on the problem of developing social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education due to analysis and synthesis of bibliographic sources, establishing links between theory and practice and identifying internal and external contradictions within the problem under study.

This stage employed such methods of theoretical research as analysis, synthesis, classification, abstraction, comparison, generalization, induction and deduction to study and generalize pedagogical, psychological, sociological, historical works of Ukrainian and international researchers, regulatory documents, laws, concepts, periodicals, reference books on pedagogy,

psychology and social pedagogy, some teaching methodologies reflecting the scientific theme and comprehend the scope of the problem under study, determine its unresolved aspects, formulate the priorities of graduate teacher education and highlight the areas requiring a more detailed study and the ways of the problem.

The axiomatic method was used to construct new scientific provisions; the hypothetical method – to propose a research hypothesis, which is that the full-fledged development of social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education takes place with pedagogical support in the context of practice-oriented activities with the aim of solving vital social problems and implementing socially significant projects on a diagnostic basis.

The following aspects can reinforce such conditions: a scientifically justified concept and a structural-and-functional model of complex prolonged development of social competency in primary school teachers in graduate education; a holistic system of theoretical and methodological support of such development at all levels of its implementation (theoretical, methodological and practical); the priority of developing social competency in primary school teachers due to making educational information and practical tasks more socially oriented; the focus of graduate education on the development of social intelligence, qualities, experience, personal growth, restoration of social health, inclusion in social and creative activities; a purposeful development of needs for social reinforcement of the educational process, as well as the subject-subject interaction.

The experimental stage (2015–2019) made it possible to determine the research methodology, organize pedagogical observations and the pedagogical experiment (ascertaining, formative and control stages), develop the structural-functional model of complex prolonged development of social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education based on the use of certain pedagogical measures, conceptual and methodological approaches, didactic principles, methods, organizational forms, kinds and types of quality assurance of this process, as well as on the implementation of relevant organizational and pedagogical conditions and research and methodological support of this process.

This stage involved selecting research methods, elaborating criteria and levels for assessing the obtained results, implementing working programmes and experimental research methodology in the context of which the system of pedagogical measures, conceptual and methodological approaches, didactic principles, methods, organizational forms, kinds and types of quality assurance of the process of developing social competency in

primary schools teachers in the system of graduate teacher education and relevant organizational and pedagogical conditions was scientifically justified. Besides, it employed the following empirical research methods: pedagogical observation, pedagogical experiment, questionnaires, tests, expert assessment (expert survey), self-analysis and self-assessment.

The effectiveness from the implementation of the elements of the scientific and technological system of complex prolonged development of social competency in primary school teachers in graduate teacher education was experimentally verified at the premises of six regional institutes for graduate teacher education (Zaporizhzhia, Khmelnytskyi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava). The activities of the experimental group were supported by such three educational institutions as Zaporizhzhia Regional Institute for Graduate Teacher Education of Zaporizhzhia Regional Council, Dnipropetrovsk Regional Institute for Graduate Teacher Education, Odesa Secondary School No 18 (levels I-III), Odesa Specialized School No 40 (levels I-III) of Odesa city council of Odesa region. The control and experimental groups (CG and EG) were formed. In the CG, the respondents studied based on the standard programme of advanced training of primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education, without developing social competency. The EG respondents studied based on the author's experimental programme of advanced training, which implied developing such competency. The CG included 116 individuals who had previously participated in the ascertaining stage and expressed a desire to continue it. At the same time, the EG included 65 teachers.

The experiment followed certain ethical rules. First of all, all ethical requirements were considered before conducting the experiment. After that, the experimenters obtained the consent of the ethics committees of the above-mentioned educational institutions. Respondents were then informed about the goals and objectives of the experiment. They were also informed that the participation in the experiment was voluntary and they were entitled to withdraw from it at any time.

The summarizing stage (2020) described the organization and research methods, processed the obtained results with the help of mathematical and statistical methods, analyzed the effectiveness of the system of measures aimed at developing social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education (solving the problem under study and eliminating internal and external contradictions), presented materials and results of research work and formulated conclusions and scientific proposals on the research topic.

This stage outlines the ways of solving such organizational and

pedagogical tasks as presenting the research organization and methods (the course of the experiment); processing research results mathematically and statistically (processing the actual research material and evaluation of its results, supplementing the qualitative research results with quantitative ones); analyzing (synthesis, comparison, generalization, induction, deduction) the effectiveness of the proposed system of pedagogical measures aimed at developing social competency in primary school teachers in graduate education (solving the problem under study, eliminating internal and external contradictions), presenting research materials and results; summarizing.

Each stage included solving theoretical and methodological, research and experimental problems using scientific methods which characterize the components of social competency and serve as a measuring tool for assessing its level.

There are three groups of organizational and pedagogical conditions for developing social competency in primary school teachers in graduate teacher education. The first group ensures the development of social competency in the participants in the educational process in graduate teacher education as a process (a high level of pedagogical skills of university teachers in teaching and developing social competency in students, as well as students' readiness for continuing development and self-development within educational activities of the course and in-between course periods and media information support of the educational process in graduate teacher education). media information support of the postgraduate pedagogical process). The second group is aimed at improving the educational process in institutes for graduate teacher education, which combines material, technical and methodical support for developing social competency in primary school teachers during the course and in-between course periods; providing university teachers with the opportunity to constantly update their knowledge and expand their competencies at their workplace and in other institutions; ensuring the continuity of social development; creating an innovative environment taking into account the peculiarities of the region; positive motivation of the participants in the educational process in graduate teacher education. The third group helps to establish personal interaction between the participants in the educational process, taking into account the needs and boosting teachers' motivation towards developing their and primary school pupils' social competency; teaching them to use technologies to process social information by types of learning, knowledge and skills of social and professional self-development during the course and in-between course periods; developing their capacity for socially oriented innovative activity and ability to acquire social experience of pedagogical activity in the

innovative environment; assisting them in mastering the methods of social reinforcement of subject-specific knowledge, applying technologies for developing social competency in primary school pupils and the methods, means and technologies of social development (according to learning style and individual needs); creating comfortable psychological working conditions based on spiritual interaction, social partnership, co-creation, comfortable and favourable reflective environment for ensuring self-development.

The components of the in-between course period included research and pedagogical support of teachers in developing their social competency and consolidating their theoretical knowledge in practice by enrolling in specialized courses; participating in seminars, training sessions, creative groups; counselling in the district counselling centre (full-time, part-time and online); engaging in self-study.

Any technology can be significantly reinforced by the presence of its methodological framework including licensed programmes of courses, specialized courses, training sessions and scientific and methodical complexes, educational and methodical materials of problem-based seminars, creative groups, educational and scientific-and-methodical textbooks, lecture notes and presentations, diagnostic tools.

3. Results

The analyzed and systematized materials of the ascertaining pedagogical experiment make it possible to identify the real state (input results) of the development of social competency in primary school teachers in control and experimental groups (CG and EG). The input results were collected using tests, questionnaires, expert assessment, self-analysis and self-assessment and the arithmetic mean, its error and quadratic deviation were determined. Based on this, Student's t-test was calculated according to the generally accepted formula for independent samples – CG and EG. It has made it possible to establish the interdependence between the arithmetic means in CG and EG. In the found value of the t-test did not exceed the limit value (according to the results of the tables), the hypothesis about the equality of the initial results was confirmed. If the found value of the criterion exceeded the table one, the null hypothesis about the equality of the two arithmetic means of CG and EG was rejected, and the difference was considered statistically significant at the level of significance a = 0.05. According to the six components of social competency (motivation and values, cognition, activities, operations, personality and professionalism,

reflection), these groups turned out to be homogeneous (t-found (1.32) < t-table (1.96); P> 0.05), which gave grounds to continue the pedagogical experiment. The results obtained at this stage have become the basis for determining the content of the formative stage of the pedagogical experiment. They suggest that the development of various components of primary school teachers' social competency is uneven. The lowest results by levels were obtained in terms of such components as cognition and personality and professionalism, whose development requires special attention in the system of graduate teacher education (see Table 1).

Table 1

The summarized level-related results of the development of primary school teachers' social competency in terms of its six-component structure at the ascertaining stage of the pedagogical experiment (%)

Levels	High		Sufficient		Average		Low	
Group	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG
Motivation and values	45.5	45.4	51.9	47.7	2.6	6.9	-	-
Cognition	-	3.1	8.6	6.2	46.2	44.6	45.2	46.1
Activities	51.1	56.4	44.1	38	4.8	5.6	-	-
Operations	22.3	24.6	61.3	61.6	13.3	12.1	3.1	1.7
Personality and professionalism	3.5	3.1	16.8	21	60.6	54.9	19.1	21
Reflection	31.8	29	57.2	65	11	3	-	3
The summarized results	25.7	26.9	40	39.9	23.1	21.2	11.2	12

The formative stage of the pedagogical experiment in EG involved observations on the development of primary school teachers' social competency in the educational process in graduate teacher education under specially created and controlled organizational and pedagogical conditions. It has made it possible to establish the dependence between the developed and theoretically justified system of pedagogical measures aimed at developing primary school teachers' social competency in the system of graduate teacher education and the result of the pedagogical impact.

The control stage of the pedagogical experiment in CG (116 teachers) and EG (65 teachers) (a total of 181 teachers) has made it possible to prove the effectiveness of the impact of relevant pedagogical factors on the development of social competency in primary school teachers. The comparison of the arithmetic means of development of primary school teachers' social competency in CG and EG (according to the calculations of

Student's t-test) proves the effectiveness of pedagogical measures aimed at developing social competency in primary school teacher introduced in the system of graduate teacher education. Based on the assessment of the obtained results, the development levels (high, sufficient, average, low) of primary school teachers' social competency have been identified. Thus, social competency of primary school teachers is a complex multidimensional and multi-component phenomenon.

Relevant diagnostic methods were used to realize the goals and objectives of the ascertaining and control stages of the pedagogical experiment and verify the research hypothesis. They are as follows: methods for assessing primary school teachers' capacity for social development (Volkova, 2011) – a values-based component of the motivation and values component); Mitina's test for determining the level of empathic tendencies (2005) – the first (emotional) component of the personality and professionalism component (Mitina, 2005); Rogov's method for assessing professional orientations of the teacher's personality (1998) – the second (professional) component of the personality and professionalism component (Rogov, 1998); the authors' questionnaire on the motives of social behaviour of primary school teachers" (the motivation and values component), test on socio-psychological and socio-pedagogical knowledge of primary school teachers (the cognition component), questionnaire on the difficulties of primary school teachers in organizing the socially oriented educational process (the first (organizational) component of the activities component), questionnaires on social competency of primary school teachers in the "child – teacher, child – child system and social competency of primary school teachers in the family – child system (the second and third (practical) components of the activities component), questionnaire on the primary school teachers' ability to solve social problems and tasks of children and teaching staff in educational institutions (the first component of the operations component), questionnaire on expert assessment of the primary school teachers' ability to solve social problems and tasks of children and teaching staff in educational institutions (the operations component), questionnaire on self-analysis of teachers' readiness to increase the level of social competency in schools (the reflection component).

The summarized level-related results of the development of primary school teachers' social competency in terms of its six-component structure at the control stage of the pedagogical experiment are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *The summarized level-related results of the development of primary school teachers' social competency in terms of its six-component structure at the control stage of the pedagogical experiment (%)*

Levels	High		Sufficient		Average		Low	
Group	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG
Motivation and values	44.6	58.5	55.4	40.8	-	0.7	-	-
Cognition	9.4	84.5	8.5	12.4	49.4	3.1	32.7	-
Activities	58.6	80	41.1	20	0.3	-	-	-
Operations	24.1	73.8	68.6	26.2	7.3	-	-	-
Personality and professionalism	4.6	10.3	22	32.2	59.5	49.8	13.9	7.7
Reflection	39.7	80	58.9	20	3.4	-	-	-
The summarized results	30.2	64.5	42.4	25.3	19.9	8.9	7.8	1.3

According to all the components of primary school teachers' social competency, the arithmetic mean of $\overline{X}_{CG}$ differs significantly from that of $\overline{X}_{EG}$ (t-found (2.71)> t-table (1.96); P>0.05), which indicates significant changes taking place during the formative stage of the pedagogical experiment.

The most promising results are characteristic of such components as operations (t-found = 4.84), cognition (t- found = 4.08), reflection (t- found = 4.07) and activities (t- found = 3.23). However, all of them show positive changes (in particular, the personality and professionalism component – t-found = 2.51; the motivation and values component – t-found = 2.37).

A comparison of the initial and final results of the research based on the levels of primary school teachers' social competency in CG and EG (see Table 3) proves their positive dynamics in EG (a high level – 26.9% at the beginning of the experiment and 64, 5% at the end of the experiment; a sufficient level– 39.9% and 25.3%, respectively; an average level – 21.2% and 8.9%, respectively; a low level – 12% and 1.3%, respectively) and only some improvements in CG (a high level – 25.7% at the beginning of the experiment and 30.2% at the end of the experiment; a sufficient level – 40% and 42.4%, respectively; an average level – 23.1% and 19.9%, respectively; a low level – 11.2% and 7.7%, respectively). Thus, the developed scientific and technological system of complex prolonged development of social competence of teachers in postgraduate pedagogical education is effective and can be offered for dissemination. Thus, the developed scientific and

technological system of complex prolonged development of social competency in primary school teachers in graduate teacher education is effective and can be promoted.

Table 3. *The dynamics of development levels of future primary school teachers' social competency during the pedagogical experiment (%)*

Levels	The ascertaining stage of the pedagogical experiment		The control stage of the pedagogical experiment	
	CG (initial results)	EG (initial results)	CG (final results)	EG (final results)
High	25.7	26.9	30.2	64.5
Sufficient	40	39.9	42.4	25.3
Average	23.1	21.2	19.9	8.9
Low	11.2	12	7.8	1.3

Discussion

Despite the dynamic changes in the structure and content of Ukraine's education system and its transition to the competency-based assessment of learning outcomes, scholars have only recently focused their research on developing the system of criteria and tools for diagnosing teachers' competencies (Korolov, 2014, Levshyn, 2014), Luhovyi, 2014; Sliusarenko, 2009). Although researchers use relevant methods for identifying the level of social competency in primary school teachers in graduate teacher education, there is no diagnostic system of its assessment. The scientific and pedagogical literature presents diagnostic methods selected and applied in practice depending on the interpretation of the very content of social competency and its components, which does not take into account either the features of socio-pedagogical and socio-psychological activities of primary school teachers or the specifics of advanced training in graduate teacher education. Therefore, the development of primary school teachers' social competency in the system of graduate teacher education is monitored based on scientific papers dealing with the development of university teachers' competencies, secondary school teachers' social competency, subject teachers' competencies during their higher education study, as well as the development of their professional competence, within which social competency is considered as one of its components, including in graduate education.

The scientific value of the obtained results lies in the fact that *for the first time*:

– the conceptual principles of developing social competency in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education, taking into account the features of their social and professional activities and

educational and social aspirations under the conditions of constant modernization and transformation of the educational environment, have been formulated;

– the structure of primary school teachers' social competency, which is represented by such components as motivation and values, cognition, activities, operations, personality and professionalism, reflection, has been specified and their content has been disclosed;

– the criteria, indicators and levels of development of primary school teachers' social competency in the system of graduate teacher education, taking into account the peculiarities of their socio-professional activities, have been determined;

– the structural-and-functional model of complex prolonged development of primary school teachers' social competency in the system of graduate teacher education as a dynamic process of moving from the possible to the real, from yesterday's self to today's self and future's self, reflecting the unity of four stages (motivational and values-based, organizational and technological, personal and professional, reflective and creative) has been proposed and experimentally verified;

– the scientific and technological system of complex prolonged development of primary school teachers' social competency in graduate teacher education, which includes conceptual approaches (competency-based, personality-oriented, activity-oriented, andragogical, systemic), the structural-and-functional model, the research and methodological support and the organizational and pedagogical conditions for such development, have been elaborated and implemented in the educational process of graduate teacher education;

– the research and methodological support of complex prolonged development of primary school teachers' social competency in the system of graduate teacher education, which contains six components, has been improved and its effectiveness has been experimentally verified;

– the groups of the organizational and pedagogical conditions for complex prolonged development of primary school teachers' social competency in the system of graduate teacher education, which determine the effectiveness of socio-professional training (developing social competency in all participants in the educational process in graduate teacher education; improving the educational process in institutes for graduate teacher education; ensuring personal interaction between the subjects in the educational process) have been enhanced;

– the functions of primary school teachers' social competency (information-and-applied, adaptive, socializing, value-oriented, prognostic, behavioural-and-activity-related, status- and role-related, reflective), taking into account the features of their social-professional activities and social requirements, have been clarified;

– the organizational and pedagogical principles and the content of graduate teachers education in terms of its modernization and reinforcement with the social component, the involvement of socio-cultural environment, constant research and methodological support of teachers during the course and in-between course periods (at the level of formal, non-formal, informal education), based on the socio-cultural experience of teachers, mastering new social roles in the professional and socio-cultural environment, highlighting the restoration of their social health and prevention of professional burnout, focusing on the development of social competency in primary school pupils, have been elaborated;

– the trends in the creation of a favourable environment in institutes for graduate teacher education to develop social competency in primary school teachers and restore their social health (spiritual interaction, socio-psychological training, psychological support) have been justified;

– scientific provisions on the organization of professional teacher training in the system of graduate teacher education as a complex and prolonged socially-oriented process, taking into account both educational and social needs of teachers and social requirements, have been further developed.

The practical value of the obtained results implies that the theory and methods of professional education will be reinforced with an effective theoretical and methodological concept of complex and prolonged development of social competence in primary school teachers in the system of graduate teacher education, which can become the basis for developing theoretical and methodological principles, concepts and technologies of variable degree-based training of future teachers, as well as graduate education of teachers of other categories.

An online library for extracurricular activities and self-development of teachers during the in-between course period has been created on the ZapoViki portal of Zaporizhzhia Regional Institute for Graduate Teacher Education of Zaporizhzhia Regional Council.

4. Conclusions

The results of the pedagogical experiment prove the effectiveness of the scientific and technological system for developing social competency in

primary school teachers in graduate teacher education, based on certain conceptual approaches of the research (competency-based, personality-oriented, activity-oriented, andragogical, systemic); the groups of organizational and pedagogical conditions (developing social competency in all participants in the educational process in graduate teacher education; improving the educational process in institutes for graduate teacher education; ensuring personal interaction between the subjects in the educational process); the application of innovative and interactive technologies which stimulate personal development, emotional recovery, psychological adjustment, establishment of partnerships, diversification of social roles, adequate perception of information, reinforcement of educational material with the social component; the complex and prolonged research and methodological support in formal, non-formal and informal education.

The consideration of the main scientific results obtained allows offering some practical recommendations at the following levels:

at the organizational and methodical level – to improve practical training, restore social health, introduce specialized courses, optional courses, special socio-psychological training for all students; to work on determining the features of research and methodological support of complex and prolonged development of social competency within the family – preschool – school – out-of-school learning – higher education system and train future primary school teachers at universities;

at the organizational and administrative level – to develop a curriculum for developing social competency in future primary school teachers together with relevant government agencies and higher education institutions;

at the practical level – to recommend institutes for graduate teacher education to take into account scientifically justified and practically verified innovative approaches to developing social competency in primary school teachers and assessing its effectiveness when elaborating regulatory documents; to reinforce plans and the content of teachers' course training with the social component; to implement the developed algorithm of monitoring research on such process.

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