



## **Modelling modern qualification upgrade courses for teachers-philologists: from demand to implementation**







### **Elaboración de cursos modernos de actualización de calificaciones para profesores-filólogos: de la demanda a su implementación**

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### **Resumen**

El siguiente artículo tiene como objetivo investigar la posibilidad de introducir los cursos de actualización de calificaciones para profesores-filólogos ofreciéndoles trayectorias de desarrollo orientadas a la práctica individual en función de su nivel de ambición y evaluación de su desempeño por expertos independientes. En nuestra investigación, nos basamos en el enfoque de actividad del sistema enriquecido con el enfoque orientado a la personalidad para la formación de profesores de lengua y literatura. Metodológicamente, la investigación fue apoyada por varios métodos teóricos y empíricos que incluyen la observación pedagógica, el análisis, la síntesis y la abstracción. Este documento proporciona fundamento para la introducción en la práctica de diseño de cursos de actualización de calificaciones de un principio modular que asume el derecho de los profesores a elegir el contenido del curso. En la conclusión, se muestra que el curso de actualización de calificaciones consiste en un conjunto de materiales orientados a la práctica, que permitirán a los estudiantes planificar de forma independiente su contenido de aprendizaje mediante la selección de componentes individuales del programa. Los hallazgos del trabajo tienen un valor práctico para la modernización de la educación y para fortalecer la competitividad de un profesor-filólogo a través de los cursos de actualización de calificaciones.

**Palabras clave:** Competencia, actualización de calificación, potencial individual, programa modular, calidad de la educación.

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## Abstract

The article is aimed at researching the possibility of introducing the qualifications upgrade courses for teachers-philologists offering them individual practice-oriented development trajectories based on their level of ambition and evaluation of their performance by independent experts. In our research, we relied on the system-activity approach enriched with the personality-oriented approach to the training of language and literature teachers. Methodologically the research was supported by various theoretical and empirical methods including pedagogical observation, analysis, synthesis and abstracting. This paper provides substantiation for introduction in the design practice of qualifications upgrade courses of a modular principle assuming the right of teachers to choose the course content. In the conclusion, it is shown that the qualifications upgrade course consists of a set of practice-oriented materials, which will allow students to independently plan their learning content by selecting individual components of the program. The paper findings have a practical value for modernization of education and for strengthening the competitiveness of a teacher-philologist through the qualifications upgrade courses.

**Keywords:** competence, qualification upgrade, individual potential, modular program, quality of education.

## Introduction

The modern system for upgrading teacher qualifications is one of the cornerstones of Russian education and, in our opinion; it is full of plenty of nuances which make it rigid and cumbersome. Meanwhile, teaching is the field of activity, which requires not only continuous self-improvement and updating of knowledge and skills, but also search for new strategic ways to ensuring high academic results of students, and opportunities for further professional growth of a teacher. The digitalization has actualized the need to move to a new level of professional pedagogical activity, which should ensure the effectiveness of the educational process due to the teachers' possession of modern information and communication technologies (Gozalova, 2019).

Same, qualifications upgrade courses aim to improve the quality of teaching and education management by increasing the teachers' level of practice competency (Lee, Lim and Lai, 2020). Relevance, social and educational research value of the modern competence-based approach to the continuous improvement of knowledge in the subject area, the ability to design learning process in a modern educational institution in line with the technological requirements and strategic goals present the minimal threshold requirements that are placed today on the basic content of the qualifications upgrade courses for teachers. The design of the content of teacher development courses is based on the principles of professional and practical orientation, multidisciplinary, the application of a regional context (Tumasheva et al., 2020).

While bearing in mind that a modern teacher is expected to have a substantial pool of knowledge, skills and abilities, the organizers of courses for teachers should unleash the greatest individual potential of each Russian language and literature teacher, develop their competencies and introduce them to innovations. In view of the above, we would like to propose a new content

paradigm behind the qualifications upgrade courses for the literature and language teachers: a path from an individual demand to implementation, inter alia by resorting to the online content.

We realize that today modernization of education in Russia reached a new level as attested by the launch and implementation of the Russian Federation State Program “Development of Education” (2018), with one of its key priorities being to ensure access to “a free and ongoing upgrading of professional excellence for the workers engaged in the field of education by means of online training”. The materials proposed by us help to handle this challenging task, and we explain on an example how to design the content of modules seen as construction blocks of the program of qualifications upgrade courses for teachers-philologists.

Introduction of the system we propose, which offers a possibility to select the content of a program of qualifications upgrade courses, will be an adequate response to the urgent need for a personality-oriented strategy for professional development of a teacher, which not only will match the challenges of our times, but will also become a reinforcement needed by a teacher-philologist to reach their fullest educational potential, setting a strong foundation for each teacher’s competitiveness and success in this occupation.

Therefore, the main purpose of the qualifications upgrade courses we propose is to establish a mechanism for building an individual educational trajectory that would offer teachers-philologists a possibility to model the content of qualifications upgrade courses on their own by using the developed online content including a system of interrelated materials targeting certain professional competencies drawing upon multisubject role of Russian language and literature as an educational medium. In view of the above, we tackled the stated objectives as summarized below:

1. A new format has been offered for building and (or) improving the professional competencies of Russian language and literature teachers through a system of modular qualifications upgrade courses delivered online.
2. A basic model of open-education courses has been created based on the monitoring results collected by a team of researchers, as part of a system of special distance technologies for upgrading the qualifications of teachers-philologists.
3. Introduction of a new mechanism enabling students to model the content of qualifications upgrade courses on their own has opened the way for building individual educational trajectories with available online content arranged in a single system by course attendants combining the selected modules from different programs.
4. The developed methodological product has undergone partial testing, and a scientific discussion in the research community concerning the use of this product was started by means of publications in the scientific periodicals.

### ***Literature review***

Analysis of the established practice of qualifications upgrade for teachers of schools and universities working in the Philology field has led us to several conclusions:

- All courses existing today are designed following the principle of translation of knowledge corresponding to the major requirements placed on a teacher-philologist (such as federal state educational standards; professional standard “Teacher (Pedagogical activities in the field of preschool, primary general, basic general, secondary general education) (a nursery teacher, a school teacher)”);

- The idea of individualization in the system of qualifications upgrade is not new; scholars reflected on it back in 1990s and introduced some improvements in the early 2000s, it’s appropriate to mention here the works of Shalashova and Schevchenko (2015), Shukshina, et al. (2016), Kargin, Buyanova, and Sukhareva (2019), and Barsky (2019), but no specific mechanisms were offered for the professional training of this kind;

- A new concept for upgrading the qualifications has been under development since 2010. A spectrum of ideas is rather diverse: from taking into account the preferences of teachers and delivering lectures tailored to individual demands (Bezmaternykh and Tereschenko, 2018), help in overcoming the obstacles in profession (Shutenko et al., 2019; Grinko et al., 2015) to creation of a mobile tutor (Belova et al., 2019; Kashkareva et al., 2019; Yakunchev et al., 2019); and exploration of narrow aspects of professional problems, e.g. distance learning in academic research communications (Dneprovskaya and Skorikova, 2016) or the use of technologies for constructing word-formation models at a federal level (Zaitseva et al., 2019; Ilyina and Smirnov, 2019); promotion of supplementary educational (Voinova et al., 2018; Vinokurova et al., 2018; Vinokurova et al., 2019; Zhukova et al., 2019) and research (Chigisheva, 2015; Strielkowski and Chigisheva, 2018; Strielkowski and Chigisheva, 2019) services with the help of networking technologies.

Having thoroughly reviewed the materials, we are compelled to note that all proposed changes are concerned either only with the organizational form or the technologies in the learning process and its methodological support. However, no attention is paid to the aspect of content related to introduction of new text samples and proper methods for their study at school.

### **Methodology**

Within this qualitative study we propose a modular structure of qualifications upgrade courses that are universal and aimed to enhance teacher’s competencies by applying a personality-

oriented development strategy for professional advancement of a teacher that is why a central role belongs to the focus on the potential and self-development of each course attendee.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate a mechanism for building a qualifications upgrade course for teachers-philologists corresponding to the individual educational trajectory and offering a possibility to model the content of qualifications upgrade courses by using the developed online content including a system of interrelated materials targeting certain professional competencies of a teacher-philologist. Fulfillment of a stated purpose hinges on the below objectives:

- To describe the principle of creation of a modular system of qualifications upgrade courses for teachers-philologists;
- To demonstrate the content aspect of courses developed and tested by us;
- To assess the effectiveness of the system of professional advancement for teachers-philologists proposed by us.

For elaborating the materials, we used theoretical (analysis, synthesis, abstracting), and empirical (consolidation, pedagogical observation) methods of pedagogical research (Vodyasova et al., 2019; Zhindeeva et al., 2019), which helped us to build differential training based on a modular arrangement of the relevant content. The modular courses presented in this paper accommodate the personal demands for improvement of competencies of each course attendee in line with the recommendations from the course trainer based on the prior diagnostics of the current level of each course attendee.

## **Results**

A distinguishing feature of the presented qualifications upgrade course “Professional Advancement of a Teacher-Philologist” is the modelling of its content to support the individual educational trajectory of a modern teacher and to meet the teacher’s needs, and the materials included in the course will upgrade the qualifications and reinforce the competitiveness of course attendees in the modern educational space. Uniqueness of the proposed project is that a teacher may independently choose educational modules of the qualifications upgrade program, which units appear as the building blocks which course attendees may combine as they wish to get the content according to their needs.

The modules we propose (the first one with the theoretical content concerned with the novelties in the theory of Russian language, literature and most relevant issues of the modern Russian language and literature; the second one with a focus on technological aspects allowing to improve the skills in using different educational technologies, such as questing, a method of provocation, etc.; the third one dealing with the issues of design and meant to improve, for

example, the development of new assessment technique in literature in compliance with the Federal State Standards of Education of new generation, etc.) are practice-oriented, and their structure addresses the immediate needs of teachers as revealed by the questionnaire survey of the later. Thus, as evidenced by practice, three modules proposed to the philologists of theoretical, technological and research nature that were structured pursuant to an alternative approach help to embrace a substantial lot of various problems facing a teacher of Russian language and literature today.

We concentrated our efforts on integration of system-, activity- and personality-oriented approaches for training teachers-philologists, which makes the proposed project unique. By combining these approaches with varying degrees of dominance when one approach is complemented with the possibilities and advantages of other approaches, the above strategies are smoothly integrated and the task of higher effectiveness of education in the system of supplementary vocational education is addressed.

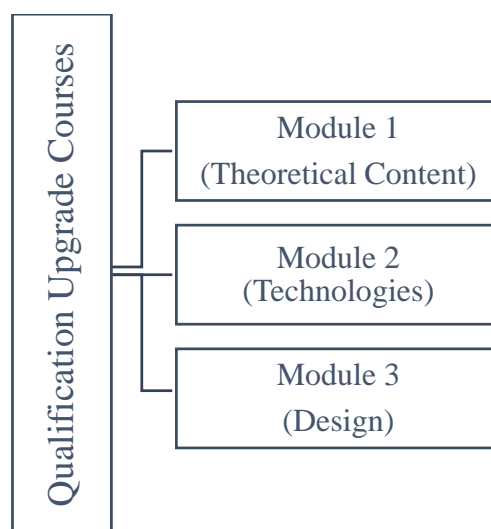
Earlier, we already published some modules proposed as construction blocks of the general program of the qualifications upgrade course, such as “Designing Educational and Methodological Materials in the Context of the Federal State Standards of Education of New Generation” (Zhindeeva, 2017), “Innovative Literature Teaching Technologies as a Basis for Implementing the Federal State Standards of Education” (Naumova, 2017), “Technologies for Developing Assessment Tools for Literature in Compliance with the Federal State Standards of Education of New Generation” (Serdobintseva, 2017), etc., the trial test of which has been run at the Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute named after M. E. Evseviev. The technology developed for qualifications upgrade courses is adaptive and could be upscaled substantially subject to the improvement and expansion of the base of study materials.

### **Discussion**

Given a high speed of changes in the society, the growing complexity of professional tasks, the need to embrace the innovation mindset, that the professional duty of each modern teacher is not only to ensure the transfer, storage, and use of knowledge, but also to broaden it, we strongly believe that fundamental to implementation of our project is ensuring higher flexibility of personal educational trajectories and wider possibilities of independent choice in the field of occupation, which would unlock the inner potential of each teacher and activate their inner motivation for the most efficient handling of professional tasks. This is consistent with the ideas expressed by Krasnova, and Anisimova (2013) and Ignatieva, and Tulupova (2018), who developed professional development courses for teachers of physics and the teachers of additional professional education physics teachers.

Since the program of each qualifications upgrade course represents a set of modules, the course attendant may independently design the content of training by selecting individual components of the course program, along with different approaches to historical-theoretical and methodological materials, going their way from choosing the disciplines to the formats of material presentation. However, here some limitations occur in relation to the choice and ability to do it by the attendants as well as the readiness of the teaching staff to such innovative practices. Both parties should be competent enough to meet each other's expectations.

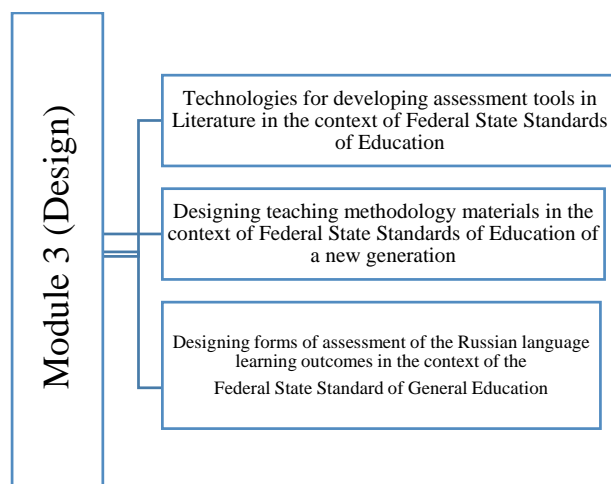
Berkeshchuk, et al. (2020) pointed out that in the context of distance learning for teachers-philologists, problems are caused by the study of new technologies related to speech practice, stylistics, and the creation of texts; the reason for this is the insufficient number of group and heuristic classes, work in pairs, the lack of sufficient speech practice of a high communicative and intellectual level. Thus, on the basis of the results of monitoring that exposed the urgent need to improve certain competencies which are crucial for a modern teacher-philologist to be effective and competent in teaching related to the Russian language as an educational medium, we developed a range of modules within the course program that are universal in their applicability. For better clarity, we made a chart illustrating how the qualifications upgrade courses for teachers-philologists may be constructed as part of the broader effort to facilitate the use of special distance learning technologies.



**Figure 1.** Mechanism for constructing the content of qualifications upgrade courses  
Source: compiled by authors.

So, each part of the qualifications upgrade course consists of a set of practice-oriented materials, which will allow students to independently plan their learning content by selecting individual components of the program, which, in turn, will lead to better customization of learning and activate inner reserves of each teacher using Russian language as an educational medium and having good knowledge of history and theory of literature. The number of modules and

submodules may also be chosen individually. Moreover, a course attendant is free to choose only one module (submodule), in which case the number of hours to study this single module will be increased accordingly. Each module, in turn, offers variable content. The chart below shows a particular example (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Structure of a qualifications upgrade course module  
Source: compiled by authors.

Therefore, each part of the qualifications upgrade course modelled by us consists of a set of practice-oriented materials, which will allow students to independently plan their learning content by selecting individual components of the program, which, in turn, will lead to better customization of learning and activate the inner reserves of each teacher using Russian language as an educational medium and having good knowledge of the history and the theory of literature. The number of modules and submodules may also be chosen individually.

Moreover, a course attendant is free to choose only one module (submodule). In this case, the number of hours to study the content of this module will be increased accordingly. The presented materials of the qualifications upgrade courses in the format as described above were tested at the Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute (presently known as the Mordovian State Pedagogical University named after M. E. Evseviev) in June-November 2020.

### Conclusion

A mechanism for building courses discussed herein provides vast possibilities for the course organizers to create such courses and for the trainees to select the module study options suiting them the best. With the help of such courses, their attendees learn how to plan, supplement, improve and assess the quality of their own education. Orientation towards personal choice with account of recommendations provided by the course organizers creates a broad field for



implementing the work anticipated by specification of the proposed training: a trainee chooses the modules first, and only after that, the most suitable technologies, methods and forms.

A modular structure of qualifications upgrade courses is the solution offered due to the program being addressed to the pedagogical workers, who are not only cognizant of rapid changes, interplay and integration of technologies into the traditional system of education, and their becoming the mainstay of education in general (especially when we talk about the distance learning), but are ready to embrace the new pedagogical realities. Keeping this in mind, we developed, described and put into practice a mechanism for building individual educational trajectories providing a practicing teacher-philologist a possibility to independently model the content of qualifications upgrade courses.

The modules that this study proposes are practice-oriented, and their structure addresses the immediate needs of teachers as revealed by the questionnaire survey of the later. The obtained results are convincing that the modular design of qualifications upgrade courses is the best possible reflection of personal preferences and targeted improvement of competencies of Russian language and literature teachers in the context of a new framework for assessing the teacher's performance in their job.

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