

## Formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning

Olga V. Galustyan<sup>1</sup>, Sofia D. Podgornaya<sup>1</sup>, Svetlana B. Seryakova<sup>2</sup>, Nailya N. Askhadullina<sup>3</sup>,  
Olga V. Khripunkova<sup>4</sup>, Jingwei Zhang<sup>1</sup>, Siqi Liu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Social Pedagogy, Southern Federal University, Rostov on Don, Russian Federation

<sup>2</sup>Department of Social Pedagogy and Psychology, Moscow Pedagogical State University, Moscow, Russian Federation

<sup>3</sup>Department of Pedagogy, Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University, Elabuga, Russian Federation

<sup>4</sup>Department of Preschool and Special Education, Yelets State University named after I. A. Bunin, Yelets, Russian Federation

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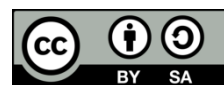
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### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the problem of formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning. Currently, there is a growing demand for professions in the field of social and pedagogical education. The number of people who need social and pedagogical assistance and support is growing every year. Social educators implement functions on social and pedagogical support for pupils within the process of their socialization, they organize educational activities within cooperation with children's and youth public associations, provide organizational and pedagogical support of the educational process. The professional basis of activity of social educators is professional communication with children and their families. The result of activity depends on social educators' communicative competence which is being revealed in interpersonal communication, interaction, and perception. The authors conclude that communication itself is impossible without collaboration. Collaborative learning is one of the types of students' educational activity which is aimed at acquiring theoretical knowledge and promoting intensive development of thinking. The presented paper reveals the process of experimental work of formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning. The results of experimental work of formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning in control and experimental groups reveal that in the experimental group the level of communicative competence of future social educators is higher than in the control group that proves the effectiveness of experimental work.

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### Corresponding Author:

Olga V. Galustyan  
Department of Social Pedagogy, Southern Federal University  
344006 Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation  
Email: olga.galustyan@gmail.com

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Modern education is a purposeful process of upbringing and training, which is a socially significant benefit and is carried out in the interests of family, society and the state. The main characteristics of education (volume, content, planned results), organizational and pedagogical conditions, forms of evaluation are contained in educational programs [1]–[4]. Various studies show [5]–[8] that educational sector is also being transformed in the context of the transformation of socio-economic, political, cultural, and other systems. That means that approaches to organization of educational process are changing, standards of

training and education are being improved, state policy is being updated, and new tasks are being set for employees of the educational system. It is important for teachers and educators to be able to respond to challenges of the external environment quickly, to adapt to them, to find non-standard solutions, and to apply to social and pedagogical methods and tools within these circumstances effectively. High-quality results are unthinkable without increasing the level of professional competence in the context of constant changes. Continuous professional and personal improvement should become a key area of social and pedagogical education.

Currently, there is a growing demand for professions in the field of social and pedagogical education. It should be noted that the number of people who need social and pedagogical assistance and support is growing every year. This need is also increasing due to geopolitical and social changes. This assistance can be provided primarily by social educators and family support specialists. As a result, we can talk about actuality and urgent need of training specialists for the social and pedagogical education system [9]–[12]. Social educators implement functions on social and pedagogical support for pupils within the process of their socialization, they organize educational activities within cooperation with children's and youth public associations, provide organizational and pedagogical support of the educational process for pupils, tutoring support for pupils. Social educators also help to different types of families, they provide social support to families with children, they develop rehabilitation programs based on the identification of family problems, they support with reintegration of a child and a family into society and involve the immediate environment to change the relationships between family members, improve the social and psychological situation in the family, and increase the responsibility of parents.

Thus, the professional basis of activity of social educators is professional communication with children and their families. The result of activity depends on social educators' communicative competence which is being revealed in interpersonal communication, interaction, and perception [13]–[17]. Now there are no studies on the problem of formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning. In general, collaborative learning in the practice of training social educators is not presented in scientific works. The novelty of the study is that the basis of the formation of communicative competence of future social educators is collaborative learning.

## 2. METHOD

The study is conducted based on the methods of theoretical analysis and generalization pedagogical scientific works devoted to problems of formation of communicative competence, professional training of future social educators, and collaborative learning. Theoretical provisions on the development of teaching strategies and organization of collaborative learning as a strategy for learning in partnership are updated. The main and the most effective method of formation of communicative competence of future social educators is collaborative learning. Collaborative learning acts as one of the components of educational activity and formation of communicative competence of social educators. Development of communicative competence of social educators occurs in the learning process through awareness and comprehension of the conditions of the activity, one's internal state as a result of the activity and interaction between students and teachers.

Today education pays primary attention to the development of individuals and their communicative competence. Analysis of works [18]–[21] reveals that collaborative learning is one of the types of students' educational activity which is aimed at acquiring theoretical knowledge and promoting intensive development of thinking. The pedagogical component of formation of communicative competence of future social educators is presented in the form of study and discovery of content of collaborative learning, which is accompanied by the teacher in accordance to the prescribed structure. This form of work promotes a student's responsibility for his/her own result, but students also should learn to interact with the other participants so that the result of the work is coordinated.

Collaborative learning makes up educational activity interconnected, and, therefore, the development of one component of educational activity leads to the development of another. Several studies [22]–[26] have suggested that the main role in collaborative learning is played by interest in learning. Collaborative learning within formation of communicative competence of future social educators can ensure full-fledged educational activity, since it orients the students directly to the process of solving content problems. Collaborative learning is a structure of interaction designed to facilitate the acquisition of a specific product through the joint work of students in groups. Collaborative learning takes place in a team with a clear division of work between the participants. The work of each team member contributes to the collective work.

The importance of collaborative learning within the educational process is obvious. Due to the fact that the conditions of the labor market are constantly changing, and it requires communicative competence of qualified social educators. This is evidenced by the need of qualified social educators in the social and cultural sphere [27]–[31]. Collaborative learning includes teaching students the ability to use existing

knowledge and skills to solve problems in real-life situations together, as well as mastering such skills as finding new or alternative ways to solve problems. Analysis of works [32]–[37] reveals that:

- Collaborative learning includes communication in cooperation, dialogic communication, that is, active participation of all parties in the learning process. The necessity of application of collaborative learning within formation of communicative competence is explained by the fact that the students' self-esteem undergoes changes. The priority opinion for students is the opinion of his/her peers, which means the need to build constructive types of interaction between the students.
- Favorable psychological climate in the classroom means a lot for collaborative learning. It largely depends on the level of group development, since collaborative learning within formation of communicative competence is characterized by the development of reflection through personal interaction. Collaborative learning within formation of communicative competence of future social educators develop one's own position through the events' essence, and self-esteem through the analysis of peers' opinions.

The state of the psychological climate in the team directly affects the effectiveness of collaborative activities of students. The features of favorable climate of collaborative learning are: i) trust in each other, ii) team cohesion, iii) emotional involvement, iv) mutual assistance, v) respectful attitude, vi) constructive criticism, vii) empathy, and viii) sincere participation in situations of success and failure. Authors [38]–[41] highlight the connection between formation of communicative competence and collaborative learning, believing that it is a way of social orientation of the individual in relation to education with multifaceted human activity.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Experimental research was conducted at Southern Federal University (Rostov-on-Don) and Moscow Pedagogical State University (Moscow) in 2023-2024. 125 students of 1st and 2nd year students of the specialty "social pedagogy" were involved in the study. The age of the students ranged from 22 to 24 years. The total number of students was 125 (62 participants were in the experimental group, control group included 63 participants). Education of future social educators in control group was realized according to the standard curriculum.

#### 3.1. The process of formation of communicative competence of future social educators

Formation of communicative competence of future social educators is an educational achievement that includes the culture of speech and rules of communication for specific situations, as well as the ability to formulate oral or written statements. Communication itself is impossible without collaboration; therefore, education and formation of communicative competence is one of the most important themes in modern education. Today, many researchers [42]–[44] emphasize the importance of studying communication characteristics that determine the organization of a person's interpersonal space and adaptation in the social environment.

We consider that communication skills and abilities are necessary for future social educators which are revealed in the adequate behavior in new social structures, knowledge of the culture of peoples and the rules of etiquette; upbringing (rule of decency), good manners, ability to use linguistic means, and to express oneself within the framework of profession of social educator.

Thus, communication is the leading component of collaborative learning, and it includes a set of various knowledge and skills that allow a student (future social educators) to participate in social processes consciously: i) knowledge of rules and norms of behavior; ii) knowledge of rules and norms of language; iii) ability to listen, to understand and to formulate one's thoughts; iv) ability to communicate in an unfamiliar environment; and v) ability to choose means of linguistic expression in appropriate situation.

Major role in the formation of communicative competence of future social educators is played by educational actions of collaborative learning. Teachers conducted collaborative learning of future social educators. Two types of collaborative learning within the formation of communicative competence of future social educators were distinguished. Their differences from each other consist in their focus within the educational process. The first one highlighted the performance of actions strictly according to educational plan, while the second one was focused on the action plan within collaborative task. Students focused their attention on the content of the actions performed repeatedly and analysis from the point of view of the required results, which constituted mutual assessment of skills of students, which were implemented through reflection during the process of working on collaborative task within educational activity. The interrelation of types of collaborative learning within the formation of communicative competence was determined by the need to develop a step-by-step algorithm or method of action, it was necessary to go through certain sequential steps in order to perform a certain action.

The goal of collaborative learning is to enhance the individual success of future social educators while focusing on the quality of interpersonal relationships in the proposed activity. This method promotes the acquisition of cognitive and social skills of future social educators, who gradually apply, appropriate, and

develop relevant practical skills during collaborative learning. In addition, cooperative learning supports future social educators in formation of communicative competence as the professional basis of their activity within professional communication with children and their families.

Collaborative learning within the formation of communicative competence of future social educators included:

- Learning of evaluating of educational situations (students' actions) from different points of view of all participants of the team.
- Explaining assessments of individual actions and phenomena of participants of the team.
- Comparing assessments with the assessments of the others and explaining their difference.
- Making one's own choice in the general system of values and to determine your own place.
- Acting in accordance with the chosen values and understanding the consequences of choice and actions.

The educational result of the individual work of future social educators in constructing his/her knowledge is supported by the activity of the group and the team. The student shares resources with the group, uses group work to learn. The structure of the activity is flexible and open, and the route of research and discovery is free. The teacher plays the role of a mediator in learning, while the group acts as a source of information, motivation, as a means of self-help and mutual support, and as a special place of interaction for collective construction of knowledge.

### 3.2. Realization of experimental work

The empirical study was conducted based on observation method. We identified the following problems that students faced while forming communicative competence of future social educators within collaborative learning within realization of experimental work in experimental group:

- Students were embarrassed to speak, afraid of making mistakes or being criticized.
- Students lacked information about the issues being discussed, lacked language and language tools.
- Students did not understand the task.
- While one student was speaking, others were silent and may be excluded from educational communication.
- Psychological discomfort. Students made mistakes, usually due to fear of criticism. If they made a mistake, they felt awkward. This happened because speech required freedom and courage in speaking in front of the audience.
- “Nothing to say” sometimes students had problems, they could not think, could not concentrate, could not express themselves.
- Students lacked of sufficient vocabulary or an unnatural environment for communication.
- Uneven participation of students. Some students spoke very well and dominated the group, while others listened and spoke very little.

Thus, we see that the mentioned above difficulties, that students faced, were the reason for the development of the communicative competence. We consider such structural elements of collaborative educational as activity motivation, features of goal setting (educational goal and objectives), planning of collaborative educational activity to achieve the set goal and the activity itself, reflection, formation of which was the part of the success of the educational process.

Experimental work included collaborative learning which revealed in collaborative project work of students according to the chosen topic. All the topics were connected with the future work of social educator and included:

- Objectives and role of extracurricular activities and additional education in upbringing and training.
- Rhetorical skills in the work of a social educator.
- Social educator in the system of modern social protection.
- Social and pedagogical work with children and teenagers during the summer period.
- Social leadership of teachers within additional education.
- Analysis of the process of formation of basic skills and competencies of effective leadership.
- Ethnic self-awareness and ethnic identity as factors of communication in education.
- Active learning methods and teacher-student collaboration.
- Volunteer movement as a mechanism for implementing social initiatives.
- Influence of mass media on the socialization of adolescent.
- Social and pedagogical work on preparing teenagers for a safe stay in virtual reality.
- Social and pedagogical conditions for correcting teenagers' self-esteem as a prevention of addictive behavior.
- Theatrical games as a means of aesthetic education of children.
- Summer recreation programs for children and pedagogical experience for their organization.
- Social networks as a tool for pedagogical interaction.

### 3.3. Outcomes

Now we present the results of the experiment. Eight experts of Southern Federal University having an academic degree of Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences and Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences took part in the experting work. Experts evaluated communicative competence of future social educators.

The expert assessment of communicative competence of future social educators was carried out according to criteria, which included knowledge and skills of methods for establishing contact, tact, flexibility, kindness, communicative literacy, and speech literacy. Criteria and characteristics of communicative competence of future social educators are reflected in Table 1. We carried out Z-standardization procedure after receiving expert assessments of determining the level intervals, which made it possible to designate the following levels. Assessment score is reflected in Table 2.

The results of practical implementation of formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning were carried out in the form of an analysis based on Likert scale. The results of assessment of communicative competence of future social educators at various stages of the experiment are revealed in Table 3. The results of experimental work of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning in control and experimental groups revealed that the level of communicative competence of future social educators in the experimental group is higher than at the control group that proves the effectiveness of experimental work.

Table 1. Criteria and characteristics of communicative competence of future social educators

Criterion	Characteristic
Knowledge and skills of methods for establishing contact	Conversation skills, active listening, ability to remove tension and communication barriers, mirroring, ability to establish eye contact
Tact	High level of communication culture, ability to establish emotional well-being at all stages of communication
Flexibility	Ability to make possible change in interaction tactics depending on situation, ability to communicate effectively without conflicts
Kindness	Ability to show good attitude, sympathy and respect towards the other people, readiness to support the other people
Communicative literacy	Knowledge of communication, ability to relate the rules to a specific situation, knowledge of pedagogy and psychology of communication
Speech literacy	Speech culture, language, knowledge of the logic and ethics of communication

Table 2. Assessment score

Level	Score (points)
Low level	0-5
Middle level	5-10
High level	11-15

Table 3. Expert assessment of formation of communicative competence of future social educators at various stages of the experiment

Level	Experimental group		Control group	
	Beginning (%)	End (%)	Beginning (%)	End (%)
Low level	41.9	3.2	39.7	36.5
Middle level	48.4	25.8	47.6	52.4
High level	9.7	71.0	12.7	11.1

## 4. CONCLUSION

The most important role in formation of communicative competence of future social educators is revealed by collaborative learning. Formation of skills motivates young people and helps to establish collaborative relationships. It also helps to develop cognitive activity, self-management, and cooperation. Formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning is a complex process of interaction between the students. We identified communicative difficulties that students faced while forming communicative competence of future social educators within collaborative learning within realization of experimental work in experimental group. The group of difficulties was associated with not knowing how to behave or what to say; misunderstanding or rejection of the communication partner; difficulties arising from the inability to understand the communication partner, i.e. inadequate formation of one's perceptual side in communication. Some communicative difficulties were caused by feelings of embarrassment, awkwardness and anxiety experienced by the speaker, they were associated with discomfort or irritation towards another person. Communication is a socially conditioned process of transmitting and

perceiving information in the context of interpersonal communication using various means of communication. Communicative competence consists of such components as ability to establish and to maintain positive emotional contact, ability to listen and to understand others, and ability to manage the attention of the audience.

Collaborative learning includes the development of the goal, the process of mastering the content of education, support for students and feedback. We recommend such principles for choosing strategies in formation of communicative competence of future social educators as active and self-managed learning, reliance on the life experience of the student and research practice, focus on reflexivity, interactivity, and cooperation within the educational process.

The productivity of collaborative learning is expressed in the following characteristics: i) positive interdependence which is revealed in participating of each student participate in the work, making his/her own task; ii) responsibility to the others, understanding that their achievements affect the effectiveness of the group; iii) face-to-face interaction which is revealed in assistance to each other's success; iv) social skills which are revealed in mastering of each student effective communication methods, interpersonal and group interaction skills; and v) group assessment of its effectiveness and development the ways of improving it.

Formation of communicative competence of future social educators based on collaborative learning is strategy in teaching and education which is considered as a general plan of joint actions of the students, based on a forecast, determining the immediate prospects of intellectual and personal development in the process of studying the subject and including all aspects of the educational process.

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Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Olga V. Galustyan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Sofia D. Podgornaya	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
Svetlana B. Seryakova		✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓		✓	
Nailya N. Askhadullina						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Olga V. Khripunkova	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Jingwei Zhang		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Siqi Liu		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	

C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

## DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [OVG], upon reasonable request.




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## BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS






**Olga V. Galustyan**    is head of the Department of Social Pedagogy of Academy of Psychology and Pedagogy of Southern Federal University. She defended her dissertation for the Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences on the topic "The system of multifunctional control of professional training of a competent specialist within higher education" in 2017. She teaches professional program "Pedagogical training of teachers of technical universities within i-PET program". Her research interests are connected with pedagogical foundations of teaching at university, methodology of education, education of future specialists, and application of online learning within education of future specialists, evaluation, and assessment of students' competencies. She is a scientific advisor of post graduate students conducting research in educational sciences. She can be contacted at email: [olga.galustyan@gmail.com](mailto:olga.galustyan@gmail.com).






**Sofia D. Podgornaya**    is a lecturer of the Department of Social Pedagogy of Academy of Psychology and Pedagogy of Southern Federal University. Her areas of research interest include methods of vocational education at the university, modernization processes in education of future specialists, project activity of students. She can be contacted at email: [sofi.galustyan@outlook.com](mailto:sofi.galustyan@outlook.com).






**Svetlana B. Seryakova**    is professor of Department of Social Pedagogy and Psychology of Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of Moscow Pedagogical State University. She defended her dissertation for the Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences on the topic “Formation of psychological and pedagogical competence of a teacher of additional education” in 2006. Her research interests are pedagogical foundations of organization of educational process at university, education of future social educators, creation, and implementation of innovative projects. She provides scientific supervision to undergraduates and graduate students of the Department of Social Pedagogy and Psychology. She can be contacted at email: svetlana.b.seryakova@gmail.com.






**Nailya N. Askhadullina**    is associate professor of the Department of Pedagogy of Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University. She has held PhD degree since 2019. Her research interests include methods of vocational education at the university, innovations in pedagogy, and methods of teaching. She can be contacted at email: nailya.askhadullina@rambler.ru.






**Olga V. Khripunkova**    is associate professor of the Department of Preschool and Special Education of Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy of Yelets State University named after I. A. Bunin. She has held PhD degree since 2018. Her research interests include methods of vocational education at the university, innovations in pedagogy, and methods of teaching. She can be contacted at email: olga.khripunkova@rambler.ru.



**Jingwei Zhang**    is a post graduate Student of Southern Federal University. His research interests include application of online learning within education of future specialists, development of higher education curriculum for future specialists, vocational education at university. He can be contacted at email: zhangjingwei@rambler.ru.



**Siqi Liu**    is a post graduate Student of Southern Federal University. Her areas of research interest include methods of vocational education at the university, modernization processes in education of future specialists, project activity of students. She can be contacted at email: Liu\_Siqi@outlook.com.