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ACMEOLOGICAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE SOCIAL EDUCATORS: CURRENT STATE

Abstract

Acmeological competence is an important issue for future social educators. This competence contributes to developing their skills to implement their professional activities, adjusting to changing circumstances, and being adaptable in professional endeavors in a rapidly changing world. This paper explores the current situation of future social educators' acmeological competence. The aim of this research is to define the current state of acmeological competence of future social educators and give recommendations to improve the situation. To collect the data a survey related to social educators' acmeological competence has been employed. The conducted survey revealed that approximately half of the future social educators are unfamiliar with the term. However, despite their unfamiliarity with "acmeology", they understand the importance of professional development. The authors of the research believe that incorporating acmeological competence components into the social education curricula and developing initiatives aimed at enhancing acmeological competence will increase future social educators' acmeological awareness and skills.

Keywords: competence, formation, acmeology, social educators, students, self-development.

Introduction. Acmeological competence is necessary for social educators to carry out their professional responsibilities. Acmeological competent social educators are able to effectively solve the problems and issues related to their profession. Research studies related to acmeological competence of social educators allows determining the present level, knowledge, skills of social educators' acmeological competence. Moreover, the research on this topic helps to identify the weakest and strongest points of the acmeological competence. The results of our research point out that a lot of work regarding to future social educators' acmeological competence should be conducted to improve their activities and benefit from their work.

At present time, the profession of social educators, which is faced with many social problems and challenges, is of great importance. Their job is essential in supporting children, teenagers, students, staff and any spheres, in which they are involved. Society benefits a lot from social educators' activities: in education they assist students to overcome educational, psychological and emotional obstacles, they

help people and children with special needs in integrating into society, people in crisis situations frequently receive primary psychological treatment from social educators. Their activities contribute to improve social environment, reduce crime rates, aid underprivileged groups, and cultivate an atmosphere that promotes the peaceful and prosperous development of all parts of society.

However, to achieve the highest accomplishments in their job social educators should put a lot of effort into their studies, work on their self-development and self-reflection. Moreover, the modern world demands high professionalism from social educators regarding their professional and personal qualities. They must grow and evolve in order to recognize and overcome obstacles as well as adapt to new challenges. Success of their work depends on their abilities and competences. Social educators' competencies form the cornerstone of their professional activity and have a direct bearing on the caliber and efficacy of the aid rendered.

One of the key competencies that are necessary for social educators in their job is acmeological competence. Acmeological competence is a significant aspect of personal and professional growth; it encompasses the aptitudes and competencies required to reach the pinnacles of both professional success and individual self-realization. This competence contributes to achieve successful career, to advance in the workplace, and to enhance well-being of the individual as a whole. Acmeological competence influences the ability to grow personally, to achieve a high degree of self-reflection, to address challenging work-related challenges successfully, and to adjust to changing circumstances. It assumes not only the possession of specialized knowledge and abilities in a certain field but also the development of character traits like self-organization, perseverance, reflection and stability. Therefore, this competence plays a crucial role in terms of other competences as it assists social educators to constantly advance in their profession.

Acmeological competence is a subset of their general professional and pedagogical competence, which reflects the dynamic unity of their individual professional and pedagogical orientation as well as their knowledge, values, and pedagogical thought activity methods. This allows to effectively grow both personally and professionally in both the sociocultural context and the classroom (Koshman, 2015).

Formation of acmeological competence of social educators is necessary for them to be able to adapt to the conditions of professional activities, to develop actively, and to strive for professional excellence and personal improvement. In this regard, it is significant to integrate acmeological competence into the process of social educators' preparation as this competence makes it possible to be capable of demonstrating adaptability and innovation, performing successfully in the face of dynamic changes, and enhancing their professional abilities continuously. In addition, acmeological competence offers a fresh viewpoint on achievement by viewing people as dynamic systems that aspire to perfection (Sydorchuk, 2022).

Moreover, integration of acmeological competence into teaching process of social educators enables the establishment of circumstances that support their ongoing professional growth and enhances the standard of social and educational support. Acmeological competence, as a collection of traits and attributes intended to reach one's professional and personal pinnacle, is increasingly important to social educators' ability to do their jobs well. Research on this subject makes it possible to build more efficient techniques and technological tools for future social educators' development as well as to have a greater grasp of the conditions and mechanisms that support their professional development and self-realization.

The study of social educators' acmeological competence is an important and pertinent field that advances both the overall social welfare and the professional quality of teachers. In the end, this research will lay the groundwork for the creation of fresh theoretical and applied perspectives in the fields of acmeology and education, which will be extremely advantageous to both specialized practitioners and society at large. The aim of this research

is to define the current state of acmeological competence of future social educators and give recommendations to improve the situation

Materials and Methods. The role of social educators in the society is becoming more significant since they provide support for all in places where they are involved. To carry out their work successfully a social educator needs to possess a wide range of competencies, including professional knowledge, abilities, and personal traits.

A lot of research studies have been written regarding to the activities and competences of social educators in the scientific literature. Training of social educators for adolescents has been considered in the article written by Alieva L.V. and others. They emphasized the role of socio-educational training as the children's public association organizer which is based on the advancements of pedagogical science in the field of upbringing and teaching. Their research focuses on the theoretical and methodological issues of the social educator's training, confirms the novelty and necessity of social educators in the modern world (Alieva, 2017).

The place and mission of the social educator in the sphere of education was considered in O.Chuiko's research. His study was devoted to defining the role of a social educator in the educational space. He concludes that a social educator impacts on the child's personality greatly and his actions ought to be directed toward a child's success and growth in general (Chuiko, 2019).

A researcher Calvo-Sastre discussed the problems of teaching social educators with and through groups in their article. His research was based on the teaching methodology used to train social educators. Through his study the researcher offers the model of teaching social educators. This model encourages group learning and yields excellent outcomes that can be applied to other disciplines in higher education in the social sector in Spain and other international contexts, in addition to offering an educational and training paradigm in social education with groups (Calvo-Sastre, 2019).

Social educators' competencies are necessary for the successful implementation of their work. The goals of social educators' competencies are to guarantee children and adolescents' complete social and academic development, support the creation of a positive social environment, and enhance their quality of life. S. Stanley and G Mettilda investigated the professional competencies of future social educators in terms of their emotional intelligence and reflective abilities (Stanley, Mettlida, 2021)

Researchers A. Magauova et.al. continue the study of the previous authors and considered the enhancement of professional competence of social pedagogy students in Kazakhstan and Lithuania. Their research revealed that both countries understand that social educators are successful in meeting the requirements of various students in inclusive environments and it is important to concentrate on their professional competencies (Magauova, Makhambetova, 2022).

Views on the social educator's figure in rural settings have been explored by Maria Garcia-Garrido and other scholars. They emphasize the value of institutional and social support in closing the need to integrate and elevate the role of the social educator as the primary facilitator of social intervention (García-Garrido et.al., 2023).

The acmeological competence that we are considering in this research is a key factor of professional success and efficacy of a social educator. It is evident that a social educator's acmeological competence has an impact on the quality of support they provide to children and young people for improving their well-being.

Acmeological competence is strongly related to acmeology, the study of the laws and processes governing human development at the mature stage and attaining the pinnacles of many pursuits. The term "acmeology" is derived from words "acme" which means the highest point and "logos" which means study. Acmeology studies the mechanics, patterns, and phenomenology of human growth at the point of his career (Pedagogical Dictionary, 2000).

A key component of professional development that aims to achieve the highest standards of professionalism and personal development is acmeological competence. The review of literature around the acmeological competence allowed us to observe that this term

is widely used in the research studies conducted by scholars of CIS countries. From existing studies we found out that a researcher L.V. Abdalina considers acmeological competence as an effective use of self-development technology to ensure the teacher's professional and personal development (Abdalina, 2009). N.A. Filonova admits that acmeological competence is the highest level of methods and ways of personal-professional development of a teacher and it is not sufficiently studied in the scientific world yet (Filonova, 2009).

Some investigations have been conducted on formation of acmeological competence of teachers of different disciplines in secondary schools as well as universities. For example, E.A. Kostina and others' research focused on the issues of foreign languages teachers' acmeological competence formation. They conclude that prospective foreign language teachers are not aware of acmeological competence at all, however they are able to make decisions and solve problems related to their professional activities and this ability positively impact on the enhancement of their professional knowledge and skills (Kostina et al., 2021). M. Kalashnyk considered the assessment characteristics of acmeological competence of shipping navigators. In his research the author defined the components of acmeological competence such as motivational, cognitive, praxeological and personal. Moreover, he recommended that future navigators should achieve the level of real "acme" in their personal and professional enhancement (Kalashnyk, 2021).

Enhancement of acmeological competence of social educators has been discussed in the research study conducted by K. Yessenamanova and other scholars. These authors' investigation revealed that acmeological competence is needed in order to enhance professionalism and boost the process of learning (Yessenamanova et al., 2022). O.A. Rudakova claimed that acmeological competence contributes to the professional capacity and personal growth of a social educator (Rudakova, 2019). According to B. Koldasbayeva et al. acmeological competence means the acquisition of moral growth, social recognition, a high degree of emotional intelligence, physical development, and lifetime maintenance of health and mental activity (Koldasbayeva, 2021).

Foreign scholars consider acmeological competence as a self-awareness, self-development and self-actualization. Pham Ha Linh and Thi Thanh Thuy considered social work students' professional development which was carried out through their self-directed learning. Their self-development programme included knowledge, awareness, their intervention abilities and professional demeanor. The research of these scholars revealed that social educators' self-development abilities are weak, the authors offer to enhance their abilities providing an individual plan for them (Linh & Thuy, 2022).

Maria Pallisera and other authors offer to develop social educators' self-knowledge via reflective learning based on their practical work experience (Pallisera, 2013). Julie Drolet et al. discussed teaching and learning strategies intended to promote wellbeing and self-development of social educators (Drolet et al., 2017). The review of literature on the researched topic made it possible to conclude that study of acmeological competence of social educators is of great importance. Studies on social educators' acmeological competence have been conducted in Kazakhstan and other CIS countries, in the foreign literature it is considered as self-development and self-realization. Several research studies have been done in development of acmeological competence of teachers and social educators. However, existed research studies do not solve the issues related to formation, development of this competence of future social educators. The authors think that examining the acmeological competency of social educators is a crucial step toward enhancing their professionalism, raising the standard of instruction, and ensuring the wellbeing and personal development of the educators. Therefore, the research question of this study is: To what extent are future social educators are aware of acmeological competence and its importance in their professional activities?

Results and discussions. Research materials were the data collected through the empirical

research method. The authors conducted the survey, which consisted questions related to acmeological competence of respondents.

Participants. The respondents were students majoring in Social Pedagogy (future social educators) of different years of study (n-52). Future social educators are enrolled in different universities of Kazakhstan. The aim of the survey was to define the current state of acmeological competence among future social educators. We divided the questions into three parts:

1. General information.
2. Competence awareness.
3. Acmeology related questions.

The questions were submitted through Google form and the link was disseminated among future social educators.

For general information we collected the information about future social educators' age, year of study, university they are enrolled. The second part was devoted to students' knowledge about the competence in general. The third part revealed future social educators' thoughts about acmeological competence. The questions were related to the term, importance, reasons and challenges in acmeological competence formation.

The research was conducted off line in one university with the participation of the respondents. In other universities the survey was conducted online.

The first part of the survey consisted of questions related the respondents' age, their year of studying and university they are studying.

The following table demonstrates the information about the age of respondents.

Table 1. *Age of respondents*

16-17	18	19	20	21	22-more
6	13	13	16	3	1

The table shows that respondents' age is different; they are 16-22 years old. This is because the survey involved from the first-year to the fourth year students.

The next table shows the information of their year of study (Table 2).

Table 2. *The year of study of respondents*

1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
14	7	25	6

From this table one can observe that our respondents are from different years of study. Most of them are on their third year.

The next table demonstrates the information about universities where students are enrolled. (Table 3)

Table 3. *Respondents' universities*

University	Number
L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University	16
Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University	7
Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University	24
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University	4

Most respondents were studying at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (16) and Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University (24). Only 4 students participated from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

The second part of the survey revealed information about future social educators' awareness of competence in general. The following figure contains respondents' replies. (Figure 1).
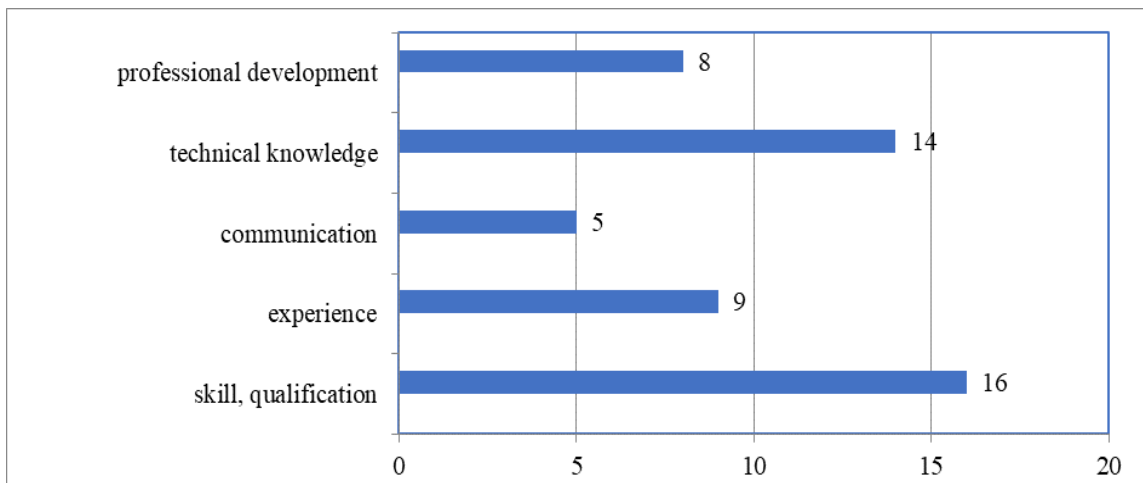
Figure 1: What is competence for you?

The figure illustrates that a majority of respondents (16) perceive competence as a skill or qualification. 14 students think that competence is related to technical knowledge. Almost similar number of students thinks that competence is professional knowledge (8) and experience (9). These data make it possible to conclude that respondents are aware of the term; however, there are some inaccuracies in their answers.

The answers to the question "Which of competence types do you think is important in your professional activities?" are as follows.
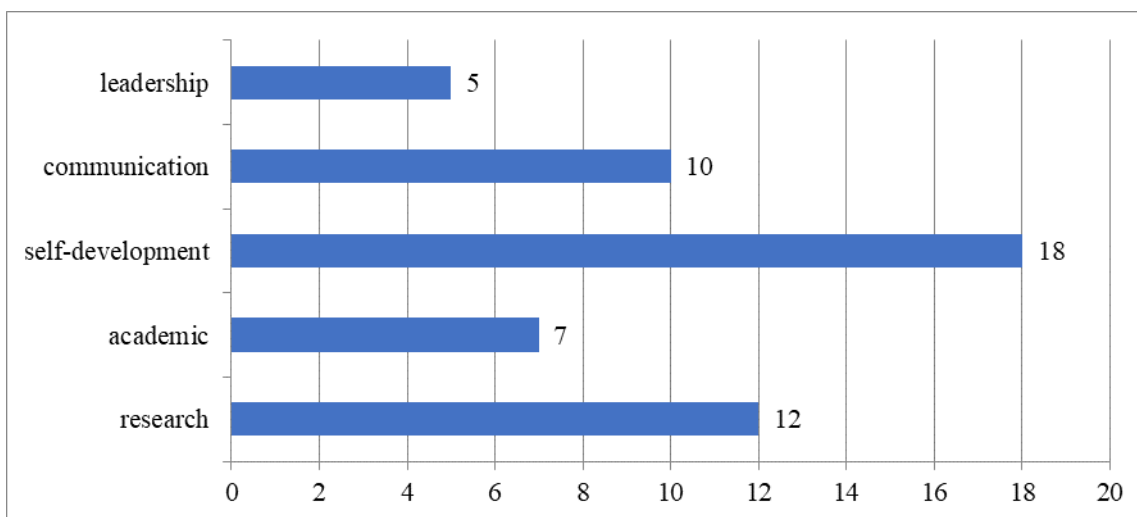

Figure 2: Respondents' answers

The data indicate that most respondents believe that self-development is crucial in their activities (18), in the second place research (12) and communication (10). Only 5 students think that they need leadership competence. These data show that respondents understand the importance of self-development in their activities as the majority of them are focused on developing their skills.

The third part of the survey covered the questions related to respondents' knowledge, skills and attitude to acmeological competence.

The following table demonstrates respondents' answers to the questions about acmeology, the importance of acmeological competence for social educators and their practice with acmeological competence. (Table 4)

The third part of the survey was dedicated to acmeology related questions. This information demonstrates that most respondents (22) are not familiar with the term «acmeology», only two respondents know about it and 23 students have heard or read about it.

Table 4. *Acmeology related answers*

Questions	Variants of answers			
1	Are you aware of the term "Acmeology"?	not familiar at all	somewhat familiar	a little familiar	very familiar
		22	12	11	7
2	How important is acmeological competence for social educators?	not important at all	not so important	a little important	very important
		21	15	8	8
3	To what extent do you integrate acmeological principles into your studying activities?	never	seldom	sometimes	always
		20	10	14	8

21 respondents think that acmeological competence for social educators is not important at all.

We think that these were respondents, who answered that they are not aware of the term «acmeology». 8 respondents believe that acmeological competence is significant for social educators. We observed that 20 students never incorporate acmeological competence into their studying, whereas 24 students do it rarely or sometimes. Only 8 students answered that they do it regularly. We think that most students are not aware of the term acmeology, in fact they all somehow are involved in acmeological competence.

The purpose of the next question was to identify respondents' opinion about what skills of social educators will develop if their acmeological competence is formed. Their answers were diverse and we tried to list the most frequent and important ones. (Table 5)

Table 5. *Respondents' answers*

№	Topics	The most frequent answers
1	Communication	with students, communication skills, interpersonal communication
2	Qualification	Professional development, new technologies, problem solving, being ready for challenges, a lot of skills will be developed, skills needed for work, quality of education, work experience
3	Responsibility	For classes, social activities, for his job, for activities
4	Skills	social, professional and creative skills, scientific, research, leadership
5	Development	Self-development, understanding live values, self-correction, self-reflection, self-management, personal and professional development

Moreover, there were some answers such as I don't know, yes, of course, well, don't know exactly but I know that it is connected to development, I am not familiar.

The following figure demonstrates the difficulties that future social educators could face when acmeological competence is integrated into teaching process. The answers are classified in the following figure (Figure 3).

As can be seen from the figure respondents' answers contain real difficulties, however many of them are not familiar with the term, they don't know what difficulties can happen when acmeological competence is integrated into teaching process of social educators.

This table lists the difficulties that respondents mentioned in the survey (Table 6).

This survey revealed the information about the current state of acmeological competence (their knowledge, understanding, skills and others) of future social educators.
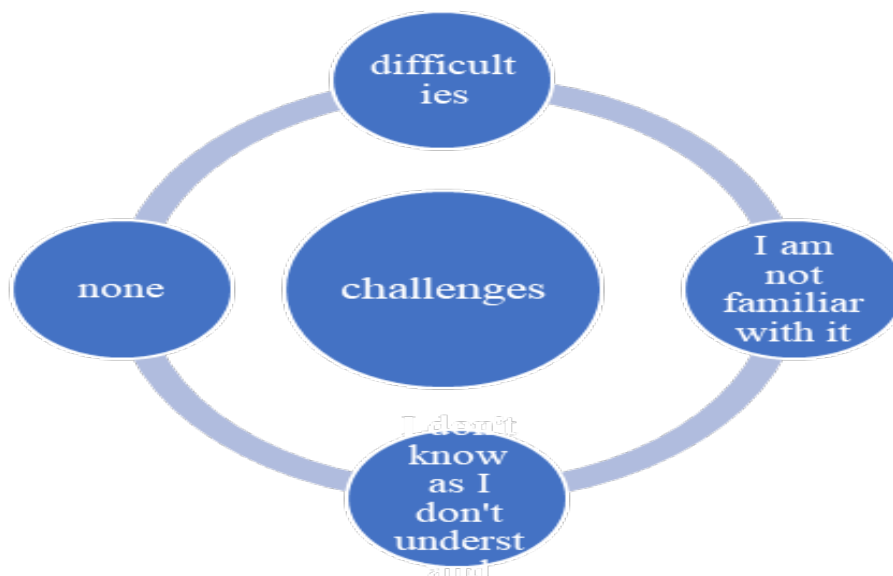
Figure 3: Respondents' answers

Table 6. *Respondents' difficulties*

Difficulties
Misunderstanding the importance of the job
Lack of reliability
Problems with adaptation
During the practice
In the future profession
Compexity
Not having a clear objective for what you are doing and not fully understanding the trade
During work with students
Small obstacles to learning new things.
There are no more paid courses available.

The results indicate that future social educators are not fully aware of the term acmeology, therefore they could not explain benefits of acmeological competence for social educators and they were not able to define the importance of acmeological competence for them. Most respondents do not know what skills they can develop if their acmeological competence is formed. However, respondents who are familiar with this term, tried to identify which skill they will be enhanced with acmeological competence. In addition, they could list the problems they might have if acmeological competence is incorporated into teaching process.

Analysing research results on acmeological competence of future social educators the authors discovered several crucial difficulties that demand particular attention. First of all, approximately half of future social educators,

who participated in the survey, are not familiar with the term «acmeology». The study conducted by E.A. Kostina et.al. revealed the similar results that students lack sufficient knowledge of acmeological competence, and that the development of acmeological competence, which is required to ensure the personal and professional growth of a future teacher, remains a task that is not always addressed during the university training process (Kostina et.al. 2021).

Secondly, as they do not know what the term means they were not able to give proper answers to the survey questions. Thirdly, even though some of our respondents understand the term and dealt with acmeological competence, they could not fully develop the theme. Nevertheless, despite the lack of skills and knowledge in acmeological competence, future social educators tried to answer all questions given in the survey. Their attempts demonstrate

their motivation and desire for self-development and contribution to the improvement of social educators' activities. These findings were indicated in the research results conducted by Yessenamanova et. al. that acmeological competence of social educators should be improved in order to accomplish personal enhancement and increase motivation of these students to study (Yessenamanova et. al.,2022).

The current situation in the development of acmeological competency among future social educators needs considerable modifications and improvements. Updating educational programs, enhancing practice-oriented training, developing students' personal traits, and upgrading methods are all critical steps toward obtaining a high degree of professionalism. Implementing these improvements will enable future social educators to efficiently address professional challenges while also contributing significantly to the growth of the social sphere.

Conclusion. The conducted survey research, the review of existed scientific literature revealed the information about the current state of social educators' acmeological competence. The study demonstrates that acmeological competence of social educators is the foundation of their willingness to always work on improving themselves and their professional activity. The research showed that nearly half of the future social educators are not aware of the term, many of them have lack of knowledge and consequently, they do not know how to form and develop this competence.

Therefore, the authors of this study give such recommendations to improve future social educators' acmeological competence: to introduce elements of acmeological competence into the content of existing disciplines of social educators; to create programs designed to advance acmeological competency in all its facets; to monitor and evaluate social educators' acmeological competence, if possible, to quickly pinpoint and address problem areas.

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ECOLOGICALLY-ORIENTED TEACHING OF ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF PEDAGOGICAL SPECIALITIES

Abstract

The relevance of the study in this paper is due to the problems of ecology in the modern world and the formation of ecological culture among the younger generation within the framework of the educational process to introduce them the ecological values in their future professional activities to preserve and restore the ecosystem of the planet. The purpose of the study is to form a model for the didactic foundations of ecologically-oriented teaching of English to students of pedagogical specialities. The leading method for the study of this issue is the a survey using the M. Rokich test for diagnosing personal value orientations, which makes it possible to determine social values, psychological aspirations by identifying the existing self-tasks of the person under survey, features of his or her self-determination and self-regulation of behaviour within the framework of ecological culture. The study presents didactic foundations of ecologically-oriented teaching of English to students of pedagogical specialities with formation of value orientations including value-motivational, cognitive-informational and modeling of creative ecological-cognitive professional activity on the basis of which the level of ecological culture of students can be created. The formed didactic foundations model of ecologically-oriented teaching of English to students of pedagogical specialties enables to create ecological culture with value standards of careful attitude to the environment and all levels of nature, which will allow them to introduce it in the educational process in their future professional activity to educate students about high ecological culture and creative behavior concerning natural objects and the whole ecosystem of life in general, which has practical significance for the education system and well-being of society.

Keywords: ecological culture, didactic foundations, ecologically-oriented teaching, education, pedagogy.