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## Study of the Professional Standard Assessment by Young Teachers

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### Abstract

Professional standard of a teacher is a document that takes into account all the requirements for teacher's personality and professional competence. From now on teacher's qualification level will be assigned in accordance with this regulatory act. It should also be considered when recruiting a teacher and in drafting his job description. This document details all the knowledge and skills that teachers should possess, and also specifies labor activities depending on the direction of work (teacher in a preschool institution, primary school teacher, subject school teacher, etc.). It is expected that due to the introduction of a professional standard, top-ranking specialists who can work with various categories of children (gifted, disabled, orphans, migrants, etc.) and effectively interact with other specialists (special education teachers, psychologists, social educators and etc.) will form the basis of Russian educational system. This study was conducted in the context of a cross-cultural research of professional teaching standards: on the understanding of professional standards by teachers in five countries. Participating countries: Scotland, Portugal, Russia (1st stage), Canada and Australia (2nd stage). The purpose of the study is to analyze the features of teacher's professional standard assessment by young teachers, and empirically compare the features of teacher's professional standard assessment by young teachers and by experienced ones. The study involved 258 teachers of educational institutions, among them - 35 men and 193 women. The age of the subjects is from 24 to 54 years. The experience of pedagogical activity varies from 3 to 35 years. The data obtained allow us to state that the majority of young teachers believe that professional standards are useful for evaluation teachers' work; professional standards state a constructive policy aimed at improving learning; professional standards are a suitable tool to support professional development of teachers. At the same time, young educators note that professional standards entail bureaucratic control over teachers, and that professional standards are the way to increase teacher accountability. In general, young teachers have a positive attitude to professional standards, however, there is a fear of increasing the bureaucratic pressure on them.

Keywords: professional standard, young teachers, teacher's skills and knowledge

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## **Introduction**

A teacher is a key figure in the process of education reforming. Willingness to change, mobility, ability to act in non-standard way at work, responsibility and independence in decision-making - all these characteristics of a successful professional activity can be fully applied to a teacher as well.

In conditions of acceleration of scientific, technical and informational progress, as well as the most important economic and social transformations carried out in the Russian Federation, teachers, who meet call of the times and have developed creative thinking and extraordinary imagination complementary to high-quality professional training, become few and far between.

At the present stage of life, a teacher is, first of all, a profession that, according to the latest trends, must meet certain standards, designed to replace outdated job descriptions and other documents regulating professional activities of teachers.

That is why, in 2013 in Russia, a specially created working group chaired by E.A. Yamburg (E.A. Yamburg, 2015) developed a professional teacher standard covering, among other things, such issues as the reform of the teacher career development system, modernization of the system of teacher education and changes in the system of teacher certification.

In a rapidly changing open world, the main professional quality that a teacher must constantly demonstrate to his students becomes the ability to learn.

The following traits can introduce teacher's personality: readiness to be changed, flexibility, propensity for non-standard reactions, commitment and ability to independently make decisions. Acquisition of these valuable qualities is impossible without expanding the area of pedagogical creativity. Teacher's work should be free from trivial regulation, relieved from total control.

The desire to achieve consensus in a society on the issue of introduction teacher's professional standard is incorporated into the process of its development, testing and implementation, starting with an extensive discussion of the draft document and ending with the timing for its introduction.

## **Problem Statement**

Today Russian system of teachers training faces changes, one of the important strategic issues of these changes is the development of professional standards. In line with the modern trends of modernization of professional education system in our country, there is a need to introduce professional standards, with wide public participation in discussion of their development.

In Russia, professional standards in the field of humanitarian education have begun to be developed quite recently. This leads to a number of problems. On the one hand, there is the experience of foreign countries that can show the "roadmap" of educational development, which is based on professional standards. On the other hand, Russia always has its own peculiarity, which does not allow copying foreign

experience, but obliges us to go our own way. Difficulties arise concerning the definition and clear description of the professional standard, as well as assessment of the professional activity of a specialist. The introduction of standards should help to define the margin of discretion of certain specialists, to determine direction and content of their main activities. The development of professional standards is of particular importance in teaching, which almost eliminates a procedure of professional selection. Consequently, there is a high probability of the risks of inefficient work done people employed in this field. Thus, it is very important to determine the standards of activity and criteria for its assessment, professional competences of a specialist, and his work functions, which are aimed at achieving a specific result.

Professional Standard (PS) is a multifunctional regulatory document that defines the requirements for the content of work and working conditions, qualifications and competencies of specialists in various fields of professional activity, set out in the form of structured characteristics of the activity (labor functions).

A distinctive feature of the professional standard is that it is interdisciplinary.

The professional standard is developed in order to:

- ensure interaction between the world of work and the educational system;
- support the continuity of the professional development of workers throughout their employment;
- consider labor market requirements while developing educational standards and training programs, including modular, examination requirements;
- unify, set and support generic requirements for the content and quality of professional activity, definition of qualification requirements for employees;
- provide transparent proficiency testing and assessment of professional qualifications of workers and graduates of education institutions;
- improve the procedure of suitable work choosing, career counseling of population;
- assess qualitative and quantitative changes in the labor market, regulate labor resources, harmonize labor market requirements and develop the sphere of vocational education and training.

Professional standard is a relatively new concept for the Russian reality. By Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 07/05/2012 No. 597 it was ordered to develop about 800 professional standards (7). In December 2012, the relevant amendments were made to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation, namely: Chapter 31 of this document was supplemented with Article 195.1, disclosing the concepts of “professional standard” and “employee qualification” (6).

According to this document, a *professional standard* is a description of the qualifications required for an employee to perform a certain type of professional activity, and the *qualification of an employee* is the level of knowledge, proficiency and competence.

In accordance with the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of June 27/06/2016 No. 584, the transition to new standards will be carried out in stages until 01/01/2020 (3).

Nowadays labor productivity in any industry depends on human resources, which should be based on highly qualified specialists. It is connected, foremost, with the growth of technical progress and, as a result, with a significant increase in the requirements for the qualifications of employees. Professional standard should be a guideline for building personnel policy.

Development and implementation of the professional standard for a teacher is an important step towards quality reforms in the field of education. This is a new direction in personnel policy, which will not only streamline professional activities of a modern teacher at each stage of the national education

system, but also regulate many important procedures directly related to the professional activities: teacher certification, wage system, rate-making and many others.

In 2013, the Order of the Ministry of Labor of Russia (No. 544n of January 18<sup>th</sup>) approved the professional standard "Teacher" (5). This is a multi-level document, since it takes into account the specifics of teacher's work depending on the type of educational institution - pre-school organization, elementary school, middle and high schools.

The document in its original form is of a so-called frame nature: it can be supplemented, firstly, at the regional level in accordance with socio-cultural, economic, demographic and other features; secondly, at the level of educational organizations in accordance with their specifics (inclusive, physical education and sports, working with gifted children, etc.).

The appearance of this document has caused many questions from the heads of organizations, scientists and practitioners. In connection with this, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation issued the Letter No. 14-0/10/B-2253 of 04/04/2016, which presents the information in accordance with the questions received from organizations and citizens, for example: what are professional standards being developed for; how often they will be updated; whether the unified pay rate guidance is to be canceled due to the approval of standards; whether professional standards are to be distributed to non-governmental organizations, etc. This informational letter has given full and complete answers to many questions of concern.

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, the article of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation (195.3) came into force, revealing the procedure of applying professional standards. Organizations were required to use standards if qualification requirements are established by the Labor Code or other laws and statutory instruments. In other cases, the standard serves as guidelines, and an employer can make changes in the documents of the organization (local acts, staffing, job descriptions, etc.), guided by the Rules for the development and approval of professional standards, approved by the Government of the Russian Federation on January 22, 2013 No. 23.

It is highly important to note that dismissal of an employee in case he or she does not meet the new professional standard by any parameters is unacceptable. In accordance with the legislation, an internal assessment procedure for compliance with the position held is applied to such an employee. In addition, he should be given the opportunity to receive extended education (usually it is professional retraining) to ensure compliance with the standard (I.S. Egorova, E.A. Mikhalkina, 2011).

The initial acquaintance with the professional standard "Teacher" for specialists of different levels (from managerial to executive), as well as the subsequent lively discussion of the document showed that the modern educational system is not ready for the full implementation of the document. This explains, first of all, the need to refine the standard, and align it more optimally in order to focus on modern educational practice.

Based on the current situation, in accordance with the Order of the Ministry of Labor of 15/12/2016 No. 745 "On Amending the Professional Standard «Teacher» (4), the date of its entry into force is postponed to September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

In the context of the introduction of new professional standards of a teacher, special attention should be paid to the issue of correlating the requirements for a teacher, prescribed in the professional standard, and the requirements for a university graduate, as this is important for the subject matter we are considering.

Let us dwell on the personal qualities and competencies needed for the implementation of professional activities by a teacher according to professional standards. Here are some of them:

- readiness to accept different children, regardless of their real educational opportunities, characteristics in behavior, mental and physical health;
- professional attitude on rendering assistance to any child;
- ability to provide targeted assistance to a child using pedagogical techniques;
- ability to draw up, together with other specialists, a program for the individual development of a child;
- ability to use psychological approaches in the practice of work: cultural and historical approach, activity and development approaches;
- ability to design a psychologically safe and comfortable educational environment, etc. (O. Yu. Malakhova, 2006).

At the same time, one should pay attention to the different interpretation of requirements imposed on a university graduate by a professional standard and the current Federal educational standard in the field of “Pedagogical education” (qualification - Bachelor of pedagogical education). Thus, for example, according to the Federal State Educational Standard of this major, the emphasis is on the development of personal qualities that are within the professional competence of a teacher, namely: proficiency in a culture of thinking; ability to generalize, analyse, percept information, set goals and choose ways to achieve them; ability to analyse ideological, socially and personally significant philosophical problems; ability to develop modern pedagogical technologies taking into account peculiarities of the educational process, tasks for personality education and development; ability to carry out pedagogical support in the processes of socialization and professional self-determination of students, preparing them for the conscious choice of a profession, etc. The analysis of this normative document allows, in particular, to speak about the absence in its description the willingness to accept different children, regardless of their real learning opportunities, behavioural features, mental state and physical health, and missing a professional attitude to help any child, etc.

Thus, there is a disagreement of the requirements imposed on the university graduate and the professional standard of a teacher. The professional standard of a teacher requires a wider range of personality traits than it is expected when preparing in a university. Consequently, in order to demand new qualities from a teacher, it is necessary to build the educational process differently, to teach these qualities. It is obvious that the introduction of a new professional standard of a teacher should inevitably entail a change in the standards of teacher’s training and retraining in higher education and in centres of excellence.

### **Research Questions**

The literature overview allows us to state the fact that the problem of introducing professional standards for teachers is important and significant. We found that the requirements for a graduate teacher differ from the requirements that are presented in the professional standard.

In this regard, the key issue of our research is: how do young teachers assess the professional standard? Is there a difference in the assessment of professional standards by young teachers and experienced ones?

The purpose of the current research is to study the features of teacher’s professional standard assessment by young teachers, and empirically compare the features of teacher’s professional standard

assessment by young teachers and by experienced ones.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the features of teacher's professional standard assessment by young teachers, and empirically compare the features of teacher's professional standard assessment by young and experienced educators.

### **Research Methods**

#### **Methodology and Empirical Methods**

To achieve goals and objectives of the study, we used the following methods:

- theoretical: study and analysis of pedagogical, psychological literature on the problem of the research, synthesis, systematization;
- empirical: questioning;
- data processing methods (quantitative and qualitative analysis), mathematical data processing methods (Student's t-test).

The study involved 258 teachers of educational institutions, of them - 35 men and 193 women, 120 young teachers (length of time worked is up to 5 years) and 138 experienced teachers (length of time worked is 6 years or more). The age of the subjects is from 24 to 54 years. The experience of pedagogical activity varies from 3 to 35 years.

For the study, we used a questionnaire on the understanding of professional standards by teachers. An online questionnaire was based on a survey developed and conducted by Flores and Van Nuland (2013) and Flores (2014). The questionnaire was designed to conduct a cross-cultural study of professional standards of teaching, to analyze the way of understanding professional standards by teachers in five countries: Scotland, Portugal, Russia, Canada and Australia.

The questionnaire includes the following sections: profile; subject matter, goals and usage of professional standards; development of professional teaching standards; work load of a teacher; professional training and development; professional renewal and professional standards.

### **Results and Discussion**

The study involved 120 young teachers (length of time worked is up to 5 years) and 138 experienced teachers (length of time worked is 6 years or more). 17.8% of participants (46 people) work with preschoolers; 36.8% (95 people) work with children from 7 to 9 years old; 26.8% (69 people) work in middle schools; 18.6% (48 people) teach in high schools.

36.8% of tested teachers (95 people), working in elementary school, teach all the disciplines (the Russian language, reading, Environmental Studies, mathematics, fine arts), except for physical education, rhythmic gymnastics, the English language, the Tatar language.

Among middle and high school teachers 35.9% (42 people) teach the Russian language and literature, 38.5% (45 people) teach algebra, geometry, 12% (14 people) teach physics, 13.7% (16 people) teach geography, biology.

The number of students in educational institutions varies from 150 to 600 people. The number of teachers in educational institutions varies from 30 to 150 people. Mentioning positioning of educational institutions, 50% of them are urban schools and 50% are rural schools.

75% of young teachers (90 people) and 32.6% of experienced teachers (45 people) believe that

professional standards are useful for assessing the work of teachers; 16.7% of young teachers (20 people) and 37.7% of experienced teachers (52 people) believe that professional standards are not always useful for assessing the work of teachers, 8.3% of young teachers (10 people) and 29.7% of experienced teachers (41 people) believe that professional standards do not need to be used to assess the work of teachers.

80% of young teachers (96 people) and 36.2% of experienced teachers (50 people) note that professional standards are important for their professional development; 20% of young teachers (24 people) and 63.8% of experienced teachers (88 people) do not consider professional standards as important for their professional development. Still, 100% of the subjects emphasize that professional standards are often discussed in their educational institutions.

74.2% (89 people) of young teachers and 33.3% (46 people) of experienced teachers believe that professional standards are a constructive policy aimed at improving education. At the same time, 83.3% (100 people) of young teachers and 39.9% (55 people) of experienced teachers say that professional standards clearly define what is expected from teachers.

75.8% of young teachers (91 people) and 43.5% of experienced teachers (60 people) emphasize that professional standards are useful for identifying key issues for teachers to improve their professional activity.

76.7% of young teachers (92 people) and 38.4% of experienced teachers (53 people) say that professional standards are a suitable tool to support professional development of teachers. 100% of teachers (both young teachers and experienced ones) believe that it is necessary to consult with teachers when developing professional standards.

71.7% of young teachers (86 people) and 42.8% of teachers with experience (59 people) emphasize that professional standards are important for improving professional skills of teachers.

70.8% of young teachers (85 people) and 29% of teachers with experience (40 people) note that professional standards are important for upward mobility of a teacher. 73.3% of young teachers (88 people) and 35.5% of experienced teachers (49 people) say that professional standards are important to make the teaching profession more perfect.

At the same time, 31.7% of young teachers (38 people) and 70% of experienced teachers (96 people) note that professional standards entail bureaucratic control over teachers, and also 38.3% of young teachers (46 people) and 71% of teachers with experience (98 people) believe that professional standards are the way to increase teacher accountability.

61.7% of young teachers (74 people) and 33.3% of experienced teachers (46 people) emphasize that professional standards are the basis for the selection of applicants for the teaching profession.

65% of young teachers (78 people) and 27.5% of experienced teachers (38 people) say that professional standards are a basis for making important career and promotion decisions.

70% (84 people) of young teachers and 30.4% (42 people) of experienced teachers say that professional standards are an important basis for certifying teachers. 67.5% (81 people) of young teachers and 29% (40 people) of experienced teachers say that professional standards are an important basis for identifying good teachers.

74.2% of young teachers (89 people) and 31.2% of experienced teachers (43 people) emphasize that professional standards provide an important basis for checking the minimum level of professional competences of a teacher.

70% of young teachers (84 people) and 28.2% of experienced teachers (39 people) note that professional standards are an important basis for quality improvement in the context of teacher training and

development. 72.5% of young teachers (87 people) and 31.2% of teachers with experience (43 people) say that professional standards are important for determining what teachers should be able to do.

65.8% of young teachers (79 people) and 15.9% of experienced teachers (22 people) emphasize that professional standards are substantial for usage in contacts with the public; 85% of young teachers (102 people) and 37.7% of experienced teachers (52 people) say that professional standards are an important basis for the reflection on their teaching activity; 71.7% of young teachers (86 people) and 26.1% of teachers with experience (36 people) point out that it is essential to use professional standards for the development of a professional dialogue; 80% of young teachers (96 people) and 32.6% of experienced teachers (45 people) emphasize that professional standards are important for facilitating constructive discussion questions about teachers' professionalism.

70% of young teachers (84 people) and 30.4% of experienced teachers (42 people) note that professional standards are an important basis for teacher certification. 67.5% of young teachers (81 people) and 29% of experienced teachers (40 people) say that professional standards are an important basis for identifying excellent teachers.

Answering the question "How should professional standards of education develop, in your opinion? Why?" there were obtained the following results: 38.3% of young teachers (46 people) and 49.3% of experienced teachers (68 people) believe that professional standards should be developed by teachers themselves; 70% of young teachers (84 people) and 31.2% of experienced teachers (43 people) emphasize that there should be more reliance on practical activities than on theory; 49.2% of young teachers (59 people) and 57.2% of experienced teachers (79 people) believe that there should be less paperwork; 76.7% of young teachers (92 people) and 33.3% of experienced teachers (46 people) believe that there should be more interaction with children, using various games and activities; 73.3% of young teachers (88 people) and 45.7% of experienced teachers (63 people) say that the development of professional standards requires training and various master classes.

Young teachers distinguish the following parameters of work as important:

- Collaboration with colleagues - 17.4% of teachers
- Work with student behavior - 20.9% of teachers
- Lesson Planning - 17.4% of teachers
- Evaluation of students - 4.7% of teachers
- Self-reflection on work in a classroom - 34.5% of teachers
- Communication with parents - 22.9% of teachers
- Improving professional training - 14% of teachers
- Sharing materials with my colleagues - 14.3% of teachers
- Student learning support - 38% of teachers
- Creating new materials for students - 48.4% of teachers
- Motivation of students - 25.2% of teachers
- Developing new strategies for better student learning - 38% of teachers

Among the most important points in professional training and career development experience over the last five years, young teachers note: participation in grants - 46.7% of the tested teachers; participation and winning various competitions of professional skills - 51.7% of teachers; advanced training courses - 100% of teachers; participation and winning of students in various competitions - 70.8% of teachers; participation in master classes - 60% of teachers; participation in scientific and practical conferences at various levels - 70.8% of teachers.

Answering the question “How do you use professional standards for planning your professional training?”, 63.3% of young teachers (76 people) and 40.6% of experienced teachers (56 people) specified that they use them for lessons planning; 70% of young teachers (84 people) and 26.1% of experienced teachers (36 people) - for drawing up the detailed outline of a lesson; 57.5% of young teachers (69 people) and 23.2% of experienced teachers (32 people) - in extracurricular activities; 80% of young teachers (96 people) and 42.8% of experienced teachers (59 people) introduced professional standards into the development of a syllabus; 74.2% of young teachers (89 people) and 30.4% of teachers with experience (42 people) use them for self-education, when preparing lessons.

The question “What relationship should be there between teacher assessment and professional standards?” has the following answers: 78.3% of young teachers (94 people) and 30.4% of experienced teachers (42 people) believe that professional standards increase accountability, upgrade qualification and evaluation criteria.

Thus, speaking generally about the attitude of teachers to professional standards, then we can come to the following conclusion: 71.7% of young teachers (86 people) and 33.3% teachers with experience (46 people) have a positive attitude (high level) to professional standards and their assessment in general; 15.8% of young teachers (19 people) and 21.7% of teachers with experience (30 people) show various attitude to professional standards, it may be said that these teachers have normal attitude (medium level) to the use of professional standards at work, depending on the circumstances; 12.5% of young teachers (15 people) and 44.9% teachers with experience (62 people) have a negative attitude towards professional standards (low level). Graphically, the results are presented in Figure 1.

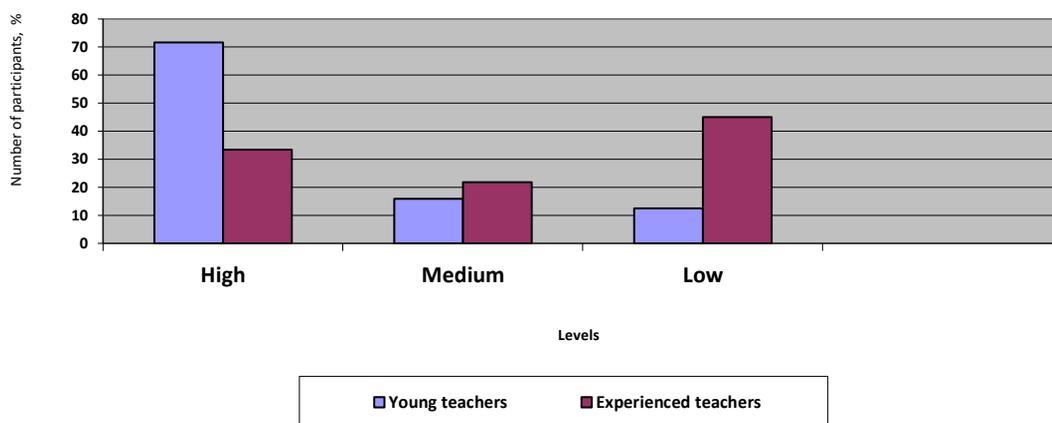


Fig. 1 Levels of attitude to professional standards among young teachers and experienced teachers

As it can be seen from the obtained data, a high level of attitude to professional standards is predominant among young teachers, there is a positive attitude towards professional standards, while in the group of experienced teachers there is mostly negative attitude towards professional standards, non-acceptance of standards, lack of wish to use them in professional activities.

### Findings

To prove the validity of the study data, we used data processing methods, in particular, the

Student's t-test. As a result of using the Student's t-test, we found that there are significant differences between the average values of the attitude to professional standards in the group of young teachers and experienced teachers, since  $t_{emp} > t_{cr}$  ( $t_{emp} = -3,34$  with  $p = 0,01$ ).

### Conclusion

Thus, our study of the features of the professional standard assessment by young teachers allows us to draw the following conclusions: young teachers believe that professional standards are useful for assessing the work of teachers; note that professional standards are important for their professional development; consider professional standards as constructive policies aimed at improving learning; emphasize that professional standards are useful in identifying key issues for teachers to improve their professional activity; note that professional standards are a suitable tool to support professional development of teachers; emphasize that professional standards are important for enhancing professional skills of teachers; they believe that professional standards are important for upward mobility of a teacher.

However, educators note that professional standards entail bureaucratic control over teachers, and that professional standards are the way to increase teacher accountability.

Thus, speaking generally about the attitude of teachers to professional standards, we can say the following: 71.7% of young teachers and 33.3% teachers with experience have a positive attitude (high level) to professional standards and their assessment in general; 15.8% of young teachers and 21.7% of teachers with experience show various attitude to professional standards, it may be said that these teachers have normal attitude (medium level) to the use of professional standards at work, depending on the circumstances; 12.5% of young teachers and 44.9% teachers with experience have a negative attitude towards professional standards (low level).

In the course of our study, we compared the features of professional teacher standard assessment by young teachers and educators with experience, we used methods of mathematical data processing to prove the obtained data, namely, Student's t-test. Its application proved that there are differences in the assessment of professional standard by young teachers and teachers with experience, the results are confirmed at the significance level  $p = 0.05$ .

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