# INNOVATING TEACHING METHODS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION STUDENTS AT HAI PHONG UNIVERSITY TO FOSTER LEARNER COMPETENCIES

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**Abstract:** Innovating teaching methods towards competency-based education is a crucial and urgent requirement to improve training quality and meet the demands of ongoing educational reform. This study focuses on innovating teaching methods for Primary Education students at Hai Phong University. Current practices indicate that many teacher training institutions still rely predominantly on traditional teaching methods, emphasizing written and oral assessments, with limited formative evaluation, practical activities, and experiential learning. Such approaches restrict students' creativity, critical thinking, and their ability to apply knowledge effectively in real-life contexts. This paper proposes a series of solutions including integrating traditional and modern teaching methods, increasing the use of digital technologies, organizing cooperative group learning, and innovating assessment through continuous evaluation and well-defined criteria for learning outcomes. The study affirms that this comprehensive and synchronized innovation is essential to enhancing the quality of teacher education, equipping Primary Education students with the holistic competencies required to meet professional demands in the context of general education reform.

**Keywords:** Teaching method innovation, primary education, competency development, teacher training.

## ĐỔI MỚI PHƯƠNG PHÁP DẠY HỌC CHO SINH VIÊN NGÀNH GIÁO DỤC TIỂU HỌC TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HẢI PHÒNG THEO HƯỚNG PHÁT TRIỂN NĂNG LỰC NGƯỜI HỌC

**Tóm tắt:** Đổi mới phương pháp dạy học (PPDH) theo định hướng phát triển năng lực người học là vấn đề có ý nghĩa quan trọng và cần thiết nhằm nâng cao chất lượng,

đáp ứng yêu cầu đổi mới giáo dục trong giai đoạn hiện nay. Bài viết tập trung vào vấn đề đổi mới PPDH cho sinh viên ngành Giáo dục Tiểu học, Trường Đại học Hải Phòng. Thực trạng cho thấy nhiều cơ sở đào tạo vẫn áp dụng các phương pháp giảng dạy truyền thống, kiểm tra, đánh giá chủ yếu bằng bài viết và vấn đáp, ít đánh giá qua quá trình, ít thực hành và trải nghiệm thực tế, khiến khả năng sáng tạo, phản biện, vận dụng kiến thức của sinh viên còn hạn chế. Bài báo đề xuất các giải pháp gồm: kết hợp phương pháp truyền thống với phương pháp hiện đại; tăng cường ứng dụng công nghệ số; tổ chức học nhóm hợp tác; đổi mới đánh giá qua quá trình và sản phẩm học tập với tiêu chí rõ ràng. Bài viết khẳng định sự đổi mới đồng bộ này là cần thiết để nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo, giúp sinh viên ngành Giáo dục Tiểu học phát triển năng lực toàn diện và đáp ứng yêu cầu nghề nghiệp trong bối cảnh đổi mới giáo dục phổ thông.

**Từ khóa:** Đổi mới phương pháp dạy học, sinh viên tiểu học, phát triển năng lực.

# 1. Introduction

In the context of international integration and rapid scientific and technological advancement, fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education and training is an urgent necessity to improve human resource quality and meet the demands of sustainable socio-economic development. Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW issued by the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam highlights the critical importance of innovating teaching methods aimed at developing learners' capacities and qualities by shifting from traditional passive teaching approaches to learner-centered methods that foster initiative and creativity [1].

In particular, for the field of Primary Education, especially at teacher training institutions such as Hai Phong University,

innovating teaching methods to develop learners' competencies not only enhances training quality but also directly impacts teaching effectiveness and graduates' ability to meet professional requirements. Therefore, researching and innovating teaching methods for Primary Education students at Hai Phong University is a practical and urgent issue contributing to the implementation of fundamental and comprehensive educational innovation as outlined in Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW.

# 2. Theoretical framework of the study

## 2.1. Competence

According to the Vietnamese Dictionary, competence refers to the psychological and physiological qualities as well as professional qualifications that enable an individual to perform specific activities with high quality [5, p. 1037].

Vu Van Dai defines competence as the ability to act, achieve results, and progress by appropriately performing tasks and activities in professional or personal life, based on organized knowledge including multidisciplinary knowledge, skills, strategies, perceptions, and attitudes [3, p. 129].

The General Education Program describes competence as a personal attribute developed through innate qualities and the learning process, enabling learners to mobilize a synthesis of knowledge, skills, and personal traits such as interest, belief, and willpower to successfully complete specific activities under certain conditions [2, p. 37].

From these perspectives, competence is understood as the outcome of education and training, expressed through relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes enabling effective participation in specific fields of activity.

## 2.2. Competency-based teaching

Teaching aimed at developing learners' competencies is a learner-centered educational approach focused on helping students not only acquire knowledge but also demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes in practical contexts. The learning content is constructed with clear output standards, emphasizing problem-solving and application rather than mere theory transmission. Teachers act as facilitators who guide, support, and monitor students' learning progress, while students actively engage and self-regulate their learning based on continuous feedback and assessment. The defining feature of competency-based learning is the assessment of learners' demonstrated competence, reflecting mastery, understanding, and effective application of knowledge and skills in practice.

## 3. Content

### 3.1. The necessity of innovating teaching methods to enhance learners' competency

Innovating teaching methods is essential to foster learners' capacity for action, initiative, proactivity, and creativity. This innovation marks a transition from content-focused to competency-based education programs. Despite progress, the Ministry of Education and Training notes persistent limitations: many institutions continue using unidirectional knowledge transmission-lecturers lecture while students passively listen and memorize-leading to weak critical thinking, creativity, and application skills. Students often lack motivation and opportunities for interactive, practical, and experiential

learning, resulting in a gap between theory and practice. "The teaching methods in many institutions have not been substantially innovated in quality or quantity. Although 'reading and copying' behaviors have been reduced, lesson plans often fail to reflect clear pedagogical orientations or stimulate learner creativity. Innovations by teachers exist but are inconsistently implemented and often remain formalistic" [4, p. 30].

In recent years, the teaching activities at the Faculty of Primary and Early Childhood Education - Hai Phong University - have made significant efforts toward innovation through a competency-based approach, contributing to the improvement of teacher training quality to meet the requirements of the new general education curriculum. Faculty members have proactively updated their knowledge, innovated teaching methods, and gradually integrated information technology into the organization of learning activities for students. However, certain limitations still exist and need to be addressed.

Teaching methods remain heavily focused on knowledge transmission. Some lecturers continue to rely primarily on traditional methods such as lecturing and explanation, without effectively combining them with more modern, student-centered approaches such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, or experiential learning. As a result, students tend to remain passive and have limited opportunities to develop critical thinking and creativity in their learning process.

The application of digital technology in teaching has not yet been implemented in a comprehensive or effective manner. While some lecturers have begun to use software and online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, PowerPoint, and Kahoot, the utilization of learning management systems (LMS), interactive lesson design tools, and simulated teaching environments remains limited. This hinders the effectiveness of flexible, personalized teaching and the development of students' technological competencies.

Group-based learning activities are still largely formalistic and have not effectively promoted students' active participation. In many classes, group work is limited to simple group discussions without clear role assignment or processes that cultivate collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills-competencies that are essential for future teachers.

Assessment practices remain heavily knowledge-oriented, with traditional formats such as written exams and multiple-choice tests being dominant. Alternative forms of assessment, such as performance tasks, pedagogical practice assignments, group projects, or student portfolios, are

still infrequently employed. Consequently, a comprehensive evaluation of students' professional competencies is lacking.

Given these challenges, it is evident that innovating teaching methods in the direction of competency development is an urgent requirement in the current context of educational reform. Particularly, in the field of training early childhood and primary school teachers-those directly responsible for educating the youngest learners-enhancing students' comprehensive competencies is not only necessary but also strategically important for improving the overall quality of general education.

### 3.2. Measures to innovate teaching methods for primary education students at Hai Phong University

#### 3.2.1. Integrating traditional and modern teaching methods

In the context of educational reform, combining traditional and modern teaching methods flexibly is effective for comprehensive competency development. Instead of discarding traditional methods, they should be improved and integrated with active teaching strategies to make learning diverse, engaging, and professionally relevant. For example, lecturers can blend direct instruction with problem-based learning, group work, project-based learning, and digital technology-enhanced activities. Teaching Vietnamese Language

Methods may involve theoretical presentations followed by group discussions on pedagogical scenarios or designing digital lessons aligned with the 2018 General Education Program. Innovations encompass communication methods, activity organization, questioning techniques, critical thinking stimulation, and assessment strategies. These changes foster students' proactive knowledge acquisition, professional skills, classroom management, and creativity in lesson design.

At Hai Phong University's Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education, systematic implementation of this combined approach tailored to faculty capacity, facilities, and student characteristics is fundamental to training competent primary teachers capable of meeting educational reform requirements.

#### 3.2.2. Enhancing the use of digital technologies to foster learner autonomy and creativity

In the digital transformation era, integrating information technology and digital tools in teaching is a vital solution for improving primary teacher training quality. Appropriate technology creates flexible, dynamic learning environments that stimulate students' interest, initiative, and creativity.

Lecturers at Hai Phong University employ tools such as Google Classroom

for online class management; Padlet for idea sharing; Canva for visual content creation; Kahoot and Quizizz for gamified assessments; Jamboard for group collaboration; and AI applications like ChatGPT to support information retrieval, idea development, debate, and pedagogical skills practice. Students are also encouraged to produce technology-based learning products, such as digital lessons, instructional videos, and e-portfolios, demonstrating essential competencies in design thinking and creativity.

Technology use must align with pedagogical goals and be appropriate for course content and student levels. Institutional support in training and infrastructure is crucial for effective digital teaching. Increased technology integration enriches teaching methods and fosters digital literacy, self-directed learning, and creativity-key competencies for adapting to evolving professional demands.

### 3.2.3. *Organizing cooperative group learning to develop teamwork and communication*

Modern education prioritizes developing teamwork, cooperation, and communication skills, crucial for primary teachers interacting with students, parents, and colleagues. Group learning promotes these competencies early in training.

Instructors can organize small group discussions, problem-solving tasks, role-playing simulations, and presentations replicating primary classroom scenarios. Group learning cultivates critical thinking, expression, listening, persuasion, and coordination skills essential for teaching. It also fosters a collaborative, open learning environment where students share knowledge and support each other, moving away from passive, competitive learning. Effective group learning requires well-designed tasks, equitable workload distribution, and transparent assessment criteria for both individuals and groups. Combining face-to-face with online platforms (Zalo, Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams) further enhances collaboration.

Group learning is particularly encouraged in specialized subjects (Vietnamese Language Teaching Methods, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Studies) and soft skills courses, offering practical opportunities to practice core competencies aligned with educational reform goals.

### 3.2.4. *Innovating assessment methods to evaluate learning competencies*

Assessment is not merely a tool for grading but a mechanism to promote competency development. Reforming

assessment helps lecturers monitor learning progress, practical skills, and creativity, enabling timely instructional adjustments. Moving beyond traditional written and oral exams, diverse assessment approaches should be adopted. Formative assessments-practical exercises, projects, group discussions, learning journals, and interactive activities-enable continuous monitoring and self-awareness of strengths and areas for improvement. Assessing learning products such as lesson plans, teaching videos, portfolios, and project reports explicitly measures application ability, organization, and creativity. Peer and self-assessments foster learner autonomy and responsibility, encouraging reflection and constructive feedback. Transparent evaluation based on clear criteria, such as rubrics, ensures fairness and clarity, helping students understand performance standards and strive effectively.

This holistic assessment approach shifts focus from rote knowledge to comprehensive competencies, motivating active participation and skill practice. It is vital for aligning Primary Education training at Hai Phong University with general education reform objectives.

## 4. Conclusion

Innovating teaching methods towards developing learners' competencies is an urgent imperative to enhance training quality for Primary Education students at Hai Phong University. Through the flexible integration of traditional and modern methods, expanded use of digital technologies, cooperative group learning, and innovative assessment practices, the training process fosters not only proactive knowledge acquisition but also comprehensive professional competencies. These synchronized innovations cultivate a dynamic learning environment that encourages creativity, collaboration, and self-directed learning, preparing a cohort of primary educators equipped to meet the demands of educational reform and sustainable development in Vietnam.

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