

# NATIONAL LITERATURE AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT THE GENERAL CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE SPECIALISTS: PERSONALISTIC CONTEKST

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## ***Abstract***

*Today, students are losing interest in reading, considering it just waste of time. They rarely visit theater, artistic exhibitions, and show little interest in classical music. The Internet, social networks, cinema etc. have pushed out the arts from the sphere of cultural interests of young people. So, according to our respondents, literature as one of the genres of art ranks third, being inferior to cinema and music. And such arts as decorative crafts, opera, circus, ballet, symphony music, painting, sculpture, architecture, choreography occupy the last positions. This situation is worrying because such means of raising spirituality, the general cultural level, intelligence, as literature and art (all its genres) lose their educational effect. She requires the development of a strategy for the formation of the general cultural level of future intellectuals. In our opinion, the first step on this path should be to use the potential of literature, including the regional literature. National (regional) fiction can become a powerful means of stimulating the reading interests of students, i.e. it can become that particular initial stage that will encourage them to get further deeper knowledge of culture and arts.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Today, students are losing interest in reading, considering it just waste of time. They rarely visit theater, artistic exhibitions, and show little interest in classical music. The Internet, social networks, cinema etc. have pushed out the arts from the sphere of cultural interests of young people. This is confirmed by the results of our study. It was conducted during 2013-2018 at the Pedagogical Faculty of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, the Faculty of Humanities of Mukachevo State University, and the Medical Faculty of I. Horbachevsky Ternopil State Medical University.

So, according to our respondents, literature as one of the genres of art ranks third, being inferior to cinema and music. And such arts as decorative crafts, opera, circus, ballet, symphony music, painting, sculpture, architecture, choreography occupy the last positions. Thus, 35% – 46% of the respondents stated that they had never been interested in these arts (they do not listen to opera, do not like symphonic music, do not attend artistic exhibitions, are not competent in architecture, do not watch ballet performances etc.). 33% of our respondents go to the theater occasionally, 67% attend outdoor concerts (usually held in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Mukachevo).

This situation is worrying because such means of raising spirituality, the general cultural level, intelligence, as literature and art (all its genres) lose their educational effect; they are distanced from the student youth. Such a situation requires the development of a strategy for the formation of the general cultural level of future intellectuals, university education professionals who must have high aesthetic tastes, needs, know and understand contemporary and classical art in all of its genre diversity. In our opinion, the first step on this path should be to use the potential of literature, including the regional literature: it is necessary to move from smaller to larger, from regional to general. We believe that regional fiction can become a powerful means of stimulating the reading interests of students, i.e. it can become that particular initial stage that will encourage them to get further deeper knowledge of culture and arts.

This problem is at the center of attention of teachers, scientists, even officials, employees of specialized ministries. In Ukraine, for example, there has been created Ukrainian Institute of Books, a state institution in the field of culture and arts, its purpose being “support of book publishing, popularization of reading, stimulation of translation activity, popularization of Ukrainian literature in the world” [1]. Here we see a certain contradiction: among the key functions of this institution, there is no means of realizing one of its tasks – “popularization of reading”. In our opinion, such a state institution should have already developed model mechanisms of forming the reading culture of young people and promoting the reading interests of Ukrainians.

Analysis of the research done in the field has revealed that the issues of literary competence of future specialists are considered by a number of foreign scholars, for example, by German researchers W.

Nieke (competence and culture) (2012), Gerda Haßler (2017) and Thomas Stehl (linguistic, textual, literary competence, creativity, linguistic variability etc.) [2]. M. Heynitz emphasizes the need to improve literary education and to assess educational knowledge after PISA [3].

The works of methodological character of Coyne Kami'Enui and Carmine (2007) [4], Snow and Sweet (2003) [5], Daniels and Steres (2015) [6] related to the subject matter of our research are also interesting.

In this context, the following publications are worth attention: "Literary competence and the literature" by T. Witte, T. Janssen and G. Rijlaarsdam [7] devoted to two empirical studies to describe the variation in the literature curriculum and the development of literary competence in upper secondary education in the Netherlands; "Enhancing the literary competencies of literature learners through activities – an action research" by E. Sulochana Neraanjani [8], which considers the foreign (Dutch) experience of enhancing the level of literary competence of personality and the means of forming students' literary education; "Teaching and learning English literature", "Teaching and learning the humanities in higher education. U.K." by E. Chambers and M. Gregory [9] (M. Chambers E. & Gregory M. (2006) Teaching and learning English literature", "Teaching and learning the humanities in higher education. U.K. SAGE Publishers), "Literature in the language classroom. A resource book of ideas and activities" by J. Collie and S. Slater (Collie J. & Slater S. (2001) Literature in the Language Classroom. A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities. Cambridge University Press.) [10]. All of these works emphasize the relevance of literary education.

The problem of the role of the book in the life of the individual is the subject of research of various national sciences – literary studies, pedagogy, psychology, cultural studies, sociology, philosophy etc. However, our research is dealing with the issue, which has not yet been sufficiently studied by the domestic researchers.

The hypothesis of the study is to consider the reading culture of future specialists in various fields as a core component of their spiritual world, of their general cultural level, and ultimately, of their competence (the culture of professional activity), which is a complex polystructural phenomenon, being a set of competences, abilities, skills, and personality traits, necessary for future productive work. The students' reading interests will increase significantly due to implementing the developed organizational and methodological system of teaching reading, which implies: a) providing knowledge of the works of contemporary writers in general and the regional writers, in particular; b) updating the content of the higher schools curricula by introducing studies of contemporary popular works for children and young people written by regional authors; c) introducing the "regional component", the fiction of local writers, into the extracurricular work; d) creating a rich literary environment; e) actively propagating reading by teachers; e) involving teachers-writers in the process of popularizing reading.

The importance of solving this problem is due to the following contradictions: as our analysis of the university curricula has shown, among the specified general competences of future specialists, there is no such competence as "general cultural competence", none of the specified competences implies the formation of a general cultural level; the requirements of the information society for the intellectual and

cultural development of future specialists and the decrease in students' interest in the book, it being a source of knowledge and spirituality; the social need for the education of patriot intellectuals, with an active civic position, and insufficient attention of teachers to this social demand (given that literary regional studies are the primary basis of patriotic education of the individual); declaration of attention by state agents to popularizing reading and the lack of the developed mechanisms of this process; concern of the university teachers and educators as to the lack of interest in reading by Ukrainian students and the lack of a developed methodological system aimed at forming reading interests of future specialists.

It is important, in our opinion, to take a closer look at this problem from another perspective: enhancing the general cultural level of future specialists largely correlates with the formation of their spiritual world, general culture of their future children. Today's students are tomorrow's parents. They will be the first teachers and educators of their own children. They will introduce them to the world, and make their children acquainted with the world of children's literature and art.

Thus, we believe that the priority should be given to popularizing modern books for children and youth, in particular, those written by the regional authors. Our research (among other things) is intended to systematize and summarize the creative achievements of writers and area studies specialists of the Precarpathian, Transcarpathian, and Ternopil regions, to show the place of regional literature in the literary process of Ukraine, and to highlight the great potential of the literature of the native land for the education of readers.

The literary Precarpathia is represented by dozens of both well-known and little-known names, among them 12 writers being the winners of the Shevchenko Prize (Iryna Vilde, Roman Ivanychuk, Ivan Malkovych, Vasyl Herasyumiuk, Taras Melnychuk, Dmytro Pavlychko, Stepan Pushyk, Fedir Pohrebennyk, Yarema Hoian, Roman Fedoriv, Vira Vovk, Mykola Andrusiak). In 2018, 57 writers were the members of the National Union of Writers of Ivano-Frankivsk region. Ternopil region is represented by five winners of the Shevchenko Prize: Stepan Sapeliak, Hrygoriy Shton, Roman Andriashyk, Ivan Hnatiuk, Roman Lubkivskyi. Five Transcarpathian writers are also the holders of the highest literary award: Ivan Chendey, Petro Skunts, Dmytro Kremin, Petro Midianka, Myroslav Dochynets. However, the majority (80%-85%) of our respondents are not familiar with the works of their regional writers.

## **II. Materials and methods**

The research work was carried out at the Pedagogical Faculty of PNU (90 students majoring in Pedagogical Education), the Faculty of Humanities of MSU (60 students majoring in Secondary Education (English language and Foreign literature), and the Medical Faculty of TSMU (90 students specializing in Medicine) in 2013-2017.

Applying the empirical methods such as questionnaires, conversations, interviews, and observations, we studied the place of fiction in the system of students' requests, its role in the spiritual development of a personality. Besides, we were interested in studying the reading interests of future specialists in pedagogy (teachers of primary school, teachers of English and foreign literature) and

medicine. We were also interested in learning how well they know the regional fiction, to what degree they are aware of the reflection of modern pedagogical problems in the works of fiction. Statistical methods were used to process the research results.

The whole complex of the methods used ensured the validity of the results obtained. We also managed to compare the results obtained in 2017 with those got during the research carried out at the then Pedagogical Institute of PNU, and the Faculty of Humanities of MSU in 2013 (a more detailed consideration is given in: G. Bilavych & I. Rozman (2016)) [11]. This made it possible to trace the development trends of students' reading interests, and introduce some appropriate changes into the methodology of its formation.

### III. Results

As the results of the study showed, compared with 2013, the “love for reading” indicator for PNU students – future pedagogical professionals – decreased from 82% to 53%. Similar changes took place in the way students spent their free time. In 2013, in response to the question “How do you spend your spare time?” 68 % of the respondents said they were reading fiction. In 2016, answering the same question, only 47% of the respondents pointed reading fiction as the way they spent free time while 43% of the students indicated “active use of social networks and the Internet to communicate with their friends” (in 2013, this indicator was 20%). 60% of the respondents spent their spare time listening to music, watching movies, reading popular blogs. We think that such a situation is caused by a number of social and cultural reasons: increasing amount of information, rapid development of the Internet, domination of TV and cinema culture, high prices for books, prevalence of Russian-language literature on the book market (often of low art value), insufficient popularization of books for children and youth written by regional writers etc.

The results of the survey conducted in 2018 indicated the appearance of such a phenomenon as “bibliophobes” (20% – 26%). Such figures raise the problem of cultivating the culture of reading among future specialists, and think over the ways to find the appropriate solutions.

We also analyzed the reading interests of students from the three universities. Typically, boys and girls prefer detectives (averaging 50%–60%), fantasies (40%–45%); historical literature (30%), adventure literature (20%), “love novels” (50%–55%), and lyrics (8% – 10%).

Interestingly, students believe that fiction has an educational value. They agree that the book is an educational tool. However, there is a certain contradiction. Most of our respondents (75%–80%) were not able to give examples of contemporary works of art in which the issue of education was raised. Consequently, fiction, for various reasons, loses its educational role among higher school students; students' interest in reading is decreasing. Unfortunately, the literary potential of the Precarpathian, Transcarpathian, and Ternopil regions is virtually unknown to the student community.

The formative experiment was conducted on the basis of PNU. It was discovered that the literary regional studies of the Precarpathian region as a branch of educational knowledge was absolutely not

applied in the higher school, as evidenced by the results of the analysis of curricula for the preparation of both bachelors and masters of pedagogy. The conclusion is unambiguous: in the higher school, future specialists are not trained to teach literary regional studies in public schools or in educational institutions of the I-II levels of accreditation. In the curricula there was found no subject of the literary-linguistic cycle dealing with such studies. In part, these issues are considered in the course "Literature for Children". Unfortunately, only 1 lecture and 1 practical lesson of this course are devoted to making students acquainted with the writers of the Precarpathian region, who write for children: Mariyka Pidhirianka, Kostiantyna Malyska, Dmytro Pavlychko, Stepan Pushyk, Lesia Dyrkavets-Pylypiuk, Vira Bahirova, Yaroslav Yarosh, Stepan Protsiuk etc.). The curriculum for the preparation of masters of pedagogy does not provide for the study of the regional literature.

Under these conditions, the need to create such a literary rich environment in a higher school that encourages and motivates students to read becomes urgent. Using the theoretical gains of the researchers dealing with the problem of literary studies at school and the experience of V. Sukhomlynsky in Pavlysh school, we created such an environment at the pedagogical faculty of PNU, where the literature of the native land was the key factor.

The competition of creative projects "Writer of my land", in which students took part during 2016-2018, was an effective means and form of developing students' interest in reading. The participants of the creative contest wrote an essay or created information projects about a regional ethnographer or a writer. Then they made presentations during the round table discussion in the "Literaturna Svitlytsia" (Literary Room), which gave an opportunity to exchange information about the literary process of the Precarpathian region, to learn about the works of little-known authors. The requirements of the contest were the following: to briefly characterize the writer's biography and his/her work, to advertise these works, to make a scenario of an educational event or an outline of a lesson devoted to the work of this regional writer. The best students' works were selected for publication, and the students' projects formed the basis of the electronic catalogue "Writers of the Precarpathian region". According to the results of the creative contest, the electronic dictionary-reference "Writers of the Precarpathian region" was compiled, which highlighted the research achievements of future pedagogues. During the round-table discussion, we asked the students to complete a questionnaire including the following questions: "What writers have you heard about for the first time today?", "Whose works would you like to read?" In this way, the students "discovered" Mykola Yanovskyi, a poet and prose-writer (a book of novels and stories "Wedding musicians were playing", collection "Mountain heart" etc.), the poet Yosyp Kuz (collection "The unsubdued song"), Paraska Plytka-Horytsvit, a writer, folk philosopher, author of fairy tales, folklorist and ethnographer, area studies specialist, "Homer of Hutsulshchyna" (a book of records, legends and stories "The Gift to the Native Land"), Halyna Maksymiv (poetry "Berezil", "From the Nut Grain", "Scythia"), Nataliia Danyiuk (collection "The Woman in the Opposite Window"), Mariia Vaino (novel in short stories "Warm Piece, or Rhapsody of the String Quartet", screen novel "The man on credit, or the fourth version", collection "The woman with a glass of rain"), Vasyl Babiy (works of "Revenge of the Vigilantes (Opryshkys)", "The Rostyslavovychs", "Disturbed nights" etc), Stepan Pidhirniak (collection of poems "The Temple of Soul"), Myroslava Hryniv from Ivano-Frankivsk (collection "The Tale of the

Soul”), Bohdan Tsiutsiak (book “Flowers for Children”), Mykhailo Borys (novels ”Sophia, the Slave”, “Shine of Light” (“Siaivo Yasnoi”)), Liubomyr Mykhailiv (collections “Formula of Grain”, “Mountain Land”, “Keys of the Sun”, “The Autograph of Love”), Oksana Spodar (collection of poems “Birth of the Flower”), Evdokia Kiprych (collection “My Beloved World”), Ivan Drapchuk (collections “Poetry of Stars”, “On the Palms of the Earth”, “Rain of Autumn Apples”), Mykola Dizhevsky (collections “The Clear Stars of Taras”, ”Chervona Ruta”, “The Baltic Dawns of Taras”), Dmytro Khalus, a poet-priest (collection “Revelation”) etc. Most of the authors and their works are little known.

The best result of such activity was that individual students (usually two to three each year) chose topics for their master’s studies related to problems of literary regional studies at school. In the same aspect, the work of the scientific group “Stylistics of the scientific text” is being organized. The students study various aspects of the literary regional studies of the Precarpathian region, as well as the peculiarities of the development of the literary process in general, present the results of their research at the student reporting scientific conferences. The best works are recommended for publication in domestic and foreign scientific journals.

Creating rich literary environment, we organized a travelling student library, it being a kind of a book lovers club, constantly joint by new participants. To become a member, you need to give the library an artistic or scientific (professionally oriented) book, usually a novelty of literature, as well as works by regional writers. In our opinion, such a move between student books serves as an effective means of popularizing reading even among those who do not like to read. Also, we constantly introduced new works for children and youth by the regional writers, arranged systematic literary reviews etc. For this purpose there served an exhibition of books arranged by the travelling student library.

During the Ukrainian Writing Day, there was organized the Ukrainian Book Festival for students, which was held in an interesting format, one of the events being collective literary game-competition for the best knowledge of the writers of the Precarpathian region. It became clear that such a game form was the best way to motivate students for more reading, as the use of interactive methods and forms (literary games, quizzes, student videos, as well as shooting by students of such videos as “Literary Precarpatheans”, “Precarpathean writers – the winners of the national book contest “Coronation of the Word”, “Precarpathean writers – laureates of the Shevchenko Prize”, “Precarpathean writers – authors of works for children and youth”, “Favorite Precarpathean writers of Ivano-Frankivsk schoolchildren”) serve the best interests of reading students, as they become active participants in the Festivity of the Ukrainian Book. Students are not only organizers of this literary rich environment, but also promoters of reading.

#### **IV. Discussion**

The use of innovative forms of learning, such as educational coaching, ensured the effectiveness of introducing a method for increasing the level of general culture of future teachers. This included their participation in the activity of the Scientific and Methodological Center “University for Gifted Children”, which operates at the “Precarpathian University” Science Park of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National

University. This unique educational and scientific project (the only one of such kind in Ukraine) brought together highly-qualified university teachers, prominent scientists, creative educators of the city, famous writers, artists and other creative personalities on the idea of purposeful creation of an educational environment based on the use of modern information and communication and innovative technologies that would serve the development of gifted children. Teachers, together with their students, arrange master classes, excursions, and other events for schoolchildren in the city, aimed at making them learn more about the history and culture of their native land and literary regional studies.

We have become convinced that the important factor in developing literary competence and interest in reading is creative meetings with teachers-writers. Such meetings were organized with O. Derkachova, T. Prokhasko, V. Yeshkiliev, O. Sloniovska, S. Protsiuk, M. Tkachivska and others. The teaching activity of the writer O. Derkacheva, which is an example of active participation in public activities (arranging, together with her master students, meetings with writers, organizing master classes in the University for Gifted Children, involving students in presentations of modern literature, organizing literary quests, competitions etc.) creates an appropriate literary environment directly during student training at university as well as in their extracurricular activities.

Good experience in creating a literary-rich environment was gained at TDMU, where since 2016 there has worked “Ukrainian Language and Culture Club” (as a permanent open space for students’ spiritual and intellectual communication), which is designed to provide intellectual leisure with the help of master classes, meetings, excursions, holidays with literary artists, figures in the field of art studies, religious studies, folklore studies. As a result of the activities of this Club, university students first of all deeply studied the works of teaching writers, in particular, the novels of a talented prose writer, surgeon, associate professor Orest Berezhovskiy (“Intermaidservant”, “Europe-Centre (1941-1957)”, “Pink Toxin (1957-1965)”, “Fouled Wing”), and the cycles of novels written by the famous writer of the region, associate professor of the department of obstetrics and gynecology Lesya Romanchuk (“Do not Leave”, “Blossom Sloe”, “Four Roads”, “Knights of Love and Hope”, “The City of Dwarfs”) as well as her other poetic and prose works. Within the framework of this Club, which also includes foreign students (more than 1,700 international students study at this higher school), medical students have the opportunity to communicate with well-known authors of the Ternopil region. Thus, Oleksandr Vilchynskiy presented to the student community his novels “The Last Hero”, “Purely Literary Murder”, “Viagra for the Mayor”; Nadiia Herbish introduced her “Warm coffee stories”, “Warm chocolate stories”; and Petro Soroka acquainted the students with his works “To the West from the Falling Sun”, “The Sign of the Heart”.

In Mukachevo State University we organized a contest of creative projects and offered students studying at the humanitarian faculty, to write a creative work “My favorite writer of the Transcarpathian region”. According to the results of the competition, the best students’ works were singled out, thus a literary gallery of well-known authors of the region was created, among whom there were not only the aforementioned laureates of the Shevchenko Prize, but also Victoria Andrusiv, Yuriy Baleha, Karoy Balla, Vasyl Basarab, Les Beley, Eva Bernitski- Balla, Taras Vashchuk, Vasyl Vovchok, Olersandr Havrosh, Yuriy Hoida, Lydia Holomb, Vasyl Husti, Tomash Deiak, Andriy Durunda, Nataliia Durunda, Stepan Zhupanyan and others.



While creating a rich literary environment, we remembered that it was also very important that the teachers themselves be active readers, book lovers, and show to students that it's modern trend to love reading. Great importance in this process was assigned to the local faculty library, whose employees, in close cooperation with the teachers, could become a factor in increasing the future specialists' interest in reading books.

At the end of the experimental study, a student survey was conducted again. The following aspects were taken into consideration: students' love for the book, interest in reading, including works by regional writers, knowledge of the literature of their native land. Thus, the students of PNU, who are very fond of reading, know most writers of their native land, analyze their works, have knowledge about ethnographers of the Precarpathian region, are eager to learn more about the literary process of their native land (32% of the respondents compared to 24% at the beginning of the experiment) were referred to people with high level of interest in reading. Master students, who read from time to time, can name seven-ten Precarpathian writers and their works, can recall the names of two-three famous native ethnographers and their works, and sometimes read "news" (41% against 28% at the beginning of the experiment) were referred to people with an average level of reading interests, and those who are indifferent to reading, know three to five authors and their literary works, are not interested in regional studies (27%, at the beginning of the experiment – 48%), were attributed to people with a low level of interest in reading. Comparison of the results at the beginning and the end of the study proves that the methods and forms of activities with the works of the Precarpathian writers provide productive assimilation of artistic information, expand the reading horizons of future specialists, and increase their general cultural level. As we witnessed, the developed methodology proved to be effective, so similar methods and forms of activity began to be implemented at MSU and TSMU. This work is going on now. At the end of the school year (June 2018), we plan to complete an experimental study at these educational institutions.

We confirmed our hypothesis that the regional fiction could become a powerful means of developing students' interest in reading, being the initial stage, encouraging students to get further deeper knowledge of culture and art. Our methodology was to create a rich literary environment at universities, to systematize and generalize the creative achievements of writers and ethnographers of the Precarpathian, Transcarpathian, and Ternopil regions as a factor in the education of students.

We believe that it is essential to change the curricula in universities where specialists in various spheres of life are being trained. The components of the education programs for bachelor's and master's should include selective courses, for example "Literature of the Native Land", "Modern National and Foreign Literature", "Art of Ukraine", "The Artistic Culture of the World", etc. For future specialists (especially for future educators) it is important to create rich literary and artistic environment that will enhance their general cultural level. This problem is especially relevant today, when the State Standard of Primary General Education, which carries out the concept of "New Ukrainian School", is being implemented in Ukraine. This document describes the profile (description of the basic competences) of the elementary school teacher. Among the competences - general cultural - the ability to understand works of art, to form their own artistic tastes, to express ideas, experience and feelings with the help of

art; self-awareness of the national identity as a basis for open-mindedness and respect for the diversity of cultural expressions of other people. In this regard, it is necessary to develop the mechanisms for raising general cultural level of students - future teachers of elementary school: after all they would build a New Ukrainian School, form the appropriate competences and values for children.

## V. Conclusion

The results of the analysis of scientific works show that literary regional studies as a scientific problem are relevant in both theoretical and practical aspects. This issue has not yet been the subject of a holistic scientific study. Regional literature has great potential for the spiritual development of the individual, in particular the formation of interest in reading, the development of the general cultural level of future specialists. However, the use of literary regional studies as an educational factor does not fully meet the needs of the time, which makes it relevant and appropriate to seek the ways to practically realize the educational possibilities of the regional literature.

Given the lack of theoretical developments, we considered it optimal to develop our own methodology, whose purpose was to expand the reading horizons of students by means of the regional literature. The proposed method implied introducing the local writers' works as the subject of study and education. It was introduced gradually, following a certain logical sequence, the emphasis was made on creating a literally saturated environment that would motivate students to read, stimulate their interest in the book, and develop their cultural horizons. It has been proved that attracting future specialists to participating in creative competitions, literary and scientific circles, writing scientific works, creative projects, organizing literary holidays, academies, attracting students to the organization of a student library, creative meetings with writers, direct contacts between students and writing teachers etc. contribute to the development of the students' general cultural level. The use of some innovative forms (educational coaching, creation of creative projects, video clips, thematic videos, organization of literary quests, scientific conferences, workshops etc.) positively influenced the literary development of students. This is evidenced by the results of the study. It is gratifying that we did not reveal any bibliophobes among students, which testifies to the great potential of the regional literature as a factor in cultivating the love for reading.

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