

Forming the Civic Position of Vocational Education Students Through the Teaching Of “Fundamentals of State and Law” In A Digital Learning Environment: A Conceptual and Methodological Approach

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Abstract: In the context of digital transformation, civic education requires not only the development of students' legal knowledge but also the cultivation of skills in critical information evaluation, understanding lawful conduct, and responsible participation in social life. This article examines the conceptual and methodological foundations for developing the civic position of vocational education students through the teaching of Fundamentals of State and Law using digital learning tools. The theoretical framework of the study is based on international concepts of digital civic education, competences for democratic culture, and the competency-based approach, as well as Uzbekistan's regulatory framework governing education and legal education. The civic position is conceptualized as an integrated pedagogical system comprising four interrelated components: cognitive, value-motivational, practical-activity, and reflective-evaluative. A conceptual and methodological model designed to develop these components is proposed. Its content is elaborated through problem-based legal scenarios, the use of official electronic legal sources, digital discussions, collaborative projects, and criteria-based reflective assessment. The article is theoretical and conceptual in nature; the effectiveness of the proposed model has not yet been empirically validated through experimental testing. Accordingly, its practical implementation, the validation of assessment criteria, and the analysis of research findings using appropriate statistical methods are identified as priorities for future research.

Keywords: Digital learning, civic position, digital citizenship, vocational education, legal education, democratic competences, Fundamentals of State and Law, problem-based learning, legal literacy, reflective assessment.

Introduction: The extensive integration of digital technologies into education, employment, and social relations necessitates a new approach to the content and methods of civic education. Today, an individual's conscious participation in social life depends not only on knowledge of the state and law but also on the ability to think independently in the digital information environment, identify reliable sources, critically analyse diverse viewpoints, and understand personal responsibility for one's actions. While the digital environment expands citizens' opportunities to access information, express opinions, and collaborate with others, it also gives rise to challenges related to misinformation, manipulative content, personal data

protection, and the ethics of digital communication. In this regard, integrating civic education with digital competencies has become one of the key priorities of contemporary education.

The UNESCO publication Global Citizenship Education in a Digital Age: Teacher Guidelines places particular emphasis on developing responsible participation in digital environments, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making [1]. The Council of Europe's Digital Citizenship Education Handbook conceptualizes digital citizenship through the interrelationship of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and critical understanding [2]. Similarly, the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture developed by the Council of

Europe approaches the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding required for effective participation in a democratic society as an integrated system [3].

These approaches demonstrate the need to examine civic position not merely as a body of legal knowledge but as a complex personal quality that develops through the interaction of knowledge, attitudes, values, and practical engagement.

This issue is particularly important in the vocational education system. Vocational education students will eventually work in specific professional teams, engage in various legal relationships, and make professional decisions. Understanding their rights and obligations, complying with the law, respecting the rights of others, and acting with social responsibility are essential aspects of both professional and civic maturity. Therefore, teaching Fundamentals of State and Law should go beyond memorizing legal concepts and involve creating a learning environment that enables students to apply their knowledge to real-life and professional situations. This subject offers significant pedagogical opportunities for exploring citizens' rights and obligations, relations between the state and society, the rule of law, human rights, and legal liability. However, the acquisition of theoretical knowledge does not, in itself, indicate that an active civic position has been developed. Students need to analyse legal situations, identify relevant sources, compare evidence, evaluate alternative solutions, and justify their decisions. This requires integrating the content of the subject with problem-based tasks, digital legal resources, interactive communication, and reflective assessment.

At the same time, the integration of digital tools into the educational process does not automatically guarantee their pedagogical effectiveness. Electronic tests, presentations, or learning platforms may fail to foster students' legal reasoning and sense of civic responsibility in a meaningful way if they are not aligned with clearly defined didactic objectives. Therefore, the central scientific and methodological challenge lies not in the use of digital technologies itself, but in integrating them into a coherent pedagogical system designed to develop the constituent components of students' civic position. The aim of this article is to substantiate a conceptual and methodological model for developing the civic position of vocational education students through the teaching of Fundamentals of State and Law in a digital learning environment and to clarify its constituent components. In line with this aim, the study seeks to characterise the substantive components of civic position, identify the pedagogical functions of digital didactic tools, develop

the interrelated elements of the methodological model, and outline promising directions for its empirical evaluation. The article is designed as a theoretical and conceptual study. Its methodological framework is based on systems, competency-based, activity-based, and learner-centred approaches. The systems approach makes it possible to examine the objectives, content, methods, tools, and outcomes of the process of developing civic position in terms of their interrelationships. The competency-based approach emphasises students' ability to apply acquired legal knowledge in practical situations. The activity-based approach engages students in identifying problems, searching for legal sources, analysing evidence, and drawing well-reasoned conclusions. The learner-centred approach, in turn, takes into account students' individual experiences, independent thinking, and active participation in the learning process.

In the theoretical analysis, international methodological resources on digital citizenship education and competences for democratic culture, together with the regulatory legal documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan relating to education, were examined as key sources. Comparative analysis was used to identify common features of these approaches, particularly the interrelationship between knowledge, values, skills, and responsible action. Through systematisation and pedagogical modelling, conceptual relationships were established between the components of civic position, the corresponding didactic tools, and the expected learning outcomes.

It is important to clearly define the limitations of this methodological approach. The model presented in this article is proposed on the basis of an analysis of theoretical sources and pedagogical synthesis; it has not yet been tested through experimental research involving students. Consequently, no empirical conclusions are drawn regarding the model's effectiveness. To determine its practical value, subsequent research will need to develop assessment instruments, examine their content validity and measurement properties, and test the model under controlled pedagogical conditions. In this study, civic position is conceptualised as a complex personal quality that integrates an individual's attitude towards society and the state, awareness of rights and obligations, readiness to make well-grounded decisions on social and legal issues, and ability to evaluate the consequences of their own actions.

This definition does not limit civic position to knowledge of legal information or the possession of particular social views. Rather, it emphasises the integration of knowledge with value-based attitudes, practical behaviour, and reflection. In the proposed

conceptual approach, civic position is represented through four interrelated components: cognitive, value-motivational, practical-activity, and reflective-evaluative. This classification constitutes a methodological construct developed within the scope of this article and should not be regarded as identical to existing international competence frameworks. Its purpose is to establish a coherent relationship between learning objectives, educational activities, and assessment criteria in the teaching of Fundamentals of State and Law. The cognitive component encompasses students' knowledge of the state, law, the Constitution, human rights, citizens' rights and obligations, the rule of law, and legal liability. In a digital learning environment, this component involves not only knowledge of legal concepts but also the ability to identify reliable information sources, verify the current version of a legal document, and apply legal provisions to specific situations. For example, when presented with a particular legal scenario, students may be required to locate the relevant official source, identify the applicable legal provision, and explain its meaning in their own words. The value-motivational component reflects attitudes towards justice, equality, human dignity, legality, mutual respect, and social responsibility. Its pedagogical purpose is not to impose predetermined views on students but to enable them to analyse legal and ethical issues, understand different perspectives, and substantiate their own conclusions. When assessing the development of civic position, it is therefore necessary to consider not only whether students provide socially acceptable answers to particular questions but also their reasoning processes, the evidence they present, and the soundness of their decisions.

The practical-activity component encompasses the skills required to analyse legal situations, identify problems, locate relevant legal sources, compare evidence, evaluate alternative solutions, and develop well-reasoned decisions. This component can be developed through the purposeful use of digital tools. For example, students may work in small groups on a legal case study, analyse official documents, prepare an evidence-based solution, and defend their conclusions before their classmates. In addition to enabling students to apply their knowledge, such activities are designed to develop communication, collaboration, and responsible decision-making skills.

The reflective-evaluative component is characterised by students' ability to examine their own thinking, decisions, and activities; identify errors; assess the validity of their conclusions; and determine ways to improve their subsequent performance. After resolving a legal scenario, students may be asked to explain

which sources they used, which evidence they considered most important, and why they rejected alternative solutions. In this way, reflection supports students' critical evaluation of their own knowledge and their capacity for independent thinking.

These four components are closely interrelated. If legal knowledge is not integrated with value-based attitudes, it may fail to translate into practical decision-making. If value-based attitudes are not supported by sufficient knowledge and analytical skills, reaching well-grounded conclusions in legal situations becomes more difficult. Similarly, when practical activity is not accompanied by reflection, students may fail to fully benefit from opportunities to learn from their mistakes. Therefore, the proposed methodology should focus not on developing individual components in isolation but on fostering their interaction and integration.

The first area of focus in developing civic position within a digital learning environment is the organisation of instruction based on problem-based legal scenarios. Problem-based tasks help transform students from passive recipients of ready-made information into active participants who independently investigate legal issues and develop solutions. Such tasks should correspond to the topics covered in the learning process and take into account students' age-related characteristics and vocational specialisations. For example, scenarios concerning rights and obligations in employment relationships, lawful rules and procedures within educational institutions, personal data protection, or responsibility for disseminating information online may be used.

The analysis of a problem-based scenario involves several interrelated steps: identifying the problem, formulating the legal question, locating reliable sources, analysing the relevant legal provisions, comparing alternative solutions, and substantiating conclusions with evidence. Rather than immediately providing ready-made answers, the teacher supports students' independent inquiry through guiding questions, supplementary sources, and feedback. Digital tools may be used to distribute learning materials, coordinate group activities, and present the solutions developed by students.

The second area of focus is the development of methods for working with official electronic legal sources. Students should be taught how to search for legal information, verify the title and legal status of a document, identify relevant articles, and apply the information obtained to a specific situation. In this regard, the official electronic sources of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and current

legislative acts are particularly important. Students should develop the habit of verifying legal information through the relevant official source rather than relying on comments on social media or unverified reports. Such tasks develop not only the cognitive component but also digital information literacy and critical thinking.

The third area of focus involves integrating interactive discussions and collaborative learning with digital tools. Students are presented with different perspectives on a legal or social issue and are required to substantiate their views with evidence, listen to the arguments of other participants, and analyse alternative viewpoints. The purpose of discussion is not to ensure that all students reach the same conclusion but to develop reasoned thinking, respectful communication, and the ability to use legal arguments. Digital discussion platforms can provide students with opportunities to express their views in writing and respond to the contributions of others. In this context, digital communication ethics, personal data protection, and the proper citation of sources should also form part of the learning objectives.

The fourth area of focus concerns the organisation of digital project-based learning. Working in small groups, students may develop presentations, infographics, electronic reference guides, or other educational products on topics such as legal literacy, citizens' rights and obligations, digital safety, and lawful conduct. Project assignments should be assessed not merely on the visual appearance of the final product but also on the reliability of the information, the accuracy of the legal content, the quality of source use, the effectiveness of collaboration, and the soundness of the conclusions. In this way, project-based learning integrates legal knowledge, digital literacy, communication, and responsible participation.

The fifth area of focus is the incorporation of reflective assessment as a regular component of the learning process. After completing an assignment, students analyse how they justified their solutions, which sources of information they relied on, what difficulties they encountered, and what they could improve in future tasks. The teacher, in turn, provides meaningful feedback based on predefined criteria.

These criteria may encompass the accuracy of legal knowledge, the reliability of sources, the logical coherence of the analysis, the sufficiency of supporting evidence, the quality of communication, and the depth of reflection. These criteria represent a preliminary version of the proposed methodological model and should be refined through expert evaluation and pilot testing before practical implementation. Building on

the theoretical approaches discussed above, this article proposes a conceptual and methodological model aimed at developing the civic position of vocational education students through the teaching of Fundamentals of State and Law in a digital learning environment. The model is based on the interrelationship between four components: objectives, content, instructional processes, and outcomes and assessment.

The objectives component focuses on developing students' legal knowledge, civic responsibility, critical attitudes towards digital information, and skills in analysing legal situations and making well-reasoned decisions. The content component integrates the topics covered in Fundamentals of State and Law with human rights, the rule of law, citizens' rights and obligations, legal relationships in professional activities, and responsibility in the digital environment. In this process, the subject curriculum and the requirements of current legislation serve as the principal reference points. The instructional-process component encompasses the use of problem-based legal case studies, activities involving official electronic sources, interactive discussions, digital project-based learning, and reflective tasks. These methods are not applied in isolation but are integrated coherently in accordance with the lesson objectives and intended learning outcomes. For example, students first examine a legal scenario, then search official sources for the relevant legal provision, discuss alternative solutions in groups, present a well-substantiated conclusion, and finally reflect on their own reasoning process.

The outcomes-and-assessment component involves evaluating students' knowledge, attitudes, practical skills, and reflective activities related to civic position. Initial diagnostic assessment helps establish students' starting points, formative assessment identifies difficulties encountered during the learning process, and summative assessment supports the analysis of changes in learning outcomes. Tests may be used to assess legal knowledge, scenario-based tasks to evaluate legal analysis, project work to examine practical performance, and reflective writing to investigate students' ability to critically review their own decisions. When assessing values and attitudes, however, it is essential to avoid drawing definitive conclusions on the basis of a single questionnaire or a one-time response. The implementation of the model may be organised into four stages: diagnostic, design, implementation, and analytical-evaluative. At the diagnostic stage, students' legal knowledge, source-handling skills, and performance on scenario-based tasks are assessed. At the design stage, learning objectives, assignments, digital resources, and

assessment criteria are established. During the implementation stage, the proposed methods are incorporated into classroom instruction, and opportunities for independent and collaborative learning are organised. At the analytical-evaluative stage, baseline and final data are compared, changes observed in students' performance are analysed, and necessary adjustments are made to the methodology.

The anticipated pedagogical value of the model lies in its capacity to integrate legal knowledge, value-based attitudes, practical activity, and reflection within a unified learning process. However, this value should currently be regarded as a theoretical proposition. Establishing the actual effectiveness of the methodology requires testing it under specific educational conditions, taking students' initial levels of preparedness and the learning environment into account, and analysing the resulting data according to scientifically justified criteria. The proposed conceptual and methodological approach views digital learning not merely as a collection of technological tools but as a pedagogical environment designed to develop students' legal reasoning and civic responsibility. Its principal distinguishing feature lies in linking digital learning tasks to the constituent components of civic position and to the methods used to assess their development. Nevertheless, this feature cannot be presented definitively as a scientific novelty without a detailed comparison with existing research, including studies conducted in Uzbekistan and other countries on civic education, digital citizenship, and the development of legal competencies in vocational education.

International conceptual frameworks highlight the importance of values, attitudes, practical skills, and critical understanding, alongside knowledge, in developing digital citizenship and democratic competences. The four-component construct proposed in this article is consistent with these general principles; however, it needs to be examined as an independent methodological model adapted to the context of a specific subject and vocational education. In this regard, the theoretical boundaries of the concept of civic position, the criteria for measuring it, and its distinguishing features in relation to related concepts, such as legal literacy and digital citizenship competence, must be clearly defined. To evaluate the model experimentally, it is important to establish comparable or equivalent learning conditions in vocational education institutions. If experimental and comparison groups are used, their baseline knowledge levels, duration of instruction, teaching content, and conditions for accessing digital resources should be documented. When analysing the results, relying

exclusively on students' self-assessments is insufficient. Instead, it is advisable to combine knowledge tests, scenario-based tasks, student work products, and observational data.

Protecting participants' confidentiality, ensuring the responsible storage of data, and providing equal opportunities for all students throughout the educational interventions should also constitute integral elements of the research methodology.

The limitations associated with the use of digital tools must also be taken into account. Students may differ in their access to the internet, availability of digital devices, and levels of digital literacy. Therefore, the methodology should not depend exclusively on high-speed internet access or a particular platform; it should also provide alternative offline tasks where necessary. Furthermore, success in digital learning cannot be assessed solely in terms of time spent on a platform or the number of completed assignments. The primary criterion should be changes in students' ability to understand legal situations, use reliable evidence, and develop well-reasoned decisions. Thus, the scientific and practical value of the proposed model depends not only on its theoretical coherence but also on its empirical validation and the transparent presentation of the findings obtained. Further research should focus on refining the model's constituent components, piloting assessment instruments, comparing outcomes across different groups of students, and determining the conditions and limits of the methodology's applicability.

Teaching Fundamentals of State and Law in a digital learning environment creates important opportunities not only to develop vocational education students' legal knowledge but also to strengthen their ability to critically evaluate information, analyse legal situations, and make socially responsible decisions. Making effective use of these opportunities requires more than simply introducing digital technologies into the classroom; it necessitates their systematic integration with clearly defined didactic objectives, learning activities, and assessment criteria.

This article proposes a conceptual approach in which civic position is characterised through four components: cognitive, value-motivational, practical-activity, and reflective-evaluative. On this basis, a conceptual and methodological model has been developed that integrates problem-based legal scenarios, the use of official electronic legal sources, interactive discussions, digital projects, and reflective assessment. The model aims to establish pedagogical conditions that enable students to apply legal knowledge in real-life situations, develop independent

thinking, and consciously understand their civic responsibilities.

The principal contribution of the article is the proposal of a conceptual and methodological approach that systematically links digital didactic tools with the constituent components of civic position and the assessment process. Nevertheless, the extent to which this approach differs from existing research and its practical effectiveness have not yet been fully established. Therefore, the next stage of research should involve a systematic analysis of national and international scholarly literature, the refinement of assessment criteria with expert input, and experimental testing in vocational education institutions. Only after empirical data have been collected and analysed will it be possible to draw evidence-based conclusions regarding the methodology's effectiveness, conditions of application, and practical outcomes.

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