

Pedagogical Opportunities for Developing Students' Conflictological Competence Based on An Acmeological Approach

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Received: 24 June 2026; **Accepted:** 20 July 2026; **Published:** 10 August 2026

Abstract: The development of conflictological competence is an important component of students' personal and professional preparation because future specialists are expected not only to recognize conflicts but also to analyze their causes, regulate emotional reactions, select constructive interaction strategies, and transform contradictions into opportunities for development. The purpose of this study is to substantiate the pedagogical opportunities for developing students' conflictological competence on the basis of an acmeological approach. The research employs theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, pedagogical modeling, synthesis, and conceptual interpretation of studies on acmeology, professional development, conflict management, and competence-based education. Conflictological competence is interpreted as an integrated personal-professional quality combining motivational-value orientation, theoretical knowledge of conflict, analytical and prognostic skills, emotional self-regulation, communicative behavior, constructive decision-making, and reflection. The findings demonstrate that the acmeological approach expands the possibilities of conflictological training by transforming students from passive recipients of conflict theory into active subjects of self-development. The proposed methodology connects self-diagnosis, acmeological goal-setting, case analysis, simulation of conflict situations, role-playing, mediation techniques, reflective analysis, feedback, and individual correction within a coherent developmental process. Particular emphasis is placed on reflection and self-regulation as mechanisms that enable students to analyze their own behavior and intentionally improve conflict-management strategies. The study concludes that an acmeologically organized learning environment can contribute to students' readiness for constructive interpersonal and professional interaction.

Keywords: Acmeological approach, conflictological competence, students, conflict management, professional development, reflection, self-regulation, communication, pedagogical opportunities, higher education.

Introduction: Contemporary higher education increasingly focuses not only on the acquisition of professional knowledge but also on the development of competencies that enable graduates to interact effectively with other people in complex and changing social environments. Professional activity in education, management, healthcare, social work, service industries, and other human-centered fields inevitably involves differences of interests, values, expectations, responsibilities, and behavioral strategies. Consequently, conflict cannot be regarded exclusively

as a destructive phenomenon that should always be avoided. It may become either a source of tension and interpersonal deterioration or a mechanism for clarification, change, creativity, and development depending on the ability of participants to manage it constructively.

The ability to work productively with contradictions requires conflictological competence. Contemporary psychological research shows that there is no entirely uniform interpretation of this construct; difficulties remain in distinguishing conflictological competence

from conflict competence, identifying universal and profession-specific elements, and determining common indicators for its assessment. Nevertheless, researchers consistently associate it with knowledge of the nature of conflicts, the ability to analyze conflict situations, select constructive behavioral strategies, anticipate consequences, regulate interaction, and reflect on one's own actions [3].

In the context of university education, conflictological competence should therefore be understood more broadly than knowledge of conflict theory. A student may correctly reproduce the classification of conflicts and still demonstrate ineffective behavior when confronted with criticism, disagreement, pressure, or competing interests. Competence becomes evident when theoretical understanding is transformed into situational analysis, emotional regulation, dialogical communication, responsible decision-making, and conscious reflection. A study of university students' personal development similarly emphasizes that conflictological competence supports constructive professional interaction and responsible interpersonal communication [4].

The problem is particularly relevant to pedagogical training. A future educator encounters conflicts between children, between teacher and learner, between colleagues, and between educational institutions and families. In preschool and other educational settings, professional behavior requires sensitivity to emotions, the ability to prevent escalation, preservation of the dignity of participants, and transformation of disagreement into constructive interaction. This means that conflictological preparation cannot be limited to one theoretical course; it should become part of students' personal and professional development.

The acmeological approach offers considerable possibilities for solving this task. In the works of A. A. Derkach and other representatives of acmeology, personal-professional development is interpreted through the subject's movement toward higher levels of maturity, professionalism, self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-realization. The approach emphasizes that professional development cannot be reduced to externally controlled acquisition of knowledge and skills; it also depends on the individual's ability to understand, regulate, and intentionally

improve himself or herself [1; 2]. Derkach specifically connects the acmeological perspective with the formation of a self-developing person who knows and governs the self and realizes personal potential in relation to society.

This conceptual position makes the acmeological approach particularly appropriate for developing conflictological competence. Conflict reveals not only what a student knows but also how the student behaves under uncertainty, emotional tension, disagreement, or interpersonal pressure. Such situations expose the actual level of self-control, empathy, communication, decision-making, and reflection. Conflict can consequently become a developmental situation through which students identify limitations in their own behavior and construct a trajectory toward a higher level of professional maturity.

The purpose of this study is to substantiate the pedagogical opportunities for developing students' conflictological competence based on an acmeological approach and to determine the educational mechanisms through which self-development, reflection, practice-oriented conflict situations, feedback, and individual developmental trajectories can be integrated into university training.

The research is theoretical and methodological in nature. The source base includes classical works on acmeology and conflictology, contemporary studies of conflict and conflictological competence, and empirical research investigating conflict-management education among university students. The study employed theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, pedagogical modeling, synthesis, generalization, and conceptual reconstruction.

The theoretical analysis was used to identify the essential characteristics of the acmeological approach and conflictological competence. Comparative analysis made it possible to correlate the logic of personal-professional development with the mechanisms required for constructive conflict behavior. Pedagogical modeling was applied to determine the components, stages, methods, and educational conditions of an acmeologically oriented system for developing conflictological competence.

The methodological synthesis proceeds from an understanding of conflictological competence as an

integrated system incorporating motivational-value, cognitive-analytical, emotional-volitional, communicative-behavioral, and reflexive-acmeological dimensions. These dimensions are analytically distinguished but operate as an interconnected whole in real conflict interaction.

The theoretical analysis demonstrates that the primary pedagogical opportunity of the acmeological approach lies in changing the position of the student within the educational process. Traditional conflictological instruction can remain externally oriented: the teacher explains types of conflicts, causes, stages, behavioral strategies, and resolution methods, while students reproduce the information. Acmeologically organized instruction changes this logic by making the student a subject of personal-professional development. The essential question becomes not merely "What is conflict?" but "How do I behave in conflict, why do I behave in this way, what consequences does my behavior produce, and how can I consciously improve it?"

This shift gives diagnostic activity a developmental rather than merely evaluative function. At the beginning of conflictological training, students can analyze their typical reactions to criticism, disagreement, emotional pressure, competition, misunderstanding, or violation of expectations. Self-assessment, observation, reflective questionnaires, situational tasks, and analysis of previous experiences make it possible to establish an individual starting point. From the acmeological perspective, such diagnosis is valuable because development requires an awareness of the distance between the actual and desired levels of competence.

The next pedagogical opportunity is associated with acmeological goal-setting. Conflictological development becomes more effective when the student has an individually meaningful image of professional maturity. For one student, improvement may require learning to express disagreement without aggression; for another, the priority may be overcoming avoidance, developing assertiveness, listening actively, controlling impulsive reactions, or acquiring mediation skills. Consequently, a common educational objective can be translated into individualized developmental goals. The student begins to regard conflict competence not as an abstract curriculum requirement but as part

of his or her professional identity.

Within the proposed conceptual model, conflictological competence begins with a motivational-value foundation. Constructive conflict management requires recognition of dialogue, respect, responsibility, cooperation, justice, and the dignity of another person as professionally significant values. Without such a foundation, conflict-management techniques can become purely instrumental means of persuasion or domination. The acmeological approach connects professional mastery with personal maturity and therefore requires students to examine the ethical dimension of their behavior.

The cognitive-analytical dimension includes knowledge about the essence, structure, causes, dynamics, functions, and types of conflicts. It also requires understanding different conflict-management strategies and the conditions under which they are appropriate. Antsupov and Shipilov associate conflictological competence with understanding contradictions and the nature of conflict, developing an adequate attitude toward it, finding solutions to difficult interaction situations, anticipating consequences, and regulating interaction [5]. The educational task is therefore not merely to transfer classifications but to teach students to interpret each conflict as a multivariable situation.

The analytical component is most effectively developed when theoretical knowledge is embedded in contextualized problems. Students may be presented with a disagreement between a teacher and parent, interpersonal tension within a student project group, a conflict caused by unequal distribution of responsibilities, or a situation involving criticism and emotional resistance. Instead of receiving a ready explanation, they identify participants, interests, positions, underlying needs, immediate triggers, hidden contradictions, emotional factors, and possible consequences. This kind of work teaches students to distinguish the visible subject of disagreement from its deeper psychological or organizational causes.

A major pedagogical opportunity of the acmeological approach is the use of conflict as a developmental resource. The student does not learn conflict competence by avoiding contradictions but by entering educationally controlled conflict situations and

analyzing personal actions within them. Role-playing, situational simulation, case studies, problem-based discussion, negotiation exercises, and mediation scenarios create conditions in which knowledge must be transformed into behavior.

Empirical evidence supports the value of purposeful conflict-management instruction. Fierke, Lepp, and Jones reported that a structured conflict-management educational session for university pharmacy students produced significant improvements in students' perceived value of conflict management, confidence, and ability to engage in difficult conversations [7]. A randomized controlled study among medical students likewise found more positive attitudes toward conflict management following a targeted educational intervention [8]. Although these studies were conducted in health-professions education, their pedagogical implication is broader: conflict-management abilities can be intentionally developed rather than treated as fixed personality characteristics.

Simulation is particularly consistent with acmeological principles because it reveals the relationship between competence and performance. During a simulated disagreement, a student may recognize that theoretical knowledge does not automatically prevent emotional escalation. The discrepancy between expected and actual behavior becomes material for reflection. An ineffective response is consequently reinterpreted not as final failure but as diagnostic information identifying the next zone of personal-professional development.

The emotional-volitional dimension is therefore essential. Conflict frequently involves anxiety, irritation, anger, defensiveness, fear of rejection, or the desire to dominate. Students need to recognize their emotional states, delay impulsive reactions, differentiate emotion from interpretation, and preserve purposeful communication under psychological tension. Research among university students has demonstrated relationships between emotional intelligence and preferred conflict-management styles, reinforcing the need to integrate emotional awareness and regulation into conflict training [9].

Acmeological work with emotions does not mean suppressing emotional responses. Instead, students learn to recognize them as information about personal needs, expectations, and perceived threats. A reflective

learner can ask why a particular statement generated a strong reaction, whether the interpretation is objectively justified, and how an alternative response might change the development of the situation. Emotional regulation consequently becomes part of self-governance.

The communicative-behavioral dimension transforms internal regulation into constructive interaction. Students need experience in active listening, clarifying questions, formulation of non-accusatory statements, argumentation, recognition of another person's position, negotiation, and collaborative search for solutions. Communication should enable them to separate the person from the problem and to preserve interpersonal respect while discussing disagreement.

Acmeological training gives special significance to variability of behavioral strategies. Competence does not mean using one supposedly ideal conflict style in every situation. Avoidance, compromise, accommodation, competition, and collaboration may have different consequences according to circumstances. A professionally mature student analyzes the importance of the issue, relationships between parties, available time, ethical boundaries, power differences, and possible consequences before selecting a strategy. Thus, the developmental objective is behavioral flexibility combined with ethical responsibility.

Reflection becomes the central mechanism connecting all components. After each simulation or real educational conflict, students analyze not only whether the problem was solved but also how they acted. They reconstruct their initial perception, emotional reaction, selected communication strategy, turning points in the interaction, feedback from others, and possible alternative responses. Reflection enables experience to become a source of self-development rather than a sequence of repeated behavioral habits.

An acmeological reflection cycle can therefore connect experience, self-evaluation, interpretation, correction, repeated action, and assessment of progress. The student gradually develops an internal standard of constructive professional behavior. External teacher feedback remains important, but its function changes: instead of simply declaring an answer correct or incorrect, feedback helps the learner compare present

performance with an individually meaningful developmental goal.

This logic also creates opportunities for individual educational trajectories. Students differ significantly in conflict sensitivity, confidence, communicative style, emotional regulation, previous social experience, and professional aspirations. Uniform training tasks cannot address these differences equally. Acmeological instruction allows the level and type of conflict tasks to be differentiated. Students who avoid disagreement may require assertive communication exercises, whereas those prone to domination may need tasks that develop listening, perspective-taking, and collaborative decision-making.

The final pedagogical opportunity concerns transfer. Conflictological competence cannot be considered developed if constructive behavior appears only in a training room. Learning activities must gradually move from artificially simplified situations toward professionally authentic cases, teaching practice, group projects, interaction with peers, and reflection on real interpersonal difficulties. The acmeological criterion of development is therefore not the quantity of information memorized but the learner's increasing independence, flexibility, responsibility, and capacity for self-correction in actual interaction.

The results demonstrate that the acmeological approach substantially changes the pedagogical meaning of conflictological preparation. From a conventional competency perspective, teaching may concentrate on a specified set of knowledge and skills. The acmeological perspective adds the question of developmental dynamics: how the student moves from the current level toward a higher level of personal and professional maturity. This movement requires self-knowledge, internal motivation, purposeful practice, feedback, reflection, and self-correction. Derkach's conception of acmeological development similarly emphasizes individual trajectories, internal factors, professional environments, and the integration of personal and professional growth.

The proposed interpretation also prevents conflictological competence from being reduced to conflict resolution. A mature specialist should be capable of recognizing conflict potential before escalation, understanding contradictions, maintaining

psychological stability, selecting an adequate behavioral strategy, facilitating dialogue, and evaluating the consequences of an agreement. Sometimes the professional task is to prevent unnecessary escalation; in other situations, a contradiction needs to be openly discussed because avoidance would preserve an underlying problem.

Contemporary theoretical work confirms that defining a single universal structure of conflictological competence remains difficult because its content varies across professional contexts [3]. This strengthens rather than weakens the relevance of the acmeological approach. It suggests that universities should maintain a universal conflictological foundation while contextualizing tasks according to professional activity. For future preschool educators, for example, the most relevant situations involve interaction with children, parents, colleagues, and administrators. Conflict competence should therefore be developed through the communicative and ethical realities of educational work.

An important methodological implication concerns assessment. A written examination can determine whether students know conflictological concepts, but it cannot fully reveal their behavior in an emotionally complicated interaction. Assessment should therefore combine knowledge tasks with analysis of cases, observation in simulations, self-reflection, peer feedback, and evaluation of decision-making processes. The indicator of development is not an absence of conflict but an increased ability to understand, regulate, and constructively transform it.

The use of practical methods is supported by research in professional education. An integrative review of conflict-management styles among nursing students concluded that conflict-management abilities should be deliberately addressed during education, while experiential and reflective methods have been increasingly used to strengthen readiness for complex interpersonal situations [10]. The evidence does not mean that any role-play automatically produces competence. Practice requires structured observation, theoretically grounded analysis, feedback, and opportunities to try an improved strategy again.

The proposed framework therefore regards conflictological competence as an evolving personal-

professional formation. Its development is most productive when students experience a repeated cycle in which they diagnose their current strategy, identify a developmental target, analyze conflict theory, act in a problem situation, receive feedback, reflect, adjust behavior, and transfer improved strategies to increasingly authentic contexts. The distinctive contribution of the acmeological approach lies in integrating these activities around the student's conscious movement toward professional maturity.

The study demonstrates that the acmeological approach creates significant pedagogical opportunities for developing students' conflictological competence by integrating professional knowledge with self-development, self-regulation, practical interaction, and reflection. Conflictological competence is interpreted as an integrated quality that combines a constructive value orientation, theoretical understanding of conflict, analytical and prognostic thinking, emotional-volitional regulation, communicative flexibility, responsible decision-making, and reflexive capacity.

The pedagogical potential of the acmeological approach is realized when conflict education moves beyond the reproduction of theoretical information and becomes a developmental process. Self-diagnosis enables students to recognize individual patterns of conflict behavior; acmeological goal-setting transforms these limitations into personal development objectives; cases and simulations provide opportunities for action; emotional self-regulation supports stability under tension; communication and mediation practices develop constructive behavioral alternatives; reflection and feedback convert experience into conscious professional growth.

For future educators, these opportunities are particularly important because professional interaction is inherently relational and may contain value, role, organizational, and interpersonal contradictions. A specialist who can recognize the developmental potential of conflict, preserve respect for participants, regulate personal emotions, conduct dialogue, and critically evaluate his or her own behavior is better prepared for responsible professional activity.

Thus, the acmeological approach makes it possible to understand conflictological competence not as a fixed outcome achieved once during university education but

as a capacity for continuous personal-professional improvement. Its central result is the formation of a student who is able not only to resolve a particular conflict but also to learn from conflict experience and consciously move toward a higher level of communicative and professional maturity.

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