



Pedagogical tolerance as a professional competence

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Abstract. The research relevance was determined by the growing complexity of pedagogical interaction and the intensification of social, cultural, and cognitive contradictions within contemporary higher education, which required not only subject knowledge but also advanced professional and social competences, including tolerance. The study aimed to substantiate teacher tolerance as an integral professional competence and as a methodological principle for resolving pedagogical contradictions in the university educational process. The research was based on philosophical and pedagogical analysis, synthesis and generalisation of theoretical sources, comparative analysis, and reflection on pedagogical practice in higher education. The study examined the phenomenon of teacher tolerance in the context of ongoing transformations in higher education and analysed contradictions inherent in the university educational process, which were classified as global, partial, and situational. The study established that tolerance functions not only as a personal quality but also as a methodological principle that ensured the constructive resolution of pedagogical contradictions. The close relationship between tolerance and critical thinking was analysed, with particular emphasis on dialectical reasoning and the principle of complementarity as alternatives to dichotomous “either-or” approaches prevalent in educational practice. Pedagogical interaction within the “teacher-student” system, the risks of pseudo-tolerance, and the imbalance between knowledge-oriented and activity-based educational models were emphasised. The study also identified and systematises key directions, forms, and methods for fostering tolerance among higher education teachers, particularly within professional development and continuing education programs. The practical value of the research results was determined by the applicability by higher education teachers, teacher educators, and developers of professional development programs to enhance pedagogical decision-making, conflict resolution, and the overall quality of higher education

Keywords: teacher tolerance; higher education; professional competence; critical thinking; pedagogical contradictions; principle of complementarity

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Introduction

Contemporary higher education functions within a context of profound social, cultural, and epistemological transformation. Processes of globalisation and digitalisation, accelerated scientific development, and increasing social polarisation have significantly complicated the university environment. These changes create a system of contradictions at institutional, interpersonal, and cognitive levels. Among them are tensions between integration and specialisation, academic freedom and regulatory control, innovation and tradition, as well as between heterogeneous value systems and worldviews represented within academic communities. Under these conditions, tolerance emerges not merely as an ethical ideal but as a fundamental professional and methodological principle of pedagogical interaction in higher education.

In international educational discourse, tolerance is increasingly interpreted as an active, competence-based phenomenon grounded in knowledge, dialogue, and critical reflection. The Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995) emphasises that tolerance presupposes intellectual openness and respect for diversity rather than passive acceptance. Developing this position, S. Attipoe (2024) conceptualises tolerance as a pedagogical resource used for balanced decisions in culturally and ideologically diverse academic contexts. W. Liao *et al.* (2025), in turn, highlight the cognitive dimension of tolerance, interpreting it as an ability to work productively with ambiguity and competing interpretations in the learning process.

At the same time, a considerable body of research continues to conceptualise tolerance primarily as a social or moral value formed in students through multicultural or civic education. O. Chaika (2024) highlights tolerance as an outcome of value-oriented educational practices, emphasising the formation of respectful attitudes and social cohesion. While such approaches are theoretically justified, they do not sufficiently cover the professional role of the

teacher, imposing a requirement for tolerance in pedagogical judgment, methodological choice, and academic communication. As a result, tolerance is often treated as an educational goal rather than as an integral component of teachers' professional competence.

Ukrainian pedagogical scholarship increasingly problematises this limitation. N. Bondarenko *et al.* (2023) argued that contemporary higher education requires a shift from normative models of teacher behaviour to competence-based frameworks that integrate ethical responsibility with methodological flexibility. From this perspective, tolerance functions as a regulator of professional thinking, enabling educators to balance conflicting demands without reducing them to simplistic solutions.

Empirical studies conducted by B. Barchi & E. Sheleia (2024) demonstrate that teacher tolerance directly influences the quality of interaction with students, particularly in situations of academic disagreement and value pluralism. Their analysis demonstrates that intolerance often manifests not as overt discrimination but as rigid adherence to unilateral pedagogical strategies. In this regard, I. Bekh (2021) noted that the dominance of prescriptive teaching models may lead to formalised or pseudo-tolerant practices, where dialogue is replaced by declarative acceptance without genuine engagement with alternative viewpoints. One of the central problems identified in both international and Ukrainian research is the persistence of dichotomous thinking patterns in higher education pedagogy. Teaching practices are frequently structured around oppositional categories such as theory versus practice or freedom versus discipline. F. Tanhan *et al.* (2021), in their validation of a teacher tolerance scale, established a correlation between low tolerance levels and rigid pedagogical styles resistant to methodological diversity.

The relationship between tolerance and critical thinking constitutes another relevant dimension of contemporary research. W. Liao *et*

al. (2025) demonstrated that critical thinking without tolerance risks degenerating into dogmatism, while tolerance without critical thinking may cause unprincipled relativism. This position is supported by B. Barchi & E. Sheleia (2024), arguing that tolerant pedagogical thinking involves the suspension of premature judgments and the ability to evaluate contradictory arguments within a structured analytical framework. Nevertheless, the interdependence of tolerance, critical thinking, and methodological decision-making in higher education remains insufficiently systematised. Another unresolved issue concerns the classification of contradictions within the university educational process. Global contradictions define the strategic development of higher education systems, while partial and situational contradictions arise in everyday pedagogical practice. Teachers are often required to resolve such contradictions intuitively, without adequate methodological tools. Under these conditions, tolerance functions not merely as a professional virtue but as a necessary mechanism for sustainable pedagogical interaction.

In this context, the study aimed to conceptualise teacher tolerance as a key component of professional competence in higher education and as a methodological principle for resolving pedagogical contradictions. The objectives of the article were to analyse global, partial, and situational contradictions in the university educational process; to examine the relationship between tolerance, critical thinking, and the principle of complementarity; and to identify directions, forms, and methods for fostering tolerance among higher education teachers in professional development and everyday pedagogical practice.

Materials and Methods

The theoretical and analytical research was based on philosophical, pedagogical, and methodological sources, as well as international normative documents on tolerance in education, covering the period from 2000 to 2025. This timeframe integrated classical foundations with

contemporary developments in higher education pedagogy and professional competence theory. The study employed a qualitative, theoretical-analytical research design aimed to conceptualise teacher tolerance as a component of professional competence in higher education. The research was based on an integrative methodological framework combining philosophical, pedagogical, and methodological approaches. This design analysed tolerance not only as an ethical category but also as a cognitive and professional principle for resolving pedagogical contradictions in contemporary university education.

The theoretical foundation of the study was based on classical and contemporary works in the fields of philosophy of education, higher education pedagogy, and professional competence theory. Dialectical methodology, the principle of the unity and struggle of opposites, and the principle of complementarity as a means of overcoming dichotomous “either-or” thinking in pedagogical practice were prioritised. The study also relied on international normative documents addressing tolerance in education, including the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995), which conceptualised tolerance as a knowledge-based, dialogical, and socially grounded phenomenon. The structure of professional competence among teachers was analysed with reference to established pedagogical models that distinguish conceptual, psychological-pedagogical, communicative, and personal components. Within this framework, tolerance is examined as an integrative quality that permeated all components of professional competence and supports reflective and balanced pedagogical decision-making.

The research materials included scientific publications indexed in international databases (Scopus, Web of Science) addressing tolerance, critical thinking, pedagogical interaction, and professional competence in higher education; classical philosophical and pedagogical texts relevant to dialectical thinking and complementarity; analytical reports and international policy

documents related to tolerance and education; and descriptions of typical pedagogical situations and contradictions derived from higher education teaching practice. These materials were selected based on their relevance to the research problem, theoretical significance, and applicability to the context of higher education.

The study was based on a set of complementary qualitative research methods. Theoretical analysis was applied to address existing concepts of tolerance, critical thinking, and professional competence and to identify their methodological foundations; comparative analysis was employed to contrast different pedagogical approaches and interpretations of tolerance, including normative, ethical, and competence-based perspectives; conceptual modelling was used to compile an integrative model of teacher tolerance as a professional quality related to the resolution of global, partial, and situational contradictions in higher education; classification and systematisation were used to identify and structure types of pedagogical contradictions and corresponding strategies for their constructive resolution; and interpretative analysis was applied to examine pedagogical situations illustrating manifestations of tolerance, pseudo-tolerance, and intolerance in professional practice. The combination of these methods ensured methodological triangulation and enhanced the analytical depth and internal coherence of the study.

Validity of the research was ensured using well-established theoretical frameworks, reliance on authoritative scholarly sources, and logical consistency in the analysis and interpretation of concepts, while reliability is supported by the transparent description of research procedures and the reproducibility of the analytical steps applied to the selected materials. The study was theoretical in nature and does not involve human participants or personal data; therefore, no additional ethical approval was required. Ethical academic standards were observed through accurate representation of scholarly positions and responsible interpretation of theoretical sources.

Results and Discussion

In modern socio-political life, contradictions of various levels, content, and scales are increasingly emerging. Their existence is openly acknowledged by government officials, politicians, sociologists, and specialists from various fields – business, economics, education, science, art, and culture. Such contradictions include geopolitical, interethnic, ecological, value-based, religious-moral, and other types. They also manifest at the level of group interests, where the views and beliefs of different groups are often polar and difficult to reconcile.

According to T. Potapchuk & M. Klepar (2020), the survival of human communities requires the development of thinking and action strategies that facilitate consensus at different levels and on a wide range of issues. Given the increasing complexity of social contradictions, the philosophical reflection on ways to achieve consensus becomes especially relevant, as well as its practical implementation-through laws, international agreements, declarations, and a system of universally recognised values, among which concepts such as consensus, compromise, mutual acceptability, tolerance, forgiveness, nonviolence, compassion, and understanding of others is central – encompassing the term “tolerance” (*tolerantia* – patience, indulgence).

These issues directly affect educational systems, from early childhood education to postgraduate professional training. As noted by O. Popov (2024), fostering a culture of tolerance and the ability to reach agreement should become a key direction of education in the new century. The role of education in cultivating tolerance among learners is emphasised. First, tolerance is a necessary condition for the professional success of future specialists. This implies that students develop unique educational and professional trajectory: choosing an institution and specialisation, assessing abilities, and evaluating level of professional competence. In the educational process, they encounter situations questioning viewpoints, requiring justification of

evaluations, and engagement in discussions and dialogues with people of varying experience and status. Effective interaction in such circumstances requires the ability to compromise, consider interests of others, and recognise well-founded arguments presented by opponents. Second, higher education promotes acquisition of social interaction skills and assimilation of both formal and “unwritten” norms of professional environments, which cultivates the initial elements of a culture of tolerance inherent to the chosen profession. Third, students face conflict situations during various types of academic activities. Education aims to teach methods for productive resolution of such conflicts, hence, by the time of graduation, students have accumulated social experience, including the ability to resolve contentious issues effectively (Didur, 2022).

Notably, the cultivation of a culture of tolerance is possible directly through the content of academic disciplines at different stages of university education. Such opportunities include demonstration of opposing, contradictory aspects, properties, and relationships in the objects, processes, and phenomena under study, which efficiently illustrates the dialectical principle of the unity and struggle of opposites; developing thinking oriented not only toward separating “conflicting” properties but also toward understanding their interaction and wholeness, ensuring harmonious existence of the object or process; highlighting that an object or process can be described using various methods, sometimes even opposing ones, each of which alone does not provide a complete overview, while their combined application is most effective; and utilising historical, scientific, and biographical examples that demonstrate manifestations of tolerance in specific episodes of the development of science and culture.

Pedagogical communication between teacher and student is substantial in the development of tolerance, particularly through the demonstration by the teacher of a model of tolerant behaviour in various situations—both during classroom activities and in extracurricular interactions, such

as supervising theses, course papers, essays, during internships, debates, creative meetings, and scientific conferences. Tolerance is correlated with the pedagogical category of “education”. This is supported by both domestic research and international documents. For instance, in 1995, the UN adopted the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995), which states that tolerance implies a correct understanding of cultural diversity, forms of self-expression, and individual uniqueness. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience, and belief.

Considering the university educational process through the lens of contradictions, it is necessary to highlight the “teacher-student” contradiction. Social and societal changes have intensified this problem. Teachers often rely on previous models of students, while contemporary students differ significantly: they may be less motivated to learn, may not always recognise the relevance of education, and often choose a university not primarily for acquiring a specific profession. This is confirmed by C. Ria & Hijriati (2025), noting a low level of learning culture, an inability to plan the educational process, reluctance to attend lectures, and instances of deviant behaviour. From the side of teachers, attempts to avoid or superficially resolve these contradictions are notable, which only exacerbates the problem. As a result, there is a need for the daily resolution of numerous “derived” contradictions, where tolerance must manifest in multiple forms and aspects. In practice, this is complicated by the emergence of pseudo-tolerance, when complex solutions are replaced by simple “you-we-me, I-owe-you” arrangements or concessions to the student – an easier path than explaining, persuading, and motivating the student to act appropriately.

In the modern university educational environment, tolerance is often insufficiently expressed, especially in addressing various contradictions. Knowledge-based approaches are frequently prioritised, while activity-oriented aspects of learning are underestimated. Teaching

often prioritises possible amount of theoretical knowledge, to the detriment of developing critical thinking. Theoretical education, abstract models, and conceptual representations are often preferred over practical strategies with direct transformative value. All these examples indicate that students are not yet capable of forming skills for reasoned presentation and defence of their viewpoints, which incorporate the multipolar nature of research objects and the diversity of applied methods. This situation is characteristic not only of the educational process but also of the scientific-pedagogical environment, where even today, some educators seek “universal” solutions and consider different textbooks, manuals, or methods as the only correct ones, disregarding existing practices. This absurdity underscores the need for a systematic approach to implementing pedagogy of tolerance, as it is not merely a theoretical issue but a critical condition for the successful functioning of both students and teachers, as well as researchers at the university. Therefore, training of higher education participants in technologies and methods for resolving numerous contradictions, with tolerance serving as one of the key guiding principles of this process, should be prioritised.

The issue of tolerance is related to the development of critical thinking in students and other participants in the university educational process. According to F. Tanhan *et al.* (2021), main procedures of critical thinking include expression of personal evaluative judgment based on direct perception of the object; formulating two polar and consciously unacceptable viewpoints on a problem, followed by searching for the “golden median”; identifying logical flaws in opposing statements by systematically comparing them with widely accepted principles; and other procedures that promote comprehensive analysis and balanced judgment. They also demonstrated that tolerance is an integral characteristic of critical thinking, manifested in “balanced judgments”, “multi-faceted analysis”, “careful verification of conclusions”, and deliberate decision-making.

The main directions for addressing this issue involve considering the formation of tolerance separately for different participants of the university community and synthesising it at the level of their interrelations, including teachers; students; graduate students, degree candidates, and their academic supervisors; and research staff of university laboratories. It is necessary to view the formation of tolerance as a component of critical thinking, in which the following polar categories are interconnected: critical patience, defined as restraint for critical evaluations; scepticism and the ability to analyse different positions; and defending personal viewpoint while being ready to agree with reasoned arguments of an opponent. Gradations of tolerance manifestation within the university environment can be identified as attempts to reconcile personal and an opponent’s analysis according to the logic of the unity of opposites; combining the results of different approaches according to the principle of “both simultaneously”; delayed or stepwise problem-solving with the involvement of independent experts; and assessment of the degree of contradiction and incompatibility of approaches and solutions.

Development of methods for formation of special cognitive strategies that can be defined as a “mentality of tolerance” in the process of professional development of teachers and in daily professional activities should be emphasised. Equally relevant is the issue of fostering a tolerant attitude toward various problems that arise in the course of pedagogical interaction with different categories of students. According to N. Bondarenko *et al.* (2023), a substantial aspect of tolerance is the formation of a peculiar synthetic culture of thinking. This involves the ability to operate both with precise scientific concepts, artistic images, and various symbols, organically combining rational and intuitive ways of cognition. The main difficulty is the fact that such cognition is difficult to represent within a logically complete system of concepts; however, its development is critical as it opposes the dominant dichotomous “either-or” type of thinking, which is conflict-prone,

intolerant, and not oriented toward seeking consensus or resolving complex contradictions. An analysis of the contemporary university pedagogical environment shows that the level of development of this socially and professionally significant quality remains insufficient for the effective functioning of the higher education system. Therefore, there is a need to develop and implement special methods in the scientific and educational process. Before moving on to discussing them, it is reasonable to identify the most significant components of this issue. They can be classified according to the contradictions manifested in higher education both at the global level and within narrow groups of students and teachers, incorporating the specific profile of the institution, students' individual and professional orientation, historically established traditions, and other factors.

Global contradictions concern the functioning of the higher education system as a whole; including those in implementation of modern educational approaches and paradigms such as the activity-based paradigm, the learner-centred approach, the pedagogy of non-violence, creative pedagogy, and others; contradictions between the rapid growth of scientific knowledge and the lack of high-speed technologies for its effective acquisition, as well as between the need for a modern specialist to have a broad scientific and professional outlook and the necessity of having deep expertise in a narrow field, reflecting the conflict between the processes of integration and differentiation of scientific knowledge; and the contradiction between the declared ideas of personal freedom and the choice of ways to implement it, and the unavoidable constraints of the educational process, including the need to comply with frameworks, standards, and criteria.

Partial contradictions are less general and often relate to specific aspects of educational activity; these include contradictions that arise in the design of curricula, the writing of textbooks, manuals, guidelines, and standards; contradictions caused by insufficient detail in methodological recommendations and principles; and

discrepancies between the content of curricula and the forms of their acquisition and the requirements for a high level of training of a graduate specialist (Petryshyna *et al.*, 2025). In contrast to global contradictions, these partial contradictions occur more locally, within concrete conditions of the educational process, and their expression varies significantly across institutions and at different stages of education. Situational contradictions arise based on two previous groups and occur in daily professional and educational activities; teachers encounter them constantly, and the effectiveness of resolving such contradictions largely depends on the level of development of the quality of tolerance. Based on this classification, it is possible to identify specific tasks, forms, and methods of working with teachers, moving from global contradictions to partial ones.

The formation of tolerance in the context of understanding and productively overcoming global contradictions involves viewing the problems of the educational process as manifestations of the dialectical unity of opposites. This includes developing teachers' awareness of the polar properties, aspects, and relationships within any holistic educational construct, especially when implementing modern educational approaches. Notably, no progressive methodology is a universal solution: alongside the positive results of its application, negative effects inevitably appear. These may arise both from unskilled implementation and from objective circumstances that are independent of specific individuals. Any innovation in the educational process introduces certain disruptive elements, and their harmonious integration with existing practices requires time and special efforts from the teacher implementing such changes. A balanced and objective assessment is crucial for teachers to determine the dialectical unity of opposites—specifically, an assessment of how meaningful and practically feasible a particular educational approach is, as well as the ways in which certain concepts, ideas, or paradigms are embodied within it.

An illustrative example is the idea of the pedagogy of non-violence, which has been actively discussed. In Western pedagogy, this approach, in its radical form, has been implemented by granting individuals opportunities for self-expression, freedom to choose ways of activity, respect for moral autonomy, and avoidance of coercion or harsh influence. The idea is grounded in universal human values and assumes that an individual can act based on personal beliefs, take responsibility for their actions, and refrain from causing harm to other people or to nature. At the same time, it can now be stated that the aspiration toward “education without violence” has led to a certain devaluation of pedagogy as an independent science – it has, in fact, become integrated into the philosophy of education, sociology, and social efforts. Paradoxically, instead of education as a potentially conflict-laden yet purposeful process, the socialisation of the individual has come to dominate, often involving more subtle forms of influence. Theorists of socialisation argue that existing legal and social systems are optimal, and that the goal of socialisation is to shape the child into a conformist capable of performing social roles according to their social, ethnic, or religious position, while the development of critical thinking and independence becomes secondary. Such a one-sided elevation of one opposing aspect at the expense of another contradicts the principle of the unity and struggle of opposites. The dialectical approach assumes that both violence and non-violence are present in any socially significant processes. For example, a market economy contains both voluntary and coercive elements: an entrepreneur invests talent and effort into their business in response to demand, yet at the same time encounters state pressure, tax and criminal risks, extortion, and other constraints.

Violence and non-violence are closely intertwined not only in political life but also in many other spheres – military, family, medical, cultural, and others. However, their manifestation in pedagogy, where personalities are shaped, is notable. Without adopting extreme positions, it is possible

to note that contemporary pedagogical discourse requires a “balanced dialectical synthesis” that recognises the inevitability of at least minimal violence within the educational process. Furthermore, violence and non-violence are manifested unevenly: at times, a violent action may have a positive effect – for example, when it promotes a patient’s recovery or prevents harm in interpersonal relationships. Rejecting utopian idealisation, it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of “necessary violence”, limiting it by the principles of reasonableness, appropriateness, and benevolence, and directing it toward achieving societal and personal well-being. From a dialectical perspective, properly applied necessary violence can transform into benevolence: through a certain amount of suffering, a new quality is achieved – liberation from oppression, chaos, and injustice, bringing forth a sense of joy and enlightenment. At the same time, the well-being achieved is temporary and imperfect, as the struggle between violence and non-violence will inevitably re-emerge.

K. Nwosu *et al.* (2024) formulated this idea succinctly: even under ideal conditions of upbringing, it is impossible to completely avoid the “violence of good”, that is, violence aimed at preserving life and fostering the spiritual development of the individual. This principle underlies a “substantially tolerant” concept of the interaction between violence and non-violence in the educational process. In this regard, it is necessary to guide teachers toward forming the following concepts: any global contradiction is an integral part of the higher education system and, in most cases, will persist for a long time; attempts to ignore contradictions or to resolve them by “extreme” means, by exaggerating or mitigating the significance of one of the sides, are unproductive and often generate new conflicts; and the implementation of innovative approaches in the educational process must be conducted with the notion that any change contains both a positive and an inevitably negative component, with the task being to reduce the latter and minimise its destructive impact.

According to I. Halian (2023), effective forms of work aimed at developing pedagogical tolerance include mastering selected fragments of courses in philosophy, the methodology of science, and scientific inquiry; studying relevant sections of higher education pedagogy courses, which present both general and concrete implementations of key ideas; and participating in specialised courses, as well as completing term papers, theses, and other qualification works, and publishing scholarly articles and essays on the issues in question. At the same time, these opportunities are not limited to the examples listed above. Among other substantial aspect is the development of a dialectical concept of the principle of complementarity and its manifestations in the educational space of higher education institutions. In general terms, the principle states that for many objects and processes studied by different sciences, more than one approach is possible, with each approach emphasising different aspects, properties, and interrelations of the phenomena under investigation.

The principle of complementarity was formulated at the beginning of the 20th century and was initially applied in quantum mechanics, later extending to classical fields of physics. It is known, for example, that statistical and thermodynamic approaches to describing macrosystems are in a complementary relationship. Similar examples can be found in the social and humanities disciplines, including higher education pedagogy, which describes the system of higher professional education. This principle has a direct bearing on the issue of tolerance among teachers, since in practice it is often misinterpreted in a non-dialectical way. This is manifested in replacement of the “both-and” approach with a dichotomous “either-or”. In other words, when implementing a particular method or approach in the educational process, teachers often completely reject other possible approaches, without realising that these do not contradict their choice, as they are based on different properties, characteristics, and initial positions of the objects and phenomena being studied.

Therefore, when working with instructors at faculties or institutes of professional development, it is essential to make full use of every opportunity to demonstrate various situations in which the principle of complementarity is revealed. This applies both to the sphere related to a specific academic discipline and to the field of higher education pedagogy, which is an integral component of training at professional development centres. It is advisable, in particular, to design a special system of pedagogical tasks in which instructors analyse problematic, contradictory, and initially ambiguous situations. Traditionally, such situations are resolved according to the “either-or” model, although in many cases require a productive approach aligned with the complementarity principle of “both-and”.

Several illustrative examples can be considered. One of the central tasks of higher natural science education is the formation of a scientific worldview; in contexts where an instructor holds firm materialist convictions while engaging with deeply religious students, discussions of worldview-related issues should be conducted in a manner that preserves academic integrity, upholds pedagogical ethics, and ensures mutual respect, ensuring critical examination of diverse perspectives. In another instance, a scholarly article raises the question of whether a university lecturer is closer in essence to an actor or to a professional fully dedicated to the educational process; reflecting on the characteristics of the acting profession, the author highlights the relevance of the ability to transform, ultimately concluding that lecturers should avoid creating the illusion of performing a role, as authenticity is the quality most valued in educational interactions.

When analysing such a situation in courses on higher education pedagogy or in professional development practicum sessions, it is necessary to incentivise the concept that the question of “being an actor or not” should not be resolved in a categorical manner. A more effective approach is guided by the principle of “both-and”. The personal uniqueness of the instructor

undoubtedly has value for students. However, under the complex contemporary conditions of university education – including manifestations of deviant behaviour, low student motivation, and other challenges elements of pedagogical performance may prove particularly useful: a deliberately moderated “sharpened” reaction to insufficient knowledge or disciplinary violations; emotionally emphasised concern regarding the consequences of unmastered material; or a sincerely expressive reinforcement of praise for even minor but meaningful student progress. Analysis of such specially modelled pedagogical situations in the system of professional development not only fosters further awareness of the significance of tolerance as a key social and professional quality, but also develops the instructor’s readiness to cultivate this attribute intentionally.

A further logical step is to analyse methodological approaches to developing tolerance in a university instructor as they address smaller-scale contradictions (group 2) of the proposed classification). In this context, it is necessary to collect typical examples of such contradictions that arise in teaching activities and present them to participants of the In-Service Professional Courses/ Continuing Teacher Professional Development (IPC/CTPD) during lectures in higher education pedagogy. A detailed examination of the causes of these contradictions and the traditionally used (though not always effective) ways of resolving them is notable. The development of tolerance among instructors during IPC/CTPD training is also facilitated using nontraditional forms of instructional activities: debates, modelling mini-conflicts, and discussing current issues of the university educational environment. At the same time, such activities within a pedagogy course or an IPC practicum requires thorough preparation by both the instructor and the trainees. Before the discussion, it is necessary to ensure familiarity with the topic, prepare introductory statements representing opposing viewpoints, and define a clear set of questions for discussion. Otherwise, the discussion risks becoming chaotic and overly diffuse.

Organising such instructional activities requires certain professional skills from the leading instructor. The educator must be well-oriented in various theoretical approaches to analysing the issue, knowledgeable about scholarly and practical developments in the field, and aware of the outcomes of their application in educational settings. It is also necessary to possess skills in moderating discussions: guiding the conversation in a constructive direction, preventing participants from moving to extremes in their judgments, and reaching conclusions not of the “either-or” type but rather “both-and”. This is essential for awareness of the complexity of the educational process as an integrated system in which substantial positive change cannot be achieved through a single approach or method. Everything in pedagogy that is perceived as a “pro” inevitably combines with elements of a “contra”, forming one logically coherent structure (Sydorenko, 2022).

For example, developmental education is an organic combination of numerous innovative methods of working with students and traditional, reproductive, well-tested methods. The use of modern digital technologies cannot entirely replace verbal or paper-based forms of instruction. Problem-based learning, no matter how actively applied, cannot encompass the entire educational process and will always coexist with traditional forms of academic activity. Thus, deep engagement of the instructor in reflecting on the fundamental philosophical-methodological contradictions of higher education contributes to developing a sense of “measure” – a key component of tolerance as a professional quality. This worldview and methodological foundation provides the basis for developing the capacity to constructively address smaller, yet equally significant, contradictions classified under groups 2 and 3.

Regarding the aspect that can be conventionally termed “practical tolerance”, several key provisions are notable: no real contradiction can be ignored or minimise, yet it is equally inadvisable to exaggerate it and create an artificial impression of its criticality; a significant proportion

of contradictions within the university educational process is an inherent feature of the system and, by nature, cannot be completely eliminated, therefore, instructor must address their objective presence, avoid attempts to quickly and superficially “eliminate” what is fundamentally a systemic phenomenon; and cultivating tolerance requires the ability to identify the true, underlying causes of contradictions, which are not on the surface, alongside the concept that overcoming them takes time. Attempts to resolve a problem immediately and by force most often yield no results or further aggravate existing difficulties.

Accepting these principles also involves developing the instructor’s critical attitude toward external information – especially information of a negative nature, which dominates the media space. Professionally, it is necessary not to accept such messages uncritically but to subject them to multifaceted analysis, assess their reliability and significance. This requires restraint, the ability to postpone a final judgment, consider different solutions to a problem, and choose the most optimal one. Thus, the problem of developing tolerance is directly related to the professional competence of the higher education instructor, as it encompasses a wide range of skills – from designing educational content to developing communication skills in specific instructional situations. Therefore, further analysis should include identifying stages of work with instructors both during IPC/IPC training and within their daily professional activities at the university, as well as identifying elements of traditional instructional practices that directly contribute to developing tolerance and ways to optimise them.

The practical dimension of tolerance should be interpreted within the context of the professional competence of a higher education instructor. For further analysis, it is most appropriate to rely on the structure of competence proposed by L. Judijanto (2025), which distinguishes four independent components: the conceptual component; the psychological and pedagogical component; the communicative component, defined as the

culture of professional interaction; and the integral personal qualities. The structure defines the conceptual component as the instructor’s mastery of the content of academic discipline, knowledge of related fields, and the formation of philosophical-social, ecological, and economic awareness.

To develop tolerance within this component, the following additional forms of work with instructors may be used: presentation, in professional development courses, of historical examples from science demonstrating the coexistence and evolution of several scientific schools that offered different, sometimes opposing, solutions to the same problem. It is necessary to illustrate the logic of the “struggle of ideas”, showing how, at different stages of scientific development, the positions of proponents of various approaches changed: where they converged, where they maintained fundamental differences, etc. A particularly illustrative example are instructors of natural sciences (physics, chemistry) undergoing training in professional development programs. They may be shown the evolution of ideas regarding the corpuscular – wave duality of light and matter, tracing how wave theories (C. Huygens, A.-J. Fresnel, T. Young) or corpuscular models dominated at different times, and how, in the 20th century, the notion of their inseparable unity emerged within the framework of the principle of complementarity. It is also worth analysing the formation of similar ideas regarding microparticles in quantum physics. It is necessary to demonstrate how the scientific community initially reacted to the evidently “heretical” ideas of L. de Broglie or M. Planck, and how these ideas gradually gained recognition and became widely accepted (Gerick & Killus, 2024).

Similar examples may be used in other scientific fields as well: analysing the contradictions underlying ecological crises. For example, technological innovations that, on the one hand, improve human life and promote scientific and technological progress, but on the other, may pose significant risks to the environment or human health. Such examples demonstrate the

complexity of balancing various aspects when introducing new technologies and forming sustainable decisions at different stages of scientific development; using specially designed tasks that require instructors to determine solutions in situations involving conflicting approaches or interests, as discussed earlier. These forms of work encompass the primary opportunities for the development of tolerance within the conceptual component of professional competence.

Regarding the analysis of the psychological and pedagogical component, it is worth noting that the key issues concern the construction of academic disciplines, the selection and implementation of optimal forms of knowledge transmission, and the determination of rational timeframes for mastering the material. In other words, this refers to the different levels of designing the content of higher education: forming strategic goals for training specialists, choosing models and approaches to structuring academic material, developing educational standards and curricula with defined invariant and variable components, and creating textbooks, teaching manuals, and methodological materials (Fedorova & Handabura, 2025).

Within the context of developing tolerance among higher education instructors, significant attention is warranted for the long-standing and still unresolved dilemma of differentiation and early specialisation in university education. In practice, situations often arise in which differentiation is excessive or specialisation occurs prematurely: first-year students, who do not yet have a mastery of their chosen profession, are given fragments of specialised disciplines without the necessary fundamental basis, while basic courses in early years are taught in isolation from future professional orientation. In such cases, the use of educational resources – time, tasks, assessment, funding, etc., becomes irrational and, in some sense, “intolerant”.

Considering methods for developing pedagogical tolerance in this context, it is essential to emphasise the development of awareness of

instructors that their discipline, regardless of how relevant, is only one component of the student’s holistic professional preparation. This requires readiness on the part of the instructor to work within clearly defined time limits – both in terms of the volume of academic content and the range of intellectual skills to be developed. Naturally, tolerance within the psychological and pedagogical component is not limited to these aspects. It is also necessary to cultivate the instructor’s ability to coordinate the content of different academic courses at both junior and senior levels of university study. Among such criteria is the alignment of the expected levels of preparation between sequential disciplines. Therefore, during course planning, the instructor should cover not only initial academic significance but also the place within the overall educational system. The instructor must maintain continuity: avoid interpretations that contradict students’ prior knowledge; utilise fundamental concepts were formed earlier; determine the actual level of knowledge retention after previous courses; and plan the necessary “recovery” steps for further learning (Firmansyah *et al.*, 2025).

Another substantial aspect, typical of fundamental first-year and second-year courses, is also worth noting. As a rule, such courses can present various approaches differing in methodological focus and emphasis. A tolasant choice between them requires relinquishing personal research preferences and focusing instead on the approach that best promotes the development of students’ professional thinking. That is, the course should include not the materials that most closely match the instructor’s interests, but those that are most organically integrated into the training system for a given field. The psychological and pedagogical block of professional competence also includes the issue of assessment. Within this topic, any assessment, whether formative or summative, functions not only as a control mechanism but also as a tool guiding further student development. Therefore, the manifestation of pedagogical tolerance is determined not by documentation of an

insufficient result but in creation of conditions and incentives for improvement (Popov, 2025).

To develop these skills in instructors, it is worth applying specially designed situational tasks for collective discussion during professional development sessions; for example, during an assessment, a student may be guided toward achieving a “satisfactory” grade through leading questions, and if the student subsequently requests an additional question to improve the mark to “good”, the possible reasons for such behaviour should be analysed along with strategies for resolving the situation; in another instance, a highly capable student may complete challenging tasks designed to develop diligence and independence with ease, demonstrating potential for greater achievement, yet without formal grounds to increase the workload or adjust the grade, requiring consideration of possible solutions to address this situation (Tanhan *et al.*, 2021). Overall, as in many other matters, the authors do not claim to offer final conclusions but rather invite constructive discussion.

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of tolerance as a professional competence in higher education. N. Bondarenko *et al.* (2023) and M. Bykova *et al.* (2024) emphasise that it functions not merely as an ethical disposition but also as a cognitive and methodological principle guiding educators in navigating complex pedagogical environments characterised by multiple contradictions. These contradictions, classified into global, partial, and situational levels by A. Didur (2022) and B. Kashkhyrbay *et al.* (2024), require the integration of diverse approaches while maintaining balanced judgment.

The correlation between tolerance and critical thinking is particularly significant. A. Didniak (2025) and W. Liao *et al.* (2025) argued that critical thinking can be used for evaluation of multiple perspectives, while tolerance ensures that such evaluation does not devolve into dogmatism or rigid adherence to personal views. This interplay aligns with the principle of complementarity, applied to pedagogical practice by

A. Didur (2022), ensuring the recognition of partial validity of seemingly contradictory positions and harmonisation of innovation and tradition, theory and practice, as well as knowledge-oriented and activity-based approaches, as highlighted by V. Sydorenko (2022) and O. Popov (2025). At the same time, K. Nwosu *et al.* (2024) and A. Zamora *et al.* (2025) highlighted the risks of pseudo-tolerance, where superficial concessions replace genuine dialogical engagement. Such tendencies underscore the need for deliberate professional development, reflective practices, and guided exposure to pedagogical contradictions, as emphasised by K. Tereshchenko (2021) and A. Bergamaschi *et al.* (2022). Methods including debates, scenario-based exercises, and interdisciplinary integration have been shown by C. Ria & Hijriati (2025) to be effective in cultivating an inclusive and tolerant mindset among higher education staff.

Moreover, tolerance contributes to the constructive resolution of both cognitive and social conflicts in the university environment. I. Babenko & G. Kuzmenko (2020), M. Bykova *et al.* (2024), and O. Fedorova & O. Handabura (2025) demonstrated that fostering a culture of dialogue, openness, and mutual respect enhances student engagement, promotes ethical decision-making, and supports the development of professional competencies in future specialists. This is particularly relevant in multicultural and interdisciplinary educational settings, where awareness of diverse worldviews is critical, as noted by F. Tanhan *et al.* (2021), H. Firmansyah *et al.* (2025), and B. Theeuwes *et al.* (2025).

The practical implications of these findings suggest that higher education institutions should explicitly incorporate the development of tolerance into teacher training programs. A. Didur (2022) and Triyanto (2026) highlight the use of historical case studies, analyses of scientific controversies, and reflective exercises as effective tools for balancing personal viewpoints with external perspectives. O. Pometun (2018), V. Sydorenko (2022) and O. Popov (2024) further stressed that attention to both conceptual and

psychological-pedagogical components ensures that this competence is embedded across instructional design, assessment, and classroom interaction. In summary, tolerance emerges as a multifaceted professional quality, intertwining ethical, cognitive, and methodological dimensions. T. Potapchuk & M. Klepar (2020) and N. Guillén-Yparrea & M. Ramírez-Montoya (2023) argue that its deliberate cultivation enhances higher education effectiveness by enabling educators to mediate contradictions, foster critical thinking, and maintain constructive professional relationships in increasingly complex learning environments. Future research should empirically validate these theoretical insights and explore cross-cultural applications of strategies for developing tolerance in diverse academic contexts.

Conclusions

The study has demonstrated that tolerance should be conceptualised not merely as a moral or interpersonal value but as a core component of teachers' professional competence in higher education. In the context of contemporary educational transformations, tolerance functions as a methodological and cognitive principle that facilitates navigation of complex pedagogical environments characterised by multiple and often contradictory demands. The analysis has shown that pedagogical contradictions in higher education can be differentiated into global, partial, and situational levels, each requiring context-sensitive and reflective professional responses. Teacher tolerance is decisive in the constructive resolution of these contradictions by supporting balanced judgment, openness to alternative perspectives, and the integration of diverse pedagogical approaches. In this sense, tolerance contributes to overcoming rigid dichotomous thinking and facilitates a transition toward complementary and dialectical modes of pedagogical reasoning. A key finding of the study is the close interrelation between tolerance and critical thinking in teachers' professional activity. Tolerance creates the cognitive space necessary for critical analysis without dogmatism,

while critical thinking prevents tolerance from being reduced to relativism or unprincipled accommodation. The integration of these qualities improves informed pedagogical decision-making in situations of uncertainty, value pluralism, and methodological diversity. The application of the principle of complementarity has been identified as a productive methodological framework for interpreting tolerance in higher education pedagogy. By recognising the partial validity of seemingly incompatible positions, this principle ensures harmonisation of theory and practice, innovation and tradition, freedom and regulation, as well as knowledge-oriented and activity-based learning models. Such an approach strengthens the coherence and sustainability of the educational process. Theoretical implications of the study include the refinement of the concept of teacher tolerance within the structure of professional competence and the expansion of methodological tools for analysing pedagogical contradictions. Practically, the findings suggest that tolerance should be deliberately fostered through professional development programs, reflective pedagogical training, and institutional support for dialogical educational practices. Prevention of pseudo-tolerance by promoting critical reflection and methodological awareness among higher education teachers is also critical. The limitations of the study are related to the theoretical and conceptual nature. Overall, the study contributes to scholarly discussions on the quality of higher education by framing tolerance as a professional, cognitive, and methodological competence essential for addressing the challenges of contemporary university education. Future research should address empirical validation of the proposed conceptual model, including qualitative and quantitative studies of tolerance development among higher education teachers, as well as cross-cultural analyses of tolerance in different academic contexts.

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Педагогічна толерантність як професійна компетентність

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Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням складності педагогічної взаємодії та посиленням соціальних, культурних і когнітивних суперечностей у сучасній вищій освіті, що потребує від викладачів не лише ґрунтовних фахових знань, а й сформованих професійних і соціальних компетентностей, зокрема толерантності. Метою статті було обґрунтування толерантності викладача як інтегральної професійної компетентності та як методологічного принципу розв'язання педагогічних суперечностей в освітньому процесі університету. Дослідження ґрунтувалося на філософсько-педагогічному аналізі, синтезі та узагальненні теоретичних джерел, порівняльному аналізі, а також рефлексії педагогічної практики у сфері вищої освіти. У роботі розглянуто феномен толерантності викладача в контексті трансформацій, що відбуваються у вищій освіті, та проаналізовано суперечності, притаманні університетському освітньому процесу, які класифіковано як глобальні, часткові та ситуативні. Встановлено, що толерантність функціонує не лише як особистісна якість, а й як методологічний принцип, що забезпечує конструктивне розв'язання педагогічних суперечностей. Проаналізовано тісний взаємозв'язок толерантності з критичним мисленням, із наголосом на діалектичному мисленні та принципі комплементарності як альтернативі дихотомічним підходам типу «або-або», поширеним в освітній практиці. Особливу увагу приділено педагогічній взаємодії в системі «викладач-студент», ризикам псевдотолерантності та дисбалансу між знаннево орієнтованими й діяльнісними моделями навчання. Також виокремлено та систематизовано основні напрями, форми й методи формування толерантності у викладачів закладів вищої освіти, зокрема в межах програм підвищення кваліфікації та безперервної освіти. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в можливості використання його результатів викладачами закладів вищої освіти, фахівцями з педагогічної підготовки та розробниками програм професійного розвитку для вдосконалення педагогічного прийняття рішень, розв'язання конфліктів і підвищення загальної якості вищої освіти

Ключові слова: толерантність викладача; вища освіта; професійна компетентність; критичне мислення; педагогічні суперечності; принцип компліментарності