

1.3. TEACHER TRAINING IN POLTAVA PROVINCE DURING THE 19TH –EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

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Abstract. *The article examines the evolution of teacher training in Poltava Province during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, revealing the historical preconditions, institutional structures, and pedagogical tendencies that determined the professionalization of education in the region.*

The study identifies and systematizes key stages in the development of pedagogical institutions in Poltava Province, focusing on the activities of teacher seminaries, gymnasiums, pedagogical courses, and institutes for noble maidens.

A special emphasis is placed on the humanization and feminization of pedagogical education, the formation of curricula integrating moral, psychological, and methodological disciplines, and the role of educators.

The results of this study enrich the historiography of Ukrainian education and provide a foundation for understanding the traditions that influenced the modernization of teacher training in Ukraine today.

Keywords: *Poltava Province; teacher training; pedagogical education; seminaries; gymnasiums; zemstvo; female education; historiography; nineteenth century; early twentieth century; Ukraine.*

Introduction

The modernization of education in Ukraine is closely linked to an understanding of its historical foundations. In the nineteenth century, the transformation of teacher training became a national issue as the need for professional educators grew in tandem with the expansion of public education. Within the Russian Empire,

Ukrainian territories, and Poltava Province in particular, developed distinctive systems of teacher preparation that combined state regulation, church influence, and civic initiative.

The early nineteenth century marked the beginning of systemic efforts to organize education. The Manifesto on the Establishment of Ministries (1802) and the creation of the Ministry of Public Education became milestones in the institutionalization of teacher training. The inclusion of the teacher's rank in the Table of Ranks (1803) recognized teaching as an official profession.

The development of teacher training in Poltava Province was influenced by a combination of social, economic, and cultural factors. The mid-nineteenth-century reforms, particularly the Regulations on Public Elementary Schools (1864) and the Regulations on the Preparation of Teachers for Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums (1865), established the legal framework for teacher education. This system provided the foundation for specialized pedagogical schools, seminaries, and courses that emerged across the province.

In addition to state and church initiatives, zemstvo organizations – institutions of local self-government introduced by the 1864 reform – played a decisive role. They financed the construction of schools, established libraries, opened Sunday schools, supported pedagogical training, and subsidized teachers' salaries. The zemstvo became a major agent of educational democratization, encouraging access to schooling and improving the professional status of teachers.

The aim of this article is to reconstruct the evolution of teacher education in Poltava Province between the early nineteenth century and 1917. The objectives include identifying the key stages of development, analyzing the activities of pedagogical institutions, and highlighting the theoretical and practical contributions of educators and administrators who shaped the region's educational tradition.

Research Results

Socio-Pedagogical Background and Early Institutional Development

The evolution of teacher training in Poltava Province during the nineteenth century was closely tied to the administrative and socio-economic transformations that occurred within the Russian Empire as a whole. The creation of the Ministry of Public Education by the Manifesto of September 8, 1802, initiated a new state system of educational management that replaced the earlier fragmented control exercised by church consistories and local authorities.

At the same time, the Scientific Committee attached to the Ministry (functioning in 1818–1831 and 1856–1917) assumed responsibility for supervising curricula and approving textbooks, thus shaping the intellectual foundations of teacher education. In the context of the empire's modernization, these measures reflected a broader shift from religious to secular principles of schooling, which directly affected the territories of present-day Ukraine, including Poltava Province.

The first decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the gradual emergence of an institutional network that combined church and secular education. The Poltava Theological Seminary, established in 1803, became the earliest and most authoritative educational center of the province.

Parallel to spiritual education, the government introduced a secular model of classical learning. In 1808, the Poltava Men's Gymnasium opened, offering a comprehensive curriculum in Latin, Greek, mathematics, geography, and natural sciences.

The establishment of the Poltava Institute for Noble Maidens in 1818 was equally significant. Conceived under the patronage of the Empress Maria's Department, it represented one of the earliest forms of organized female education in the Ukrainian provinces.

The expansion of schooling during the first half of the nineteenth century was closely linked to economic and demographic growth in the region. Urban centers such as Poltava, Kremenchuk, Lubny, and Pryluky required increasing numbers of literate officials and teachers.

Throughout this period, the Church retained a leading influence in education. Ecclesiastical authorities supervised the opening of parish schools, controlled teacher appointments, and ensured the confessional orientation of instruction.

During the reign of Emperor Alexander I, a series of charters and circulars laid the basis for the state-school network. The Charter of Educational Institutions Subordinate to the University Districts (1804) and the Charter of Gymnasias and District Schools (1828) regulated the structure and governance of schools, including the provinces of Left-Bank Ukraine.

By mid-century, Poltava Province had a diversified yet still loosely coordinated educational network, comprising the Theological Seminary, the Men's Gymnasium, the Institute for Noble Maidens, and several parish and county schools. Together, they produced the first generation of professionally oriented teachers who combined religious devotion with emerging pedagogical literacy.

The groundwork laid in these decades enabled the subsequent professionalization of the teaching profession. The early institutions not only transmitted knowledge but also embodied new social values, discipline, service, and enlightenment, which turned education into a distinct public mission.

Reforms and Expansion of the Teacher Training Network (1860s–1917)

The second half of the nineteenth century became a turning point in the history of education in Poltava Province. Profound socio-economic transformations associated with the abolition of serfdom (1861) and the subsequent administrative reforms created a favorable environment for the modernization of schooling.

Two legislative documents played a decisive role in organizing the process of teacher preparation: the Regulations on Public Elementary Schools (1864) and the Regulations on the Preparation of Teachers for Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums (1865). These decrees established unified standards for

elementary education, defined the qualifications of teachers, and authorized the creation of specialized pedagogical institutions.

Under the influence of these reforms, the zemstvo institutions, introduced by the administrative reform of 1864, became the leading force in the educational field. The zemstvo councils, elected by local landowners and representatives of urban and rural communities, assumed direct responsibility for establishing and maintaining schools.

The zemstvos' role extended beyond financial assistance. They organized pedagogical congresses and conferences, where teachers discussed methodological innovations and the moral aspects of their profession.

Parallel to civic initiatives, the Orthodox Church continued to influence the spiritual and moral dimensions of education. Responding to the growing need for teachers, the Holy Synod encouraged the establishment of church teacher schools, where the curriculum combined theology, moral instruction, and elementary pedagogy.

A distinctive feature of Poltava's educational landscape was the cooperation between the zemstvo and the church. While the Church maintained confessional education, the zemstvos ensured material support and advocated for methodological improvements.

By the 1870s and 1880s, teacher training institutions had become the backbone of professional development in the province. The first such institutions, the Poltava, Hadyach, Lubny, Zinkiv, and Pryluky seminaries, offered a three-year course that integrated general subjects (History, Geography, Arithmetic, and Natural Science) with pedagogical ones (Pedagogy, Psychology, Didactics, and Methodology of Elementary Instruction).

The professionalization of teacher education during this period also manifested in the establishment of the Poltava Teachers' Institute in 1914. It became a regional center for the scientific and methodological coordination of pedagogical institutions, preparing teachers for secondary schools and offering retraining for those already employed. The Institute's foundation marked the culmination of a half-century process of institutional

consolidation. It united the experience of seminaries, gymnasiums, and pedagogical courses within a unified educational framework.

At the turn of the century, Poltava Province could boast one of the most comprehensive educational networks in Ukraine. Statistical reports from 1910–1915 indicate the following structure:

- The Poltava Theological Seminary (founded 1803);
- The Poltava Institute for Noble Maidens (1818);
- Four religious schools under the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod;
- Five teacher seminaries (Poltava, Hadyach, Lubny, Zinkiv, Pryluky);
- One Teachers' Institute (1914);
- 26 female and 13 male gymnasia (departments of the Empress Maria, Ministry of Education, and private);
- One full diocesan and one parish female school;
- Four incomplete female parish schools;
- The Oleksandr-Mykolai Church Teachers' School and four two-class male church teacher schools;
- One Zhdaniv female church teacher school (three-year term);
- Short-term pedagogical courses and seven biennial pedagogical programs (Zen'kiv, 1906; Poltava, 1910; Pryluky, 1911; Khorol, Kremenchuk & Hadyach, 1910; Lubny, 1912).

This network represented a multi-level and functionally differentiated system. Theological institutions provided moral and religious formation; seminaries and pedagogical courses offered practical preparation; gymnasia and the Institute ensured theoretical depth and a broad cultural foundation. The combination of these levels guaranteed a continuous pipeline of qualified teachers for all tiers of the educational system, from parish to gymnasium.

The short-term pedagogical courses played a particularly important role in supplying rural schools with instructors. Their emergence was a direct response to the acute shortage of trained teachers in the countryside. Funded primarily by zemstvos and, later, the Holy Synod, these courses evolved through three phases. In the 1870s and 1880s, these were brief literacy programs, lasting two to three months, that emphasized reading, writing, and arithmetic. By the 1890s, the curriculum included catechism, pedagogy, and psychology. In the 1910s, the courses evolved into two-year programs with a distinct pedagogical profile, incorporating supervised teaching practice in local schools.

Students of these courses were typically young men and women aged 16–25 who had completed city or district schools. The training combined lectures, practical exercises, and pedagogical observation. Participants conducted lessons, prepared class journals, and compiled “psychological characteristics” of pupils, which encouraged reflective teaching. Upon completion, graduates received certificates granting the right to teach in elementary schools under either the Ministry of Education or the Synod.

The experience of Poltava’s pedagogical courses demonstrated the local adaptability of education policy. Despite limited funding and modest facilities, they achieved considerable success in raising literacy and introducing modern teaching methods. Their programs were periodically reviewed at teachers’ congresses, where zemstvo and church representatives discussed issues such as teacher discipline, remuneration, and moral conduct.

A remarkable example of methodological progress was the Velykosorochynsk Teachers’ Seminary, whose curriculum included electives such as Natural Science, Beekeeping, and Land Surveying. This integration of practical agrarian knowledge reflected the socioeconomic character of the province, where the majority of the population depended on agriculture. The seminary thus embodied a pedagogical synthesis between scientific instruction and the realities of peasant life.

By the early twentieth century, the educational landscape of Poltava Province had evolved into a coherent system of institutions

characterized by interaction among the state, the church, and local self-government. Its organizational model combined centralized regulation with local initiative, ensuring both ideological unity and adaptability to regional needs. The result was not only the quantitative growth of schools and teachers, but also the qualitative improvement of pedagogical culture, which by 1917 had reached a level comparable to that of the most advanced regions of the Russian Empire.

Curricular Structure and Content of Teacher Education in Poltava Province

By the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the system of teacher training in Poltava Province had reached a level of internal differentiation that enabled it to prepare educators for various types of schools, from parish to gymnasium, within a unified pedagogical framework. The curriculum of pedagogical institutions reflected the synthesis of three educational traditions that had developed in the region: religious, civic-humanistic, and practical-professional.

The theological and moral component, inherited from the early nineteenth-century seminary system, remained central to all programs. Courses such as *Holy Scripture*, *Church Slavonic Grammar*, *Moral Theology*, and *Catechism* continued to be taught in theological and church-teacher schools, forming the ethical foundation of the teacher's worldview. At the same time, these institutions increasingly supplemented religious content with elements of pedagogy and psychology. Inspectors' reports from the 1890s testify that seminary graduates were evaluated not only for their piety and obedience but also for their ability to manage a class, maintain order, and apply modern teaching methods.

The general education block in all teacher-training institutions included *History*, *Geography*, *Mathematics*, *Physics*, *Natural Science*, and *Languages* (Russian, Latin, Greek, and sometimes German or French). The Poltava Institute for Noble Maidens, for example, emphasized humanities, adding courses in *World History*, *Geography*, *Literature*, and *Fine Arts* to cultivate aesthetic and moral sensibility in future female educators. Male seminaries, by contrast, introduced more natural-scientific

subjects, aligning their graduates with the needs of rural and technical education.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, pedagogical subjects had been systematically structured into an independent cycle. This cycle included *Pedagogy, History of Pedagogy, Didactics, Methodology of Elementary Instruction, and Psychology*. The inclusion of these disciplines reflected the gradual scientification of teacher training. Pedagogy was now understood not only as an art of teaching but also as a field of theoretical research. Lecturers in Poltava, Hadyach, and Zinkiv seminaries used contemporary textbooks by Ushinsky, Pirogov, and Vodovozov, thereby introducing students to comparative pedagogy and the concept of developmental learning.

Another characteristic feature of Poltava teacher education was the introduction of aesthetic-labor training. Subjects such as *Singing, Drawing, Gymnastics, Manual Work, and Gardening* appeared in most curricula after the 1880s. Their purpose was twofold: to develop students' creative abilities and to equip them with practical skills for rural life. Manual Work and Gardening were considered particularly valuable in a predominantly agrarian province. Teachers trained in these disciplines could lead school gardens and agricultural workshops, thereby contributing to the local economy and instilling respect for physical labor among pupils.

A comparative analysis of curricula demonstrates clear institutional specialization. The Poltava Theological Seminary combined a wide range of general education and theological courses, ensuring the moral and intellectual formation of parish teachers.

The content of instruction in seminaries and pedagogical courses was built around three principal cycles:

1. General educational disciplines, the foundation of broad erudition: *Russian Language, Literature, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Natural Science*.
2. Pedagogical and psychological disciplines, the professional core: *Pedagogy, History of Pedagogy, Psychology,*

Didactics, Hygiene of Education, Methodology of Teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Natural Science.

3. Practical and aesthetic-labor training, the applied component: Singing, Drawing, Gymnastics, Manual Work, Gardening, Beekeeping, Land Surveying, and in certain women's schools, *Needlework and Dancing*.

The Poltava and Hadyach seminaries distinguished themselves by introducing optional subjects such as Botany, Zoology, and Elements of Agriculture. The Velykosorochynsk Seminary gained recognition for its electives in Beekeeping and Land Surveying, while the Lubny Seminary experimented with integrating cosmography and Practical Geometry.

Particular attention was paid to methodological practice. Each seminary maintained a model school where students conducted lessons under the supervision of instructors. The practice included planning lessons, maintaining class journals, assessing pupils' progress, and writing "psychological portraits," individualized observations of children's temperaments and learning abilities. This approach prefigured later learner-centered methodologies. Evaluations of teaching practice became decisive in graduation exams, emphasizing the primacy of pedagogical mastery over rote knowledge.

The short-term and biennial pedagogical courses, which proliferated after 1906, further diversified teacher preparation. Their programs gradually expanded from elementary literacy to include *Pedagogy, Psychology, Methodology*, and even *Elements of School Hygiene*. The three chronological stages of these courses can be identified:

- 1870s–1880s: rudimentary literacy courses financed by zemstvos, focusing on reading, writing, and arithmetic;
- 1890s–1910: short-term pedagogical courses under the patronage of the Holy Synod, incorporating Catechism, Pedagogy, and Psychology;
- 1911–1917: biennial courses with extended syllabi covering general and special pedagogy, methods of teaching, and supervised practice.

Admission to pedagogical courses was open to persons aged sixteen or older who had completed at least a district or city school. Many participants were children of peasants or petty clerks, reflecting the social democratization of teacher training.

Women's education also underwent a deep transformation during this period. The inclusion of *Hygiene, Management, and Needlework* into women's schools' programs symbolized a shift from domestic preparation to professional competence. Women's gymnasia, especially the Mariinsky Gymnasium in Poltava, and private institutions led by V. Aksharmova and V. Morozovska, pioneered the introduction of Pedagogy, Psychology, Latin, Cosmography, and foreign languages into their curricula. These reforms not only broadened the intellectual horizons of female students but also legitimized their participation in public education as qualified teachers.

The humanistic dimension of education is expressed in the integration of moral and aesthetic ideals into teaching content. Textbooks and manuals authored by Poltava educators emphasized empathy, respect for the child's individuality, and moral self-perfection of the teacher.

The structure and content of teacher training in Poltava Province thus represented a harmonious synthesis of theory and practice. The curriculum united classical subjects with applied disciplines, moral education with scientific inquiry, and individual creativity with collective responsibility.

Women's Education and Institutional Differentiation in Poltava Province

The development of women's education in Poltava Province during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries constituted one of the most progressive aspects of the regional pedagogical tradition. While the early decades of the century limited female schooling mainly to philanthropic institutions for the daughters of the nobility, subsequent reforms transformed this sphere into a structured and socially inclusive system of professional education for women.

The cornerstone of this evolution was the Poltava Institute for Noble Maidens (established 1818). Originally subordinate to the Department of the Empress Maria, it represented a model of disciplined upbringing and moral refinement. The Institute's founders aimed to provide Christian-oriented intellectual and aesthetic education that would prepare women for domestic and social responsibilities. Its curriculum encompassed *Religion, Russian and French Languages, Literature, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Drawing, Music, and Needlework*. From the 1820s onward, the Institute gradually expanded its social intake, admitting the daughters of merchants (1828) and, after the 1860s, the daughters of civil servants and rural clergy. This democratization anticipated later trends toward universal education and reflected the humanitarian ethos characteristic of Poltava's educational environment.

By the 1860s and 1870s, a network of female gymnasia and seminaries began to form under both state and private auspices. The *Mariinsky Gymnasium* in Poltava became the most prominent state institution of female secondary education in the province. Its program combined the classical curriculum of gymnasia with specialized courses in *Pedagogy, Psychology, and Didactics*. Instruction was designed not merely to produce well-educated women but to cultivate potential teachers for elementary and lower-secondary schools.

Private education developed in parallel. The gymnasia of V. Aksharmova and V. Morozovska in Poltava distinguished themselves by introducing innovative subjects, including *Hygiene, Cosmography, Latin, and Foreign Languages* (German and French). These schools were financed partly by tuition fees and partly by municipal subsidies, which allowed them to maintain smaller class sizes and modern didactic materials. Their graduates often continued their studies at pedagogical courses or were employed as governesses and teachers in provincial towns.

A distinctive feature of women's institutions was the integration of moral and aesthetic education with practical skills. Alongside academic subjects, curricula included Dancing, Singing, Drawing, Needlework, and, later, Gymnastics and Hygiene.

The establishment of women's parish schools in the 1870s and 1880s further extended access to female education. Initially focused on domestic instruction and moral upbringing, these schools gradually adopted elements of general and pedagogical training.

The interaction between church and secular authorities in organizing female education was a distinctive hallmark of the Poltava model. The Church maintained its influence over moral and spiritual matters, while the Ministry of Education oversaw secular subjects and certification.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Poltava Province had one of the most densely populated networks of women's educational institutions in Ukraine. Archival statistics indicate that by 1915, there were 26 female gymnasias (state, departmental, and private), one diocesan, and several parish schools, as well as multiple short-term pedagogical courses for women. Together they formed a multilevel continuum: parish schooling provided elementary literacy and moral training; gymnasias offered general secondary education; pedagogical courses and institutes supplied professional specialization.

The pedagogical orientation of female education was reflected in the inclusion of Psychology, Pedagogy, Methodology, and didactics in senior classes. Students attended lectures, performed teaching observations, and participated in supervised practice. At the Mariinsky Gymnasium, for instance, advanced pupils taught sample lessons in lower forms, analyzed mistakes collectively, and wrote essays on educational themes such as "The moral influence of the teacher's personality" or "The role of cleanliness and order in school discipline." These exercises developed self-reflection and communicative competence qualities regarded as indispensable for professional maturity.

Equally significant was the social composition of female students. If, in the early decades, the majority were daughters of nobles and civil servants, by 1900 the proportion of merchant and petty-bourgeois families exceeded 60 percent, and by 1914, peasant daughters accounted for nearly one-fifth of the intake.

The content of women's teacher training corresponded closely to the broader modernization of pedagogy in the province.

The curriculum emphasized the unity of intellectual, moral, and aesthetic formation.

The methodological innovations introduced in women's schools later influenced co-educational and male seminaries. The practice of "lesson analysis," systematic pedagogical observation, and the maintenance of pupil journals originated in female institutions and gradually spread across the provincial educational system.

Zemstvo involvement in female education also deserves attention. Local self-governments funded scholarships for talented girls, purchased equipment, and supported libraries within gymnasia.

By 1917, the institutional differentiation of female education in Poltava Province had reached completion. It comprised:

1. Parish and diocesan schools focusing on moral and domestic upbringing;
2. Gymnasia offering broad general education with pedagogical orientation;
3. Pedagogical courses and seminaries providing professional training for teachers;
4. The Poltava Institute for Noble Maidens, serving as the historical nucleus and prestige symbol of women's education.

This structure ensured a continuous educational trajectory from basic literacy to professional competence, reflecting the general tendencies of European pedagogical modernization. The transformation of women's schooling in Poltava Province was not merely a quantitative expansion; it represented a profound change in the social role of women - from passive recipients of instruction to active bearers of cultural and moral values.

By combining moral formation with intellectual training, women's educational institutions of Poltava Province laid the groundwork for the emergence of a professional female teaching corps. Their graduates embodied the synthesis of compassion, discipline, and knowledge that became a hallmark of Ukrainian pedagogy in the early twentieth century.

Zemstvo, Church, and Society in Teacher Training: Cooperation and Influence

The interrelation of social, ecclesiastical, and civic institutions in Poltava Province gave rise to a unique model of teacher training that combined moral authority with practical efficiency. In the absence of a centralized educational infrastructure during much of the nineteenth century, the burden of organizing and maintaining schools fell largely upon the zemstvos and the Orthodox Church, whose cooperation defined the distinctive character of Poltava's pedagogical system.

The zemstvo reform of 1864 created local self-governing bodies endowed with the right to manage issues of education, public health, and local economy. For Poltava Province, this reform marked the beginning of a sustained period of educational innovation.

Financially, zemstvos allocated a significant portion of their annual budgets - sometimes up to one quarter - to education. These funds covered the construction and repair of school buildings, the purchase of textbooks and visual aids, and the payment of teachers' salaries.

Beyond financial contributions, the zemstvos played a critical methodological and organizational role. They initiated and supervised pedagogical congresses, which gathered teachers, inspectors, and clergy to discuss curriculum development, classroom discipline, and moral education.

Another important aspect of zemstvo activity was the collection and publication of educational statistics. The Poltava Zemstvo Statistical Bureau conducted systematic surveys on literacy levels, attendance rates, and teacher qualifications.

While the zemstvos provided the administrative and financial backbone of schooling, the Orthodox Church continued to shape its moral and spiritual content. The Poltava Theological Seminary served as the primary training center for parish teachers and clergy, integrating theological education with basic pedagogical principles.

These schools maintained a delicate balance between confessional and pedagogical components. Alongside Holy

Scripture, Moral Theology, and Church Singing, the curriculum included Pedagogy, Methodology, Arithmetic, and Reading Instruction.

The Church's contribution also extended to supervising moral discipline among teachers. Parish priests were tasked with monitoring the behavior and diligence of school staff, ensuring that teachers maintained an exemplary lifestyle in accordance with Christian virtues.

The interaction between the Church and the zemstvo was not always harmonious. Disputes arose over curriculum content, especially concerning the proportion of religious versus secular subjects.

A crucial instrument of collaboration was the inspection system. Inspectors from both the diocesan administration and the zemstvo visited schools, evaluated teachers, and reported their findings to the provincial boards.

The teachers themselves occupied a central position in this social alliance. Many came from peasant backgrounds and viewed teaching as a means of upward mobility and social service.

The Zemstvo pedagogical libraries played a crucial role in supporting teacher professional development. They stocked not only textbooks and methodological guides but also works of literature, philosophy, and natural science.

The interaction of church and civic education also manifested in the organization of charity and Sunday schools, which became a transitional form between formal and informal education. Many were run by parish priests or teachers who volunteered their time to instruct adults and adolescents in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

From the 1880s onward, the provincial administration increasingly recognized the achievements of Poltava's educational model. Official reports praised the balanced distribution of responsibilities between the Church and the zemstvo, noting that such cooperation reduced administrative conflicts and raised teaching standards.

The Teachers' Institute, founded in 1914, represented the culmination of this partnership. Conceived as a state institution with local support, it united the methodological resources of the Ministry of Education, the moral authority of the Church, and the financial stability of the zemstvos.

Socially, the cooperation between Church and zemstvo reflected the broader civic awakening of the late imperial period. Education was increasingly seen as a means of strengthening national consciousness and moral cohesion.

By the eve of World War I, Poltava Province stood out as one of the most educationally advanced regions of the Ukrainian territories of the Russian Empire. Its network of schools was dense, its teachers were professionally trained, and its moral standards were high.

Intellectual and Methodological Contributions of Poltava Educators

The culmination of pedagogical development in Poltava Province at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was marked by the emergence of a coherent regional school of educational thought. Its foundations were laid by a constellation of teachers, methodologists, and intellectuals whose activity extended beyond classroom practice into theoretical reflection, authorship, and civic engagement.

Among the most influential representatives of this tradition were Mykola Hryhorevskyi, Oleksandr Levytskyi, and Hryhorii Istomin, whose works and public lectures shaped the moral-pedagogical discourse of the province. Their legacy, though largely confined to provincial periodicals and archival manuscripts, articulated the philosophical essence of Poltava's teacher education.

Hryhorevskyi, a graduate of the Poltava Seminary and later lecturer at the Lubny Teachers' Seminary, emphasized the unity of theory and practice in pedagogical preparation. In his treatise "On the Moral Image of the Teacher" (1889), he argued that genuine mastery begins not with formal instruction but with moral self-discipline.

Oleksandr Levytskyi, a historian and educator affiliated with the Poltava Teachers' Institute, proposed a humanistic perspective on pedagogical professionalism. He regarded education as a process of mutual moral development between teacher and pupil, grounded in empathy and personal responsibility.

Hryhorii Istomin, another seminal figure, introduced methodological innovations that bridged traditional moral education with emerging psychological research. His 1912 work "The Psychology of the Lesson" analyzed the emotional dynamics of classroom interaction and proposed techniques for sustaining pupils' attention and motivation.

Together, these educators forged what may be called the Poltava pedagogical synthesis - a fusion of moral idealism, empirical observation, and methodological clarity. Their writings stressed that the effectiveness of teaching depended not on rigid adherence to syllabi but on the teacher's capacity for moral influence and creative adaptation.

The intellectual vibrancy of Poltava's pedagogical milieu found institutional expression in professional teacher associations, reading circles, and methodological societies. Beginning in the 1890s, zemstvo-sponsored conferences evolved into regular meetings where educators presented papers, exchanged lesson plans, and discussed new literature.

A key methodological contribution of the Poltava school was the concept of the integrated curriculum, which combined general, aesthetic, and vocational education. Teachers were encouraged to relate abstract knowledge to local realities, geography lessons to regional topography, natural science to agriculture, and moral instruction to everyday community life.

Another innovation was the system of pedagogical documentation, introduced experimentally in Poltava's seminaries and later adopted by other provinces. Each teacher maintained a portfolio that included lesson outlines, reflections on classroom experiences, and individual pupil profiles.

The methodological writings of Poltava educators focused particularly on the psychological climate of the classroom. They

emphasized kindness, patience, and a sense of beauty as integral to pedagogy.

Importantly, Poltava educators saw pedagogy as a form of social service. Many of them participated in literacy campaigns, organized evening schools for adults, and wrote popular brochures on hygiene and child upbringing.

Within the broader historiographical context, the contribution of Poltava educators signified a transition from descriptive to analytical pedagogy. Whereas earlier decades had produced mostly normative manuals, the period after 1890 witnessed a surge of empirical studies, lesson observations, and methodological experiments.

The intellectual output of the province also demonstrated an openness to European influences. Translations of Pestalozzi, Herbart, and Diesterweg circulated widely among Poltava teachers, often accompanied by commentaries that linked foreign theories to local experiences.

Another noteworthy aspect was the formation of a pedagogical language that combined scientific precision with ethical warmth. The discourse of Poltava's teacher community avoided bureaucratic jargon, preferring expressions that conveyed sincerity and empathy.

By 1917, the cumulative result of these intellectual efforts was the establishment of a professionally conscious and ethically unified teaching corps. Teachers of Poltava Province shared common values: faith in the moral power of education, respect for the individuality of each child, and devotion to public service.

The outbreak of the First World War and the revolutionary upheavals that followed temporarily disrupted this progress, yet the intellectual legacy of the Poltava pedagogical school endured. Its graduates and adherents became active participants in the subsequent Ukrainian educational revival of the 1920s, carrying forward principles of moral pedagogy, community service, and cultural enlightenment.

In retrospective evaluation, the methodological and ethical synthesis achieved in Poltava stands as one of the earliest regional models of professional teacher education in Eastern Europe. Its

distinguishing features, the fusion of moral authority and scientific method, the interplay of local initiative and state oversight, and the cultivation of reflective professionalism, anticipated the pedagogical ideals of the twentieth century.

Conclusions

The historical and pedagogical analysis of teacher training in Poltava Province during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries allows for several conceptually integrated and empirically grounded conclusions.

1. *Systemic character of development.* Teacher education in Poltava Province emerged as part of the broader modernization processes of the Russian Empire, reflecting the gradual civic consolidation of Ukrainian territories. The formation of a multilayered educational network, from seminaries and gymnasias to zemstvo schools and short-term pedagogical courses, created a stable yet adaptable system of teacher preparation.
2. *Integration of moral, religious, and professional training.* Teacher training in Poltava Province was distinguished by its organic synthesis of moral, religious, and pedagogical components.
3. *Democratization and gender expansion.* The gradual inclusion of different social strata, and particularly the development of female education, transformed the teaching profession into a socially open vocation.
4. *Balanced cooperation between Church, State, and zemstvo.* The works of M. Hryhorevskyi, O. Levytskyi, and H. Istomin established a regional pedagogical tradition emphasizing reflective practice, moral integrity, and child-centeredness. The introduction of teaching practice, psychological observation, and systematic documentation of student progress marks a transition toward analytically informed and humanistic pedagogy.

5. *Methodological innovation and humanistic orientation.* The works of M. Hryhorevskyi, O. Levytskyi, and H. Istomin established a regional pedagogical tradition emphasizing reflective practice, moral integrity, and child-centeredness. The introduction of teaching practice, psychological observation, and systematic documentation of student progress marks a transition from prescriptive instruction to analytically informed and humanistic pedagogy.
6. *Civic and cultural mission of teacher training.* Beyond its institutional achievements, teacher training in Poltava Province served as a tool for cultural nation-building.
7. *Continuity and relevance for modern teacher education.* The intellectual and organizational legacy formed in Poltava Province did not disappear after 1917. Instead, it provided stable conceptual and ethical foundations for later Ukrainian pedagogical development. The principles formulated in that period, service, professionalism, moral responsibility, and community engagement, remain significant for contemporary debates on teacher training.

This historical experience demonstrates that the effectiveness of teacher education depends on the equilibrium between moral formation, community engagement, and methodological rigor. The Poltava model demonstrates that decentralized cooperation among state, local institutions, and the Church can yield a resilient and socially responsive educational system – a principle that remains relevant in today's efforts to enhance local governance and institutional autonomy in education. The humanistic and practice-oriented approaches developed in the province align with modern priorities, including reflective teaching, psychological literacy, and a value-based professional identity. These elements can be meaningfully adapted to contemporary challenges, including the need for a balanced combination of ethical training, civic responsibility, and evidence-based pedagogy. Thus, the historical trajectory of teacher training in Poltava Province not only enriches the understanding of past educational structures but also offers conceptual guidelines for improving the modern system of teacher preparation in Ukraine.

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