

UDC 378.147:81'243

**ELEVATING COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN SPECIALIST TRAINING*****Beketova A.B.***

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*The article explores modern methods of enhancing communication skills in specialist training. Particular attention is given to the adaptation of medical communication frameworks—SPIKES, TeamSTEPPS, and SOPHIE—for the educational sphere. Through analysis of international research and applied case studies, the study highlights effective interactive strategies such as role-playing, structured discussions, ethical simulations, and technology-assisted training. The article also presents a comparative analysis of the methods and offers recommendations for developing professional communicative competence among teachers.*

**Keywords:** communication, teaching, training, SPIKES, SOPHIE, TeamSTEPPS, strategy.

**Introduction.** As research shows, the development of communication skills in teachers improves classroom management, fosters a positive learning environment, and enhances mutual understanding among all stakeholders in the educational process. However, systematic training in communication remains limited in many teacher education programs, especially in the context of real-life, emotionally charged, or ethically sensitive situations. This article explores modern strategies for elevating communication skills among teachers through the adaptation of well-established communication models - **SPIKES**, **TeamSTEPPS**, and **SOPHIE** - originally used in the medical field. It analyzes their methodological potential when applied to education, outlines how these models were tested and adapted, and compares their effectiveness in building essential communication competencies in the teaching profession. By integrating these models into teacher training, the article aims to provide practical solutions for developing reflective, ethical, and collaborative communicators in schools and beyond.

**Materials and methods.** This section presents a conceptual and practical adaptation of three internationally recognized communication models - **SPIKES**, **TeamSTEPPS**, and **SOPHIE** - to the context of teacher training.

The SPIKES model, initially developed for delivering difficult news in medical settings, offers a clear structure for navigating emotionally charged conversations. In

teacher training, SPIKES was adapted for situations that require sensitive dialogue with students and parents, such as academic failure, behavioral issues, or emotional distress. The six steps - Setting, Perception, Invitation, Knowledge, Empathy, and Strategy - were reformulated to fit educational needs. For example, teachers learned to prepare for difficult conversations by creating a safe and respectful setting, assessing the perception of the student or parent, inviting open dialogue, and presenting information in a tactful and clear manner. Particular emphasis was placed on empathic responses and the collaborative formulation of next steps. In a pilot implementation with 20 subject teachers, participants engaged in role-playing sessions based on real school scenarios. These included cases such as “A parent reacting with anger to a disciplinary note,” “A student expressing emotional distress,” and “Teacher mediation during classroom conflict.” Feedback and reflection were integrated throughout. Evaluation was conducted using empathy scales, confidence self-assessments, and pre-/post-session video analysis, all of which showed increased teacher confidence and more empathetic communication behaviors.

The second model, TeamSTEPPS (Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety), was originally developed to improve interdisciplinary collaboration in healthcare. Its emphasis on structured communication tools, leadership roles, and mutual support translated effectively to the educational environment. Within the school context, TeamSTEPPS was applied to train teacher teams—comprising educators, administrators, and psychologists—in collaborative communication during staff meetings, parent conferences, and team-based problem-solving. Tools such as SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) and CUS (Concerned, Uncomfortable, Safety issue) were introduced to structure communication in high-stakes or tense settings. Simulations of complex school interactions were followed by team debriefings and reflection. Assessment included teamwork attitude surveys and communication satisfaction questionnaires, with participants reporting improved coordination and confidence in collaborative work.

The third model, SOPHIE (Simulated Online Professionalism and Humanism in Ethics), centers on the development of ethical reasoning through virtual scenarios. In its adapted educational version, SOPHIE presented teachers with ethically complex cases, such as whether to inform parents about a student’s personal issue, how to address a colleague’s misconduct, or how to navigate communication boundaries with students on social media. Participants engaged with interactive online cases, choosing between multiple possible responses and reviewing the consequences of their decisions. This was followed by reflective writing assignments or group discussions. Teachers participating in the training demonstrated greater awareness of professional boundaries and increased ability to justify ethical decisions, as shown by pre-/post-training ethical sensitivity surveys and content analysis of written reflections.

Table1.

<b>Model</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Assessment Tools</b>
<b>SPIKES</b>	Difficult conversations with students/parents	Role-play, feedback sessions, video reflection	Empathy scale, confidence self-report, behavioral video log
<b>TeamSTEPPS</b>	Team communication in education	Simulations, structured tools (SBAR/CUS), group work	Teamwork attitude questionnaire, satisfaction survey
<b>SOPHIE</b>	Ethical dilemmas in teaching practice	Interactive case modules, reflection writing	Ethical reasoning test, content analysis of essays

### Results and Discussion

The implementation of communication training in teacher education using interactive strategies and adapted professional models led to noticeable improvements in key communicative competencies. Across training sessions based on role-playing, structured debates, improvisational exercises, and digital simulations, participants demonstrated statistically and behaviorally significant development in several areas. Notably, participants showed enhanced active listening skills, the ability to deliver constructive feedback, and empathic interaction with students, parents, and colleagues. Teachers also reported improved clarity in communication, especially in emotionally challenging contexts such as parent-teacher conferences or classroom conflict resolution.

Programs that incorporated structured methodologies such as SPIKES, TeamSTEPPS, and SOPHIE revealed particular strengths. For example, SPIKES training enabled teachers to manage difficult conversations more confidently and with greater emotional intelligence. Participants in TeamSTEPPS simulations developed clearer role distribution within teaching teams, improving interdisciplinary cooperation and communication in group decision-making. Meanwhile, the SOPHIE modules supported growth in ethical awareness, helping teachers articulate and defend decisions in morally complex classroom situations. The inclusion of regular feedback and guided reflection emerged as a crucial factor in the success of training sessions. Participants who engaged in reflective journaling or video-based self-analysis showed more consistent improvement than those who received only one-time theoretical instruction. Feedback from facilitators and peers contributed to greater self-awareness and long-term retention of new communication behaviors. Training programs of longer duration (e.g., those extending beyond one week and incorporating simulation) yielded more stable and sustained outcomes. In contrast, short-term theoretical sessions, while beneficial, did not produce equally lasting

changes unless paired with active methodologies and follow-up support. The results confirm that communication competence is not innate but can be effectively developed through systematic, multi-level training. Teaching professionals, like those in healthcare or psychology, benefit from structured exposure to realistic communication scenarios, collaborative exercises, and ethical reflection. Moreover, cross-sectional comparisons suggest that improvements in teacher communication are directly correlated with increased student and parent satisfaction, reduction in conflict, and enhanced team functioning within schools.

In sum, the study reinforces the necessity of integrating communication skills training into the core structure of teacher education programs, rather than treating it as supplementary or optional. When designed with practical application, ethical complexity, and structured reflection in mind, such training cultivates resilience, confidence, and professionalism in educational practice.

### **Conclusion**

Elevating communication skills in specialist training leads to more effective interactions, stronger workplace relationships, and enhanced problem-solving capabilities. By integrating active listening, role-playing, improvisational techniques, structured discussions, and technological tools, organizations can cultivate robust communicative competence within their professional teams.

The adaptation of the SPIKES, TeamSTEPPS, and SOPHIE models for educational purposes offers educators practical and flexible frameworks for managing complex communication scenarios. SPIKES supports teachers in conducting sensitive and empathetic conversations with students and parents. TeamSTEPPS strengthens collaboration and mutual understanding among school teams, while SOPHIE enhances ethical awareness and critical thinking in real-world teaching dilemmas.

Implementing these strategies within teacher education and professional development programs contributes to the formation of a communicatively competent, emotionally intelligent, and professionally resilient teaching workforce.

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## МАМАНДАРДЫ ДАЙЫНДАУДА КОММУНИКАЦИЯЛЫҚ ДАҒДЫЛАРДЫ ЖЕТІЛДІРУ

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*Мақалада мамандарды даярлау барысында коммуникативтік дағдыларды жетілдірудің заманауи әдістері қарастырылады. Әсіресе, бастапқыда медицинада қолданылған SPIKES, TeamSTEPPS және SOPHIE әдістерін білім беру саласына бейімдеу жолдары зерттелген. Халықаралық зерттеулер мен тәжірибелік мысалдар негізінде рөлдік ойындар, құрылымдалған пікірталастар, этикалық жағдайларды модельдеу және технологиялық құралдарды пайдалану сияқты тиімді интерактивті тәсілдер ұсынылады. Сонымен қатар, әдістерге салыстырмалы талдау жүргізіліп, педагогтардың кәсіби коммуникативтік құзыреттілігін дамытуға арналған ұсыныстар берілген.*

**Кілт сөздер:** коммуникация, оқыту, педагогика, SPIKES, SOPHIE, TeamSTEPPS, стратегия

## **ПОВЫШЕНИЕ КОММУНИКАЦИОННЫХ НАВЫКОВ В ПОДГОТОВКЕ СПЕЦИАЛИСТОВ**

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*В статье рассматриваются современные методы повышения коммуникативных навыков в профессиональной подготовке специалистов. Особое внимание уделяется адаптации медицинских методик коммуникации — SPIKES, TeamSTEPPS и SOPHIE — к сфере образования. На основе анализа международных исследований и практических кейсов представлены эффективные интерактивные подходы: ролевые игры, структурированные дискуссии, моделирование этических ситуаций и использование цифровых технологий. Также проводится сравнительный анализ методик и формулируются рекомендации по развитию профессиональной коммуникативной компетентности у преподавателей.*

**Ключевые слова:** коммуникация, обучение, преподавание, SPIKES, SOPHIE, TeamSTEPPS, стратегия