

Future Teacher Training for Work in the Inclusive Education Framework

Khrystyna MYKYTEICHUK¹,

Inna PEREPELIUK²,

Lesia PERKHUN³,

Yuliia BONDARENKO⁴,

Svitlana YAKOVLEVA⁵,

Iryna SYDORUK⁶

¹ Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine, k.mykyteichuk@chnu.edu.ua, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0590-125X>

² Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine, i.perepeliuk@chnu.edu.ua, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6376-2825>

³ Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, Drohobych, Ukraine, lesiaperkhun@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9531-1175>

⁴ Sumy state pedagogical university named after A. S. Makarenko, Sumy, Ukraine, bondarenkosspu@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6190-7648>

⁵ Kherson State University, Kherson, cdyakovleva@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7620-098X>

⁶ Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Lutsk, Ukraine, Sydoruk.Iryna@vnu.edu.ua, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3029-3142>

Abstract: The relevance of the chosen topic is determined by the need for improvement of the inclusive education system in the current conditions as well as by the necessity to properly train and prepare future teachers for professional activity in the inclusive learning environment. In the given article, we have analyzed the developments on the topic, identified models of integration of children with special educational needs in the educational process in inclusive education. We also articulated the concept and essence of the professional readiness of future teachers. The ways to form the readiness of teachers for professional activity in the conditions of inclusive education are presented. The article analyzes the understanding of the concept of inclusive education and provides a brief overview of the studies by prominent researchers on this issue, taking into account their proposed educational values. Based on the analysis, the authors conclude that it is necessary to critically review traditional approaches to the understanding of inclusive education, and to the formation of readiness of future teachers for professional activities in inclusive education to eventually benefit modern education. The authors of the article note that in the context of professional training for teachers' activity, four main components will be effective, which will promote the integration of children with special educational needs into the educational process.

Keywords: *Inclusive environment, methodical readiness for pedagogical activity, professional training, change of personal indicators, special educational needs.*

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Introduction

Inclusive education means ensuring equal access to education for all learners, taking into account the diversity of their special educational needs and individual opportunities (Anishchuck, 2016).

Inclusive education is considered one of the most promising areas of development of the education system for children with special educational needs (SEN). This process used to have a spontaneous, often chaotic character in conventional schools; yet, today it is acquiring a more defined nature and requires research, analysis and methodological justification (Budnyk, 2019).

Inclusive education provides ample opportunities for the social adaptation of children with developmental disabilities. It enables them to enjoy a fulfilling life living with their parents, in the family, not in a specialized institution. This type of education allows them to be exposed to active communication with their peers with normal development.

Peculiarities of the learning process organization in the conditions of inclusive education necessitate special training of teachers in the educational institution that provides integrated education. Teachers working in inclusive education should know the basics of correctional pedagogy and special psychology, peculiarities of psychophysical development of children with SEN, methods and technologies of educational and rehabilitation processes for children (Ashitock, 2015).

Today, the leading role of the teacher in achieving the education system goals is recognized on a governmental level. Therefore, new requirements are put forward to the personality of the teacher as well as their professional competence. This constituent is especially relevant in the context of the development of inclusive education.

Today, a teacher in the inclusive learning environment bears a defining role since they should not just be able to carry out the educational process at a high level and form a complex of necessary knowledge, skills and abilities in a child with developmental challenges, but also to help them in social adaptation, establishing contacts with the outside world and the people around.

Therefore, of crucial importance here is to professionally train teachers who are ready to work efficiently in the inclusive educational environment. It requires the reorganization and upgrading of the training program for the psychology and pedagogy students specializing in inclusive education. One of the most important conditions for successful

implementation of inclusive education is a professional pedagogical community where each member would be ready to work with SEN children and would deliver a set of personal qualities; where each member would be focused on humanistic education, ready to constantly improve, purposefully increase their professional competencies while meeting the demands of modern society (Hnoyevska, 2016).

Both Ukrainian (Voloshyna, 2017; Dmitrenko, 2017; Demchenko, 2021; Komogorova, 2021; Sheremet, 2019; etc.) and foreign scientists (Bielawski, 2002), Metcalf, 2002, etc.) considered the problem of the development of professional competence and training of future teachers.

Various aspects of the professional training of teachers for work in inclusive education are reflected in the scientific works by N. Voyevutko (2017), Raptis (2020), and Spanaki (2020).

The purpose of this article is to determine the models of integration of children with SEN in the educational process in an inclusive environment; to reveal the concept and essence of formation of professional teacher training; ways to form the readiness of future teachers for professional activity in inclusive education.

Models of integration of SEN children into the educational process through inclusive learning

Nowadays, society is paying more attention to the vulnerable population groups, in particular, the children with disabilities and special educational needs. Therefore, an alternative to the system of special education is the spread of the inclusion of children with SEN in regular secondary schools.

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Ashitock, 2015, p. 34).

The inclusive approach has gained weight due to the fact that in modern society the "medical" model, which defines disability as a health disorder, is gradually being replaced by a "social" model. It means it is not a specific disease that is seen as the reason for disability but the existing physical (architectural barriers), relative barriers and social stereotypes. If in the case with the "medical" model a child with SEN is seen as a "carrier of the problem", the "social" model, on the contrary, sees the society and the

imperfect education system as the barrier to children's learning. The current system cannot meet the diverse needs of students in a mass school, namely, it fails to involve students with special educational needs in the educational process and implement the social model. It calls for further, in-depth changes in the educational system (Treviranus, 2010).

As of today, there are a few integration models developed to help children with SEN feel as comfortable as possible within the general education environment.

The first model involves teaching children with SEN in correctional classes of mainstream schools.

Another model involves the organization of education for such children in the same class with children who are developing normally.

Inclusive education is considered one of the most promising areas of the education system development for children with SEN. Inclusive education provides ample opportunities for the social adaptation of children with developmental problems. It improves the quality of a child's life, allowing them to live in a family with parents instead of boarding schools. It also provides constant communication with normally developing peers and gives children the opportunity to take an active part in all aspects of life (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

In Ukraine, a discussion is still going on regarding the necessity of the introduction of an inclusive education system. Some researchers (Bondarenko, 2018; Martynchuck, 2018, etc.) believe that it is the psychological-medical-pedagogical commission that should determine the form of learning and educational route for a child with SEN. The researchers point out that the idea of SEN children studying together with their healthy peers may not always be the best option. In some cases, depending on the characteristics of the development and capabilities of the child with SEN, a specialized learning facility remains the most acceptable education option.

However, there is also an alternative opinion voiced by other researchers (Chupakhina, 2019; Mattson, 2009; Hansen, 2009). They believe that there should be no contraindications to inclusion, that everyone has the right to freely choose the path of study. The author of the article also supports the position that a student with SEN should socialize through teamwork with healthy children.

It is beyond argument that, according to the fundamental principle of inclusive education, no child should be assessed or, otherwise,

discriminated based on the condition of their health, abilities, or their achievements. However, the children with SEN do require a certain educational approach, a customized learning model, development route, and monitoring.

When we speak about a child with SEN, we do strive to build a development trajectory and an environment where they and their peers feel as comfortable as possible. There has to be an environment that encourages the effective education and upbringing of all children in the team, both healthy and with developmental issues. Therefore, the possibility for children with SEN to pursue education in a specialized institution cannot be ruled out (Berehova, 2019).

It is important to notice that the very idea of inclusive education implies the variability of the provision of educational services for people with disabilities. Therefore, the basic principle of integration, which is the freedom to choose a place of study, should not be violated. In our opinion, the most reasonable option is to maintain a network of correctional educational institutions while simultaneously developing an inclusive education system. Correctional institutions, in this case, can act as educational and methodological centers that provide assistance to secondary school teachers, as well as psychological and pedagogical assistance to children with SEN and their parents (Voyevutko, 2017).

Therefore, it is now necessary to work on creating adequate and favorable learning conditions both in mass secondary schools and in special correctional facilities.

The concept and essence of the professional teacher training

According to several researchers (Bondarenko, 2018; Martyntchuk, 2018; Kasyanenko, 2018), one of the dominant prerequisites for the development of inclusive education is the professional, up-to-date training directed to enhance the competence of the teachers who would be capable of and ready to work with children with SEN.

International experience in organizing an inclusive education system shows that the professional requirements for teachers have been increasing, their responsibilities are expanding, and there is a change in personal indicators as well.

In the new environment, it is no longer sufficient to know the educational standards, basic educational programs and traditional learning

technologies. The available knowledge and skills often prove to be inadequate.

The development of an inclusive education system requires adjustments and changes to the organization of training of future educators themselves (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

An impressive number of scientific works are devoted to the study of teacher professional training issues. Such scientists as O. Voloshyna (2017), N. Dmytrenko (2017), S. Chupakhina (2019) and others, have studied the issues of pedagogical education.

T. Cowl (1997), when revealing the structure of the teacher professional profile (qualification characteristics), concluded that along with special subject and methodological training, the professional and pedagogical orientation of the teacher is expressed, first, in a positive emotional attitude to students and teaching as such, and secondly, in the pursuit to master pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Thus, the professional and pedagogical orientation of the teacher should be regarded as inseparable from motivation.

In scientific works, we find the opinions of scientists that future teacher needs help in creating conditions that would stimulate them to professional development. Such researchers as M. Berehova (2019), O. Voloshyna (2017), and N. Dmytrenko (2017) express their strongest belief that it is the teacher who plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation of inclusive education principles and their application in pedagogical practice.

This conviction is further supported in the scientific works by S. I. Chupakhina. The author is strongly convinced that “in the inclusive education framework, it is necessary to comply with special requirements for professional and personal training of teachers, which includes not only basic component (subject, methodological and other knowledge, skills and abilities), but also a special component of professional qualification. This being said, the special component of training should be aimed at the formation of knowledge about the essence of inclusive education in a student, as well as the ability to implement different ways of pedagogical interaction between all subjects of the educational environment” (S. Chupakhina, 2019, p. 34).

Kearsley (1992) believes that the teacher training for the work in an inclusive learning environment should, among other things, include psychological training. This training facilitates the formation of motivational

readiness: the moral principles of the teacher on inclusion, the ability to emotionally accept students with disabilities and others.

The teacher stands in the limelight of the entire inclusive learning space. To ensure effective work with children with SEN the teacher needs to demonstrate certain personal qualities, namely, mercy, empathy, tolerance, tact, tolerance, psychological stability, and optimism.

In the context of the axiological approach, the pedagogical values remain the stronghold of the training process. It is the values that eventually determine the educational content since pedagogical axiology is aimed at changing the nature of the relationship between teacher and student. As a result, what really matters is not only a complex of knowledge, abilities and skills but also a set of vital values. (Mattson, 2009; Hansen, 2009).

Within the framework of the competency approach logic, many scientists (M. Berehova (2019), O. Voloshyna (2017), N. Dmytrenko (2017)) agree that the teacher's training is the path and the outcome of their competence development, which determines the ability of a specialist to address various professional problems arising in professional activities, based on the knowledge, professional and life experience they have accumulated, as well as values and inclinations.

Hence, the concept of teacher training for work in inclusive education, seen as a purposeful process of developing professional competence, aimed at achieving humanistic goals and forming pedagogical values is to be considered a framework of the given article. The product of this process is the teacher's ability to address the professional issues within the inclusive educational environment (Martynchuk, 2018).

When thinking within the professional training context, it is reasonable to point out the following four components:

1. Cognitive component, which is special knowledge and skills a teacher needs to effectively arrange the inclusive learning process.

2. Activity component, represented by the ability to design the learning process for SEN children to work effectively with their healthy peers.

3. Reflection component, or analysis and assessment of the efficiency of teacher's work.

4. Personality component, represented by a set of professionally relevant qualities, necessary for work in an inclusive environment.

Now, let us examine these teacher training components in detail.

Within the context of the current article, the cognitive component can be considered as a theoretical readiness encompassing psychological, pedagogical and special knowledge. However, N. Voyevutko (2017) also included theoretical activity in this concept. It is manifested in the general ability to think pedagogically, which implies that the teacher has a set of analytical, prognostic, projective, and even reflexive skills. These skills are interdependent, as one is successively replaced by another. As a result, we obtain an algorithm representing a generalized process of a teacher's mental activity.

The activity component of the teacher training embraces psychological, pedagogical, methodical and communicative skills.

Psychological and pedagogical skills are the foundation for the future teacher. These include project skills, proactivity, skills for organizational, diagnostic, protective, research, and applied skills. They are referred to as "learning abilities", and enable a teacher to independently set goals and objectives, engage in planning their activities, adjust to changes and assess the efficiency of one's own work.

The methodological skills include up-to-date note-taking techniques and technologies, mastery of work methods, activation of students' cognitive activity, development of their creative abilities, implementation of individual approach, and creation of conditions for full development, education and training of students. The formation of communication skills is of particular importance in educational and professional activities.

According to G. Kearsley (1992), communication skills include the ability to construct a hypothesis, substantiate the individual point of view, ability to communicate, purposeful organization of communication and its management.

The definition of communication skills as particularly significant in terms of the characteristics of the activity component is emphasized by the fact that "the basic structural pedagogical cell of activity is communication between teacher and students". Dialogue proves to be the most optimal form of subject-subject interaction between a teacher and a student, which reflects its democratic character.

The reflective component acts as one of the main indicators of the teacher's personality. Reflection can be defined as the teacher's ability to evaluate and predict the results of their actions and the actions of students that may be diagnostic or educational in nature. The ability to analyze the accumulated experience, draw important conclusions and assessments

facilitates the development of professional skills and can be illustrated by a formula: “experience + reflection = development” (Voyevutko, 2017).

The personality component characterizes the degree of the teacher’s readiness for the professional activity, particularly, in terms of morals and pedagogy skills. It also reflects the value orientations, interest in the profession, as well as the level of development of motivation for the pedagogical activity.

A teacher that is working in the inclusive education environment has a pivotal role because they are expected to not only be able to carry out the educational process at a high level, building a complex of necessary knowledge, skills and abilities in a child with developmental problems, but also to demonstrate the capacity to help the children in social adaptation, in establishing contacts with the surrounding world. Of great importance is the professional culture of the teacher, their psychological and pedagogical willingness to work with all children without exception (Treviranus, 2010).

The essence of the formation of future teacher professional training allowed us to formulate the prerequisites aimed at implementing the training of future teachers in inclusive classrooms (Berehova, 2019):

- 1) organization of workshops aimed at the formation of personal qualities of the future teacher in inclusive education;
- 2) designing the educational process taking into account personality-oriented learning;
- 3) building the motivational component in the educational environment, aimed at a lasting interest and the need for self-improvement in educational and professional activities;
- 4) close connection between the theoretical material and practical training.

Unlike a conventional teacher, an inclusive education teacher needs to have a number of qualities, among which are tolerance, tact, empathy, and responsibility.

Therefore, the training of professionals ready to work effectively in conditions of mass inclusion is the most burning issue as of today.

Conclusion

The article provides a theoretical analysis of best developments and practices on the topic. We have outlined the models of integration of children with special educational needs in an inclusive learning environment. The concept and essence of the formation of professional training of future

teachers are revealed; the ways of formation of readiness of future teachers for professional activity in inclusive education are presented.

As the best practices show, the pedagogical university graduates mostly demonstrate the methodological and professional readiness for work in an inclusive learning environment: they possess various methods and technologies, they demonstrate the knowledge of the basics of special psychology and pedagogy, as well as individual differences of children, etc. However, the acquisition of knowledge on inclusion does not contribute to solving the psychological issues a teacher might face, which, in its turn, does not relieve the stress that arises when the classroom has a child with special educational needs. As a result, of the total number of pedagogical universities' graduates, only a few are willing to work in an inclusive educational institution.

To make the idea of inclusion really work it has to become an integral part of the teacher professional training. Solving the problems of the teacher and relieving the stress that arises during work with children with special needs, can help to realize the fact that the effectiveness of educational reforms depends on each teacher (ambition, motivation to achieve goals).

The content of training programs for students of psychological and pedagogical directions who specialize in work in an inclusive education has to be reformed.

Thus, one of the most important conditions for the successful implementation of the system of inclusive education is a professional pedagogical community, each member of which is ready to work with children with special educational needs. These specialists are expected to possess a set of personal qualities, to be focused on the humanistic attitude of education, be ready to constantly improve themselves, to purposefully upgrade their professional competencies to meet the demands of modern society.

Thus, the synergy of all four of the above components will contribute to an effective process of preparing future teachers for professional activities in an inclusive environment.

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