

Formation of students preparedness to professional activity in conditions of preschool inclusive education

(scientific paper)

Angelika Kurchatova, Kateryna Shapochka

Abstract: *The urgent problem of formation of future educators preparedness for professional activity in conditions of preschool inclusive education is considered in this article. The authors analyze the system of professional training of future educators for working with children with special educational needs in conditions of preschool inclusive education. The concept of “inclusive education” is defined as a process of ensuring equal rights to receive educational services for preschool children with special educational needs at their place of residence in a general educational institution. The essence of the concept “professional readiness of future educators for education and upbringing of children in conditions of preschool inclusive education” is revealed. The forms and methods of preparing future educators for professional activity in conditions of preschool inclusive education are considered. Examples of forms and methods of training future specialists of preschool education for professional activities in preschool inclusive education are given.*

Keywords: *preschool inclusive education, future educators, preparedness for professional activity*

1 Introduction

An urgent requirement of the present is to provide the educational sphere with specialists of a new generation, able to carry out the educational process on a high professional level, to think creatively, to independently replenish their knowledge, to orientate and possess scientific information.

The development of inclusive education is a long-term strategy that requires patience and tolerance, consistency, continuity, step by step, and a comprehensive approach to its implementation, according to international experience. A special place

in this system is given to the teacher. It is precisely because of his or her emotional stability, readiness for acceptance of children with special educational needs (SEN), depends on the development of inclusive education in the education system. The emergence of inclusive education, aimed at creating for all children adequate to their capabilities and educational needs, involves the training of teachers able to carry out professional activities with children with SEN. In this connection, the problem of professional training of future specialists of preschool education for professional activity in preschool inclusive education is relevant. This requires the introduction of changes in the content of education, the modernization of organizational forms, methods and methods of training of students in a higher education institution. Given the specifics of the work of teacher of preschool education institution, the following questions need to be further explored: how should future educators be trained in a higher education institution; which interactive forms and methods can be used to prepare future specialists for a particular type of activity; if there is enough knowledge to be prepared to organize the joint interaction of children with SEN.

The aim

The aim of the article is to theoretically substantiate the peculiarities of formation of students' preparedness for professional activity in the conditions of pre-school inclusive education. Assessing the state of the studied problem of vocational training of future teachers of preschool education institution, one can state that its importance has always attracted the interest of scientists. Modern researches (L. Artemov, G. Belenka, O. Boginich, A. Bogush, N. Havrysh, G. Klovak, I. Knyazheva, R. Kondratenko, O. Kononko, Y. Kosenko, K. Krutiy, M. Mashovets, T. Ponimanska, O. Proskura, M. Sokchynska, T. Stepanova, T. Shkvarina) are characterized by a productive approach to the analysis of the training of specialists in the field of preschool education. Scientists have determined the theoretical and methodological principles of training of future specialists in modern conditions, it is proved that the essence of vocational and pedagogical training is a system of content-pedagogical and organizational-methodical measures aimed at ensuring the readiness of the future teacher to professional activity.

2 Methods

According to the vocabulary sources, the "professional activity of the teacher" is interpreted as: "the kind of continuously carried out activity, the specifics of which is psychological and pedagogical impact on children, taking into account their age and individual characteristics, requests, interests, hobbies, spiritual world and, at the same time, in purposeful management of the process of learning and personal develop-

ment “[8, p. 481]; “the characteristic of a professional on the basis of a certain set of professional tasks and responsibilities (works) performed by a specialist [2, p. 78].

Under the professional activity of the educator of preschool education institution, we understand the kind of activity of the educator, the specificity of which is psychological and pedagogical influence on children, taking into account their age and individual characteristics, requests, interests, hobbies, the spiritual world and, at the same time, in the purposeful management of the process of education and development of the individual. Professional activity of a modern teacher of preschool education is a complex, holistic, dynamic, multidimensional and multifunctional system of interaction between an educator and children, aimed at realization of the purpose and tasks of preschool education.

The analysis of scientific and methodological literature allows us to conclude that the problem of professional training of future specialists of inclusive preschool education has not yet been fully considered. Existing studies allow us to take into account the findings in developing the content of the future educators training for professional activities in preschool inclusive education.

One of the main strategic guidelines for state educational policy is recognition of the training of pedagogical staff for activities under the conditions of inclusive educational model; modernization of the education management system [5, p. 172].

The logic of the study has necessitated the disclosure of the basic terminology concepts in the system of inclusion. According to the Encyclopedia of Education, inclusive education is a “system of educational services based on the principle of ensuring the basic right of children to education and the right to study at the place of residence, which envisages the education of a child with SEN, in particular a child with peculiarities of psychophysical development, in a general education institution “[1, p. 11]. The chief scientist of Ukraine in the field of special pedagogy A. Kolupayeva believes that inclusive education involves the creation of an educational environment that would meet the needs and capabilities of each child, regardless of their psycho-physical development peculiarities [3, p. 13]. I. Kuzava considers the system of inclusive education of preschool children as a holistic pedagogical process aimed at creating a suitable environment, adapting it to the needs of all children and providing the necessary psychological and pedagogical support for the purpose of common education (upbringing) of children with both normal and special development [4, p. 12].

Ukrainian scientists (L. Budyak, L. Grechko, A. Kolupayeva) among the conditions that support the effective provision of inclusive education for children with special needs determined the appropriate training of teachers of general education institutions.

In recent years, a number of studies have been carried out, in which the theoretical and methodological foundations of the problem of training teachers of preschool and primary school education for providing psychological and pedagogical

support for children with SEN (B. Bondar, O. Vorobiova, A. Kolupayeva, S. Mironova, N. Nazarova, V. Siniov, T. Pyatakova, N. Shmatko); formation of professional competence of future teachers in the process of professional training (I. Khafizullina, Y. Shumilovska); preparation of specialists for working with children in inclusive preschool education (A. Kolupaeva, I. Kuzava, L. Savchuk, O. Samsonova, O. Martynchuk, I. Yukhymets).

I. Kuzava identified the main components of the professional preparedness of educators for inclusive education, which are its structure:

1. personality-content (the teacher's acceptance of the idea of inclusion, motivation);
2. cognitive (a complex of vocational and pedagogical knowledge, skills, skills for the implementation of inclusive education for preschool children with SEN);
3. technological (practical skills of educators in the application of technologies of inclusive education, in particular the creation of an inclusive environment);
4. creative (creative activity and personal qualities of the educator);
5. evaluative-productive (analysis of the methods and techniques necessary for the introduction of inclusive education) [4].

3 Results and Discussion

On the basis of the generalization of the results of the analysis of psychological and pedagogical sources, the training of future educators for professional activity in the conditions of preschool inclusive education as part of a holistic pedagogical process in the institution of higher education was determined, which is aimed at developing the student's motivational and value attitudes towards the education and upbringing of children with different levels of psychophysical development, use of achievements of modern psychological and pedagogical science and practice for increasing the efficiency of the process of education and upbringing of children with SEN.

The result of the educational process in the higher education institution is the professional preparedness of future educators for the education and upbringing of children in preschool inclusive education, which is considered as the integral quality, which combines the motivational, theoretical and practical components. Such preparedness is based, first of all, on the recognition of the importance of inclusive education, the system of knowledge about the nature of education and upbringing of children with SEN, and the methodology for carrying out the specified type of activity, practical skills and skills that provide high results in solving professional tasks in the education and upbringing of children with different levels of psychophysical development.

In our opinion, the process of formation of preparedness of future specialists for professional activities in preschool inclusive education will be effective if:

- a) provides psychological, correctional (special) orientation of the training of future educators, based on a deep knowledge of the peculiarities of working with children with SEN;
- b) motivates students to work with children with SEN;
- c) uses pedagogical practice at school, district, regional levels using developed models of work of teachers with children with SEN.

For professional and personal training of future preschool education specialists, it is necessary to understand what inclusive education is, what its difference from traditional forms of education is; knowledge of psychological regularities and peculiarities of age and personal development of children in conditions of inclusive educational environment; knowledge of the methods of psychological and didactic designing of the educational process for the common and equal education of all children; ability to implement various methods of pedagogical interaction between all subjects of the educational process (with children separately and in a group, with parents, colleagues-educators, specialists, administration).

In our opinion, for the successful formation of students' preparedness for professional activity in preschool inclusive education, it is necessary to use the potential of the content of psychological and pedagogical disciplines for the formation of positive motivation to inclusive education. For this purpose, the educational disciplines "Fundamentals of speech therapy and special pedagogy", "Fundamentals of correctional pedagogy", "Fundamentals of inclusive education" were introduced into the curricula of Bachelors of Preschool Education.

In order to form students professional competence in the field of development, education and upbringing of children with special needs, it is important to include in the content of the students' program of education the special course "Inclusive education in the preschool education institution" which, in addition to the knowledge, skills and abilities of the future educator, will ensure the formation of professional competences, in particular:

- to be prepared for tolerant perception of children with special educational needs;
- to know the individual peculiarities of psychophysical development of children;
- to know the special methodology for teaching children with special educational needs, including the purpose and tasks, principles, methods and techniques, as well as organizational forms and correctional orientation of inclusive practice;
- to be able to work in a team of specialists on the implementation of psychological and pedagogical support for children with special educational needs and their parents;

- to be able to conduct diagnostic work on the identification of individual peculiarities of children;
- be able to create an individual educational plan/program for a child with special educational needs.

Effective forms and methods of training of future specialists of pre-school education for professional activity in preschool inclusive education are:

- lectures with interactive teaching methods;
- practical and seminar sessions (“Organization of education and upbringing of children with special needs by means of inclusive education”, “Organization of psychological and pedagogical support of inclusive education”, “Interaction of Pre-school education institution and family on the issues of organization of inclusive educational process”, etc.);
- individual and independent work of students;
- disputes (“Inclusive Education as a Social and Pedagogical Phenomenon”, “Ukrainian Experience of Inclusive Education of Children with Special Educational Needs”);
- master class “Creating adaptive educational environment for children with special educational needs”;
- round table talks (“The role of inclusive education in the development of a child of preschool age: pros and cons”, “Inclusive practice as an innovative pedagogical activity”);
- business game “Inclusive competence of a preschool education institution teacher”.

During the class future teachers will get acquainted with the general theoretical issues that provide a holistic understanding of the key issues of the inclusive educational process. At practical and seminary classes, students study the experience of organizing an inclusive educational process, study how to develop a model of the subject-developing environment of the inclusive group, learn to interpret the received knowledge in the field of inclusive education, and create individual educational programs for children with special needs on the basis of diagnosis.

Since the formation of students’ ideas about the inclusive education of children with SEN and the awareness of the importance of this problem depends on the effectiveness of the work in the specified field, then work with students begins with a series of lectures with interactive techniques, the purpose of which is to familiarize future preschool education specialists with the basic rules of the theory of integrated and inclusive education, conceptual apparatus, scientific and methodological principles; to give an idea of inclusive education as an important socio-cultural phenomenon of general and special education; to form positive attitude towards the development of

inclusive activity among students, a deep personal interest in the implementation of pedagogical activities in the context of including children with special educational needs in peer education.

We recommend the following lectures: 1. General characteristics of inclusive education of children with special educational needs. 2. Regulatory and legal, ethical bases of inclusive education management. 3. Theoretical basis for the formation of inclusive education. 4. Models of inclusive education. 5. Organization of inclusive education in the institution of preschool education. 6. Psychological and pedagogical support of subjects of inclusive preschool education. 7. Psychological-pedagogical bases of formation of a professional culture of the teacher of inclusive preschool education.

An example of lecture with interactive methods "Inclusive Education in the Developed Countries of the World and the Post-Soviet Countries"

Plan

1. Stages of the attitude evolution of the West European state and society towards people with disabilities. Formation and development of inclusive education in the countries of Western Europe.
2. Formation and development of inclusive education in the countries of North America.
3. Inclusive tendencies of education system development in post-Soviet countries.
4. Trends and prospects for the development of preschool inclusive education in Ukraine.

During the lecture it is advisable to use interactive methods.

1. The beginning of the lecture. There were such thoughts about children with disabilities. The philosopher Seneca asserted: «We kill the freaks, and we seduce children who are born to the false and distorted. We do so not because of anger and annoyance, but guided by the rules of the mind: to separate the unworthy from the healthy.»

The meaning of Socrates lies in the fact that the decision, about the necessity and useless, and accordingly, the end of life, must be taken by the man himself and nobody else. The society has no right to decide this question.

- Was unequivocal the attitude towards children with physical and mental deficiencies in society during all its existence? Why could not precedents of active charity arise in an antique state? When did the legal principles of protection of persons with disabilities begin to emerge? So, the theme of our lecture.
2. Problematic questions: There is such an opinion that at the end of the twentieth century Western Europe and Ukraine are experiencing different periods of

evolution in relation to children with disabilities and, accordingly, are at different stages of the development of special education systems. Is this statement true? What do you think?

3. Reception retrospection: Remember if you have witnessed in a lifetime negative or indifferent attitude towards people with disabilities or incorrect expressions at their address? Tell us about it.
4. Analysis of the positive experience of inclusive education, the opinions of experienced teachers, the views of parents of children with special educational needs attending educational institutions, real examples of the successful inclusion of children with special needs in the educational process.
5. Watch videos of classes with children.

Preparing students, you need to use active and interactive methods and forms of learning: design, training discussions, problem-activity games, analysis of production situations and simulations, solutions of situational tasks, heuristic conversations, case studies that allow you to imagine a professional experience to be mastered by children in the form of a system of cognitive and practical tasks. The content of the classes is characterized by the presence of a system of purposeful and pre-thought-out actions and roles, which reflect the real-life problems of practical activity of teachers of inclusive education. Inclusion in the process of preparation for the workshop allows you to systematically develop professional skills.

Tasks for preparation for a seminar session

Students are divided into subgroups (max. 5 students) and perform one of the tasks. Each subgroup chooses one task:

- Draw a diagram of the periodization of the evolution of the state and society relations with children with disabilities. Title each of the five periods and indicate chronological terms in relation to Western Europe and Ukraine. Do the terms coincide?
- Make a multimedia presentation: «The Origins of Inclusive Education in Special Education: Moving from Integration to Inclusion.»
- Write a lecture or report on the use of movies or cartoons for solving the problems of forming a tolerant attitude in society for children with disabilities.
- Make a program of leisure activities for older children, which involves the interaction of children with different educational needs.
- Analyze the materials of the periodical on tolerance issues and make a selection of articles on tolerant attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

Tentative plan of the seminar

The subject: History of the development of the system of individual support for the development of children in Ukraine and abroad.

1. Formation and stages of the development of the system of special education.
2. The first period of evolution: from aggression and intolerance to awareness of the need for contempt for the disabled.
3. The second period of evolution: from the awareness of the need for contempt for the disabled to realize the possibility of training deaf and blind children; from shelters through the experience of individual training to the first special educational institutions.
4. The third period of evolution: from the awareness of the possibility of teaching children with sensory impairments to recognition of the right of abnormal children to education. The formation of the system of special education.
5. The fourth period of evolution: from the awareness of the need for special education for certain categories of children with developmental deviations to understanding the need for special education for all who need it. Development and differentiation of the system of special education.
6. The fifth period of evolution: from equal rights to equal opportunities; from “institutionalization” to integration.

Tasks for independent extra-curricular work

1. To collect scientific and methodological literature on the problem of inclusive education.
2. To create a chronological card: «Inclusive education».
3. To compile and arrange the dictionary of terms «Inclusive education».
4. Summarizing articles on inclusive education.
5. Make a model of educational program for an inclusive group.
6. To find a diagnostic complex for studying problems in the families of children with special needs.
7. Based on the results of the diagnosis, develop a program of individual work with the child in an inclusive learning environment.
8. To draw up a blueprint/plan for conducting consultations of the family members of child with SEN.
9. Prepare for the round table talks: “The main barriers in the education of children with SEN.”

During their independent extra-curricular work, students study international documents and national legislation on meeting the educational needs of children with

SEN, the principles of inclusive education, and the psychological characteristics of children with special needs.

It is advisable to make a creative laboratory for the formation of pedagogical skills of students to develop individual programs of correction and development work; to carry out correctional and pedagogical activity in conditions of inclusive education; advise parents of children with SEN. Forms and methods of formation of pedagogical skills were: counseling hours in the institution of preschool education with educators and methodologists; solution of pedagogical situational tasks, discussion of problem issues, pedagogical situations.

For better orientation during fulfilling tasks, future educators were asked questions for observation, conversation and analysis, tests, charts of the characteristics of children development, diagnostic materials for studying the problem of education of children with SEN.

The analysis of pedagogical situations at the meetings of the creative laboratory

The method of group discussion was effective. Here is an example.

Situation: A child of 5 years with a syndromic form of mental retardation, walking in the yard with mother (grandmother), approaches a sandbox where children 2–3 years old play and aspire to engage in the process of playing with sand. Two of the five parents of younger children come to the sandbox and take their children away, preventing contact with a mentally retarded child.

Question: To offer several variants of constructive solution of the situation on the basis of psychological detailed analysis of the situation.

Express your opinion about existing thoughts and situations:

1. Children with disabilities – in future, people who cannot afford themselves are unprofitable and unnecessary for society.
2. Some parents themselves are trying to «isolate» their children from society because of the fact that in the country, disability is often associated with disadvantages, the problems of families with persons with disabilities.
3. Are you ready to interact with disabled children? If so, then how?
4. Do you consider coeducation of children with SEN and ordinary children to be beneficial or harmful to ordinary children and children with SEN?
5. A society considered friendly when ... (to continue the opinion).

It is good to hold among students a business game-training on the topic “It’s easy to be different from others.” Such a business game-training is aimed at forming a tolerant attitude towards people with special needs.

At practical lessons it is desirable to use visual materials that cover the peculiarities of the development of various categories of children. At practical classes on special psychology, students were offered to independently pick from the Internet materials that illustrate various aspects of mental development of children with different degrees of mental retardation, learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairment, pathologies of the musculoskeletal system, and autism disorders.

Specially organized extra-curriculum work, conducted by students, envisaged their familiarization with video materials, which featured both artistic and documentary films that depict different aspects of the lives of people with special needs. These materials should pay attention of future educators of empathy, emotional adoption of children with special needs, sympathy for their problems.

When organizing and conducting an educational process in a higher educational institution, special attention should be paid to the formation of professional-value orientations, professional and personal qualities, skills and professional competences of future educators. It is necessary to form skills of psychological support of children with peculiarities of psychophysical development (with SEN); ability to organize non-conflict social interaction of children with different levels of psychophysical development; ability to cooperate with different types of families; skills of interaction with colleagues.

4 Conclusions

The analysis of the problem of forming the preparedness of future educators to work with children with special educational needs in the general education area has shown the need for future scientific research with the aim of further studying the peculiarities of preparing students for the effective support of these children in preschool establishments, the formation of professional competence of preschool education in the field of development, education and upbringing of children with SEN. Preparation of students for vocational and pedagogical activities in the context of inclusive education is a complex, long-term, multi-stage process. Purposeful modernization of the content of the study of normative disciplines and disciplines of choice, possibility to choose the most appropriate forms and methods will definitely contribute to the positive dynamics in the development of professional competence of future specialists in preschool education.

References

- [1] Encyclopedia of Education (2008) [Entsyklopediya osvity] / Acad. ped Sciences of Ukraine; chief ed. V. G. Kremen. – K.: Yuricom Inter. – 1040 p.
- [2] Preschool education: dictionary-directory: more than 1000 terms, concepts and names (2010) [Doshkilna osvita: slovnyk-dovidnyk: ponad 1000 terminiv, ponyat ta nazv] / [emphasis: K. L. Kruty, O. O. Funtikova]. – Zaporozhye: LLC "LIPS" LTD. – 324 p.

- [3] Kolupayeva A. A., Taranchenko O. M. (2016) Inclusive Education: From Basics to Practice: Monograph [Inklyuzyivna osvita: vid osnov do praktyky: monografiya] / A. A. Kolupayeva, O. M. Taranchenko – K.: LLC “ATOPOI”. – 152 p.
- [4] Kuzava I. B. (2015) Theoretical and methodical principles of inclusive education of preschool children who need correction of psychophysical development: author's abstract. dis. .. for the sciences. doctor's degree of ped. Sciences: special 13.00.03 “Correctional pedagogy” [Teoretychni ta metodychni zasady inklyuzyvnoyi osvity doshkilnykiv, yaki potrebuyut korektsiyi psyhofizychnogo rozvytku: avtoref. dys. na zdobuttya nauk. stupenya doktora ped. nauk: specz. 13.00.03 “Korektsijna pedagogika”] / I. B. Kuzava. – K. – 42 p.
- [5] Lystopad E. V. Development of Inclusive Education in Ukraine [Electronic Version] [Razvytye inklyuzyvnoho obrazovaniya v Ukrainy [Elektronnyj variant] / E. V. Lystopad / Access Mode: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/razvitie-inklyuzivnogo-obrazovaniya-v-ukraine>.
- [6] Martynchuk O. V. (2012) Preparation of future teachers for professional activity under the conditions of inclusive education [Electronic resource] [Pidgotovka majbutnih pedagogiv do profesijnoyi diyalnosti v umovah inklyuzyvnoyi osvity [Elektronnyj resurs]] / O.V. Martynchuk // Bulletin of Psychology and Pedagogy: Collection of Sciences Works / Pedagogical Institute of the Boris Grinchenko University of Kyiv Institute of Psychology and Social Pedagogics of Borys Grinchenko University of Kyiv [Visnyk psykholohiyi i pedagogiky: zbirnyk nauk. pratz / Pedagogichnyj instytut Kyivskogo universytetu imeni Borysa Grinchenka Instytut psykholohiyi i socialnoyi pedagogiky Kyivskogo universytetu imeni Borysa Grinchenka.]. – K. – Exp. 8. – 248 p.
- [7] Preparation of future educators for work with preschool children: competence approach / [Pidgotovka majbutnih vyhovateliv do roboty z ditmy doshkilnogo viku: kompetentnisnyj pidhid] Ed. GV Belenkova O. A. Polovinoyi / – Monograph – K.: Publishing house. – 244 p.
- [8] Rapatsevich E. S. (2010) Pedagogy Modern Encyclopedia [Pedagogyka. Sovremennaya entsyklopedyya] / E. S. Rapatsevich; Ed. A. P. Astakhov. – Minsk: Modern School [Sovremennaya shkola]. – 720 p.

(reviewed twice)

Angelika Kurchatova

PhD, Associate Professor of Preschool Education Department

Faculty of Preschool and Elementary School Education

V. O. Sukhomlynskyi National University of Mykolaiv

Ukraine

e-mail: kurchat67@mail.ru

Kateryna Shapochka

PhD, Associate Professor of Pedagogy and Inclusive Education Department

Faculty of Preschool and Elementary School Education

V. O. Sukhomlynskyi National University of Mykolaiv

Ukraine

e-mail: shapochka1111@gmail.com