

PEDAGOGY

TEACHING STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issues of providing support to pedagogical team in the inclusive education settings as the main condition for the success of inclusion implementation. As a methodological basis for the analysis, the teacher competence structure is used as an approach. There are given many ways to expand the circle for teachers support. Arguments are also made in favor of engaging and interested in organizations for all employees of an inclusive school to create an inclusive team and the necessity for interest in joint work of both the administration and the teachers, correctional teachers included.

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Introduction. The processes occurring in the world, such as globalization, increasing competition in economic systems, and integration, cause systemic changes in the sphere of education, which is becoming one of the main factors in the development of society.

It is well-known fact that Education as a historical, sociocultural process reflects the state of this or that society within the specific period of development, its problems, tendencies, valuable orientations [3].

The recent years have marked out the tendency in modern education for coeducation of disabled children, children with language, racial and other peculiarities and children without special educational needs. Such education has got the name inclusive education [4].

In this context, inclusive education can be considered as a paradigm for the development of modern education, of a certain global brand, ensuring equal access to education for all students, taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities [4].

Inclusive education assumes to create appropriately adapted educational environment and to render supporting services, but not just to provide the right to attend educational institutions. One of necessary conditions to realize inclusive education effectively is teaching staff training. The performance of this condition will allow to solve truly and competently the issues of teaching persons with special educational needs. But now there is an urgent problem concerning the training and retraining of experts working in the system of preschool, school and higher school inclusive education of persons with special needs [1].

Inclusive education has gained ground in many countries due to its support by various members of the society [4]. It is mentioned in the law of RA “Public Education”/ՀՕ-200-Ն, 03.01.2015/ as well [2]. And the newly-formed system is providing an opportunity for education and upbringing of children in need of special education, without leaving the child away from the family,

ensuring its comprehensive social development and involving it in the general education institution. As a result of the policy implemented in the sector, it is envisaged to expand the opportunities for children with special education needs to receive quality education by creating an inclusive education system in all general education schools. It is essential to mention that there are many organizations, Initiatives that are committed to provide quality basic education for all children, youth, and adults thus supporting the public-school system.

Though, the procedures for dealing with these issues there are consist of organizational, financial, methodological, and volume frameworks. Indeed, the training of teachers to interact with students with disabilities in an inclusive education should be given special attention [5]. Thus, the tendencies existing at the present stage pedagogical theory and practice development related to the need for a wider inclusion of children with disabilities in society, actualizing the problem of inclusive competence among teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in providing quality education for all children. Around the world, the work of teachers is dedicated to ensuring the right to education for all children. Although many teachers work in difficult conditions (large classes, lack of needed infrastructure, lack of basic teaching and learning materials, poor attendance, inflexible policies and curricula, low wages, etc.), they do their best to serve each student in their schools. Despite the efforts of politicians, school principals, head teachers and teachers, many children still lack teachers who are properly trained for supporting to meet their special and educational needs.

It is necessary to solve several problems associated not only with the material base, but also with different attitudes of society members, and, above all, teachers' unwillingness to carry out their professional activities in new conditions for practical implementation inclusive education.

Considering that a child with disabilities should be given the opportunity to freely choose an educational institution, each teacher must have a certain level of inclusive competence as part of their professional competence. The teacher's inclusive competence is part of his / her professional competence and includes key content and functional competencies.

To describe the holistic structure of a teacher's competence as a set of general, basic, special and private competencies, we have identified the following levels: (table 1).

Table 1. The Structure of Teacher Competences

Review levels	Types of competencies	Competency structure	
		Key content competencies	Key functional competencies
General competence of a person	General (universal)	Value-semantic Cultural Intellectual Informational Personal self-improvement	Educational Communicative Socio-professional Social role
Professional competence of the teacher	Basic (in a certain professional field)	Value-motivational Cultural Intellectual and pedagogical Informational Professional and personal self-improvement	Operating: Diagnostic Prognostic/ predictive Constructive Organizational Communicative Technological Corrective Research
Special professional competence	Special (in specific conditions of activity)	Motivational Cognitive Reflective	Operational
Private professional competencies	Private (aimed at solving specific professional problems)	Motivational Cognitive Reflective	Operational

A person's overall competence includes common key content and functional competencies.

The professional competence of the teacher includes basic professional competence of the expert in a professional field, such as teachers, educators, psychologists, speech therapists.

Special professional competence of the teacher, required by the specifics of the institution in which the pedagogical activity is carried out, and the object to which the activity is directed, for example, professional competence of the teacher (general education, special (correctional) schools, etc.) or professional competence of the teacher in working with various categories of children, with parents.

Private professional competence of the teacher, ensuring the implementation of specific pedagogical actions, the solution of specific pedagogical problems.

Inclusive competence of teachers refers to the level of special professional competencies. This is an integrative personal education that determines the ability of teachers to perform professional functions in the process of inclusive education, considering the different educational needs of students and ensuring the inclusion of a child with disabilities in the educational organization and creating conditions for its development and self-development.

Motivational competence is defined as the ability based on a set of values, needs, motives, appropriate goals and objectives of inclusive education, to motivate themselves to perform certain professional activities. The most significant for this competence is the orientation of the teacher's personality. This is, firstly, a general humanistic orientation of the individual, and, secondly, a positive focus on the implementation of professional activities in an inclusive education of children with different educational needs, understanding the importance of inclusive education for the successful socialization of children with disabilities, a deep awareness of his humanistic potential.

The core of this key competence is scientific professional pedagogical knowledge of innovative integration processes in the field of special education; basics of personality development; pedagogical and psychological foundations of training and education; anatomical, physiological, age-related, psychological and individual characteristics of students in normal conditions and students with various development impairments; the fundamentals of pedagogical management of students' self-development process; basic patterns of interaction between society and a person with impaired development.

The reflective component of the teacher's inclusive competence includes reflexive competence, manifested in the ability to reflect on activities in the context of the preparation and implementation of inclusive education.

The operational component of the teacher's inclusive competence includes operational competencies that are defined as the ability to perform specific professional tasks in the pedagogical process and represent the methods and experiences of pedagogical activity that are necessary for the successful implementation of inclusive education, resolving emerging pedagogical situations, independent and mobile pedagogical tasks, implementation of search and research activities [6].

Considering that inclusive education has been introduced into a wide practice of educational organizations, secured in law, but still there are lack experienced teachers with high level of development of inclusive competence, it seems appropriate to include in the curriculum of advanced training a module for practicing competencies in the implementation of inclusive education. And in this regard only state agencies could not succeed to manage all sessions, trainings for inclusive education development in RA. And this lack is covering non-state agencies.

As we have already mention in this topic about organizations which do pay much attention to teacher trainings, capacity building and so on. One of them is "Children of Armenia" Charitable Fund/COAF/, it is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, its mission is improving the overall quality of education in rural communities and among the education programs there are so-called project "Education for All" /EFA/. It is well-known EFA is an international initiative, aiming to bring the benefits of education to "every citizen in every society". Including all learners and ensuring that everyone has an equal and personalized opportunity for educational progress is still a challenge in almost every community.

This project was started implementing the so-called awareness raising project on EFA, paying attention to Sustainable Development Goals/SDG/, mainly to the 4th point which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. It emphasizes inclusion and equity as laying foundations for quality education and learning. The aim is to build and upgrade

education and facilitate child-, disability-, and gender-sensitive and for providing safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Within the framework of this project series of trainings are planned and conducted for COAF beneficiary schools' principals, teachers, multidisciplinary professionals and etc, and these trainings, sessions will address questions related to educational system, to its management and also issues like: What is the current national and international policy context for inclusion? Why are inclusive practices difficult to develop? How do teachers perceive their roles in supporting inclusion and reducing underachievement? How might teacher education contribute to the development of inclusive practices and so on?

Within the topic of this article it is relevant to introduce the concept of that project which is based on scientific research and approaches.

Underlying the process of inclusion is the assumption that the general classroom teacher has certain knowledge and understanding about the needs of different learners, teaching techniques and curriculum strategies.

Several basic teaching skills were felt to be particularly important in this context to share with: Classroom research skills and the ability to engage with academic research; Monitoring the effectiveness of their classroom interventions; Reflecting critically on their own practice; Working collaboratively. In addition, initial teacher education should equip teachers with the skills to: Examine and reassess their attitudes towards other cultures; Develop empathy and treat all students as individuals; Promote the success of all students and the strategies to deal appropriately with prejudice at school; Teach learners who lack a strong command of the language of instruction; Make good use of the resources that minority learners bring to the classroom; Communicate effectively and with cultural sensitivity with parents

It is important to stress the fact that sessions/trainings being developed and organized within this project are not organized only for disability-oriented streams but rather aimed at providing teachers with a wide variety of knowledge and skills that they can apply in various settings and situations.

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