

## CHAPTER 3

# THEORY AND METHODS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

### PREPARATION OF FUTURE EDUCATORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS FOR THE SPECIFICS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** *The article identifies the importance of inclusive education in Ukraine based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature. The main qualities that should be inherent in an educator working in an inclusive environment: humanity; the ability to ensure the connection between the child and the educator; spirituality; the ability to shape the child's personality; possession of methods of practical pedagogical activity, pedagogical technologies; availability of pedagogical abilities. The necessity of preparation of the future educator for the following is proved: composition of the complex program of development of the child with special educational needs; providing additional services and introducing new forms of support in the learning process; organization of observation of the dynamics of the child's development. The method of preparation for such activities is shown. Positive results are gained by psychological and pedagogical support, which means a comprehensive system of measures for the organization of the educational process and child development according to the individual program. It is participated by the director of the preschool institution, methodologist, educators, practical psychologist, social worker or teacher, special education teacher, rehabilitation teacher and parents, medical worker of the educational institution, doctor, child assistant, social protection specialists, various services children, etc.*

*It is determined that the professional activity of an educator in the system of inclusive education involves mastering a specific way of working in an inclusive environment: to treat all children equally, give students with special needs feasible tasks, involve such children in group work, joint problem solving; with the use of modeling, games, projects, theatrical performances, artistic creativity. Much attention is paid to the professional competence of the educator.*

**Keywords:** *future educator, inclusive education, preschool institution, individual program, specifics of preparation for work in an inclusive environment, professional competence of the educator.*

**JEL Classification:** A22, I23

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**Introduction.** Ukraine is creating conditions for equal access to education, both general and professional. This ensures the development of another area of the educational process of inclusive education. It is known that the birth rate of children with certain abnormalities in physical and psychological development is increasing in

Ukraine. Identifying and eliminating developmental deficiencies is a matter for health professionals, and providing normal conditions for the development of such children is the task of educators and psychologists, ensuring equal access of every child to quality education, regardless of social background, abilities and place of residence. The educational process in the system of inclusive education goes through all the general stages that correspond to the established educational process. Therefore, inclusive groups and inclusive classes are organized at each stage. Mixed groups, mixed classes also are established. In higher education institutions, children with special needs are engaged in general groups. Because inclusive education has the same consistency as general education, we started our research with preschools.

**Literature review.** The issues of professional training of future teachers are paid attention to in the research of A. Aleksyuk, V. Bobrytska, A. Boyko, L. Vovk, N. Demyanenko, N. Kichuk, V. Kuzya, V. Lugovoi, N. Nychkalo, D. Nikolenko, O. Oleksyuk, O. Pekhota, O. Savchenko, L. Romanyshyna, R. Skulsky, I. Shorobura and others.

G. Bilenko, A. Bogush, L. Zdanevych, I. Lutsenko, K. Krutiy, O. Kucheryavy, N. Lysenko, V. Rozgon, and others covered the problem of training future educators of preschool institutions in their works. I. Zvereva, I. Ivanova, A. Kapska, O. Molchan, L. Pisotska and others considered the organization of social and pedagogical work with children with disabilities in their works. All works draw attention to the need to train professionals who will work in an inclusive education. The works indicate the gradual introduction of inclusive education from preschool to vocational.

**Aims.** The problem of preparation of future educators to work in inclusive education has not been studied enough. Therefore, the aim of the article is to study the problem of preparation of future educators for the specifics of work in an inclusive education.

**Methods.** Theoretical methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison, modeling) were used in order to study the state of research of the problem, to determine the main directions of further research, to build a structural model of training of future educators. Empirical methods (surveys, questionnaires, testing) were used in order to study the readiness of future educators for professional activities in an inclusive education. Methods of mathematical statistics were used to determine the effectiveness of the study.

**Results.** Based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature on the training of future educators, the importance of the problem of inclusive education in Ukraine was determined. The urgency of this problem is indicated by legal documents, in particular: Laws of Ukraine «On Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine» [6], «On Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine» [7], which guarantees children with special needs opportunities equal to other children.

The main figure in the educational process in the preschool is the educator. According to O. Kononko, a modern educator is a teacher who uses modern technologies of education, knows the basics of child psychology, uses pedagogical techniques, directs his professional activities to help children with disabilities. This

educator «... looks at education as a process of expanding the child's competent choice of content, place, duration, partners, materials for their classes; creating conditions for its self-development, manifestation of essential forces; search for pedagogical technologies for building a developmental lifestyle of preschoolers; formation of the foundations of personal culture; creating an educational environment» [2].

The psychological and pedagogical literature identifies the main qualities that should be inherent in the educator who works in an inclusive environment:

- human: the ability to ensure communication between the child and the educator on the basis of mutual understanding;
- spiritual: on the basis of pedagogical experience of mankind to direct the educational process on the formation of the child's personality;
- practical: mastery of methods of practical pedagogical activity, pedagogical technologies;
- availability of pedagogical abilities, ability to create personal-humane interaction [2].

The available qualities imply that the educator should promote the development of those qualities of the child that ensure its entry into the educational environment in the future. In this process, special knowledge, possession of information are in pair with professional-pedagogical culture of educators (balance, high mobility, emotional stability, sufficient level of intellectual development, high level of imagination, imagination, fantasizing).

The educator needs to know that an inclusive educational environment is characterized by a system of values to the educational process, the development of children with special educational needs, and is based on a combination of tools, external and internal conditions, and modern technologies [6].

To work in an inclusive environment, the educator must have methods of working with children with limited educational needs and know the possible practical situations for the formation of skills and abilities of students. This is the main specificity of the work of educators and inclusive groups.

This requires that the educator must form the tasks of the program within the educational capabilities of the group, correctly assess the results of its implementation, and take into account the individual capabilities of each student, ensuring their motivation. Therefore, individualization of the educational process is mandatory. And this is a prerequisite for successful learning of students with special educational needs [10]. Future educators should know this and be ready for such features of their professional activity.

To ensure the individualization of education, students must learn to: develop comprehensive programs for the development of children with special educational needs; provide additional services and introduce new forms of support in the learning process; organize observations of the dynamics of child development [8]. They must learn to compile individual child development programs. «An individual development program is a written document that is generally a contract between the teaching staff and the child's parents or guardians. It establishes requirements for the organization of education and correctional and developmental work of a child with special educational

needs, in particular, determines the nature of educational services and forms of support» [8]. Parents of children should be involved in drawing up an individual program, because they know the possibilities of children better.

The following components were introduced into the individual development program:

1. General information about the child.
2. Current level of knowledge and skills.
3. Information on developmental disorders of the child.
4. Special and additional educational services needed by the child.
5. Ability to adapt.

Adaptation is a must because it affects the way the content is presented while preserving the content.

Another component of the individual program is the system of assessment of students' knowledge. It should be built in such a way as to motivate children to learn. Each individual program should have time dedicated to correctional and developmental classes. A modular training program will help determine the location of such work. As a rule, such work is carried out after studying a block of topics with common concepts.

Positive results are obtained by psychological and pedagogical support, which means a comprehensive system of measures for the organization of the educational process and child development according to the individual program.

Psychological and pedagogical support involves the presence of various specialists: the director of preschool education, methodologist, educators, practical psychologist, social worker or teacher, special education teacher, rehabilitation teacher and parents. In addition, the following are invited: a medical worker of the educational institution, a doctor, a child's assistant, specialists in social protection, various services for children, etc.

The professional activity of an educator in the system of inclusive education involves the possession of special ways of working with students with special educational needs: not to emphasize that they are special children; to involve them as much as possible in the same activities as other children, but to give them feasible tasks so that they feel that they are coping with them; to involve children in group forms of work, joint problem solving; using modeling, games, projects, theatrical performances, artistic creativity [9].

Definitions with their new reading play an important role in solving the problem of inclusion: «interaction, mutual activity, cooperation of teachers and students in the process of their communication at school» [3].

Pedagogical interaction is understood as the unity of functional-role (the teacher acts as the organizer of the process) and personal aspects of the relationship (transfer of the educator's own individuality). Such interaction is based on values: human value in all its perspectives; everyone has the right to have their own opinion; real education can only be carried out in the context of real relationships; all people need the support and friendship of their peers; for all, progress may be in what they can do rather than in what they cannot; all people need each other.

The main purpose of the work of a preschool teacher is to provide counseling and assistance to families raising children with special educational needs. But for this they must undergo appropriate training in higher education institutions. Practice shows that the parents of such children, in addition to the help of health professionals, psychologists, need the help of teachers, who are educators. Parents and their children need attention, patience, care, and communication with other parents. This allows the family to live a normal life.

When working with such families, teachers are obliged to take into account the characteristics of both children and parents, which requires a creative approach to choosing methods of work. Their modernization will help to avoid common methods of work, make the right decisions, and modernize methods of pedagogical interaction.

There is now a need for educators-innovators who understand the needs of families with children with special educational needs, know how to help such families, and know how to prepare children for life. Thus, the modern educator of the inclusive group of preschool education should be able to perform the following functions: health, educational, developmental, communicative, informational, coordinating. Each of these functions has its own tasks that need to be performed to achieve a positive result. And to perform these functions, the educator must be professionally competent.

According to G. Belenka, the professional competence of an educator is an integrated concept that includes: worldview of the individual, deep awareness and practical skills in the chosen field of activity, developed professionally significant qualities, authority built on this foundation. At the same time, the researcher warns: «Professional competence of a preschool teacher cannot be considered only as a cognitive component of pedagogical professionalism and the basis of the culture of professional thinking, consciousness and self-awareness. Professional competence of a teacher-educator of preschool children is a much broader concept» [4].

The educator must have the following personal qualities, which T. Ponimanska points out: the ability to reflect, cooperate with the child and his parents; ability to give moral support of the child; desire for emotional communication with the child; desire to replenish knowledge, engage in self-learning and self-education, the ability to identify and take into account the interests of children in education and their right to respect [5].

Nowadays, an educator must have computer literacy, which means mastering the means of information and communication technologies.

**Discussion.** Before making a plan for the pedagogical experiment, we conducted a statement phase of the experiment on the basis of the Khmelnytsky Academy of Humanities and Education. To analyze the completeness of students' knowledge about the features of inclusive education, we conducted a survey of students of different courses in the specialty «Preschool Education» [11].

The results of the study: 78% did not give a reasoned answer to the questionnaire «What do you think the term inclusive environment means?», 15% of students gave complete answers, and others did not answer at all.

In the answers to the questionnaire «Who do you think belong to the category of children with special educational needs» almost all of the students gave the correct

answers. We also observed the same in the analysis of students' answers to the question «What, in your opinion, are the features of the professional activities of educators of preschool education?», 45% gave a complete answer.

Questionnaire question «Can inclusive competence of students be formed during the period of study at a higher education institution?» caused significant difficulties for students. 74% could not give a clear and reasonable answer to this question

The question of the questionnaire «What method of education, in your opinion, is most conducive to the development of the personality of a child with special educational needs» received the following answers from almost all respondents:

- special education – 28%;
- individual training – 73%.

No less difficult for students was the question of the conditions that contribute to the preparation for work in an inclusive environment, which almost students could not answer. «What conditions need to be provided for the implementation of inclusive education.» The majority of respondents answered as follows: individual approach – 43%; individual program for which all children with disabilities will study – 36%; improvement of material and technical base – 11%; increasing the level of inclusive competence of educators – 7%. However, a significant number of respondents could not answer this question.

These results suggested the idea of further research on the impact of pedagogical conditions on the readiness of future educators to work in an inclusive environment.

**Conclusions.** The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature showed the importance of introducing inclusion into the educational system. Preparation of future educators to work with children with limited educational needs should be carried out in higher education institutions in the study of special disciplines and during pedagogical practice. The effectiveness of the process depends on the right pedagogical conditions. Therefore, further research will be aimed at studying the effective pedagogical conditions for preparing future educators to work with children with limited educational needs.

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