

INCLUSIVE TEACHER COMPETENCE AS A COMPONENT OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

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Annotation

This article examines the characteristics of developing inclusive competence as a key component of teacher professional training in higher education institutions. It analyzes definitions of the terms "inclusion," "professional training," and "inclusive competence." The essential competencies of teachers in inclusive education, which are necessary for performing professional tasks, are highlighted. The key components of inclusive competence, which ensure the provision of educational services at a high level, are identified. The structure of a teacher's inclusive competence and the specifics of its formation within higher education institutions are also defined.

Key words: Professional competence. Inclusion. Inclusive competence. Professional training.

Introduction

The inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream educational institutions is a priority in modern society. The new educational paradigm places new demands on the organization of an inclusive environment, particularly regarding teachers' professional competence. To effectively conduct pedagogical activities within inclusive education, future educators must possess relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities, continuously improve their professionalism, think creatively and adaptively in challenging situations, and be prepared for practical work. Therefore, scientific studies on the development of inclusive competence as a component of teacher professional training are gaining increasing relevance and require thorough analysis.

1. Analysis of system-forming research concepts

1.1. Concepts of "competence", "professional competence", "professional training" in modern scientific research. The scientific literature offers numerous definitions of the terms "competence," "professional competence," and "inclusive competence," which are not identical.

"Competence" is most often understood as an integrated quality of an individual, reflecting their readiness and ability to work. This readiness is based on the knowledge and experience gained through education and interaction with the surrounding environment and is directed toward independent and active participation in various forms of activity (Salivon, 2007).

A. Kolupaeva argues that competence results from learning and self-development, manifesting in knowledge, skills, experience, and values. Competence involves the ability to apply these competencies in various life situations (Kolupaeva, 2018).

"Professional competence" is commonly defined as the teacher's ability to perform pedagogical tasks based on the integration of theoretical knowledge, practical skills,

experience, values, and essential personal qualities. It serves as the primary criterion for meeting professional standards (Drach, 2012).

The development of professional competence is largely within the teacher's control, as they consciously regulate their behaviors based on accumulated pedagogical experience. Only conscious experience is meaningful; reflection, through analytical activities, transforms "raw" experience into personally assigned knowledge. Through this reflective process, teachers become aware not only of their own pedagogical experiences but also of the experiences of other teachers (Tsipan, 2016).

The term "professional training" in modern scientific literature refers to a process in which not only professional knowledge, skills, and abilities are developed but also personal moral qualities and beliefs, which are crucial for future pedagogical practice (Boichenko, 2014).

Furthermore, "professional training" refers to a process of preparing a specialist for work in a particular field of labor, typically involving the mastery of a specific occupation or profession. The goal of professional training is to equip future specialists with the professional education necessary for carrying out their professional duties. This involves the acquisition of systematized knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal and professional qualities required for the performance of professional tasks (Osadcha, 2018).

It is worth noting that the term "professional training" has a dual meaning in the scientific literature. Most commonly, it is considered both as a process and as the outcome of education, representing a state of readiness for professional activity. Such training is characterized by a set of professional requirements concerning the level and quality of a specialist's preparation. Quite often, assessments of professional training are based on a competency approach, which involves a system of specified competencies.

1.2. Definition of the concept of "inclusive competence". The concept of a teacher's inclusive competence is closely related to the idea of "inclusion." In scientific literature, inclusion is understood as a flexible, systematic, and dynamic process that fosters an adequate, positive attitude toward the diversity of participants in the educational process. It involves recognizing individual developmental differences among children not as problems but as opportunities for growth.

The concept of "inclusion" is interpreted in both a narrow and broad sense. A narrow understanding of inclusion involves integrating individuals with special educational needs into the educational system, from preschool institutions to higher education. In contrast, a broader understanding of inclusion involves fostering a tolerant, respectful, and positive attitude among all participants toward the varied needs and abilities of students, and addressing these differences in personal interactions.

The term "inclusion" is often equated with "inclusive education," but this is not entirely accurate. According to UNESCO's legal framework, inclusive education is a process that addresses and responds to the diverse needs of students by ensuring their participation in education, cultural events, and community life, while reducing exclusion in both education and the broader educational process.

A. Kolupaeva defines inclusive education as a complex, continuous, multifaceted, and systemic process that develops general education by making it open and accessible to participants with varying levels of psychophysical development. This process requires the involvement of scientific, methodological, and administrative resources (Kolupaeva, 2018).

Inclusive competence refers to a form of professional competence that enables the effective implementation of inclusive practices. This competence can only be developed

through the actual practice of inclusive activities by students, which must be integrated into the entire educational process within higher education institutions (Fihol, 2020).

Inclusive competence is part of a teacher's key competencies and is often considered a variant of professional or special competence. Typically, the components of inclusive competence include:

- 1) communicative competence – direct interaction, drawing from experience in communicating with others, and the ability to establish contacts and collaborate in teams;
- 2) pedagogical competence – a combination of knowledge, skills, personal qualities, and the techniques needed to apply them effectively in professional activities;
- 3) professional competence – an integrated, multi-level characteristic of a specialist's personality and pedagogical activity, reflecting their ability to solve professional problems using knowledge, life experience, and values (Kuzava, Hats, 2022).

A teacher's inclusive competence requires a blend of theoretical and practical training, appropriate professional and personal qualities, and the ability to reflect on their practice.

2. The structure of the teacher's inclusive competence

2.1. Components of the teacher's inclusive competence. A detailed analysis of the problem allows us to identify key competencies that teachers need for effective professional activity in an inclusive educational environment:

1. Knowledge, understanding, and the ability to analyze the conditions of the methodological situation at various levels of the methodological system (systemic-methodological, general-methodological, partially-methodological). This involves identifying external factors that influence the components of the methodological system and predicting their impact on a specific situation. For example, this includes understanding the unique developmental needs of children with special educational needs, predicting how these needs may affect the learning situation, and understanding the specifics of different subjects in relation to students with diverse learning needs. Additionally, this requires knowledge of general and special pedagogical principles, ensuring that inclusive education is organized with a corrective orientation, accompanied by psychological and pedagogical support, among other factors.

2. Knowledge of types of methodical tasks, the ability to distinguish between a methodological problem and a situation at different methodological levels, and to formulate tasks accordingly.

3. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to select individual components of the system, plan methodical actions, and apply them at different levels of the methodological system. This includes the following:

Knowledge and understanding of the place of each component within the methodical system (purpose, content, form, methodological technique, and means), as well as their interdependence. Teachers must understand how these components interact with each other and how external factors influence their interaction.

Awareness of external factors and their influence on the system's components. These external factors include the developmental peculiarities of the child, the specifics of the subject being taught, and relevant pedagogical concepts (both general and special pedagogy).

Ability to choose components based on external factors: For example, teachers should select the purpose and tasks of the lesson depending on the child's capabilities and subject specifics. They must also align these choices with the pedagogical principles that govern the organization of the learning process.

Content selection: Teachers must choose educational content that is appropriate for the child's capabilities and aligned with the subject matter, while considering modern pedagogical views. This content should support the overall goal of education in inclusive settings.

Choice of educational forms: The selection of the appropriate forms of education should correspond with the established goal and the chosen content. Teachers need to adapt forms like group work, individual tasks, or specific classroom structures to fit inclusive environments.

Method selection: Teachers should choose methods and techniques that align with the purpose, content, and form of education. These methods should be suitable for inclusive settings, ensuring that all students, including those with special educational needs, can engage meaningfully in the learning process.

Selection of teaching aids: In addition to choosing appropriate teaching methods, teachers must select teaching aids that are suitable for the purpose, content, and form of the lesson. These aids should also accommodate the diverse learning needs of students, ensuring accessibility and relevance in the inclusive classroom setting.

4. Knowledge, understanding and ability to control and evaluate methodical tasks. At a specified level of the methodological system, teachers should be able to assess the effectiveness of their actions and make necessary corrections (Chupakhina, 2017).

An important aspect of training future teachers to work in inclusive settings is the development of their professional qualities, including:

- professional value orientations for working with children with special educational needs;
- recognition of the inherent value of every child's personality, regardless of any disabilities; an awareness of one's responsibility as both a carrier and translator of culture for children with special psychophysical development;
- an understanding of the creative nature of teaching, which, when working with children with special needs, requires significant emotional and energy investment (Babakova, 2014).

Teachers in inclusive schools must be competent in adapting the inclusive process to individual plans, which require modification and adaptation. They are supported by a teaching assistant and a multidisciplinary team of specialists who ensure the provision of educational services to students with special educational needs.

Successful inclusive teaching also requires teachers to master a specific level of professional knowledge and practical skills for working with adults. Additionally, they must be proficient in communication, negotiation, and collaboration with families, as well as conflict resolution. Reducing the psychological distance between parents and teachers is crucial for building cooperative relationships.

2.2. Components of the formation of the teacher's inclusive competence. An analysis of the theoretical work of modern researchers has allowed for the identification of key structural components of teachers' inclusive competence in higher education institutions. These components, when developed, indicate a teacher's readiness to work in inclusive settings. The components are: motivational, cognitive, operational, and personal.

The motivational component is characterized by a genuine motivation for professional training and a desire to work with people who have special educational needs. Interest and commitment to this work contribute to both personal and professional development, fostering the growth of the teacher as a professional. The presence of social, personal, and professional motives reflects a readiness to engage in professional activities with students who have special educational needs.

The cognitive component involves having a system of professionally oriented knowledge about the specifics of teaching in an inclusive educational environment. The ability to absorb, process, analyze, and organize information, and recall it when necessary to solve professional challenges, demonstrates a teacher's readiness to work in inclusive settings.

The operational component is characterized by the teacher's design, constructive, executive, and analytical-reflective skills, which are essential for performing pedagogical tasks in inclusive institutions. A teacher's ability to apply professional knowledge and practical experience to facilitate the inclusion of students with special needs reflects their capacity for effective and efficient teaching.

The personal component includes the presence of social creativity, pedagogical innovation, professional reflection, and a system of moral principles necessary for successful teaching. Creativity, empathy, and a positive attitude toward work all contribute to a teacher's preparedness for working in inclusive education.

Conclusion. In conclusion, a teacher's inclusive competence is a crucial part of their professional development. It requires theoretical and methodological knowledge, practical skills, a strong system of moral principles, and the ability for self-development and reflection. The integration of professional competencies and motivation is essential for building inclusive competence in teachers at higher education institutions.

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