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**TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL PREPAREDNESS FOR INCLUSIVE
PRACTICE IN SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

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Abstract

Current educational practices show that there is a need for monitoring and assessing the level of teacher preparedness for inclusive education. There is also a demand for developing a new systematic approach to teacher education that would better prepare teachers for inclusive education. In this regard, this article is aimed to identify some features of this process. The authors also try to find out how to develop professional preparedness for inclusive education in primary school. The leading method in the study of this problem was the questionnaire method conducted among 20 primary school teachers, which made it possible to identify some features and ways of fashioning professional preparedness for inclusive education in primary school. The article theoretically substantiates the main components of primary school teachers' professional preparedness to put into practice an inclusive approach. It systematizes the main problems of primary school teachers to realize this approach. Besides, the process of the professional preparedness development for an inclusive approach is presented. The materials introduced in the article can be used to supplement to the existing training and retraining system of primary school teachers. The proposed developing program can be used in higher education institutions or universities as an interactive method of forming the future teachers' preparedness to work in the contexts of an inclusive approach, as well as in refresher courses for schoolteachers.

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Keywords: School teacher' professional preparedness, inclusive education, preparedness for inclusive practice in education.



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1. Introduction

Modernization of the current stage of education is associated with the awareness and rethinking of attitudes towards the category of “disabled children”. The refusal of the educational community to divide people into categories is confirmed by the emergence of the term “persons with special educational needs”, which establishes the transition from deviations from the norm in the physical or mental development of a child to reinforcing the needs of children in special educational conditions, to the educational responsibility for realizing these requirements. Therefore, one of the priorities of the Federal Targeted Program for the Development of Education is the creation of modern organizational, legal and educational models that ensure the successful social adaptation of children with developmental grows problems.

2. Problem Statement

In Russia and all over the world, there is a tendency to include people with special needs in an active social life. In a dynamic, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional world, society and the state, recognizing their responsibility for providing equal opportunities for all in various spheres of life, proposed new educational concepts, including the concept of inclusive education that provides conditions for cooperative and truly equal education for all children.

3. Research Questions

In various studies of scientists such as Alekhina, Alekseeva, and Agafonova (2011), Godovnikova (2008), Malofeev (2007), Nazarova (2012), Semago and Semago (2004) the enormous pedagogical potential of inclusive education is noted. An innovative understanding of the goals and priorities for implementing inclusive education determines the requirement to rethink the conditions for teaching children with special educational needs (SEN), and therefore requires changing the system of teachers' professional preparedness to realize an inclusive approach in an educational organization.

4. Purpose of the Study

The changing educational paradigms, the growing integrative nature of the educational space, its openness, leading to the necessity to introduce various models and learning technologies, quite significantly change the idea of what professional and personal characteristics of a modern teacher should be considered as really important. According to Zubareva (2009), if we take into account the social order addressed to a teacher training, expressed in the form of requirements to prepare teachers who would be able to think creatively and independently navigate in the modern educational space, then the integral teacher' characteristics (including his professional preparedness) interest becomes obvious. In this perspective, the problems of developing the primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach that is adequate to the educational needs of all categories of children become actual.

5. Research Methods

In the scientific literature there is a fairly wide range of research problems, revealing preparedness. So, the work of Bykova, Zhelezova, and Shvetsova (2018) is devoted to the analysis of the teacher professional qualities development. The papers of Alekhina, Alekseeva, and Agafonova (2011), Malofeev (2007), Semago and Semago (2004) have studied teacher training for the conditions of inclusive education. In recent years, studies on the contextual approach to the formation of teachers' competence in the field of inclusive education have been conducted (Khafizullina, 2008), competence-oriented professional development of the psychological specialists, medical and pedagogical commissions to create an inclusive educational environment (Zubareva, 2009), short-term professional teachers development in the field of inclusive education (Semago & Semago, 2004).

Despite the presence of all these studies, the problem of teacher' professional preparedness for inclusive practice in school educational process development is not sufficiently studied, although because of its importance and complexity, it requires in-depth scientific study.

6. Findings

In the research process, the following methods were used: theoretical (analysis; synthesis; generalization); diagnostic (questionnaire "I and inclusive education"; Methods of professional pedagogical tolerance diagnosing (Makarov, 2011); Questionnaire "Self-analysis of difficulties in a teacher's activity" (Gorbunova & Tsveluykh, 2006); "The methodology for assessing the teachers ability to solve professional problems" (Kuzmina, 1970); experimental (stating, forming, control experiments); methods of graphical representation of the results.

Experimental research base

Stavropol municipal budgetary educational institutions of secondary education (primary schools). The study involved 20 primary school teachers.

Research stages:

I. Search-theoretical: at this stage the theoretical analysis of the existing methodological approaches in philosophical, psychological and pedagogical scientific literature, thesis papers on the problem, as well as the theory and methodology of educational research was implemented; the problem, purpose, and methods of research are highlighted, the plan of experimental research is made.

II. The main one: at this stage, selection and testing of diagnostic methods, studying the level of primary school teachers' preparedness for an inclusive approach, analyzing the results of diagnostics, determined the structure and content of the process of developing the primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach.

III. Final: at this stage, a quantitative, qualitative and comparative analysis of the research results, a synthesis and systematization of the research materials and the formulation of conclusions were carried out.

Research results

According to pedagogical encyclopedia, the preparedness of teachers to work in an inclusive approach is the ability to solve professional problems in the field of cooperative learning of children with typical development and special educational needs organizing (Bim-Bad, 2003).

The professional preparedness of the primary school teacher for an inclusive approach is a complex of professional and personal education, characterized by the presence of the installation, implying an active predisposition and the teacher's need for an inclusive education of primary school age children, manifested in the availability and mobilization of special knowledge, skills and skills to realize inclusive education (Bim-Bad, 2003).

Professional preparedness is manifested in the orientation of the consciousness of the teacher and his ability to carry out professional activities for the full-fledged training and education of the child in an inclusive approach. The structure of school teachers' preparedness for the inclusive approach includes the main substantive components: the motivational (teacher's reflective attitude to the adoption of the ideology of inclusive education, the motivational orientation of the teacher's will, and feelings on the inclusive education of children), cognitive (the set of professional and pedagogical knowledge necessary for inclusive education children) and operational (a set of professional and practical skills for the inclusive education of students).

Readiness for professional activity in the context of inclusive education approaches is represented by the following components (Vogan, 2010):

- knowledge of pedagogical technologies, the fundamentals of correctional pedagogy and special psychology;
- information readiness;
- the variability and flexibility of pedagogical thinking, able to take into account the individual differences of each child;
- reflection of professional experience and results;
- psychological readiness, which has its own structure.

The structure of preparedness for professional activity in the context of inclusive education approaches includes: motivational readiness represented by personal attitudes (teacher's moral principles and pedagogical worldview); emotional readiness (acceptance - rejection of children with different educational needs); practice-oriented willingness to include various children in educational activities (inclusion - isolation) (Selevko, 2004).

Zubareva (2009) considers that formed professional preparedness helps teacher to perform their duties under the conditions of an inclusive approach successfully, as it allows to truly accumulate and use existing knowledge, skills, and experience, maintain emotional balance, self-control and restructure activities when obstacles and obstacles arise.

However, in practice we are faced with the fact that many school teachers are not ready to work in an inclusive environment, which is confirmed by the results of an experiment conducted at the bases of the Municipal budgetary educational institutions of secondary education in the city of Stavropol. The study involved 20 primary school teachers. To determine the complex of research methods, we theoretically substantiated the criteria for assessing the primary school teacher professional readiness for implementation

of an inclusive approach: the motivational component (the teacher's conscious attitude to the need and conditions for organizing inclusive education; the degree of tolerance and empathic manifestations of the teacher); cognitive component (the presence of clear, systemic knowledge about the inclusive education of preschool children); operational component (the formation of specific skills of the inclusive education for preschoolers organization). Based on these criteria and the processing of the methods results, we identified three levels of teacher' preparedness for an inclusive approach development: high, medium and low.

According to the results of the ascertaining stage of the study, we identified the following: the preparedness of teachers to work in an inclusive education is not sufficiently developed. In 12 respondents out of 20, there is a predominance of medium and low levels of preparedness development; namely, a high level of professional preparedness of teachers to work in an inclusive education environment was noted in 8 teachers, an average level in 8 teachers and a low level in 4 teachers.

Analysis of the results showed that 10 teachers are familiar with the principles, objectives and philosophy of inclusive education; the remaining 10 teachers have limited understanding of inclusion. The majority of teachers (80%) showed a valuable attitude towards inclusive education. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents positively respond to the role of inclusion in the educational process, fully or partially agreeing that an inclusive approach in education should be one of the forms of teaching children with disabilities, yet not all teachers are motivated to implement the ideas of inclusion in own teaching practice. Since the preparedness to work with disabled children and organize their cooperative training with normally developing peers was shown by only 30% of teachers, while the main motive for inclusion is the need to comply with federal standards or the administration requirements. This is confirmed by quantitative data on the criterion of motivational preparedness - a low level of professional preparedness is noted in 70% of teachers.

In the teachers' answers, inclusion is understood only as the work of a speech therapist and / or a speech pathologist teacher, and the direct inclusion of a teacher or educator in the educational process of a disabled child is not provided.

It should be noted that 10 teachers showed a high level of professional tolerance development for children with disabilities, which confirms the high potential for work in an inclusive educational approach and indicates acceptance of disabled children and shows a desire to create friendly relations in the children's team. At the same time, the remaining 10 teachers do not see the value of each disabled child significance.

However, only 8 teachers understand the peculiarities of the disabled children development; the ability to analyze the difficulties and problems of such children is demonstrated by only 10 teachers. The ability to design a correctional development environment in an inclusive education is owned only by 2 teachers.

Quantitative data of the control phase of the study are presented in Fig. 1.

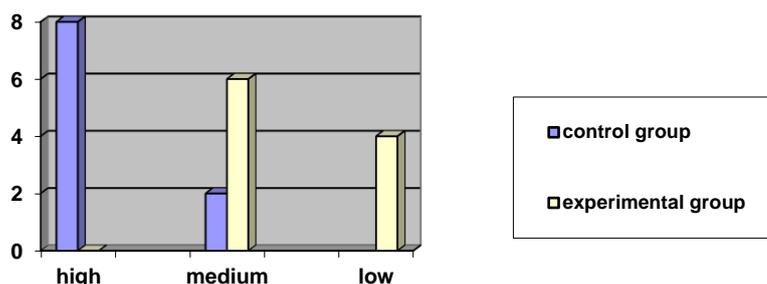


Figure 01. Distribution of respondents according to the level of the primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach development

From the answers of teachers it follows that they do not know how to analyze the context of the difficulties and problems of individual children and groups of children in general. These answers indicate that teachers do not have the skills to adequately assess the situation in an inclusive group, to choose effective ones and to abandon inefficient ways of organizing interaction between the subjects of an inclusive process.

The main argument justifying the insufficiently motivational readiness of respondents to work in an inclusive education is the lack of necessary knowledge about the developmental characteristics of disabled children, their special educational needs and ways to meet these needs using special corrective-pedagogical methods.

In this regard, we have developed and tested at the formative stage of the research a program for developing teachers professional preparedness for an inclusive approach that:

- aimed at the development of primary school teachers professional-psychological preparedness for the cooperative education of children with normal and impaired development;
- provides for the teachers to solve the professional tasks of each stage;
- ensures the development of motivational, cognitive and operational primary school teachers preparedness for inclusive practice.

Primary school teachers' preparedness for an inclusive approach in education was carried out in stages, on the basis of a systematic way of organizing cooperative activities of students (teachers) and a teacher (teacher) through solving professional problems and carried out using humanitarian technologies.

The program of primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach in education includes informative and organizational components.

The organizational component of the program for the primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach in education is presented in a systematic way of organizing cooperative activities of students (teachers) and a teacher (teacher), which makes it possible to successfully form motivational, cognitive and operational readiness for inclusive practice by solving professional tasks. All this is carried out step by step: immersion in activities, problematization, goal-setting and planning, design and implementation of the professional task solution, reflection on the activity performed.

According to Mitchell (2011), an effective means of forming the primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach in education is humanitarian technologies, focused on

the professional and personal development of teachers and aimed at achieving the goal. The use of humanitarian technologies allows us to personalize the training of teachers for work in an inclusive education, to form their value attitude towards children with disabilities.

Selevko (2004) determined the main psychological and pedagogical conditions that are important for the formation of primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach:

- an observance of stepping in the process of preparedness developing;
- an integrative impact on all subjects of the inclusive educational space;
- a creative collaboration in the teacher-child dyad;
- the process of developing the primary school teachers readiness for an inclusive approach will be carried out systematically, consistently and holistically;
- the implementation of the program for the primary school teachers professional preparedness should be preceded by diagnostics in order to identify their professional difficulties;
- the use of a complex methods that contribute to the motivation and value preparedness, professional competence and the readiness of teachers to innovate;
- the training should be continuous and include the whole team of educational organization teachers.

The main directions of our program are the formation of:

- 1) knowledge systems: about the features of the psychophysical development of children with disabilities; about the goal, objectives, content and technologies of inclusive education;
- 2) practical skills aimed at analyzing, designing and constructing an individual trajectory of a child's development included in an inclusive educational environment;
- 3) professionally important qualities aimed at the development of a teacher's subjective position in the field of inclusive education as the main neoplasm in the structure of his professional competence;
- 4) attitudes on the interaction of subjects of inclusive education.

The program included three interrelated stages:

- the first stage - the formation of personal, motivational and emotional-volitional components through psychological and pedagogical training;
- the second stage - the formation of the cognitive component on the basis of the elective course;
- the third stage is the consolidation of practical skills formed at the previous stages.

The elective course included the following topics:

1. Inclusive education as a socio-pedagogical phenomenon.
2. Special educational needs of disabled children.
3. Technologies, methods and forms of inclusive education organization.
4. Methods of developing a tolerant attitude towards children with disabilities.
5. Organization and content of the work of the educational organization interdisciplinary team (the work of the psychological-medical-pedagogical consultation (PMPc)).

In addition to theoretical training at this stage, teachers were taught to interact with various specialists, school teachers, and parents of children with disabilities. Teachers were trained in the elements of remedial work with disabled children. Psycho-prophylactic measures were carried out with teachers to relieve emotional stress, which was held daily or at the request of teachers.

In order to identify the effectiveness of the program developed and implemented by us for the formation of the primary school teachers professional readiness for implementation of an inclusive approach, a repeat control survey of teachers was carried out, involving the use of the same research methods used at the stage of the ascertaining experiment. Comparison of the results of these diagnostic sections allows us to trace the positive dynamics of the primary school teachers' professional readiness for implementation of an inclusive approach in education.

After the formative program, the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the teachers of the control group did not change, while the teachers of the experimental group showed a positive trend: 35% (7 people) of teachers reached the average level of readiness, and three remained at a low level of readiness. All other changes are associated with a change in quantitative indicators up to the upper limit of the same level that was observed by teachers and at the ascertaining stage of the study.

Qualitative analysis allowed to say that the majority of respondents developed tolerance to children with disabilities (18 teachers), understanding and value attitude towards such children and to inclusive education in particular (17 teachers), increased knowledge about the features of the development of children with disabilities (16 teachers). 60% of teachers (11 teachers) began to demonstrate the ability to analyze the difficulties and problems of such children. 50% (10 teachers) have learned the initial skills to design a correctional development environment in the context of inclusive education.

Summarizing the quantitative data obtained in the course of our control study, we can state the following:

- teachers began to understand the need for additional education on the organization of inclusion, clarification of special educational needs and psychological and pedagogical features of the disabled children development;
- the majority of teachers have mastered the skills to use technologies, techniques and methods for the development of children with disabilities in cooperative activities with their normally developing peers;
- teachers learned how to design a correctional and educational process taking into account the psychophysical features of disabled children, but they also noted that this is quite difficult to do without special professional training;
- teachers expressed the need for additional practical experience in the children's team, which implements an inclusive approach in the form of internships.

This level of answers confirms the high potential of teachers to work in an inclusive approach to education and indicates that teachers accept children with disabilities.

Thus, the analysis of the results of our research showed that the program developed and tested by us on the formation of primary school teachers' professional readiness for implementation of an inclusive approach in education has a positive trend, and accordingly it is effective.

Despite the fact that domestic and foreign pedagogy and psychology have accumulated quite extensive experience in studying problems related to the teacher professional preparedness, the problem of developing the primary school teacher's preparedness for an inclusive educational approach remains insufficiently studied and urgently requires profound scientific and practical studying to solve the difficulties during inclusive education in primary school.

In addition, the analysis of the literature on the research problem allowed stating the absence of special studies devoted to the practice-oriented problem of the primary school teachers' professional preparedness for an inclusive approach in the context of real practical pedagogical activity.

It should also be noted that when preparing future teachers-educators for inclusive education in universities, there is either no or the educational base aimed at developing professional preparedness as a significant component of teacher's professional-pedagogical activity with various categories of primary school children.

Therefore, there is a need to develop theoretical, practical and propaedeutic teacher training, focusing on issues of inclusive education.

7. Conclusion

It has been established that the development of the primary school teachers professional preparedness an inclusive approach in education will be carried out successfully if this process is carried out in stages: university preparation, professional development or professional retraining, internships, provided that they are carried out on the basis of systematic way of organizing cooperative activities of students (teachers) and a teacher (educator), by means of professional tasks and carried out using humanitarian technologies. The analysis of pedagogical experience shows that practicing teachers have considerable difficulties in inclusive education for children; therefore, there is a need for propaedeutic theoretical and practical training of a future teacher who is oriented in matters of inclusive education.

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