

# APPROACHES TO THE TRAINING OF SPECIALISTS FOR THE WIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN UKRAINE: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UZHHOROD NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Ivan Myronyuk<sup>1</sup>, Svitlana Stebliuk<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

*Ukraine is confidently joining the European community: a decision was made to grant the country the status of a candidate for EU membership. Today, the legal framework of Ukraine (Laws of Ukraine, orders of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine, Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, orders, letters, concepts, including the Concept of the New Ukrainian School) clearly regulates the implementation of inclusive education.*

*The philosophy of inclusive education acquired a new meaning – medical-psychological-pedagogical. In the field of medicine, the latest data on molecular and molecular-genetic mechanisms of the development of pathological processes and diseases are emerging. In the field of psychology and pedagogy, a strategy for the development of inclusive education on an interdisciplinary basis and a model for the implementation of learning in an inclusive classroom, have been developed. Technologies for teaching children with special educational needs are singled out: health-therapeutic, speech therapy, development of mental processes, correction and optimization of educational activities, correction of behavioral disorders, formation of communication skills. The system of higher education should provide quality training of specialists in inclusive education in new conditions. The Uzhgorod National University in the Transcarpathian region is the only institution that prepares future specialists in special and inclusive education under educational and professional Bachelor and Master programs and constantly implements innovative approaches in training based on non-standard forms of organization of the educational process in both the normative and optional parts of the curriculum process.*

**Key words:** *Ukraine. Inclusive education. Inclusive teaching. Educational institutions. Students. Master's degree. Educational program. Technologies and methods of learning.*

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dr. Ivan Myronyuk, PhD., ДВНЗ «Ужгородський національний університет», ivan.myronyuk@uzhnu.edu.ua, +380506927220

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Svitlana Stebliuk, ДВНЗ «Ужгородський національний університет», svitlana.stebliuk@uzhnu.edu.ua, +380506738940

## **Theoretical and methodological principles of preparation of masters for future professional activity**

In June 2022, the European Council decided to grant Ukraine the status of a candidate country for EU membership. This obliges everyone, including academia, to work together to affirm the foundations of democracy in a peaceful society, the right to life of every person, and the inadmissibility of discrimination on the basis of disability. Ukraine, like other States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, respects and ensures all legal norms «to every child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status» ... «(Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 2. 1).

In the last decade, the national regulatory framework governing the implementation of inclusive education has been strengthened: Laws of Ukraine, Orders of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, orders, letters, concepts. It is about providing children with special educational needs with the possibility of effective access to education services, barrier-free communication, and self-realization in public life. This thesis is formulated in the study of A. Kolupaeva: «The newly created Ukrainian educational regulatory and legal framework provides sufficient opportunities to apply a personality-oriented approach in the educational process, in particular, the Concept of the New Ukrainian School defines this approach as «an educational model, the implementation of which takes into account the abilities, needs and interests of each child to the maximum extent possible and allows to implement the principle of child-centrism in practice» (Kolupaieva A., 2019: 16). a system has been created to provide inclusive educational institutions with conditions for the education, upbringing and development of children with special educational needs (hereinafter referred to as SEN). Due to martial law, on April 26, 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved changes to the procedure for organizing inclusive education in preschool and general secondary education institutions (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Resolution, 2022).

Every child with special needs has not been left out of attention, and a clear link has been established between the inclusive resource centre and all educational institutions. In the field of medicine, the latest data on the molecular and molecular genetic mechanisms of

the development of pathological processes and diseases are emerging (Ataman O., 2018).

Thus, the development of inclusive education in Ukraine is aimed at creating a barrier-free learning environment, ensuring equal access to knowledge for all citizens.

### **Inclusive education in the research of scientists**

Ukrainian scientists and educators (V. Bondar, G. Gladush, E. Danilaviciute, A. Kolupaeva, S. Mironova, V. Sinyov, T. Skrypnyk, N. Pakhomova and others) have developed a strategy for the development of inclusive education on an interdisciplinary basis, models for the implementation of inclusive classroom education. T. Skrypnyk's monograph reveals the connection between diagnostic conclusions and correctional programs; the criteria and indicators of the dynamics of positive transformations in autistic children as a result of the consistent implementation of agreed correctional measures by teachers and parents are determined. It is positive that the issue is also considered from the point of view of medical psychology (Skrypnyk T., 2010). Dissertation research is aimed at studying the organization of correctional work with children (persons) with different nosologies. Some of them are:

Pedagogical conditions for the organization of correctional work with autistic children by L. Rybchenko; Pedagogical support of junior schoolchildren with hearing impairment in inclusive education by O. Fedorenko; Formation of methodological competence of teachers of general secondary education institutions in an inclusive environment by G. Vasilieva. Organizational and pedagogical conditions of integrated support for students with special educational needs in an inclusive educational institution N. Sofia.

The study of scientific works shows that the philosophy of inclusive education in Ukraine has acquired a new content: medical, psychological and pedagogical, which is revealed in the works of a number of scientists, in particular V. Sinyov, Ukrainian scientist in the field of correctional pedagogy, legal and special psychology, academician of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor.

The Model Regulation on the team of psychological and pedagogical support of a child with special educational needs in a general secondary and preschool education institution defines the basic principles, tasks and functions, as well as the procedure for organizing the activities of the team of psychological and pedagogical support of children with special

educational needs who receive education in inclusive education (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Model Regulation on the team of psychological and pedagogical support of a child with special educational needs in a general secondary and preschool education institution, 2018). Permanent participants have been formed with the involvement of medical workers of the educational institution, a child's assistant, specialists of the social protection system, children's services and others. Thus, today requires competent specialists to implement all the tasks. Staffing is on the agenda, which is one of the most important areas of development of modern education.

The purpose of the article is to present the experience of training future specialists in special education at Uzhhorod National University, its contribution to the development of inclusive education in Ukraine. Our attention is focused on the training of masters in this specialty (Educational and professional program «Oligophrenopedagogy. Inclusive Education» of the second (master's) higher education in the specialty 016 Special Education, specialization 016.02 - oligophrenopedagogy.

### **Implementation of innovative approaches in the training of future specialists in special education at SHEI «UzhNU»**

Uzhhorod National University in the Transcarpathian region is the only institution that trains future specialists in special and inclusive education in bachelor's and master's educational and professional programs and constantly introduces innovative approaches in training based on non-standard forms of organization of the educational process in both the normative and variable parts of the educational process.

The uniqueness of the training is that it is carried out by the Department of Physical Rehabilitation of the Faculty of Health and Physical Education, within which unrelated specialties are interconnected and complementary. Medical education, rehabilitation, physical education and sports, clinical psychology and pedagogical problems of teaching, upbringing and development of children with special needs provide a comprehensive, system-forming model of Master's in Special Education.

The educational and professional program of Master of Special Education is aimed at

- formation of integral, general and special components of professional competence in future teachers;
- possession of special knowledge of the chosen specialty;

- development of psychological and pedagogical competence, understanding of the specifics of the activities of the team supporting a child with SEN;
- formation of the personality of the carrier of national culture.

We adhere to the opinion of I. Sadova that «an important aspect in the process of training teachers to work in inclusive conditions is the formation of their professional and value orientations, professional and personal qualities, skills and competencies. Professional and value orientations of a teacher who works with children with special educational needs is a focus on the development of the personality as a whole, and not only on obtaining educational results; awareness of their responsibility for children» (Sadova I., 2015: 313).

The purpose of the Educational and Professional Master's Program is to train competitive specialists in special education in the context of the modern pedagogical paradigm, the formation of professional competence on the basis of a personality-oriented learning model and a multidisciplinary team approach, mastering the methodology of scientific, correctional, pedagogical and rehabilitation activities, the ability to professional self-realization, taking into account universal values and norms of professional ethics (Educational and Professional Program «Oligophrenopedagogy. Inclusive Education» of the second (master's) higher education in specialty 016 Special Education, specialization 016.02, 2022).

Compulsory and elective components are formed in such a way that the graduate of the educational institution is an innovator, citizen-patriot, creative teacher and master of his craft. To this end, teaching methods and techniques are being modernized: along with the traditional ones, innovative types of lectures are being introduced: lecture «together», lecture-debate, lecture with problematic issues, lecture-introduction; in practical classes, «spiral discussion», work in interactive groups, creation of lepbook, mental maps and others, which allowed the student to show their personal qualities, leadership, creativity.

The use of informal and non-formal education within the university, international cooperation, including with the University of Presov, allowed SHEI «UzhNU» to create a pedagogical creative laboratory for the training of future specialists in special education. The medical component should be the basis for professional activity, since «public health and the quality of life of individuals are determined by a complex set of interrelated factors, so the issue of improving the health and well-

being of the population cannot be limited to the health sector alone and requires a multisectoral approach, namely the active participation and involvement of other sectors of society at all stages of the process aimed at maintaining and promoting health» (Slabkyi G, Myroniuk I, Koshelia I, Dudnik S., 2019: 64). Based on the goals and objectives of inclusive education, we have formulated the definition of a «competent specialist in special education», which we interpret as a person educated in various fields of science, who has a set of psychological, pedagogical knowledge, skills, emotional and ethical competence, universal values, is able to work in a team of support for a child, to implement their activities in an inclusive environment.

Our research shows that in the context of European integration, it is this scientific approach that will provide a competitive specialist.

In the process of theoretical and practical training, we paid considerable attention to the technologies of teaching children with special educational needs in general secondary education institutions: therapeutic health, speech therapy, development of mental processes, correction and optimization of learning activities, correction of behavioral disorders, formation of communication skills. Differentiated teaching is being introduced into the practice of work in classes with inclusive education. «Differentiated teaching, according to S. Kolupaieva, is the teacher's acceptance of the diversity and polymorphism of the student population (different levels of basic and current knowledge of students, preparedness, learning interests, different learning styles, etc.

Teachers of the department develop original methods of teaching children with SEN in inclusive classrooms for primary school teachers and assistants. Examples of some of the development of coherent speech.

Imitative and creative. «Exploring ... ». The teacher lays out autumn leaves on the table (or mat). Task for pupils: examine the leaves from different trees along the contour with your fingers. What did you feel? What would you say to a yellow leaf that fell to the ground?

Recommendations: group students into groups so that a child with SEN works together with the class. The teacher's assistant will help her to make a dialogue with the autumn leaf, using the imitation technique.

Constructive. The game «Beads». Pupils are offered colored beads and object drawings. They arrange the beads by associations into pictures, justifying the choice. The work ends with watching a video about the necklace as a talisman for a Ukrainian girl. Recommendations:

the teacher's assistant is a participant of the game (According to S. Stebliuk).

As our research shows, it is extremely important to differentiate teaching methods and techniques in an inclusive classroom. Grouping students into groups enables a child with SEN to feel part of the student community.

### **Practical training of masters of special education**

Updated approach to the structure and content of the types of practices. The educational and professional program «Oligophrenopedagogy. Inclusive Education» has two types: industrial (two-component: in general secondary education institutions with inclusive and special classes, inclusive resource centers) and pedagogical. The choice of a two-component production practice ensured close cooperation between educational institutions and the inclusive resource center, as this issue is still problematic. The Study of the Quality of Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs December 2020 - January 2021, commissioned by the State Education Quality Service of Ukraine within the framework of the Education Quality Assurance System initiative, which is being implemented within the framework of the Support to Ukraine's Government Reforms (SURGe) project, states that «... one of the main needs for the implementation of quality inclusive education in schools is to strengthen coherence between the key stakeholders in this process - RRCs, schools and parents. ... Some RICs have regular contact with individual schools, but there are a number of reasons that prevent closer cooperation with schools» (State Service for Education Quality of Ukraine Canada: 61-62).

Accordingly, this type of practice allows the future specialist to understand the interconnection of educational institutions, which will improve the choice of program for working with a student in an inclusive classroom. We believe that this approach of the scientific and pedagogical staff of the SHEI «UzhNU» is correct and scientifically sound. This is confirmed by the results of the survey of higher education applicants (22 people). To the question «Do the types of practice provide the formation of professional competence?» the respondents answered positively - 100%; «Have you acquired skills in working on various remote platforms in the process of practice?» the answers were distributed as follows: yes - 95%, partially - 5%; «Have you established cooperation as a member of a multidisciplinary team in inclusive classrooms?»: yes - 85%, partially - 15%.

Scientific and practical conferences of various levels, regional seminars, scientific and methodological round tables provide an opportunity to formulate the tasks facing the SHEI «UzhNU» and the scientific elite of the region:

- 1) staffing of preschool and general secondary education institutions with specialists. Statistics show: «In Ukraine, as of January 1, 2021, 25,078 students study in inclusive classes. This number is almost 10 times higher than five years ago. In total, 18,687 inclusive classes have been created in schools. In the 2020-2021 school year, almost 43% of the total number of schools organized inclusive education. That is, almost every second school in Ukraine teaches children with special educational needs» (Study of the quality of inclusive education for children with special educational needs (State Service for Education Quality of Ukraine Canada: 61-62).
- 2) providing higher education institutions with scientific and pedagogical staff who would be able to provide degree education: Bachelor, Master, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Science.
- 3) intensification of educational work aimed at reorienting the consciousness of a separate part of society about the need for inclusive education;
- 4) creation of inclusive employment programs in the production sector.

In the framework of international cooperation:

- 1) improvement of terminology in inclusion: for example, «integration» of a child into the student community or «entry» of a child into the educational space. Summarizing the definition according to different dictionaries, integration is the unification of any separate parts into a whole. We advocate the concept of «entry (inclusion) into the educational space», as each child is unique and inimitable. In addition, the term «inclusion» means the process of active involvement in social relations of all citizens, regardless of physical, intellectual, cultural, linguistic, national and other characteristics. According to the Concept of the New Ukrainian School, a graduate is a personality, a patriot with an active position, who acts in accordance with moral and ethical principles and is able to make responsible decisions, respects dignity and human rights, an innovator, able to change the world around him, develop the economy on the principles of sustainable development, compete in the labor market, and learn



throughout life» (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. New Ukrainian School).

- 2) encouraging domestic and foreign employers to search for talented people with SEN, creating a bank of jobs and offers.
- 3) further cooperation in the development, testing of author's methods in the field of special and inclusive education.

SHEI «UzhNU» has clearly defined its priorities in scientific activities in this area and thanks to joint cooperation with foreign researchers, the results have become tangible. Today, Ukraine defends its independence, while higher education institutions continue research with faith in victory.

## Conclusion

The features of the development of inclusive education in Ukraine are revealed. The experience of training masters of special education at Uzhhorod National University is presented. Attention is focused on innovative teaching methods, examples of some of them are given. The peculiarities of practical training of applicants for higher education at the master's level are revealed.

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