

THE SPECIFIC FEATURES OF DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE COMPETENCIES IN FUTURE PEDAGOGUES

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Abstract: *This scientific thesis analyzes the theoretical and practical foundations of developing inclusive competencies in future pedagogues. During the research, based on international and local scientific sources, the essence of inclusive education, pedagogical competencies, and the mechanisms for their formation were studied. The results indicate that the development of inclusive competencies requires a systematic and comprehensive approach.*

Keywords: *inclusive education, pedagogical competency, children with special needs, differentiated approach, innovative technologies*

Introduction In the modern education system, inclusive education is considered one of the important directions. As noted in the UNESCO (2020) report, “inclusive education is a system aimed at ensuring the right of all learners to quality education.” Therefore, the development of inclusive competencies among pedagogues is one of the most pressing issues today.

Main Part

1. The Content of Inclusive Competency Inclusive competency is interpreted as a set of knowledge, skills, and values possessed by a pedagogue. In the study by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2012), the following definition is provided: “Inclusive competency is the ability to effectively organize pedagogical activities aimed at supporting all learners.” This definition encompasses not only the theoretical knowledge of the pedagogue but also their practical abilities. The research emphasizes four core values of an inclusive pedagogue: valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and personal professional development. These components are interrelated and define the future pedagogue’s ability to create an inclusive environment.

Furthermore, Florian and Rouse (2009) state in their study: “Inclusive education requires pedagogues to develop adapted teaching strategies for all learners.” This demonstrates the practical orientation of the competency. This approach serves as the main tool for forming an individual approach when working with children with special needs among future pedagogues. Inclusive competency requires not only mastering knowledge but also applying it in a real classroom setting. For example, a pedagogue must acquire skills in adapting lesson plans to the learning process of students with special needs, differentiating the assessment system, and ensuring social integration. As Shulman (1987) emphasizes, pedagogical knowledge is not limited to the content of the subject but also includes pedagogical and methodological knowledge. In an inclusive context, these knowledges must be integrated while taking into account the diverse needs of learners. As a result, inclusive competency is interpreted as a central element of the pedagogue’s professional activity and is formed through the integration of theoretical foundations with practical experience (Forlin, 2010).

2. **Specific Features of Developing Inclusive Competencies** The specific features of developing inclusive competencies are described as follows. Each of them serves to elevate the professional training of future pedagogues to a new level.

a) **Complex and Systemic Character** Inclusive competencies consist of several components that are formed in an interrelated manner. Shulman (1987), emphasizing the need to integrate pedagogical knowledge, states that “the teacher’s knowledge is not limited only to the subject matter but also includes pedagogical and methodological knowledge.” This approach is particularly important in inclusive education because the pedagogue must simultaneously address the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of learners. A complex approach must be systematically implemented in pedagogical education programs: for instance, by integrating inclusive modules not separately but with all subjects in universities. As a result, the future pedagogue’s competency is formed not as fragmented elements but as a holistic and interconnected system. This feature enhances the effectiveness of inclusive education by ensuring the synthesis of individual skills rather than their isolation.

b) **Harmony of Theory and Practice** According to Forlin (2010), “practical experience plays a decisive role in preparing pedagogues for inclusive education.” This highlights the necessity of applying theoretical knowledge in real educational processes. The harmony of theory and practice is realized through internships and practical trainings for future pedagogues. For example, the book edited by Forlin emphasizes that innovative approaches in pedagogical programs suggest combining simulations, case studies, and observations in real classroom environments. This harmony provides an opportunity for the pedagogue to test theoretical knowledge when working with children with special needs. Consequently, the future pedagogue not only knows but can also do — this is the core essence of inclusive competency. Insufficient practical experience renders theoretical knowledge ineffective; therefore, it is recommended that the practical component in educational programs should not be less than 50% (Forlin, 2010).

c) **Socio-Emotional Component** In inclusive education, the importance of the social environment is significant. Qualities such as the pedagogue’s empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility must be developed. In the European Agency (2012) study, this component is linked to the core value of “supporting all learners” for inclusive pedagogues. For future pedagogues, socio-emotional preparation is formed through seminars, role-playing games, and interactions with families of children with special needs. This feature helps to view inclusivity not merely as a technical tool but as a culture. As Shulman (1987) notes regarding the social context of pedagogical knowledge, the emotional component is an important condition for applying knowledge.

d) **Differentiated and Individual Approach** In her theory of differentiated instruction, Tomlinson (2014) emphasizes that “every learner requires a unique and adapted approach.” This is one of the fundamental principles of inclusive education. The differentiated approach teaches future pedagogues to adapt teaching materials, tasks, and assessments according to each learner’s level of readiness, interests, and needs. Examples provided in Tomlinson’s book (such as differentiating content, process, and product) can be practically applied in inclusive classrooms. This feature develops the pedagogue’s individualization skills and ensures the integration of children with special needs.

e) **Innovative and Digital Technologies** The UNESCO (2021) report states that “digital technologies are an important tool for expanding inclusive education.” In particular, cross-platform tools are effective in developing pedagogues’ competencies. For future pedagogues,

digital tools (for example, interactive platforms and artificial intelligence-based adaptive programs) provide opportunities to individualize the learning process. Forlin (2010), emphasizing innovative approaches, recommends integrating digital technologies into pedagogical training. This feature becomes an integral part of modern education and elevates inclusive competency to a new level.

3. Factors in Forming Inclusive Competencies The development of inclusive competencies depends on the following factors: • the quality of pedagogical education; • practical trainings and internships; • the use of innovative technologies; • the level of socio-psychological preparation.

As Forlin (2010) emphasizes, “teacher training programs must be adapted to an inclusive approach.” This requires new approaches in the education system. The quality of pedagogical education is enhanced by expanding inclusive modules in university programs. Practical trainings must be conducted in real classrooms. Innovative technologies (UNESCO, 2021) and socio-psychological preparation (European Agency, 2012) factors exert a complex influence together. For instance, Tomlinson (2014) stresses the practical application of differentiated approaches, while Shulman (1987) emphasizes the integration of knowledge. These factors are interconnected and fully form the future pedagogue’s inclusive competency. Studies show that educational programs that do not take these factors into account are ineffective.

Conclusion: The research results indicate that developing inclusive competencies in future pedagogues is a multifaceted and complex process. This process has the following main features: • systematic and complex nature; • harmony of theory and practice; • socio-emotional development; • differentiated approach; • use of innovative technologies.

On this basis, the use of modern methods and cross-platform tools in preparing pedagogues holds significant importance.

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