

Further Teacher Training for Implementing Professional Education of Disabled Students in Conditions of Inclusive Education at Universities: Problems and Solutions

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Abstract

The priority area of modern universities development is inclusive education implementation, which provides disabled students with equal possibilities in getting professional training of high quality. Teacher training for working in inclusive education system is one of the main conditions of the efficiency and success in getting professional education by disabled students. That is why improving high school teachers professional competencies, especially their readiness to implement education of disabled students, is one of the key points of modern inclusive system of higher education. The improvement of further teacher training system demands establishing absolutely new multidisciplinary flexible programmes, designing new format of organizing further teacher training courses. First of all, in a study university teachers were interviewed with the view to identify the main problems they come across while organizing educational process of disabled student professional training within inclusive education system. The results of the interview allowed to form the main request of university teachers to the substantive part of further teacher training courses. Secondly, further high school teacher training programmes aimed at preparing for inclusive education were analyzed. The analysis results demonstrated that these programmes do not fully comply with the key points of teachers' demands. Thirdly, main directions in changing further teacher training system were formulated. Finally, the algorithm for designing educational programme for further high school teacher training aimed at implementing professional teaching in inclusive environment was developed. The programme designed according to this algorithm was implemented in 10 universities in the South of Russia.

Keywords: further teacher training, university inclusive education.

1. Introduction

Disabled school leavers have the right for professional education, which is the essential part of Russian national educational system, including university education. The priority area of modern universities development is inclusive education implementation, which provides disabled students with equal possibilities in getting professional training of high quality. The aim of inclusive education implementation at universities is in providing its availability to disabled students and creating conditions for their successful professional self-determination, adaptation and socializing. Professional training and relevant professional development of university teachers is a milestone in inclusive education development [7]. Therefore, the core condition of efficacy and success in getting professional education by disabled students is the readiness of the teaching staff to exercise their profession in inclusive university education system. That is why improving high school teachers professional competencies, especially their readiness to implement education of disabled students, is one of the key points of modern inclusive system of higher education.

2. Problem Statement

The basis for the teachers' readiness to implement education of disabled students is the high level of inclusive competence, which is the main part of his or her professional competence [6]. It should be mentioned that many scientists both from Russia and other countries are in favour of the idea that modern education of teachers must be supported by competence-based approach as it allows to design teacher training process close to real life conditions [1]. That is why inclusive competence is the main part of instructive set of an effective high school teacher. Considering that, during the implementation of changes in the university education in the direction of inclusion, a teacher becomes a major agent of change. However, a certain part of researchers [3] highlight in their works that a modern teacher implementing education of disabled students face a wide range of professional problems, which forms his or her demands in increasing readiness for inclusive education

implementation. Hence there is a need for the search for the ways and mechanisms of forming and developing inclusive competence of already working university teachers. Further teacher training system has a significant potential for solving the above-mentioned problem.

3. Research Questions

The main focus of the study was on the process of designing further high school teacher training courses in order to form their inclusive competence as a basis for making them ready to implement education of disabled students in conditions of inclusive education at universities. The degree of skill level of a high school teacher's inclusive competence reflects the level of the preparedness for implementing teaching in conditions of inclusive professional education system, providing fulfilling potentials of students with special needs. Accordingly, the structure of a teacher's inclusive competence is a complex of interrelated, complementary components: designing, cognitive, technological, regulative [2]. As the process of forming and developing a teacher's inclusive competence is a constant and continuous process, higher education institutions must pay particular attention to its development with the help of changing the content of methods and technologies of further professional training, corporate education and further training system, in particular.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the research was defining the main problematic issues which high school teachers come across while implementing professional training of disabled students in inclusive environment and also defining key directions of improving further university teacher training for the purpose of forming their inclusive competence and increasing the level of their readiness for inclusive university education implementation.

5. Research Methods

Research among high school teachers to identify main professional problems, which they face while educating disabled students, was undertaken with the help of various qualitative and quantitative methods. The survey was conducted for describing the problems which teachers might have and identifying some cause-and-effect relationships between further teacher training courses quality and the degree of teachers readiness to educate disabled students. In research another method of interviewing was used to talk to teachers, as well as education materials and documents analysis as the source of evidence. Using the above-mentioned methods allowed to investigate teachers major problems, identify further teacher training courses weaknesses and form the ways of further high school teacher training improvement in order to implement disabled students education in inclusive environment.

6. Findings

Findings. In research in 2017 high school teachers were questioned in order to identify main problems they face while organising professional training of disabled students in the context of inclusive education. 264 teachers from 7 universities in the South of Russia (Rostov State Social University, Taganrog Institute n.a. A.P. Chekhov (branch) of Rostov State University of Economics, Armavir State Pedagogical University, South Russia State Polytechnic University, Southern Management Institute, Kalmyck State University, Southern Federal University) who were doing further teacher training course, took part in this survey. Qualitative analysis of the composition of the students in further teacher training courses demonstrated that 90% of them are university teaching staff members. It is connected with the fact that most universities already have overall environment for educating students with special needs, even though teachers are not completely prepared for implementing inclusive education. Survey results analysis allowed to identify two main problems of teachers implementing inclusive education at universities. Firstly, they are problems related to educational materials adaptation for disabled students taking into consideration their mental characteristics and special needs. Secondly, they are problems due to absence of knowledge of world educational technologies in teaching specific academic disciplines and methods of adaptation of educational technologies being in use. Teachers of natural sciences, mathematics and technological subjects had the most serious difficulties in teaching students with visual and hearing disabilities. These problems allowed to form the main request of university teachers to the substantive part of further teacher training courses.

Researchers analysed teacher training programmes at universities aimed at making it ready for implementing inclusive education. The analysis of the substantive part of the further teacher training courses demonstrated that in 80% of cases the participants acquire information about the content and

structure of legal and regulatory framework of inclusive professional education in 3 main directions: public policy in inclusive professional education; legislative framework of professional education for students with special need in Russia and abroad; legal framework for employment of disabled students and their social rights, and also knowledge about organising educational process at university taking into consideration general and specific features of educating students from nosological sectors; about required logistical support of inclusive high education connected with the special equipment usage and solutions for universities physical and educational accessibility. It should be noted that this content is relevant if the university has only started positioning itself as an inclusive institution and training disabled students. The content analysis of further teacher training programme highlighted that in all programmes the content is not differentiated with the consideration of the nature of participants activity. Only in 10% further teacher training programmes the attention is paid to educational technologies recommended for educating students with special needs. Summarizing the analysis results it should be concluded that further teacher training programmes do not completely correspond to the major points of high school teachers requests in further training and level of readiness for implementing inclusive education.

The study allowed to see main directions in changing further high school teachers training system aimed at implementing education of disabled students in inclusive environment. The modernization process is based on guidelines of cluster, resource, differentiation, person and activity, competence approaches. Among main directions for improving further high school teachers training system are changes in the structure of further teachers training courses in the result of enhancing practical training of teachers and acquiring knowledge about educational technologies in teaching disabled students; selecting and organising the content of the teacher training courses taking into account the nature of participants activity, peculiarities in expertise implemented by a certain university, peculiarities of the students studying at university; creating conditions for participants to build an individual educational path in developing inclusive competence; using new forms of conducting lessons in further training and new educational methods too.

7. Conclusion

The authors of the study developed the algorithm for designing educational programme for further high school teacher training aimed at implementing professional teaching in inclusive environment. It consists of three steps: diagnostics, design, organizational and methodological work. Interdisciplinary module programme for further teacher training "Organizational and didactic fundamentals of inclusive education at universities, designed according to this algorithm was implemented at universities. In 2018 459 teachers from ten universities in 3 regions of South Russia took part in implementing further training programmes (Krasnodar region, Rostov region, Kalmyck Republic) Further teacher training process represents a system of interconnected consecutive steps: analytical, shaping, reflexive, which reveal the logic of the process. The content of further training programme has core and elective components, mastering these components will allow participants to improve skill levels in using mechanisms of adapting organizational and methodological and didactic materials of Bachelors and Masters educational programmes taking into consideration disabled students' special needs; skills in designing adapted basic professional educational programmes for disabled students. The implementation results demonstrated the efficiency of using the developed algorithm of designing interdisciplinary module programmes for further high school teacher training for implementing education of disabled students in university inclusive environment, where the structure of the further teacher training courses was divided into two components, which are theory oriented and results based, as a result it allowed to level up high school teachers readiness to implement education of disabled students in inclusive environment.

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