

Forming the Competence of Working in Activity Centres Within the Context of Inclusive Education

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Abstract: This article elucidates the issues surrounding the formation of professional competence for operating within activity centres under inclusive education conditions. In particular, the theoretical and legal foundations of organising the educational process based on the principles of the inclusive approach promoted by UNESCO and UNICEF are thoroughly analysed. The possibilities of implementing differentiated and personalised education are examined through activity centres, taking into account the individual needs, innate abilities, and developmental characteristics of students. Furthermore, the study explores the methodical aspects of developing pedagogical competences in areas such as the effective organisation of activity centres, working with children who possess special educational needs, fostering a collaborative environment, and enhancing reflective approaches. According to the research findings, the targeted and systematic utilisation of activity centres in an inclusive educational environment serves to improve both the quality of education and the level of social adaptation among students.

Keywords: Inclusive education, activity centres, pedagogical competence, professional training, differentiated approach, special educational needs.

Introduction: In the contemporary landscape of global educational reform, the modernisation of the pedagogical system increasingly recognises the development of inclusive education as a fundamental strategic priority. Inclusive education is fundamentally designed to guarantee the equitable and efficient academic participation of all children, specifically ensuring that students with special educational needs (SEN) are integrated into a supportive learning environment [1]. Modern pedagogical paradigms necessitate a transition towards a learner-centred approach, which mandates the meticulous consideration of each student's unique cognitive capabilities, individualised needs, and developmental trajectories [2].

An educational environment structured around activity centres plays a pivotal role in cultivating pupils'

independent critical thinking, practical skill sets, social engagement, and collaborative competences [3]. Particularly within the framework of inclusive education, the systematic and efficient utilisation of activity centres facilitates the implementation of differentiated and individualised instruction, thereby enhancing academic attainment and fostering robust social adaptation [4]. Simultaneously, this methodology demands a high level of professional competence from educators, encompassing the ability to strategically plan activity-based learning, adapt curricular content, and employ efficacious instructional methods tailored for children with diverse learning requirements [5]. The profound relevance of this topic lies in the fact that developing the competence to operate within activity centres in an inclusive setting not only elevates the overall quality of education but also serves as a cornerstone for the holistic personal development of

every learner. Consequently, the primary objective of this article is to analyse the theoretical foundations and practical mechanisms involved in forming the professional competence required to manage activity centres within the inclusive education paradigm.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The challenges and dimensions of inclusive education have been extensively investigated on an international scale over recent decades, with its theoretical and methodological frameworks established by numerous prestigious organisations and eminent scholars. Specifically, conceptual documents adopted by UNESCO underscore the imperative of creating equitable educational opportunities for all children, eliminating systemic discrimination, and establishing adapted learning environments [6]. Furthermore, UNICEF places significant emphasis on the protection of children's rights and the development of robust mechanisms to support students with special educational needs, interpreting inclusive education as a system inherently rooted in the principles of humanism and social equity [7].

The psychological underpinnings of inclusive education have been explored by a multitude of researchers. Notably, L. S. Vygotsky's socio-cultural development theory and his seminal concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" provide a scientific justification for identifying a student's individual potential and delivering calibrated pedagogical support [8]. This approach establishes the scientific bedrock for organising differentiated and individualised instruction within inclusive settings. Moreover, the ideology of activity-oriented education finds its expression in John Dewey's pragmatic pedagogy, which posits that the educational process should be structured through the prism of students' practical activities [9]. This perspective validates the establishment of activity centres, the positioning of the student as an active subject of learning, and the principles of collaborative instruction.

In contemporary academic discourse, the professional competence of the teacher is recognised as the decisive factor in enhancing the effectiveness of inclusive education. Mel Ainscow emphasises that "the development of an inclusive school culture depends significantly on the reflective practices of educators and

their commitment to collaborative approaches" [10]. Similarly, the "Index for Inclusion" model developed by Tony Booth provides comprehensive criteria for making school environments more inclusive and offers practical recommendations for curricular adaptation.

Local pedagogical research in Uzbekistan has also focused on the evolution of inclusive education, methodologies for working with children with special needs, and the implementation of adaptive teaching techniques. Furthermore, the regulatory and legal frameworks of the Republic of Uzbekistan explicitly highlight the necessity for the phased implementation of inclusive education and the continuous professional development of pedagogical staff. Education organised through activity centres has also been extensively studied within the framework of the constructivist approach, which asserts that knowledge is actively constructed through the learner's engagement. Thus, activity centres provide an optimal environment for independent study, small-group collaboration, and the execution of differentiated tasks. Research indicates that such an approach significantly augments cognitive activity, improves social integration, and yields positive impacts on academic performance indicators in inclusive classrooms. Ultimately, the reviewed scientific literature confirms that forming the competence to operate activity centres is both theoretically sound and practically essential for the advancement of inclusive education.

METHODOLOGY

To investigate the process of forming professional competence for operating within activity centres in preschool educational organisations under inclusive education conditions, a comprehensive methodological system based on an integrated approach was developed for this study. The theoretical framework of the research is constituted by regulatory and legal documents governing preschool education, state programmes, and the scholarly perspectives of leading pedagogical scientists. Specifically, the principles of learner-centred, competence-based, and developmental approaches defined in the "Ilk Qadam" (First Step) state curriculum were adopted as the fundamental methodological bedrock. Throughout the research, systematic, competence-oriented, person-centred, and inclusive approaches were applied in a harmonised manner.

Through the systematic approach, activity centres were examined as a cohesive pedagogical process; that is, their objectives, content, methods, and anticipated outcomes were analysed in their mutual interconnection. Based on the competence-oriented approach, the process of forming the knowledge, skills, and professional abilities of educators regarding work in activity centres was rigorously assessed. The person-centred approach facilitated the organisation of the educational process by taking into account the unique individual developmental characteristics of each child. Within the framework of the inclusive approach, the primary criteria were established as creating an equitable and accessible learning environment for all children, developing differentiated assignments, and utilising adapted instructional methodologies.

In the empirical phase, a diverse array of methods was employed, including pedagogical observation, interviews, questionnaires, analysis of activity outcomes, and experimental pilot work. During the observation process, the organisation of activity centres in inclusive groups, the degree of children's participation, their mutual communication, and their independent activities were meticulously studied. Through interviews and questionnaires, the attitudes of educators towards inclusive education, their methodological preparedness, and the prevailing challenges they encounter were clarified. During the experimental trials, activity centres were reconfigured in an adapted manner, sessions were conducted using differentiated approaches and visual aids, and the subsequent results were subjected to comparative analysis.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were applied to process the gathered data. Indicators of children's development, social engagement, and changes in speech and cognitive processes were evaluated based on established pedagogical diagnostic criteria. The findings were compared with initial and final indicators, identifying positive dynamic shifts.

From a methodological standpoint, the research process was organised in sequential stages:

- Initially, a comprehensive analysis of theoretical sources and literature was conducted;
- Subsequently, practical observations and experimental pilot activities were carried out;

- Finally, the obtained results were synthesised to derive scientific conclusions.

This methodological framework enabled a multifaceted exploration of the process of forming the competence to work in activity centres within an inclusive education environment and provided a robust justification for its overall efficacy. This research, aimed at a profound examination of the theoretical and practical facets of competence formation, relied on the seamless integration of pedagogy, psychology, and inclusive education theories.

Methodological Foundations of the Research

The method of theoretical analysis and synthesis.

Through the application of this method, an extensive review was conducted of scientific literature, regulatory and legal documents, and advanced pedagogical practices pertaining to inclusive education, activity centres, and professional pedagogical competence. During the analytical process, the fundamental essence, constituent elements, and mutual interconnections of these core concepts were rigorously clarified. Furthermore, through the process of synthesis, a comprehensive structural model of the competence required for operating within activity centres was successfully developed.

The method of pedagogical observation. The observation method facilitated the direct examination of the organisation of activity centres within inclusive classrooms, the active participation of students, and the methodological activities of educators under authentic, real-world conditions. During the observation process, particular attention was devoted to the following key aspects:

- The equipping and structural adaptation of the designated activity centres;
- The availability and systematic utilisation of differentiated learning assignments;
- The level of active engagement and inclusion of students presenting with special educational needs;
- The collaborative dynamics and interactive environment established between the educator and the student;
- The execution of the observation process itself in a systematic and purposeful manner, strictly based on pre-established diagnostic criteria.

The questionnaire method. A comprehensive questionnaire was administered with the primary objective of determining the level of preparedness among educators for operating within activity centres under inclusive education conditions. The structured questions were specifically designed to assess the educators' theoretical knowledge base, their practical skills, the professional challenges they frequently encounter, and their ongoing methodological needs. The obtained empirical results were subsequently subjected to rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The interview method. Semi-structured interviews were systematically organised with the participating educators in both individual and group formats. This qualitative method provided a valuable opportunity to delve more deeply into the educators' personal experiences, professional perspectives, and practical suggestions. During the course of these interviews, profound discussions were held regarding the inherent difficulties of working in an inclusive environment, the prevalent challenges associated with organising activity centres, and viable strategic solutions to overcome these identified obstacles.

Diagnostic methods. The diagnostic procedures were explicitly aimed at identifying and evaluating the following core components of professional pedagogical competence:

- The motivational component (indicating a positive, empathetic, and proactive attitude towards inclusive education);
- The cognitive component (reflecting the depth, breadth, and accuracy of theoretical knowledge);
- The practical component (demonstrating the applied skill and proficiency in effectively organising activity centres);
- The reflective component (encompassing the critical ability to continuously analyse and evaluate one's own professional pedagogical activities).

Based on these specially developed criteria and measurable indicators, the low, intermediate, and high levels of professional competence were systematically defined and categorised.

The experimental-testing method. The experimental pilot activities possessed a fundamentally formative

character, wherein the newly developed methodological recommendations were practically implemented into the daily educational process. To comprehensively support this implementation, specialised training seminars, practical workshops, and detailed methodological guidelines were organised for the participating educators. At the conclusion of the experimental phase, the final obtained outcomes were meticulously compared with the initial baseline indicators, allowing for the precise determination of the developmental dynamics and positive shifts.

The mathematical and statistical analysis method. The raw data collected throughout the duration of the research were rigorously analysed using established methods of statistical data processing. The overall efficacy of the pedagogical experiment was carefully evaluated through the calculation of percentage indicators, comparative assessments, the determination of mean values, and the juxtaposition of the results' developmental dynamics over time. This robust mathematical method ensured the strict scientific validity, objectivity, and ultimate reliability of the research conclusions.

The harmonious and integrated application of the methodologies outlined above facilitated a comprehensive, multifaceted, and profound investigation into the intricate process of forming the professional competence necessary for operating within activity centres in an inclusive educational setting.

Furthermore, the research framework was underpinned by the following foundational approaches:

- The person-centred approach – organising the educational process by rigorously taking into account the unique individual needs, innate abilities, and distinct developmental characteristics of each specific student;
- The competence-based approach – focusing on the systematic formation of the essential professional knowledge, practical skills, and specialised abilities required for educators to operate effectively and confidently within an inclusive pedagogical environment;
- The systemic-activity approach – strategically planning activity centres as an integral, core component of the broader educational process and conceptualising

them as a cohesive system of mutually interconnected educational elements;

– The differentiated and adaptive approach – systematically applying highly tailored assignments, customised instructional methods, and adapted pedagogical materials specifically designed for students with special educational needs.

Additionally, to ensure a holistic learning environment, the following specialised domains were established within the activity centres: a cognitive-activity centre, a creative centre, a communicative centre, and a practical-skills centre. Each individual centre was comprehensively supplied with adapted assignments and varied resources tailored to the specific interests, aptitudes, and evolving capabilities of the students.

Ultimately, the logical consistency of the methodological approach, the harmonious integration of the applied research methods, and the empirical results derived from the experimental pilot activities collectively demonstrated the substantial potential for effectively forming and permanently enhancing the competence to work within activity centres under the modern conditions of inclusive education.

RESULTS

The issue of forming the professional competence to work within activity centres in preschool educational organisations under inclusive education conditions is considered one of the priority directions in modern pedagogy. The conducted theoretical and practical analyses have demonstrated that the effective implementation of the inclusive approach primarily necessitates adapting the educational process to the individual needs, developmental level, and psychological characteristics of each child. In this process, the "Ilk qadam" (First Step) state curriculum, which serves as the principal methodological document of the preschool education system, provides an essential theoretical and practical foundation. The core principles established in the curriculum—such as the learner-centred approach, differentiated instruction, the creation of a stimulating developmental environment, and the maintenance of individual developmental maps for children—acquire particular significance during the strategic organisation of activity centres in inclusive groups.

During the course of the research, it was determined

that activity centres—specifically construction and mathematics, language and speech, art, role-play, as well as science and nature centres—constitute a highly effective pedagogical mechanism that ensures the comprehensive development of children within an inclusive environment. Through these designated centres, children are afforded the opportunity to engage in independent activities, make autonomous choices, conduct empirical experiments, communicate, and work collaboratively. For children with special educational needs, in particular, activity centres create a highly flexible and accessible learning environment. The utilisation of object-practical activities, visual aids, sensory materials, and explicitly differentiated assignments substantially facilitates the children's knowledge acquisition process and elevates their active participation in the educational continuum.

The rigorous analysis of theoretical sources, including the scientific perspectives of Sh.A. Sodiqova, indicated that competences in preschool-aged children are predominantly and effectively formed during the processes of play and practical activities. Consequently, under inclusive education conditions, role-playing games and creative activities successfully mitigate social barriers among children and engender an authentic atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. The research findings definitively demonstrated that when activity centres are correctly organised, the levels of self-confidence, independence, and social engagement notably increase in children with special needs; simultaneously, vital socio-emotional skills such as tolerance, empathy, and the willingness to assist others are cultivated in their neurotypical peers.

Furthermore, it was observed that the systematic utilisation of activity centres within an inclusive setting exerts a profoundly positive influence on children's speech development, logical reasoning, creative imagination, and socio-emotional stability. While spatial awareness and problem-solving skills were robustly developed in the construction and mathematics centre, vocabulary richness and the culture of communication increased significantly in the language and speech centre. Art and creative activities served to empower children to express themselves freely, whereas observational skills and the cognitive capacity to comprehend cause-and-effect relationships were distinctly strengthened in the science and nature

centre.

Overall, the conducted analyses demonstrated that the pedagogically correct planning and methodical adaptation of activity centres under inclusive education conditions guarantee the holistic development of all children. In this multifaceted process, the professional competence of the educator emerged as the decisive factor; it was determined that the teacher must possess not only profound methodological knowledge but also a solid grounding in the fundamentals of special pedagogy, advanced communicative proficiency, and a highly reflective approach. As a result, it was scientifically substantiated that inclusive activity centres serve to elevate the overall quality of preschool education, enhance children's psychological readiness for primary school, and foster a broader societal atmosphere of social equity and tolerance.

In this research, the critical issue of forming the professional competence to operate within activity centres in preschool educational organisations under inclusive education conditions was analysed deeply from both theoretical and practical standpoints. The methodological foundation of the study was constituted by the "Ilk qadam" state curriculum, authoritative textbooks on preschool pedagogy, and the scholarly perspectives articulated by Sh.A. Sodiqova.

The overarching concept of inclusive education is to guarantee the fundamental right of every child to receive an equitable education, regardless of their physical, cognitive, psychological, or social characteristics. The preschool age period is universally recognised as the most sensitive and crucial stage of personal development; it is precisely during this developmental phase that the correct establishment of an inclusive environment creates a robust, permanent foundation for the children's future social adaptation and successful academic trajectory.

The pedagogical objective of inclusive education revealed that, in stark contrast to basic integration, inclusive pedagogy does not imply forcing the child to adapt to the existing rigid system, but rather necessitates structurally adapting the educational system to meet the unique requirements of the child.

Within the "Ilk qadam" curriculum, foundational principles such as the learner-centred approach, differentiated instruction, individual developmental

maps, and the creation of a developmental environment form the core methodological basis of inclusive education. The curriculum identifies the creation of optimal conditions for every child to develop within the scope of their own capabilities, to experience genuine success, and to become socially active as a primary, overriding task.

Sodiqova's scientific views explicitly emphasise that the holistic development of preschool-aged children occurs most effectively during the interconnected processes of play, communication, and practical activities. This paradigm is exceptionally vital in inclusive groups, as play and joint collaborative activities systematically dismantle psychological barriers between children.

Effectively organising activity centres in preschool educational organisations under inclusive education conditions and cultivating necessary competences in children through these interactive environments currently stand as one of the most pressing pedagogical tasks. The comprehensive analyses conducted have shown that the inclusive approach strictly mandates the organisation of the educational process by meticulously taking into account the individual characteristics, latent abilities, and specific needs of preschool-aged children. This targeted approach, in turn, serves to substantially elevate the overall quality of education and fully realise every child's innate developmental potential.

Throughout the course of the research, it was determined that the "Ilk qadam" state curriculum serves as a remarkably robust methodological foundation for the practical implementation of inclusive education. The curriculum enshrines critical principles—such as the learner-centred approach, differentiated instruction, the establishment of a stimulating developmental environment, and the maintenance of individual developmental maps—all of which possess paramount importance in the strategic organisation of modern activity centres.

Furthermore, as articulated by Sh.A. Sodiqova: "Her scientific views pertaining to preschool pedagogy theoretically substantiate the immense effectiveness of teaching and upbringing through active engagement. In her professional opinion, knowledge, skills, and practical abilities in preschool-aged children are effectively formed precisely during the continuous process of play and practical activity" [8; 33]. This

specific conceptual approach is uniquely crucial within inclusive groups, as it significantly fortifies the children's social adaptation and bolsters mutual collaboration.

It was definitively established that activity centres (specifically: construction and mathematics, language and speech, art, role-play, as well as science and nature) perform the following critical functions within an inclusive educational environment:

- They consistently support the individual developmental pace and unique learning trajectory of each child;
- They cultivate an authentic, nurturing atmosphere of social integration and equitable participation;
- They actively stimulate independent critical thinking and dynamic creative expression;
- They rigorously form and refine essential interpersonal communication and collaborative teamwork skills;
- They ensure comprehensive psychological and intellectual preparation for the transition to primary schooling.

The analytical results conclusively demonstrated that adapting activity centres within an inclusive educational setting (through the strategic use of visual aids, differentiated assignments, small group interactions, and highly individualised approaches) dramatically increases the children's active participation in the educational process. Consequently, profound self-confidence, autonomy, and social proactivity are robustly developed in children with special educational needs. Concurrently, vital interpersonal skills encompassing tolerance, empathy, and collaborative engagement are firmly established in their neurotypical peers.

Simultaneously, successfully operating within activity centres under the complex, dynamic conditions of inclusive education demands an exceptionally high level of professional competence from the educator. The modern pedagogue must unequivocally possess not only profound methodological and subject-specific knowledge but also a comprehensive understanding of the foundational principles of special pedagogy, advanced communicative mastery, and a consistently reflective approach to their ongoing professional practice.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the effective organisation of activity centres under inclusive education conditions serves to systematically enhance quality indicators within the preschool education system, ensure the comprehensive, multifaceted development of children, and cultivate an enduring atmosphere of social justice and tolerance within broader society. Therefore, it is imperative to systematically develop the inclusive approach starting directly from the preschool stage and to continuously, rigorously advance the professional competences of educators working in this vital direction.

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