



DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SETTINGS

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Annotation: This article examines the development of teachers' professional competence in the context of inclusive education. The expansion of inclusive education policies and the integration of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools require educators to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches and specialized competencies. The study analyzes both Uzbekistans' and international experiences, highlighting the importance of individualized instruction, psychological readiness, methodological support, and professional training programs. Based on recent research findings, the paper concludes that continuous professional development of teachers is a key factor in enhancing the effectiveness, quality, and inclusiveness of the educational process.

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada inklyuziv ta'lim sharoitida o'qituvchilarning kasbiy kompetensiyasini rivojlantirish masalasi ilmiy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Inklyuziv ta'lim siyosatining kengayishi va maxsus ta'lim ehtiyojlariga ega bo'lgan bolalarning umumta'lim muassasalariga integratsiyasi pedagoglardan innovatsion yondashuv hamda maxsus kasbiy kompetensiyalarni talab etmoqda. Maqolada O'zbekiston va xorijiy tajribalar asosida individual ta'lim strategiyalari, psixologik tayyorgarlik, metodik ta'minot hamda malaka oshirish dasturlarining ahamiyati yoritiladi. Ilmiy tadqiqotlar natijalari asosida pedagoglarning uzluksiz kasbiy rivoji inkluziv ta'lim samaradorligini oshirishning muhim omili ekanligi asoslab beriladi.

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются вопросы развития профессиональных компетенций педагогов в условиях инклюзивного образования. Расширение политики инклюзии и интеграция детей с особыми образовательными потребностями в общеобразовательные учреждения требуют от учителей внедрения инновационных педагогических подходов и формирования специальных профессиональных компетенций. В работе проанализирован опыт узбекистана и зарубежных стран с акцентом на индивидуализацию обучения, психологическую готовность, методическое обеспечение и программы повышения квалификации. На основе научных исследований обоснована ключевая роль непрерывного профессионального развития педагогов в повышении качества и эффективности инклюзивного образования.

Key words: Inclusive education, teachers' professional competence, students with special educational needs, individualized approach, pedagogical training.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a form of education aimed at ensuring equal learning opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities or other special conditions.



Within inclusive education the school and classroom are reorganized by taking into account students' individual needs, abilities, and differences.

In recent years, attention to inclusive education has increased in the Republic of Uzbekistan. For example, as of 2022, it was identified that 92,067 children aged 0-16 with disabilities require inclusive education in Uzbekistan, representing a 15.7% increase compared to 2013. Therefore, the introduction of new pedagogical approaches, improvement of teachers' qualifications, and adaptation of advanced international practices in inclusive education have become urgent tasks.

Main part

New approaches in Inclusive Education Methodology

Recent studies indicate that innovative pedagogical approaches contribute significantly to improving the quality of inclusive education. In particular, digital learning platforms, adapted curricula, and interactive teaching methods increase students' engagement in lessons and facilitate knowledge acquisition. The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) play an important role in planning inclusive instructional materials. Through UDL principles, lesson content is designed to provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. Such an approach reduces barriers in the learning process and facilitates the implementation of differentiated instruction.

Digital platforms and interactive technologies. The use of modern information and communication technologies (multimedia tools, educational portals, virtual classrooms) enhances students' interest in lessons and promotes learning in an equitable environment.

Adapted curricula. Conducting lessons based on individualized educational plans for students with special needs ensures an approach that takes into account their specific characteristics.

Differentiated approach. Differentiating teaching methods and assignments according to students' levels allows teachers to provide appropriate support to each learner based on their abilities.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Based on UDL principles, educational design incorporates various pathways that are accessible to all learners. For each lesson topic, multiple forms of content presentation, assignment options, and assessment methods are developed.

Teacher Preparation, Training, and Motivation

The success of inclusive education largely depends on teachers' professional qualifications. International research shows that teacher candidates must possess in-depth theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to inclusion.

For example, as demonstrated by the experience of Israel, it is essential to organize training programs that integrate theory and practice. Analyses emphasize that teachers' experience and competence in inclusive environments contribute to the development of respectful and tolerant attitudes toward diversity.

At the same time, increasing teachers' motivation and providing incentives are equally important. For instance, the Government of Uzbekistan plans to introduce a certification system for special educators working in inclusive classrooms starting from 2027.



Practical and theoretical preparation.

It is necessary to revise teacher education programs in the field of inclusion, introduce additional seminars into coursework, and implement mandatory professional development courses.

Mentorship and Collaboration

New teachers should be encouraged to work collaboratively with experienced educators through mentorship programs. Organizing seminars, workshop-based seminars, and research activities promotes the exchange of knowledge and professional experience.

Professional development of teachers. Within the framework of state programs, it is necessary to organize additional training courses for special educators, encourage volunteer initiatives, and introduce incentive and reward systems.

International Experience

Globally, several advanced practices in inclusive education have been studied and implemented. For example, in 2018, Israel revised its Special Education Law and expanded inclusive education to all classes. Currently, every general education teacher is responsible for teaching students with special educational needs, while special educators participate primarily in a supportive role.

In Finland's education system, inclusiveness is deeply embedded in school culture. Finnish teachers are required to hold a master's degree, and their professional development programs are research-based. This enables teachers to continuously update their knowledge and implement innovative teaching methods in practice.

In addition, the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles is becoming increasingly widespread worldwide. UDL ensures inclusiveness by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and assessment. According to the recommendations of UNESCO and the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE), inclusive teaching methods should not be treated as a separate subject in teacher education programs but should instead be integrated as an essential component of overall professional preparation.

UDL approaches: Pre-adapting educational materials and assignments to meet the needs of learners at different levels; applying feedback and reflective assessment systems for both teachers and students.

Israel's experience: The expansion of inclusive legislation and training programs, along with continuous methodological support for teachers.

Finland's experience: All general education teachers hold a master's degree and regularly update their professional expertise.

UNESCO reports: International recommendations emphasize that countries incorporating inclusiveness into educational legislation must pay special attention to preparing teachers for inclusive practice.

Legislative Framework and Practical Initiatives in the Context of Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, significant steps have also been taken to establish a legal framework and implement inclusive education in practice. Article 20 of the Law "On Education"



defines the fundamental principles of inclusive education, stating that inclusive education aims to ensure equal learning opportunities in general education institutions while taking into account the diversity of students' individual capabilities.

Furthermore, in accordance with resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, inclusive classrooms have been established in schools since 2021.

According to a recently announced government resolution, a Multifunctional Inclusive Resource Center under the Social Protection Agency system is planned to be established in Tashkent, along with similar institutions in other regions. Starting from the 2026/2027 academic year, an inclusive-correctional school will operate within this center on a pilot basis. The program will include adaptation of primary school students and the organization of special corrective and supplementary classes within inclusive classrooms.

From January 1, 2027, a professional certification system will be introduced to assess the knowledge and competencies of special educators working at the center. Beginning with the 2027/2028 academic year, inclusive schools will be gradually established across different regions of the country.

A Significant Initiative in Higher Education

A noteworthy initiative is the establishment of scientific and practical laboratories on inclusive education within higher education institutions. For example, at the Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature, the "Inclusive Education" Scientific-Practical Laboratory and the "Sign Language Interpretation" Laboratory are actively operating.

Within these laboratories, research is conducted using modern technologies to develop educational products for individuals with special needs and to identify effective teaching methods. In addition, Japanese scholars visiting Uzbekistan have shared their experience in organizing inclusive education, contributing to the exchange of international best practices.

Indicators

Indicator

Quantity

Children aged 0–16 with special educational needs 2022

General education schools implementing inclusive education

2022–2023

Students with special educational needs enrolled in inclusive education 2022–2023

Conclusion

The studies and experiences discussed above demonstrate that pedagogical innovations and well-qualified teachers significantly enhance the quality of inclusive education. Through digital platforms, adapted curricula, and interactive teaching methods, it is essential to comprehensively support the learning process and design instructional materials that take into account each child's abilities.

At the same time, it is crucial to prepare teachers specifically for inclusive environments, ensure their continuous professional development, and provide motivation through state-supported programs. Based on international experience—particularly from



Israel, Finland, and the recommendations of UNESCO—improving both the theoretical and practical preparation of teachers is the key to expanding inclusive education.

In the context of Uzbekistan, legislative frameworks and practical initiatives actively support the development of inclusive education. However, strengthening teachers' professional competence remains a priority. By widely implementing innovative approaches and advanced practices, it is possible to further improve the inclusive education system and ensure the social integration of children with special needs.

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