

Model of Formation for Readiness to Work within Inclusive Education in Teachers

Zulfiya A. Movkebayeva^a, Indira A. Oralkanova^b, Bagdat M. Mazhinov^a, Aitolkyn B. Beisenova^a, Oksana G. Belenko^b

^aAbai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, KAZAKHSTAN;

^bShakarim State University of Semey, Semey, KAZAKHSTAN

ABSTRACT

The whole civilized world commonly practices including of all the children into educational system regardless on their abilities or cultural and social status. In this context there is a topical issue of creation of a social environment within an educational institution that shall allow a child to fulfil him/herself, to feel inner connection with the world around, to realise his/her importance for the world. The objective of this research is to model the process of formation of readiness in teachers of elementary school to work within inclusive education. The article describes basic parameters of professional and physiologic readiness of elementary school teachers to inclusion of a child with special educational needs into educational process: new conception thinking, ability to realise personal and social value of work with children with special educational needs, readiness to continuous learning and self-development. In order to create effective ways of training teachers to work within inclusive education the methods of theoretical analysis and synthesis were used. The results of the study might be used in preparation of teachers to work in inclusive schools is a complex and systematic work, including professional selection of applicants to the pedagogical specialty and the inclusion of psychological and pedagogical disciplines with information about inclusive education.

KEYWORDS

Inclusive education, physiologic readiness, elementary school teacher, formation of readiness in teachers, model.

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Introduction

An idea of including of all the children into educational system regardless on their abilities, cultural and social status spreads over more and more countries of the global society. It conditioned a need for establishment of such environment within educational institution which can allow a child with special educational needs to fully realise him/herself, to feel inner connection with the world around, to realise his/her importance for the world. According to many scholars (Forlin and Chambers, 2011; Cagran and Schmidt, 2011; Galkienė, 2003; Alyokhina, 2012; Shumilovskaya, 2011), the key role in establishment of this environment belongs to the teacher. Thereafter, one of the main tasks of modernisation of national education and bringing it into accordance with international requirements is the formation of readiness to work within inclusive education in staff. It primarily refers to training of elementary school teachers, as it is in elementary-school age when comprehensive development of child's abilities is introduced, when a child develops

CORRESPONDENCE Zulfiya A. Movkebayeva ✉ zmovkebaewa@mail.ru

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skills needed for learning activity as well as culture of communication and behaviour. Ability of pupils to accept own 'otherness', difference from other children, ability to understand, support and help each other greatly depends on their elementary school teacher. It should be noted that training of modern teacher, capable of implementation of inclusive education, is a vital and challenging task for high school of education. What is meant here is content-visionary, moral, spiritual and professional training of a teacher, capable to independently, creatively and appropriately choose and implement techniques for work with a particular group of learners (for example, children with limited physical and intellectual abilities, children of different social groups, children living in a village/city etc.).

Even though teachers' readiness for implementation of inclusive education is regarded in psychological and pedagogical studies as a major factor of its success, currently there is no definite approach to formation of needed expertise in teachers. In this research we attempted to close this gap.

The objective of research assumes modelling of the process of formation of readiness in elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education. Research tasks are following: 1. To allocate methodological basis of formation of readiness in elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education; 2. To define the notion of "readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education"; 3. To develop a structural and conceptual model of formation of readiness in elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education; 4. To define basic components, parameters, criteria and levels of formation of readiness in elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education.

Methodological Framework

Each research resulting in change of conventional rules, has certain methodological basis. Our research, aimed at formation of readiness in elementary school teachers, is not an exception. Among such researches we can name: activity theory (Vygotsky, 1982; Galperin, 1999; Leontiev, 1977; Rubinstein, 1997), motivation theory of A. Maslow (Maslow, 1970), culturological approach (Bondarevskaya, 1997; Gazman, 1995; Likhachov, 1997; Shchurkova, 1998), deontological approach (Kertaeva, 2002), acmeological approach (Bodalev, 1995; Derkach, 2004), competency building approach (Zimnyaya, 2004; Ivanov, 2007), axiological approach (Bim-Bad, 1998; Nikandrov, 2004; Slastenin, 2000; Shchedrovitskiy, 1996), andragogical approach (Kolesnikova, 2007; Zmeev, 2007), system and complex approaches. Analysis and grounding of methodological basis of formation of readiness in elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education reveal the need for complex training of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education. In this regard, we define readiness in elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education as existence of complex of harmonically interacting and mutually reinforcing psychological and professional qualities, which allow to carry out teaching activity at a high motivational and value level, as well as to organise education/bringing-up process in elementary school taking into account requirements of inclusive education.

Psychological readiness as personal qualities of a teacher, and professional as a set of didactical knowledge and methodical skills of an elementary school teacher. In order to reach readiness of teachers to work within inclusive education and to create step solution of formation of this readiness, we have developed a structural and conceptual model (Figure 1).

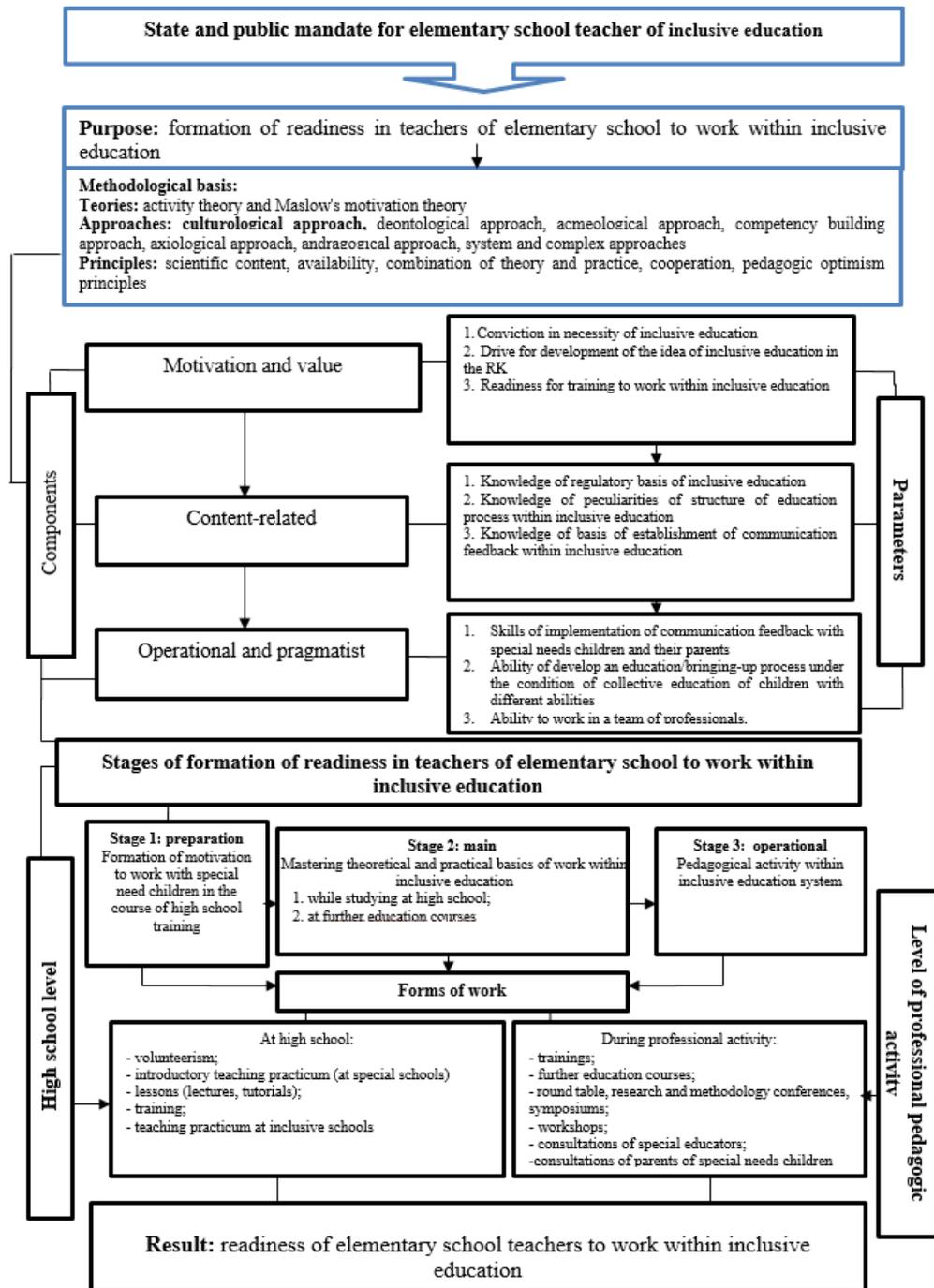


Figure 1. Model of formation of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education

As a foundation for this model we chose social and state mandate for elementary school teachers, ready to work within inclusive education. In its turn this determined necessity for following objective – formation of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education.

To unravel the process of readiness we defined 3 components of formation model: motivation and value, content-related, operational and pragmatist. Motivation and value component directly reflects a professional mind-set of a teacher (logical behaviour against the subjects of inclusive education), their readiness to manifestation of positive qualities. Taking into account the fact that a motive incites the action, we suppose that the level of teacher's motivation at work within inclusive education has great influence on efficiency of his/her work. We think that the main condition for effective performance of inclusive education is recognition of children as a value regardless on their physical and other capabilities. Only having acknowledged inclusive education as a value, a teacher is ready for self-development within inclusive education. This promotes an attitude that a teacher is a member of humane democratic society, where every person is valued – and this attitude should be manifested through the work. Only under the condition of continuous evolution of the parameters under study we can count on formation of motivational and value component, i.e. readiness of a teacher to work within inclusive education.

Thus, an indicator of well-formedness of motivation-value complex in teachers for work within inclusive education may be following: acceptance of the idea of inclusive education as a value; acknowledgment of equal rights of children with special educational needs and acceptance of children as a value; readiness for continuous education and self-development within inclusive education. At this the main component of well-formedness should be value-conceptual content – that is 'a pupil as value' and 'posted' tolerance, i.e. 'I accept otherness as a norm'.

Results and Discussion

For effective realisation of inclusive education of utmost importance is content-related component of readiness of teacher for work within inclusive education, which is reflected in our structural and conceptual model. Recognizing children with special educational needs as a value, a teacher should realise his/her need in continuous perfection of professional skills in order to be successful in inclusive education. Particularly he/she should know normative framework of inclusion of children with special educational needs into education/bringing-up process at comprehensive institutions, requirements to physical access of children with special educational needs, peculiarities of lesson structure within inclusive education etc.

We distinguish operational and pragmatist into a separate part, as it reflects practical skills of a teacher in educational work with special needs children. Its parameters are skills of efficient communication with children with special educational needs and their parents, of creation of education/bringing-up process within collective education of children with different abilities, of work in team etc. At this the most important requirement to an elementary school teacher within inclusive education is commitment to progress of each student regardless of his abilities and individualities, and not to the result of learning or meeting the requirements of state educational standards. It is also important that the teacher in his work switched from a dominant position to recognition of a lack of knowledge in special pedagogics, in understanding of interdependence between physical and psychological individualities of children with special educational needs, in formation of 'skill' to ask and receive help of professionals. At this a skill of a teacher to 'submit' his/her 'professional self' to knowledge of other professionals is regarded as a 'golden rule of inclusive education', where all the teacher's actions should be

focused at effective inclusion of special need children into comprehensive education system.

Formation of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education can be represented by a two-level system. The first level is high school education of students. Second level is practical professional self-improvement. Main forms of work at the first level – i.e. work with students at high school – are following: volunteerism, visits to special schools, introduction of special subjects ('Inclusive Education', 'Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs into Comprehensive Education Process' etc.), trainings, active teaching practicum at inclusive schools. At the second level, that is in the process of work as an elementary school teacher, we consider it efficient to use following forms: further education courses, round table, research and methodology conferences, symposiums, workshops, trainings, consultations with special educators, study of methodical literature etc.

Within this two-level system of formation of readiness to work within inclusive education we can distinguish 3 coherent stages. At the first (preparation) stage the motivation to work with special need children is formed in future teachers. At the second (main) stage students and elementary school teachers master theoretical and practical basics of work within inclusive education. The third stage (operational) is associated directly with pedagogical activity within inclusive education system.

Teacher's expertise in inclusive education can be measured by following levels: adaptive, procreational and ideal. Adaptive level may be characterised by lack of awareness and partial embrace of ideology and philosophy of inclusive education, absence of desire to work with special needs children, fragmentarity of knowledge on forms, methods and tools of efficient implementation of inclusive education for children.

Procreational level is characterised by relative conformity with criteria of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education: low drive for knowledge in inclusive education for special needs children, undifferential theoretical knowledge on organisation of inclusive education, low digestion of information on solution for professional tasks within inclusive education.

Ideal level reflects conformity of teachers' readiness with criteria of readiness to inclusive education: awareness, independence and reflectivity in search of solutions for study and professional tasks, understanding and acceptance of ideology of inclusive education, personal focus and orientation towards inclusive education of children. Teachers of this level are highly motivated, show empathy and tolerance; acknowledge value of inclusive education; have system, integral, comprehensive knowledge on peculiarities of work with children with special educational needs; are strongly convinced that children with special educational needs are individual and extraordinary; can develop, forecast, assess and describe results of children's progress within inclusive education; are ready to work 'in team' with parents and other professionals (Table 1).

Table 1. Components, parameters, criteria and levels of formation of readiness in elementary school teachers within inclusive education

	<i>Parameters</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Levels</i>
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			Adaptive	Procreational	Perfect	
Motivation and value	1. Conviction in the necessity of inclusive education	- drive for pedagogic education;		+	+	
		- acknowledgement of equal rights of children with special educational needs;	+	+	+	
	2. Drive for development of the idea of inclusive education in the RK	- acknowledgement of children as value;				+
		- conviction in individual character of every child and his unlimited abilities;				+
		- high level of empathy;	+	+	+	+
		- high level of tolerance;		+	+	
	3. Readiness for self-education	- conviction in enhancing of knowledge and self-development for successful work within inclusive education	+	+	+	+
	Content-related	1. Knowledge of regulatory basis of inclusive education	- knowledge of basis of inclusive education;		+	+
			- knowledge of evolution of attitude to people with special educational needs;		+	+
- knowledge of regulatory basis of inclusive education in the world and in the RK;			+	+	+	
2. Knowledge of peculiarities of structure of the education/bringing-up process within inclusive education		- knowledge of requirements to physical access of children with special educational needs;	+	+	+	+
		- knowledge of adaptation of academic programme;		+	+	+
		- knowledge of peculiarities of lesson structure within inclusive education;		+	+	+
		- knowledge of basic principles of differentiation and individuation of education process for children with special educational needs.		+	+	+



Operational and pragmatist	3. Knowledge on basis of development of communication within inclusive education	- knowledge of forms and methods of work with parent of children with special educational needs ;		+	+	
		- knowledge of functional duties of professionals within inclusive education;		+	+	
	1. Skills of implementation of communicative connection with children with special educational needs and their parents	- a skill to organise communication with children with special educational needs;				+
		- a skill to develop relationships with parents of special needs children as with main subjects of a 'team' within inclusive education;				+
	2. A skill to develop education/bringing-up process within collective study system for children with different educational needs	- a skill to create conditions for comprehensive physical access for children with special educational needs;				+
		- a skill to adapt academic programme;				+
		- a skill to construct a lesson taking into account principles differentiation and individuation;				+
	3. A skill to work in 'team'	- a skill to distribute professional duties among other professional;				+
		- a skill to share knowledge and to defer to opinions of professionals				+

Having completed systematic work by this algorithm, the authors came to a conclusion that it is possible to form professional and psychological competences in teachers in order to implement inclusive education effectively. At this we think that this process is quite long and continuous. It requires system approach to the components and stages of formation of readiness in teachers within inclusive education.

Conclusions

Thus, the research gave practical and theoretical results allowing to draw following conclusions:

1. On the basis of the essence of the concept "readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education" from the point of view of psychological and pedagogical requirements to the job, we have found out that structure of the readiness is represented by a complex of psychological and professional qualities,

making up a unity of personal, theoretical and practical readiness of teachers. Thereby the “readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education” is a complex of psychological and professional qualities, which interact and mutually reinforce each other, allowing to perform educational work at a high motivational and value level and to organise the education/bringing-up process for elementary school pupils taking into account requirements of inclusive education.

2. Results of the research revealed components of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education: psychological readiness and professional readiness, where the structure of psychological readiness includes value orientation, personal motivation, tolerance, empathy, pedagogical optimism. The structure of professional readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education is represented by a complex of didactic knowledge and methodical skills. Didactic knowledge includes: knowledge of regulatory basis of inclusive education; knowledge of peculiarities of education process structure within inclusive education; knowledge of basic principles of development of communication with subjects of inclusive education. Methodical skills include: a skill to organise communication with children with special educational needs and their parents; a skill to develop the education/bringing-up process within collective education of children with different abilities; a skill to work ‘in team’ with other professionals.

3. Using systematic approach, we have developed a model of formation of readiness in elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education, which is a complex system consisting of certain interconnected elements: objectives, methodological approaches, components and their parameters, stages and forms of work. At this an approach to formation of readiness in teachers is defined as systematic, continuous process of formation and further development of readiness to work within inclusive education that requires upholding certain requirements and stages.

4. Defining efficiency of the model of formation of elementary school teachers readiness to work within inclusive education we have singled out following psychological and pedagogical conditions: focus of process of elementary school teachers training at formation of professional readiness to work within inclusive education, characterised by gradual increase of difficulty of subjects in education plan; continuous process of formation of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education; use of various (extra-curricular and curricular) forms and methods of work upon formation of teachers’ readiness; involving of future teachers in active pedagogic activity, which ensures mastering of practical skills required by inclusive education; training and methodological support of the process of readiness formation taking into account peculiarities of local education system and current state of theory and practice of inclusive education in the world.

On the basis of the research results we suggest several recommendations on formation of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education:

1. Applicants for pedagogic degrees should go through professional selection, as requirements to teachers within inclusive education are increasing.

2. Complex and systematic preparation of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education is necessary.

3. It is reasonable to include a subject of Inclusive Education into an academic program of pedagogic specialities at high schools.



4. It is necessary to include information on inclusive education to all the psychological and pedagogical courses at high schools.

At present in our society at large and pedagogic society in particular, the idea of inclusive education is not new. The process of formation of readiness of elementary school teachers to work within inclusive education is one of the most important and many-faceted processes, requiring thorough research.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Zulfiya A. Movkebayeva holds a PhD of Pedagogical Sciences and is an Associate Professor at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Indira A. Oralkanova holds a PhD and is a Senior Lecturer at Shakarim State University of Semey, Semey, Kazakhstan.

Bagdat M. Mazhinov is a PhD Student at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Aitolkyn B. Beisenova is a PhD Student at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Oksana G. Belenko holds PhD in Psychological Sciences and is an Associate Professor at Shakarim State University of Semey, Semey, Kazakhstan.

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