

The readiness of the Bulgarian teacher for work with children with special educational needs

Готовность болгарского учителя к работе с детьми со специальными образовательными потребностями

Abstract: The article is devoted to a significant socio-pedagogical problem – the readiness of the Bulgarian teacher to work with children with special educational needs. The concept is clarified "readiness to activity", "readiness to work with children with special educational needs". The Bulgarian pedagogical practice, related to the formation of readiness for work with children with special educational needs, has been revealed. Outline of the unsolved problems in the future teacher's education and the need for adequate change.

In parallel, a number of organizational problems have been outlined that prevent the teacher from showing his readiness to act. Special attention is paid to the change of the Bulgarian legislation in the direction of working with children with special educational needs.

Keywords: *readiness to work with a child with special educational needs, teacher, pedagogical competence, law*

Аннотация: Статья посвящена серьезной социально-педагогической проблеме – готовности болгарского учителя к работе с детьми со специальными образовательными потребностями. Выяснены понятия „готовность к деятельности“, „готовность к работе с детьми с специальными образовательными потребностями“. Раскрывается болгарская педагогическая практика, связанная с формированием готовности к работе с детьми со специальными образовательными потребностями. Изложены нерешенные проблемы в университетской подготовке будущих учителей и необходимость их адекватного изменения. Параллельно с этим намечается ряд нерешенных вопросов, которые мешают учителю проявлять свою готовность к действию. Специальное внимание уделяется изменению болгарского законодательства в направлении работы с детьми со специальными образовательными потребностями.

Ключевые слова: *готовность к работе с ребенком со специальными образовательными потребностями, учитель, педагогическая правоспособность, закон*

The inclusion of children with special educational needs into the micro and macro environment is a long and prolonged process. It requires all the participants involved in the inclusive process to be ready to work with the children.

The readiness to perform a particular activity is a person's "set-up, attitude" [*Psychology Dictionary*, 1989, p. 79]. It is a cognitive (informative), affective (emotional-valuational) and initially (behavioral-volitional) development of the person, allowing him to realize his / her professional abilities optimally [Dessev, 1999].

The teacher's readiness to work with children with special educational needs is the in-person education of the personality, an organic combination of knowledge about the peculiarities of these children, with the desire to provide them with continuous help and the formation of skills for working with them. It is about the purposeful and systematic training of the teacher to diagnose the problem of the child and to help him / her become involved in the micro-environment at school, and thus through the macro-environment. The readiness of each teacher to work with children with special educational needs is one of the decisive conditions and a factor for the optimal implementation of the inclusive child with special educational needs process.

The analysis of the practice in the Republic of Bulgaria shows that there are still many unresolved problems regarding the readiness of the mass teacher to work with children with special educational needs. They are related, on the one hand, to the teacher's willingness to work with these children, not knowing in detail the phenomenon "child with special educational needs", with the lack of this problem in the permanent qualification of the teacher. On the other hand, it also relates to the inability of the mass teacher to communicate continuously individually with these children due to independent from his/her reasons.

Although there is an "inclusive education" in the current standard for obtaining a teaching qualification, it is only 15 hours, ie. with an insufficient number of hours, so that not only future teachers are familiar with the problem, but they can also find adequate pedagogical solutions. This circumstance does not allow future teachers to master the necessary knowledge and to form relevant skills for working with children with special educational needs. Ie, this circumstance does not create conditions for building a willingness to work with children with special educational needs.

In this respect there is another problem – the intolerant attitude of a number of students towards these children. "Especially difficult task in the educational process with students, writes T. Zaharuk, is to increase the level of their tolerance to any difference. There is rarely no understanding and respect for these children. This circumstance may be the cause of many conflicts, both between the teacher and the child with special educational needs, and between the children themselves..." [Zaharuk, Čeluscinska, 2016, p. 576].

To these unresolved problems related to the preparation of the future teacher on the problems of children with special educational needs, we have to add the unresolved organizational issues regarding the inclusion of these children in the respective class. Specially trained specialists in the Republic of Bulgaria, Resource Teachers are insufficient in quantity to be able to communicate daily with each child. They work with children with special educational needs 2-3 hours a week. During the rest of the time, when staying in school, these children should work with a mass teacher who is in a very complicated situation. The teacher has to deal with 25-30 students at the same time, to realize an optimum educational process, while also having to work individually with one, two or three pupils with special educational needs. This hinders the quality of the overall educational-learning process. It also causes discontent among pupils without special educational needs and their parents. In this way, a negative attitude towards children with special educational needs in the respective class is not rarely occurring, which actually hinders the inclusive process.

All this necessitates a qualitative reorganization of the preparation of the future teachers and the post-graduate qualification of the existing teachers regarding the inclusive education of children with special educational needs. It is imperative to think not only about the amount of classes that will help to prepare the future and acting teachers for the problem, but also for the qualitative reorganization of the specific learning process. V. Shivacheva highlights the importance of applying interactive technologies in the training of future teachers in inclusive education. The theoretical model, which it adopts, refers to the varieties of interactive methods and their possibilities for introducing intensity of interpersonal communication and energy of the joint activity [Shivacheva, 2009, p. 192].

Also, interesting are the studies conducted by E. Zheleva for the preparation of future medical specialists for work with children and adults with special educational problems. For this purpose, she has used her "Methodology

for Healthcare Training". "The results of the survey, she points out, show that a methodology for training in health care in the system of preparing future medical specialists for working with children and adults with special needs is essential for their training; a valuable source of information on quality professional healthcare; means of pre-self-preparation; a tool for qualitative preparation for exams and the building of professional knowledge, skills, habits and competences of the trainee specialists. The implementation of the health care training methodology in the system of training future medical specialists for work with children and adults with special needs in the higher education institution received a sufficiently positive assessment from the teachers and trainees who used it, future medical specialists, at the higher schools" [Zheleva, 2017, p. 119].

The quoted study reveals once again how important is the content preparation of the future specialist in the respective higher education institution on the problems of children with special educational needs in order to build a real readiness to work with them.

At the same time, it is imperative to change the legal framework that provides the inclusive process for children with special educational needs. There must be clauses that provide real daily, continuous, individual pedagogical help to each child. In this process, besides the pedagogical specialists, the parents of the child can be included after being pedagogically trained.

In conclusion, we must say that the readiness of the Bulgarian teacher to work with children with special educational needs is not only a personal but also a contemporary socio-pedagogical problem. It depends both on the systemic pedagogical preparation of the future teacher on the problem and on the permanent qualification of the acting teachers. At the same time, this problem is also related to the existing legislation in our country.

This necessitates a rethinking of the place of the problem in the university education system, the permanent qualification of the acting teachers at all levels and the change of the existing legislation on the problem in the Republic of Bulgaria.

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