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Training for a Future Teacher. Introduction to Inclusion for Primary School Students Through Literary Works

Introduction

Relevance of the topic is defined by the professional standards for the specialty: a primary school teacher for general secondary educational institutions, that require development of “inclusive competence” directed towards forming “a skill for pedagogical support of persons with special educational needs” in primary school students.¹

One of the tools for development of this competence is the use of literary works on inclusion facilitating the forming of children’s consciousness and influencing the perception of children with disabilities by school students. We concur and think that literary works on inclusion will help primary school students to understand, accept and respect every person no matter of his/her special features and professional training of the specialist for introducing children to the concept is necessary.

The purpose of the paper is to prove theoretic aspects of professional training for future teachers for introducing children to the literary works on inclusion and evaluation of the results of introducing the literary autobio-

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¹ *Professional Standard for the professions “Primary school teacher of general secondary education”, “Teacher of general secondary education”, “Primary teacher (with a diploma of junior specialist)”* approved by the order of the Ministry of Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine no. 2736 of 23.12.2020, p. 1–47.

graphical story and fairy tale *The Unhopper Bunny and His Brave Mom* by Oksana Drachkovskaya.²

Research materials and scholarly evaluation of the result

Development of an inclusive educational environment in modern Ukraine is supported by the international legal instruments, national legal framework as well as defined by the social and pedagogical practice and became a fact of life. There are no national features for education, development and socialization of children with special educational needs. We believe that this challenge belongs to the world as a whole. However, inclusive processes are not necessarily facilitated by the method and effectiveness.

A teacher needs high-quality training for working in the inclusive educational environment.

The practice-based approach to professional training for future primary teachers for working in an inclusive class should be the way to do that. This paper is aimed at development of motivation, values, content, method, operation, practice, reflection and evaluation as components of professional readiness of a future primary school teacher for inclusive education. We will explain each key definition.

Primary school age is an important period in development of social culture as at this time a child learns concepts that are crucial for effective social development. Primary school students establish a new type of relationship with other people. Children learn social and cultural norms, forfeit an absolute orientation towards opinions of adults and form close relationships with their peers.

According to the scholarly research of Larysa Kalinina, social development of children of primary school age is based on the following skills:

- motivation for achievement;
- positive attitude towards oneself;
- adequate self-assessment;
- empathy;
- adequate behavior in stress situations;
- management of conflict situations.³

² O. Drachkovskaya, *The Non-jumping Bunny and His Brave Mother*, Chernivtsi 2019 (Book 32).

³ L. Kalinina, *Features of the formation of socio-cultural competence of primary school students*, "Scientific Notes" 2013, no. 33, p. 340.

Primary school age includes periods of adaptation and individualization. Aspiration to learn and join the environment of adult relationships motivates children to intensive learning of norms, values and setups that regulate human relationships. It's important for the process of social development of a person, whether he/she has or has not special educational needs, to be guided by a teacher.

One of the innovative ways in the inclusion system is introducing sociocultural material (tools) into the educational process allowing opportunities for personal growth and reflection of primary school children including those with special educational needs.

The source material for development social and cultural competences in primary school children is literary stories and fairy tales on inclusion.

In Ukraine, a key term "inclusive literature" was introduced by Olena Osmolovskaya, a writer and an associate professor of publishing at the Grinchenko Kyiv University. There is a bibliography of inclusive literature published over the last 20 years now.

There are new books published by the Terra Inclusion full of stories about the life of persons with disabilities.⁴

The purpose of literary works on inclusion is to develop moral qualities in primary school children, to prompt them to reflect on such concepts as friendship, mutual help and equality. The main idea in the books of stories published by the Terra Inclusion is that we need to love life, love each other because love has a great power and life is beautiful no matter how many problems face us at times.

According to the purpose of the book it's important to examine the value of this powerful genre, literary (authorial) fairy tales, with its developmental and educational orientation.

The use of fairy tales' motives and images in the educational process was introduced by Vasyl Sukhomlinsky. According to him "a child learns to think in words under the influence of feelings caused by fairy tale images".⁵

One of the most famous definitions belongs to Ludmila Braude. According to her "literary fairy tale is an authorial artistic prose or poetry based on a folklore source or on an original idea; it's mostly a fantasy, magical piece depicting unbelievable adventures of imaginary of traditional fairy tale characters, in some cases intended for children; it's a literary work where a mi-

⁴ *Terra Inclusion 2019: a collection of inclusive stories*, Kyiv 2019, p. 256.

⁵ V. Sukhomlinsky, *Selected works. Soviet school*, Kyiv 1977, p. 670.

raclé plays a role of a narrative and creative factor and serves as a source of basic character's features".⁶

Characteristic features of a literary (authorial) fairy tale are psychologism, rhetoric, flamboyant characters, and the use of fairy tale clichés and so on.

Now, an inclusive fairytale is a completely new literature genre.

Inclusive fairy tales is a literary genre that describes a topic of inclusion of a child with special educational needs into an educational environment, develops a sense of fairness in children, tolerance toward any person despite his/her special features and draws attention to his/her needs.

According to current needs, an inclusive fairy tale is an important tool for the use in the inclusive process. Having analyzed the content of inclusive fairy tales we can state that this genre influences development and education of primary school children and particularly the following qualities:

- understanding their rights, responsibilities and place of each child/adult person in society;
- conscious and tolerant attitude towards all children whether they have or have not special educational needs;
- development of concepts of friendship, mutual help and equality, etc.

It's important to take into consideration following pedagogical conditions within the context of training of future teachers to introducing fairy tales on inclusion to primary school students:

- relevance of the literary material;
- a teacher's ability to establish trusting relationships with the children;
- a goal-oriented pedagogical guidance in the step-by-step process of working with a fairy tale;
- ensuring that the children perceive a fairy tale in an adequate manner and correctly evaluate actions of the characters;
- encouraging children to make up their mind and to take their own moral decisions;
- development of self-confidence in children and providing their moral wellbeing;
- promoting development of the environment for adaptation and education of every child;
- evaluation of the results by the subjects of the activity.

⁶ L. Braude, *On the history of the concept of "literary tale"*. *Proceedings of the USSR Academy of Sciences*, Moscow 1997 (series of "Literature and Language"), pp. 270–291.

Professional training of future teachers will be presented on the example of introducing the literary autobiographical story and fairy tale *The Unhopper Bunny and His Brave Mom* by Oksana Drachkovskaya⁷ to the group of children of various ages with or without special educational needs.

This fairy tale created by the Ukrainian author won the Coronation of the Word competition as the best inclusive literary work and was published by the Books-XXI in Chernivtsi.

Since there is no scholarly method for research of this genre of inclusive literature we'd like to present tested characteristics of working with autobiographical story and fairy tale on inclusion:

- interpretation of the name of the book by children;
- meeting between the author of the book and the children and discussion of the idea and the story of creating the fairy tale;
- the use of the acroverbal method in working with the book;
- the use of eidetic method and its techniques for development of memory through the visual and associative thought to focus children's attention on positive aspects;
- the use of various tasks for activation of all types of perception (visual, auditory, kinesthetic);
- the feedback from the children;
- demonstration by the teacher of his/her emotional and value attitude to the plot and the idea of the fairy tale.

Testing of the characteristics of working with the literary autobiographical story and fairy tale on inclusion was carried out for the first time during the second "Inclusive Community: Here and Now" marathon within the framework of the international "Inclusive NON!SCHOOL online" project (the organizers of the project: public organization Inclusive Space. Ukraine Community, Chernivtsi, Ukraine) and NGO Inclusive Practices (Ureki, Georgia).

A meeting with the Prof. David Rodrigues, the National Counselor of Education in Portugal, President of Pro-Inclusion / National Association of Teachers of Special Education and director of the magazine "Inclusive Education", during the first working session of the Inclusive Community Development Program organized by the NGO Inclusive Practices (Ureki, Georgia) became a landmark for us.

⁷ O. Drachkovskaya, *The Non-jumping Bunny...*, op. cit.

His words “It’s impossible to adopt inclusion if there is no base for it. Develop your schools’ capacity! Then you’ll have a soil where you can sow the seeds of inclusion”⁸ became an inspiration for us and our partners and were put in the basis of the model of the “Inclusive NON!SCHOOL online” project.

We asked the participants of the NON!SCHOOL what in the words of Prof. Rodrigues resonated with them the most so we could keep searching for a better way to organize the “NON!SCHOOL” and revitalize prospective partnerships We asked the participants of the NON!SCHOOL what in the words of Prof. Rodrigues resonated with them the most so we could keep searching for a better way to organize the “NON!SCHOOL” and revitalize prospective partnerships.⁹

Those are some of the comments we received from the children from the Inclusive Generation NEXT team:

- “I liked the first part of the phrase «It’s impossible to adopt inclusion if there is no base for it. It means that if you want to do something good and important, you have to prepare for it and learn a lot of things»”.¹⁰
- “It’s important to understand your own personal interest when you create an inclusive school”. (Nikita Kochereschenko).
- “I remembered the words «Develop your schools» capacity. It means that you have to develop relationships in a school”. (Alimzhan Khassenov).
- “Then you’ll have a soil where you can sow the seeds of inclusion”. You need to have a team. Then we can develop. (Ilya Kochereschenko).
- “I remember the words «a soil» and «adopt». I think that people, who want to develop inclusion, have to learn how to do it the way Sasha and Lena and the Inclusive Practices practitioners do. And every person should know that he/she makes a contribution”. (Almira Sadykova).
- “I remember the words «to sow the seeds of inclusion» because a flower grows from the seed. The same is with our NON!SCHOOL that grows from the contacts”. (Bakhtiyar Imanbaev).
- “It’s impossible to adopt [inclusion] if there is no base for it. This phrase resonated with me”. (Yaroslav Yurtaev).

⁸ David Rodriguez during the master class “Policy and Practice: how to become closer to the inclusive education”, Ureki, 4.11.2019 r.

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/iplikbez/videos/455016309274589> (access: 12.12.2021).

¹⁰ L. Kalinina, *Features of the formation...*, op. cit., p. 340.

- “If there is no soil, nothing can grow. In our case, if there is no contact, there is no inclusion and development”. (Sanzhar Iliyasyuly).

This initiative and activity is the author’s project aimed at the achieving of one of the pedagogical conditions for development of the readiness of a future primary school teacher for working in an inclusive class, particularly: modification of training through comprehensive renewal of programs for professional and practice-based training for formal education and engaging a future primary school teacher in informal inclusive practice.¹¹

14 November 2020 we carried out an inclusive training session for students at the Chernivtsi National University specializing in primary education during an online meeting with a multiethnic team of children of various ages, members of the Inclusive Generation NEXT team. Among the children there were those with and without special educational needs. The topic of the meeting was “Visiting a life-based fairy tale”. During the meeting the children met with the Ukrainian author Oxana Drachkovskaya and her son Nazar and were introduced to the fairy tale on inclusion *The Unhopper Bunny and His Brave Mom*.

As the quality results of the interpretation we’d like to highlight the unique answers of our respondents. When asked “Why do you think the bunny’s name is Unhopper?” the children gave following answers:

- his name is Unhopper because he doesn’t know how to hop, but he wants to learn;
- he Unhopper Bunny is a jumping toy;
- the Bunny has a disability so he can’t hop.

The children gave the following answers to the question “Why is his Mom brave?”

- because she protects her baby from predators;
- because his Mom wants to protect her baby from being hurt again.

When we asked children to think what could motivate a person to write a story or a fairy tale the children gave following answers:

- a person writes something when he/she has something to say;
- a happy occasion like a new baby being born motivates people to write a fairy tale;
- a person might write a story so the other people would understand that if a child has challenges it means that you shouldn’t give up on him/her but

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Inclusive-spaceUkrainian-community-112210550159373/> (access: 12.12.2021).

you have to help him/her to develop, to create an accessible environment for him/her.

After these questions the children had an active discussion with the author about the idea and the story behind the fairy tale. The children asked:

- Why have you become a writer?
- What made you write this story and fairy tale?
- Why is the Bunny a protagonist?

As an empirical observation of the audience showed, the energy of the contact, the power of verbal and nonverbal communication and emotional speech were the factors that facilitated productive understanding of the depth and philosophy of the autobiographical story and fairy tale *The Unhopper Bunny and His Brave Mom*.

Thus, the following steps should be included and systematically carried out during the training to ensure the readiness of a future teacher to introducing primary school children to the literary works on inclusion:

- participation of a student of a specialty 013 Primary Education in author's presentation of the book;
- choosing a topic of inclusion for scholarly and practical research project;
- if possible, to organize a meeting between researchers and the author;
- testing the results of the project;
- analysis and evaluation of the results, publishing the scholarly results of the research based on the materials and its public defense.

The conclusions and prospects for further research studies in the chosen field

Based on the results of the research the following conclusions were made:

1. The scholarly problem defined in this paper is not sufficiently researched and requires further theoretic and methodical study.
2. The literary works published in the book *Terra Inclusion* as a whole, and the autobiographical story and fairy tale on inclusion *The Unhopper Bunny and His Brave Mom* in particular, should become a modern tool of informing primary school students on acceptance of all children/persons in society, whether they have or have not special educational needs, and they can be tested in traditional educational environment as well as in remote educational environment.

3. Social acceptance and support of children with disabilities requires systematic training, meetings and a set of tools. And while we understand the complexity of the process, nevertheless, we are convinced that literary works on inclusion are the most powerful and readily available tool to use in discussions on relevant social issues and development inclusive culture in primary school students.
4. Engaging a future primary school teacher in informal inclusive practice should become a part in modification of formal education with the purpose of high-quality professional training of specialists for working in an inclusive environment.
5. The prospect for further research study is in searching more fairy tales on inclusion by Ukrainian and foreign authors. We'd like to note that there are other literary forms worth researching such as poetry, short stories, poems, plays. Also we plan to conduct research and develop a method for studying literary works on inclusion and introducing them to the primary school children.

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Abstract

The author proved the need to train a future teacher to introduce children to literary works on inclusion; specifics of introducing the literary autobiographical story and fairy tale *The Unhopper Bunny and His Brave Mom* are approbated and evaluated.

keywords: teacher training for the future, working in an inclusive environment, primary school, literary works, inclusive subject matter, literary fairy tale, author's fairy tale, inclusive fairy tale

Streszczenie

Szkolenie dla przyszłych nauczycieli. Wprowadzenie do inkluzji uczniów szkoły podstawowej poprzez prace literackie

Autorka wykazała potrzebę kształcenia przyszłego nauczyciela w zakresie zapoznawania dzieci z utworami literackimi o tematyce inkluzyjnej; zaaprobowwała i oceniła specyfikę wprowadzania literackiego opowiadania autobiograficznego i bajki *Niežnośny Królik i jego dzielna mama*.

słowa kluczowe: kształcenie przyszłego nauczyciela, praca w klasie integracyjnej, szkoła podstawowa, utwory literackie, tematyka włączająca, bajka literacka, bajka autorska, bajka o tematyce włączającej