

THEORETICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY FOR WORKING WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and pedagogical foundations for the methodology of working with primary school students in an inclusive education setting. The article extensively explores the importance of inclusive education, its core principles, and pedagogical approaches such as the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.

Keywords

Inclusive education, primary school, pedagogy, teaching methodology, Universal Design, collaboration, development, effectiveness.

In the modern education system, the concept of inclusivity is becoming an increasingly important and expanding paradigm. The right of every child to receive a quality education—regardless of their physical, intellectual, socio-emotional, or other characteristics—is being recognized at both international and national levels. In Uzbekistan, the implementation and improvement of inclusive education is considered one of the main priorities of state policy. Traditional educational models, often designed for the "average" student, can hinder the full realization of the potential of children with unique needs. For this reason, the goal of inclusive education is to successfully integrate all students, including children with special developmental needs, into the mainstream educational environment and to create equal opportunities for their social adaptation and personal development.

Philosophically, inclusive education is based on recognizing the dignity and equal rights of all children. From a pedagogical perspective, this approach entails creating an adaptable and supportive learning environment that responds to the individual needs of each student. Inclusive pedagogy is defined as a student-centered approach that fully integrates the diverse social characteristics and positions that students bring to the classroom. This includes not only those with disabilities but all students from diverse ethnic, cultural, or economic backgrounds.

It should permeate all aspects of the curriculum, course design, management, and assessment, and is aimed at actively dismantling oppressive practices that have historically hindered the academic success of underserved students.

The main principles of inclusive education include the following:

recognizing the uniqueness and dignity of every student;

ensuring equal rights to education;

making the educational environment adaptable; accepting student diversity as a strength and introducing differentiated education that responds to individual needs.

The theoretical foundations of inclusive education are a field that is continuously being studied and improved, and its development is closely linked with modern educational paradigms.

The primary school age (6-11 years) is a significant stage in a child's cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development. During this period, a transition from play-based activities to learning activities occurs, logical thinking develops, social skills are formed, and the emotional regulation system is strengthened. Each child's development proceeds at an individual pace, which requires their unique needs to be taken into account in an inclusive environment.

Primary school students with unique developmental needs—such as those with learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorders, or hearing or visual impairments—require special assistance and accommodations. Their educational needs may include: adaptations to visual and audio materials, additional time, individual assignments, opportunities to work in small groups, and exercises aimed at developing socio-emotional skills. In an inclusive classroom environment, it is crucial for teachers to recognize diversity as a strength, employ a student-centered approach, and prioritize the affective and emotional aspects of education. This approach ensures that every child feels comfortable and safe, creating an opportunity for them to actively participate in the educational process.

In inclusive education, effective pedagogy is based on flexible approaches that respond to the diverse needs of all students. In this context, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) serves as an important framework. Based on cognitive neuroscience, UDL aims to create an adaptable learning environment to accommodate individual differences. Its main goal is to enhance learning opportunities by creating a curriculum that offers various tools for acquiring information, demonstrating knowledge, and fostering motivation.

Engagement: This answers the "why?" of learning. It sparks students' interest by motivating them, demonstrating the relevance of the material, and encouraging

self-reflection. For primary school students, this can include game elements, interactive exercises, and projects that align with their personal interests.

Representation: This answers the "what?" of learning. It facilitates students' comprehension of the material by presenting information in various, customizable formats (e.g., text, audio, visual images, manipulative activities). This principle is especially important for students with hearing or visual impairments.

Action and Expression: This answers the "how?" of learning. This principle offers students flexibility in demonstrating their knowledge in various ways (e.g., written work, oral presentations, drawings, models, practical projects). This helps them develop strategic thinking and self-regulation skills.

Inclusive pedagogy also requires teachers to recognize and respond to microaggressions, co-create knowledge, and acknowledge the experience of each student. Research shows that teachers who use inclusive pedagogy view diversity as a strength, adopt a student-centered approach, prioritize the affective and emotional aspects of education, and base their teaching on active methodologies. When working with primary school students, methods such as differentiated tasks, cooperative learning, project-based learning, game-based methods, and interactive exercises are considered effective.

Organizing the learning process in an inclusive classroom requires adapting the curriculum based on UDL principles. This, first and foremost, means ensuring that learning materials, assignments, and the learning environment are accessible to all students. It is important to make the classroom learning environment physically and psychologically comfortable. For example, the learning space should be organized to suit various learning needs and activity types, and factors like noise level and lighting should be controlled and adjusted.

During the lesson, the teacher should use differentiated tasks and offer supplementary materials and support resources that correspond to each student's level of readiness and learning style. This can include working in small groups, peer support, and individual tutoring. Assessment methods must also align with the principles of inclusivity. Alongside traditional tests, it is recommended to use various methods to assess students' knowledge, skills, and social adaptation. These include methods such as observation, portfolios (a collection of student work), oral questioning, project work, and self-assessment. The assessment process should reflect the student's learning progress and provide constructive feedback for their further development. Assessment methods should be flexible to accommodate students' different ways of expression.

The success of inclusive education is directly dependent on effective partnership. This involves close collaboration among teachers, parents, school

administration, and specialists (such as special education teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, and social pedagogues). It is crucial for teachers to participate in continuous professional development and advanced training courses to effectively organize the educational process in an inclusive environment. They must be provided with in-depth knowledge of the principles of inclusive pedagogy, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and differentiated instruction strategies.

Parents are an integral part of the inclusive education process. It is important to establish regular communication with them, exchange information about changes in their child's development, and provide recommendations for applying consistent approaches both at school and at home. Specialists, in turn, should provide individual support to students, advise teachers, and participate in adapting the curriculum. The school administration is responsible for providing resources that support an inclusive environment, creating the necessary infrastructure, and fostering a collaborative partnership. Teachers must recognize that the classroom climate, stereotypes, and especially microaggressions (frequent, unintentional acts of disrespect) can significantly hinder learning and create a hostile environment, which necessitates proactive pedagogical strategies. The harmonious functioning of all these mechanisms ensures the stability and effectiveness of the inclusive education system.

Conclusion: The theoretical and pedagogical foundations of the methodology for working with primary school students in an inclusive education setting have been comprehensively examined. It is emphasized that inclusive education is not merely a method of organizing education, but a profound philosophical perspective aimed at creating equal opportunities for the personal development and social adaptation of every child. Advanced pedagogical principles, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and teacher attitudes that are based on viewing diversity as a strength, are key to effective teaching in an inclusive environment. Considering the unique developmental characteristics of primary school students, differentiated and student-centered methodologies play a significant role. Flexibility in organizing the educational process, diversity in assessment methods, and the collaboration of all stakeholders (teachers, parents, specialists) ensure the success of inclusive education.

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