

PREPARATION OF FUTURE TEACHERS FOR ORGANISING A HEALTH-PRESERVING INCLUSIVE SPACE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. The purpose of the research consists in analysing the current state of training future teachers for the organisation of a health-preserving inclusive space. The identified problems are actualised by the growing role of inclusive education, which is aimed at teaching children with different educational needs and disabilities. For realising the goal of the research, a number of theoretical (analysis, synthesis, abstraction, induction, deduction, generalisation) and empirical (observations of the educational process of a higher education institution, in which future teachers undergo professional training), study of documentation (academic programs, curricula, syllabi), questionnaire) methods. In particular, the documentation of Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University of Drohobych has been studied, and 120 students of the first (bachelor's) and the second (master's) degrees of higher education have been surveyed. The conducted research has proved the ability of a modern higher education institution to form specialists with developed inclusive competence. This is facilitated by the systematic work of the higher education institution regarding the formation and implementation of academic programs for training future teachers and regarding the inclusion of a number of educational components, which are aimed at forming inclusive competence and future teachers' relevant skills in the process of pedagogical practice.

Keywords: future teachers; training of future teachers; health-preserving space of an educational institution; inclusive space of an educational institution; educational institution

Introduction

One of the problems of modern society is social stratification, which causes uneven access of citizens to the basic benefits, which are necessary for their physical or

personal development. In a society with a complex stratification structure, certain social groups may face, in particular, limited access to education. After all, children from prosperous and disadvantaged or low-income families, students of urban and rural schools, healthy schoolchildren and those with special educational needs have different starting educational conditions. The authors pay special attention to the latter category of children, which is extremely vulnerable in the modern world.

For full socialisation, versatile development and education, they need appropriate educational space to be created in educational institutions which would provide them with health care and potential opportunities for personal growth and self-improvement.

In the modern educational policy of various countries of the world, several approaches to the education of people with special educational needs have been developed (Winzer 2009). This is, in particular, mainstreaming, thanks to which children with special educational needs can temporarily be in a group of healthy peers. This form of education is more focused on providing a child with SEN with social contacts. Therefore, achieving the educational goal is not a priority here. Integration is a form of education in which children with special educational needs are expected to adapt to a generally unchanged education system. Children can attend an educational institution, but separate groups or classes can be created for them. Instead, inclusive education “is based on the principle of ensuring the basic right of children to be educated and the right to study at the place of residence, which involves the education of a child with special educational needs, in particular a child with special psychophysical development peculiarities in the conditions of a general educational institution... Modern inclusive education develops a new methodology aimed at teaching children with various educational needs and disabilities, and develops approaches to learning and teaching which will be more flexible than the previous ones” (Shved 2015, p. 44 – 45).

The authors agree with O. Nevmerzhytska that since inclusion involves the creation of a special environment, which is adapted to the educational needs of each child, it can be created only with the active cooperation of parents and specialists working in the educational process. Instead, today, a significant part of the difficulties in teaching and raising children with health disabilities is being associated with an acute shortage of qualified staff: teachers, psychologists, preschool educators and social pedagogues, and their insufficient level of training (Nevmerzhytska 2018, p. 204).

Since one of the important tasks of a teacher who works with children with special educational needs in the conditions of an educational institution is the organisation of a health-preserving inclusive space, ***the purpose of the article*** is to analyse the current state of training future teachers for implementing this direction of professional activity.

Methodology

The realisation of the specified goal has been performed with involving a number of research methods. In particular, theoretical methods, like analysis, synthesis, abstraction, induction and deduction, as well as generalisation, made it possible to study scientific sources on the given issue, to highlight the essential characteristics of the health-preserving inclusive space of educational institutions, and to formulate a number of conclusions.

In addition, the authors have used such empirical methods as observation of the educational process of a higher education institution, in which future teachers undergo professional training, and as study of documentation (academic programs, curricula, syllabi, etc.), questionnaires.

Mathematical methods of statistical data processing have been used to work with the survey results.

Results and Discussion

Organising an effective and productive educational space in educational institutions is an important task for all the participants in the educational process. A large number of scientific researches are devoted to this problem, among which there are works by O. Demydenko (2010), K. Krutii (2009), T. Pantiuk (2016) and others.

According to O. Demydenko¹), the elements of the educational space are real material environment (territories and natural objects, areas for various activities, equipment and tools, including books, technical and multimedia means); educational institutions at the level of micro society (preschool education institutions, schools, children's and youth institutions of culture and extracurricular education, public organisations, sports institutions, etc.); means of mass communication (television and radio programs, children's and youth publications, self-made magazines and wall newspapers); the content of the educational space (social experience is "encoded" in the content of education, in games, artistic activities, sports, children's and youth subculture); organisation of the educational space (schedule, time organisation and life regulation of the participants of the educational space, methods of co-organisation of the participants of the educational space and forms of self-management, norms, management system, means of discipline).

Instead, K. Krutii (Krutii 2009) considers the educational space at the level of a separate educational institution and defines it as a three-component structure, which includes "...*subject environment* – economic infrastructure, food organisation, material support of educational and health activities. It is determined by the quality assessment of the areas, sanitary-technical, medical, sports equipment, by organisation of the food system taking into account the requirements, sanitary rules and norms; *communicative environment* – interpersonal relations between subjects of the pedagogical process; *health-improving environment* – forms and principles of health-improving activity" (Krutii 2009, p. 87).

T. Pantiuk (Pantiuk 2016) has defined specific parameters of the educational space (physical environment (architecture, external and internal design, combination of elements); human factor (spatial and social density, personal space, status-role and gender-age distribution of subjects in the educational process); training program (control, style of communication with children, forms of training organisation, etc.)). Among the main characteristics of the space, the author has attributed safety, problematic saturation, openness to active intervention of the child, a dialogic way of functioning, multifunctionality, maximum adaptability to the needs of common activities of children and adults, etc. The scholar has also named the main functions of the educational space (communicative, informative, didactic, cognitive, emotional, etc.).

To efficiently perform its functions, the educational space of an educational institution must meet a number of integral criteria:

- enrichment with sensory stimuli: the sensory richness of the institution and its territory; harmonisation, structuredness of sensory environment; aesthetics of the environment;

- saturation with different types and kinds of activities: types – game (leading type), educational, working activities; kinds of activities – communication, cognitive activity; transformative, estimating and controlling, creative activities;

- satisfaction of needs for physical activity and physical development: healthy lifestyle, need for activity, sports achievements, etc.;

- saturation of the interaction of teachers, children, parents (Krutii 2009, p. 88).

It is obvious that compliance with the mentioned criteria should ensure the health-preserving nature of the educational space. Instead, involving both individuals with typical development and those with special educational needs will transform this space into an inclusive one.

Such a health-preserving educational space should include modern material facilities which meet educational needs of children; ensure barrier-free and architectural accessibility of the institution space and the surrounding area; orient academic programs to the requirements of a child with special educational needs; ensure a sensory style of learning and differentiation of education (when the teacher does not change the program itself, but only the educational material, means and methods of its mastering and final results); be characterised by close interaction of the support team and the organisation of communication between its members, etc.

Therefore, future teachers in the conditions of professional training should be ready not only to work in the conditions of an inclusive educational space, but also to organise it.

The authors have researched the current state of preparation of future teachers for work in the conditions of inclusion. The analysis of academic programs and curricula for training specialists of the first (bachelor's) and the second (master's) degrees of higher education in Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University of Dro-

hobych showed that forming the preparedness of future teachers for work in the conditions of an inclusive educational space is implemented with the help of a number of educational components (work with children with special needs, inclusive education, basics of defectology and speech therapy, art pedagogy and art therapy; inclusive education abroad, art therapy, etc.). The authors have studied the syllabi of the named educational components and discovered that they are mostly aimed at considering the legislative framework for the education of people with special educational needs, the specifics of corrective and developmental work in the conditions of inclusive education, the peculiarities of forming an individual academic plan as a component of the curriculum, the content and technologies of work in the conditions of the inclusive educational space. These educational components do not include separate topics which would cover students' familiarisation with organising a health-preserving inclusive educational space. However, such information is being included in the content of various topics provided by the syllabi of the named educational components.

Due to this, the authors have conducted a research which dealt with the theory and practice of arranging such a space; future teachers' awareness of the importance of its functional perfection; forming students' ability to improve the environment of the preschool education institution and adapt it to the needs of each child, etc.

120 students of the "Preschool Education" speciality of Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University of Drohobych, aged 17 to 24, took part in the research.

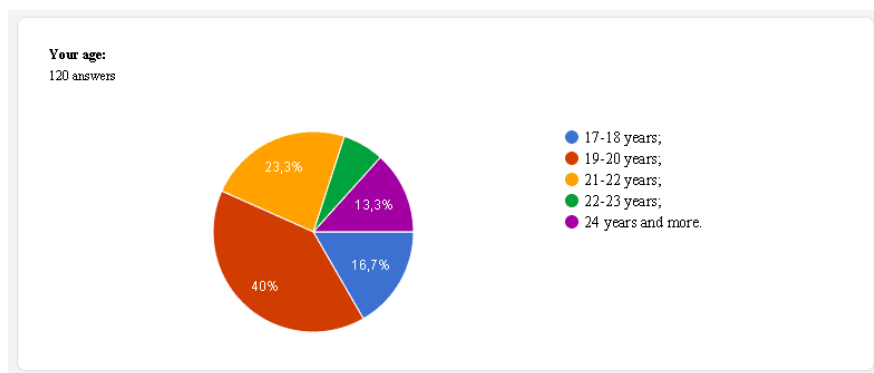


Figure 1. Age of respondents

Students of different degrees of education – bachelor's and master's – participated in the survey in order to have a complete picture of understanding the problem of creating, improving and functioning of a health-preserving inclusive space in educational institutions.

Students who already have knowledge and understanding of the functions, tasks and quality criteria of the inclusive educational space in the educational institution were asked to grade the educational space, which they had observed at the place of pedagogical practice or work (if the student was already working), using a 10-point grading scale. The research showed that, in general, the health-preserving inclusive space in the educational institutions where our students undergo practice is sufficiently perfect and well-equipped. This was evidenced by the students' grades, namely:

26.7% of students gave the educational space 10 points;

10% – 9 points;

30% – 8 points;

20% – 7 points.

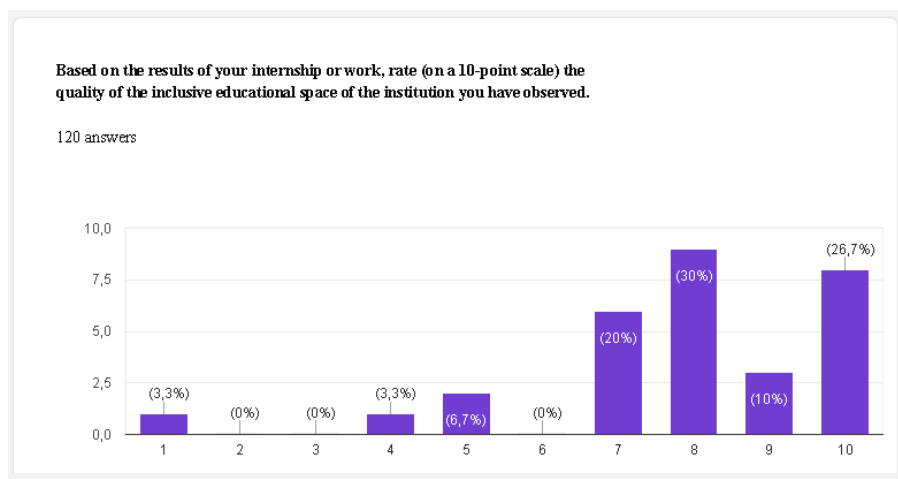


Figure 4. Evaluation of the quality of the inclusive space of the educational institution

Such grades were given by the students taking into account certain criteria. In particular, the students analysed and researched such criteria of an inclusive educational space, which were implemented in the institution where they studied. Including:

a) *spatial and subject* (modern material means which meet the educational needs of children; barrier-free and architectural accessibility of the premises of the institution and the surrounding area);

b) *content-methodical* (orientation of programs to the needs of a child with SEN; use of its positive aspects; sensory learning style; differentiation of education, when

the teacher does not change the program itself, but only the educational material, ways and methods of its mastering and final results);

c) *communicative and organisational* (close interaction of the support team and organisation of communication between its members; definition of roles and activity spheres of team members, etc.).

The research has proved that the spatial and subject criterion is implemented in 60% of the investigated institutions. The content-methodical component of the educational process is well reflected in 66.7% of preschool education institutions. The communicative and organisational aspect of the health-preserving inclusive space in educational institutions occupies an important place in the work of 46.7% of institutions.

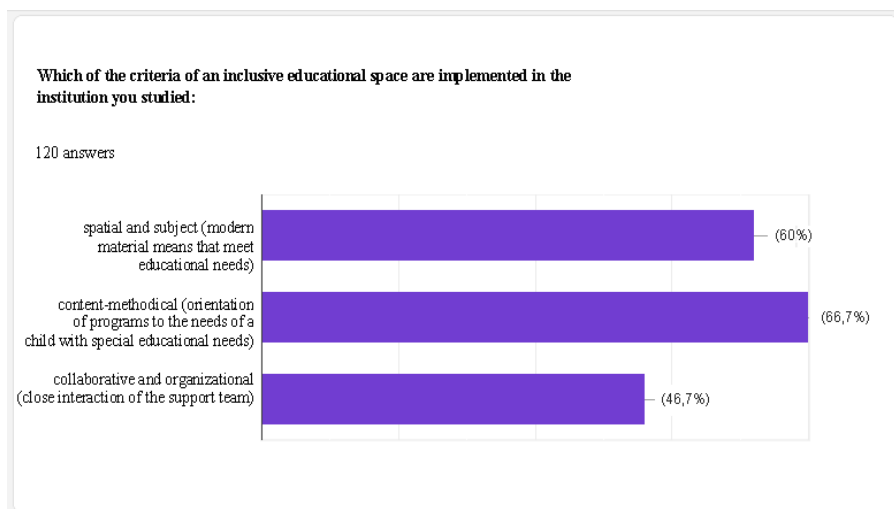


Figure 5. Criteria of an inclusive educational space

In the process of practice and professional activities, students were actively engaged in the process of improving the inclusive educational space of the institution. This happened by:

- improving means for children’s games and education;
- concern about perfecting the aesthetic appearance of the rooms in the educational institution;
- diversification of children’s play and work areas (play, relaxation, personal, quiet zone, “joy corner”, nature corner, “fairy tale lawn”, etc.);
- working on improving the accessibility of educational space;
- strengthening the aesthetic component of space, etc.

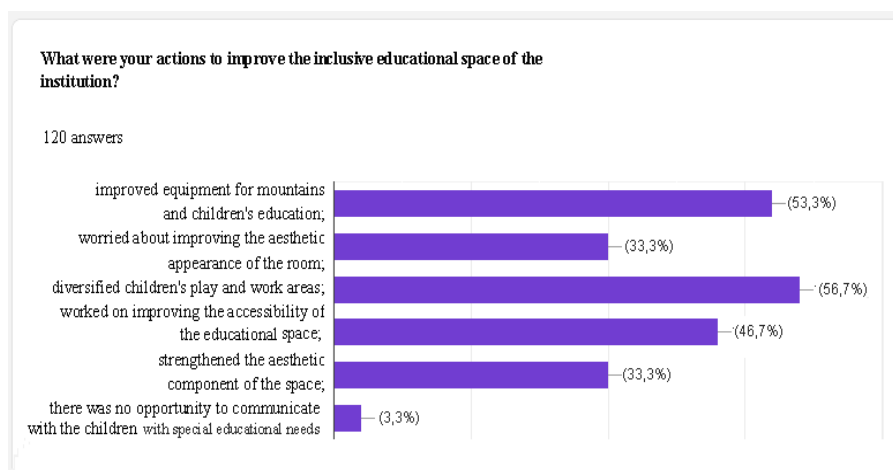


Figure 6. Actions to improve the inclusive space of the educational institution

In the process of research, the authors suggested the students give specific recommendations on improving the health-preserving inclusive educational space of the educational institution. According to the respondents, more concern should be given to:

- ensuring the quality of educational activities of the institution;
- ensuring safe and harmless conditions for children and teachers;
- functional suitability of premises and surrounding area;
- convenience and accessibility for different groups of users;
- availability of the necessary amount of furniture and equipment;
- diversification of space organisation options, using mobile workplaces, creation of premises with “open educational space”;
- flexibility and openness of the educational institution space;
- availability of personal space for each child (availability of an individual table, shelf, locker for clothes and bags, etc.);
- avoiding “visual clutter of space”;
- aesthetic aspect – the institution should be beautiful and attractive, etc.

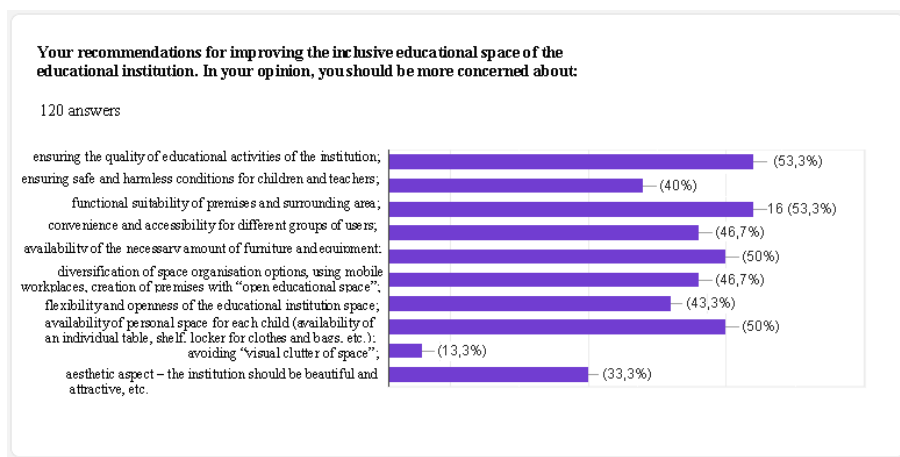


Figure 7. Recommendations for improving the inclusive space of the educational institution

In the process of the research, the authors also intended to find out whether enough space and time was allocated in the content of the components in the academic programs to highlight issues related to the health-preserving inclusive educational space of the educational institution.

The students' answers are shown in Fig. 8 and are the basis for improving academic programs, their correction and expansion of the health-preserving component.

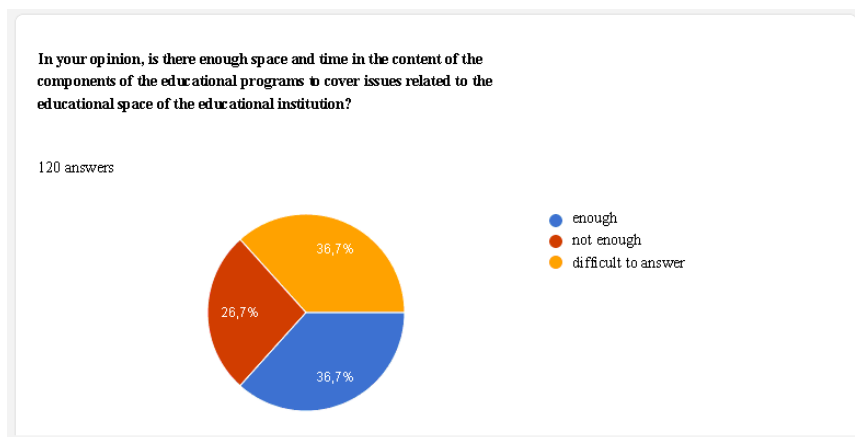


Figure 8. Sufficiency in the educational program of components that reflect the issues of organizing an inclusive space

To the question “Which components of academic programs do you think give the broadest and most complete idea of forming an inclusive educational space in an educational institution?”, the students gave answers which indicate the following hierarchy of educational courses:

- Work with children with special needs – 83.3%;
- Inclusive education – 70%;
- Fundamentals of defectology and speech therapy – 56.7%;
- Art pedagogy and art therapy – 43.3%;
- Inclusive education abroad – 40%;
- Art therapy – 13.3%.

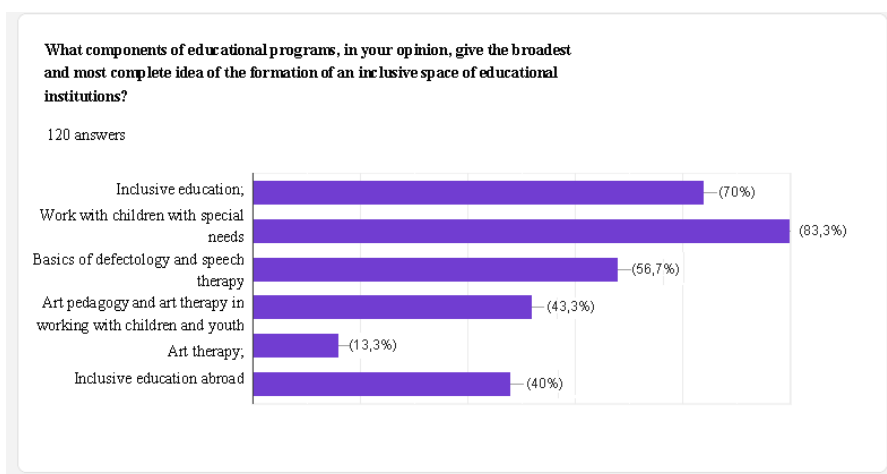


Figure 9. Educational components that reflect the issues of organizing an inclusive space

The analysis of the obtained results has testified to the generally good preparation of future teachers for organising or improving the inclusive health-preserving space in educational institutions. Students have necessary knowledge and skills for this, understand the importance of inclusion in modern conditions and are ready to change the educational space around them in order to make it comfortable for all the participants in the educational process.

However, it is worth mentioning that not all the researchers share this opinion. Thus, Kh. Shaparenko considers that higher education institutions are not always able to ensure the preparedness of future teachers to work in the conditions of inclusion because the content of academic programs is not always perfect, and the structure of individual educational components

includes declarative information which does not reflect the essence, values and principles of creating an inclusive environment in educational institutions (Shaparenko 2018, p. 16).

O. Holiuk also assesses the state of preparation of future teachers for organising an inclusive health-preserving space quite critically. In particular, the scholar is convinced that the quality of such training is low, taking into account the imperfection of the education content, the fact that scientific and pedagogical workers lack practical experience while working in the inclusive space of educational institutions, the lack of tasks of creating an inclusive educational space in practice programs, etc. (Holiuk 2016).

Instead, S. Sydoriv is more optimistic in his views and claims that in the process of preparing future teachers for organising an inclusive educational space, it is worth focusing on the formation of a positive attitude towards inclusive education, on awareness of the need to use proven technologies, approaches and methods that can be adapted to meet the individual needs of each child, and the main thing is to remember the importance of continuous professional development of teachers (Sydoriv 2022, p. 177).

Actually, the experience of professional training of future teachers in Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University of Drohobych has proved the ability of the higher education institution to form specialists with developed inclusive competence. Instead, the critical considerations of colleagues quoted above were obviously expressed in a transitional period, when society did not fully comprehend the idea of inclusion, which had an impact on the professional training of specialists. This fact also indicates serious changes in modern Ukrainian society and indicates positive improvements in forming inclusive competence of future teachers.

Conclusions and summary

Therefore, nowadays, the role of inclusive education, which provides equal opportunities in access to education for healthy people and those with special educational needs, is growing. However, on the one hand, the problem of creating a health-preserving inclusive space in educational institutions is being actualised, and on the other hand, this problem consists in preparing future teachers to organise such a space.

Despite a number of critical views on the professional training of future teachers in the direction of forming their inclusive competence, the empirical research conducted by the authors has shown quite positive trends in the construction of a health-preserving inclusive space in educational institutions. It has also indicated the future teachers' understanding of the importance of the problem and the ability to contribute to the development of a universal educational space.

It is obvious that this was facilitated by the systematic work of the higher education institution regarding the formation and implementation of academic programs for training future teachers, the fact of including a number of educational components aimed at forming inclusive competence, as well as forming future teachers' relevant skills in the process of pedagogical practice.

NOTES

1. DEMYDENKO, O.P., 2010. *Multicultural educational space: concept, structure*. Available From: <http://conf.stavsu.ru/conf.asp?ReportId=1242> [Viewed 2023-4-07].

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