

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF RESEARCH COMPETENCE OF FUTURE SPECIALISTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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The article defines and scientifically substantiates the conceptual foundations for the development of research competence in future specialists in special education.

It has been proven that effective professional training should provide the most favorable developmental impact aimed at shaping the personality of the future special education teacher and unlocking their creative potential. Orienting scientific activity toward the practical domain of professional engagement – both for students and instructors – highlights the need to reconsider the factors that determine the organization of research work in higher education institutions.

The article emphasizes that the demands of today call for a highly qualified, competent special education teacher who is capable of mastering the methodology of scientific inquiry, acquiring research experience, realizing themselves in the professional-pedagogical sphere, and implementing innovative approaches to organizing scientific work.

The objective need for significant adjustments to the goals and content of professional training for future special education specialists is highlighted – specifically, providing maximum opportunities for developing professional qualities, fostering the scientific potential of the future special education teacher. This includes high motivation for active scientific and cognitive activity, mastery of scientific-pedagogical research methods, the ability to independently analyze and generalize pedagogical facts, make independent decisions, and continuously pursue professional self-improvement.

The article outlines key conceptual priorities, which include bringing future special education teachers closer to professionalism, actively involving them in research activities, acquiring valuable practical experience in performing the tasks of a researcher-specialist, stimulating deeper understanding of the specifics of their future professional activity through research work, organizing the study of pedagogical issues directly related to their future profession, and internalizing a value-based personal attitude toward research work.

Key words: research competence, inquiry-based research activity, learners with special educational needs, future special education specialists, special education teacher, professional training.

Боряк Оксана, Сущенко Лариса. Концептуальні засади формування науково-дослідницької компетентності майбутніх фахівців спеціальної освіти

У статті визначено й науково обгрунтовано концептуальні засади формування науково-дослідницької компетентності майбутніх фахівців спеціальної освіти.

Доведено: ефективна професійна підготовка має забезпечувати максимально сприятливий розвивальний вплив, спрямований на формування особистості майбутнього корекційного педагога та розкриття його творчого потенціалу; орієнтація наукової діяльності у практичну площину професійної активності як студентів, так і викладачів, актуалізує необхідність перегляду чинників, що визначають організацію науково-дослідної роботи у закладі вищої освіти.

У статті акцентовано на тому, що вимоги сьогодення висувають гостру потребу у кваліфікованому, компетентному корекційному педагогові, здатному опанувати методологію наукового пізнання, набувати дослідницького досвіду, реалізовувати себе в професійно-педагогічній сфері та впроваджувати інноваційні підходи до організації наукової роботи.

Наголошено на об'єктивній необхідності суттєвого коригування цілей та змісту професійної підготовки майбутніх фахівців спеціальної освіти, наданні максимальних можливостей для розвитку професійних якостей, сприянні розвитку наукового потенціалу особистості майбутнього корекційного педагога, яка характеризується високою мотивацією до активної науково-пізнавальної діяльності, оволодінні методами науково-педагогічного дослідження, здатності самостійно аналізувати й узагальнювати педагогічні факти, приймати самостійні рішення, безперервно професійно самовдосконалюватися.

Визначено пріоритетні концептуальні позиції, які полягають у наближенні майбутніх корекційних педагогів до професіоналізму, активному залученні їх до науково-дослідної роботи; набутті важливого практичного досвіду виконання завдань фахівця-дослідника; стимулюванні поглибленого пізнання особливостей його майбутньої професійної діяльності засобами науково-дослідної роботи; організації дослідження педагогічних проблем, що мають безпосередній зв'язок

з майбутньою професійною діяльністю; інтеріоризації ціннісно-особистісного ставлення майбутніх корекційних педагогів до науково-дослідної роботи.

Ключові слова: науково-дослідницька компетентність, пошуково-дослідницька діяльність, здобувачі з особливими освітніми потребами, майбутні фахівці спеціальної освіти, корекційний педагог, професійна підготовка.

Introduction. Research activity among students of higher pedagogical education serves as a key factor in shaping their professional subjectivity and developing their individual creative potential. Involving students in scientific inquiry not only deepens their understanding of the regularities of pedagogical reality, but also stimulates their cognitive and professional initiative, encourages intellectual growth, and fosters the ability to generate innovative approaches to solving pedagogical problems.

Such activity ensures the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, functions as an important tool in forming a scientifically grounded pedagogical position, and is an integral part of the holistic process of professional and pedagogical training throughout the entire period of study at a higher education institution.

The «Special Education» specialty is gaining increasing relevance in the context of modern sociocultural development. This is due to a steady rise in the number of children and adults with developmental disorders who require professional support from specialists in this field. Despite the growing societal demand, there is a certain devaluation of the importance of this profession in public discourse, typically linked to a superficial or distorted understanding of its functional role – especially following the introduction of the inclusive education model.

Special education professionals fulfill a range of complex functions: they provide educational, psychological-pedagogical, and corrective-developmental support to children with special educational needs; they coordinate interdisciplinary collaboration, interacting with families, medical professionals, rehabilitation specialists, and social services. While in inclusive settings the educational component is provided by teachers of general education institutions, the implementation of corrective-developmental work requires the specialized competence of correctional educators. Without this expertise, achieving educational goals for children with special needs becomes ineffective or even unattainable.

In light of the above, the **aim of this study** is to define and scientifically substantiate the conceptual foundations for developing the research competence of future special education professionals within the context of their professional training.

Materials and Methods. The writing of this article is based on an in-depth analysis of literature sources concerning the training of specialists within the higher education system and on practices in special education. The description incorporates the authors' own experience in developing the research competence of future specialists in special education.

Discussion. The training of specialists for professional implementation within the field of special education must be grounded in the fundamental principles of pedagogical science (A. Aleksyuk, V. Andrushchenko,

I. Bekh, A. Boiko, V. Bondar, S. Vitvytska, S. Honcharenko, N. Demianenko, V. Luhovyi, O. Sukhomlynska, L. Khomych, L. Khoruzha, and others), while also taking into account the specifics of special (corrective) pedagogy (V. Bondar, V. Havrylov, V. Zasenka, A. Kolupaeva, S. Myronova, V. Syniov, N. Sofii, M. Suprun, S. Fedorenko, L. Fomichova, M. Sheremet, and others).

A competency-based approach should serve as the conceptual guide for the professional training of special education specialists. This approach involves the integration of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and personal qualities, in clear alignment with current standards of higher education, professional standards, and qualification characteristics.

Research competence is a vital component of the educational process for future special education specialists. It ensures the effective application of graduates' integrated competencies in professional situations and the independent implementation of specific pedagogical projects.

Effective professional and pedagogical training should provide the most favorable developmental impact aimed at shaping the personality of the future correctional educator and unlocking their creative potential. Directing scientific activity toward the practical domain of both student and instructor professional engagement underlines the need to revise the factors that determine the organization of research work in higher education institutions.

We fully agree with the opinion of Academician V. Andrushchenko, who states that education connects a person to fundamental knowledge, culture, and social experience, shapes their competencies, fosters life-oriented and humanistic values, and cultivates an integrative worldview, thereby preparing a capable subject of future innovations. Structuring the education system is a strategic (and primary) task of social development. In this context, the modernization of education is one of the most crucial prerequisites for its future at the national, European, and global levels [1, p. 8].

Current realities demand a qualified, competent correctional educator capable of mastering the methodology of scientific inquiry, gaining research experience, actualizing their potential in the professional-pedagogical sphere, and implementing innovative approaches to organizing scientific work.

Based on the aforementioned principles, we identify several factors that, in our opinion, ensure the effectiveness of organizing student research activities. One of the key approaches is the creation of a professionally oriented environment, which modern pedagogical science views in the context of the humanistic paradigm. However, there remains a lack of thorough research dedicated to studying the characteristics of this phenomenon.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of an educational environment conducive to personal development and self-realization are reflected in the works of I. Bekh,

V. Bykov, P. Verbytska, I. Zyazyun, V. Zhelanova, O. Kyrychuk, M. Knyazian, L. Lazorenko, O. Savchenko, S. Sysioeva, O. Yaroshynska, and other scholars.

The concept of «environment» does not have a single, definitive interpretation in scientific discourse and is considered from various perspectives: as surroundings, as a system, or as a set of conditions. In a broad sense (macro-environment), it encompasses the socio-economic structure of society, including productive forces, social institutions, consciousness, and culture. In a narrower sense (micro-environment), it refers to the immediate surroundings of an individual. Regarding the «educational environment», researchers emphasize its function of supporting the comprehensive development of the individual and creating conditions for realizing their positive potential.

The formation of the future special education professional as a personality who is simultaneously the subject and organizer of scientific inquiry within an educational institution is most effective in the context of a scientific-educational environment. Such an environment stimulates the development of scientific thinking, academic mobility, and students' creative activity.

An analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature shows that the research activity of future correctional educators is characterized by the creative orientation of intellectual processes. The effectiveness of these processes increases when students develop the ability to anticipate outcomes, formulate goals and hypotheses, identify independent paths to problem-solving, and justify their own decisions.

Creating such an environment in higher education institutions requires identifying and implementing mechanisms for both internal and external interaction – with institutions at other educational levels, as well as with governmental and public organizations. The intra-university environment is viewed as a special form of scientific community that functions analogously to a scientific school. On one hand, such a community generates new educational content and tests pedagogical technologies; on the other, it ensures the personal and professional growth of participants in the educational process.

The complexity and multifaceted nature of the issue of developing research activities are explained by the multitude of factors that influence educational outcomes. Among them, a significant role is played by the creation of a professionally oriented environment that fosters inner freedom, self-realization, and spiritual and cultural enrichment of the individual, while also transforming the content and methodology of organizing students' scientific activity.

It is precisely the reflective character of such organization that enables both the teacher and the student to realize their potential – intellectually, socially, and spiritually – by fostering motivation for interaction based on the principles of humanistic co-creativity, achieving wholeness and the harmonious diversity of the inner and outer existence of each participant in the educational process.

An important element of a professionally oriented environment is the worldview and value-based growth of its participants. This manifests in their ability for self-development, self-determination, responsible attitude toward their

own activity, and the formation of self-creation experience through the completion of scientific tasks.

This condition is realized through: subject-equal interaction in the context of innovative learning; reflection on personal capabilities in the course of problem-reflective dialogue; active self-reflection and spiritual enrichment of mental experience; awareness of the uniqueness of one's own existence through reflection on the educational path traveled and the outcomes of psycho-cultural self-affirmation.

Researchers note that the key figure in the educational process is the personality of the teacher, with well-developed communicative competence. They define this competence as an integrative personal formation that reflects the development of professional competencies and personal qualities, enabling the teacher to establish psychological contact with all participants in the educational process and to organize pedagogically appropriate interaction in an inclusive educational environment. Continuous communicative interaction in various conditions, under different circumstances, and in diverse situations fosters empathy, mutual affection, awareness of each individual's uniqueness, and a sense of security [5].

Based on the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The future correctional educator independently determines their educational paradigm by mastering professional experience, engaging in scientific discourse, and familiarizing themselves with the achievements of science and culture;
- The formation of a productive educational environment requires the joint participation of teachers, university administration, and professionals involved in organizing students' research activities;
- The quality of such an environment is defined by the professional level of teachers and their ability to establish a system of scientific guidelines that determine the research direction of interaction within the educational space.

In the context of further implementation of these scientific guidelines in the author's pedagogical process, it is planned to expand the forms of organizing research and exploratory activity for future special education professionals, reorient educational content according to a model of a specialist-professional who meets modern standards of professional quality, and shift the educational goals toward developing a sustainable need for continuous professional self-improvement and personal growth.

The research activity of higher education students should become a kind of bifurcation point in the higher education system, as the convergence of professional training with science, the focus on interdisciplinary approaches to solving educational problems, and the search for innovative methods and approaches to enhancing student research require the educational process to be grounded in facilitative interaction between teacher and student.

Given that the effectiveness of pedagogical interaction largely depends on the teacher's professional skill, the facilitative function becomes especially relevant. This function involves creating favorable conditions for the professional growth of participants in the educational process based on the principles of creative pedagogy – or «psychological

pedagogy» in the interpretation of C. Rogers. It also includes supporting the effective assimilation of information and the improvement of pedagogical interaction between teacher and student. In this context, the implementation of subject-subject interaction is a key factor in the facilitative support of the process of students mastering the methodology and tools of scientific inquiry, which are integral components of their professional training.

Improving the effectiveness of student research activities depends, in particular, on the quality of the established facilitative interaction among educational process participants, supported and initiated by the teaching staff. Facilitative interaction is an inseparable component of the pedagogical process and implies: the participants' aspiration toward understanding and harmonious interaction; the teacher's ability to offer educational activities that captivate, surprise, and inspire; the creation of educational situations that foster the personal uniqueness of each student, bring them beyond the boundaries of formal communication, and guide them toward the gradual development of their spiritual potential – which is, above all, an act of affirming human dignity and subjectivity of the future educator.

Thus, the means of implementing the outlined strategy is the facilitative approach to organizing interaction among the subjects of the educational process, which contributes to expanding the individual cognitive horizon of each participant. Such interaction ensures a reconsideration of the content of the issues studied, revealing new semantic dimensions for their comprehension. In this context, it is seen as a potential foundation for the effective organization of educational-exploratory, cognitive-scientific, and research activity of future correctional educators – particularly through the initiation by the teacher of problematic, cognitive, and practice-oriented tasks that involve students in independent creative inquiry.

The implementation of this approach is possible only if an appropriate psychological climate is created – one based on mutual trust, openness, tolerance toward alternative viewpoints, and constructive dialogue. Amidst dynamic socio-economic transformations, there is an increasing need to reconsider the role of the modern correctional educator within the updated educational paradigm. Society needs special education professionals with a high level of intellectual development who are capable of effectively motivating, supporting, and inspiring children by stimulating their cognitive engagement and interest in learning and development.

In this context, the pedagogical university is called to become a scientific-methodological center and strategic coordinator of purposeful changes in the field of professional training for future special education professionals. The main task within the scope of this issue is to create conditions for the development of students' intellectual and creative potential, and their involvement in research activity by integrating its content with professional training.

Particularly relevant today is the task of preparing an elite researcher-specialist of a new type – one capable of independently solving complex research problems

and demonstrating original, highly effective approaches to addressing educational challenges. In this regard, a logical conclusion emerges about the need for systemic implementation of the principle of «learning through research», which entails developing research skills and engaging students in various forms of educational and research activity. Such an approach ensures the formation of the methodological culture of the future researcher-specialist.

At the center of this process stands the correctional educator – a change agent, dynamic, adaptive, highly reflective, and capable of continuously renewing their scientific potential. The success of transformational processes in the educational space largely depends on them.

Given the significant educational and developmental potential of research activity in the professional formation of future correctional educators, an important strategic direction should be the intensification of its impact as a means of developing the individual creative capacities of each student. At the same time, it is important to highlight a contradiction observed in higher education practice: namely, the dominance of assessing the results of students' educational activities over evaluating their personal potential. Such an approach narrows the scope of the university's influence on shaping a holistic, professionally mature personality in future special education professionals, since the emphasis shifts toward achieving predetermined outcomes, rather than creating conditions for the discovery and development of each learner's individual abilities.

Results. Considering the problem in a holistic context, it can be argued that the implementation of the main directions of professional education is possible only under the condition of organizing students' structured educational and research activities. This is explained by the fact that it is precisely through research activities that a person first defines themselves as a subject and faces the task of transforming themselves by adopting new roles and functions in this process. Such formation is conscious and purposeful, emphasizing the importance of personal development within the framework of scientific inquiry.

Under these conditions, research activity becomes a self-directed engagement of the future specialist in special education, where activity is an integral characteristic of this process. The scientific organization of this activity involves managing the level of engagement, which includes motivation, choosing development pathways, achieving an optimal level of activity, and maintaining this level as a crucial component of research competence. It is important for the student to gain experience in performing new tasks under changed conditions based on acquired knowledge and skills.

The results of the scientific investigations served as the foundation for a congruent conceptual model for organizing the research work of future specialists in special education, aimed at understanding and generalizing the essence of its components and the developmental interrelation as an important mechanism for ensuring consistent and non-contradictory pedagogical actions and decisions.

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