

06

Presentation date: January, 2024

Date of acceptance: May, 2024

Publication date: July, 2024

PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL

FOUNDATIONS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF INCLUSIVE STUDENTS

FUNDAMENTOS PSICOPEDAGÓGICOS DE LA FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL DEL ESTUDIANTE INCLUSIVO

Aytakin Telman Mammadova ¹*

Email: telmanaytekin82@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1084-8884>

Shahnaz Mustafa Guliyeva ¹

Email: shahnaz1969@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7648-502X>

Ayna Shirzad Hajiyeva ¹

Email: haciyevaayna748@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1598-8157>

Shalala Ali Adigozelova ¹

Email: adigozelshallala@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4277-0866>

* Author for correspondence

¹ Sumgayit State University. Azerbaijan.

Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Mammadova, A. T., Guliyeva, S. M., Hajiyeva, A. S., & Adigozelova, S. A. (2024). Psychopedagogical foundations of vocational training of inclusive students. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 16(4), 64-70.

ABSTRACT

This article examines the birth, development and existence of the field of science known as Educational Psychology within the framework of inclusivity in vocational schools. The topic is discussed from the perspective of the preparation of inclusive students in vocational education in Azerbaijan and the world. In this way, it aims to contribute to the correct positioning and conceptualization of educational psychology as a field of scientific study in Azerbaijan, especially at present. One of the most distinctive characteristics of being a scientific field is the formation of a framework for the field and a community that interacts based on a shared language and understanding. Therefore, in this article, educational psychology, considered as a scientific field, is examined in parallel with two elements: vocational education and inclusivity. Although the educational psychology of the inclusive student is a field of science, it is also known as a concept identified with the career offered under the same name. Improving the quality of the field of educational psychology or weakening the function of this field is a problem of the educational sciences. Therefore, the existence of this field must be addressed by both educational scientists and experts in educational psychology. This article was written with this awareness.

Keywords: Vocational training of students, Inclusive education, Attitude, Students with disabilities, Special student.

RESUMEN

Este artículo examina el nacimiento, desarrollo y existencia del campo de la ciencia conocida como Psicología de la Educación en el marco de la inclusividad en las escuelas vocacionales. El tema se discute desde la perspectiva de la preparación de estudiantes inclusivos en la educación vocacional en Azerbaiyán y el mundo. De esta manera, se pretende contribuir al correcto posicionamiento y conceptualización de la psicología educativa como campo de estudio científico en Azerbaiyán, especialmente en la actualidad. Una de las características más distintivas de ser un campo científico es la formación de un marco para el campo y una comunidad que interactúa basándose en un lenguaje y una comprensión compartidos. Por ello, en este artículo se examina la psicología educativa, considerada como un campo científico, en paralelo con dos elementos: la educación vocacional y la inclusividad. Si bien la psicología educativa del estudiante inclusivo es un campo de la ciencia, también se la conoce como un concepto identificado con la

carrera que se ofrece bajo el mismo nombre. Mejorar la calidad del campo de la psicología educativa o debilitar la función de este campo es un problema de las ciencias de la educación. Por tanto, la existencia de este campo debe ser abordada tanto por los científicos de la educación como por los expertos en psicología educativa. Este artículo fue escrito con esta línea investigativa.

Palabras claves: Formación profesional de estudiantes, Educación inclusiva, actitud, Estudiantes con discapacidades, Estudiante especial.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an approach to teaching students with diverse needs, abilities, and backgrounds together in the same classroom environment, thus ensuring that all individuals benefit from equal educational opportunities. Some of its key principles are: presence, where all students attend and are welcomed in their neighborhood schools in regular, age-appropriate classes; participation, where students actively engage in their learning and school life; and achievement, where students learn effectively and reach their full potential (Alzahrani, 2020; Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2021).

According to research conducted in special education in the last twenty years, inclusive education creates a quality teaching environment not only for students with disabilities, but for all students (Florian, 2019). In other words, inclusion is a movement that aims to create schools that meet the needs of all students by creating learning communities for students with and without disabilities who are educated together in age-appropriate general education classes in neighborhood schools (Nichkalo, 2014). The purpose of inclusion is to ensure that students with special needs are integrated into the general and vocational education environment for as long as possible with the supports they need to be successful (Kargin et al., 2010, p. 2435). Integration trainings, which are carried out at all levels, aim to ensure the social interaction of individuals and thus create a healthy educational environment. Today, individuals with disabilities are supported to take part in inclusive classes where they can come together with their peers, rather than being in special education classes (Uysal, 2003).

Inclusive education aspire at providing all students with equitable opportunities to succeed, regardless of their individual differences. Therefore, inclusive education involves an educational process that requires changes in content, teaching methods, approaches and educational strategies, and for inclusive education to be successful, it is important for educators, families and students to be

involved in education (Erten & Savage, 2012; Spandagou, 2021). Studies show that in a successful inclusive education, educators' attitudes and preparation for the lesson also affect the success of the education (Ba, 2022). It is essential that school personnel, families and educators work collaboratively in planning the necessary educational strategies for students with different learning needs to get the most out of regular education classes. It can have a beneficial effect on the development of inclusive learning environments in institutions where inclusive education is provided, depending on the form of cooperation between teachers (Ba, 2022; Osuna-Juárez & González-Castellano, 2023).

However, implementing inclusive education in regular schools has faced challenges, leading to special education schools playing a complementary role in some cases. Some of the biggest obstacles include (Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015; Augusto et al., 2022; Moriña, 2017; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014; Walton, 2023):

Attitudinal Barriers:

- Limited comprehension about inclusivity: Many individuals still lack a full understanding of what inclusive education entails and the advantages it offers. This can breed opposition to change and hinder implementing inclusive practices in schools.
- Biased perceptions and stereotyping: Prejudiced views and stereotyping of those with disabilities or differences can obstruct the participation and inclusion of all students.
- Empathy deficit: Struggles to grasp the needs and challenges faced by students with disabilities or differences can impede fostering an inclusive school environment.
- Organizational Hurdles:
- Resource constraints: Schools frequently lack adequate resources to adopt inclusive practices, such as trained faculty, adapted materials, and specialized support services.
- Physical barriers: School facilities may contain architectural impediments that restrict access and involvement for students with physical disabilities.
- Inflexible curricula: School curricula can be rigid and unable to adapt to accommodate the needs of all students.
- Lack of synergy: Insufficient collaboration among teachers, parents, and other professionals can obstruct the implementation of inclusive practices.

Pedagogical Challenges:

- Inadequate teacher preparation: Educators often lack proper training to effectively meet the needs of all students.
- Ineffective instructional approaches: Traditional teaching methods may be ill-suited for all students, especially those with special educational requirements.
- Inadequate assessments: Conventional assessment techniques may fail to properly gauge the progress of all students, particularly those with special needs.
- Social Factors:
 - Peer exclusion: Students with disabilities or differences may encounter social exclusion from their classmates.
 - Bullying issues: Bullying can pose a serious problem in inclusive schools, with students exhibiting disabilities or differences being more susceptible to victimization.
 - Unsupportive families: Families of students with disabilities or differences may lack the necessary support system to aid their children's academic success.

There are also debates around whether inclusive education is truly achievable for all students, especially those with severe or profound disabilities. But despite these obstacles, pursuing inclusive education remains a worthy endeavor. By cultivating an educational system that embraces all students, we can help ensure everyone has the chance to realize their full potential. As can be seen, inclusive education is a complex and evolving concept that requires ongoing research and adaptation to different contexts and student needs.

Considering the above, the goal of this work is to analyze the psycho-pedagogical foundations of the inclusive student's vocational training. The determinations, analyses and suggestions of the article were mainly based on the framework of the educational sciences formed in Azerbaijan from the experiences of science to pedagogy. Therefore, in this article the field of educational psychology is examined based on inclusive courses in the field of general education and vocational education in Azerbaijan. The textbooks used for the courses were used as sources of information while field information and associations were being developed. Since ontological analysis is considered incomplete without generating basic information, in this article the historical method was used, whose subject is the ontological evaluation of the psychology of inclusion in vocational training institutions.

DEVELOPMENT

Educational psychology concept in the context of support for vocational training of inclusive students

It is noteworthy that in the first half of the 1900s, when the views that students with special needs should be educated in special education schools were widespread, opinions and efforts towards inclusion, albeit limited, began to form (Kargin et al., 2010, p. 2437). Inclusive education is the inclusion of children in the same class at school with their peers, regardless of their physical, mental, intellectual and other characteristics. The education of children with disabilities together with their non-disabled peers is an effective form of education for everyone. Thus, the participation of all children in the educational process carried out in the same class encourages educators to approach students individually. In addition, the results of various studies show that studying together children with disabilities and children without disabilities in an inclusive classroom leads to a change in attitudes towards difference, improvement of self-esteem and acceptance of peers, which contributes to the construction of a socially just and non-discriminatory society.

The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) covers many aspects of the educational rights of persons with disabilities and promotes inclusive education as the best educational environment for all. Similarly, Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1990) recognizes the right of every child to education and supports the realization of this right on the basis of equal opportunities. The mentioned article states that education should be focused on the development of the child's personality, talent, mental and physical abilities, respect for human rights and basic freedoms, life in a free society in peace, friendship, understanding, tolerance and equality, and respect for the environment. On this basis, the inclusion of children with disabilities in education together with children without disabilities is especially considered. In addition, UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasizes the provision of inclusive and equal quality education for all.

Inclusive practices for students of vocational educational institutions with special needs are the meeting point of general and special educational practices. As in the whole world, within the definition of inclusiveness in Azerbaijan, students with special needs should continue their education in the same schools and in the same classes as their peers (CESD, 2016). While they spent part of the school day in a general education classroom with their peers, they also spent part of the school day attending a special class for the visually impaired. In the same period, steps towards special education classes and inclusion practices began to be taken within general education schools. In 1928, it was decided to open special and general

education schools together in England, and in 1944, it was legally accepted that students with special needs should be educated in general education classes (LeRoy & Simpson, 1996, pp. 35–36). Inclusion practices, which mean that students with special needs and normally developing students receive education together in general education schools and classes, have been accepted and implemented in many countries since the 1960s (LeRoy & Simpson, 1996, p. 34).

In the 1970s, inclusive practices in the direction of general education, as well as vocational education, started in the United States, became widespread over time and began to form the basis of the education policy of many countries (OECD, 1995). With the laws that came into force in Italy in 1971, in England in 1974, in the USA and France in 1975, and in Norway in 1976, it was legally accepted that students with special needs should be educated with their peers in general education classes. In Finland, the movement to improve schools to meet the needs of all students started in the 1970s and entered its most effective period in the 1990s. In Portugal, the education system was reorganized with the Basic Education Law enacted in 1986. It is stated in the law that the general purpose of special education is to ensure the social and educational adaptation of physically and mentally disabled children. For this purpose, it was planned to give importance and priority to the practice of inclusion, but it could not be fully implemented due to financial difficulties. This situation led to the preference for special education services to be provided by private institutions and non-governmental organizations (Kargin et al., 2010; OECD, 1995).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), adopted in the USA in 1975, is a comprehensive law that aims to ensure that school-age disabled children benefit from appropriate educational services (Kargin et al., 2010). In 1990, some amendments were made to PL 94-142 and this law was named the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (PL 101-476). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act includes a provision supporting inclusive education. According to this provision, schools must accept all children, regardless of the degree and characteristics of their disabilities; no child with special needs is excluded from free public education.

In Australia, discussions began in the early 1970s about the right of children with special needs to receive education in general education classes, and this right was guaranteed by the Disability Discrimination Act adopted in 1992. France, which has a two-hundred-year history in the field of special education, decided that, with a special law passed in 1975, disabled children should also be included in compulsory education and education should be

given in normal classes, and when it is not possible, these students should be taken to special subclasses or sent to other special educational institutions according to their disabilities (Uysal, 2003).

In England, the principles of educational regulations for children in each disability group were determined with the Education Act and Regulations enacted in 1993 and the Code of Practice entered into force in 1994 (Kargin et al., 2010). In the Code of Practice, it is stated that individuals with special needs should benefit from the broadest and most comprehensive education system possible and that the needs of more individuals with special needs should be met through inclusion.

In 1994, the World Conference on Special Needs Education was held in Salamanca, with the participation of more than 300 people from 92 states and 25 international organizations. The conference aimed to develop an integration approach in line with the goal of “education for all” and to take the necessary political steps to ensure that schools serve all children, especially children with special needs. The Salamanca Statement is the first international document calling for children with special needs to receive education within the general education system (UNESCO, 1994). Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 states that:

Persons with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of their disabilities, and children with disabilities should not be excluded from free and compulsory primary and secondary education opportunities on the basis of their disabilities. (United Nations, 2006).

Again, in Article 24 of the convention, it is stated that “in order for persons with disabilities to benefit from general education effectively, they must receive the support they need within the general education system.” In summary, inclusive practices, which were initiated in the United States in the 1970s, have become widespread over time and have affected the education policies of many countries. Countries have made changes at the necessary legislation, policy and practice levels in their education systems so that students with special needs can receive education in the same schools and classes as their non-disabled peers. In addition, the educational rights of students with special needs have been secured with the international agreements signed, and significant gains have been achieved in ensuring that these students benefit from special education services in the best possible way.

Inclusivity within the framework of vocational education in Azerbaijan

According to Article 5 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Education" in the national legislation, the state shall create the opportunity to study for every citizen, regardless of gender, race, language, religion, political belief, ethnicity, social status, origin, and health capabilities, and ensures that discrimination is not allowed. Also, the State Program for the Development of Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018-2024, approved by Decree No. 3498 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated December 14th, 2017, protects the right to education of persons with disabilities at all levels of education and takes as its main goal to provide education on an equal level with others and to create a barrier-free environment for their education (Aliyev, 2017).

Based on this, significant work is being done in the education system in order to fulfill international and national obligations. In order to ensure quality inclusive education in the country, the network of general educational institutions where inclusive classes are organized is being expanded, support is provided for ensuring the right to education of children with disabilities in Azerbaijan, the quality of inclusive education is increased, and staff potential is strengthened in schools. Since 2018, the Educational Institute of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been carrying out a number of activities in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Children's Fund (McCabe, 2011). Thus, in 2018-2020, Teacher Development Centers (sometimes called Resource Centers) were established in order to support the opportunities of children with disabilities to receive quality education in general educational institutions. Those centers created in 9 schools selected in 7 regions (Baku, Ganja, Sumgayit, Guba, Sheki, Aghjabadi, and Gazakh) served for the professional development of teachers.

Starting from 2021, it supports the promotion of inclusion in vocational education and the application of inclusive education in Azerbaijan in 3 directions: Awareness, Training, and Methodical support. A number of activities are carried out in order to ensure the awareness of stakeholders about inclusive education. Thus, in order to form a culture of inclusion in vocational educational institutions, meetings are organized with the pedagogical and administrative staff, as well as with students and their parents. During those meetings, participants are informed about inclusion, the essence and importance of inclusive education, the medical and social approach to disability, as well as the role of school staff and parents in inclusive

education. In addition, social videos are made that discuss the nature and importance of inclusive education.

The Educational Institute conducts various trainings to increase the competence of teachers, correctional pedagogues, and psychologists in the field of inclusive education. Trainings include inclusive values, the social and medical approach to disability, child-oriented pedagogy, Universal Learning Design, planning and implementation of inclusive education to promote the effective organization of the teaching-learning process, the use of various classroom strategies, and other topics. At the same time, trainings are held in order to support the Psychological-Medical-Pedagogical Commissions in the selection of children with disabilities who will be involved in inclusive education. Inclusive education and inclusion, work with parents of children with disabilities, as well as rules and criteria for identifying students, and obstacles to their inclusion in inclusive education are discussed with the members of the commission.

To ensure the implementation of quality inclusive education, teachers, correctional pedagogues, psychologists, and school management are supported by mentoring and Individual Training Plans. During the mentoring support, discussions are held with the pedagogical and administrative staff on topics such as the adaptation of students with disabilities to the school and teachers, socialization, the use of effective teaching strategies in classes, including difficulties arising in the teaching-learning process and their elimination, and cooperation with parents. Suggestions and advice in these directions are given. Also, specialists provide teachers, correctional pedagogues, school psychologists, and parents with the necessary assistance in the preparation, improvement, and implementation of Individual Training Plans. In addition, a methodological tool called "Organization of Inclusive Training in Professional Groups" has been prepared to help teachers working in various groups of vocational educational institutions in the effective organization of the training process with students with disabilities. In order to evaluate the work done in the field of application and development of inclusive education and timely implementation of necessary corrections, the Educational Institute regularly monitors schools.

Although successful work has been done in the relevant direction, since the activity in this field is new, there are many problems. The number of students in the class, the size of the classroom, the sound, light, heating, and ventilation system of the classroom, desks, cabinets, and special devices in the classroom are recognized as important elements of the appropriate physical environment (McCabe, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to establish

inclusive schools with an appropriate physical environment in Azerbaijan, evaluate the results of inclusive models to be applied in these schools, and carry out forward improvement work in inclusive practices.

CONCLUSIONS

Inclusive education, which is mostly provided as face-to-face inclusive education, has been implemented successfully in Azerbaijan since the beginning of the 2000s. Interestingly, inclusive education practices have grown since then, but initiatives for the mainstreaming model have remained limited. However, when examining the statistics of the Ministry of Education, it appears that the number of students attending inclusive education in Azerbaijan is increasing. Although the Ministry of Education prepared regulations for the implementation of inclusive education considering this increase, it is a fact that the existing problems of inclusive education continue. One of the main problems facing the implementation of inclusion in Azerbaijan is that classrooms and schools, especially vocational schools, do not have a suitable physical environment for the implementation of this education. The number of students in the class, the size of the classroom, the sound, light, heating and ventilation systems of the classroom, desks, cabinets and special devices in the classroom are recognized as important elements of an appropriate physical environment. Therefore, it is necessary to establish inclusive schools with an appropriate physical environment in Azerbaijan, evaluate the results of inclusive models to be applied in these schools, and carry out further improvement works in inclusive practices.

Although it is gratifying that more and more students are benefiting from the inclusive experience, there are many significant problems at the practical level, such as the large number of students, the lack of materials, the lack of functionalization of the applications of the Individualized Education Program units, the lack of information about education, and the lack of support education services. Support rooms for students with special needs outside the classroom cannot be established when necessary, and some private institutions and organizations are trying their best to create small units for this purpose. This situation limits the educational rights of students with special needs. First of all, it is necessary to develop policies that will ensure the employment of special education teachers in each school or educational region where inclusive education is provided. Thus, special educational support will be provided to classroom teachers and field teachers working in inclusive classrooms, both in and out of the classroom. In addition, the provision of assistant teacher support to classroom teachers and field teachers working in

inclusive classrooms will increase the success of inclusive education. Based on these problems experienced in inclusive education practices and legislation in Azerbaijan, alternative inclusive models for people with special needs can be developed. However, the spread of models in which special education schools or special education vocational classes, which lead to the separation of people with special needs, are combined with general education classes that provide inclusive education, should be aimed at providing education to every child under equal conditions.

REFERENCES

- Aliyev, I. (2017). State Program for the Development of Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018-2024. <https://baku.edu.gov.az/upload/file/inkluziv-tehsil-dovlet-proqrami-2018-2024.pdf>
- Alzahrani, N. (2020). The Development of Inclusive Education Practice: A Review of Literature. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 12(1), 68–83. <https://doi.org/10.20489/intjecse.722380>
- Ametepee, L. K., & Anastasiou, D. (2015). Special and inclusive education in Ghana: Status and progress, challenges and implications. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 41, 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2015.02.007>
- Augusto Ferrari, F. A., Miranda Dugois, R. C., & Moriya Schlunzen, E. T. (2022). Inclusive Education: Challenges and difficulties in daily school life. *DIALOGIA*, 41. <https://doi.org/10.5585/41.2022.21981>
- Baş, G. (2022). Factors Influencing Teacher Efficacy in Inclusive Education. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education*, 46(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jsi.2021.22>
- CESD. (2016). Access to education for persons with disabilities: Real situation, international practice and proposals. Economic and Social Development Center.
- Erten, O., & Savage, R. S. (2012). Moving forward in inclusive education research. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(2), 221–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603111003777496>
- Florian, L. (2019). On the necessary co-existence of special and inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(7–8), 691–704. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1622801>

- Kargin, T., Güldenoglu, B., & Şahin, F. (2010). Examining the opinions of classroom teachers regarding the adaptations that should be made for students with special needs in general education classes. *Educational Sciences in Theory and Practice*, 10(4), 2431–2464.
- LeRoy, B., & Simpson, C. (1996). Improving student outcomes through inclusive education. *Support for Learning*, 11(1), 32–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9604.1996.tb00046.x>
- McCabe, C. (2011). Situation Assessment: People with disabilities in Azerbaijan. Unicef Azerbaijan.
- Moriña, A. (2017). Inclusive education in higher education: Challenges and opportunities. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32(1), 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1254964>
- Nichkalo, N. (2014). Development of Vocational Education in the Conditions of Globalization and Integration Processes. NPU Drahomanov Publishing House.
- OECD. (1995). Integrating Students with Special Needs Into Mainstream Schools. OECD Publications.
- Osuna-Juárez, A., & González-Castellano, N. (2023). Understanding professors' and students with disabilities' perceptions of inclusive higher education: A systematic literature review. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 0(0), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2023.2294238>
- Spandagou, I. (2021). Inclusive education is another country; developments, obstacles and resistance to inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 0(0), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1965805>
- Stentiford, L., & Koutsouris, G. (2021). What are inclusive pedagogies in higher education? A systematic scoping reviews. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(11), 2245–2261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1716322>
- UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special needs of Education. United Nations. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Salamanca_Statement_1994.pdf
- United Nations. (1990). Convention on the Rights of the Child. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>
- United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd>
- Uysal, A. (2003). Opinions of Teachers Who Practice Inclusion on Inclusion. 13th National Education Congress.
- Vorapanya, S., & Dunlap, D. (2014). Inclusive education in Thailand: Practices and challenges. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(10), 1014–1028. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.693400>
- Walton, E. (2023). Why inclusive education falters: A Bernsteinian analysis. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2241045>