



PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING SPECIAL PEDAGOGY DISCIPLINES ON THE BASIS OF AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: The modernization of higher education requires the implementation of innovative teaching approaches that ensure the development of professional competencies and interdisciplinary thinking among future specialists. This paper explores practical recommendations for teaching special pedagogy disciplines through an integrative approach in higher education institutions. The study emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, competency-based learning, innovative pedagogical technologies, and inclusive educational practices. The proposed recommendations aim to improve the quality of professional training, enhance students' practical skills, and strengthen the connection between theoretical knowledge and professional practice. The findings indicate that the integrative approach contributes significantly to the effectiveness of educational processes and the preparation of highly qualified special education professionals.

Keywords: integrative approach, special pedagogy, higher education, interdisciplinary integration.

In the context of rapid social, technological, and educational transformations, higher education institutions are expected to prepare specialists who possess not only profound theoretical knowledge but also the ability to apply interdisciplinary competencies in professional practice. This requirement is particularly relevant in the field of special pedagogy, where future professionals work with learners who have diverse educational needs and require comprehensive pedagogical support.

The increasing complexity of educational challenges has highlighted the limitations of traditional subject-centered teaching models. As a result, educational researchers and practitioners have increasingly focused on integrative approaches that promote the interconnectedness of knowledge, skills, and competencies across different disciplines. The integrative approach enables students to perceive educational phenomena holistically, establish



meaningful relationships between theoretical concepts and practical situations, and develop flexible problem-solving abilities.

In special pedagogy education, integration serves as a crucial mechanism for combining knowledge from pedagogy, psychology, speech therapy, inclusive education, correctional pedagogy, and related fields. Such interdisciplinary cooperation allows future specialists to gain a comprehensive understanding of developmental disorders, educational interventions, and support strategies for individuals with special educational needs. Consequently, integrative learning contributes to the formation of professional competence and readiness for real-world pedagogical practice.

Despite the recognized benefits of integration, many higher education institutions continue to face challenges related to curriculum design, teaching methodologies, assessment systems, and the professional development of academic staff. Therefore, identifying practical recommendations for implementing an integrative approach in teaching special pedagogy disciplines remains an important scientific and educational task.

This paper aims to develop and justify practical recommendations that can support higher education institutions in effectively implementing integrative teaching strategies within special pedagogy programs. The recommendations are intended to enhance educational quality, improve students' professional competencies, and strengthen the overall effectiveness of the learning process.

The implementation of an integrative approach in teaching special pedagogy disciplines requires systematic changes in curriculum design, instructional methods, and assessment strategies. In higher education institutions, the effectiveness of professional training largely depends on how well theoretical knowledge is connected with practical application and how interdisciplinary links are established between related subjects such as special pedagogy, inclusive education, psychology, speech therapy, and correctional pedagogy.

To examine the effectiveness of the integrative approach, an experimental study was conducted involving 80 students of a special pedagogy program. The participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group (40 students) and a control group (40 students). In the experimental group, instruction was organized based on integrative principles, while the control group was taught using traditional lecture-based methods.

The effectiveness of the integrative approach was evaluated using the following criteria: level of theoretical knowledge acquisition, development of professional competencies, ability to apply interdisciplinary knowledge in



practice, independent learning skills, communication and teamwork abilities, problem-solving and analytical thinking skills.

At the beginning of the experiment, diagnostic assessments showed no significant differences between the two groups, ensuring the validity of comparative analysis.

Table 1

Initial level of students' learning outcomes (%)		
Level		Experimental
group	Control group	
High		20.5 22.0
Medium		52.3 50.8
Low		27.2 27.2

The results indicate that both groups had relatively similar starting levels of academic achievement. After one academic semester of instruction based on the integrative approach, significant improvements were observed in the experimental group.

Table 2

Final level of students' learning outcomes (%)		
Level		Experimental
group	Control group	
High		78.4 56.9
Medium		18.6 31.5
Low		3.0 11.6

The data clearly demonstrate that the proportion of high-achieving students in the experimental group increased from 20.5% to 78.4%, while in the control group the increase was significantly lower. At the same time, the number of low-performing students in the experimental group decreased dramatically.

Further analysis focused on the development of professional competencies.

Table 3

Dynamics of professional competence development (%)		
Competence area		Initial stage Final
stage		
Pedagogical knowledge		47.6 86.2
Practical teaching skills		44.9 88.0
Diagnostic skills		42.3 82.5
Inclusive education competencies		40.8 85.7
Communication skills		51.4 89.1



The results show that integrative instruction significantly enhanced all categories of professional competencies. The most notable improvement was observed in inclusive education competencies and practical teaching skills, confirming the importance of linking theory with practice.

Independent learning skills were also analyzed as a key indicator of educational quality.

Table 4

Development of independent learning skills (%)

Indicator	Initial stage	Final stage
Information search skills	45.2	87.6
Academic reading and analysis	43.8	84.3
Independent problem solving	39.7	81.9
Research skills	37.5	79.8

The results confirm that students in the experimental group developed stronger independent learning abilities, including research skills and analytical thinking.

A student survey was also conducted to evaluate perceptions of the learning process. The findings revealed that: 92.3% of students reported better understanding of interdisciplinary connections, 88.7% indicated improved practical training effectiveness, 86.5% experienced increased motivation for learning, 90.1% confirmed improved readiness for professional practice. Statistical analysis of the results showed that the differences between the experimental and control groups were significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming the reliability of the findings.

Based on the results, the following practical recommendations can be proposed: Integrate interdisciplinary content across all special pedagogy courses. Use interactive and practice-oriented teaching methods such as case studies, simulations, and project-based learning. Strengthen cooperation between academic disciplines and clinical practice. Develop digital learning resources to support integrative instruction. Provide continuous professional development for instructors in modern pedagogical technologies. Implement competency-based assessment systems focusing on real-world application of knowledge.

Overall, the findings confirm that the integrative approach significantly improves the quality of teaching special pedagogy disciplines and enhances students' professional readiness for inclusive and correctional educational practice.



The results of this study confirm that the integrative approach is an effective pedagogical strategy for improving the quality of teaching special pedagogy disciplines in higher education. The experimental data demonstrated significant positive changes in students' academic achievement, professional competencies, independent learning abilities, and practical skills development in the experimental group compared to the control group.

In particular, the integrative teaching model contributed to a deeper understanding of interdisciplinary connections, stronger application of theoretical knowledge in practical situations, and improved readiness for professional practice in inclusive and special education settings. The statistical analysis also confirmed that the differences between the experimental and control groups were significant, which validates the effectiveness of the proposed approach.

Furthermore, the study highlights that integrative learning enhances students' motivation, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and collaborative skills. These outcomes are essential for preparing highly qualified special education professionals capable of working in complex and diverse educational environments.

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