

## **TRAINING PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS TO DEVELOP HEALTH-SAVING COMPETENCE OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

**Datskiv Olha,**  
*PhD (Pedagogy), Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor of the Department of English Philology  
and Methods of Teaching English,  
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National  
Pedagogical University,  
E-mail: olhadatskiv@tnpu.edu.ua*

The problem of saving school age children's health has always been relevant but it has become extremely acute nowadays due to the pandemic threat and distance learning challenge. The number of students who have a chronic condition or disability increases very quickly. Learners with special educational needs (SEN) belong to an «at risk» category, therefore they «need special approaches to forming their health-saving competence as a necessary way of improvement the life quality» [2, p. 289–290]. These approaches need to be developed commonly by in-service teachers and teacher trainers and implemented into the process of pre-service teachers training. Pre-service teacher education and training involving health-saving competence formation and development is crucial to preparing future teachers for the new conditions in which teaching and learning occurs and increased responsibilities.

The ability of pre-service English teachers to form health-saving competence of SEN learners lies within their professional competence, in particular their inclusive competence. Copious research explores health saving-competence of pre-primary and primary students, its structure and means of development [4, p. 308; 2, p. 270–271]. The researchers are unanimous in that all aspects of the problem need to be further addressed.

This paper aims at exploring ways of training pre-service English teachers to develop health-saving competence of learners with SEN. The research questions are as follows: How is the need for forming SEN learners health-saving competence reflected in the English language methodology curriculum? What classroom activities best develop SEN learners' health-saving competence?

O. Kazachiner and L. Tkachenko define health-saving competence as «the high level of excellence in the personality of health-saving activity, characterized by deep knowledge about the preservation and strengthening of health, the possibility of free possession of healthcare-saving activities and relevant competences» [2, p. 270]. This definition highlights the knowledge as a structural component of health-saving competence and activities of individuals aimed at developing the competence in connection with other competences. According to O. Kazachiner and L. Tkachenko, health-saving competence is accompanied by a belief in the importance of organizing their own health-saving actions, a positive attitude to them, the ability to use health-saving technologies during training activities, independent exercises and active recreation [2, p. 271].

It goes without saying that students' health-saving competence cannot be developed by teachers who lack knowledge, skills and abilities in the field and whose own health-saving competence is not developed. In another study teacher's health-saving competence is regarded as an integrative professional and personal quality that promotes the formation of a healthy lifestyle for participants of the educational process at school and at pedagogical university [3, p.186]. The definition stresses the integrative character of the teachers' health-saving competence which should be developed in both professional and personal domains. The study offers and experimentally verifies the method for forming the health-saving competence of pedagogical universities' students.

To answer the first research question about the reflection of the need for forming SEN learners health-saving competence in the English language teaching methodology curriculum we analysed the PRESETT Curriculum. With the aim to improve English language methodology teaching and learning at Ukrainian pedagogical universities and according to the Ministry of Education and Science order of 12 August 2015 No. 871, the curriculum was piloted in selected universities across

Ukraine in 2016-2019 academic years. Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University joined the New Generation School Teacher project in 2017. The final evaluation of the New Generation School Teacher project was undertaken in 2019. The evaluation report states that the experimental course has enabled the pilot universities to develop a cadre of novice teachers who are very well prepared to enter schools as highly competent classroom teachers [1, p. 19]. The introduction of the new PRESETT Curriculum constituted a significant reform for universities, for their teachers and students, a departure from previously existing practices.

Analysis of the Curriculum's structure will enable identification and description of the content and learning outcomes necessary for forming health-saving competence of SEN learners. The curriculum is made up of six modules, each representing a broad area of methodology, and each module contains a number of units, each of which covers an essential specialist topic for English teachers in training. Each module is designed to be taught for a semester, starting in Semester 3. The programme starts with a four-hour introduction to the course structure and requirements by way of orientation for the students. The six modules are arranged to reflect the pathway that students embark on from being language learners to becoming language teachers by the end of the programme. Thus, the more basic content is covered in early modules in Semesters 3 and 4 and more challenging topics follow later. Each unit has an allocation of 18 hours of class contact time, backed up by a recommended number of hours of self-study, in most cases 12. Module descriptions include aims, learning outcomes and recommended assessment specifications. Unit descriptions contain detailed objectives, indicative content and recommended reading references [1, p. 18].

The Profile of a newly-qualified English Teacher included in the Curriculum specifies that a graduate from the PRESETT Bachelor's programme should demonstrate ability to identify individual learning difficulties and cater for different categories of special educational needs in planning and teaching: plan teaching to meet the needs of learners and to achieve course outcomes according to the curriculum, anticipate non-language problems that may arise during the lesson and plan how to respond to them, create conditions and provide facilities for learning in the classroom, apply different types of assessment to suit a range of learning contexts, evaluate and select existing tasks/tests from an online or a printed source for assessing learners' progress and achievement, adapting and/or supplementing them if needed, select and create appropriate tasks and materials for the classroom [1, p. 20-21]. The knowledge, skills and qualities outlined above take a long time to be acquired, however, they contribute to the task of forming health-saving competence of SEN learners which requires careful planning and teaching from their English teachers. Thus, the Curriculum focuses specifically on planning for and teaching an inclusive class.

In the fourth year of English language teaching methodology course the students learn «Catering for Special Educational Needs (SEN)» as a course unit with the aim to achieve the following learning outcomes: evaluate, select and adapt materials and Internet resources for teaching foreign languages to learners of different age groups, learner types and/or learning difficulties, choose teaching strategies, methods, activities and assessment tools appropriate to an age group, learner type and/or learning difficulty, use classroom English appropriate to an age group, learner type and/or learning difficulty with a justified use of the learner's first language [1, p.25].

Research and practice suggest a range of activities conducive to development of SEN learners' health-saving competence. O. Kazachiner and L. Tkachenko advocate fairy-tale therapy as the specific way in which the health-saving competence of young English language learners, including the ones with SEN, can be formed [2]. Another effective activity, which does not require specialized training is storytelling. It helps children acquire useful habits of health saving and care as story characters teach children that they should sleep well, follow personal hygiene rules, do morning exercises, eat healthy food, dress according to the weather, etc. This knowledge is very important for SEN learners because they may have complex health and behavior-related problems.

As a part of their coursework in the unit «Catering for Special Educational Needs (SEN)» pre-service teachers are asked to research and create a list of relevant fairy tales, stories, poems,

cartoons and films, which they can use in their English classrooms to solve the daily tasks of health-saving competence forming. They also create a bank (collection) of different activities and a list of Internet resources which facilitate planning lessons and teaching English in inclusive classrooms. The content of these activities is aimed both at developing English language skills and forming health-saving competence of their students at different levels: primary, lower and upper secondary, high school.

During sessions in methodology pre-service teachers are asked to reflect upon the ways to adjust physical activities, such as games, to include SEN learners: they may consider altering speed, duration, space used, equipment and rules of the game. Pacing the game to accommodate students with limited mobility, repeating the game for students who are more fit or mobile, reducing its duration for students with lower levels of fitness, using game equipment that is easy to use, etc are important considerations that pre-service English teachers have to make while planning their lessons. The general recommendation is playing non-competitive games and provide a peer-helper to a SEN learner to facilitate engagement. The students also discuss the ways of involving all learners into decision making process when an activity is implemented during the lesson.

Among numerous forms and methods of forming children's health-saving competence used in secondary schools in Ukraine there are physical, sport and musical activities, including Health Day, different kinds of gymnastics, excursions, role and theatre games, games-travelling, games-experiments, solving problematic and situational tasks, project activities, and independent children's activities devoted to mastering health culture, printed games (lotto, puzzles, jumbled pictures etc.), illustrations according to health theme, etc [2, p. 278]. Pre-service English teachers are involved in implementing these forms and methods during their teaching practice and later, when they start working at schools as in-service teachers. In the workplace, knowledge about health-saving competence, skills to form the aforementioned competence in their students and a combination of respective personal and professional qualities will help them to become successful professionals in their field.

Pre-service English teachers need to be familiarized with and trained in using different approaches, methods, forms and techniques of forming health-saving competence of their students. This goal can be achieved by common effort of learning university courses in pedagogy, psychology and English language teaching methodology and practical application of the knowledge and skills during their teaching practice in inclusive classrooms.

The prospect of further research lies in investigating opportunities for professional development of in-service English teachers in the area of forming health-saving competence of SEN learners.

#### *References:*

1. Типова програма «Методика навчання англійської мови». Освітній ступінь бакалавра. Івано-Франківськ : НАІР, 2020. 126 с.
2. Kazachiner O., & Tkachenko L. Fairy Tale Therapy as a Means of Forming Health-Saving Competence of Children with SEN. *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională*, Vol. 12, №3. 2020. P.268–293. URL: <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/12.3/321> (дата звернення: 25.03.2020).
3. Khatuntseva, S., Kabus, N., Portyan, M., Zhernovnykova, O., Kara, S., Knysh, S. The Method of Forming the Health-Saving Competence of Pedagogical Universities' Students. *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*. 2020. Vol. 12, No. 1. P. 185–197. URL: <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/208> (дата звернення: 25.03.2020).
4. Palamar S., Nezhyva L., Vaskivska H., Vaschenko O., Bondarenko G. Naumenko M. Health-Saving Competence of Future Primary School Teachers: Indicators of Development. *III International Scientific Congress Society of Ambient Intelligence (ISC-SAI 2020)*. Paris, 2020. P. 307–315. URL: [https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/720009/1/VHO\\_2020-04\\_01.pdf](https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/720009/1/VHO_2020-04_01.pdf) (дата звернення: 25.03.2020).