Training Teachers of Languages to Meet the Needs of Inclusive Classrooms

Tsvetelina Harakchiyska

Abstract. The inclusion of special needs learners into mainstream schools is a key issue on the European agenda which poses new challenges to the training of future teachers (including teachers of languages to young learners) who need to receive adequate knowledge about various special needs categories and develop professional skills for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of special needs learners.

In response to this new demand and in relation to the growing number of primary school children with special needs who attend mainstream classrooms in Bulgaria, the University of Ruse introduces a new training pack of materials for initial teacher training. The training materials’ aim is to equip the student teachers with the relevant knowledge and competences for approaching diversity in their classroom in such a way that allows all children (including those with special educational needs) to demonstrate their potential as learners.

The goal of this paper is to present the pedagogical and methodological underpinnings, planned outcomes and challenges in the design and development of the in-service teacher training materials and to motivate the need for such type of training in the Bulgarian educational context.

Key words: trainee teachers, inclusive education, young learners, English.