

# Exploration of Pathways for Incorporating Special Education Courses into Preschool Education Programs in Shaanxi Universities Under the Context of Inclusive Education

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**Abstract:** Under the context of inclusive education, the addition of special education courses in preschool education majors at Shaanxi universities is driven by both policy and regional development needs. This initiative addresses the disconnect between professional competence and practical demands, as well as presents innovative opportunities for extending special education into preschool education. Implementation pathways include designing a multi-dimensional integrated curriculum concept, constructing a progressive content system, adopting diverse and integrated implementation models, strengthening practical teaching components, and establishing a dynamic and continuous evaluation mechanism. These approaches aim to break down traditional disciplinary boundaries, achieve organic integration of special education and preschool education, enhance the special education competencies of preschool education majors, and provide talent support for the development of inclusive education in Shaanxi Province.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, universities in shaanxi, early childhood education major, special education courses

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## 1. Introduction

With the advancement of national inclusive education policies, the number of children with special needs enrolled in preschool education institutions continues to rise, placing higher demands on the professional competence of early childhood teachers. As a major education province in western China, Shaanxi faces both developmental opportunities and growing challenges in its special education curriculum offerings within higher education institutions specializing in early childhood education. To cultivate interdisciplinary talents with inclusive education literacy, this paper analyzes the practical necessity of introducing special education courses from the perspective of Shaanxi Province, explores specific implementation pathways, and aims to promote effective integration of preschool education and special education, thereby fostering high-quality early childhood teachers capable of thriving in inclusive learning environments.

## 2. The Practical Demand for Special Education Courses in Preschool Education Programs in Shaanxi Universities under the Context of Inclusive Education

### 2.1 Dual Drive of Policy Orientation and Regional Development

Against the backdrop of the deepening advancement of inclusive education, the addition of special education courses to preschool education programs in Shaanxi's universities has become an inevitable trend. This transformation stems from dual drivers of policy and regional factors: the state has extended the concept of inclusive education comprehensively to the preschool stage, explicitly requiring regular kindergartens to implement inclusive practices; while the "Implementation

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Plan for the Action Program to Enhance Special Education Development in Shaanxi Province" sets the goal of establishing a high-quality special education system by 2025. These policies not only reshape the standards for talent cultivation but also elevate the professional competence of early childhood educators. New requirements have been introduced, emphasizing the mastery of fundamental special education knowledge and practical skills. Meanwhile, the accelerated construction of special education institutions in Shaanxi Province and the continuous expansion of inclusive practices in ordinary kindergartens have intensified the demand for interdisciplinary talent in early childhood education. This interplay between top-down policy guidance and bottom-up practical needs not only presents a valuable opportunity for university curriculum reform but also makes the integration of special education courses into the core professional system an inevitable trend of the times. In response to this profound transformation, universities in Shaanxi must proactively adapt by organically embedding special education courses throughout the entire talent cultivation process to train early childhood education professionals who truly meet the demands of inclusive education.

## **2.2 A Significant Gap Between Professional Competence and Practical Needs**

Currently, there is a notable gap in special education literacy among preschool education majors in Shaanxi's higher education institutions, which starkly contrasts with the practical demands of inclusive education. This deficiency manifests across three dimensions: First, in terms of curriculum design, most institutions' preschool education programs lack systematic special education content, with only a few offering isolated elective courses in special education, failing to support students in developing a comprehensive knowledge structure for inclusive education<sup>[1]</sup>. Take the School of Education Science at Xianyang Normal University as an example: despite offering a bachelor's program in special education, its preschool education curriculum still lacks substantial special education-related content. Second, in practical skills, preschool education majors generally lack the teaching competencies to identify and address children with special needs<sup>[2]</sup>. According to the *Shandong Special Education Regulations*, preschool institutions must "rationally arrange care, education, and targeted rehabilitation training based on the developmental patterns and individualized educational needs of children with special needs." However, graduates under the current training model often fail to meet this standard. This skill gap directly results in kindergarten teachers being at a loss when dealing with children with diverse special needs, such as autism, developmental delays, and attention deficits. These shortcomings not only constrain the quality of preschool education talent cultivation but also pose potential obstacles to the advancement of inclusive education in Shaanxi Province, urgently requiring deep reforms in the curriculum system to address these issues.

## **2.3 Innovative opportunities for extending special education to preschool education**

The in-depth promotion of integrated education has brought unprecedented innovation opportunities for preschool education majors in Shaanxi universities. With Shaanxi Province's clear requirement for provincial-level demonstration special education schools to establish preschool departments before 2025, the intersection of preschool education and special education is becoming a new growth point for professional development<sup>[3]</sup>. This institutional change indicates that in the future, kindergartens will require a large number of compound talents with dual knowledge of preschool education and special education. Shaanxi universities can take this opportunity to reposition the characteristic development direction of preschool education majors and organically integrate the knowledge system of special education into existing courses. For example, the special education program at Xi'an Sport University combines physical education with special education, providing a reference model for cross-border integration for other universities. This innovation is not only reflected in the expansion of course content, but also in the overall optimization and transformation of talent cultivation models. Seizing this innovative opportunity, Shaanxi universities are expected to form differentiated advantages in the field of preschool education and provide talent support for regional integrated education development.

# **3. The Implementation Path of Adding Special Education Courses to Preschool Education Majors in Shaanxi Universities under the Background of Integrated Education**

## **3.1 Design of Multi dimensional Integration Curriculum Concept**

To construct a special education curriculum in the context of integrated education, it is necessary to first establish a multi-dimensional integrated curriculum concept, break through traditional disciplinary boundaries, and achieve the

organic integration of special education and preschool education. Shaanxi universities should comprehensively reconstruct from three dimensions: knowledge, ability, and values. In terms of knowledge system, core content such as the development, assessment, and intervention of special children should be organically embedded into the curriculum of preschool education majors; In terms of ability structure, combining special education skills such as observation, evaluation, and differentiated teaching with existing training in childcare and education abilities; In terms of values, efforts should be made to cultivate students' inclusive education concept, so that they can form a professional sentiment of respecting diversity and differences. This multi-dimensional integrated curriculum concept should run through the entire process of talent cultivation, enabling students to adapt to the requirements of an integrated education environment in terms of knowledge, abilities, and values. The curriculum design should be guided by the concept of "inclusive education" and draw on the integrated education philosophy of "equality, respect, acceptance, and inclusiveness" of advanced special education institutions to strengthen the understanding and acceptance ability of preschool education majors towards children with special needs. Through deep integration at the conceptual level, Shaanxi universities can promote Transforming the cultivation of preschool education professionals from single skills to composite abilities, and elevating traditional educational concepts to inclusive education concepts, laying a solid foundation for integrated education practice<sup>[4]</sup>.

### **3.2 Constructing a hierarchical curriculum content system**

In the context of integrated education, the addition of special education courses in preschool education majors in Shaanxi universities should abandon the simple accumulation of content and focus on building a hierarchical and progressive curriculum system. Curriculum design should be based on the internal logic of students' cognitive development, achieving a systematic transition from concept establishment to ability formation. In the basic stage, general courses such as "Introduction to Special Education" and "Integration of Education Policies and Concepts" should be offered to help students understand the characteristics of special needs children and the value orientation of inclusive education; Entering the stage of professional advancement, core courses such as "Assessment and Intervention for Special Children" and "Differentiated Teaching Strategies" will be established to guide students in mastering individualized education plan development and adaptive teaching methods; In the comprehensive application stage, advanced courses such as "Integrated Education Case Studies" and "Special Children's Activity Design" are used to promote students to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical problems in real situations, and enhance their comprehensive ability to cope with complex educational needs. The course content should focus on common special needs types in early childhood education, such as autism, developmental delay, and speech disorders, highlighting the practicality and pertinence of the content, and incorporating localized cases and resources to enhance students' cultural understanding and situational adaptability. Through this progressive curriculum structure, students can gradually achieve a leap in their abilities from conceptual cognition to skill mastery, and then to innovative practice, thus growing into specialized preschool teachers who can effectively support the development of various special needs children.

### **3.3 The Implementation Model of Diversified Integration Curriculum**

The implementation of special education curriculum should break through the traditional single teaching mode, adopt a diversified and integrated teaching strategy, and achieve the organic combination of theoretical teaching and practical experience. Shaanxi universities can integrate various methods such as case-based teaching, project-based learning, and simulated training to create authentic educational contexts, enabling students to construct knowledge while solving practical problems; At the same time, fully utilize internal and external resources, establish an open and shared resource platform, including a special education case library, a digital teaching resource library, etc. In creating a teaching environment, it is necessary to create an inclusive learning atmosphere, allowing students to understand the learning characteristics of children with special needs through experiential learning. Shaanxi universities can draw on the successful experience of cultivating "practice reflective" talents, and organically combine the theoretical teaching in the first classroom, practical activities in the second classroom, and social services in the third classroom to form a comprehensive and three-dimensional curriculum implementation network. For example, students can be organized to participate in

volunteer services at special education institutions, participate in inclusive education case analysis competitions, or create inclusive education learning communities. Through the implementation mode of diversified integration, not only can it stimulate students' interest in learning, but it can also promote the effective transformation of theoretical knowledge into practical ability, cultivate students' adaptability and innovative thinking in complex educational situations<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **3.4 Strengthen the practical teaching process**

Special education is a practice oriented discipline, and universities in Shaanxi must strengthen the practical aspects of special education in preschool education majors, and build a multi-level and all-round practical teaching system. Drawing on the successful experience of "practical and reflective" talent cultivation at Shaanxi Preschool Normal University, special education skills training can be integrated throughout the entire process of talent cultivation: in the practical aspects of the school, emphasis should be placed on building integrated education training rooms, equipped with necessary equipment for evaluating and intervening in the education of children with special needs, and conducting simulated teaching and skills training; In the off campus practical activities, establish stable cooperative relationships with kindergartens and special education institutions that carry out integrated education, and organize students to participate in observation, evaluation, and teaching practice activities for children with special needs. Special attention should be paid to the design and guidance of the internship process, arranging for students to undergo long-term residency internships in kindergartens with integrated education experience, under the joint guidance of university and kindergarten teachers, to help students transform theoretical knowledge into practical educational abilities. By closely integrating theory with practice, this training method effectively enhances students' professional competence in dealing with integrated education scenarios, enabling them to confidently face diverse educational needs in their future work.

### **3.5 Establish a dynamic and continuous course evaluation mechanism**

The effectiveness of adding special education courses needs to be ensured through a dynamic and continuous curriculum evaluation mechanism, which should run through the entire process of curriculum implementation and take into account multiple evaluation subjects. Shaanxi universities should establish a scientific evaluation system: in terms of evaluation methods, a combination of formative evaluation and summative evaluation should be adopted, focusing on both learning outcomes and developmental changes in the learning process; In terms of evaluation subjects, integrate multiple perspectives such as teachers, students, and practical mentors, and pay special attention to students' feedback on course experience; In terms of evaluation content, it comprehensively covers three dimensions: knowledge mastery, ability development, and attitude change, ensuring the comprehensive achievement of special education curriculum goals. This evaluation mechanism can draw on advanced evaluation concepts in the field of education, focusing on improving students' practical teaching abilities rather than just memorizing theoretical knowledge. By establishing a scientific and reasonable evaluation index system, using diverse evaluation tools, collecting comprehensive and objective evaluation data, and providing a basis for curriculum improvement. Dynamic and continuous course evaluation can not only timely identify problems and adjust teaching strategies, but also promote the continuous improvement of the curriculum system, ensuring a high degree of consistency between special education courses and the professional training objectives of preschool education.

## **4. Conclusion**

In short, adding special education courses to preschool education majors in Shaanxi universities is a necessary measure to comply with the trend of integrated education development. By adopting a multi-dimensional integrated curriculum concept, a step-by-step curriculum content, a multi-dimensional integrated implementation model, strengthened practical teaching, and a dynamic evaluation mechanism, traditional disciplinary barriers can be broken down, promoting the integration of special education and preschool education. This not only enhances the special education literacy of preschool education professionals, cultivates high-quality preschool teachers, but also provides talent support and path reference for the sustainable development of integrated education in Shaanxi Province.

### **Research Project:**

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