

Socialization of students with disabilities in an inclusive educational environment

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ABSTRACT

With the implementation of the Educational Standard for children with disabilities the need for definition of parameters of an inclusive educational environment is high. The article highlights the groups of special conditions of socialization for students with disabilities in an inclusive educational environment; the authors give the content characteristics of all groups. In order to implement inclusive practice it is necessary to create special educational conditions for children with disabilities. Russian defectologists adequately defined a list of special conditions, but they did not give the system description. Without these conditions studying in a regular school is difficult for a child with disabilities. We have used a new approach to the representation of special conditions system of inclusive education, which is based on the structural-functional model of the educational environment; the components of this model allowed identifying some groups of special conditions (organizational and managerial, material and technical, organizational and pedagogical, the organization of psychological and pedagogical support, social-psychological and subjective). We have defined the content of each group of special conditions and determined the significance and content of extracurricular activities for successful socialization.

KEYWORDS

students with disabilities; inclusive educational environment; inclusive classroom; socialization of students with disabilities; Federal State Educational Standard of primary education for students with disabilities; educational and extra-curricular activities

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduce the Problem

The purpose of the state is promoting the development of the society, as well as creating conditions for productive life and activities of socially vulnerable groups of population. The priority of the contemporary Russian social and educational policy is to ensure an access to quality education and create the conditions for successful socialization of children with disabilities. The formation of economically viable and socially equitable public policies in relation to people

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with disabilities is determined by several factors such as the increase in the number of disabled people, the problem of adaptation to the new social-economic conditions and study of various aspects of inclusive education, including the socialization of children with disabilities in an inclusive educational environment [Merinova, 2007].

Finding ways to overcome the physical and psychological ill-being of persons with disabilities has led to various forms of social integration, which involves the social adaptation of a child with disabilities in the general system of social relations. However, the full social integration of people with disabilities (PWD) is impossible without improving the quality of their lives, which means providing access to knowledge, education and cultural values, which form the personality and his/her ideas about the world, full participation in social and cultural life in all forms [Zubets, 2013; Raizberg, 1999].

In addition to the development of various types of social integration, forms of educational integration (foreign and Russian models) were tested in the past two decades in Russia. Over time, in the scientific and pedagogical vocabulary the terms “educational integration”, “integrated learning” have been supplemented by the term “inclusive education”.

Inclusive education is the practice of co-education of children with disabilities and children without disabilities. Until the present in Russia the process of educational inclusion of children with disabilities proceeded spontaneously. The approval of the principle of equal rights and opportunities in the education of PWD in the Russian legislation - the Constitution, the Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation” (Article 5), synthesizing the outcomes of scientific and experimental work and experience of joint training of PWD and their normally developing contemporaries allowed to transfer the practice of inclusive education in the legal field.

Today in Trans-Baikal region children with disabilities study mostly in regular schools, it confirms the high relevance of the study of various aspects of inclusive education, including the socialization of children with disabilities in an inclusive educational environment (Table 1).

Table 1. The structure of the regional system of education of children with disabilities

Type of study	Number of schools, classes	Number of students
Special Schools	11	1,127
Special classes in regular schools	34	405
Inclusive education in regular schools	577	7,228

1.2. Explore Importance of the Problem

The right to general education, in the form of inclusion, is provided by the introduction of the Federal State Educational Standards of general primary education for children with disabilities (effective in the Russian Federation since 1/09/2016). According to the Federal State Educational Standard of primary education for students with disabilities, children's education may be in special schools (a form of differential learning), individual classes in regular schools (a form of integrated education), as well as in an inclusive classroom in regular schools [FSES, 2014, p. 6]. Special schools for children with developmental disorders have special conditions that meet their special educational needs, but the process of socialization is very hard. A school has a huge potential for socializing, but often it is not ready to accept a child with disabilities [Nazarova, 2016]. As V. Lubovsky says “cases of successful education of children with developmental disabilities in regular schools relate primarily to children with impaired physical development (defects of vision and hearing, motor skills without additional abnormalities and mostly in mild forms) and from families where children are given a lot of attention and constant learning support” [Lubovsky, 2008, p.13].

Since the opening of inclusive classes in regular schools is inevitable, it is important to identify new content of all the components of an inclusive educational environment contributing to the socialization of children with disabilities. Despite many publications on the peculiarities of creating an inclusive educational environment, factors and conditions of successful inclusion, there is no systematic description of the content of inclusive environment components which meet special educational needs of students with disabilities.

1.3. Describe Relevant Scholarship

Integration is considered as “a means of creating an optimal developmental environment” [Lubovsky, 2008, p.14]. No socialization of children with disabilities in a regular educational institution is possible without creation of conditions that meet their “special needs”, and it becomes a priority of the educational and training process which allow a child to be engaged in an inclusive educational environment.

Socialization is the process and the result of the inclusion of an individual in social relations [Nikitin, 1998]. However, socialization is a multidirectional process. Socialization takes place both as the process of integration of an individual in the social system (T. Parsons, R. Merton), and as a self-actualization process of “self-identity”, self-actualization of one’s potentialities and abilities as the process of overcoming the environmental influences that hinder self-development and self-assertion of a concrete personality (A. Maslow, C. Rogers). Russian scientists (I.Kon, A.Mudrik et al.) [Kon, 2010; Mudrik, 2004] point to the duality of the socialization. This means that the child learns a new social experience and, at the same time, reproduces certain social relations that affect the environment.

Socialization of children with disabilities has a considerable specificity defined as the nature of the child's limitations and as well as availability of rehabilitation resources of society [Savina, 2002]. The features of socialization of a child with disabilities may be best disclosed from the social-pedagogical positions. Social-pedagogical essence of the social potential development of children with disabilities is purposeful pedagogical support of children and disclosing their rehabilitation potential in various forms of joint activities. New social-pedagogical



sense of integration process of children with disabilities in educational process not only and not so much consists of the organization of the joint activities for a certain age (games, training), but as “joint children’s world” [Shipitsyna, 2016].

However, socialization in an inclusive educational environment is a two-way process involving both the interests of children with disabilities and schoolchildren without disabilities. Therefore, inclusive education model proposes creating a learning environment that meets educational needs of both student’s groups. If inclusion is not provided by a corresponding change in the educational environment, it will result in the deepening of social exclusion of children with disabilities and the increase in intolerance of schoolchildren without disabilities and their families.

Philosophy of inclusion assumes that the focus of the teacher’s attention is a class as a heterogeneous group of students, which requires a differentiated approach to training [Zvoleyko, 2015, p.11]. The guiding principle of the creation an inclusive educational environment is its willingness to adapt to the individual needs of different categories of children by means of structural and functional, informative and technological modernization of the educational system of an institution [Zubareva, 2009]. However, a modern school is just looking for models of learning that can provide multilevel education in one class, taking into account different psycho-physical and intellectual capacities of children. The areas of concern include the organizing activities in an inclusive classroom, adjusting the pace of work of different students, making full use of lesson time for both groups of students, defining the scope and content of educational material for different groups of students, technology of homework checking, and so forth [Lubovsky, 2008, p.19]. From the standpoint of the needs of all groups of students, inclusive education requires significant elaboration.

Russian defectology defined the list of special conditions, which are very important for creating the socialization process for students with disabilities in inclusive education [Malofeev, 2016; MGPPU, 2016; Nazarova, 2016; Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the RF, 2008]. It is important to identify backbone components of an inclusive educational environment contributing to the socialization of children with disabilities.

2. Method

The main research method was the modeling method, involving the creation of a model of special conditions that determine the structure of an inclusive educational environment conducive to the socialization of students with disabilities.

The method of expert estimation of the educational environment was used as a supplementary one. The educational environment of three regular schools was experted in terms of their compliance with the special educational needs of children with disabilities according to personnel, material and technical and psychological-educational parameters of learning conditions. The estimation procedure of an educational environment of schools was carried out in compliance with the general principles of implementation of the method of expert estimation. Each parameter was estimated using predetermined criteria expressed in a quantitative scale (in points). Comparative analysis allowed identifying the groups of special conditions of socialization for students with the disabilities and characteristics of these groups.

Our study is related to the modeling of innovative educational process; it is the result of theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific researches in the development of approaches to creating an inclusive educational environment and experience of educational institutions.

T. Zubareva notes that the creation of an inclusive educational environment provides for the definition and implementation of the philosophy of inclusive education and its system of values; information, personnel, methodological and organizational policy; common approaches and principles of life of children with disabilities in regular schools (the approaches to the creation and development of external relations, the choice of certain priorities in resource allocation, milestones and deadlines of the inclusive education of children with disabilities); the optimal structure of the educational process, the integration of its functions (educational, correctional, mental, physical, creative, health-promoting) and their resources in order to ensure the socialization of children with disabilities [Zubareva, 2009].

E. Laktionova suggests structural and functional model of an educational environment which includes five components: organizational management, spatial and substantive, psycho-didactic, social-psychological and subjective [Laktionova, 2012]. A list of these components determines the direction of reorganization of the educational process in an inclusive educational environment and, accordingly, it defines the groups of special educational conditions that meet the educational needs of students with disabilities.

3. Results

Let us consider in details the content of these special conditions, external and internal factors that create an inclusive educational environment of educational institution that promotes the socialization of students with disabilities. The real work of education institutions will depend on the regional policy and the features of a social situation in a region, the composition of teaching staff and its readiness to take into account the diversity of special educational needs of students [MGPPU, 2016, p.3].

1. Organizational and management component of the environment.

In the field of regulatory framework of the Federal State Educational Standard it includes:

- The data bank of regulations at the federal, regional and local levels, which govern the introduction and implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard of primary education for students with disabilities in secondary schools;
- Bringing into line the statute of a school and the regulatory framework of school activities with the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard; correcting of existing acts and development of new local acts, which reveal the mechanism to ensure effective education of other categories of students; drafting agreements with parents [MGPPU, 2012; MGPPU, 2016].

In the field of coordinating the activities of participants of inclusive education it includes:

- The concept of an educational institution in the conditions of inclusive education, formation of relevant set of values for teachers and parents, creation of a psychologically comfortable educational environment;



- Coordination of activities of all subjects of an educational environment; changing job descriptions of teachers and specialists who work with children in inclusive classrooms;

- Organization of interaction with “external” social partners to provide methodological support and advice by psychological centers, resource centers, special schools, social protection bodies, health institutions, cultural and public organizations;

- Parental involvement in creating conditions for education of children;

- Improving the level of psychological readiness of children without disabilities and their parents to joint training – raising awareness on issues related to the peculiarities of the educational process.

In the field of resource support of inclusive education it includes:

- Provision of financial and economic conditions of educational institutions allowing executing the Federal State Educational Standard requirements for students with disabilities;

- Foodservice and health care.

In the field of IT support it includes:

- Creation of information educational environment, which includes a set of technological tools (office appliances, multimedia, software), organizational forms of communication and the participants of the educational process, which can solve problems with the use of information and communication technologies;

- Development of distance learning technologies (for students with disabilities, who cannot attend school);

- Completeness of a school library with print and electronic educational resources, availability of literature (fiction, non-fiction, reference, periodicals).

2. Material and technical component of the environment.

In the field of general conditions for learning it includes:

- Easy access to all premises of the school for students with disabilities;

- Availability of the required set of premises for the educational process (classrooms, libraries, a dining room, assembly and sports halls, rooms for extra-classes activities);

- Compliance of all the premises and adjacent territory with the sanitary, fire safety and labor standards;

- Creation of recreational spaces inside and outside the school premises;

- Compliance with health and hygiene standards of the educational process;

- Creation of sanitary conditions, taking into account the needs of children with disabilities.

In the field of creating an adaptive environment for students with disabilities it includes:

- Organization of the working space with the use of health-saving technologies (lighting, etc.);

- Use of specialized training equipment and special computer training software (for different categories of PWD);

- Creation of correctional and developing environment as a unity of natural, social, technical and didactic means providing the child with a variety of activities;

- Registration of all the premises of a school in accordance with hygienic and aesthetic requirements;

- Provision of office equipment, consumables and stationery in an amount effective to implement a differentiated approach to learning.

3. Organizational and pedagogical component of the environment.

In the field of staffing it includes:

- Professional competences of teachers in inclusive education (special education, further training or retraining);

- Staffing with specialists of psychological and pedagogical support (tutors, special education teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, etc.);

- Ensuring continuous retraining courses;

- Organization of the work of methodological school council in the following areas – research and extension of best experience in the field of inclusive education; workshops on correctional pedagogy, special teaching methods; consultations for teachers working in inclusive classrooms;

- Organization of a methodological office, accumulating instructional materials (newsletters, guidelines and scientific journals) in the area of special education, correctional work programs, and so on.

In the field of methodological support it includes:

- Completeness with educational programs and educational complexes, printed and electronic educational resources for all academic subjects recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;

- Availability of teaching materials (inserts, workbooks) in all educational areas, including educational computer programs;

In the field of organization of educational process it includes:

- Ensuring of the variability of the educational process for students with disabilities;

- Use of health-saving technologies in education (compliance with the time mode of study, rational organization of the school day/week; expansion of physical activity; regulation of the teaching load);

- The use of technologies, forms and methods of training relevant to the educational needs of students with disabilities.

The basis of the Federal State Educational Standard of primary education for students with disabilities is an activity approach, which assumes that the development of the child's personality depends on available training activities [FSES, 2014]. Both Russian and foreign researchers have noted that in educational process the emphasis should be placed on practice-oriented forms and activation of independent activity of a child [Ormrod, 2006].

4. The organization of psychological and pedagogical support includes:

- Organization of work of experts in the form of psychological, medical and pedagogical consultations for the examination of children; development of customized educational programs, correctional work programs; organization of a continuous process of psycho-pedagogical support of integrated children;

- Pedagogical support of an adapted educational program mastering (monitoring of adapted programs mastering; development of the assessment



system of students' achievements; individual correctional and developing work; advisory work with parents);

- Psychological and speech therapy support within the correctional work program;
- Organization of networking with educational institutions, when self-realization of full remedial courses programs is impossible.

The above components of educational environment discover management features, resource support and psycho-pedagogical support of the educational process. These factors are external towards a child; they are special activities for educational support of children with disabilities.

The priority of a socialization process and inclusion is a result of development of child's internal resources, formation of his/her social skills, gaining experience of social relations, which means the disclosure of the rehabilitation potential of children. Due to the fact that the volume of "academic" curriculum component for a child with disabilities reduces, the area of the life competence development expands [Malofeev, 2016], the essence of life competence is to develop sufficient subjectivity of an individual and to build interpersonal relationships. Thus, it is necessary to determine the content of social-psychological and subjective components of an inclusive educational environment.

5. Social-psychological and subjective components.

The content of these components makes up the processes of interaction between the participants of the educational process (students, teachers, parents) and the process of personality development of a child with disabilities.

Socialization of a child with disabilities implies acceptance, assimilation and reproduction of norms, values, and attitudes, which are typical for the modern society of healthy people. The problem is that "the individual qualities of a child with disabilities are not recognized as personally and socially valuable ones, so ... teachers do not contribute to their development" [Kazakova, 2010, p. 257]. Meanwhile, successful socialization is not just a social adaptation, but also social autonomy and personal development of a child.

The purpose of the personality socialization of a child with disabilities is to develop the individual qualities and self-realization in real life. According to L. Kazakova [Kazakova, 2010], three groups of tasks should be solved in the process of socialization of a child with disabilities:

- Natural and cultural development of a child, when he/she reaches a certain level of physical development at every age stage. Within this framework, it is necessary to form ideas about the structure and functioning of the body, to teach healthy life skills;
- Social and cultural development associated with the solution of cognitive, moral, and axiological tasks;
- Social and psychological development associated with the development of self-awareness, self-determination, and self-actualization.

These tasks can be successfully solved by the implementation of school-wide programs (the program of formation of ecological culture, the program of healthy and safe lifestyle, the program of spiritual and moral development and the program of extracurricular activities).

An inclusive school is a school for everybody. Real inclusion appears in a school when full participation in school life is ensured for all students. As researchers noted [Tarabaeva, 2014], students with developmental disabilities do not take part in activities that would require their personal responsibility and discretion; they do not make decisions, their normally developing contemporaries and adults do this. In terms of integration students with disabilities are often hyper-protected; thus their social development is blocked and development of personal autonomy and freedom of decision-making are not ensured.

The process of socialization depends on the quality of communication and collaboration. If enough attention is not paid to both components, there will not be real inclusion of children with developmental problems in the educational process [Tarabaeva, 2014].

An extracurricular activity as the process of communication and collaboration has the greatest opportunities for children with disabilities. An extracurricular activity has far greater opportunities for genuine socialization of children with disabilities, as it does not restrict the possibilities of healthy schoolchildren in their self-fulfillment, and, moreover, extracurricular activities, organized in collaboration with students with disabilities, have “tremendous educational value” [Lubovsky, p.16]. On the other hand, students with disabilities are involved in extracurricular activities on the basis of free choice in the affordable rate and volume.

An extracurricular activity is a part of the basic educational program: “The basic educational program of primary education is realized through the organization of classroom and extracurricular activities” [The Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation”, 2012]. An extracurricular activity is organized in different areas (sports and recreation, spiritual, moral, social, intelligence, cultural). An extracurricular activity is conducted in accordance with the action plan of extracurricular activities, which includes games, excursions, interesting activities, art festivals, competitions, exhibitions, competitions, festivals, camps, trips, and others [MGPPU, 2016].

An extracurricular activity for students with disabilities is organized in two directions: the implementation of remedial work programs and an extracurricular activity program. If activities within correctional work program are aimed at correcting the shortcomings in the development, the various forms of extracurricular work permit to use free time efficiently, to discover and develop abilities, to give impetus to cognitive development, to participate in various joint activities with schoolchildren without disabilities.

It is very important to consider not only child preferences, but also his/her psycho-physical abilities and to create good conditions for extracurricular activities.

L. Vygotsky considered the process of socialization of the child as “growing into human culture”. Culture is created by people and culture is taught. Gaining cultural experience is not automatic and spontaneous. According to some researchers [Savina, 2002], the quality of the socialization of children with disabilities can increase through their involvement in social and cultural activities associated with creativity. Interacting with animals, theatrical and art activities, music lessons, crafts classes can be the means of social and cultural rehabilitation. Child involvement in creative activities allows creating new, more complex needs, it helps absorb the people's customs and traditions, it realizes the



need for communication, it develops abilities, volitional powers (compassion, responsibility), cognitive skills – to listen and to hear, to look and to see, to recognize and to draw conclusions about themselves and the world around.

The success of the integration of children with developmental disabilities depends not only on the established special conditions, but also on the psychological climate of the educational environment. As researchers noted [Tarabaeva, 2014], in classes of integrated education healthy peers do not show explicit insulation and striving to superiority, but they lack the social interest, cooperation, empathy towards children with disabilities.

The researchers state that for these children it is necessary to create an environment where they will feel safety, acceptance, and comfort without any discrimination; the relationship with a teacher is very important, because the children have a strong need for social and emotional acceptance [Onuigbo, 2012; Swart, 2001]. The special training aimed at changing negative attitudes and stereotypes towards children with developmental disorders is obligatory for teachers, parents and children without disabilities.

The groups of special conditions for socialization of students with disabilities in an inclusive educational environment and their structure are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2. The structure of an inclusive educational environment

Groups of conditions	Content
1. Organizational and management component group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bringing into line the regulatory framework of a school with the requirements of Federal State Educational Standard - coordination of participants activities of inclusive education; - resource support of inclusive education - IT support
2. Material and technical group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general conditions for learning, relevant to current regulations - creating an adaptive environment for students with disabilities (health-saving technologies, specialized equipment)
3. Organizational and pedagogical group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staffing - methodological support - special organization of the educational process

4. Organization of psychological and pedagogical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- an organization of activity of psychological, medical and pedagogical consultation in a school- pedagogical support of mastering of an adapted educational program- psychological and speech therapy support within the correctional work program
5. Social-psychological and subjective group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the interaction of students, teachers and parents in the inclusive educational environment- the process of development of a child with disabilities in educational and extracurricular activities

4. Discussion

Thus, the socialization of a child with disabilities in an inclusive educational environment cannot be achieved by transferring elements of special education in the general education system. We need a significant and long-term organizational and pedagogical work to establish positive interpersonal relationships in inclusive education classrooms. The optimization of a regular school of the inclusive model is achievable when the structure, content, organization and methods of work are flexible, mobile and orientated for the future.

Currently, the Russian model of inclusive education has the status of innovation, as many questions (theoretical and practical) remain unsolved. It is fundamental to create special educational conditions, major groups and their contents (presented in this article) in order to implement inclusive practice.

5. Conclusion

Implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard of primary education for students with disabilities sets new challenges, relating to the alignment of all components of the educational environment taking into account the new strategy of its development. It is necessary to further develop theoretical and methodological approaches, concerning the organization of inclusive practices in educational institutions in Russia.

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