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## Organization and Content of the Psychological and Pedagogical Support of Students with Special Health Needs at the Vladimir State University

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to the issue of organizing inclusive education in Russian universities. The authors of the article offer a comparative analysis of the concepts used in the psychological and pedagogical Russian literature and practice: “invalid” and “person with disabilities”. The article focuses on the psychological and pedagogical organization of educational activities at the university with psychology students, taking into account their nosology. The authors describe their experience in organizing and conducting psychological and pedagogical support for disabled students studying at the university; forms and methods. The description of work experience is based on the theoretical and methodological foundations of Russian psychology and pedagogy. The article describes the work of different departments of the university and proves the idea of the need for comprehensive support for students with disabilities studying at Russian universities.

**Keywords:** student, disabled person, person with disabilities, pedagogical support, psychological support, educational activity

## **Introduction**

Today, there is a situation with a pronounced tendency towards a deterioration in the health of young people, which is confirmed by a number of studies (Aleksandrova, Zhivitskaya, Zaitsev, Kupreeva, etc.). In recent years, the number of students with disabilities has been growing in the higher education system. On the one hand, this speaks of the rapid pace of implementation of the idea of inclusive education in our country, on the other hand, of the sad statistics (the growth of disability among the population) and numerous problems when working with this category of people.

Building an inclusive society and providing education for people with disabilities can be considered a progressive step in the development of our country. However, in the system of higher education, the directions for preparing students with disabilities for professional activities are still poorly developed, many universities are not focused on such a category of students, there is also an insufficient readiness of the teaching staff to work with students with disabilities, and much more.

## **Subject of study**

The study is dedicated to invalid students and students with disabilities studying at Russian universities; organization of their educational and professional activities, psychological and pedagogical support.

## **Students with disabilities as a group of students in a higher educational institution**

In most Russian works it is recognized that the concept of “person with disabilities” and “invalid” are similar in content. However, the concept of “disabled” is considered a medical term that expresses the result of an expert assessment of a person’s health, recorded in documents of the established form (for example, a certificate).

In this case, the role of education and upbringing is assigned to special pedagogy (defectology; oligophrenopedagogy; correctional pedagogy), which study the psychophysiological characteristics of people with developmental anomalies, including those with intellectual disabilities. However, each of the branches of special pedagogy presupposes some inferiority of the object of education and training.

Aleksandrova proposes the following more correct definition of the group of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities or persons with special needs are a special social community, whose participants, in view of the limitedness of their motor, intellectual, sensory and other capabilities due to the state of health, need to introduce special social, pedagogical, psychological technologies aimed at leveling barriers and other spatial, social-psychological, socio-structural and socio-cultural limitations.

The concept of “people with special educational needs” is often used, but it still retains the initial inferiority, which does not allow talking about equal opportunities. Zhivitskaya (2011, p. 12) proposes to introduce a more correct definition for people with disabilities, but with a sufficiently high level of intelligence: “this is a person who is able to make a choice”, which does not indicate a person’s inferiority and does not limit the understanding of her freedom. But this concept has not found its place either in science, or in practice, or in legislation.

Degtyareva (2005, p. 72–74) conducts a socio-philosophical analysis of the categories “disability” and “person with disabilities” in the context of the categories: “feature”, “opportunity”, “limitation”. The peculiarity is understood by the author as uniqueness, originality, which sets the space of individuality, meaning a unique embodiment of the universal in a person, distinctive, unique, that allows a person to be distinguished from others. Possibility is interpreted both as a state and as a situation, endowed with the characteristics of potentiality and temporality, suggesting compensation for insufficiently mature parts of the personality and the emergence of a new quality. The constraint demonstrates the nature of the difference in the implementation of a particular opportunity. One of these constraints can be health.

Based on this, the author gives the following definition of the state of disability in human health. This is a state of loss of identity with the norm of biological, social, psychological aspects of humans, but the preservation of the tendency towards changes.

As you can see, for people who have a fairly high intellectual potential, which they want to realize in educational activities, but have certain limitations of the physical plane, their status in society has not yet been clearly defined. On the one hand, normative documents require some concretization to designate, identify this group of people, on the other (from a psychological point of view), more correct formulations are really needed. The concept of “person with disabilities”, widely used in scientific research, in psychological and pedagogical practice, includes, as a rule, persons with a certain status. Both concepts are increasingly used in official documents: invalid and persons with disabilities.

Students with disabilities are assigned to a separate group of people with disabilities. Students are a special social category, a specific community of people united by the institution of higher education (Bezyuleva, 2003, p. 47). The modern dictionary of foreign words gives us the following definition of the term “student” – a student of a higher educational institution. Students with disabilities are persons who have made their professional choice, have a physical or mental disability, severe chronic diseases, which, at the same time, does not interfere with the development of personal, physical, psychophysiological properties, and higher mental functions. The student period is the most favorable for education, professional training and adaptation of students with disabilities. Ex-

perts in the field of psychology prove that the success of the adaptation process of students with disabilities in university is influenced by their personal and individual psychological characteristics, the level of personal activity, life-meaning orientations and motivation, resilience, the desire for self-realization and self-actualization, and much more.

When working with students with disabilities in a higher educational institution, questions of various types of assistance become very relevant:

- pedagogical support,
- psychological support,
- psychological follow-up.

## **Methodology and subject of research**

### **Pedagogical and psychological support for students with disabilities**

When working with students with disabilities in a higher educational institution, issues of various types of assistance become very relevant: pedagogical and psychological support, psychological follow-up.

The concepts of “support” and “help” are often viewed as identical, although they are different in their meaning. As noted in psychology, you can support indirectly (indirectly), not being around; help – only in communication (that is, in close contact with another), at the moment of difficulty that a person himself cannot overcome. Aid is a system of measures, the implementation of which leads to relief, and support is the implementation of this system of measures, this aid, that is, assistance activities.

Pedagogical support should be considered as prompt and preventive assistance to students with disabilities, and as one of the most important resources of the educational environment of a higher educational institution. This is a system of means that provides assistance to students with disabilities in overcoming problems and difficulties in the process of studying at a higher educational institution. The essence of pedagogical support includes complex transformations affecting the core of the personality of students with disabilities. It is these students who need understanding and acceptance, in special learning strategies, in arming them with methods and mechanisms for overcoming difficult situations. When implementing pedagogical support, the development of “self”, “self-movement”, independence of students with disabilities is supported. Hence, the main idea of the direction of this type of support and the methods of its implementation is the self-development of the personality of a student with a disability. Pedagogical support is a complex education that is subjectively perceived by a person with disabilities as an experience of a sense of self-confidence, significance, and one’s own need, which arise when receiving pedagogical assistance.

Psychological support, from the point of view of modern humanistic psychology, refers to subjectivity – this is a positive assistance to a person in the

development of his personality. Psychological support is also understood as a process of socialization in education; as a special psychological character of the process of individualization; and as a unique style of interpersonal relations; as an important source of self-esteem improvement; as one of the basic needs of self-development; as a need for positive attention, etc.

For psychological and pedagogical support, implemented at VISU, it is important that a student with disabilities learn to control himself, overcome obstacles and difficulties constructively, and learn to be the author of his own life. Psychological and pedagogical support complements and enhances the effectiveness of training. The essence of the ideology of psychological and pedagogical support for students with disabilities can be expressed in the words: “problem”, “protection”, “independence”.

The success of such a psychological and pedagogical interaction is possible if the appropriate conditions are met:

1. Consent of a student with disabilities to help;
2. The priority of the student with disabilities in solving personal problems;
3. Assistance, cooperation;
4. Compliance with the principle of confidentiality;
5. Non-value and benevolence.

### **Psychological and pedagogical support of students with disabilities**

In the few theoretical and practical developments of accompanying students with disabilities, special attention is paid to the mechanisms, directions, types, methods and conditions of psychological support.

Psychological and pedagogical support is a special prolonged psychological assistance, a specially organized process aimed at creating safe conditions in which it becomes possible to get out of negative alienation and isolation into the world of interaction, relationships, communication, active expansion of social contacts, the world of independence, responsibility, and autonomy.

The goal of the psychological and pedagogical support of students with special health needs at the Vladimir State University is to teach them independence in solving their problems and difficulties, which implies a deep knowledge of themselves, their resources, and adequate perception of the world around them.

The main difference between psychological and pedagogical support from other types of psychological and pedagogical activity is that the problem is identified and solved independently by the student with disabilities with the indirect, supportive participation of teachers. At the same time, a person with disabilities takes responsibility for the result of their actions, and becomes a subject of life.

It is especially important to pay attention to this aspect of the development of students with disabilities in the modern conditions of the transition of Russian education to a two-level system. One of the difficulties of the new education

system, as noted by many experts, is the organization of independent activities of students, on which almost the entire educational process is based today.

Perhaps the central concept of psychological and pedagogical support, interconnected with autonomy, is the self-development of the student's personality in terms of self-knowledge, self-organization, self-improvement; orientation towards the development of self-confidence, self-control, conscientiousness, activity, independence, expanding the range of interests, responsibility.

At the same time, psychological and pedagogical support is a type of professional activity of psychologists and teachers, which is aimed at creating safe conditions for the successful personal and professional development of students with disabilities in difficult situations associated with studying at a higher educational institution.

Psychological and pedagogical support is a prolonged assistance, a rather lengthy process with the involvement of teachers, employees of the administrative building, the university administration and the immediate environment of a student with disabilities.

In general, the path to psychological support for students with disabilities is to psychologize education, which means through psychological education to psychological literacy, and then to the psychological culture of all participants in psychological interaction.

## **Development (analysis of research results)**

### **Organization and content of psychological and pedagogical support for students with disabilities at VISU**

Psychological and pedagogical support of students with special education needs realizes at different levels:

- at the level of the university (Department for educational work and public relations of the Vladimir State University, the Vladimir regional resource educational and methodological center for inclusive education and the Center for vocational education of disabled people of the Vladimir State University);
- at the level of the department (REC “Inclusive Education”);
- at the level of psychological service (psychological consulting research and educational center “UNISON”).

The main areas of activity that provide conditions for obtaining higher professional education for persons with disabilities:

1. Career guidance and educational work with potential enrollees with disabilities.
2. Organizational and methodological support of the conditions prescribed by law when passing entrance examinations by enrollees with disabilities.
3. Creation and systematic updating of a database on students with disabilities.
4. Providing methodological, socio-psychological, pedagogical, and informational support of the educational process of students with disabilities; improv-

ing the methodological, material, and technical support for the training of students with disabilities.

5. Organization and support of social interaction between students with disabilities and other students at the levels of the study group, institute, and university.

6. Organization of interaction between the structural units of the university to ensure the learning process for students with disabilities.

7. Cooperation with state and public organizations, resource centers on the issues of material and technical, organizational and methodological support of the educational process, planning the employment of university graduates with disabilities.

The structure of psychological and pedagogical support for students with disabilities at the department level includes three components:

- organizational and pedagogical;
- meaningful;
- psychological.

Psychological and pedagogical support at the department level is designed to ensure the integration of students with disabilities into the university environment, provide them with a real opportunity to obtain higher education, help to form as qualified specialists, and teach them how to adapt to the environment. The most important tasks of psychological and pedagogical support of students with disabilities in this case are:

- the formation of effective teaching skills;
- psychological adaptation to the conditions of the educational institution, the learning process and the student body;
- development of motivation for self-education and personal self-improvement;
- assistance in professional self-determination and development of motivation to acquire a profession;
- psychological preparation for self-realization in the profession and related interactions;
- improvement of professionally significant personal properties.

Subdivisions at VISU providing psychological and pedagogical support for students with disabilities. The Vladimir Regional Resource Training and Methodological Center for Inclusive Education was established on April 02, 2018 by order of the rector.

The main task of the regional Center is to assist educational organizations in the city of Vladimir and the Vladimir region in the development of inclusive higher and vocational education and the creation of special conditions aimed at ensuring the availability and improving the quality of inclusive education for persons with disabilities of all nosologies in all areas of training (specialties),

including including through the use of electronic education and modern distance learning technologies.

The structure of the Center includes the following subdivisions.



**Picture 1. Visually impaired teachers congratulate students at a music competition**



**Picture 2. Student performing at a music competition**

### **Center for vocational education of disabled people**

Created at Vladimir State University by order of the rector on April 4, 1994.

By order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the Vocational Education Center for Disabled People was assigned the status of a federal experimental site for distributed information educational systems.

By the decision of the Academic Council of VISU dated December 22, 2005, the center for vocational education of disabled people was separated as an independent structural unit of the university on the rights of a faculty with a separate staff of teaching staff and teaching support personnel.



The purpose of the center is to provide special conditions for training disabled people and people with disabilities.

Employees carrying out the work of the center:

- leading sign language interpreters
- typhlopedagogue,
- psychologist,
- faculty (professors, associate professors, assistants),
- engineer, specialists,
- heads of laboratories.



**Picture 3. Classes at the university with students with hearing disabilities**

### **Research and Education Center “Inclusive Education”**

The Center for Inclusive Education was established on September 10, 2014.

In 2015, the first enrollment was carried out: 5 visually impaired students from different regions of Russia: Vladimir, the Vladimir region, the Republic of Mordovia, the North Caucasian district.

2019 – the first graduation of students with disabilities enrolled in the direction 370301 – Psychology.

Currently, 6 future bachelors of this direction are studying. 1 our graduate – in the magistracy direction 44.03.03 – Special (defectological) education (magistracy).

### **Actual directions of activities of the center “Inclusive Education”**

- Expanding the areas of training in which students with disabilities will receive education.

- Cooperation with government agencies and non-profit organizations of the Vladimir region, whose activities are related to persons with disabilities and disabilities.

- Educational and educational activities among the teaching staff of the VISU and other educational and social institutions of Vladimir and the Vladimir region.

- Popularization of ideas of inclusive education among students.

- Development of a volunteer student movement to accompany students and people with disabilities and disabilities. Conducting a school of volunteers.

- Organization of psychological and pedagogical support for people with disabilities and disabilities at VISU.

- Involvement of persons with disabilities and disabilities in scientific, research and project activities.

- Promotion of employment of people with disabilities and people with disabilities.

Center structure:

- laboratory of monitoring studies,

- laboratory of psychological and pedagogical diagnostics and correction of speech disorders,

- laboratory of typhlopsychology and typhlopedagogy,

- an office of psychological and pedagogical counseling.

- scientific and methodological office,

Monitoring research laboratory:

- study, promotion and dissemination of the experience of inclusive education in the Vladimir region and in Russia;

- communication with the media.

Laboratory of psychological and pedagogical diagnostics and correction of speech disorders:

- diagnostics of violations of speech development;

- corrective speech therapy work with children and adults with speech disorders.

Scientific and methodological office:

- organization and holding of scientific and methodological conferences, seminars, round tables on the problems of inclusive education;

- training of higher education personnel to work with disabled students;

- preparation and organization of the student volunteer movement.

Psychological and pedagogical consulting room:

- provision of psychological, pedagogical and rehabilitation assistance to disabled students;

- advising university staff, faculty, students, citizens and legal entities applying for inclusive education.

### **Laboratory of Typhlopsychology and Typhlopedagogy:**

- organizational and methodological support;
- psychological and pedagogical support;
- social support;
- material and technical support
- students with visual impairments.

Center employees carry out:

1. Assistance from the center's staff and volunteers in submitting documents to the admissions office, in placing blind students in a hostel upon admission to VISU (August-September)
2. Help of center staff and volunteers in adapting blind first-year students to the educational space of VISU (September–February).
3. Adaptation of educational material by discipline, preparation of rating assignments, test questions, tests – translation from flat-print text into relief-point braille and printing.

The tasks and simultaneously implemented activities are:

1. Scientific and methodological support of conditions for the formation and development of inclusive education.
2. Conducting research work in the field of inclusive education.
3. Design and development of technologies for monitoring the development of inclusive processes in educational institutions.
4. Scientific and methodological support of educational institutions implementing inclusive practice.
5. Providing assistance to employees, faculty, students, citizens and legal entities applying to the Center for Inclusive Education.
6. Psychological and pedagogical counseling and rehabilitation.
7. Study, promotion and dissemination of experience of inclusive education in the region.



**Picture 4. Participation of visually impaired students and teachers in the forum**

In 2015, on the basis of the REC “Inclusive Education”, a volunteer group KROT was created. Volunteers are first – fourth year students of the Humanities Institute of the directions “Psychology” and “Special (defectological) education”. Now there are 19 people in the squadron.



**Picture 5. Spatial orientation lesson with visually impaired students on the campus**

## Conclusions

The number of graduates of the department is increasing every year, which on the one hand indicates the demand for these specialists, on the other hand, this demand indicates an increase in requests from society.

Psychological and pedagogical support at the department level ensures the integration of students with disabilities into the university environment, provides them with a real opportunity to obtain higher education, helps to form qualified specialists, and teaches them to adapt to the environment.

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