

## SCTMG 2020

### International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

## INCLUSIVE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AT THE US MODERN SCHOOL

Inna Bessarabova (a)\*, Ekaterina Kurysheva (b)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Volgograd State Social and Pedagogical University, 27, Lenina ave., Volgograd, Russia, andrologia@rambler.ru,

(b) Volgograd State Social and Pedagogical University, 27, Lenina ave., Volgograd, Russia, nedotikomka15@mail.ru

### *Abstract*

The relevance of the research topic is due to the leading role of inclusive education in organizing work with students who have alternative physical or mental development. Education by this category of citizens is one of the basic and inalienable conditions for their successful socialization, ensuring their full participation in society, effective self-realization in various types of professional and social activities. The results of the study showed that due to the variety of technologies it is advisable to systematize them into the following groups: *pedagogical management technologies* allow taking into account the functions of all participants in the learning process, but the teacher remains the main coordinator of this process; *mutual support technologies* consider the creation of a democratic atmosphere in the school and community as an important condition for an inclusive environment; *service technologies* to meet the special educational needs of the alternative child, which mean the appropriate mechanism for providing the child with the services that facilitate its inclusion in the general educational environment; *tutoring technologies*, involving the constant help of a tutor. The practical value of the research results lies in the fact that the results can serve as the basis for the design of the inclusive learning process in domestic educational institutions in the development of new technologies, methods and techniques for working with alternative students; the formation of an inclusive educational environment in an educational institution and the development of multicultural competence as an integral quality of the personality of any specialist in the world.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, inclusive education, multicultural education, alternative children.



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## 1. Introduction

In modern conditions, inclusive education is recognized by specialists as the leading promising form of teaching children with alternative development in the American school, since such an organization of the educational process allows satisfying the educational needs of each special child. At the same time, the opportunities for socialization of students and their communication methods both in the educational institution and beyond are significantly expanded. It should be emphasized that in this study we consider the problem of teaching alternative children in the context of multicultural education, and not corrective pedagogy. Multicultural education draws attention, first of all, to the problem of children's socialization, considering issues of tolerance and respect for these children from peers and adults.

According to Heward (2017), a professor at the University of Manchester, inclusive education is the first step towards achieving the ultimate goal—creating an inclusive society that will allow all children and adults, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, ability to fully participate in society. Heward (2017), a supporter of multicultural education, emphasizes that in such a society, differences will be respected and appreciated, and there will be an active struggle against discrimination and prejudice.

If we take into account the multicultural composition of students, as well as differences in the ability of each student to learn the training material provided for in the program, then the problem arises of the correspondence of school programs and teaching methods with individual characteristics of students. The problem of teaching children with developmental disabilities is an urgent psychological and pedagogical problem in the USA, which is confirmed by the works of leading American psychologists and educators. Scientists are focusing on such issues as the importance of timely correct diagnosis of students' abilities and capabilities in order to determine the need for special training (Koonce & Pijanowski, 2019); the permissible number of alternative children in one class (Vaughn & Fall, 2018); the ability of all alternative children, without exception, to study in a regular school (Hagermoser-Sanetti & Luh, 2019); preparing the teacher and the entire school staff for the adoption of an alternative child in the school community (Sweigart & Collins, 2017) and many others.

In the American scientific and pedagogical literature there are a number of terms to refer to children with special educational needs. Note that the problem of terminology in relation to this category of children is a very topical issue, since it is closely interconnected with the problem of perception of these children in society. Considering the problem of teaching children in the context of multicultural education, we adhere to the terminology accepted in the world pedagogical practice by advocates of multicultural education in our work (Banks, 2005; Gollnick & Chinn, 2005). So, the leading concepts in relation to this group of children are “exceptional children” or “alternative children”. In the interpretation of American authors, these terms are synonymous.

In modern Russia, there is an urgent need for reforming the educational environment of the educational institution in order to accept and educate alternative students. This requires serious theoretical and practical efforts of various specialists, as well as a thorough study and analysis of foreign experience in this field in order to adapt its valuable elements to Russian sociocultural conditions, which will modernize the education system in Russia.

The appeal to the US pedagogical experience in this matter is due to the fact that this country is the pioneer in the field of multicultural education, which stimulated the reform of the country's education system and provided equal rights and opportunities to receive high-quality educational services to all citizens, regardless of identity. The study of the pedagogical experience of the United States is relevant for Russia in order to identify the most valuable ideas of foreign scientists to solve the difficult task of preparing young people for life in a multicultural world.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Thus, it is necessary to study the problem of teaching children with alternative development in a modern school in the USA, taking into account the principle of inclusion in the context of a multicultural education policy; analyze leading American concepts and concepts that define the essence of inclusive education; to study modern approaches and technologies for the organization of inclusive education in a modern American school. In this regard, the research problem is to identify the features of the process of formation and development of inclusive education in a modern comprehensive American school in the context of a multicultural education policy.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of this article is the process of organizing inclusive education in a modern US school, taking into account the multicultural orientation of the country's educational policy.

An analysis of the US scientific literature on the teaching of alternative students shows that this is a complex, lengthy, multilateral process that requires a combination of various technologies, a high level of professionalism of teachers and specialists in various fields involved in the diagnosis and training of alternative children, and the constant patient participation of parents and other members of the immediate environment child in order to create a true inclusive educational environment in which every child, regardless of the form of alternative, feel like a full member of society.

We turn to a review of the leading technologies for inclusive education of alternative children in the United States. In general, American scientists understand teaching technology as a method for creating, applying and defining a learning process, teaching and mastering knowledge, taking into account the interaction of technical and human resources (Bos & Vaughn, 2006; Boscardin, 2019; Smolkowski & Crawford, 2019). For all the variety of definitions of the concept of “educational technology”, the term “educational technology” is closer to our study, which also has many approaches to definition in American literature: the technique of implementing the educational process (Bos & Vaughn, 2006); the process of obtaining the desired learning outcomes (Curtin, 2019); Mastery of Learning (Greer, 2019); learning tools (O'Connor, 2017); a set of tools for solving learning problems (Olson & Platt, 2008).

With many definitions of the concept of "educational technology", most experts believe that it has the following characteristics:

- orientation of training planning towards a clearly defined desired standard;

- adherence to a strict sequence of actions of the teacher and student when programming the educational process;
- continuous monitoring of learning outcomes;
- timely correction of learning outcomes at any stage of the educational process.

It is thought that the above provisions can be attributed to inclusive education technologies.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the work is to identify and characterize the leading technologies of inclusive education in the modern American school and determine their multicultural orientation.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The sources for the research were the fundamental theoretical works of American and Russian scientists on multicultural education and inclusive education; US encyclopedic publications, documents of international organizations (UN, UNESCO, UNICEF), statistical literature of this subject area, materials of international and all-Russian conferences, pedagogical periodicals of the USA and Russia. In the process of research, a set of methods was used that is used in studies of foreign and comparative pedagogy: the method of historical and logical analysis, retrospective analysis, theoretical analysis of the problem under study in pedagogy, psychology, sociology; comparative analysis and classification of approaches of American and Russian scientists to the definitions, goals, objectives, principles and content of inclusive education and multicultural education.

#### **6. Findings**

An analysis of the literature allows distinguishing the following *groups of inclusive education technologies*, which we conventionally united according to the leading principle of organization: educational management technologies; mutual support technologies; service technology; technology tutoring support.

Let us consider in more detail the above-mentioned groups of inclusive education technologies. According to American researchers Friend and Bursuck (2019), *pedagogical management technologies* should be developed taking into account the following principles: the focused and systematic nature of the changes introduced by the teacher, which should fully take into account the individual needs of each student; organization of an inclusive educational environment; positive perception by the teacher of emerging problems and their assessment from the position of the possibility of finding a non-standard solution from a difficult situation; a combination of practical pedagogical actions and reflective vision of the teacher; an adequate relationship between the efforts of the teacher and children to create a healthy inclusive microclimate; a combination of horizontal and vertical inclusive classroom management strategies; interaction with the wider local community to include the child in a common network of social contacts (Friend & Bursuck, 2019).

An analysis of the literature showed that the pedagogical management technologies of American authors combine the following features: the teacher's complete knowledge of the degree of student's

alternativeness, which requires attention, both at school and outside the school; providing the child with a flexible curriculum for completing learning tasks; respect for the child as a person capable of mastering knowledge; the teacher's ongoing interest in the child's life outside the school. We support this point of view, since compliance with these principles will create a healthy inclusive environment that takes into account the functions of all participants in the learning process, but the teacher remains the main coordinator of this process.

A comparative analysis showed that between the American and Russian pedagogical management technologies, there was a significant difference in terms of the overall goal of teaching a child. Western technologies are aimed at raising a child as an active, independent (as far as his characteristics allow) member of society. It is for this purpose that a relationship with the wider local community is envisaged (i.e., the active inclusion of the child in the community). Russian technologies limit the goal of teaching a child only to academic achievements.

The next group of inclusive learning technologies is designated as *mutual support technologies*. Researchers identify the following mandatory principles for developing these technologies: creating an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance in an inclusive space; coordinated actions of all participants in the learning process and an adequate response to the educational needs of the alternative child; the comprehensiveness of the services provided to the child for the normal functioning of the school and beyond (Ferguson-Patrick & Jolliffe, 2018). Compliance with these principles is due to the impossibility of creating a democratic atmosphere in an inclusive class, in isolation from the positive personal mood of each member to accept any form of child's alternative. The democratic atmosphere in this case is considered as an important condition for an adequate response of all participants in the learning process to the particular development of an alternative child.

A comparative analysis showed that Western technologies of mutual support are different from Russian in terms of reaching a wider category of actors involved in creating a democratic atmosphere not only in the educational institution, but also in the community where the child lives.

The next group of inclusive education technologies is *service technologies*, which mean the appropriate mechanism for providing the services the child needs that facilitate their inclusion in the general educational environment. The concept of "service" in inclusive education means a combination of techniques and practical tools that help a child make an individual choice and reveal his inner potential. The selection of a suitable service is carried out taking into account the individual characteristics of children (Johnston et al., 2018). The main principles for developing these technologies are: the right of each child to individually determine the amount of material studied with the help of a teacher; the right of every child to participate in the development of democratic school rules; the right of each child to make meaningful independent choices in learning situations; the use by all participants of the educational process of the necessary forms of communication for communicating with alternative children. These educational technologies allow an alternative child to act simultaneously as the recipient and producer of a particular service, which develops his personal activity.

A comparative analysis showed that the main difference between Western service technologies of inclusive education from Russian lies in their integrity, while domestic technology is characterized by fragmentation (emphasis on a particular type of service).

Let us consider the following group of inclusive learning technologies—*tutoring technologies*—which include: designing an individual educational route, organizing a child’s reflection on their activities, maintaining a portfolio (Reichow & Boyd, 2016).

These technologies require the help of a tutor, which may be an educational worker engaged in curatorial activities. It should be emphasized that in this case, the American educational system successfully implements English pedagogical experience, since the tutoring system of education originated in medieval universities in England and has established itself as an effective form of education. Today, tutoring is a powerful tool to improve the quality of education in England at all levels (pre-school, primary, secondary, higher) and has both traditional and modern types (for example, online tutoring). In general, the tutoring system of education implies a system of individual learning, accompaniment and support of students, based on the idea of pedagogical search, aimed at the formation of subjectivity, the academic growth of students and the development of the ability to independently acquire the necessary knowledge. Scientists identify the main functions of a tutor (help in self-determination—mediation; creating conditions for finding oneself; planning and organizing students' activities; organizing independent work; accompanying a student in an educational institution), as well as ways of a tutor's activity (recording student success; planning for close prospects; shared activities) (Counts et al., 2018).

In the system of inclusive education, the tutor's activity has its own specifics. The functions of the tutor are to equalize the diverse abilities and capabilities of all children, regardless of the severity of their various forms of alternativeness. According to scientists, the tutor helps to solve a number of important tasks: to develop the most appropriate educational tasks that satisfy the special educational needs of all students and to form the necessary level of cohesion of the children’s team, when all students understand and accept the specifics of alternative children; quick solution to problem situations (having a high level of special knowledge, skills, the tutor passes them to the teacher); a combination of “tracking” strategies (temporary isolation of a child from traditional students in connection with his special educational needs) and “streaming” (inclusion of a child in an inclusive class and in those types of educational and/or social activities in which he is most successful); help to the teacher in collecting the full psychological and pedagogical history of the child; detailed tracking of successes and failures in child development (Correa, 2005).

## **7. Conclusion**

This article examined the main groups of inclusive education technologies used today in the USA. Depending on the school and the composition of students, the content and process of implementing these technologies may take on individual characteristics, but the characteristics that unite all of the above technologies are: positive perception of an alternative child by all participants in the educational process; prohibition of any form of discrimination against a child; the perception of any forms of child's alternative, not as a problem in learning, but as its natural feature; development of an individual educational route for a child to all participants in the educational process; close contact with the family and the immediate environment of the child; recognition of the possible autonomy of each person and the development of their subjective principles; continuous training and retraining of educators.

It should be emphasized that these characteristics of educational technologies for alternative students are based on the leading principles of multicultural education, which significantly complements the essence of inclusive education in Russian science: anti-discrimination nature; focus on achieving social justice; continuity and dynamism; liberating nature (inclusive learning gives a person the opportunity to go beyond the limits of their cultural experience), transactional nature (a person enriches their cultural experience through interaction with other cultures) and transformational nature (an alternative child is transformed from an object of family care to the most active participant in personal, social and political life of society).

Let us emphasize that, on the one hand, a variety of training technologies has been identified, and, on the other hand, their mandatory interconnection and integrity is emphasized. Not every technology in itself is important, but their combination, which will ensure the creation of a genuine inclusive environment in the educational institution.

## Acknowledgments

The study was supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (the theme “The Formation and Development of Inclusive Education in the Modern US General Education School in the Context of a Multicultural Education Policy”, project No. 19-313-90028).

## References

- Banks, J.A. (2005). *Cultural Diversity and Education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bos, C., & Vaughn, Sh. (2006). *Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning and Behavior Problems*. US: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.
- Boscardin, M.L. (2019). CEC Driving Change in the Special Education Profession. *Teach. Except. Children, 52(1)*, 5.
- Correa, V. (2005). *Interactive Teaming: Enhancing Programs for Students with Special Needs*. New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.
- Counts, J., Katsiyannis, A., & Whitford, D.K. (2018). Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in Special Education. *NASSP Bull., 102(1)*, 5–21.
- Curtin, A. (2019). *Assessment in Practice: Explorations in Identity, Culture, Policy and Inclusion*. New York: Routledge.
- Ferguson-Patrick, K., & Jolliffe, W. (2018). *Cooperative Learning for Intercultural Classrooms*. New York: Routledge.
- Friend, M., & Bursuck, W.C. (2019). *Including Students With Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. US: Pearson.
- Gollnick, D.M., & Chinn, P.G. (2005). *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*. New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.
- Greer, C.W. (2019). Teaching Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities to Count: Routine for Achieving Early Counting. *Teach. Except. Children, 51(5)*, 382–389.
- Hagermoser-Sanetti, L., & Luh, H. (2019). Fidelity of Implementation in the Field of Learning Disabilities. *Learn. Disability Quarterly, 42(4)*, 204–216.
- Heward, W.L. (2017). *Exceptional Children: An Introduction to Special Education*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Johnston, S., O’Keeffe, B.V., & Stokes, K. (2018). Early Literacy Support for Students with Physical Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs. *Teach. Except. Children, 51(2)*, 91–99.
- Koonce, M., & Pijanowski, J. (2019). Principal Engagement in the Professional Development Process. *NASSP Bull., 103(3)*, 229–252.

- O'Connor, R. E. (2017). Building Better Bridges. *Learn. Disability Quarterly*, 40(3), 174–186.
- Olson, J., & Platt, J. (2008). *Teaching Children and Adolescents with Special Needs*. US: Pearson.
- Reichow, B., & Boyd, B. (2016). *Handbook of Early Childhood Special Education*. US: Springer.
- Smolkowski, K., & Crawford, L. (2019). Introduction to Implementation Science for Research on Learning Disabilities. *Learn. Disability Quarterly*, 42(4), 192–203.
- Sweigart, C.A., & Collins, L.W. (2017). Supporting the Needs of Beginning Special Education Teachers and Their Students. *Teach. Except. Children*, 49(4), 209–212.
- Vaughn, Sh., & Fall, A. (2018). Class Percentage of Students with Reading Difficulties on Content Knowledge and Comprehension. *J. of Learn. Disabilities*, 52(2), 120–134