

PSYRGGU 2020
Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH
HEALTH LIMITATIONS**

Tatiana V. Kuzmicheva (a)*, Juliia A. Afonkina (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Murmansk Arctic State University, K. Egorova st., 16, Murmansk, 183038, Russia, tvkuzmicheva@gmail.com

(b) Murmansk Arctic State University, Murmansk, Russia

Abstract

The authors has justified and presented an approach to the analysis of the teacher's ability to individualize educational activity in the context of inclusive education in terms of its sensitivity to the individual educational needs of a student with health limitations and to bring the methods of managing the schoolchild's educational behaviour into line with them. The semantic core for the teacher's analysis of these needs in the author's approach is the "specific case", which is formulated on the teacher's reflection on the individual characteristics of the child, demonstrated in situations of educational behaviour and their own actions aimed at resolving the difficulties at the lesson. The purpose of the study is the problematization of the educational activity individualization, the development and testing of tools to obtain information on the sensitivity of the teacher to the individual needs of students with health limitations, as well as to typify the teacher's ability to individualize educational activities based on these needs. As a diagnostic toolkit, a method of educational events is proposed as the possible one, which based on teachers' reflection on their professional activity, to obtain information about the peculiarities of their perception on the demonstration of the schoolchild's individual psychosocial development, objectified in educational activities. This method made it possible to identify and describe several types of the teacher's ability to individualize educational activity: formal, pragmatic and didactic, empathic and reflective.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Individualization of the teacher's professional activity, Special educational needs, Students with health limitations.



1. Introduction

Accessibility and quality of education for children with health limitations continues to remain in modern society as one of the most important problems that need to be addressed. Obtaining a quality education for students with health limitations is a determining factor in their future independent life in society. There is no doubt that the idea of inclusive education is perceived by Russian society as progressive and in demand by modern times, as evidenced by numerous fundamental and applied research, as well as widespread public discussions (Malofeev, 2018; Soloveva, 2018; Zubareva et al., 2018). The teachers of secondary schools are faced with the task of ensuring the high educational performance of children with health limitations, taking into account the diversity of their individual development and the options for educational programs and individual educational routes corresponding to these features (Korobeynikov & Kuzmicheva, 2018, 2019).

It should be noted that the current situation is characterized by a significant increase in the risks of inclusive education, including the insufficient sensitivity of teachers to the individual demonstrations of a particular student, the dynamics of their educational needs, which does not allow fully revealing the educational potential of each child (Chernik et al., 2019). Our analysis of a large amount of information showed that in the current practice of inclusive education in the field of individualizing the activities of students with health limitations, such components as professional flexibility, compromise, creativity, communication, empathy are not adequately reflected. This impedes the implementation of the basic principles of inclusion and reduces the quality of inclusive education, that does not allow achieving the planned results in relation to the students' academic and life competencies formation (Väyrynen et al., 2016).

In connection with the transition of the 2020 Federal State Educational Standard (GEF) of Primary General Education for schoolchildren with health limitations to the level of basic general education, this problem acquires special relevance. The successful construction of an inclusive vertical, which ensures the continuity of inclusive education, largely depends on the solution of the indicated problem.

Thus, new contexts of scientific understanding of the inclusive education problem are objectified.

2. Problem Statement

The solution to the problem of ensuring the high educational performance of children with health limitations is only possible with delicate and precise differentiation of the variety of their individual psychosocial features by building individual trajectories to meet their educational needs when developing educational programs.

At the same time, it should be noted that the current educational situation differs both in the development of effective practices for including students with health limitations in educational activities, and in an increase of educational risks, which is most significantly demonstrated in inclusive education. Among the aspects of inclusive education that can lead to effective changes in traditional educational practice and allow achieving the changes necessary to promote inclusion, individualization of educational activity should be highlighted.

The approach from the “individualization” point of view is embodied in modern studies of inclusive education of students with health limitations from the perspective of creating special conditions, in a concentrated form reflecting the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard for Primary General Education of schoolchildren with health limitations (Korobeynikov & Kuzmicheva, 2018, 2019). In the focus there is a problem of individualization, the authors consider the categories of educational needs and special conditions for their training. Thus, the researchers set a vector in understanding the problem of individualization of educational activity of students with health limitations, reflecting on the variety of options for individual development in the conjunction of mental disorders and compensatory resources, adaptive capabilities, abilities as “strengths” of individual development.

It is noted in the research of Goncharova et al. (2019) that there are the following groups of special educational needs in the national scientific school: common for all children with health limitations, specific for each category of children with health limitations, and individual educational needs determined by a particular child’s life.

The statement of the problem of individualizing the educational activity of students with health limitations is emerging today as relatively new not so much in content as in the demand of modern educational practice. This practice needs to differentiate the individual educational needs of students in the context of their front-line learning, in which the individual educational needs of a student with health limitations are levelled out as the professional consciousness of the teacher, and in his professional activities. The situation of a student’s failure in conditions of inclusive education naturally causes the teacher to feel professionally impotent, low in productivity of his actions, hopelessness, pessimism in assessing the educational prospects of students with health limitations, and the depreciation of his educational achievements. In turn, the ability of the teacher to ensure the individualization of educational activity can be considered as an important condition for achieving the quality of education of students with health limitations.

Individualization, being the one of the main principles in modern pedagogy, is expressed as such an organization of training and education when the student becomes the subject of activity, that is gradually learns to independently use his compensatory capabilities and overcome the limitations caused by his developmental disability.

Thus, the practical implementation of the principle of individualization in the conditions of inclusive education presupposes an objective perception of the student’s individual psychosocial development, his individual educational needs by the teacher, and the teacher should take selection of pedagogical means, forms, methods and techniques into account. It is especially important to increase the degree of involvement in the design and implementation of educational goals, objectives, the content of education and the evaluation of its results for all subjects of responsibility of the student and his parents.

So individualization involves achieving maximum compliance with the individual educational needs of students and the methods of managing educational behaviour used by the teacher. In our opinion, the “specific case” described by Korobeynikov (2002), reflecting those signs that are characteristic of different levels of the student’s individual psychosocial development, can serve as the semantic core for the analysis of these needs.

In our research, the “specific case” is formulated on the teacher’s reflection on the individual characteristics of the child, demonstrated in the situations of educational behaviour and their own actions aimed at resolving the difficulties encountered in the lesson. As structural units for assessing the educational needs and individual capabilities of the student, we distinguish: the level of cognitive and social abilities deficit, as well as the state of the affective and personal sphere in combination with individual problems caused by various dysfunctions.

With reference to the pedagogical mechanisms of educational activities individualization of students with health limitations, we emphasize that in the practice of inclusive education they are based on the sensitivity of the teacher not only to the individual demonstration of a particular student, but also to their dynamics, which allows us to fully reveal the educational potential of each child.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. What are the theoretical foundations of a scientific interpretation of the problem of individualization of educational activity in the context of inclusion?
- 3.2. How can we study the ability of a teacher to individualize educational activities based on his sensitivity to the individual needs of students with health limitations?
- 3.3. What is the teacher’s sensitivity to these needs? What is the typological diversity of demonstrations of the primary education teachers’ abilities to individualize educational activities?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to problematize the category of individualization of educational activity, to develop and test tools to obtain information on the sensitivity of a teacher to the individual needs of students with health limitations, as well as to typify the teacher’s abilities to individualize educational activities based on these needs.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Methods

General scientific methods necessary for the theoretical understanding of the stated problems (analysis and synthesis, comparison and generalization; principles of objectivity, logical consistency and consistency) were applied in the research. To obtain empirical data, the method of analysis of the activity products was applied, which appeared in the author's modification as an analysis of specific cases formed by a chain of events highlighted by the teacher, being significant for him. The proposed method makes it possible, on the basis of teachers’ reflection on their professional activities, to obtain information about the characteristics of their perception of the schoolchild’s individual development, objectified in educational activities, that is, to get an idea of the “specific case”.

The diagnostic value of the event as a “specific case” is that it reflects the importance of certain facts in the teacher’s perception of the schoolchild’s difficulties, demonstrating an assessment of these facts; confirming the presence of problems and determining their causes in a specific time period and localized

in space. According to the event described by the teacher, one can understand his involvement in the objectification of this or that fact in inclusive educational practice.

The essence of the method of educational events that we propose in the format of studying the individualization of educational activities of students with health limitations is to analyse the descriptions compiled by teachers that are related to their professional difficulties in interacting with a schoolchild with health limitations at a lesson, and reflect a certain set of facts observed by the teacher about the schoolchild's educational behaviour. Thus, the attention of the teacher focuses not only on the individuality of the schoolchild, but also on the specifics of the interaction itself, micro-social conditions in which it occurs.

5.2. Participants

Within the proposed method, empirical data was obtained in the form of activity products - 144 descriptions of educational events prepared by 48 teachers who implement the practice of inclusive education in Murmansk. The following instruction was offered to teachers: "Describe at least three examples of "specific cases" that reflect the problems of your professional interaction with a student with health limitations at the lesson, which resolution was difficult for you. Try to explain why the problems turned out to be difficult for you".

In order to analyze the sensitivity of teachers to the individual educational needs of students with health limitations, based on the obtained products of activity, we propose the following criteria:

- plot of the event, definition of its temporal and spatial characteristics;
- features of the facts reflected in the description of the event: their content (reflect the forms of schoolchild's activity, ways of managing his educational behavior by the teacher, other incentives of the educational environment); the number of facts that the teacher considers sufficient to describe the event; the level of interaction; logic in the sequence of their presentation, the completeness of the disclosure of the event as a chain of facts; a description of the dynamics of facts; "integration" of facts into microsocium;
- interpretation by the teacher of the facts that make up the event and / or events as a whole: the identification of cause-effect relationship of facts, the nature of this relationship; comprehension and assessment of the subjective activity of the participants in the event; assessment of acquired experience of interaction with the schoolchild.

6. Findings

Based on the descriptions systematization we have proposed a typology of teachers' abilities to individualize educational activities, which is based on sensitivity to the individual needs of the schoolchild.

The formal type (12% of teachers) is an indifferent or negative perception of the schoolchild and his difficulties. The behaviour of the schoolchild is recognized as a difficulty, since, according to the teacher, it does not correspond to the generally accepted, expected and violates the usual pedagogical formats. The emphasis is on the negative behavioural reactions of the schoolchild, a small number of stereotypical methods of pedagogical activity to manage his educational activities are noted. The inefficiency of these methods is attributed to the lack of development of a schoolchild, the disinterest of parents, the lack of specialist assistance. Responsibility for educational results is delegated not only to adults ("parents don't

accept the problem”, “psychologist does not help” or “... the psychologist dealt with the problem, it became better, but at the lessons A. is still emotionally unstable”), but also to a child who “doesn’t want to learn”, “is not interested in anything”, “has specific features” (for example, “I didn’t know what to do in this situation, because the schoolchild with his/her specific features, did not understand what I have expected from him”). It is characterized by inattention to the experience, specific actions and interests of the schoolchild.

The pragmatic and didactic type (46% of teachers) appears in the absolutization of the didactic component. The schoolchild’s perception is negative or conditionally positive, when the teacher’s efforts still achieve results, and the schoolchild copes with the tasks set by the teacher. It is characterized by the teacher’s intention to achieve didactic tasks at any cost, which dominates his perception of the individual demonstrations of the child’s educational behaviour. The focus of the teacher’s attention is the student’s academic failures related not only to the content, but also to the organization of educational activities, as well as his own efforts to discipline the schoolchild, “train” in solving certain educational problems (for example, “V. refuses to answer in front of the blackboard, then I suggested him answering from the seat. This attempt was also unsuccessful...”). The absolute usefulness of the specific or generalized tasks posed by the teacher is declared for each and every schoolchild (he/she must: “study well”, “do homework every day”, “answer in front of the blackboard”; he/she should “listen to the teacher”, “get it right the first time”, “be attentive”, etc. ..). The teacher’s evaluative judgments are categorical and have the character of a label (“weak student”, “wants nothing”, “constantly distracted”). Excessive and uninformative detailing of various aspects of the event is demonstrated by the teacher. The global aim of the teacher is to teach but not to create the conditions for the child to learn, act but not to interact.

The empathetic type (21% of teachers) is characterized by unconditionally positive attention to the individual demonstrations of the schoolchild, empathy with his difficulties, attempts to find a way to him/her and provide assistance, but these efforts are ineffective because it is not possible to establish productive contact with the schoolchild (or this contact is built on emotional, but not business-like basis), flexibly apply knowledge and rebuild interaction tactics. The teacher, although makes attempts to help the child, but his repertoire of teaching methods and means is not wide enough. In addition, the independence and initiative of the schoolchild is underestimated. Let us cite one of the descriptions as an example: “A boy with cerebral palsy is in my class. Because of his particular nature, he does tasks more slowly, makes many mistakes, talks in unclear way that annoy the other schoolchildren. I explained to the schoolchildren that such a child has specific features and he should be treated with understanding. The schoolchildren listened to me and understood the situation, but as soon as it came to working in pairs, they refused to interact with him. I perfectly understood the sadness of that boy and the indignation of other children, but I did not know what to do in this situation. This situation was unsolvable for me”.

The reflexive type (21% of teachers) is characterized by a positive perception of the schoolchild and the support of his independence, initiative. The teacher is focused on achieving high-quality educational results that are personally significant for the schoolchild and draws attention to the schoolchild’s experiences. The teacher perceives in detail the difficulties of the child, examines them in dynamics, analyses the conditions for the demonstration of difficulties, both external and internal, and tries to establish cause-and-effect relationship. He understands the problem in development, in a temporal and spatial

context. The teacher carries out self-analysis of his actions aimed at helping the schoolchild and establishing productive relationships based on attention to his/her personality. His/her difficulties are regarded as a general problem that can only be solved collectively by means of shared responsibility. The teacher understands what his actions are successful or unsuccessful, and hypothesizes the reasons for this, trying to understand the problem, demonstrating pedagogical optimism. This type is characterized by the high degree of teacher's sensitivity.

7. Conclusion

The conducted research revealed the understanding by teachers of the ways to control the educational behaviour of the schoolchild to individualize his/her educational activities. In the system of inclusive education, taking into account individual differences in the mental development of children with disabilities is complicated by the conditions of their frontal education. As our study has shown, most educators strive to situational control of the educational behaviour of a schoolchild by embedding pedagogical, including correctional, developmental methods in the educational process without taking into account the hierarchy of difficulties specific to a particular schoolchild. In addition, in most cases, teachers are inclined to delegate responsibility, and not to cooperate with other specialists in solving educational problems. In our opinion, it is professional reflection and the productive interaction of all subjects of the educational process in the interests of the schoolchild that will create the opportunity to “include” children with disabilities in the overall activities of the class, thus ensuring the individualization of education.

Acknowledgments

The research was supported by the RFBR grant № 20-013-00811 A “Individualization of the educational environment as a factor in the development of inclusive processes in education and upbringing of children with health limitations living in urban and rural areas”.

References

- Chernik, V., Afonkina, J., Kuzmicheva, T., Merzliakova, E. Stien, K. E., & Reinertsen, A. B. (2019, October 8). Explorations Across National Borders: Wor(l)ding Differences Together. *Qualitative Inquiry*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419879186>
- Goncharova, E. L., Nikolskaya, O. S., & Kukushkina, O. I. (2019). Deti s osobymi obrazovatel'nymi potrebnostyami v sisteme ponyatij kul'turno-istoricheskoy psihologii [Children with special educational needs in the system of concepts of cultural-historical psychology]. *The Almanac Institute of Special Education*, 39. <https://alldef.ru/ru/articles/almanah-39/children-with-special-educational-needs-in-the-system-of-concepts-of-cultural-historical-psychology>
- Korobeynikov, I. A. (2002). *Narusheniya razvitiya i social'naya adaptaciya* [Developmental disorders and social adaptation]. PER SE.
- Korobeynikov, I. A., & Kuzmicheva, T. V. (2018). Sovmestnoe obuchenie pedagoga i psihologa na osnove osvoeniya metoda nablyudeniya za uchebnym povedeniem mladshogo shkol'nika s ZPR [Cooperative Learning of Teacher and Psychologist on the Basis of Method of Observing by the Learning Behavior of Primary School Student with Mental Development Delay]. *Defectology*, 6, 63 – 69.
- Korobeynikov, I. A., & Kuzmicheva, T. V. (2019). Osvoenie professional'nyh kompetencij budushchimi pedagogami i psihologami v hode sovmestnoj podgotovki v vuze//Vysshee obrazovanie v Rossii

- [Development of Professional Competences of teachers and Psychologists in the Conditions of Joint training]. *Higher Education in Russia*, 28(6), 97 – 106.
- Malofeev, N. N. (2018). Ot institucionalizacii k inklyuzivnomu obrazovaniyu detej s osobymi obrazovatel'nymi potrebnostryami [Institutionalization towards inclusive education of children with special needs]. *The Almanac Institute of Special Education*, 34. <https://alldef.ru/ru/articles/almanac-34/from-institutionalization-to-inclusive-education-of-children-with-special-educational-needs>
- Soloveva, T. A. (2018). *Sistemnyj podhod k organizacii vklyucheniya mladshih shkol'nikov s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami zdorov'ya v obshcheobrazovatel'nuyu sredu* [The systematic approach to organizing the process of including primary school children with disabilities in the general education environment]. MPGU.
- Väyrynen, S., Kesälähti, E., Pynninen, T., Siivola, J., Flotskaya, N. (...) Afonkina, Y. (2016). Finnish and Russian teachers supporting the development of social skills. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(4), 437 – 451.
- Zubareva, T. G., Glagolev, D. V., Garanina, L. A., & Rossiyskaya, E. N. (2018). Ot teorii inklyuzivnogo obrazovaniya k praktike (opyt Kurskogo regiona) [From the Theory of Inclusive Education to Practice: Experience of the Kursk Region]. *Defectology*, 6, 3 – 10.