

## PEHPP 2019

### Pedagogical Education: History, Present Time, Perspectives

# CONDITIONS OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION OF DISABLED STUDENTS IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

V. M. Grebennikova (a)\*, T. I. Bonkalo (b), O. Vl. Grebennikov (c)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Kuban State University, Krasnodar, Russia, vmgrebennikova@mail.ru

(b) Scientific Research Institute of Healthcare Organization and Medical Management, Moscow, Russia,  
bonkalotatyanaivanovna@yandex.ru

(c) Kuban State University, Krasnodar, Russia, olegvlad@inbox.ru

### *Abstract*

The article is devoted to the problem of the formation and improvement of an inclusive higher education system, the quality of which is an indicator of the development of modern society - a society of equal opportunities. The authors focus on the issues of self-actualization, self-realization and self-development of students with disabilities and special needs in the process of their education and training in organizations of inclusive higher education. In order to develop pedagogical conditions for the development of the qualities of a self-actualizing personality, the factors that determine them for the students with disabilities and special needs are studied. We consider the features of students' self-attitude, the degree of their self-confidence, self-acceptance and self-guidance as the dominant factor. The study revealed the peculiarities of self-actualization of students with disabilities and special needs, their self-relationships, the relationship between these psychological phenomena. The authors develop a system of pedagogical conditions necessary for their self-realization in the inclusive educational environment of the educational organization of higher education based on the results of empirical studies. An important condition is the preparation and organization of psychological support for the process of personal and professional development of students with disabilities and disabilities, aimed at correcting the consequences of their disability, increasing their self-acceptance, self-confidence through the development of reflection, self-knowledge and an adequate perception of their uniqueness and personality traits.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

**Keywords:** Students with disabilities, self-actualization, self-realization, self-development, self-attitude, conditions.



## 1. Introduction

The problem of higher education of persons with disabilities and special needs is one of the urgent and at the same time complex problems that are on the agenda of modern society aimed at creating a society of equal opportunities.

Researchers note that over the past decade, both in Russia and in foreign countries there has been a steady trend towards an increase in the number of students with disabilities and special needs studying in higher education programs. Since 2012, when Russia ratified the UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adopted a number of legislative and regulatory acts, the practice of inclusive education began to be introduced in all educational organizations of the Russian Federation.

However, the lack of a holistic theory of inclusive vocational education for people with disabilities and special needs in modern Russian pedagogy leads to the emergence and development of a huge number of problems, the solution of which determines the effectiveness of the implementation of strategic state tasks.

A theoretical analysis of modern studies of inclusive education problems has shown that the joint education system for disabled and conditionally healthy students is just beginning to take shape (Grebennikova & Nikitina, 2016). Researchers from different countries are looking for an answer to the questions of what inclusive education should be today (Dickson & Duffy, 2019), what patterns and principles should underlie it (Marková, 2018), how, with what forms, means and methods it is possible to increase its quality ensuring the achievement of the effectiveness of vocational training, including for persons with disabilities and special needs (Parey, 2019; Peeters, De Backer, Kindekens, Triquet, & Lombaerts, 2016).

In 2016, Mahadeo and Chtlsea analyzed the current problems that students with disabilities face in the process of studying at universities in different countries. As a result of the analysis, the authors come to the conclusion that it is necessary to create an “accessibility culture” in modern universities as a necessary condition for improving the quality of training students with disabilities. Vršmaş (2014), based on an analysis of the information contained in magazines, books, web pages and electronic articles of countries such as Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the USA and Romania, examines the attitude of the population towards the educational needs of adult students with disabilities. The author compares the opinion of people with the subjective perception of the students with disabilities themselves of the difficulties they face in the process of higher education.

Lucas and Passe (2017), as well as Dvir (2015) focus on the special training of teachers with disabilities on the problems of their professional identity. The work of domestic researchers raises the issue of professional self-determination of students with disabilities and special needs. Researchers point out that the actualization of professional self-determination is interconnected, first of all, with the issues of self-realization, self-actualization and self-development (Bonkalo, Rybakova, Bonkalo, Belyakova, & Gorohova, 2015). In this regard, one of the problems of modern inclusive education should recognize the problem of creating conditions for the self-realization of the personality of students with disabilities in the inclusive educational environment of higher education educational organizations.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The objective of the study is to identify factors and conditions for the self-realization of the personality of students with disabilities and special needs in the process of their education at the university.

## **3. Research Questions**

The study is focused on finding answers to questions about what prevents the self-realization of the personality of students with disabilities in the inclusive educational environment of the university, what psychological problems students with disabilities studying in higher education experience face, how and why most of them lack positive dynamics in the qualities of a self-actualizing personality, what measures should be taken to increase the effectiveness of the educational process in an inclusive university.

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

The aim of the study is to develop pedagogical conditions for self-realization and self-actualization of the personality of students with disabilities and special needs in an inclusive educational environment of the university.

## **5. Research Methods**

The study involved 248 senior students studying at Russian universities in the areas of psychological and pedagogical training, 124 of which are students with and without disabilities and special needs. The groups were equalized by the number of students (each research group included 124 students studying “Law”, “Economics”, “Management” and “Psychological and pedagogical education”).

In the study, the method “Self-actualization test” (SAT) was used (adapted by E.Yu. Aleshina and Gozman) and the Panteleev’s method “Self-relationship”.

The SAT test is based on the basic ideas of self-actualization. In its most general form, self-actualization is a person’s desire and ability to realize his own potential in professional activity and life activity in general, as an essential characteristic of the personality, reflecting the need for self-knowledge, self-improvement and self-development, personal growth in order to achieve personal maturity. Self-actualization is traditionally understood as the natural process of continuous growth inherent in all organisms, due to the desire for self-improvement and realization of the potential laid down by nature. In humanistic psychology, the need for self-actualization is considered as the highest need of a person, which makes them a person and becomes the main source of development.

In Russian psychology, self-actualization is associated with the process of becoming a person as a subject of their life, with issues of personal growth, self-realization of a person, self-realization of creative potential in professional activity, and reaching the peak of professionalism. From the point of view of E.E. Vakhromov self-actualization reflects a person’s disclosure of the self through constant work, on the education and personal improvement (Vahromov, 2001). Pidkasty, Fridman, and Garunov (1999) noted that the potential of a person studying in educational organizations is realized through effective self-organization of educational activities, which involves independent, without external control, management

of one's own cognitive activity. Researchers note that it is necessary for a person to have a high level of self-awareness, reflective abilities and a rejection of psychological defenses for self-actualization.

The SAT technique is a questionnaire that includes indicators of a self-actualizing personality, that is, features of its orientation in time, degree of independence of values, flexibility in translating values into life, sensitivity and spontaneity of a person, degree of self-esteem and features of self-perception and acceptance of others. The disorientation in time, according to the creators of the SAT technique, is caused by a person's inability to accept themselves for what they really are with all the weaknesses and abilities, character traits and the social situation of their development. Experiences of resentment combined with compensatory fantasies that manifest themselves in unreality of life goals and plans determine the disorientation of personality in time.

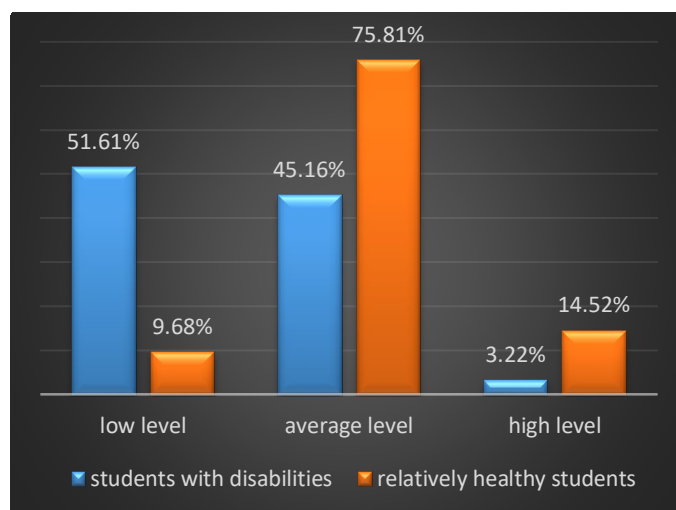
In the process of the study, a comparative analysis of the indicators of self-actualization and self-attitude of students with disabilities and special needs and conditionally healthy students was carried out.

Statistical data processing was carried out by calculating the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, representative error, percentage distribution, student t-test,  $\chi^2$  - criterion.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Features of self-actualization of the personality of students with disabilities

The results of a study conducted using the SAT technique suggest that most students with disabilities and special needs (51.61%) are characterized by a low level of self-actualization, which makes them possible to experience depressive states, apathy and psychosomatic diseases. Most students with disabilities and special needs are either living in the future, hope for it, unrelated to the real situation of their development, or, on the contrary, do not believe in the possibility of achieving success in life, and even more so in professional activities (Figure 01).



**Figure 01.** Percentage distribution of students of two research groups by the level of self-actualization of their personality

Significant differences between the two research groups were recorded in the indicators on the scale of “Support”, or “Reliance on oneself”. The fact revealed indicates that many students with disabilities and special needs have an unconscious demand for emotional attachment, a sense of confidence that they are loved, appreciated and respected, as a result of which they urgently need support from other people, depending on their opinion and ratings. The greatest differences were recorded in terms of self-perception, and most students with disabilities and special needs are characterized by relatively high self-esteem, the ability to value and respect themselves in combination with low self-acceptance, inability to internally accept themselves as they really are, with all their weaknesses and features.

The same uneven combination of individual indicators characterizes the value sphere of the personality of many students with disabilities and special needs. Most of them share the values of a self-actualizing personality, but at the same time they are characterized by rigidity of behavior and interaction with other people, a low degree of flexibility in the implementation of these values, and inability to quickly and adequately respond to changing conditions.

Low reflective abilities, inability to adequately evaluate themselves, to realize how others perceive them, fear of being natural, congruent in communication, inability to quickly establish psychological emotionally saturated contact with people, insufficient level of development of creative personality traits - all these features determine a low personal potential of many students with disabilities and special needs, which prevents their self-actualization in the process of studying at a university.

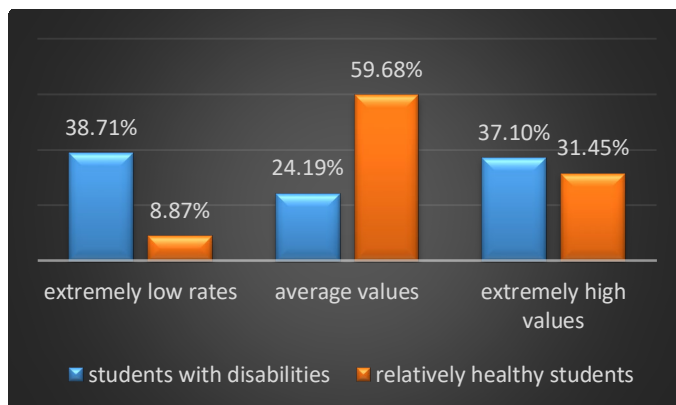
## 6.2. Features of the self-attitude of students with disabilities

The results of a study conducted using the methodology for determining self-relationship indicate that many students with disabilities and special needs are characterized by an increased desire to “deceive themselves,” low ability and willingness to recognize the presence of negative and socially disapproving personal qualities, isolation and lack of desire to give out negative information about themselves (reliably significant differences were recorded between groups in indicators on the first scale of the questionnaire - “Openness”, and in the group of students with disabilities and special needs, the average group score on this scale is significantly higher than in the second research group)( $t = 4.02777, p < 0,001$ ). Among students with disabilities and special needs, the majority are students who are either extremely low (38.71%) or, on the contrary, extremely high (37.10%) on the Self-confidence scale (Table 01, Figure 02).

**Table 01.** The results of a comparative analysis of the average group indicators of self-relation of two research groups

Indicators	Group of students with disabilities	Group of relatively healthy students	Student t-test / significance level
Openness	6.5 ± 0.61	3.6 ± 0.44	4.02777***
Self-confidence	4.8 ± 0.64	5.2 ± 0.56	0.6250
Self-government	3.4 ± 0.32	5.6 ± 0.59	3.05555**
Mirror I	2.9 ± 0.33	5.5 ± 0.58	3.939393***
Intrinsic value	4.9 ± 0.51	5.0 ± 0.53	0.6249550
Self-acceptance	3.3 ± 0.42	5.8 ± 0.64	3.472222**
Self-attachment	6.5 ± 0.72	5.0 ± 0.51	1.2374533
Internal conflict	6.6 ± 0.62	5.4 ± 0.57	1.5384615
Self-incrimination	5.9 ± 0.62	4.4 ± 0.51	1.9230769

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



**Figure 02.** Percentage distribution of students of two research groups by indicators of self-confidence

37.10% of students with disabilities and special needs have a high conceit and self-confidence in their uniqueness. The lack of criticality, the ability to adequately assess their strengths and weaknesses determine the development of self-confidence and a sense of estrangement from others, from close and distant surroundings, due to their lack of support for a high opinion of themselves. Almost the same number of students - 38.71%, are characterized, on the contrary, by a low degree of self-confidence, belief in their strengths, that they can arouse sympathy and respect in others. In the group of relatively healthy students, the majority of respondents (59.68%) have an average degree of self-satisfaction: their indicators on the indicated scale vary in the range of normal values. Reliably significant differences at a high level of significance were found on the Self-guidance scale, and in the group of students with disabilities and special needs indicators on this scale are significantly lower than in the control group ( $t = 3.05555$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Students with disabilities and special needs have a poorly developed ability to adequately analyze what is happening to them, their causes and possible consequences.

## 7. Conclusion

The study revealed that students with disabilities and special needs studying in higher education programs are characterized by a low level of self-acceptance and a low degree of severity of the features of a self-actualizing personality, combined with a developed desire for self-realization of their internal potential in their chosen field of activity. An important condition for the self-realization of their personality is the preparation and organization of psychological support for the process of personal and professional development, aimed at correcting the consequences of their disability, overcoming the laws of the influence of disability on a socializing personality, increasing their self-acceptance, self-confidence through the development of reflection, self-knowledge and adequate perception of their uniqueness and personal characteristics.

The following conditions were identified that effectively support the self-actualization of the personality of students with disabilities and special needs:

- use of various teaching methods in the educational process, the rejection of standard methods for transmitting finished information, the use of active methods of developing and problematic

training, teaching methods and technologies that actualize their professional and personal potential;

- inclusion of adaptation disciplines-modules in the variable part of educational programs, the study of which contributes to the adaptation and socialization of students with disabilities, to overcome the social consequences of their primary violations;
- creation of classroom success and extracurricular activities situations of success and personal achievements;
- involvement of students with disabilities and special needs in student self-government, volunteering and the development of a mentoring system at the university, where students with disabilities and special needs can also act as mentors;
- building the educational process on the principles of inclusion, congruency, optimism, activity, subjectivity, implementation of individually-differentiated and integrative approaches.

## Acknowledgments

This article was prepared with the financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy of the Krasnodar Territory as part of a scientific project № 19-413-230017.

## References

- Bonkalo, T. I., Rybakova, A. I., Bonkalo, S. V., Belyakova, N. V., & Gorohova, I. V. (2015). Social and psychological provisions for actualization of the professional self-identity of teenagers with disabilities in conditions of the inclusive education. *Biosciences Biotechnology Research Asia*, 12(3), 2525-2534.
- Dickson, E., & Duffy, J. (2019). A non-discriminatory response to disability related problem behaviour at Australian universities. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 64, 129-136.
- Dvir, N. (2015). Does physical disability affect the construction of professional identity? Narratives of student teachers with physical disabilities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 52, 56 – 65.
- Grebennikova, V. M., & Nikitina, N. So. (2016). Socio-pedagogical, integrative anthropological and technological aspects of the formation of an inclusive educational environment. *Historical and socio-educational thought*, 8(4-2), 119-126. [in Russ.].
- Lucas, A. G., & Passe, J. (2017). Are social studies methods textbooks preparing teachers to support students with disabilities in social studies classrooms? *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 41(2), 141 – 153.
- Mahadeo, A. S., & Chtlsea, E. M. (2016). *Creating a Culture of Accessibility in the Sciences*. Academic Press; 1st Edition.
- Marková, A. (2018). The “inclusive volunteering” phenomenon: Research into the volunteering of people with disabilities. *Kontakt*, 20(1), e48-e56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kontakt.2017.10.003>
- Parey, P. (2019). Understanding teachers’ attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in inclusive schools using mixed methods: The case of Trinidad. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 83, 199-211.
- Peeters, J., De Backer, F., Kindekens, A., Triquet, K., & Lombaerts, K. (2016). Teacher differences in promoting students' self-regulated learning: Exploring the role of student characteristics. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 52, 88-96.
- Pidkasisty, P. I., Fridman, L. M., & Garunov, M. G. (1999). Psychological and didactic reference book of a teacher of higher education. M.: Pedagogical Society of Russia. [in Russ.]
- Vahromov, E. E. (2001). *Psychological concepts of human development: theories of self-actualization*. M. [in Russ.].
- Vrašmaš, T. (2014). Adults with Disabilities as Students at the University. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 142, 235-242.