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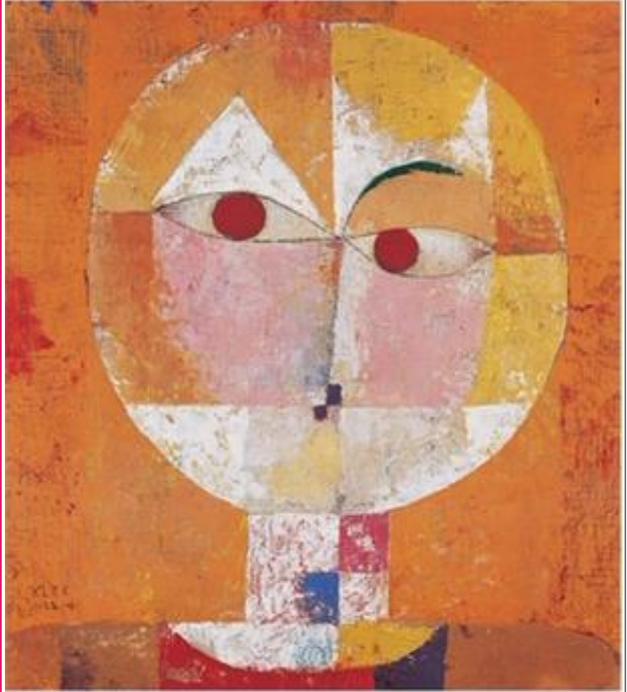
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Universidad del Zulia
Facultad Experimental de Ciencias
Departamento de Ciencias Humanas
Maracaibo - Venezuela

Problems of teaching students with special needs

Rima Kamaeva¹

¹Yelabuga Institute of the Kazan Federal University, Yelabuga,
Russian Federation

kamaeva-r@kpfu.ru

Tatiana Kvasnikova²

²Far Eastern Federal University, Vladivostok, Russian Federation

k.t.7891@dvfu.ru

Maria Egorova³

³National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, Tomsk, Russian
Federation

egorovams@tpu.ru

Lyalya Kashapova⁴

⁴BSPU them. M. Akmully, Ufa, Russian Federation

lya220852@bspu.ru

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the main problems in obtaining quality higher education for students with special needs, and also to find out whether graduates with special needs can compete in the labor market. The survey was conducted using an online survey among two groups of respondents. The results of the study indicate that more than half of universities (65 percent) have ramps, elevators, and lifting devices. In conclusion, the administration of all universities must ensure that all students in this group will be provided with the necessary training materials, equipment, and appropriate teaching staff.

Keywords: Education, Students, Needs, Inclusive, Special.

Problemas para enseñar a estudiantes con necesidades especiales

Resumen

El propósito de este estudio es identificar los principales problemas para obtener una educación superior de calidad para estudiantes con necesidades especiales, y también para averiguar si los graduados con necesidades especiales pueden competir en el mercado laboral. La encuesta se realizó mediante una encuesta en línea entre dos grupos de encuestados. Los resultados del estudio indican que más de la mitad de las universidades (65 por ciento) tienen rampas, ascensores y dispositivos de elevación. En conclusión, la administración de todas las universidades debe garantizar que todos los estudiantes de este grupo reciban los materiales de capacitación, el equipo y el personal docente adecuado.

Palabras clave: Educación, Estudiantes, Necesidades, Inclusivo, Especial.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the problems of special education are among the most relevant in the work of all departments of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the system of special correctional institutions. This is due primarily to the fact that the number of children with special needs is growing steadily (DONGAUZER AND MYKHALEVA, 2017). Recognizing the urgency of the problem, the Russian Federation has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on May 3, 2012, assuming the obligation to implement inclusive education for people with disabilities at all levels of education, including higher education.

Inclusive education is based on traditional and special education systems, integrating them to the needs of persons with disabilities. Inclusive education in the Law on Education in the Russian Federation is defined as ensuring equal access to education for all students, taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual abilities. World experience shows that one of the most important ways to integrate people with disabilities into society is higher education. For example, in Japan, 47 percent of people with hearing disabilities receive higher education. 3 universities for the deaf have been established in the USA: Rochester Institute of Technology, California State University Northridge and Gallaudet University (IMAFUKU, 2012).

Teaching students with special needs in universities require the creation of the necessary conditions for them to ensure equal access to higher education and to meet their special educational needs and individual abilities. One of the objectives of inclusive education in higher education institutions is to create a barrier-free environment for this category of people and the opportunity to become a specialist and gain a profession for young people with special needs. One of the most common forms of education is distance learning, which involves obtaining a set of educational services with the help of a specialized information learning environment (GETZEL & THOMA, 2008).

The problematic aspect is rather a set of objective conditions, in particular, the reluctance of some state and non-state structures and agencies to find an approach and to meet such people in providing the

necessary services. Despite some success in terms of participation of higher education in general and regional university, in particular, in creating conditions for inclusive education, it should be noted a number of problems:

- The architectural and planning unsuitability of university buildings;
- Inclusive education is considered mainly in relation to the school level of education, pre-school and university inclusive education often remain outside the scope of discussion and funding (DENISOVA AND LEKHANOVA, 2015);
- Rehabilitation programs for people with disabilities make little use of the resource of interdepartmental interaction between institutions and organizations of health, education, social protection (KASHAPOVA, 2012);
- The lack of human resources mechanisms of inclusive vocational education for people with disabilities and special needs;
- Most universities do not give the possibility of retraining and advanced training for teachers who work with students with special needs (IARSKAIA-SMIRNOVA & ROMANOV, 2005);

- The status of people with special needs who have reached the age of 18 is not defined by law and regulations, which makes it difficult to create special educational conditions for them at the stage of vocational training (DENISOVA AND LEKHANOVA, 2015; FUJO & DIDA, 2019).

Research on this topic demonstrates a number of problems associated with obtaining higher professional education for students with special needs. In accordance with the existing problems, the purpose of the study is to identify the main problems in obtaining quality higher education for students with special needs, and also to find out whether graduates with special needs can compete in the labor market (WELI, 2019).

2. METHODS

On the basis of the set goals, an empirical study was developed, organized and conducted. The study consisted of a survey of teachers of public and private universities of the Russian Federation, and employers, to identify current trends and possible problems. The survey was conducted using an online survey.

A random sample of the online survey consisted of 1031 teachers of higher educational institutions of the Russian Federation. Among them, there were 35 percent of men and 65 percent of women

aged 30 to 55 years old. The second group of respondents involved medium and small businesses of the Russian Federation in the field of tourism, trade, construction, and IT. 543 representatives of enterprises took part in the survey. The frequency of response to questionnaires was 53 percent of sent ones.

This survey was conducted using an anonymous survey. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part was for teachers, and the second one was for entrepreneurs. The first questionnaire consisted of questions about 5 problems of teaching students with special needs. Five characteristics were given for each problem (see Table 1). The survey was possible thanks to the deans of the faculties of the participating universities. Due to the specific form of teaching of respondents, the survey was conducted online. The questionnaire used a five-point scale to assess the answers and, accordingly, points from 1 to 5 were taken: 5 points = very high, 4 points = good, 3 points = to some extent, 2 points = very little and 1= not at all.

Table 1: The questionnaire for teachers

Criterion	Characteristics
1. Information technology tools	1 - availability of textbooks and electronic resources for visually impaired students 2 - library fund with special adaptive-technical means for people with disabilities 3 - special software for students with special needs
2. Special equipment in the buildings of higher educational institutions	1 - ramps, elevators, and lifting devices 2 - information boards with tactile information (Braille); 3 - special seats in classrooms
3. Organization of	1 - adapted educational programs

educational process for students with special needs	2 - educational and methodical complexes 3 - local regulations
4. Staffing of inclusive vocational education for students with special needs	1 - improvement of qualifications in the field of inclusive education 2 - provision of services of an assistant 3 - availability in the staff of the organization of the pedagogical workers having the basic education and/or received additional education for teaching people with disabilities and special needs

The second questionnaire consisted of 3 questions (see Table 2). In the questionnaire, there was used a three-point scale and respectively points from 1 to 3: 1 – yes, 2 – no, 3 – it is difficult to answer. Due to the high employment of respondents in this group and for their convenience, the survey was also conducted online.

Table 2: The questionnaire for employers

A question	
1.	Are you ready to hire a graduate with special needs?
2.	Are you ready to finance the creation of working conditions for graduates with special needs?
3.	Do you have the conditions for people with special needs to work?

The study deals with generalized problems associated with the organization of teaching students with special needs in universities of the Russian Federation. Further research can also be conducted in a narrower plan, choosing the direction of teaching: economic, tourism, construction, medicine, etc. It will help to formulate the problem and make more specific conclusions in a particular field of activity.

The analysis of the data of our study was made in the STATISTICA system. For convenience, some of the data had been translated into histograms developed in Origin 9. Normal student distribution and standard deviation of the sample (σ) were used to calculate the confidence interval. The size of the error is 3 percent. Some parts of the questionnaires were incorrectly filled (for example, some respondents did not answer all the questions).

The validity of the survey included the calculation of the average between teachers, who assessed the problems of the organization of education of students with special needs, and entrepreneurs from a potential employer.

3. RESULTS

The analysis of the results of our study shows that the level of use of information technology tools for teaching students with special needs is below average (see Table 3).

Table 3: The level of use of information technology tools for teaching students with special needs

Problem category	Characteristics	n= 1035	%	σ
Information technology tools	textbooks and electronic resources for visually impaired students	2,17	43	0.02
	library fund	1,91	38	0.03

	special software for students with special needs	2,97	59	0.01
Special equipment	ramps, elevators, and lifting devices	3,28	65	0.02
	information boards with tactile information (Braille);	1,97	39	0.03
	special seats in classrooms	1,93	38	0.02
Organization of educational process	adapted educational programs	1,52	30	0.03
	educational and methodical complexes	1,86	37	0.01
	local regulations	3,24	65	0.02
Staffing	improvement of qualifications in the field of inclusive education	2,11	42	0.03
	provision of assistant services	1, 82	36	0.01
	teachers with basic education for teaching people with disabilities and special needs	1,61	32	0.04

The research results show that 43 percent of universities are provided with textbooks, electronic resources, and 38 percent have adapted sources in the library. These results may indicate the need to effectively organize the information environment with special needs, provide libraries with sources with Braille, audiobooks, etc. in accordance with the students' needs. At the same time, it is worth noting that special software for students with special needs is implemented in universities at a good level, as it is estimated at 59 percent by teachers. This indicator shows that more and more universities are carrying out a set of activities aimed at the integration of students with special needs in the general academic educational process, as the bulk of the educational work is based on electronic resources.

In addition, the results of the study indicate the problem of staffing. This is evidenced by the following results: table 3 show that 40 percent of universities provide an opportunity for employees to undergo retraining. It should be noted that only 30 percent of universities have a staff of teachers with basic education and/or received additional education for teaching people with disabilities. The universities that have participated in the online survey can also provide the services of an instructor, who is an assistant to provide technical assistance to students with special needs and services of sign language interpreters and interpreters for the deafblind. To solve this problem, it is necessary to increase funding for the retraining of teachers to create favorable conditions for the education of students with special needs. The results, obtained from the processing of questionnaires for employers, indicate their degree of readiness to attract graduates with special needs.

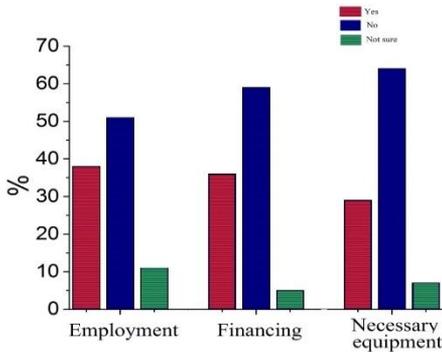


Figure 1: The employers' answers

The figure 1 shows that 38 percent of employers are ready to employ graduates with special needs. It is noteworthy that only 36 percent of respondents are interested in funding to create working conditions for graduates with special needs. It is worth noting that 64 percent of respondents have said that they do not have the necessary working conditions for employees with special needs. These results indicate the problematic employment of graduates.

4. DISCUSSION

International experts assess the development of inclusive education in Russia as serious progress. Academics say that it is a fashionable topic. Politicians consider it a new state ideology in education. Public organizations consider inclusion as a human rights concept. Questions from the ideological plane have moved to the organizational, scientific and methodological aspects. Earlier studies have shown that in order to provide teaching, it is important that audiences are organized on an all-inclusive basis. At the same time, students with special needs should have full access to classrooms, movement around the university without any physical barriers. In this context, it is essential that educational institutions are built on the basis of universal design. Scientists have also shown that many of the problems faced by students with special needs are also common to other students.

However, these problems can be more complex and will take longer to solve for people with disabilities. An important point for improving the education of students with disabilities is the methodology of teaching and the use of technological resources. It is important to take into account the individual characteristics of students (BAIN, 2004; KURTH ET AL., 2014). Scientists have shown in their studies that many students with special needs do not want to get higher education because of the obstacles they face in the learning process (KILPATRICK ET AL., 2017). They have identified such obstacles: prejudices, architectural barriers, lack of appropriate support devices and services, programs and means of support, poor material conditions, inaccessible public transport services, information barriers, non-equivalent presence of the institutional network, lack of professional staff, non-adaptable books, literature, and didactic tools. If students with disabilities do not achieve equal competencies with others, they will not be competitive enough in the labor markets.

European universities are actively introducing equal education for students with special needs. For example, the University of Lille 3 Human & Social Sciences (France) has one of the priorities to provide access to higher education to all, especially people with disabilities. Students with special needs have a guaranteed right to adapted exam formats. Students are accompanied by peers (tutors), and teachers and members of administrative staff in all faculties. The University has signed the Handicap Université Entreprises Convention with a number of corporate participants (Thalès, Auchan) who help the University to employ graduates with special needs (CLAEYS-KULIK AND

EKMAN, 2018). Technical University of Delft (Netherlands) aims to provide equal opportunities in obtaining and completing academic education for students with special needs (physical disabilities, chronic diseases, psychological complications or dyslexia) but with equal competencies and the same level of knowledge that students without disabilities have. To create equal opportunities, TU Delft employees, as part of the enrollment process, conduct a survey of students about their experience and educational needs to discuss disability-related needs. (The Free University of Berlin and the University of Heidelberg have single centers that address the problem of employing graduates with special needs and actively cooperate with the labor market and employers.

It should be noted that the development of support systems for people with disabilities is influenced by several factors at the national and international levels. The economic situation, social values, political ideology, public funding, cultural and legal services play an important role in the development of support services. In developing countries, the combination of these elements is the basis for the development of support services for people with special needs. A key issue that affects their transition to adulthood is the lack of satisfactory university infrastructure and adequate support in the educational system. Regarding the employment of graduates with special needs, there are positive trends. Large companies often try to accept applicants with disabilities.

Loreal is one of the socially responsible companies supporting people with disabilities. Several wheelchair users work here. It should be noted that employers also have their own concerns about the employee with disabilities. Often employers note that people with disabilities are subconsciously waiting for pity and concessions, or such employee has reduced motivation. Companies are simply afraid of many things. For example, employing a person with a disability, they will not be able to fire him/her, although it is just ignorance of the law. The business often has a lack of basic knowledge. Answering the question what can prevent you from working in the same team with specialists with disabilities? People from different regions of the country, who have already had experience working with such colleagues, say nothing. 44 percent of those people, who have not had such practice, are in solidarity with them. They see the biggest barrier in the absence of communication with people with disabilities – 30 percent.

In several studies, working situations are compared between different types of disability (BOMAN ET AL., 2013); employment opportunities differ between types of disability. Crisp (2005) has studied the professional outcome for six groups with disabilities (five of them are with medical disabilities, and one group is with psychological disabilities). The author has found that the severity of disability, socio-demographic, psychological and psychosocial factors are key predictors for returning to work or employment status after the appearance of disability.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the positive trends in teaching students with special needs, there are still a number of problems. This study shows that in Russian universities the education of students with special needs is below the average level. Based on the results of the study, it is possible to identify the main problems. There is a low level of information technology (46 percent), special equipment (47 percent), the organization of the educational process (44 percent), staffing (36 percent). The results show that less than half of universities (43 percent) are provided with special textbooks, electronic resources, and 38 percent have appropriate adapted sources in the library. At the same time, it is worth noting that special software for students with special needs is implemented in 59 percent of universities.

The results of the study also indicate that more than half of universities (65 percent) have ramps, elevators, and lifting devices. The situation with the employment of graduates with special needs is an important problem on the way to creating comfortable conditions for them to study and work. The results, obtained from the questions for employers, indicate a low degree of readiness to attract graduates with special needs. Thus, 38 percent of employers are ready to hire graduates with special needs, 36 percent of respondents are interested in funding to create working conditions for graduates with special needs and 64 percent of respondents do not have the necessary conditions for employees with special needs. Based on the results, we

have found that students with special needs will not be able to compete in the labor market.

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