

# Professional training of future speech therapists for work in the inclusive educational environment of a city

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**Abstract.** This article discusses the issues of training of future speech therapists for work in inclusive educational environment. One of the prioritized tasks of modern education is training of personnel for working with students with specific learning difficulties. In recent years due to modernization of the Russian education system the training of experts for work in inclusive educational environment becomes more and more important. However, the issue of analysis of professional competences of future speech therapists is insufficiently studied. This article is aimed at analysis of educational programs of training students in Moscow universities for work with children with specific learning difficulties on the basis of their knowledge and attitude to inclusive education. Aiming at analysis of competences of future speech therapists, the students were surveyed by various blocks: from knowledge of regulatory documents to personal attitude of students to foundations of inclusive education. The obtained results have confirmed the assumption that in general the students have positive attitude to inclusive education, the disputable issue concerns readiness of society for conditions of inclusive education and understanding of special demands of children with limited health capacities by teachers of educational entities. This article defines various approaches and trends of formation of tolerant attitude to students with specific learning difficulties, as well as the required professional competences corresponding to the requirements of Federal State Education Standard of higher education. Due to increased number of children with severe speech pathologies and expanded competences of speech therapists of educational entities, it would be reasonable to increase the number of disciplines expanding skills and habits of future speech therapists under conditions of inclusive education.

**Keywords:** competences of special teacher; integration; quality of education in a city.

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## **1 Introduction**

The education system of the City of Moscow is an inherent portion of the education system of the Russian Federation; its principles in addition to creation of conditions for talented pupils include recognition of rights for special conditions for children and adolescents with limited health capacities [1]. The model of inclusive approach regarding persons with special demands is based on the concepts of equality and respect to differences among people. In the era of education globalization, the traditional and conservative paradigm is reoriented for competence paradigm, where inclusion is a certain step to innovative modification of overall education system [2-6]. Modern trends in educational system assume development of pedagogical and methodological provision at all levels of general education. Review of policy in the field of continuous inclusive education [7-11], analysis and comparison of aspects of preschool education quality in Russian and European schools [12-16], peculiarities of execution of class and extracurricular activities for children with special demands, necessity to prolong special assistance at the level of basic general education [17, 18] make it possible to conclude that personnel training as one of prioritized tasks of modern education is required.

The issue of specialist training for work in inclusive educational environment has recently become important, which is related with modernization of the Russian education system, adoption of Law On Education in the Russian Federation, development and implementation of Federal State Education Standard (FSES) for children with limited health capacities. Expansion of practice of inclusive education puts forward a set of tasks before educational society, among which the personnel provision of inclusive educational environment is the most urgent. In recent years a series of studies have been carried out devoted to training students specialized in “Special (defectologic) education” [19-23]. However, the issue of analysis and comparison of mastering professional competences by future speech therapists of Moscow, who just started their education, and students having practical experience of work with children, is insufficiently studied.

## **2 Methods**

We conducted a survey of 80 students of the Institute of Special Education and Psychology (Moscow City University) in order to study the competencies of future speech therapists. Among them, there were 40 full-time students and 40 part-time students enrolled in the “Speech therapy” program. The questionnaire was comprised of 30 questions, which should be answered by students in free from using short and detailed answers. The survey results were combined into 15 general questions. Portions of positive and negative answers as well as of ambiguous answers to the questions were determined by the obtained responses.

## **3 Results**

The block of questions devoted to attitude to the inclusive education system demonstrated that this form was familiar for many students participating in the research. 85% of students understood the importance of inclusion of students with specific learning difficulties into general education system. Most surveyed students knew laws and regulations of the inclusive education system.

While analyzing the students’ responses, it should be mentioned that together with positive attitude to the inclusive education (60%) some students did not support this system (15%), and 25% of students supported it in part. However, while explaining the reasons of such attitude to the system of inclusive education, the detailed answer demonstrated that the

main reason of the negative attitude was the lack of conditions for education of children with limited health capacities in educational entities. Part-time students with secondary special education (50% of the surveyed), having experience of work in educational entity, in their answers mentioned that for successful integration of students with specific learning difficulties into general education environment, it was required to improve the system of such entities. 50% of students believed that educational entities rendered services in accordance with the demands of children with specific learning difficulties not in full scope (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Student responses.

Questionary blocks	Students (80 persons – 100%)		
	Yes	No	Partially
1. Knowledge of laws and regulations about the system of inclusive education	75%	15%	10%
2. Readiness of society to inclusion	25%	30%	45%
3. Positive attitude to inclusive education of children with limited health capacities	60%	15%	25%
4. Adaptation of environment in educational entity for children with limited health capacities	47.5%	47.5%	5%
5. Provision of equal opportunities for children by inclusion	70%	10%	20%
6. Formation of tolerant behavior of children by inclusion	75%	15%	10%
7. Awareness of teachers about special demands of children with limited health capacities	60%	15%	25%
8. Rendering of educational services in accordance with demands of children with limited health capacities	50%	-	50%
9. Awareness of trends of work with parents of children with limited health capacities	75%	15%	10%
10. Promotion of socialization of students with specific learning difficulties by inclusion	100%	-	-
11. Awareness of model of psychological and pedagogical assistance for children with limited health capacities	50%	40%	10%
12. Awareness of support technology of children with complicated violations	45%	45%	10%
13. Necessity of team of special teachers for studying children with limited health capacities	100%	-	-
14. Necessity of special teacher training	100%	-	-
15. Necessity to convert all educational entities to the system of inclusive education	30%	65%	5%

It should be mentioned that most students referred to significant positive sides of inclusive education: socialization of children with specific learning difficulties (100%), formation of tolerant behavior of children (75%), provision of equal opportunities for children (70%).

The first-year students at initial stage of education were not sufficiently aware of the models and technologies of accompanying children with complex combined deviations in development (40%).

The disputable issue concerned readiness of society for conditions of inclusive education and understanding of special demands of children with limited health capacities by teachers of educational entities.

The survey results demonstrated the full-time students showed poorer knowledge of models and technologies of psychological and pedagogical assistance for children with specific learning difficulties. In this regard the significance of the discipline titled “Special

(corrective) and inclusive education of children with various deviations in development” increases. In terms of provision of inclusive education system with professional staff, all surveyed (100%) mentioned the importance of joint work of expert team for provision of efficient assistance to students with specific learning difficulties, as well as the necessity of special training of experts for work with children under the conditions of inclusive education.

Due to the increasing number of children with severe speech pathologies and more complicated work of speech therapists of educational entities, it would be reasonable to increase the number of disciplines expanding professionalism under conditions of inclusive education. The discipline titled “Pedagogical systems of education of children with speech pathologies” presents various systems of logopedic assistance to children both under conditions of special and inclusive education.

## **4 Discussion**

The obtained results demonstrate that the students of full-time and part-time form during studying the disciplines of Logopedics profile understand well the system of inclusive education in Russia, master professional competences for development of adapted educational programs with experts of psychological and pedagogical assistance for preschool children with limited health capacities (PK-1.3). They are familiar with the technologies of diagnostic examination of children with deviations, correctly interpret results, are capable to plan tasks of correcting and developing activities by monitoring results with accounting for individual peculiarities of development of each child.

In order to update theoretical knowledge of students specializing in Logopedics, the Department of logopedics, Moscow City University, prepared working programs providing interdisciplinary links in accordance with academic plan for bachelor training [24, 25]. The following disciplines: Thinking and Writing, Great Books, and Cultural Codes form universal competences oriented at development of skills to literary and argumentatively formulate own judgements and assessments (UK-1), to select communicatively acceptable styles of business communications with partners (UK-4). Social and cultural practice enhances the students’ knowledge, who attend city libraries, analyze literature on problems of intercultural communications.

Basic portion of professional cycle forms general cultural competences. The discipline titled “Regularities of nervous-psychical and speech development” is one of the most significant. While studying this discipline, the students learn about age specific norms of speech development for preschool children. In the course of logopedic diagnostics, it allows for speech therapist, comparing ontogenesis and features of child speech, to detect specificity of the considered speech violation. The basic part also includes special pedagogics and psychology, as well as disciplines of medical and biological foundations of defectology.

The variative block of Logopedics profile includes 20 disciplines, 12 of which concern diagnostics and correction of persons with speech pathologies. Studying of basics of diagnostics and correction of speech violations is based on conventional and innovative aspects, parallels with foreign technologies are made. Other disciplines form pedagogical competences of education of persons with specific learning difficulties under special and inclusive conditions of education. During mastering these disciplines the students acquire skills of tolerant and productive interaction with various social groups considering for their social and cultural peculiarities, professional correct attitude to children and adults with limited health capacities (UK-5, PK-1.4).

## 5 Conclusion

Improvement of expert training for working in inclusive educational environment of a city should be performed towards expansion of organizational, content, and methodological aspects. The quality of training of future speech therapists at Moscow City University is improved by pedagogical practice in educational entities where students with specific learning difficulties learn together with their peers, by wide range of elective courses for students, by implementation of video presentations into learning practice. Provision of such supplemental theoretical and practical material improves understanding of integration issues by students, allows to form basic skills of pedagogical assistance of complex combined speech pathologies, forms positive attitude of future specialists to children with limited health capacities, and influences positively the quality of education in the city.

In order to improve the quality of training of future specialists in Moscow, it is necessary to perform timely monitoring and analysis of forming professional competences of university students with consideration for course and form of education.

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